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Socialism: The Dream and the Reality

By DANIEL BELL

SOcialism was once an unbounded dream. Fourier promised that under socialism people would be at least "ten feet tall." Karl Kautsky proclaimed that the average citizen of a socialist society would be a superman. The flamboyant Antonio Labriola told his Italian followers that their socialist-bred children would each be Galileos and Giordano Brunos. And the grandiloquent Trotsky described the socialist millennium as one in which "man would become immeasurably stronger, wiser, freer, his body more harmoniously proportioned, his movements more rhythmic, his voice more musical, and the forms of his existence permeated with dramatic dynamism."

America, too, was an unbounded dream. The utopians gamboled in the virgin wilderness. Some immigrants called it the *golden medinah*, the golden land. Here it seemed as if socialism would have its finest hour. Both Marx and Engels felt a boundless optimism. In 1879 Marx wrote, ". . . the United States have at present overtaken England in the rapidity of economical progress, though they lag still behind in the extent of acquired wealth; but at the same time, the masses are quicker, and have greater political means in their hands, to resent the form of a progress accomplished at their expense." Engels, who wrote a score of letters on the American scene in the late 1880's and early '90's, repeated this prediction time and again. In his introduction to the American edition of *The Conditions of the Working Class in England*, written at the height of enthusiasm over the events

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of 1886—notably the spectacular rise of the Knights of Labor and the Henry George campaign—he exulted: “On the more favored soil of America, where no medieval ruins bar the way, where history begins with the elements of modern bourgeois society, as evolved in the seventeenth century, the working class passed through these two stages of its development [i.e., a national trade-union movement and an independent labor party] within ten months.” And five years later, his optimism undiminished by the sorry turn of events, Engels wrote to Schlüter: “. . . continually renewed waves of advance, followed by equally certain set-backs, are inevitable. Only the advancing waves are becoming more powerful, the set-backs less paralyzing. . . . Once the Americans get started it will be with an energy and violence compared with which we in Europe shall be mere children.”

But there still hovers the melancholy question, posed by Werner Sombart at the turn of the century in the title of a book, *Why Is There No Socialism in the United States?* To this Sombart supplied one set of answers. He pointed to the open frontiers, the many opportunities for social ascent through individual effort, and the rising standard of living of the country as factors. Other writers have expanded these considerations. Selig Perlman, in his *Theory of the Labor Movement*, advanced three reasons for the lack of class consciousness in the United States: the absence of a “settled” wage-earner class; the “free gift” of the ballot (workers in other countries, denied such rights—for example, the Chartists—developed political rather than economic motivations); and third, the impact of succeeding waves of immigration. It was immigration, said Perlman, which gave rise to the ethnic, linguistic, religious, and cultural heterogeneity of American labor, and to the heightened ambitions of immigrants’ sons to escape their inferior status.

In the end, all such explanations fall back on the naturally-endowed resources and material vastness of America. Other explanations have indicated equally general, and relevant, facts. Some have stressed the agrarian basis of American life, with the farmer seesawing to radicalism and conservatism in tune to the business cycle. Others have pointed to the basically geographic, rather than functional, organization of the two-party system, with its emphasis on opportunism, rhetoric, and patronage as the mode of political discourse; hence, compromise, rather than rigid principle, becomes the prime concern of the interest-seeking political bloc.

Implicit in many of these analyses, however, was the notion that such conditions were but temporary. Capitalism as an evolving social system would of necessity "mature." Crises would follow, and at that time a large, self-conscious wage-earner class and a socialist movement, perhaps on the European pattern, would probably emerge. The great depression was such a crisis—an emotional shock which shook the self-confidence of the entire society. It left permanent scar tissue in the minds of the American workers. It spurred the organization of a giant trade-union movement which in ten years grew from less than three million to over fifteen million workers, or one-fourth of the total labor force of the country.¹ It brought in its train the smoking-hot organizing drives and sit-downs in the Ohio industrial valley which gave the country a whiff of class warfare. In the 1940's labor entered national politics with a vigor—in order to safeguard its economic gains. Here at last was the fertile soil which socialist theorists had long awaited. Yet no socialist movement emerged, nor has a coherent socialist ideology taken seed either in the labor movement or in government. So Sombart's question still remains unanswered.

Most of the attempted answers have discussed not *causes* but *conditions*, and these in but general terms. An inquiry into the fate of a social movement has to be pinned in the specific questions of time, place, and opportunity, and framed within a general hypothesis regarding the "why" of its success or failure. The "why" which this essay proposes (with the usual genuflections to *ceteris paribus*), is that the failure of the socialist movement in the United States is rooted in its inability to resolve a basic dilemma of ethics and politics. The socialist movement, by its very statement of goal and in its rejection of the capitalist order as a whole, could not relate itself to the specific problems of social action in the here-and-now, give-and-take political world. It was trapped by the unhappy problem of living "*in* but not *of* the world," so it could only act, and then inadequately, as the moral, but not political, man in immoral society. It could never resolve but only straddle the basic issue of either accepting capitalist society, and seeking

¹Actually such a statistic slights the real magnitude of labor's swift rise. The non-agricultural labor force is approximately forty-five million, so that unionization touches one in three. Even here a further breakdown is revealing. Nearly every major manufacturing industry (except chemicals and textiles) is more than 80 per cent unionized.

to transform it from within as the labor movement did, or becoming the sworn enemy of that society, like the communists. A religious movement can split its allegiances and live *in* but not *of* the world (like Lutheranism); a political movement can not.

In social action there is an irreconcilable tension between ethics and politics. Lord Acton posed the dilemma in a note: "Are politics an attempt to realize ideals, or an endeavor to get advantages, within the limits of ethics?" More succinctly, "are ethics a purpose or a limit?" In the largest sense, society is an organized system for the distribution of tangible rewards and privileges, obligations and duties. Within that frame, ethics deals with the *ought* of distribution, implying a theory of justice. Politics is the concrete *mode* of distribution, involving a power struggle between organized groups to determine the allocation of privilege. In some periods of history, generally in closed societies, ethics and politics have gone hand in hand. But a distinguishing feature of modern society is the separation of the two; and ideology—the façade of general interest and universal values which masks a specific self-interest—replaces ethics. The redivision of the rewards and privileges of society can only be accomplished in the political arena. But in that fateful commitment to politics, an ethical goal, stated as purpose rather than limit, becomes a far-reaching goal before which lies a yawning abyss that can be spanned only by a "leap." The alternatives were forcefully posed by Max Weber in his contrast between the "ethics of responsibility" (or the acceptance of limits) and the "ethics of conscience" (or the dedication to absolute ends). Weber, arguing that only the former is applicable in politics, writes: "The matter does not appear to me so desperate if one does not ask exclusively who is morally right and who is morally wrong? But if one rather asks: Given the existing conflict how can I solve it with the least internal and external danger for all concerned?" Such a pragmatic compromise rather than dedication to an absolute (like bolshevism or religious pacifism) is possible, however, only when there is a basic consensus among contending groups about the rules of the game. But this consensus the socialist movement, because of its original rejection of capitalist society, while operating within it, could never fully accept.

The distinctive character of "modern" politics is the involvement of *all* strata of society in movements of social change, rather than the fatalistic acceptance of events as they are. Its starting point was, as Karl

Mannheim elegantly put it, the “orgiastic chiliasm” of the Anabaptists, their messianic hope, their ecstatic faith in the millennium to come. For, as Mannheim and others have pointed out, the Anabaptism of the sixteenth century, of Thomas Münzer and those who sought to establish at Münster the Kingdom of God on earth, proclaimed not merely that equality of souls stressed by Luther, but also equality of property. Other-worldly religious quietism became transformed into a revolutionary activism in order to realize the millennium in the here and now. Thus the religious frenzy of the chiliasts which burst the bonds of the old religious order threatened to buckle the social order as well; for unlike previous revolutions, chiliasm did not aim against a single oppression, but at the entire existing social order.

The characteristic psychological fact about the chiliast is that for him “there is no inner articulation of time.” There is only the “absolute presentness.” “Orgiastic energies and ecstatic outbursts began to operate in a worldly setting and tensions previously transcending day to day life became explosive agents within it.” The chiliast is neither “in the world [n]or of it.” He stands outside of it and against it because salvation, the millennium, is immediately at hand. Where such a hope is possible, where such a social movement can transform society in a cataclysmic flash, the “leap” is made, and in the pillar of fire the fusion of ethics and politics is possible. But where societies are stable, and social change can only come piecemeal, the pure chiliast in despair turns nihilist, rather than make the bitter-tasting compromises with the established hierarchial order. “When this spirit ebbs and deserts these movements,” writes Mannheim, “there remains behind in the world a naked mass-frenzy and despiritualized fury.” In a later and secularized form, this attitude found its expression in Russian anarchism. So Bakunin could write: “The desire for destruction is at the same time a creative desire.”

Yet not only the anarchist, but every socialist, every convert to political messianism, is in the beginning something of a chiliast. In the newly-found enthusiasms, in the identification with an oppressed group, hope flares that the “final conflict” will not be far ahead. (“Socialism in our time,” was the affirmative voice of Norman Thomas in the 1930’s.) But the “revolution” is not always immediately in sight, and the question of how to discipline this chiliastic zeal and hold it in readiness has been the basic problem of socialist strategy.

The most radical approach was that of Georges Sorel with his concept of the revolutionary myth ("*images de batailles*"), a myth which functions as a bastardized version of the doctrine of salvation. These unifying images, Sorel wrote, can neither be proved nor disproved; thus they are "capable of evoking as an undivided whole" the mass of diverse sentiments which exist in society. "The syndicalists solve this problem perfectly, by concentrating the whole of socialism in the drama of the general strike; thus there is no longer any place for the reconciliation of contraries in the equivocations of the professors; everything is clearly mapped out so that only one interpretation of Socialism is possible." In this "catastrophic conception" of socialism, as Sorel called it, "*it is the myth in its entirety which is alone important.*"

But in the here and now, people live "in parts." "History does not work with bottled essences," wrote Acton, "but with active combinations; compromise is the soul if not the whole of politics. Occasional conformity is the nearest practical approach to orthodoxy and progress is along diagonals. . . . Pure dialectics and bilateral dogmas have less control than custom and interest and prejudice." And for the socialist movements, operating on "partial" day-to-day problems, the dilemma remained.

II

Neither nineteenth-century American radicals nor the American socialists faced up to this problem of social compromise. The utopias that were spun so profusely in the nineteenth century assumed that in the course of evolution "reason" would find its way and the perfect society would emerge. But so mechanical were the mannikin visions of human delights in such utopias that a modern reading of Bellamy, for example, with its plan for conscript armies of labor ("a horrible cockney dream," William Morris called *Looking Backward*) only arouses revulsion.

The "scientific socialist" movement that emerged at the turn of the century mocked these utopian unrealities. Only the organization of the proletariat could bring a better world. But this apparent relatedness to the world was itself a delusion. The socialist dilemma was still how to face the problem of "in the world and of it," and in practice the early socialist movement "rejected" the world; it simply waited

for the new. Although the American Socialist Party sought to function politically by raising "immediate demands" and pressing for needed social reforms, it rarely took a stand on the actual political problems that emerged from the on-going functioning of the society. "What but meaningless phrases are 'imperialism,' 'expansion,' 'free silver,' 'gold standard,' etc., to the wage worker?" asked Eugene V. Debs in 1900. "The large capitalists represented by Mr. McKinley and the small capitalists represented by Mr. Bryan are interested in these 'issues' but they do not concern the working class." These "issues" were beside the point, said Debs, because the worker stood outside society. Thus Debs and the socialist movement as a whole would have no traffic with the capitalist parties. Even on local municipal issues the party would not compromise. The socialist movement could "afford" this purity because of its supreme confidence about the future. "The socialist program is not a theory imposed upon society for its acceptance or rejection. It is but the interpretation of what is, sooner or later, inevitable. Capitalism is already struggling to its destruction," proclaimed the Socialist national platform of 1904, the first issued by the Socialist Party.

But unlike the other-worldly movements toward salvation, which can always postpone the date of the resurrection, the Socialist Party, living in the here and now, had to show results. It was a movement based on a belief in "history"; but it found itself outside of "time." World War I finally broke through the façade. For the first time the party had to face a stand on a realistic issue of the day. And on that issue almost the entire intellectual leadership of the party deserted, and the back of American socialism was broken.

The socialist movement of the 1930's, the socialism of Norman Thomas, could not afford the luxury of the earlier belief in the inevitable course of history. It was forced to take stands on the particular issues of the day. But it too rejected completely the premises of the society which shaped these issues. In effect, the Socialist Party acknowledged the fact that it lived "in" the world, but refused the responsibility of becoming a part "of" it. But such a straddle is impossible for a *political* movement. It was as if it consented to a duel, with no choice as to weapons, place, amount of preparation, etc. Politically, the consequences were disastrous. Each issue could only be met by an ambiguous political formula which would satisfy neither

the purist, nor the activist who lived with the daily problem of choice. When the Loyalists in Spain demanded arms, for example, the Socialist Party could only respond with a feeble policy of "workers aid," not (capitalist) government aid; but to the Spaniard, arms, not theoretical niceties, were the need of the moment. When the young trade unionists, whom the socialists seeded into the labor movement, faced the necessity of going along politically with Roosevelt and the New Deal in order to safeguard progressive legislative gains, the socialists proposed a "labor party" rather than work with the Democrats, and so the Socialist Party lost almost its entire trade-union base. The threat of fascism and World War II finally proved to be the clashing rocks through which the socialist argonauts could not row safely. How to defeat Hitler without supporting capitalist society? Some socialists raised the slogan of a "third force." The Socialist Party, however, realized the futility of that effort; in characteristic form, it chose abnegation. The best way to stem fascism, it stated, "is to make democracy work at home." But could the issue be resolved other than militarily? The main concern of the antifascist movement had to be with the political center of fascist power, Hitler's Berlin, and any other concern was peripheral.

In still another way the religious, chiliastic origin of modern socialism revealed itself—the multiplication of splits, the constant formation of sectarian splinter groups each hotly disputing the other regarding the true road to power. Socialism is an eschatological movement; it is sure of its destiny, because "history" leads it to its goal. But though sure of its final ends, there is never a standard of testing the immediate means. The result is a constant fractiousness in socialist life. Each position taken is always open to challenge by those who feel that it would only swerve the movement from its final goal and lead it up some blind alley. And because it is an ideological movement, embracing all the realm of the human polity, the Socialist Party is always challenged to take a stand on every problem from Viet Nam to Finland, from prohibition to pacifism. And, since for every two socialists there are always three political opinions, the consequence has been that in its inner life, the Socialist Party has never, *even for a single year*, been without some issue which threatened to split the party and which forced it to spend much of its time on the problem of reconciliation

or rupture. In this fact lies the chief clue to the impotence of American socialism as a political movement, especially in the past twenty years.²

III

But what of the proletariat itself? What is its role in the socialist drama of history? How does the proletariat see through the veils of obscurity and come to self-awareness? Marx could say with Jesus, "I have come to end all mysteries, not to perpetuate them." His role, in his own self-image, was to lay bare the fetishes which enslave modern man and thus confute Hegel's claim that freedom and rationality had already been achieved. But like his old master he could only deal with the "immanent" forces of history, not the mechanics of social action.

All political movements, Marx wrote, have been slaves to the symbols of the past. But history is the process of progressive disenchantment: men are no longer bound to the river gods and anthropomorphic deities of the agricultural societies; nor need they be bound to the abstract impersonal deity of bourgeois Protestantism. Man himself was potential. But how to realize his potentiality? The intellectual was, in part, capable of self-emancipation because he possessed the imagination to transcend his origins. But the proletariat, as a class, could develop only to the extent that the social relations of society itself revealed to the slave the thongs that bound him. Man is no more free, said Marx in *Das Kapital*, because he can sell his labor power to whom he wishes. Exploitation is implicit in the very structure of capitalist society, which in order to live must constantly expand by extracting surplus value and thus accumulate new capital. In the process, the proletarian would be reduced to the barest minimum of human existence (the law of increasing misery) and thus robbed of any mark of distinction. In the agony of alienation and the deepening class struggle he would realize consciously a sense of identity which would unite him

²Far beyond the reaches of this essay is the problem of the psychological types who are attracted by such a sectarian existence. Yet one might say here that certainly the illusions of settling the fate of history, the mimetic combat on the plains of destiny, and the vicarious sense of power in demolishing opponents all provide a sure sense of gratification which makes the continuance of sectarian life desirable. The many leadership complexes, the intense aggressiveness through gossip, the strong clique group formations, all attest to a particular set of psychological needs and satisfactions which are fulfilled in these opaque, molecular worlds.

with others and create a cohesive social movement of revolution. In action he would no longer be manipulated but "make" himself.

Thus the scene is set for the grand drama. Out of the immanent, convulsive contradictions of capitalism, conflict would spread. The proletariat, neither in nor of the world, would inherit the world. But History (to use these personifications) confounded Marx's prophecy, at least in the West. The law of increasing misery was refuted by the tremendous advances of technology. The trade union began bettering the worker's lot. And, in the political struggles that followed, it found that it could sustain itself not by becoming a revolutionary instrument against society, but by accepting a place within society.

In the America of the nineteenth century, almost every social movement had involved an effort by the worker to escape his lot as a worker. At times the solution was free land, or cheap money, or producers' co-operatives, or some other chimera from the gaudy bag of utopian dreams. The rise of the American Federation of Labor signaled the end of this drive for some new "northwest passage." Under Gompers, labor's single ambition was to achieve a status on a par with that of business and the church, as a "legitimate" social institution of American life. The socialists within and without the A.F.L. challenged this approach, and lost. As a result, before World War I they found themselves isolated from the labor movement which they regarded as necessary for the fulfillment of socialism. During the New Deal and after, however, the socialists in the unions, faced with a similar dilemma, chose the labor movement. When the Socialist Party refused to go along, it lost its strength as a tangible force in American political life.

But even apart from its presumed relation to socialism, perhaps the most significant fact regarding the "consciousness" of the American proletariat is that in the past thirty years American middle-class mass culture has triumphed over capitalist and worker alike. The America of 1890, the capstone of the Gilded Age, was a society of increasing differentiation in manners and morals, the area, that is, of *visible* distinction and the one that could give rise, as in Europe, to class resentment. It saw the emergence in baroque mansion, elaborate dress, and refined leisure activities of a new *haut* style of life. By the 1920's this style was already gone. Beneath this change was the transformation of entrepreneurial to corporate capitalism, with a corresponding shift in

the social type from the self-made man to the smooth, faceless manager. But beyond that it was a change in the very character of society, symbolized in large measure by the adjective which qualified the phrases "mass production" and "mass consumption." Production—apart from war needs—was no longer geared *primarily*, as it had been in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, to turning out capital goods (steel, railroad equipment, tools), but to the output of consumers' durable goods (autos, washing machines, radios, etc.). The mass market became the arbiter of taste, and the style of life was leveled. In another dimension of this vast social revolution that has been taking place during the past quarter of a century, professional skill has been replacing property as the chief means of acquiring and wielding power, and the educational system rather than inheritance has become the chief avenue for social ascent. In short, a new-type, bureaucratic, mass society has been emerging, and with it, new institutions, of which the modern trade union is one. If the worker was "absorbed" culturally into the social structure of this new, bureaucratic mass society, the trade union itself finally achieved its respectability.

World War II brought a social truce and the beginnings of a social merger between the major power blocs in American life. "Labor" was living in and of the capitalist society. It was represented on government boards and was consulted on policy. The rise of totalitarianism demonstrated that all social groups had a common fate if democracy fell. In this respect all other values have become subordinate. And the emergence of a garrison economy as a response to the threat of a third world war illustrated the need for some defined national interest in the form of government decision to bring the particular self-interest groups to heel.

For the fast-dwindling Socialist Party the answer to this new dilemma was still a "third force," or a "neither-nor" position which sought to stand apart and outside the swirling sandstorm of conflict. Like the ostrich in the Slavic parable, they put their heads in the sand and thought no one was looking. By 1950, nobody was.

IV

For the twentieth-century communist, however, there are none of these agonizing problems of ethics and politics. He is the perpetual alien living in hostile enemy territory. Any gesture of support, any

pressure for social reforms—all of these are simply tactics, a set of Potemkin villages, the façades to be torn down after the necessary moment for deception has passed. His is the ethic of “ultimate ends”; only the goal counts, the means are inconsequential. Bolshevism thus is neither in the world nor of it, but stands outside. It takes no responsibility for the consequences of any act within the society nor does it suffer the tension of acquiescence or rejection. But the socialist, unlike the communist, lacks that fanatical vision, and so faces the daily anguish of participating in and sharing responsibility for the day-to-day problems of the society.

It is this commitment to the “absolute” that gives bolshevism its religious strength. It is this commitment which sustains one of the great political myths of the century, the myth of the iron-willed Bolshevik. Selfless, devoted, resourceful, a man with a cause, he is the modern Hero. He alone, a man of action, a soldier for the future, continues the tradition of courage which is the aristocratic heritage bestowed on Western culture and which has been devitalized by the narrow, monetary calculus of the bourgeoisie. (Can the businessman be the Hero?) Such is the peculiar myth which has taken a deep hold among many intellectuals. It is a myth which is also responsible for a deep emotional hatred and almost pathologic resentment felt most keenly by the ex-communist intellectual, the “defrocked priest” toward the party. For the “Bolshevik,” through the myth of absolute selflessness, claims to be the “extreme man,” the man of no compromise, the man of purity. The intellectual, driven to be moral, fears the comparison and resents the claim. He thus bears either a sense of guilt or a psychological wound.

In addition to the myth of the Bolshevik as iron-willed Hero, twentieth-century communism has made several other distinctive contributions to the theory and practice of modern politics. Like so many other social doctrines, these were never put down systematically in a fully self-conscious fashion; yet over the years they have emerged as a coherent philosophy. Of these contributions some five can be linked schematically. These are central for understanding the history of the Communist Party in this country and are summarized here.

One of the major innovations of the Bolsheviks is their theory of power. Against the nineteenth-century liberal view which saw social decisions as a reconciliation of diverse interests through compromise

and consensus—a theory which social democracy gradually began to accept after World War I when it was called upon to take responsibility for governments and enter coalitions—the Bolsheviks saw politics as a naked struggle for power, power being defined as a monopoly of the means of coercion. Power was thought of almost in the sense of physics, its equation being almost literally mass times force equals power. The individual, while central to a market society, was for the Bolshevik a helpless entity. Only the organized group counted, and only a mass base could exert social leverage in society.

But a mass requires leadership. The great unresolved dilemma of Marxian sociology was the question of how the proletariat achieves the consciousness of its role. To await the immanent development of history was to rely on the fallacy of misplaced abstraction. “Spontaneity” was not for Lenin a reality in mass politics; nor was the trade union an effective instrument. His answer, the most significant addition to revolutionary theory, was the vanguard role of the party.

Against the “economism” which glorified the role of the trade union, Lenin argued that the mere organization of society on a trade-union basis could only lead to wage consciousness, not revolutionary consciousness; against the spontaneity theories of Rosa Luxemburg he argued that the masses, by nature, were backward. Only the vanguard party, aware of the precarious balance of social forces, could assess the play and correctly tip the scales in the revolutionary direction. The classic formulation of revolutionary avant-gardism Lenin outlined in his *What Is to Be Done*, published as early as 1903.

In it he wrote that without the “dozen” tried and talented leaders, (and talented men are not born by the hundred), professionally trained, schooled by long experience and working in perfect harmony, no class in modern society is capable of conducting a determined struggle. “I assert,” said Lenin, “(1) that no movement can be durable without a stable organization of leaders to maintain continuity; (2) that the more widely the masses are spontaneously drawn into the struggle and form the basis of the movement, the more necessary it is to have such an organization and the more stable must it be (for it is much easier for demagogues to sidetrack the more backward sections of the masses); (3) that the organization must consist chiefly of persons engaged in revolution as a profession.”

If the party were to become a vanguard, it needed discipline in

action, and thus there arose the principle of party hierarchy and "democratic centralism." In theory there was full discussion of policy before decision, and rigid adherence to policy once discussion had been closed. In practice a line was laid down by the leadership which was binding on all. Lenin's promulgation of these doctrines split Russian socialism in 1903 and brought about the emergence of the Bolshevik and Menshevik factions. In the beginning Trotsky opposed Lenin's ideas, but later he capitulated. As he reveals in his autobiography: ". . . there is no doubt that at that time I did not fully realize what an intense and imperious centralism the revolutionary party would need to lead millions of people in a war against the old order. . . . Revolutionary centralism is a harsh, imperative and exacting principle. It often takes the guise of absolute ruthlessness in its relation to individual members, to whole groups of former associates. It is not without significance that the words 'irreconcilable' and 'relentless' are among Lenin's favorites."

From the principle of power and the theory of party organization rose two other key tenets of bolshevism. One was the polarization of classes. Because it looked only toward the "final conflict," bolshevism split society into two classes, the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. But the proletariat could only be emancipated by the vanguard party; hence anyone resisting the party must belong to the enemy. For Lenin, the maxim of the absolute ethic meant that "those who are not for me are against me." Hence, too, a formulation of the theory of "social fascism," which in the early 1930's branded the social democrats rather than Hitler as the chief enemy, and led the communists to unite, in several instances, with the Nazis in order to overthrow the German Republic.

The second tenet, deriving from the backward nature of the masses, was the key psychological tactic of formulating all policy into forceful slogans. Slogans dramatize events, make issues simple, and wipe out the qualifications, nuances, and subtleties which accompany democratic political action. In his chapter on slogans, Lenin wrote one of the first manuals on modern mass psychology. During the revolution, the Bolsheviks achieved a flexibility of tactic by using such slogans as "All Power to the Soviets," "Land, Peace, and Bread," etc. The basic political tactic of all Communist parties everywhere is to formulate policy primarily through the use of key slogans which are transmitted first to the party rank and file and then to the masses.

The consequence of the theory of the vanguard party and its relation to the masses is a system of "two truths," the *consilia evangelica*, or a special ethic endowed for those whose lives are so dedicated to the revolutionary ends, and another truth for the masses. Out of this belief grew Lenin's famous admonition—one can lie, steal, or cheat, for the cause itself has a higher truth.

Communism as a social movement did not, with the brief exception of the late 1930's, achieve any sizable mass following in the United States. Its main appeal, then, was to the dispossessed intelligentsia of the depression generation and to the "engineers of the future" who were captivated by the type of elitist appeal just described. Within American life, its influence was oblique. It stirred many Americans to action against injustices, and left them with burnt fingers when, for reasons of expediency, the party line changed and the cause was dropped. It provided an unmatched political sophistication to a generation that went through its ranks and gave to an easygoing, tolerant, sprawling America a lesson in organizational manipulation and hard-bitten ideological devotion which this country, because of tradition and temperament, found hard to understand. But most of all, through the seeds of distrust and anxiety it sowed, communism has spawned a reaction, an hysteria and bitterness that democratic America may find difficult to erase in the rugged years ahead.

Thus within the span of a century American socialism passed from those bright and unbounded dreams of social justice which possessed the utopians and early Marxians alike to—in the deeds of one bastard faction at least—a nightmare of distrust and bitterness.