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A 150-page intelligence study on developments in the field of Soviet philosophy between 1945 and 1957. The above study bears the classification **CONFIDENTIAL**,

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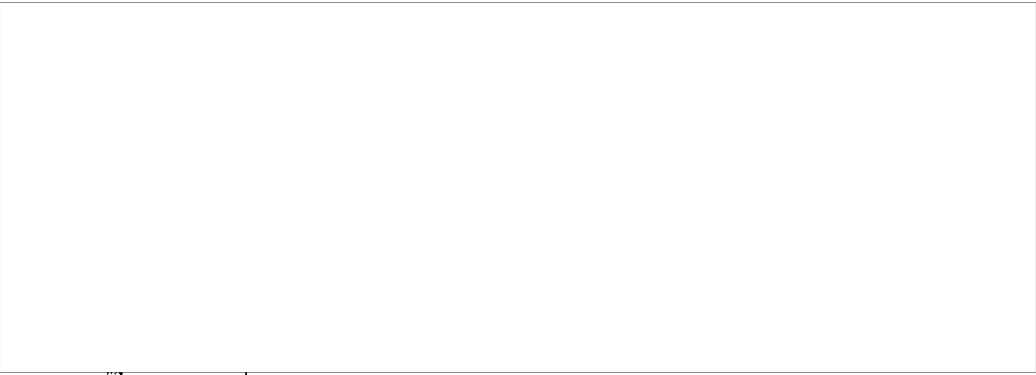
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# INFORMATION REPORT INFORMATION REPORT

  
THE SOVIET PHILOSOPHERS, 1945 - 1957.INTRODUCTION

1. The history of the fate of Soviet Philosophy since the end of the war can be divided into four phases.
2. The study begins in 1947 with an attack directed by Zhdanov which took the form of an all-Union discussion of G.F. Aleksandrov's History of Western Philosophy. Two aspects of this were notable. In the first place, its primary object was to jerk the professional philosophers out of the position of entrenched independence as a college of ideological high priests, into which they had successfully intrigued themselves. But secondly, they were enjoined to become obedient executors of party directives to supply the theoretical arguments and thus to create among the intellectuals a favourable atmosphere for the acceptance of the general policy of the leadership.
3. The next phase represents the attempt of the philosophers to apply themselves with abject willingness to carrying out the injunctions of Zhdanov. In this they failed lamentably. They picked an apparently safe winner in backing the views of Professor Marr, which they with full reason believed to coincide with those of Stalin. They seriously miscalculated, however, and their endeavour to rehabilitate themselves misfired. In 1951 Stalin himself came out against the views of Marr, to

2/the serious

- 2 -

the serious discomfiture of all the professional philosophers who had backed them. The reasons for this surprising development suggested in this paper are that Stalin's reactions were less ideological than personal. The supporters of Marr had unwisely, as events showed, used some of Marr's political activities in Georgia in 1905 to bolster the claims of their champion. This indirectly gave authority to certain early writings of Marr which Stalin, ever sensitive to the history of Georgian Bolshevism, was anxious to keep suppressed.

(There is ample evidence of the lengths to which Stalin was prepared to go to fake the history of Georgian Bolshevism in order to bolster his own role, which lends support to this hypothesis).

4. The chastened and rebuffed philosophers now entered on their third phase, from 1951 until Stalin's death. Their activity was now confined to commentary on, and exaggerated praise of, Stalin's contribution to Marxist theory, and to systematic misrepresentation of Western philosophy in a manner bordering on the ludicrous. In so far as the philosophers during this period ventured into the field of ideological speculation, they confined themselves to carrying out the injunctions clearly deducible from Stalin's own work on Linguistics, which he had written against the views of Marr:

3/they no longer

they no longer attempted to interpret official Soviet policy in the light of Marxism, but on the contrary set about re-writing Marxism so as to make it fit with Soviet, or Stalin's, policies. It is of interest that, even before Stalin's death, there was one sphere in which their anticosmopolitan fervour seems to have gone too far - that of theoretical physics. The usual vulgar attacks on the theories of Western physicists were eventually quelled, in 1952, by the distinguished mathematician Fok, who won official support. Plainly, the importance of physics in a nuclear world outweighed the importance of anticosmopolitan zeal.

5. Stalin's death and the subsequent denigration of Stalin at the XXth Congress have not to date (mid 1957) led to any great daring on the part of the philosophers. Indeed, the leading philosophers are too far compromised by their record of exemplary sycophancy to put themselves forward as leaders of a "new liberalism". Two main trends have been discernible: first, an attempt to present a somewhat more objective picture of the current achievements of Western philosophy. This trend is dictated perhaps not so much by "liberalism", as by the practical recognition that if there is to be academic co-existence, it is necessary to have professional philosophers who know more, say, of Freud, than the fact that he was an agent

4/of imperialist

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of imperialist oppression. An interesting sideline to this trend has been the rehabilitation of cybernetics - hitherto condemned as a device used by capitalists for the exploitation of the workers. The second trend has been evident in the slight signs that the younger philosophers; especially in the non-Russian republics, are pressing for greater academic objectivity and freedom. This trend has been stoutly opposed by all the leading philosophers, who have used the example of Hungary to urge the dangerous consequences of any ideological deviation. This is the position at the moment. That much private and unpublished discussion is going on in the numerous university faculties of philosophy is, however, certain. Latterly, there have appeared protagonists of academic freedom - notably the present Rector of Leningrad University. The argument which these new "liberal" protagonists adduce is that the proper course is not to suppress free discussion, but to guide it and lead it along orderly and controlled lines. This is strongly reminiscent of the argument of the "liberal" bureaucrats and police officers in Imperialist Russia - notably the Deputy Chief of the Moscow police, Zubatov. It remains to be seen if, as did their predecessors, the present advocates of "controlled freedom" will find that it can only too easily get out of hand.

THE SOVIET PHILOSOPHERS, 1945 - 1957

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CHAPTER I.

1. Post-war development in what might be described as the Study of Philosophy in the Soviet Union was largely determined by a number of spasmodic attempts (all of them abortive) to implement the principle of "party-mindedness" in philosophy. Party-mindedness (partiinost) means - in connection with philosophy - far more than mere compliance with the political line of the Party, and more than the party-control practised in other branches of cultural activity. In theory, the philosophy taught in the proletarian State is identical with the ideology of the ruling Party.
  2. The Marxist-Leninist principle of unity of theory and practice requires philosophy to perform a dual function:
    - a) It has to be the theory on which all practical decisions of the Party are founded, and has to provide an ultimate justification for them, and
    - b) it has to be a powerful instrument for implementing these practical decisions, in organizing their acceptance by all concerned and in providing an effective foundation for successful propaganda.
- This - in short - is what philosophy should be according to Lenin and, in fact, this is what it had been for Lenin, under Lenin, and in Lenin's own thinking. In him the fusion of

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theory and practice was complete. His political decisions were based on the theoretical views which he held sincerely and seriously, and these theoretical views were used as a means to achieve the practical ends for which they seemed in Lenin's eyes to provide a theoretically unimpeachable justification. Never did he allow himself to voice a theoretical principle if this did not seem expedient for the achievement of a concrete political target. For instance, in 1906 he kept quiet about his dissension from Bogdanov's "empirionomistic" philosophy as long as - for Party organizational reasons - it was necessary for him to work hand in hand with Bogdanov. As soon as this political alliance became obsolete and also in order to attract Plochanov, he attacked Bogdanov on the philosophical front with a violence of language which has ever since been the dominant tone of Communist philosophical writing.

3. After the 'dictatorship of the proletariat' became established in Russia, and the Communist Party took control of all scholarship and educational activities, demands for 'the unity of theory and practice' were put to those academic circles of professional philosophers who were responsible for the development and propagation of Party ideology in the Soviet State. The history of philosophical debates and the personal fates of many professional philosophers in the Soviet

3/Union,

- 3 -

Union, in the course of the last forty years, demonstrate that this unity - which was so naturally and easily achieved in the person of Lenin - has never been emulated, and perhaps could never have been applicable to the activities of professional philosophers. They were on the one hand the repositories of highly-specialized knowledge, pundits to whom the sources and origins of the ideology of the rulers of the Soviet State should be more familiar than to anybody else. But, on the other hand, in an overwhelming majority of cases they were not directly concerned with the work of the policy-making strata of the Party hierarchy with whom all practical decisions rested. In the late twenties and thirties, in the struggle between the mechanists and the Deborinists, the professional philosophers had to learn by bitter experience all the dangers of becoming (more often than not inadvertently) purveyors of ammunition for possible and actual deviationists. The lessons of the pogrom of mechanists, and the eclipse of Deborin in the early thirties were never forgotten by them. Philosophers became timid and restricted themselves mostly to epitomising the works of Lenin and Stalin by copious and uncritical quotation. Appeals from high official places to show 'initiative and boldness', to produce theoretically well-founded textbooks of dialectical materialism, failed to restore their self-confidence.

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Many of them, particularly the intellectually inclined, turned to the study of historical problems of a non-controversial character.

4. Such was the atmosphere in which a collective three-volume work on/History of Philosophy was produced and published at the beginning of the war under the general editorship of G.F. Aleksandrov. At about this time, the same Aleksandrov produced a textbook on the History of Western Philosophy for university students. The first drafts of the book are said to have appeared before the war. The first edition of the complete work was published by the Higher Party School, and had a restricted circulation. Aleksandrov's critics implied that this was done in order to keep the book out of general circulation and to protect it from criticism during the statutory six months' period preceding presentation for the award of a Stalin prize. The high position of the author in the Party (Head of the Central Committee Directorate for Agitation and Propaganda) secured the most favourable auspices for this publication, the first reviews in the Soviet Press were most flattering, and the Ministry of Education recommended the book for use in the universities and Institutes of Higher Education. Then, at the start of the period with which we concern ourselves (1946) in this paper, there came a reaction which not only reversed the situation with regard to Aleksandrov's book but

5/determined the

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determined the whole further development of academic work on philosophy in the Soviet Union for the next ten years. It appears that the publication of the third volume of the collective work on/History of Philosophy had already caused some discontent in the Central Committee, and there had been a decision pointing out the shortcomings of this book. Aleksandrov, obviously relying on his strong position in the Party, disregarded this criticism and had his book published.

5. This caused a direct intervention by Stalin to which Aleksandrov himself refers, and the Central Committee ordered a discussion on the merits of Aleksandrov's book to be held by the Institute of Philosophy of the Academy of Sciences. There is no published record of this first discussion in the summer of 1946, and the way it was staged only increased the suspicions which had already existed in the Central Committee. No stenographic minutes were taken, and not all those who wanted to take part in the debates were allowed to speak. Accusations were made that the speakers had been handpicked by Aleksandrov himself and included a number of his friends who had already outgized his book in print. And yet those who took part in the discussion were equally divided in their opinion on the merits of the book.

6. The heavy guns of the Central Committee were therefore brought to bear on the Institute of Philosophy, and an

6/unprecedented

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unprecedented public philosophical discussion, on an all-Union scale, was organized in June, 1947 in Moscow. It was presided over by A.A. Zhdanov, who directed the debates for ten days. Moreover, he himself delivered an oration which was the official expression of the Central Committee's views, not only on Aleksandrov's book itself, but on the whole situation on "the philosophical front" in the Soviet Union. The record of the proceedings of this fantastic gathering was published as the first volume of the new philosophical magazine: "Questions of Philosophy". The discussion, in which more than forty speakers took part (over forty did not speak but their contributions were later published in the proceedings), reflected many sides of the academic conditions prevailing in the Soviet Union immediately after the war. And yet the reading of this record leaves us guessing as to the purpose for which this unprecedented show was staged. Many of those who attended, and even some of those who took part in the discussion, obviously had no idea what it was all about. One of the speakers, a woman Professor of Philosophy from Odessa, made the unchallenged and surprising statement that she had not been able to get the book under discussion from libraries or bookshops and had had to borrow it from friends! Another speaker referred to the earlier discussion of Aleksandrov's book as if it had been about some shameful secret, an unavowable illness which had befallen

7/philosophical

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philosophical circles. The fact that no-one attempted openly to defend the views criticized by Zhdanov, and that Aleksandrov himself meekly accepted all that was said against him (and much of it was rather humiliating) and indeed masochistically embroidered on it, only makes it more difficult to find out what this disease really was.

7. It has sometimes been said that the attack on Aleksandrov's book was only part of the anti-cosmopolitan campaign headed by Zhdanov, and that it is comparable with the latter's criticism of the Leningrad literary magazine in 1946: in other words, according to this view the philosophical discussion was only part of the extreme anti-western campaign which culminated before Stalin's death in the frame-up of the doctors and the anti-semitic witch-hunt. The proceedings of the debate in 1947 do not quite bear out such an interpretation. In the case of the writers there had been victims (Zoshchenko and Akhmatova, for example), but some of the philosophers who came under criticism were treated more leniently. Aleksandrov himself was removed from the Directorate of Agitation and Propaganda and was appointed Head of the Institute of Philosophy of the Academy of Sciences. Under Malenkov he became Minister of Culture of the U.S.S.R., from which office he was removed after Malenkov's resignation from the Chairmanship of the Council of Ministers. The tenor of Zhdanov's indictment against Aleksandrov indicates that he was not so much out for the liquidation of

8/a heresy

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a heresy as for instilling more courage and fighting spirit among the professional philosophers so that they might become worthy representatives of Leninist/Stalinist orthodoxy.

8. Zhdanov's speech, as it appears in print, is divided into two parts. The first deals with the shortcomings of Aleksandrov's book; the second with the situation on the philosophical front. Aleksandrov's book is, indeed, a most undistinguished concoction which invites the kind of sarcastic criticism so lavishly poured out on it by Zhdanov. The ideologically important part of this criticism is, however, that dealing with Aleksandrov's treatment of early Marxism. In his introductory chapter Aleksandrov paid the inevitable lip-service to the principle of party-mindedness in philosophy. Applied to this History of Philosophy, this principle would require Aleksandrov to show how changes in philosophical ideas were brought about by the process of class struggle, whenever this became acute, as the result of changes in the basic economic and social structure of society. Zhdanov pointed out in his criticism that whenever Aleksandrov tried to apply this method of historical interpretation he failed, either because he stuck to generalities and did not explain how specific social conflicts determined the emergence of one or another philosophical theory; or because he lacked the necessary historical knowledge and misinterpreted the basic conditions. And so he was forced to

9/fall back

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fall back, according to Zhdanov, on the old-fashioned bourgeois method of expounding philosophical development as an association of ideas in which new theories emerge as the result of development or criticism of old ones without direct relation to the underlying process of class struggle. This inconsistency between the principle of historical research proclaimed in Aleksandrov's introductory chapter, and the actual exposition of philosophical development in his book culminated in the greatest error of all when Aleksandrov explained the formation of Marx's and Engels' philosophical views as part of such an association of ideas. According to Aleksandrov, the philosophy of Marx and Engels appears to be the crowning stage of all "progressive thinking" in the preceding centuries. In this connection Zhdanov remarks: "The vague wording of the author's definitions glosses over the enormous revolutionary significance of the discovery of genius made by Marx and Engels; while emphasising the connection of Marx with his predecessors in philosophy, the author fails to demonstrate that with Marx a totally new period in the history of philosophy came into being, a period in which philosophy became a science for the first time.....". Zhdanov blames the author of the textbook for quoting Chernyshevsky to the effect that in our days we should look upon our historical predecessors with "respect and almost filial love", recognizing the greatness of their genius and the noble character of their

10/teaching



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teaching which contains the nucleus of our own ideas. Zhdanov contrasted this with Lenin's attitude towards those who did not share his materialistic views. "Lenin himself", Zhdanov went on, "has - as is well known - not spared his opponents. Lenin saw in every attempt to gloss over the contradictions between philosophical schools, and to reconcile them, nothing but a tactical manoeuvre of reactionary professorial philosophy. How, after that, could comrade Aleksandrov come out in his textbook as a preacher of toothless vegetarianism towards philosophical opponents and definitely pay tribute to professorial quasi-objectivism, whereas Marxism was born, grew up, and became victorious in a merciless struggle against all representatives of idealist trends?"

9. According to Zhdanov, Aleksandrov's errors and shortcomings were not merely the result of his personal ideological slackness. The whole position on the philosophical front - "which reminds one much more of a quiet backwater, or a camping site far away in the rear of the battlefield" - seemed to him unsatisfactory. The lagging behind of the philosophers was only part of the general ideological slowing-down which had been severely criticised and condemned by the Central Committee. Zhdanov went out of his way to analyse the "subjective" reasons for this 'lagging behind'. These subjective reasons he saw in the dictatorial way Aleksandrov was directing the work of the

11/philosophical

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philosophical front, in his intolerance towards criticism, in his reliance on a narrow circle of collaborators and admirers of his own talent. Zhdanov reproached the philosophers, especially those of the younger generation, for not having grasped sufficiently the foundation of Marxism/Leninism and for having failed to detect the remnants of the influence of bourgeois ideology.

10. It is clear that Zhdanov was disingenuous in his attempt to reduce the causes of the ideological slackness of the first post-war years to such "subjective" factors. We must bear in mind that during the war the Party had to soft-pedal its own propaganda in order not to antagonize elements in the country who were ready to co-operate in the common war effort from patriotic or other motives. Among those motives was the consciousness of fighting in defence of a common inheritance with the West which was threatened by Nazi/Fascist barbarity. This sense of solidarity with the "progressive forces" of the West was a new factor, and Zhdanov himself testified to its importance as far as the younger generation of party ideologists was concerned. For them the days of militant communism seemed to belong to the past, and to be overshadowed by the new solidarities which were justly believed to have contributed to victory in the war. Perhaps, some of those younger people hoped that the same forces of solidarity which helped to win

12/the war

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the war would now be used in the enormous task of reconstruction. The demand that philosophers should stop commenting and epitomizing basic works of Marxism/Leninism, and should not neglect scholarship, detailed study of philosophy and "monographic work", came from such circles. It was sharply rebuked by Zhdanov. "Of course," he said, "the creative work of a philosopher must be the cornerstone of his activities but that does not mean that he should wind up his work as commentator or - better say - his popularising work. This is also needed by our people." It was certainly needed at that time by Stalin, the Central Committee, and Zhdanov himself.

11. Zhdanov went out of his way to rekindle the flame of revolutionary fervour in the motley gathering of professional teachers of philosophy whom he was addressing. He admitted that the days of revolutionary class struggle were over in Soviet society. This, however, should not lead to a stagnation in the ideological field. Anticipating a doctrine proclaimed by Stalin in his work condemning the Marxist heresy, Zhdanov said that progress in Soviet society does not proceed by way of class struggle and cataclysms as it does under capitalism. The real moving force in Socialist society takes the shape of criticism and self-criticism - "a powerful instrument in the hands of the Party. This is, without any doubt, a new kind of movement, a new type of development, a new dialectical

13/law."

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law." It falls to the philosophers to take an active, and indeed a leading part in it. Zhdanov took it on himself to demonstrate how old Leninist methods of fighting idealist philosophers should be revived. Idealist philosophy, he said, had led whole nations to Fascism. Now it stands before us in all its revolting, dirty essence, reflecting the whole depth, baseness, and filth of bourgeois degeneration. Soviet philosophers were invited to expose and denounce the slanders and obscurantist campaigns of such debased thinkers as present-day Thomists, existentialists, and bourgeois scientists who were supplying fideism and popery with new arguments. "Take for instance the teaching of the English astronomer Eddington on the physical constants of the world which leads you directly to the pythagorean mysticism of numbers, and evolves from mathematical formulae such essential constants of the world as the apocalyptic number 666; take for instance the Kantian sophistry of contemporary bourgeois atomic physicists who proclaim a freedom of the will for electrons, and attempt to represent matter as a certain conglomeration of waves and similar devilry." There is no limit to Zhdanov's extravaganzas as far as denunciation of bourgeois philosophy is concerned. It is according to him but a servant of 'atom-dollar democracy' dressed up in the shattered armour of obscurantism and popery. In their struggle against Marxism bourgeois philosophers have aligned themselves with gangsters, scoundrels, spies and

14/criminals

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criminals, and so on, and so on. Zhdanov concluded with an impassioned appeal to philosophers to keep their powder dry and to remain worthy of the epoch of Lenin and Stalin, 'the epoch of our people - the victorious people.'

12. The obligatory applause, stormy and long-lasting, could hardly conceal the dismay caused by Zhdanov's oration in the audience. Aleksandrov himself showed such dismay less than any of the others. He was given the last word in the discussion and this he used to endorse every accusation brought against him by Zhdanov. He admitted that he had failed to make proper use of his study of Marxism and Leninism when writing his book and that he had failed as an organizer of the Institute of Philosophy. Aleksandrov ended by promising to improve, provided the Central Committee did not refuse its support and guidance to the leaders of the philosophical front. Aleksandrov evidently had some reason to feel confident and one is tempted to think that the real fight at the discussion may have concerned some other personalities. In a speech made after Zhdanov, P.F. Yudin (Head of the Institute of Philosophy, 1938 - 1944) throw some light on what was going on behind the scenes. He began sarcastically by saying that after Zhdanov's speech it had become easier for people to find out what they should say, although some of them might find it difficult to re-arrange their ideas in three minutes. The villain of the piece was, according to Yudin, Fedoseev. It

15/was he who,

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was he who, with the connivance of Professors Kruzhkov and Vasetsky, had sabotaged the first discussion on Aleksandrov's book held under the auspices of the Institute of Philosophy. Yudin attacked them for lack of principles and for building up a clique. Yudin accused Fedoseev of concentrating power in his hands, and of misusing his position for influencing appointments. He said: "Take, for instance, the Chair of Philosophy of the Academy of Social Sciences - it is in the hands of Comrade Fedoseev. If the Chair shows unsatisfactory work you have to complain to the Administration of Propaganda - that is to Comrade Fedoseev; if you write an article for the Bolshevik and find yourself in disagreement with the Managing Director, Comrade Fedoseev, you must complain to the Administration of Propaganda - again to Comrade Fedoseev." All that Fedoseev had to answer to these attacks (in a speech he was not allowed to make at the Conference, but which was published in the proceedings), was that Yudin himself was guilty of the very same shortcomings of which he accused others. It was Yudin who pressed for the publication of the third volume of the collective History of Philosophy, tainted by the same errors as Aleksandrov's book; and it was Yudin who hoped to get the Stalin Prize awarded to it.

13. Yudin's intervention in the debate lifts a corner of the curtain which conceals from us a kind of conspiracy between the leading specialists in philosophy which had aroused

16/the anger

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the anger of Stalin and of the Central Committee. The dejected surrender of those people to the criticisms meted out to them at the Conference of June, 1947 should not let us forget that they were the very people who had created the situation which led to the interference of the Central Committee, Zhdanov and Stalin himself. It should not be forgotten that they had shown considerable stubbornness in the face of repeated warnings, and pursued for a time a line of policy which was known to be frowned on by the supreme masters. Their protestations, that they had done so inadvertently through lack of guidance from the Central Committee, through slackness or personal inability to find the right way (i.e. the one approved from above) lacked sincerity. People like Fedoseev and Aleksandrov, even if at that time not sufficiently influential to determine the Party line, were close enough to the ruling circles to know what this line was. We are entitled, therefore, to ask two questions: i) What were they after? ii) What or who encouraged them on their path and what were they relying upon when risking the displeasure of the Supreme Leadership?

14. However difficult it may be to find a satisfactory answer to these questions, this must be attempted. We must, at least, have a working hypothesis to understand the complicated situation on the ideological front in 1947, and to grasp its far-reaching implications for succeeding years, including the current one.

17/15.

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15. Proceeding by the method of elimination, we must first of all exclude the possibility that the aims pursued by the "philosophical clique" were anti-communist or, in any way, directed against the regime. In spite of many unpleasant things Zhdanov had to tell them, the tone of his statement in June, 1947 was quite different from the one he adopted in criticizing certain authors and poets a year before. There was no imputation of anti-soviet motives in his attack on Aleksandrov and company, but merely a reproach for their inability to fulfil the task which the Central Committee expected philosophers to perform. In saying so, Zhdanov can hardly have been quite candid. If anything, he himself was a formidable administrator, and had the philosophers indeed been inept nincompoops, he would have known how to deal with them and how to attract more competent people to the important work of agitation and propaganda. In his criticisms Zhdanov himself "glossed over" - to use his own favourite term - the real offence of the accused. He did not tell them what they were expected to be, and what part they should play in Soviet society, but he did not denounce them for wanting to play a different role and did not expose what this role had been in their conception in the days preceding the philosophical discussion of 1947. It is only by implication from his own speech and from the fortuitous revelation of a document in 1952 (December 24th) in Pravda, that we can reconstruct the secret aims

- 18/pursued

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pursued by the philosophical clique before 1947. That year saw the meteoric rise of Voznesensky who became a member of the Politburo about the time when the philosophical discussion took place. It is possible that at least one of the philosophers who came under criticism, Fedoseev, sincerely supported Voznesensky. Two years later, in 1949, Fedoseev together with Aleksandrov and Novohuk, was dismissed from the editorial board of Bolshevik for having been supporters of Voznesensky and for having propagated the views expressed by him in his book "The Military Economics of the U.S.S.R. during the War for the Fatherland," but that was, of course, after the fall and disappearance of Voznesensky, the circumstances of which have not been revealed even now when Voznesensky is, at least partly, rehabilitated. It is, however, significant that the decree of the Central Committee of 14th July, 1949 severely reprimanding Fedoseev and dismissing him and his associates from the Bolshevik, follows closely the line of criticism directed against them at the philosophical discussion. Here again they are accused of building up a clique, of having alienated themselves from Party life, of relying on a narrow group of authors, and of censoring the texts of articles sent to Bolshevik without the knowledge of their authors - all accusations which were

19/voiced

voiced from various quarters at the Philosophical Conference of 1947. \*

16. In 1947, however, Voznesensky was still in power and no-one could be attacked openly for supporting him. It is nevertheless possible that the criticism of the philosophers by Zhdanov was really directed against Voznesensky, and was to serve as a warning to him. There is no necessity, however, to make such an assumption. The philosophers were at fault because of their own behaviour, although this behaviour might have been influenced by what Voznesensky had been doing when he was the Head of the Gosplan. In that position Voznesensky showed a tendency to emancipate himself from the control of the Politburo, basing his pretensions on his special knowledge and understanding of economic techniques and on his achievements in the administration of Soviet war economy. Under Voznesensky, the Gosplan organization presumed to play the role of an independent "advisor" of the supreme Leadership on economic questions, and its advice was to be based on its special knowledge of economic necessities and its skill in solving economic problems

20/(documented)

\* Note: The key document - a Resolution of the Central Committee dated 14th July, 1949 - was quoted in an article by Suslov on 24th December, 1952. In this article Suslov attacks Fedoseev for his contributions to Izvestiya of 12th and 21st December of the same year. The Resolution of the Central Committee of 1949 also contains a stricture on Shepilov who was at that time accused of having recommended Voznesensky's book as a textbook for Secretaries of District Party Committees and for propagandists.

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(documented by its ability to organize war-time production) far more than on the light and guidance emanating from the supreme authority. It looks as if the philosophers around Aleksandrov and Fedoseev wanted a similar status for their work in the field of ideology to the one Voznesensky wanted in the field of economic activities. Aleksandrov, and the authors of the third volume of the History of Philosophy, pretended to introduce young people, most of whom were to become party propagandists, journalists, and ideologists, to the highly specialized knowledge of the origins of Marxist theory and of its historical antecedents. The philosophical contents of their writings are naive and primitive to a degree, but they did introduce their readers to a new world of specialized knowledge lying beyond the direct control of those who are not specialists. And Aleksandrov and his friends did claim a monopoly of this teaching, just as Voznesensky did in his field, to the exclusion of criticism by Party rank and file.

17. Such pretensions to become Gurus on questions of philosophy were quite intolerable from the point of view of the Party leadership. However orthodox and conformist the teachings of such philosophers may have been, they had to be kept under direct Party control. The Central Committee - for which, at that time, we should read "Stalin" - could not surrender the build-up of the ideological foundation of

21/Communism

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Communism to any group of specialists whose authority was based on their own scholarly achievements and academic position, instead of being derived from an investiture by the Supreme Leader. In other words, the Party leadership was not prepared to accept the existence of a College of ideological high-priests and this - we must assume - was exactly what the pretensions of the philosophical clique amounted to. It is possible that the philosophers were encouraged to put forward their claim for an exclusive leading position in their special field by Voznesensky, who was a member of the Politburo. The support they gave him in his own similar pretensions in the economic field might well have been reciprocal. But they were the first to burn their fingers; they climbed down and were forced to a humiliating surrender, whereas Voznesensky possibly resisted and was broken. Zhdanov's position is particularly interesting in this connection. While carrying out Stalin's instructions for a cleansing operation on the philosophical front, he seems to have made it possible for the philosophers to bend and not to break under the storm. When the Voznesensky affair came up he was already buried in the Kremlin wall and Malenkov was too cautious to protect the philosophers. They suffered a minor defeat, but lived to return to power and glory after Stalin's death.

18. In analysing the policy of the leading philosophers before the discussion of 1947 we have been forced to rely on

22/conjecture

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conjecture. There is no such necessity with regard to the role which was assigned to them. This role was clearly stated by Zhdanov and further elaborated by the philosophers themselves. They were to become obedient executors of the Party leadership directives, and were to apply themselves to the establishment of a favourable atmosphere among intellectuals for the acceptance of the general policy dictated by the leadership. They were to supply theoretical arguments in support of such decisions as the leadership might take, and not to suggest what these decisions should be according to their own reading of the fundamental texts of Marxism/Leninism. As far as the history of philosophy was concerned they were to accept the thesis that all philosophers in a non-socialist society were conscious and unconscious instruments in the hands of the ruling classes, i.e. elements of the superstructure designed to maintain the supremacy of these classes in the social order. All non-marxist philosophy was to be treated as an instrument in the hands of the enemies of communism and, therefore, as obscurantist and war-mongering. Beyond that, the philosophers should assist the Party in its struggle against the survival of bourgeois mentality in Soviet society itself, and intensify its fight against religious prejudices and religion in general. In particular, the philosopher should keep a watch on activities in the various branches of science. Whatever the achievements of scientists in their particular field might be, they

23/are apt

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are apt to fall into error when generalizing. The philosophers should become the watch-dogs of communism, attacking all possible ideological deviations which might emerge from the general conceptions of modern physics, physiology, biology, genetics and the humanities.

19. As far as the organization of the philosophical world was concerned, Zhdanov demanded that wider strata of Party workers should become associated with it and that no academic body, such as the Institute of Philosophy of the Academy of Science, should have the monopoly of ideological policy. This last demand gave a kind of populist democratic slant to the criticism voiced against Aleksandrov and company during the discussion. It must also be seen in conjunction with the re-organization of Agitprop (the ideological section of the Central Committee Secretariat) which took place about the same time. Aleksandrov and several philosophers were removed from this section. The philosophers then did indeed lose their monopoly of ideological policy, which now passed to professional apparatchiki. The change in leadership soon became apparent - possibly because the new party bureaucrats felt less sure of themselves in the ideological field than had the professional ideologists. At any rate, as will be seen, the party leadership did not thereafter very closely supervise and guide the activities of the Central Philosophical Institutes. It did, of course, exercise control through the medium of the party

24/organizations

- 24 -

organizations within those Institutes. But to a large extent the leading philosophers were left to their own resources for finding out which way the wind was blowing, and for learning to comply with the whims of the supreme leadership by a method of trial and error.

25/CHAPTER II

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## CHAPTER II

20. The execution of the programme, clearly defined in Zhdanov's historic speech presented greater difficulties than the willing philosophers ever expected. It seems that they were given far too great a freedom in selecting the best way to implement Zhdanov's instructions; in other words, they seem to have been given enough rope to hang themselves. Aleksandrov, after having confessed to everything of which he was accused, was appointed Head of the Institute of Philosophy of the Academy of Sciences, and was co-responsible ex officio for the contents of the magazine Voprosy Filosofii (the first issue of which was for July, 1947) of which Kedrov became chief editor. Zhdanov had required the philosophers to become watchdogs in all ideological matters resulting from the activity of scientists and scholars in their special fields. Kedrov's method was, accordingly, to commission prominent specialists in those branches of knowledge where ideologically controversial ideas had recently clashed, in order to reconcile these ideas with the official Marxist/Leninist/Stalinist doctrine.

21. By 1947 an ideological crisis had broken out in a number of fields of scientific enquiry. Einstein's remoulding of fundamental ideas in physics had already preoccupied Lenin, and required a re-orientation of official ideas of physics, because the founders of Marxism had worked out their attitude

26/on the basis



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on the basis of a now-antiquated Newtonian conception. Bohm's and Heisenberg's contributions to quantum mechanics and, in particular, the physicalists' indeterminism of Heisenberg, required a special treatment and adaptation to official and old-fashioned Marxist determinism. In the field of biology Lysonko had already launched his vicious attack on the classical theories of heredity, which were shared by the majority of well-established authorities on biology in the Soviet Union, and had given his support to the agricultural and horticultural methods of Michurin and Vilyams. In philology, the controversy between the followers of Marr and the exponents of the more orthodox theory of language was reaching a climax. Kedrov, as editor, published in Voprosy Filosofii a number of articles in which the authors, while paying lip-service to the wisdom of official dialectical materialism, tried to show that certain achievements of western science in the last thirty years were reconcilable with the official Marxist view. "The nature of physical knowledge" was discussed by M.L. Markov, and Shmalgauzen, the veteran authority on biology, in an article entitled "The Concept of the Whole in Modern Biology", attacked Michurin's and Lysonko's positions.

22. The disciples of Bolshevik doctrine were not slow to react. Maximov exposed the "hypocrisy of Markov's attitude", and demanded a much stronger condemnation of Einstein and the

27/Copenhagen

- 27 -

Copenhagen School in physics. The shortcomings of Einstein and of his followers lay not only in the philosophical consequences which they themselves and idealist philosophers drew from their theories. There were, according to Maximov, mistakes in the physical theories themselves. The attack on the Institute of Philosophy and on the editorial board of Voprosy Filosofii was well organized by the Party. On 7th December, 1949 Pravda published an editorial demanding a philosophical magazine with a "fighting spirit". This was preceded by an all-union conference of Directors of the Chairs of Marxism and Leninism and Philosophy in Institutes of Higher Education, which was opened by the then Minister of Higher Education of the U.S.S.R., Kaftanov (see his article in Bolshevik, No 12 for 1949, pages 22 - 23). The same failings as those already mentioned in the discussion of 1947 were listed once more:- lack of fighting spirit in the criticism of western ideologies, in particular of cosmopolitanism; academic approach to ideological questions; objectivism in the exposure of philosophies alien to Marxism; a detached and dispassionate attitude to current problems raised by the progress of the building of communism in the Soviet Union. The failure to support the Michurin movement in biology at the very height of its struggle against Weismannism and Morganism was mentioned as an instance of such shortcomings. It was also said that no lead had been given by philosophers

28/in the

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in the struggle for materialism in physics. In other words, it was alleged that the directing bodies of the 'philosophical front' had not learned the lessons of Zhdanov's speech of 1947.

23. It is surprising that after such devastating criticism coming two years after Zhdanov's admonition, Aleksandrov still managed to keep his position as Director of the Institute of Philosophy at the very time when he was ousted, together with Fedoseev, from the editorial board of Bolshevik. Perhaps the reason is that even at that time the Academy of Sciences possessed a certain degree of independence, and it was less easy to dismiss their officials than those who were working directly in the Party apparatus or under the Ministry of Higher Education. However, the Editor in Chief of Voprosy Filosofii, Kedrov, was replaced by Chesnokov, and the articles which Kedrov had published in the first five issues of the magazine were declared inadequate and insufficient. The blurb of the magazine under the new editorship (issue N° 3 of 1948, which did not go to press until June, 1949) announced that it pursued the aim of active and uncompromising struggle against the philosophy of bourgeois reaction; against bourgeois objectivism; for Lenin's principles of party-mindedness in philosophy; and for militant materialism.

24. The philosophers were obviously hard pressed by this Party criticism, which came at the very time when the anti-cosmopolitan campaign was at the height of its fury.

29/A number

- 29 -

A number of philosophers came in for sharp criticism of their Party work in the resolution of the Central Committee of the Party, quoted in Chapter I. Their reaction to the attacks and the dangers which beset them is typical of the technique of political struggle of that period. The philosophers registered the criticism meted out to them, and recognized their shortcomings in humble public admission of guilt. They even joined the Lysenko front in a number of articles denouncing Mendelism. They revised Markov's arguments and denounced, in an article by corresponding Academician Vul, Markov's interpretation of the quantum theory. Vul declared a merciless war on physicalist idealism, and proclaimed that the conscious application of the methods of dialectical materialism was speeding up the development of physics and helping Soviet physicists to achieve the targets put before them "by our great leader Comrade Stalin". But all this was of little consequence. Lysenko had already triumphed after the discussion on biology in the summer of 1948. His opponents were silenced and disappeared from circulation. Physicists, even when accused of cosmopolitanism and idealism, had a natural protection because they were indispensable for the development and digestion of nuclear physics, and could avoid being drawn into ideological discussions. The philosophers found a safe way to protect themselves against accusations of slackness by raising the banner of Stalinism as the great philosophical revolution of our time. Two hundred

30/and

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and seventy-three pages out of three hundred and thirty-four of the second issue of Voprosy Filosofii in 1950 were dedicated to the praise of Stalin for his great work as a leader and teacher who carried on the immortal work of Lenin, as the great master of Marxism and Leninism, as the leader of the Party who had solved the problems of historical materialism during the great war for the Fatherland, who had worked out the principle of socialist competition as the moving force in the development of Soviet society, and even as a leading marxist epistemologist.

25. At the same time, the philosophers took a lead in the new ideological struggle of Marxism. The biological discussion of 1948 seemed to provide a pattern for a militant, aggressive policy. These discussions had shown that a theory professing to be radically marxist could win the support of the supreme authority even against the opposition of the best-established authorities in a special branch of knowledge. It looked pretty safe to back a horse in another field which would be running under the same colours as Lysenko. An opportunity to give such backing arose when the struggle between Marxist and conventional linguists took a sharper turn in 1949.

Voprosy Filosofii, backed the Marxists right from the beginning. Voprosy Filosofii, in its first issue edited by Chesnokov in 1949, published an article by Nikol'sky and Yakovlev - "Basic Principles of the Materialist Theory of Language of N. Ya. Marr". In it the authors gave some biographical details on Marr, and

31/expounded

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expounded the principles of his theory. The article concluded with the words: "the new theory of language of Marr and of his followers, based on the teaching of Marx/Engels/Lenin/Stalin, is a powerful weapon in the struggle for Marxism/Leninism, for dialectical and historical materialism, against idealist pseudo-science in the field of linguistics".

26. Certain points in this article should be noted at once. In the first line both authors link the theories of Marr with Stalin's own ideas on the development of language and, where necessary, correct Marr's sanguine expectations of the emergence of one common human language in socialist society in accordance with Stalin's conception. While Marr expected all languages to merge into one under Communism, Stalin, in his article - "The National Question and Leninism" - distinguished two successive stages after the forthcoming inevitable victory of socialism. Stalin wrote: "In the first period of world dictatorship by the proletariat, after the cessation of national oppression, formerly oppressed nations will flourish and develop and so will their languages, and only in the second period of world dictatorship of the proletariat, when the world socialist economic system achieves a sufficient degree of strength and socialism penetrates the daily life of the nations ..... will national differences and languages begin to die off, giving place to a world language common to them all". Then Nikol'sky and Yakovlev, while recognizing

32/Academician

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Academician Meshchaninov as a faithful pupil and follower of Marr, criticized some of his theories, mainly those concerning the priority of syntax over morphology in linguistics, a point later made by Stalin himself. This shows that the Marrists, as represented in Voprosy Filosofii, were quite willing to modify the theory in compliance with the supreme party authority. Furthermore, the article is militant in its attacks on an objectivist attitude to reactionary, idealist, and bourgeois theories in linguistics. They are both "progressive and patriotic" in accusing bourgeois linguists of a tendency to assume the qualitative superiority of the so-called Indo-European languages, and especially the superiority of analytical languages, such as English, over synthetic, such as Russian. It thus looked as if the Marxist offensive had been well prepared all round and could safely rely on support from supreme authority.

27. And yet, something must have gone wrong right from the beginning. On 24th-27th January, 1950 long before Stalin's pronouncement on linguistics, a Scientific Conference dedicated to the eighty-fifth birthday, and the fifteenth anniversary of the death of Marr, took place in Moscow. It is reported on ten pages of small print in the third issue of Voprosy Filosofii for 1949 (the third issue for 1949 did not appear until the spring of 1950). The publishing of the minutes of the Linguistic Conference must have been done in haste,

33/and for some

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and for some special reason. This Conference was to assert the unchallenged authority of Marr - a true son of the Party of Lenin and Stalin - and of his theories, which were hailed as a product of the great October Socialist Revolution. The report in Voprosy Filosofii states that the participants of the Conference stressed in their papers the fact that the theories of Marr - based on the unshakable foundations of dialectical and historical materialism - are the sharpest ideological weapon in the struggle against bourgeois "idealist" linguistics which propagate reactionary and racial theories. The main speakers were Academician Meshchaninov, correspondent-Academician Sordyuchenko and Professor Chernodanov. All three speakers stressed the "party-mindedness" of Marr's work. Professor Serdyuchenko stated in his paper: "in solving the question of the emergence and development of national languages, Marr based himself completely on the fundamental works of Comrade Stalin dealing with the problems of the nationalities". And again: "for all the successes achieved, Soviet linguistics owe a debt of gratitude to the leadership of the great Communist Party of the Bolsheviks, and its leader of genius I.V. Stalin". 28. One can therefore safely say that the standard of subservience to Stalin in the initial stages of the Marxist campaign was not less than that in the Lysonko campaign, and that it should have satisfied the most stringent requirements

34/of Stalinist

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of Stalinist loyalty. There were, however, signs that the launching of the campaign had not gone through without a hitch. The hitch was to be found in the article by Nikolsky and Yakovlev in Voprosy Filosofii. The article was criticized hotly by Professor Chemodanov, and by a Comrade Yaroshevsky of the Institute of Philosophy, who accused the authors of "formalism", and of a conception of Marr's theory which he called "theoretically vitiated and politically noxious". The account of the meeting was followed by an editorial note in Voprosy Filosofii which, while continuing to support the Marxist campaign, condemned the article of Nikolsky and Yakovlev as containing serious mistakes, both factual and of principle. A feature of the proceedings at the conference was a private war waged by some Georgian linguists against others. Thus Comrades Glonti, Negrolidze, N. Gozalishvili, came out with a sharp criticism of another Georgian, Professor Chikobava, who soon was to be called to deliver the first blow against the Marxist campaign and Marr's scientific reputation in the all-Union discussion which was to be staged in Pravda in the summer of 1950.

29. The accusations against Nikolsky and Yakovlev are worded either in very general terms such as "formalism", or concerned with details of the rather abstruse theory of Marr on the origins of language in general. The politically noxious

35/character

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character of the article is merely asserted and not even exposed. It is therefore important to discover the real reason for the wrath of the authorities against this article which, as a whole, hardly differs in its political attitude from other Stalinist scientific contributions of the time. It would be futile to seek the errors of the two authors of the article in Voprosy Filosofii in anything they had or had not said about Marr's theoretical views. This had been said by various and more important people before their time and again and could hardly have aroused the attention, and certainly not caused the intervention of the supreme authority. And such an intervention must be assumed because it is otherwise inexplicable why so many Marxists tried to dissociate themselves from this article and because its authors were given no opportunity, and possibility did not even try, to defend themselves. Their mistake must have been something completely unmentionable, so that all criticism had to be cloaked in the vague accusation of "formalism" with the ominous warning of the political danger which the article represented. Voprosy Filosofii and the speakers at the conference mentioned a criticism of the article in Nauka i Zhizn, a popular scientific magazine. When one looks up this short critical note one finds nothing but a rather unfair presentation of the authors' views and a sarcastic comment on the extravagance of Marxist views. No indication of "political noxiousness" can be found there.

36/30.

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30. There is, however, an interesting passage in Nikol'sky and Yakovlev's article which was intended to establish Marr's reputation as a sympathizer of the revolutionary movement in Russia as far back as 1905. No Marrists have ever had recourse to this argument in favour of their idol in the subsequent discussion, and this subject was never mentioned in the final condemnation by Stalin in June, 1950. The relevant passage of the article in Voprosy Filosofii runs as follows: "But it is particularly important that N. Ya. Marr was not a scholar who had locked himself up in the sphere of "pure" science. In the conditions of Tsarist Russia he sincerely sympathized with the revolution. In 1905, in a "letter to the Caucasian youth", he declares: "power should be in the hands of the people" (there is a footnote to the article by Nikol'sky and Yakovlev quoting Marr's "letter" as published in the paper Rassvet, No<sup>s</sup> 209, 214 and 222 for 1905. The quotation is, as the footnote says, taken from a book by V.A. Mikhankova and Ya. Marr p.133, published in 1948 in Moscow-Leningrad). The Voprosy Filosofii article goes on to say that in the summer of 1905, Marr went to the Georgian province of Guriya and gave, in the paper Rassvet, an eyewitness account of revolutionary activities there. Marr is said to have declared himself an admirer of the Bolsheviks at these meetings, and to have roused the anger of the Mensheviks who criticized him in the Menshevik-controlled Iskra, No 111, of 29th April, 1905. Finally, in

37/a footnote

a footnote, the paper quotes a separate publication by N. Ya. Marr, entitled "From Gurian Observations and Impressions (on the question of the Baku Events)", published by Al. Arabidze, St. Petersburg, 1905, pages 24 and 25.

31. There can hardly be any doubt that it was precisely this reference to Marr's eye-witness accounts of the 1905 revolutionary events in Transcaucasia which stung the authorities. As has now been conclusively shown by Bertram Wolfe in "The Three Who made a Revolution", ever since the early thirties Stalin had begun to build up a legend about his own role in Transcaucasia. In this he was helped by Beriya, who published a faked biography of Stalin, and liquidated all eye-witnesses who would not corroborate the blatant falsifications which were required to glamorize the early days of the Supreme Leader. Naturally, Marr's eye-witness account contained no direct attack on Stalin's behaviour. He does not mention Stalin-Dzhughashvili-Koba at all, but that only made things worse for the authors of the article. Any direct reference to authentic original sources, without mention of the established authority, viz. Beriya, was a rash and foolish thing on the part of the contributors to Voprosy Filosofii, and it is quite natural that the Marrists were quick to dissociate themselves from the authors of the obnoxious and ill-timed attempt to recall to memory the revolutionary reminiscences of Marr.

38/The fact

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The fact that the Marxist and anti-Marxist war was particularly acute in Georgia itself confirms the hypothesis that the final verdict on Marr was connected with something he had seen and recorded on the 1905 revolution in Transcaucasia. It was mainly there that any eye-witness account of the true course of events, and the role of personalities, was to be wiped out completely by Beriya methods. Should Marr, as the Marxists wanted, have been proclaimed the supreme Marxist authority in a large field of human knowledge comprising linguistic history, pre-history, anthropology, archeology, ethnology and so on, he would have entered the pantheon of socialist Fathers whose earlier writings could not be suppressed for ever. Sooner or later the contradictions of Marr as an eye-witness of the 1905 revolution, and of Beriya's legend, might come to the fore and acquire dangerous importance. Stalin and Beriya could not tolerate this.

32. Stalin's condemnation of Marxism has often been explained as the reaction of a somewhat pedestrian sanity and commonsense against the extravaganzas of a brilliant but fantastic inventor of scientific hypothesis. It is, however, more in keeping with what we know of the character of Stalin to assume that the manifestation of sanity and commonsense in this case was prompted not by the merits or demerits of the theory which he criticized, but by the ulterior motive - always present in his mind - of building up the legend of a great

39/revolutionary

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revolutionary leader in 1905 whom he wanted to substitute for the real Dzhugashvili - an obscure and rather sordid Caucasian rebel with but little following in the masses.

33. Of course this real reason for Stalin's belated condemnation of Marxism could not be stated openly<sup>21</sup>. There is, however, sufficient evidence that it was the reference to Marr's writings on the Transcaucasian situation in 1905 and connected matters, which roused the supreme Leader's wrath. It is interesting

40/to note

\* Footnote: The practice of accusing publicly a delinquent of a crime he had not committed while concealing the one for which he is actually to be punished, had been established by Stalin at least as long ago as the great trials in the thirties. In the Bukharin trial, Bukharin was accused of all sorts of crimes he had never committed while the writing of a seditious letter to a friend abroad, which had been published in 1925 through an indiscretion and which can be proved to have been written by Bukharin, was not even mentioned at the trial although it was well known to all concerned. Stalin's touchiness on everything concerning his status and his activities before 1906 in Transcaucasia was well known; it must be left open whether the article by Nikol'sky and Yakovlev had been instigated in order to raise Stalin's wrath. The fact that the article was signed by two names hardly known to the general public and not by some prominent Marxist such as Meshchaninov or Chomdanov, makes it seem highly suspicious. Articles signed by a couple of youngish authors have frequently been used in order to evade responsibility even on the pages of *Voprosy Filosofii* itself. (Quite recently in the article by Nazarov and Gridneva, see Chapter IV). It may well, however, have been an innocent slip of the pen on the part of the authors which gave rise to the whole of the Marr affair. Somebody must, nevertheless, have drawn Stalin's attention to the danger such references to the early writings of Marr presented to his reputation. It is a fair guess that this might have been either Professor Chikobava who was suffering under the persecution of Georgian Marxists, or possibly somebody of the standing of Academician Vinogradov, whose serious work on linguistics was threatened by the growth of semi-literate Marxist charlatanism.

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to note that in quoting Iskra the authors of the fatal article in Voprosy Filosofii omitted to quote the name of the Bolshevik propagandist who attracted Marr's attention, and who was praised by him. Is it possible that this man - a certain Khtis-Tskaloba - had shared the fate of other eye-witnesses of the Transcaucasian events who, like Emukidze, Mdivani and many others (see Wolfe "Three Who Made a Revolution", Chapter 25) were eliminated? In any case, the article in Iskra of 24th September, 1905 ends with the assertion that "now as is well known the very odour of Leninism has disappeared from Guriya", and this was the text which the authors of the article, following Marr's biographer, Mikhankova, were inviting their leaders to consult!

34. Quoting Marr's articles of 1905 was even more dangerous. Marr was far less enthusiastic about the Bolshevik activities in Guriya than Mikhankova and the authors of the article pretend. In the same pamphlet which they quoted (Is Guriyskikh Nabludeni i Vpechatlenii, St. Petersburg, 1905), and which is a reprint of the articles in Rassvet, Marr criticizes the behaviour of Bolshevik agitators in Guriya, while giving a sympathetic account of the Guriyan revolutionary movement itself. He writes on page 26, describing a political meeting in a Guriyan village:

"The speaker criticized violently local public views, in particular federalist and autonomist ones.

41/In estimating

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In estimating then he showed a sharp Party bias. The orator's infatuation with the views of his Party went so far that he - although a Georgian - not only identified himself with the Russian Social Democrats but made the disavowal of all Georgian national elements or, at best, the complete ignoring of them, the basis of his own political Weltanschauung.

"Later I was told that the organizers of the meeting did not allow one of the dissenting orators to speak, although he was a member of the same Social Democrat Party. There can be no doubt that a certain censorship exists in Free Guriya. By the way, the speaker whom I mentioned, Khtis-Tskaloba, was reproached for gathering people in private houses instead of talking to them publicly because in this way one can, in secret, disseminate ideas which are dangerous for the people", etc.

35. But this is not all. The very reference to the Guriyan movement was singularly tactless in 1950. In 1904 the peasants in Guriya established a kind of independent republic of their own, ignored and boycotted the Russian imperial administration, established courts and administrative offices of their own, carried out a sort of land reform, challenged the authority of the ecclesiastics, reduced the "Church tax" and

42/defied

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defied the legal authorities in numerous and successful demonstrations. They were ruled by a revolutionary Committee, owing allegiance to the Batum Revolutionary Committee, consisting of Mensheviks. In the first edition of the Great Soviet Encyclopedia (1930) there is a more or less objective account of the Guriyan movement, a movement which was suppressed by military force after the 1905 revolution. In the new edition, started under the supervision of Boriya, this account was suppressed, and not even replaced by a revised version. We know from Stalin's writings (also quoted by Boriya in his book) that Stalin did not approve of the Guriyan movement, for he believed that the Guriyan peasants were particularly impervious to Bolshevik indoctrination. Under such conditions a revival of interest in the Guriyan movement in an article intended for general circulation was very much out of place.

36. Moreover, Marr's own part in the events in Transcaucasia preceding the 1905 revolution is far from unequivocal. He was a popular and influential figure in that region. He sympathized with national aspirations and was accused of doing so at that time. He was highly critical of socialist extremists, possibly even of mensheviks. In a contemporary pamphlet (Krestyanskoye Dvizheniye v Gruzii i Sotsial-Demokratiya, published in Moscow in 1906) a certain Shakhnasaryan quotes the same passage from Marr's pamphlet as does Mikhankova,

43/but adds

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but adds in a footnote on page 112:

"It is characteristic that those words have been used by the very same Marr who, being popular among the population, has shown himself an enraged enemy of the Movement together with the priest and Dean I. Rashvili who has been executed as a spy. He said that the heads of the Movement are youngsters who had received no education, he argued with the peasants to stop the Movement, threatening them with Siberia and the gallows, he described the Peter and Paul fortress and abused the Social Democrats, calling them "Traitors to the Motherland"."  
(Obrazovanie № 1, page 38, 1905)

37. So Marr was a well known figure at the critical time and a friend of a man whom the revolutionaries had executed. It is highly improbable that Stalin, who was at that time active in Transcaucasia, would not have heard of Marr and of the part he played in the events of those days. It is therefore significant that Stalin does not refer to them in his criticism of Marr. Even more to the point is the fact that after the unlucky attempt to recall Marr's revolutionary past in the article in Voprosy Filosofii this theme was dropped by the followers and by the opponents of Marrism, during the "discussion" in the pages of Pravda in the summer of 1950.

38. There is, however, one passage in Stalin's "Work of Genius" on "Marxism in Philology" in which we may well detect

44/an indirect

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an indirect allusion to the unfortunate passage in the Voprosy Filosofii article. "It is generally recognized," writes Stalin in his inimitable style, "that no science can develop and prosper without a clash of opinions and the freedom of criticism. This generally-recognized rule has been ignored and trampled on in the most unceremonious way. A closed group of infallible masters has been formed which, having protected itself from all possible criticism, began to act in an arbitrary and hooligan way." One would expect that Stalin would quote examples of this arbitrariness of the Marrists in dealing with their opponents before branding them for establishing an "Arakcheev" regime. And an example he actually quotes. But typically enough this example has nothing to do with the persecution of opponents, as we can see from the passage immediately following the preceding quotation: "To quote only one instance: the so-called "Baku course" (i.e. the lectures which Marr read in Baku in 1927 and which the author himself had rejected and republication of which he had forbidden) was re-published by order of the caste of those masters whom Comrade Meshchaninov calls the "pupils" of Marr, and was included in a number of textbooks recommended to students, without any reservation. This means that the confidence of the students was abused, and that they were presented with a rejected course as if it was a completely commendable textbook. Had I not been sure of the honesty of Comrade Meshchaninov and other workers on philology, I might have said that such behaviour amounts to sabotage."

45/39.

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39. The reference to the caste of philology pundits who would be accused of sabotage but for Stalin's personal trust in their honesty, is ominous. The instance of criminal activity, however, which has been chosen by Stalin to pillory the guilty is merely the publication without reservations of an earlier and rejected version of Marr's linguistic theories. Is that not, we should ask, the clearest way to drop a hint to the linguists that they should stop referring to Marr's works written long before 1927, and stop investigating a past with which nobody but such masters of the re-writing of history as Beriia should be concerned? In any case, the condemnation of Marr was final and radical. Stalin writes: "Having recognized 'some' of the mistakes of Marr, 'the pupils' of Marr - as it appears - intend to develop in the future Soviet philology on the basis of a corrected theory of Marr which they consider to be Marxist. Oh no! spare us the Marxism of Marr. Marr really wanted and tried to be a Marxist, but he did not succeed in becoming one: he was merely a simplifier and a vulgarizer of Marx, something like a proletkult and rapp-man."

40. It is clear from Stalin's words, that what he feared was not so much the theory or the various changing theories of Marr, about which he must have heard mostly from secondary sources, but the reputation of the man. It must be born in mind that the efforts of Marrists to establish a Marr-cult had

46/gonc

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gone rather far. There existed an archive of all Marr's unpublished works of which a partial catalogue was printed in the above-mentioned book by Mikhankova. This also was hardly a circumstance which would escape Stalin's attention. Such archives could easily have contained material bearing on events in Transcaucasia in 1903-1905 which for special reasons Stalin did not want to be touched by "unqualified" people.

41. The unfortunate initiative of Nikolsky and Yakovlev in the pages of Voprosy Filosofii and the subsequent development of the anti-Marrist campaign show clearly the political and extraneous motives for Stalin's interference in the linguistic discussion. The theoretical contents of his writings on this subject must be considered, therefore, as casual and accessory, as a kind of cover for the denunciation of Marr. Nevertheless they at once assumed great importance, because they provided philosophers and other theoreticians with a new text for commentary and speculation. Indeed, all philosophical activity in the Soviet Union from then on and up to the publication of Stalin's contribution to the economic theory of socialist society in 1952, centred on his anti-Marrist writings, which were hailed as a great step forward in the development of Marxist theory. We shall consider Stalin's remarks and their repercussions on ideological writing in the next chapter.

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CHAPTER III

42. Whatever reasons may have prompted Stalin to interfere in the linguistic debate of 1950, they have never been divulged either by him or by any of the numerous commentators in subsequent years, when the "work of genius" of the leader was discussed at all levels of the Soviet educational and propaganda system. At a special meeting of the Academy of Sciences the former Chief Editor of Voprosy Filosofii, Kedrov, could not refrain from pointing out that a considerable responsibility for launching the ill-fated Marrist offensive rested with the editorial board of Voprosy Filosofii, then under the chairmanship of Kedrov's successor, Chesnokov. The first anniversary of the publication of Stalin's pamphlet was celebrated by another meeting of philosophers as well as of linguists. At all these meetings, and in innumerable articles, the point was made that Stalin's remarks were a great contribution to Marxist theory. Indeed, the pamphlet affected Soviet ideological writing for the next three years as no other work had done since the October Revolution. The adulation of Stalin as the "greatest theoretician and scholar of our days" reached its apex in the commentaries on this work.

43. It would, however, be a mistake to consider Stalin's pronouncements of 1950 as a further turn of the screw towards the establishment of total uniformity and dogmatism in Communist

48/ideology

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ideology. Stalin's contribution was, on the contrary, a direct attack on Marxist dogmatism and on those whom he called "bookworms" (nachetohiki)\* and Talmudists. The latter, said Stalin, consider Marxism, the separate conclusions and formulae of Marxism, as a collection of dogmas which never change in spite of the changes in the conditions of development in society. They think that if they memorize these conclusions and formulae and quote them at every opportunity they will be able to solve all problems and hope that the conclusions and formulae which they have thus memorized will be useful to them at all times, in all countries, and in all circumstances of life." In place of this view of Marxism, based on the study of the letter but not the spirit, Stalin presents Marxism as "a science of the laws of development of nature and society, a science of the Revolution of the oppressed and exploited masses, a science of the victory of socialism in all countries, a science of building Communist society; as a science Marxism cannot be static. It does not recognize conclusions and formulae applicable to all epochs and periods and unalterable." And Stalin concludes: "Marxism is the enemy of all dogmatism."

49/44.

\* Note:

A "nachetohik" was a 'reader' in the small sects in Russia which had no properly established priesthood. He was responsible for the maintenance of the tradition of the sect and was always ready to answer a question on dogma by a more or less appropriate quotation from the scriptures or the sect's founders.

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44. This tirade cannot be regarded as an attack on Marr and his followers. The "bookworms and Talmudists" whom Stalin was attacking were the self-appointed High Priests of Marxism against whom Zhdanov had already thundered in 1947. They were the philosophers who were repeating Marxist formulae without taking into consideration the reflection which these formulae might cast on the day-to-day policies of Stalin's government. Such an attack on the specialists of Marxist theory, combined with denunciation of the "Arakcheev"\* regime in certain branches of science, and the proclamation of the necessity of free discussion in scientific matters, must have been welcome to all those scholars who found irksome the close control of their work by professional Marxist ideologists. Stalin made it clear that science and scientists were not at the mercy of such "bookworms and Talmudists", and that there was an appeal against them to the benevolent commonsense of the supreme ruler himself. For some of them the arbitrariness of the tyrant must have appeared more tolerable than the pedantic nagging of ignorant and self-important Marxist ideologists. The enthusiastic reception of Stalin's platitudinous pamphlet on linguistics might well be explained as an attempt by the

50/specialists

\* Note:

Arakcheev, a hated reactionary figure of the later years of the reign of Alexander I. He introduced agricultural military settlements.

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specialists in various branches of knowledge to secure their emancipation from the ideological control of the diehard ideologists and philosophers of official Marxism.

45. This, however, is only part of the general loosening of dogmatic rigidity which was caused by Stalin's contribution. Possibly far more important was the effect of his impromptu remarks on certain basic concepts of Marxism. These remarks became the object of endless discussion, and they led to an erosion of the formalized conception of the world and of society, which professional philosophers had worked out on the basis of the writings of Marx, Engels and Lenin as well as those of the earlier Stalin. Stalin's remarks deal with such fundamental Marxist concepts as the relation between basis and superstructure; the respective functions of antagonistic and non-antagonistic contradictions as factors of development; the sudden "jump" from a quantitative to a qualitative change; the emergence of new qualities; and finally, the prospects of revolutionary changes in the future.

46. The publication of Stalin's work on linguistics thus brought about a change, a certain easing of controls both for the victims of ideological regimentation and for those whose job it was to carry out this regimentation. The new mood found expression in a number of "discussions" on various general subjects connected with the foundations of

51/different

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different branches of knowledge, and their relation to the basic ideas of Marxism. In these discussions the representatives of specialized science became bolder in defence of their views against possible attack by Marxist diehards. It must be admitted that these discussions never developed into the controversial debates between specialists which occur in western academic circles. In the U.S.S.R. they were still vitiated by irrelevant comments on whether one point of view or another was in greater harmony with some casual remark on the subject by one of the four founders of Marxism/Leninism. The technique in such debates was to find a quotation which would expose the opponent as a deviationist. The answer to this attack would be to denounce it as Talmudism or "quotationism", i.e. the using of quotations out of context, and thus the discussion would go on inconclusively. This procedure was complicated by the introduction of the nationalist element. Any theoretical view which sought general acceptance or hearing could do so only by claiming to have its origins in Russia; otherwise it would have been decried as cosmopolitan or as implying a servile attitude to the West.

47. Some of these discussions were more or less formal, others developed in a less organized way in the philosophical and scientific periodicals. The principal ones were the discussions on the relation of formal logic to dialectics; the

52/discussions

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discussions on the later views of Einstein and on the significance of the quantum theory; on the role of art in social life; and on the significance and importance of Pavlov's physiological theories, in particular in their application to psychology. In these discussions the top representatives of theoretical Marxism took little part. But even for them the publication of Stalin's work on linguistics meant, in a sense, a loosening of the shackles. The discovery that such an important phenomenon in human activity as language cannot be classified as belonging either to the basis or to the superstructure of social life, came as a revelation to the traditional Marxist theoreticians.

48. The original Marxist text introducing the distinction between basis and superstructure is in the preface to the Critique of Political Economy. It states that the sum total of the circumstances of production (i.e. the circumstances of property holding within which the material powers of production operate) constitute the economic structure of society, the real basis on which a juridical and political superstructure is reared, and to which correspond determined forms of social consciousness. From this relatively narrow claim Marx goes on immediately to draw far-reaching and vague generalizations: "the mode of production of the material means of life conditions in general the social, political and spiritual process of living." Marx ends with another even vaguer and wider

53/generalization

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generalization: "It is not mass consciousness that determines their existence, but - on the contrary - their social existence that determines their consciousness." The dogmatic acceptance of this last generalization led Soviet ideologists of the '40s to believe that all cultural activities belong to the so-called superstructure.

49. As language was part of culture, there had never been much protest against Marx's classification of it as part of the superstructure. Stalin accused Larr and his followers of having confused the "mode of production of the material means of life" (of which Marx says that it conditions in general the social, political and spiritual processes of living) with the "material powers of production" (i.e. the actual techniques, the capital goods, the raw materials as well as the actual labour employed on them). Marx, according to Stalin, meant by "mode of production" nothing but the economic structure, i.e. "circumstances of property-holding", within which the material powers of production are operated. According to Stalin, only those elements of cultural human activity which are conditioned by a certain "mode of production", i.e. a certain economic structure of society, belong to the superstructure. Language is not conditioned by the economic basis whereas law, religion and State all are, both according to Stalin and to Marx, fully conditioned by it. It is not the

54/intention

intention of this paper to find out whether this restricted and limiting interpretation of Marx's text by Stalin is the correct one or whether Marr (and for that matter many other Marxists) were right in believing that the Marxist text had a wider significance. It should, however, be noted that anybody who had dared to challenge Stalin on a question of Marxist theory could have pointed out that Marx's generalization went much further than Stalin would admit, and that Marx preferred in this context his dictum about "existence determining consciousness" - a dictum which has certainly become the very basis of historical materialism.

50. Stalin, however, went even further in deviating from what he now called a vulgarized version of Marxism. He pointed out - and his admirers and adulators could not praise him enough for doing so - that the superstructure itself, while being fully determined in its origin by the economic basis of society, is by no means a passive phenomenon. It is active in strengthening the basis in which it has its origin and is, to a great extent, responsible for the continued existence of a basis even beyond the time at which it has ceased to fulfil its function as the most adequate system for the development of the production capacity of society. Indeed, according to Stalin, this action of the superstructure gains in importance with the advent of socialist society, in which ideology and

55/institutions

institutions are established by the conscious application of scientific Marxism. The part of these institutions as a regulating factor of production relations is overwhelming. This basic idea of the supremacy of politics over economics which Stalin expressed more and more explicitly as he went on revising Marxist ideas is also at the root of his view that no political revolution is possible after the establishment of the dictatorship of the working masses. The work on linguistics only hinted at Stalin's subsequent development of this idea and Stalin merely warned comrades not to be taken in by the theory of explosive changes leading to the emergence of new qualities. In his later work on Soviet economics Stalin explained with greater clarity how revolutions in a proletarian dictatorship are prevented and made unnecessary, and indeed superfluous, by the fact that social contradictions are being and will be solved by direct action of the Government. It is a safe assumption that this claim is based on the professed conviction that the only State machine which can prevent revolution is the one which makes use of the weapon of scientific Marxism.

51. The development of the theory of basis and superstructure is reflected in successive editions of the "Short Dictionary of Philosophical Terms" edited by Rozental and Yudin. In 1941, under the title "Basis and Superstructure",

56/the

the dictionary explains that "the means of production, that is the production forces and the production relations which correspond to them form the economic basis (foundation) of society." In this formula the short dictionary follows closely the text of the introduction to Marx's Critique of Political Economy. However, even in 1941 Rozenal and Yudin thought it necessary to warn their readers against the vulgar interpretation of this text by economists who could see in the superstructure only a passive consequence of economic conditions. The dictionary also points to the collectivization of agriculture in the Soviet Union as an instance of the reverse action of the superstructure upon the basis.

52. In the third edition (1952) of the dictionary the article is considerably enlarged. It states that in his work "Marxism and Questions of Linguistics" Stalin has "profoundly uncovered the essence and the inter-relations of the superstructure with economics". The importance of the superstructure in the socialist State is, according to the new version, "enormous". This increase of importance is caused by the planning of the economy by the State.

53. In the fourth edition of the dictionary in 1955, (that is after the appearance of Stalin's work on Soviet economics and after his death), the same entry in the dictionary marks the further development of the argument. The increase in importance of the superstructure of socialist society is not

57/merely the

merely the result of a widening of the sphere of activity of the Soviet State but much more the result of the wisdom of the Party which knows what is best for the masses; "knowing the laws of social development, the Communist Party foresees in advance the basic processes of economic development in the future and accordingly plans the programme of State activity necessary for securing the welfare of the popular masses". In all three last editions of the dictionary the article on "basis and superstructure" is intended to bolster the case for a stronger and permanent socialist State apparatus.

54. The idea of the dominant role of the superstructure in socialist society is, of course, totally alien to the teaching of Marx and Engels, although it may well go back to Lenin; but this could not be admitted openly either by Stalin himself or by the professional Marxist theoreticians who commented on Stalin's "work of genius". The hysterical style of these commentaries, and their hyperbolic praise of Stalin's genius, which allegedly enabled him to discover and to express clearly such elementary and simple truths, were an outstanding feature of Soviet philosophical writing in the years 1950 to 1953. The abject hypocrisy of this praise-singing is less striking than the sincere surprise of the Soviet Marxists at discovering that all their efforts to interpret Stalin's policies as compatible with Marx's and Engel's teaching were

58/not only



not only dishonest, which they must have known throughout, but also quite superfluous. Now, after the publication of Stalin's work on linguistics, Marxist theoreticians discovered to their surprise that they were not required to explain the principles of Stalinist policy in terms of traditional Marxism. Instead, they were obviously expected to state these principles boldly and then to give an interpretation of Marx which would make the obvious contradiction with Stalinism less noticeable. To make things even more absurd this was not to be put forward as a revision of Marx; on the contrary, Stalin's views were to be explained as the highest form of development of the original teaching of Marx and Engels.

55. The professional philosophers took up their new assignment with the greatest enthusiasm. Immediately after the appearance of Stalin's work on linguistics the Academy of Social Sciences organized a special conference dedicated to the study of the pamphlet. Both G.F. Aleksandrov and Fedoseev made a first attempt to appreciate Stalin's great contribution to Marxism. A year later the anniversary of the publication of Stalin's work on linguistics was celebrated by another conference of the same Academy. Both in Voprosy Filosofii and in Bolshovik, article after article dealt with Stalin's new pronouncements and Aleksandrov himself published a special book epitomizing them. Reading this literature is

59/one of the

one of the most painful spiritual and intellectual exercises to which one can submit oneself. The writings of Aleksandrov, Fedoseev, Leonov, Glesermann and others, give the impression that these people were aware throughout the fifteen or twenty years preceding the appearance of Stalin's works that the Soviet State was not run on lines which were in any way consistent with the Marxist theory they had learned, and yet they refused to admit in their writings that this was so. They obstinately described Soviet reality as if it were nothing but the fulfilment of Marx's prognosis. Their interpretation of what was happening had less and less resemblance to real life, they indeed became "bookworms and Talmudists" but at least up to 1950 they had been consistent in their own system of lies. Now the situation suddenly changed and Stalin told them that it was not he who had deviated from orthodox Marxism, but they who had interpreted Marx in a vulgar and popularizing way and therefore had invented this false and superfluous interpretation of Soviet reality. They could have spared themselves the efforts of finding excuses for Stalin's policies, had they accepted the principles on which these policies were based and revised their own view of Marx.

56. A few examples of the effect of Stalin's "work on linguistics" on the "discussions" which took place in 1950/53 may suffice to illustrate the new situation. Stalin had explained that language was neither an element of the superstructure

60/nor the result

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nor the result of class struggle. The question immediately arose whether other social and cultural features which had been wrongly classified as elements of the superstructure should not now be declassified. Stalin remarked that there could be no thinking without language, therefore thinking as such was declared not to be an element of the superstructure, notwithstanding Marx's claim that economic conditions determined human consciousness. According to the licence issued by Stalin it was legitimate to assume that thinking is a human activity in all human beings independently of class struggle, and that the laws of thinking, which find their expression in formal logic, are therefore independent of the progress of social evolution. All talk of "proletarian logic" as opposed to bourgeois logic was declared to be as dangerous as the Marxist heresy itself. This did not go off quite smoothly; there had been certain attempts to create a special socialist logic by trying to revise the rules of formal logic and to alter them to suit the style of Marxist dialectics. The results were handed out to the secondary schools as text books of logic; in quick succession projects of new text books of logic were compiled by various authors and rejected at special conferences as confusing. The question lost its practical interest when logic was again withdrawn from the curriculum of the secondary schools, but the solution which emerged after Stalin's work on linguistics remained

61/the accepted

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the accepted theory on logic in the Soviet Union. According to this, formal logic was the science concerned with human thinking as such and had no class significance. Dialectics was the scientific method of Marxism and therefore a method concerned with the whole universe, and in particular with human affairs. Dialectics was determined by class struggle and belonged, therefore, to the superstructure of socialist society. Dialectics as the method of Marxism was still considered to be some kind of logic and the Georgian logician Bekradze was sharply criticized for having denied that dialectics was a form of logic. But according to the diehards of orthodox Marxism, dialectics was a "higher form" of logic, the understanding of which presumed complete mastery of formal logic and which stood in a similar relation to formal logic as higher mathematics stands to elementary arithmetic. With this vague comparison the discussion more or less petered out.

57. The course of this discussion showed that works by modern mathematical logicians had penetrated into the Soviet Union. Indeed, Tarski's "Introduction to Logic" and Hilbert and Ackermann's classical work on mathematical logic had been translated into Russian. However, in the discussion it was decided to consider mathematical logic as part of mathematical studies. The translators of Tarski were attacked

62/for their

for their uncritical approach, and the dangerous connection of mathematical logic with neo-positivism was pointed out as a warning against over-enthusiasm. It may be noted here that the study of mathematical logic was revised after the death of Stalin in connection with the "rehabilitation" of cybernetics as a science. In 1951 cybernetics was still considered to be one of those pseudo-sciences which capitalist ideologists invent in order to corrupt and mislead the masses. Later, Mr. Wiener's book on cybernetics received official recognition. So did the mathematical theories of logical calculation on which cybernetics is largely based.\*

58. Another discussion of the foundations of physics, the significance of Einstein's contribution to it, and the theory of quantum mechanics followed similar lines to that on logic. Lenin had viewed the beginnings of modern development in theoretical physics with an unfriendly eye, mainly because of its connection with Ernst Mach's epistemological ideas which he abhorred and which he most violently attacked. Modern physics, however, continued to develop independently of any Marxist theoretical views even though so many prominent physicists of the inter-war period professed very

63/advanced

\* Note: See a detailed account of this development in CHAPTER IV.

advanced political views. Work on physics went on in the Soviet Union on the same lines as in non-communist countries and it soon became necessary to reconcile Lenin's criticism of modern physics with the general ideas which Soviet physicists had to share with their western colleagues, in order not to lag behind in the development of science. This was attempted by a professor of Kiev University, M.E. Omelyanovsky, at the beginning of 1947. He published a booklet: "V.I. Lenin and 20th Century Physics". Although it was only a pamphlet of 120 pages and was published in a relatively small edition (10,000 copies in 1947) as compared with other Soviet publications, it is said to have been widely read and was reprinted in 1948. This second edition coincided with the crisis in the editorial board of Voprosy Filosofii, (mentioned at the beginning of the second chapter of this paper and which resulted in the replacement of Kedrov by Chesnokov as editor in chief). In the same issue in which the ill-starred article by Nikolsky and Yakovlev on Marr's linguistic theory appeared, the new editorial board published a review of Omelyanovsky's book signed by Karasov and Nozarev (two quite unknown authors). An editorial note stated that the mistaken views contained in Omelyanovsky's book had escaped criticism and that the book had been favourably reviewed in the Soviet press. The mistaken views of Omelyanovsky had influenced his own contributions

64/to Voprosy

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to Voprosy Filosofii as well as the position which the editorial board of the journal had adopted in questions concerned with physics.

59. The review adhered strictly to the instructions laid down in Zhdanov's speech at the philosophical discussion of 1947. Omelyanovsky was accused of adopting an "evolutionist view" of the development of physics instead of showing how, according to the rules of dialectics, progress had been made in the relentless clash between the reactionary idealist tendency in physics and the progressive materialist views acting against this reaction. Whereas Lenin always insisted on the "party-mindedness" of science, Omelyanovsky was accused of drawing a smoke screen over the political aspect of modern physical controversies. "In Omelyanovsky's book there is no substantial criticism of the methodological positions of Bohr and Einstein. The attempts of certain contemporary schools of physics to saddle scientists with a "physical" idealism are passed over by the author in silence and everything leads to the assumption that certain philosophers - idealists are attempting to make use of contemporary physics for their own purpose". This, according to the reviewers, was a grave error. Bohr and Heisenberg as well as Jordan (whom the authors call a "fascisant") were said to have put forward idealist views in physics itself. Omelyanovsky was accused of whitewashing the leaders of the Copenhagen school and of portraying

65/them as

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them as "potential materialists" whose views have been misrepresented by idealist philosophers. Omelyanovsky was also accused of being unable to appreciate the real significance of Einstein's theory of relativity from a materialist point of view. This criticism was linked with the anti-cosmopolitan campaign and denunciation of a servile attitude to the West of which Omelyanovsky was said to be guilty.

60. The attack on Omelyanovsky set the ball rolling. There were three parties to this discussion. The one led by a corresponding member of the Academy, A.A. Maximov, represented the Party view on modern physical controversies and the other two were led by eminent physicists, Academician Fok and Professor Blokhintsev. The latter published in 1949 a book on the "Foundations of Quantum Mechanics" in which he attempts to review Bohr's "principle of complementarity". Blokhintsev himself was joined by Omelyanovsky, who took advantage of the discussion to demonstrate that he had in no way been dragged in the wake of Bohr and Heisenberg (Voprosy Filosofii N° 4, page 151, 1951). In doing so Omelyanovsky attacked the Leningrad physicist Academician V.A. Fok, whom he accused of accepting Bohr's principle of complementarity "which is bound to drag physics away from a correct interpretation of micro-phenomena into an idealist bog" (page 166). Academician Fok reacted by publishing a short appreciation of Blokhintsev's theory in Voprosy Filosofii 1952, N° 4. The

66/controversy

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controversy between these two eminent physicists is one of theoretical physics and the polemics were maintained on a high academic level by both protagonists (Blokhintsev answered Fok's criticism in Voprosy Filosofii 1952 N° 6).

61. On the whole it can be said that Blokhintsev tended to revise the physical part of the Bohr/Heisenberg theory, whereas Academician Fok was ready to accept the physical elements of the teaching of the Copenhagen school in their entirety with a vague promise to adapt them to the requirements of dialectical materialism. It was under these circumstances that Maximov, (a corresponding member of the Academy and a member of the editorial board of Voprosy Filosofii), launched an attack on modern physics in the paper Krasny Flot, a publication of the Soviet Navy (on 13th June, 1952). The article bore the title "Against Reactionary Einsteinism in Physics". The mere fact that a subject which was under discussion in specialized periodicals should be brought out in a widely read daily paper was considered by the Leningrad physicists - headed by Fok - as hitting below the belt (see the article by A.D. Aleksandrov in Voprosy Filosofii 1953, N° 5, page 244). Academician Fok reacted with an article in Voprosy Filosofii (1953, N° 1) of unusual violence in polemics even in Soviet Russia. The article is entitled "Against Ignorant Criticism of Present-Day Physical Theories". Fok

67/wrote

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wrote that the article by Maximov in the Krasny Flot "produced the most painful impression by its anti-scientific attitude and its unbelievable mistakes both in questions of physics and in questions of philosophy". Fok accused Maximov of confusing relativity and subjectivism. He reminded him that Lenin considered Einstein as a great reformer of natural sciences whereas, according to Maximov, Einstein merely corrupted the materialist contents of physical laws discovered before him. Fok broke a lance in defence of the memory of the late Academician L.I. Mandelshtam who had been attacked in Maximov's article. The final passage of Fok's article explains the position better than the confused arguments in the discussion and is worth quoting in full. On page 174 he writes:

"The adversaries of the theory of relativity are misinforming our scientific workers and our undergraduate students when they appeal to them to reject one of the most important achievements of the physics of our age and to go back, in fact, to a stage which belongs to the past.

"We are particularly indignant when we see that reactionary anti-scientific views are brought forward by the opponents of the theory of relativity in the name of dialectical materialism. Apart from anything else, they are thus doing extreme damage

68/to the

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to the cause of spreading the ideas of dialectical materialism in the countries of people's democracy - where the struggle between the supporters of idealist and materialist philosophy is still going on and where every word spoken by the scientist in our country is listened to with the greatest attention.

"Soviet scientists should develop present-day physical theories in a creative way, considering them in the light of the teaching of dialectical materialism and cleansing their exposition from their husk of idealism which only renders them more difficult to understand. Nothing is, however, more alien to the tasks confronting progressive Soviet science than the ignorant criticism of these theories which leads to their senseless and damaging rejection".

62. The courage shown by Academician Fok in launching this attack on an orthodox Marxist is even more remarkable for the following two circumstances. First, the Academy of Sciences seems, to a large extent, to have supported the point of view of Maximov and had accepted his article on the "struggle of Lenin against physical idealism" in its Bulletin dedicated to the "great force of the ideas of Leninism", 200,000 copies of which appeared in 1950. Secondly, Fok speaks only vaguely of the approach to modern physics in the light of dialectical materialism. He does not attempt to show how the ideas of

69/dialectical

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dialectical materialism and the antiquated views of Marx, Engels and Lenin on physical problems can be upheld and reconciled with the great revolution which basic physical ideas have undergone in the last thirty or forty years. But Fok must have had very powerful trumps in his hand when challenging Maximov. The latter was allowed to publish a long rejoinder to Fok's article in the same issue of Voprosy Filosofii, but this rejoinder carried a note by the editorial board disclaiming responsibility for anything Maximov said.

63. Subsequent developments vindicated Fok's attitude completely. In the fifth issue of Voprosy Filosofii for 1953, Fok's pupil and friend A.D. Aleksandrov (the present - 1957 - Rector of Leningrad University, who should not be confused with the one-time Minister of Culture G.F. Aleksandrov), attacked Maximov and his supporters once more and seems to have silenced him. The lesson to be drawn from this discussion is the triumph of the specialists' point of view represented by Fok, which amounts approximately to the following, when put into plain language: "Never mind what the old fogies of Marxism thought of the early timid steps towards new ideas in physics. These ideas have come to stay and without a thorough mastery of them no physical science is possible. The task of the philosophers, if there is any, is to adapt Marxist theory to this modern physics by finding

70/a suitable

a suitable dialectical materialist interpretation of it". In this respect Fok follows the example of Stalin whose admonition of Marxist theoreticians amounted to exactly the same in the political field. Obviously his position as a leading physicist at a time when nuclear physics became almost as important in the Soviet Union as political power itself, allowed him to adopt such an attitude.

64. The pattern of the discussions on other subjects which went on from 1950 to 1953 is very much the same as that of the discussions on logic and physics. They all reflect the far-reaching revision of Marxist ideas initiated by Stalin's contribution to linguistics. Art is no longer a mere part of the superstructure and literature is not solely determined by class consciousness; those who, by inertia, continue to profess the opposite views are denounced as revivalists of the "proletkult" movement, which was connected with the Bogdanovite heresy in the 1920s and was condemned by Lenin. Professor Glasermann dedicated a whole book to this revision of the concepts of basis and superstructure. According to him, neither science nor art are by themselves part of the superstructure, but they can accidentally become part of the superstructure when they are used by or make themselves subservient to the needs of the economic basis of society, that is when they become instruments of State power, which wields

71/then as a

them as a weapon against its enemies. None of this made the task of teachers of Marxist philosophy and ideology particularly easy. No wonder that at that period (1950-53) no text books of dialectical materialism or of historical materialism could be produced. The drafts of such books were continually discussed and revised but nobody dared to bring out a definitive version. Teachers and lecturers on philosophy in the Soviet Union found it difficult to adapt themselves to the changing situation. It was left to them to estimate what importance they should attach to the new pronouncements by Stalin and how far they should go in revising his former views. The teachers stuck to their own programmes and were criticised for not showing a close connection between Marxist/Leninist philosophy and "life", i.e. Stalin's policy. It is astonishing that in 1953, only two days after Stalin's death, a professor of Moscow University (Kharapinsky) could have been accused of not having mentioned, when speaking of the creative evolution of Marxism, Comrade Stalin's work on linguistics. Such teachers were reminded that "indispensable professors who are not perfecting themselves, who lag behind the increasing demand of the undergraduates, should be replaced by able and growing comrades". (Voprosy Filosofii, 1953, No 1, page 88).

65. The majority of Soviet philosophers avoided entering into theoretical discussions of the kind we have analysed

72/avoc.

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above. Like Professor G.F. Alokandrov, they preferred the safer way of contributing to the "philosophical development" of their time by surpassing themselves in praising the latest contributions of Stalin and in vicious attacks on "bourgeois" philosophy as an instrument for the maintenance of a capitalist imperialist system. One need only look at titles of articles such as "The Learned Lackeys of the U.S.A. Monopolists are fanning Military Hysteria", or "The Struggle of the German Unity Party against the Ideology of War and the Betrayal of National Interests", or "Present-day American Theoreticians are justifying Lawlessness and Arbitrariness", or "Gangsterism in the Service of the Monopolies of the U.S.A.". The last two are signed by B.S. Nikiforov and are a particularly non-dacious and stupid attack on American conditions. (This same Nikiforov is now at the head of the department of foreign relations of Moscow University. All negotiations about the practical arrangements for exchanges of students, delegations and so on go through him, although he is treated by the academic authorities with some reserve).

66. Soviet criticism of Western bourgeois philosophy during the years 1950-53 gave hardly any information as to what the much-abused Western philosophers were actually saying. Bertrand Russell was again and again merely referred to as a "war-mongering obscurantist." This activity of Soviet

73/philosophy

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philosophy was even organized as a special branch called "Criticism of Bourgeois Ideology". It was a useful activity for many people since it provided opportunities for authors such as Nikiforov, who could not have otherwise contributed to Voprosy Filosofii, to join the exalted circle of philosophers. On the other hand, it gave prominent people in academic circles such as Tarle or Deborin, an opportunity to make a contribution to the "World Peace Movement" by denouncing imperialism and militarism. They thus performed a useful function in support of the policies of the Soviet Government.

67. Closely connected with the so-called criticism of bourgeois ideology and of such bourgeois lackeys as the British Labour Movement and the non-communist socialist parties of the West was the direct support given to foreign communist ideologists. But even here Soviet philosophers were careful not to publish too much authentic information about discussions in communist parties abroad. In 1951 there were hardly any foreign contributors to Voprosy Filosofii. However, a slow change in this respect became noticeable in the policy of the editorial board of Voprosy Filosofii. In the autumn of 1952 a lecture by Professor Roger Garaudy took place in Moscow to a selected audience of the collaborators of the Institute of Philosophy of the Academy of Sciences and the editorial board of Voprosy Filosofii. Garaudy, whose

74/lecture

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lecture was summarized in Voprosy Filosofii, gave an account of the struggle being carried on by French communist intellectuals against "reactionary official philosophy" in France. The level of his criticism can be judged by what he said of the study of Hegel in France; "Hegel's reactionary apology of Prussian feudal monarchy has been adopted by the French fascist philosopher, Aron, as a pattern for justifying reaction in France". Free philosophical study in France, according to Garaudy, was only a camouflage for the poisoning of the imagination of the philosophers by all sorts of "ridiculous fantasies", in order to prevent ideas from having a connection with reality: "a philosopher locked up in such an idealistic cage becomes harmless to the existing regime". Garaudy also explained the efforts made to prevent the penetration of reactionary ideas from England and the United States into France. Toynbee's "Outline of History" was classified as a "philosophical concoction directly serving the purposes of war". The "American occupation authorities in France" imported a considerable amount of "luxuriously published papers, magazines and books" but only "a few philosophers in France" were said to indulge "in this form of intellectual prostitution and to take part in this new way of collaborating with the occupation authorities". This lecture by Professor Garaudy, then a member of the Central Committee of the French Communist Party,

75/inaugurated

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inaugurated a period of more or less close co-operation between him and the philosophical institutions of the Soviet Union. Garaudy became a Doctor of Philosophy of Moscow University in 1955. 50X1-HUM

68. The other relatively safe field in which Soviet philosophers could work and publish was the study of materialist Russian thinkers and scientists of the 19th century, both those who belonged to the revolutionary intelligentsia and those who worked as obscure teachers and professors in the Universities. Obscure and insignificant figures were dressed up as fighters for an advanced materialist trend in some special branch of philosophy. Casual remarks on general subjects by the great Russian scientists of the past were commented on in endless articles. This literature is of negligible value for real historical research and is nothing but a falsification of the views of the persons concerned, whose work is criticized according to a ready-made pattern.

69. Stalin's swan song, his work on the "Economic Problems of Socialism in the U.S.S.R.", was published in full with all the additional letters in Voprosy Filosofii (1952, No 5) together with an analysis of the ideological findings of the 19th Party Congress. However, the shock which Stalin's intervention in the linguistic controversy had produced in ideological circles was not repeated. Besides, Malenkov's

76/commentary

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commentary on Stalin's latest scientific effort provided a pattern for further commentaries by the philosophers. Only the very top of the ideological hierarchy, i.e. G.F. Aleksandrov, Fedoseev and Kammari ventured to comment at once on the general principles of Stalin's new contribution to knowledge. It is characteristic, however, that one of the first commentaries made, this time by a Leningrad contributor, L.I. Kon, went a step further in explaining the leading role of political and legal views in the development of society. It attacked certain lawyers who gave an erroneous interpretation of the interrelation between political and legal institutions. These were on no account to be opposed to each other, Lenin was quoted to the effect that "law is a political measure, is itself politics". The main theme of the article was the rehabilitation of the State as a necessary instrument of socialism. "The bourgeois State is an instrument of exploitation and is an enemy of the popular masses, therefore, as Lenin points out, socialism has inherited from capitalism a hatred and a lack of confidence among the masses towards anything which has to do with the State. We needed intensive educational work carried out by the Communist Party in order to overcome this obsolete view. This work has been crowned with success. Popular masses brought in by the Soviet Government on a large scale to participate in the business of State administration

77/have understood

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have understood that the Soviet State is indeed a people's one". The article is remarkable for its praise of the Soviet legal system as it actually worked at that time and for its theoretical justification of the practices of Soviet court proceedings (with ample quotations from Vyshinsky). It also vindicated interference by the executive power in the Soviet judiciary. It should be borne in mind that this was the philosophical reading material for people who might have had a sleepless night after the announcement of the discovery of the Doctors' Plot (Kon's article appeared in November, 1952 and the announcement of the Doctors' Plot in January, 1953).

70. The period between the publication of Stalin's work on linguistics and his death was marked by a total collapse on the ideological front as it had existed before the end of the second world war. In the '30s and even in the beginning of the '40s under the active leadership of such people as Mitin and Yudin and, to a certain extent, of G.F. Aleksandrov himself, there existed in the Soviet Union something like a doctrine which was formally binding for the authorities as well as for the rank and file communist. True, it had long ceased to be a scientific theory open to discussion and criticism from any sources. The supreme argument in any discussion was the quotation from the works of Lenin or Stalin interpreted in one's own favour and intended to silence one's opponent.

78/And yet a doctrine

50X1-HUM

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And yet a doctrine it was, although perhaps a doctrine similar in its function to that of a religious sect with its final authority rooted in the sacred texts, rather than the scientific theory which Marx and Engels intended it to be.

71. It was this fossilized conception of Marxism that Stalin attacked. Zhdanov's warning in 1947 had not been understood by those to whom it was addressed. They showed great willingness to mend their ways and to comply with any demands which might be made on them by the authorities; but they seemed not to understand what these demands were and, in response to them, could only offer protestations of loyalty, good will and subservience. Stalin's work on linguistics destroyed the very concept of an accepted and established doctrine of Marxism and Leninism. Marxism, according to Stalin, is the theory of revolution, the theory helping the proletariat and the only bearer of the proletariat's real interests, the Communist Party, to seize and hold power. Accordingly, Marxism as a theory was identical with the policy pursued by the Communist Party and, as long as Stalin was alive, by Stalin himself as the leader of the Party.

72. This was a doctrine which it was not easy for the professional Marxist theoreticians to swallow. Indeed, the older generation - the Mitins and Yudin's - withdrew from the struggle. The somewhat younger Aleksandrov's and Fedoseev's attempted to apply sly and clever tactics and to combine

79/servility

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servility to Stalin and Byzantine sycophancy with the maintenance of their status as high priests of the doctrine. They hoped, in a sense, to fulfil the function performed by the highest church dignitaries in a State where the lay absolute monarch is the head of the church. This would not do. Fedoseev got his reprimand in December, 1952 from Suslov, who ridiculed Fedoseev's tone of doctrinaire priesthood by using the verb voshchat' (to play the oracle).

73. Aleksandrov, on the other hand, in his book on Stalin's works on linguistics and questions of historical materialism, went perhaps too far on the path of servility. The book contains many expressions of the most humble and, indeed, humiliating self-criticism and it is certainly not lacking in strong expressions emphasizing the supreme importance of Stalin's "contributions" to Marxism. But Aleksandrov was criticized - and rightly so - for not developing the hints made by Stalin into an elaborate theory and not using his knowledge and ability to provide a "profound" criticism of such obscurantists as Russell, Jeans and Dewey. Almost every chapter of the book was criticized for this lack of ability, or possibly desire, to develop Stalin's pronouncements into a full-fledged academic theory. For instance, critics accused Aleksandrov, when speaking of the evolution of language, of not supporting his thesis that language does not develop in "jumps". "Aleksandrov should not have satisfied himself by

80/merely

50X1-HUM

merely quoting the theses of J.V. Stalin's work; he should have supported it with the necessary argumentation".

74. This reserve of Aleksandrov's and of some other critics was possibly originally caused by their reluctance to believe that Stalin really meant to liquidate the existence of all independent Marxist theorising and to replace it by a kind of top-level propaganda department dedicated to providing a "scholarly" dressing for every new line of Stalin's policy. Such doubts as these theoreticians had must have been completely dispelled by the publication of Stalin's work on economics and the ensuing discussions at the 19th Party Conference. The theoreticians indeed showed every willingness to assume the new role assigned to them and the last months of Stalin's life were marked by a growth of the cult of his personality in philosophical literature. A stronger imagination than that of George Orwell would be needed to picture the depths of degradation to which Soviet philosophers would have sunk had Stalin lived to see the development of the great purge for which the Doctors' Plot was to be the prologue. There are clear indications that a part was assigned to them in this fantastic drama which was never played out.

75. Following Kon's article, to which we have referred above, Voprosy Filosofii published in its first issue of 1953 (signed for publication two days after Stalin's death) an

81/editorial

editorial on "The state of legal scholarship". The article 50X1-HUM claims that there is a need for a basic reconstruction of the "science of law", which can be carried out successfully only on the basis of a profound assimilation of the work of genius of J.V. Stalin. The article warns against over-estimating the importance of the reversed action of the superstructure on the basis and especially against an interpretation according to which the superstructure had a kind of independent existence. Superstructure rests on the realities of the basis and the task of the legal scholars is to show how this reality influences the contents and the function of the legal norms and State institutions of the Soviet Union. On page 101 the real purpose of this vague diatribe becomes apparent: "We must further remember that our State and legal institutions to a certain extent reflect international relations. J.V. Stalin has shown that our Army, our punitive organ, and our intelligence service point their sharp edge not inwards but outside our borders against external enemies, against attempts to undermine the security of the U.S.S.R. on the part of hostile imperialist States, against the spies and saboteurs who are sent into our country by the enemy. The exposure by the organs of State security of the terrorist group of base hirelings of Anglo-American imperialism, of murderers who hid behind the mask of Professors of Medicine demonstrates once more that..

82/capitalist

capitalist encirclement uses the most revolting methods in the struggle and reminds us of the necessity of increasing political vigilance and mercilessly fighting slovenliness and carelessness. It is obvious that legal scholarship should take into consideration this function of the Soviet state - the function of the defence of the country against attacks from outside".

76. The article goes on to explain that legal science is not a deductive system "inferring concept from concept, definition from definition, construction from construction. Its task is to study the concrete objective conditions which give rise to one or other legal norm, legal status or State institution and, after having studied the specific nature of this norm, status or institution to show what their "recoil action" is on the social economic conditions which have given rise to them. Legal science also has to find out how to secure a better functioning of this "recoil action" in the interests of the Soviet people as represented by the policy of the Communist Party and of the Soviet State." It is obvious that this editorial article was planned and inspired as a first step for a theoretical justification of the blood bath which Stalin envisaged in 1953. That it was allowed to appear after Stalin's death in the same issue as the official obituary notice by the Central Committee, the Council of

83/Ministers

Ministers and the Presidium can only mean that the ideological front was not in the centre of attention of Stalin's successors. Otherwise they would have certainly prevented the publication of such an article, even if it had been already set. But it may well be the clearest indication of the real purpose for which, on the instructions of Stalin, and with the help of his latest writings and pronouncements, the last remnants of Marxist dogmatism based on literary and revolutionary tradition had to be liquidated and replaced by a running apologetic commentary on the day-to-day policies of Stalin himself.

84/CHAPTER IV..

50X1-HUM

CHAPTER IV.

77. The outstanding feature of Soviet ideology during the years 1950 to 1953 had been the erosion of Marxist dogma; the period following Stalin's death witnessed a further stage in the decomposition of the remains of Marxist ideology in Russia. The contrast between both periods is, however, not spectacular. The phraseology, the way of putting and answering questions, the very subjects of philosophical discussions remained much the same as before. The changes were mainly confined to the gradual reduction of the stature of Stalin, to an increased interest in Western philosophy and determined attempts to get at least some factual information on it, and possibly to a return to less biased and tendentious methods of historical research. The modesty of those changes should not, however, conceal from us the basic difference in the situation on the "philosophical front" before and after Stalin's death.

78. In the last years of Stalin's life everything stated or printed in philosophy which was not immediately denounced as a heresy could be taken as having the support or at least the tolerance of the supreme leadership. Even attempts at ideological deviations, such as the Marxist heresy, could all be traced to the desire to comply with the whims of the dictator or, at the most, to try and win him over to a certain

85/point of view.

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50X1-HUM

point of view. The period after his death with which we are now concerned lacks any such unifying factor as that of Stalin's personal control. For the first time for years conflicting views are being put forward at the same time and no authority has, as yet, emerged to which they could be put for final arbitration. One would naturally expect polemics in this period to have become sharper but, on the contrary, opposing views have, in fact, been put forward with much greater moderation than in Stalin's time. It is as if ideological opponents within the framework of official ideology are pulling their punches, whereas in Stalin's day they went all out for their adversaries as soon as they realized that these could be hounded down.

79. The first thing which attracts attention when reading the latest Soviet philosophical literature is that in the first two years after Stalin's death his stature as a supreme teacher of Marxism suffered a gradual reduction. Quotations from his works became scarcer and laudatory qualifications which used inevitably to be attached to his name disappeared almost entirely. The highest praise to be dispensed was that of having faithfully continued the work of Lenin. The eclipse of Stalin did not affect even the style of philosophical works as much as might have been expected, because the exaggerated claims of a unique method and a supreme ability

86/to understand

50X1-HUM

988

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to understand and direct processes of social development were now attached to the name of Lenin. Some of the early articles printed in Voprosy Filosofii after Stalin's death give the impression that they were written before the event and that the editor simply crossed out Stalin's name in the purely sycophantic passages and replaced it by Lenin's.

80. After the first number of 1953 announcing Stalin's death, which gave the impression that the main subject of future philosophical discussions would be Stalin's latest work on "The Economic Problems of Socialism", articles specifically dealing with Stalin's contribution to Marxism gradually disappear from the pages of the magazine. (It should be noted, however, that a number of pamphlets dedicated to Stalin and designed for propagandists were still published in 1953). From the third number of Voprosy Filosofii of 1953 it becomes clear that the study and epitomizing of Stalin's last work had been definitely dropped. The most surprising thing is that nobody ever mentioned this process of de-Stalinisation or admitted that it was taking place. This only shows - if there was any necessity for such a proof - that the most basic and far-reaching changes in the Soviet Union can, and do, occur without anybody daring to acknowledge them openly. The degree of hypocrisy, self-deception and conscious inhibition which is required from those who are engaged in effecting such changes has never been sufficiently appreciated.

87/81.

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81. We should realize that every contributor to Soviet philosophical literature after Stalin's death, in fact every writer on ideological matters, must have been profoundly worried by the question - whether he should mention Stalin or not and how often he should mention him, if at all, in connection with any subject he was writing on. Take, for instance, Kammari, later Chief Editor of Voprosy Filosofii, and a corresponding member of the Academy; he welcomed the appearance of Stalin's last work with twenty pages of the most servile praise (Voprosy Filosofii 1952, No 6). In 1954 Voprosy Filosofii No 3, Kammari publishes an article on the triumph of the ideology of friendship between the nations. The article deals with a subject which was considered to be one of Stalin's reserved specialities and before 1953 a work on this subject could not have failed to refer to Stalin's numerous writings on the question of nationalities. And yet, in 1954 Kammari mentions no works by Stalin. He replaces Stalin's name by Lenin's in such meaningless sentences as "Lenin exposed and smashed the nationalism and the great-power - chauvinism of the bourgeois landowners and small-bourgeois farmers". But even then, as if to prove that there had been no intentional attempt to suppress Stalin's name, Kammari mentions him "incidentally" together with Lenin and his "collaborators", (page 131). The suppression of any reference to Stalin's

88/eclipse

50X1-HUM

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eclipse created a most unreal situation. It was as if all concerned were continuously and more or less uniformly changing the colour of their skins; all the time pretending not to notice and never mentioning the fact to each other.

82. The strain which this imposed must have been partly alleviated by the opportunity to vituperate against the cult of personality - a new vice discovered at that period among intellectuals. The first mention of it seems to have been made in connection with the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the C.P.S.U. in 1953. At a meeting of the Academy of Sciences, the chairman, Academician Nemesyanov, proclaimed that "the Party demands the elimination from scientific propaganda work of the established practice of interpreting in a non-Marxist way the role of personality in history - a practice which found its expression in a cult of personality alien to Marxism". But in launching the campaign against the cult of personality the representatives of the Party were cautious enough not to link it up openly with the process of de-Stalinisation. P.N. Pospelov, who was the main speaker at that meeting of the Academy, expressly disclaimed Stalin's responsibility for the establishment of the cult of personality. Pospelov joined in Nemesyanov's demand for the elimination of the cult of personality and added that "it leads to an under-estimation of the role played by the Party and

89/its directing

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its directing centre and to an under-estimation of the creative activity of the Party's rank and file and of the Soviet people".

83. The authority which Pospelov invoked in this context was .... J.V. Stalin. According to Voprosy Filosofii, 1953, No 6, Pospelov said: "on this question there are a number of categorical pronouncements by the classics of Marxism/Leninism. In 1938 J.V. Stalin wrote a letter against the publication of a book entitled "Stories from Stalin's Childhood" which was then prepared by the 'Detizdat' of the Komsomol. In his letter - as quoted by Pospelov - J.V. Stalin pointed out that he "decidedly protests against the publication of such a book because it is full of factual inaccuracies, distortions, exaggerations and undeserved praise. Obviously the author had been led into error by lovers of fairy tales, by story tellers, possibly by honest story tellers, but nevertheless by fairy tale tellers and sycophants. The book has a tendency to instil in the consciousness of Soviet children, and of the people in general, a cult of personalities and of infallible heroes; this is a dangerous thing because the theory which opposes heroes to the crowd is not a Bolshevik theory but a theory of the Socialist Revolutionaries. Such a book would pour water on to the mill of the Socialist Revolutionaries and would damage our common Bolshevik cause; any such book should be burnt".

90/84.

50X1-HUM



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84. The camouflage of the process of de-Stalinisation as a mere correction of over-emphasis on the role of personality and as being in complete agreement with Stalin's own theoretical views, was maintained throughout Soviet philosophical literature up to the spring and summer of 1956, when Khrushchev's speech to the XXth Party Congress was gradually publicized at special meetings of Party organizations at all levels. The technique of camouflaging was convenient for both sides in a contest which developed inside the process of de-Stalinisation. Those who hoped for an easing of Party controls over discussions of theoretical Marxist ideas or of historical research in philosophy, were paying for their right to indulge in their private hobbies (or even to bring forward an idea which they would not have dared to put forward before) by an occasional quotation from Stalin or Zhdanov. On the other hand, the "reactionaries" like Kodrov, Fedoseev, Kammerl and Rumyantsov - who were rather apprehensive that an upsurge of spontaneous activity on the part of the ideologists or teachers of philosophy might get out of the control of the Party - were also pleased with the camouflaged system of de-Stalinisation. It gave them the opportunity of criticizing Stalinist theses, contained in the text books of dialectical materialism or in Aleksandrov's book on Stalin's contribution to Marxism, merely as "vulgar simplifications"

91/condemned

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50X1-HUM

condemned in advance by all serious authority and, in particular, by Lenin himself (e.g. in his famous strictures on Shulyatkov).\*

85. From 1954 on a certain number of works and articles, written in flagrant violation of the directives given by Zhdanov in 1947, have been published. As an example we can quote No 5 of Voprosy Filosofii, 1954 which carries an article by Professor Asmus on Kant and another one by Friedlander on the aesthetic theories of Lessing. These articles are of no importance as contributions to knowledge, but they are a sign of a change in the approach to historical research. They tend to show that the views of Kant and Lessing had been taken seriously by the founders of Marxism and even by Lenin himself, and they are an invitation to a further serious study of German philosophy. Such articles would certainly have been qualified in 1947 as manifestations of an objectivist, "toothless", cosmopolitan approach to reactionary idealist German thinkers.

92/86.

\* Note: Shulyatkov was an autodidact who produced a theory explaining how economic conditions directly influence philosophical theories, and was derided by Lenin in his book on empiriocriticism.

50X1-HUM

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86. The attitude of the 'purists' is perhaps best exemplified by a peculiar discussion which developed after Stalin's death. In his work on linguistics Stalin made an ill-tempered remark warning comrades not to get carried away by the idea of "explosive changes". Ostensibly Stalin referred to changes in language and was criticizing Marr's sanguine expectation of the sudden emergence of a new language under socialist conditions. But he was hinting at far more important things than that, he was giving a warning to those who hoped that with the proclamation of the establishment of a socialist economic order, or of the inauguration of the communist phase, a sudden change would occur in the political structure of the Soviet Union, a change forecast in Marxist eschatology as the "withering away of the State". This was clearly understood by the editors of the short dictionary of philosophical terms who re-wrote the entry under "antagonistic and non-antagonistic contradictions" accordingly. In the Soviet Union, they said, where there is no exploitation there can be no antagonistic contradictions and therefore no explosive changes. A "political revolution" in the Soviet Union is unthinkable. The use of such a phrase is noteworthy, for the very mention of a "political revolution" in the Soviet Union, even to deny its possibility, seems to clash with the predominant style.

93/87.

87. Stalin's casual remark put Soviet Marxists in a difficult position. For many, the emergence of a new quality in dialectical development had always appeared "explosive", in the sense that quantitative changes became qualitative suddenly "by a jump". If future changes in the Soviet Union were to proceed without explosion, how could the necessary new qualities emerge which would characterize the advent of communism. It was in the expectation of these new qualities that enormous sacrifices had been imposed on and borne by the people. There developed a lengthy discussion concerning the question whether revolutions can occur without "explosive changes" and whether "jumps" can be "gradual". The hair-splitting character of these discussions is shown, for instance, in Kedrov's article on "Gradualness as a form of Change from an Old Quality to a New One". Kedrov begins by saying that one should not speculate in the abstract about jumps in general. But twenty-one pages later he comes to the amazing conclusion: "it follows that speaking of the gradualness of the process of a jump, we must distinguish the beginning of a jump, its development or process, and its endings or conclusion. A jump has its own quantitative denominators and we must take into account with what moment of it - whether its beginning, development or ending - we have to deal in every concrete instance".

94/88.

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50X1-HUM

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88. The passage might appear gibberish, and yet it explains the difficulty with which a Stalinist like Kedrov had to deal in 1954. On the one hand he had to maintain the gradual character of all future changes (even revolutionary ones) in the Soviet Union, especially at a time when the expectation of a sudden betterment of general conditions was particularly acute. On the other hand, he had to avoid "evolutionism", that is a theory by which qualitative changes will emerge as the result of an accumulation of imperceptible quantitative ones without our being able to point out the moment in the development at which the changes occur. Such evolutionism would be tantamount to a criticism of Marx and would smack of Bukharin's theories of "the gradual growth of capitalism into a socialist system".

89. Closely connected with this problem of the jump from quantitative to qualitative changes is the other problem, mentioned at the end of Chapter III, of how contradictions in Soviet society are being overcome. Another "reactionary", Stepanyan, published in Voprosy Filosofii, No 2, 1955, a typical attempt to reconcile the new trends in ideology with the maintenance of Stalin's authority. An editorial note points out that the article is published as a contribution to a discussion. Stepanyan vindicates Stalin's claim that non-antagonistic conflicts can be solved by administrative

95/

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administrative measures and illustrates this point by now 50X1-HUM  
examples. He repeats Stalin's theories that the contra-  
dictions inherent in the Soviet regime, where state-planning  
economy is opposed to the marketing-goods-producing-economy  
of the collective farms, can be overcome only by a transformation  
of the Kolkhoz property into "national" property. This means  
ultimately nationalization of the produce of the collective  
farms.

90. There is, however, a new note in Stepanyan's article  
as compared with Stalin's last work. The leading role in the  
discovery and the overcoming of contradictions in the socialist  
society is, according to Stepanyan, played by the Communist  
Party and not, as was foreshadowed by Stalin and by the article  
quoted at the end of Chapter III, by the State. Stepanyan,  
however, takes his "development dialectics" seriously. In  
order to be able to solve contradictions, the Party has itself  
to develop and development necessarily presupposes the exist-  
ence of contradictory tendencies. Such contradictory tenden-  
cies inside the Party had been exposed shortly before Stepanyan's  
article in a much-discussed play by Zorin, "The Guests",  
where the selfless fighting spirit of Lenin's generation of  
communists was contrasted<sup>with</sup> the bureaucratic spirit prevailing  
among Soviet contemporary ruling strata. Stepanyan accuses  
Zorin of seeing contradictions where there are none. "The

96/law of the

50X1-HUM

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law of the development of the Party is the further unwavering strengthening of the monolithic unity of the Party by way of a broad development of criticism and self-criticism as a proved method of uncovering and overcoming contradictions between the old and the new". Therefore there can be no sudden explosive changes in the development of the Party, and Stepanyan closes his article with a quotation from Stalin saying: "in our Party as in every organism a metabolism takes place. Old, dying-off elements drop out and new, growing elements live and develop. Some go - both at the top and at the bottom. Others come, both at the top and at the bottom and carry on with the work; this is the way the Party grow in the past, this is the way it will grow in future".

91. The editorial note to Stepanyan's article may have been an indication that some of the members of the board did not share his attitude which excluded any major shake-up in the structure of the Party. However, no one said so explicitly and the same Stepanyan was allowed in December, 1955 to publish the obligatory article preceding the meeting of every Party Congress. Not a word in this article pointed to the possibility of a denunciation of Stalin. True, quotations from Stalin are relatively rare but great emphasis is put on his personal ties with Lenin. "J.V. Stalin - writes Stepanyan - has at all stages of the development of the Bolshevik Party

97/stood for,

- 97 -

stood for, propagated and developed Leninism and after Lenin's death, when at the head of the Central Committee of the Party, 50X1-HUM he led it in the struggle for the further implementation of Lenin's plan of a revolutionary change of society". (Our underlining).

92. These few examples prove clearly that the leading philosophical circles of the Soviet Union adopted an extremely cautious attitude, to say the least, towards the changes which culminated in the XXth Congress and Khrushchev's speech. The fact that various shades of opinion were probably represented on the editorial board of Voprosy Filosofii, and the philosophers' consideration for their personal status in the new situation might explain this caution. As we have seen, Stalin reduced the philosophers from the status of a relatively independent caste of ideological specialists to that of commentators on his political line, of ideological civil servants. After his death an opportunity was given to them to regain some independence and to start playing a political role again, if not by putting forward theoretical ideas which politicians could translate into practice, then at least by giving support to certain political trends represented by one or the other personality at the top of the Party hierarchy. The lament issued by the editorial board of Voprosy Filosofii on the status of philosophy in the spring of 1956 might

98/possibly

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possibly point to such a situation. "Can we say that our philosophers have succeeded in reaching a high level of theoretical generalization concerning actual theoretical problems of the practice of the building-up of communism? We regret to say that this is not so. Our philosophical cadres have not yet produced important theoretical works which would deserve to be considered as equal to independent original research studies. We are still under the spell of lagging behind the development of life, under the spell of an insufficiently high level of theoretical work".

93. The way to improve this situation was, according to Voprosy Filosofii, to allocate a certain minimum of time to philosophers for research work "making rational use of the available time budget", to show "daring in putting theoretical problems which correspond to the spirit and to the demands of our days, daring in solving problems of the revolutionary transformation of the world, daring in the philosophical explanation of the data of modern science". Voprosy Filosofii makes it clear, however, that such "daring" should not lead one beyond the protecting reach of the Communist Party leadership.

94. Nor was any daring or even courage shown by the Soviet philosophers when the "nuclear bomb" exploded at the XXth Congress. The first reaction was to admit that the

99/cult of

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cult of personality, which had been criticized for the last two years, was not a cult of personality in general but a cult of the personality of J.V. Stalin. And yet, criticism of Stalin in a leading article published in Voprosy Filosofii after the Congress is extremely weak, not only as compared with the text of Khrushchev's speech, which has since become available, but even as compared with the decisions of the Central Committee on the "overcoming of the cult of personality". The criticism in Voprosy Filosofii is confined to a few remarks on the inflated importance which had been attached to Stalin's work on dialectical and historical materialism, which was, the leader in Voprosy Filosofii admits, wrongly considered to be the summit of Marxist philosophy. This had, in its turn, brought about "a discontinuance of a profound study of the works of Marx, Engels and Lenin". Sticking close to Stalin's formulae and words was said to be the main reason for the narrowing down of philosophical interest. Stalin's formula, according to which German speculative philosophy was nothing but "an aristocratic reaction to the French bourgeois revolution and French materialism", was made responsible for the shortcomings of research on the history of philosophy.

95. In their self-criticism in the leading article in Voprosy Filosofii, however, the philosophers borrow their

100/terminology

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terminology almost entirely from Stalin's own strictures on philosophers when he accused them of being Talmudists and of replacing the study of real life by deductions and an abstract analysis of some allegedly indubitable truths. Nor does the article, in spite of all its abject self-criticism, mention the scathing remark in Mikoyan's speech at the XXth Congress, according to which the work of Soviet philosophers was below contempt and not even worthy of a word of blame. Unmoved by what was said at the Congress, the editorial board of Voprosy Filosofii still maintained that the philosophers have to perform an important task in the class struggle, that they must head the fight against reactionary bourgeois ideology which must go on in spite of co-existence. True, such criticism of bourgeois philosophy must be subtle and must differentiate between those who are obvious reactionaries and the wavering elements among bourgeois philosophers and scientists who, under the influence of persuasive criticism, can still find the right path.

96. Nevertheless, the editorial board of Voprosy Filosofii could not long withstand the pressure of discussions which broke out immediately after the text of Khrushchev's speech became known in the U.S.S.R. Stepanyan's article, quoted above, was understood by its readers, and probably rightly so, as an attempt to justify and maintain certain views

101/which were

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which were now considered to be Stalinist and which many wanted to shake off. In the summer of 1956 the article was discussed, not only by specialists in Soviet philosophy, but even in a philosophical circle by undergraduates. (This is, by the way, the only mention of the existence of such a philosophical circle). In an article signed Perlov (Odessa) in Voprosy Filosofii, No 4, 1956 Stepanyan is accused of believing that a contradiction in society can be overcome by a "one-act action", and not "as a process". This seems to be a rather awkwardly expressed criticism of Stalin's theory according to which non-antagonistic conflicts in Soviet society will be overcome by State and/or Party interference.

97. Perlov points out that Stepanyan's definition of the basic contradiction in socialist economy - which was that of Stalin - does not explain anything. The tension between the ever-increasing needs of the whole population and the level of production of material and cultural goods is inherent, Perlov says, in capitalist economy as well, and is therefore not a specific contradiction of socialist economy. Such a specific contradiction Perlov sees in the inequality in the standard of living of people who have the same "relation to the means of production". This contradiction will be wholly overcome in some distant future in the "second stage of communism", but the Party and the State are already, according

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to Perlov, taking steps to weaken this contradiction, by increasing the wages of the lower paid workers and measures of social welfare.

98. The whole purpose of this discussion about contradiction becomes clear when Perlov attacks Stepanyan for saying that certain contradictions in socialist society are antagonistic, that is that they can be surmounted only by violent methods of repression. Not even plunderers of socialist property should be indiscriminately considered as antagonistic to Soviet society; only those who are connected with the liquidated classes or with the capitalist surroundings and are acting in their interests, have placed themselves in an antagonistic contradiction with socialist society. If thieves and embezzlers are working people with an under-developed class consciousness, if they are simply not keen on their work, there is no antagonism. Perlov goes on to make rather far-reaching assertions; it is true, he says, that a religious ideology is antagonistic to a scientific one, but there is no antagonism between Soviet society and those citizens who are believers. Even more surprising is Perlov's statement that although cosmopolitanism and bourgeois nationalism is antagonistic to the ideology of Soviet patriotism and proletarian internationalism, certain cosmopolitanist and nationalist errors of scientists and artists should not be considered as

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antagonistically opposed to Soviet society. This means that they should not be dealt with, as they were under Stalin, by "one-act action", but by the "process" of education and persuasion.

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99. The article criticizing Stepanyan's theory of conflicts shows how difficult it was even after Khrushchev's speech to voice a criticism of Stalinist conditions and to try and build a theoretical foundation for such criticism. Not until the beginning of October, 1956 do we encounter in Voprosy Filosofii an indication of a systematic attack on Stalinist views as such. Such an attack came with the article signed by Nazarov and Gridnova (Voprosy Filosofii, No 5, 1956) on questions of the lagging behind of dramaturgy and the theatre. It is not a mere accident that the strongest manifestation of de-Stalinization was connected with questions of art. These had already been discussed and some daring words had been spoken by writers and critics in literary magazines and in the Literary Gazette.

100. In publishing the article by Nazarov and Gridnova on the question of the lagging behind of dramatic writing and of the theatre in general, the editorial board of Voprosy Filosofii did not make any of the usual reservations. Nevertheless, the article certainly could not have represented the views of the majority of the editorial board and must have

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been forced upon them by some outside authority. The article gives a detailed account of the development of State interference in matters of Soviet art and theatre in particular. It brings out facts which have become well known outside the U.S.S.R. through such books as Elagin's "The Taming of the Arts". It quotes Lenin and Lunacharsky as defenders of relative freedom when policing artistic activities. According to these authorities, State and Party interference must be flexible and stiff directives should not be applied too literally. Lenin's and Lunacharsky's principles were, according to the authors, implemented in the 1925 resolutions of the Central Committee, which stated that "communist criticism must fight mercilessly counter-revolutionary manifestations in literature . . . . . but at the same time it should demonstrate extreme tact, caution and tolerance towards all those intermediary literary stratas which might fall in step with the proletariat and will eventually do so". The authors emphasize by underlining the following passage of the same resolution: "Marxist criticism must purge itself in the most decisive way of any pretentious, semi-literate and 'suffisant' communist boastfulness". The change in the policy inaugurated by Lenin as far as the theatre is concerned took definite shape in 1936. It began with sharp criticism of Shostakovich's opera "Lady Macbeth of the Mtsonsk District". It went on under the slogan of "uprooting formalism from the arts". The reason for that fatal change was, according

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to the authors of the article, the cult of personality and in fact Stalin's personal interference. The article proposes "to reorganize the method of control over the theatre and the arts in general, on the basis of Lenin's principle of less guidance and more practical help". It proposes "to create an Academy of Arts, and to transfer the controls of artistic activity to such an autonomous organization".

101. The article is significant, not so much because of its complaints about the state of the theatre as because of its attempt to oppose Lenin to Stalin in the most drastic way. Nowhere is there a direct attack on the Party or the principle of Party control and the whole criticism is confined to the action of Soviet State officials, and in particular of the All-Union Committee of Arts established in 1936 under Korzhentsov. It is an indication of the sensitivity of Soviet public opinion that, even in this form, the article was understood to be a direct attack on the Party and on Party controls. It was condemned in the daily press and in the Literary Gazette and in the very next number (signed for publication on 22nd December, 1956) Voprosy Filosofii was forced to apologize for publishing this article. The editorial says: "In this article, methods of administration of theatrical art which had taken place in a past period are being criticized. However, the article, while directing its fire against naked administration as a

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method of guidance in art, at the same time under-estimates the importance of the guiding activity of the Communist Party in the development of Soviet socialist art. Although the authors do speak of Lenin's principles for the guiding of art by the Party, and although they quote Party decisions and instructions by Lenin from which it follows that the Party should guide the process of the development of arts according to plan, nevertheless, in a number of points, their criticism of the methods of administration becomes in substance a negation of the necessity of Party guidance". The editorial explains the mistake of the authors by the general conditions resulting from an over-estimation of Stalin's mistakes. "In a number of cases we see to much haste in the solution of complicated theoretical problems, an unprincipled shying off from one extreme to another, a substitution of primitive self-concoctions for serious Marxist analysis ..... a global negation of all the theoretical positions of Stalin including those which are correct".

102. The picture of this "shying off" in ideological matters which the editorial gives is very different from that obtained by reading Soviet philosophical literature. It emerges from the editorial that the poisonous influence of bourgeois propaganda has infiltrated "certain pronouncements in which the socialist nature of our democracy is questioned

107/and proposals

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and proposals are made to allow freedom to preach idealism, and so on. There have been pronouncements to the effect that a materialist philosophy and learning in general can develop successfully only if one allows freedom for idealist philosophy". The editorial refers to some workers on the ideological front who interpreted the demand for a differentiated approach to various trends of bourgeois philosophy, sociology, etc. as a softening of the criticism of bourgeois ideology and a first step to making peace with it. It speaks also of certain scientists who are alleged even to have said that the philosophy of dialectical materialism is of no use to them and that natural science can do without dialectics. Things went so far that it was proposed to abolish philosophical instruction altogether.

103. The editorial admits that philosophers were responsible for having provoked such erroneous views by incompetent discussions of physics, biology and other sciences, by attacks on the theory of relativity and so on. It also points out that a number of Stalin's pronouncements were inconsistent with the far more flexible and dialectical teaching of Marx; for instance, his conception that with the liquidation of a basis, the superstructure also suffers a total liquidation. To this the editorial opposes a theory of traditionalism in superstructure which, it claims, is more consistent with the teaching of Marx. It is clear that this sharp reaction

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to the belated penetration of the demands for radical reforms, of which the article by Nazarov and Gridneva is an example, was caused by the October events in Hungary: "bourgeois ideologists are trying to discredit Soviet democracy, the real democracy of the popular masses and are opposing to it bourgeois democracy which they call an expression of the spirit of the 'free world'. What this free world is has been shown best of all by the bandit attack of England, France and Israel on the independent people of Egypt and by the exploits of the organizers of the counter-revolutionary fascist putsch in Hungary and their bloody terror against the best sons of the Hungarian people".

104. There remains one unclear question: who are all those 'certain people' who voiced illegitimate criticism (according to Voprosy Filosofii's editorial) undermining the Marxist foundations of Soviet cultural life? Some light on this question is thrown by the reports of the proceedings of the all-union co-ordinating conference on questions of philosophy at the Institute of Philosophy of the Academy of Sciences of the U.S.S.R. The report is published (in part and in a short version) in Voprosy Filosofii, No 6, 1956 in which the editorial apology for Nazarov's and Gridneva's article also appeared; but, even in this shortened version, it is clear that very sharp things were said at that meeting.

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One of the subjects of discussion was the two volumes of "Essays on the History of Philosophical and Political Thought of the Nations of the U.S.S.R." edited by Vasetsky, Lovchuk and others. The sharpest criticism was made by a Professor of the University of Erevan (the Armenian Chaloyan) who criticized the method applied in writing and compiling the "Essays". He spoke of the erroneous definition of the history of philosophy given by Zhdanov. Philosophy is not, as Zhdanov had postulated, a history of materialism and it is impossible to explain the development of materialist views in Russia without giving an account of the idealist tendencies in the struggle with which materialist views are developed.

105. A lengthy discussion developed in which Lovchuk gave rather half-hearted support to Zhdanov's definition of the history of philosophy. Chaloyan criticized the "Essays" because the authors avoided mentioning the influence which foreign philosophical trends used to have in the past on Russian philosophy or the philosophies of other nations of the U.S.S.R. To this Lovchuk answered that one should take the book edited by him in its historical aspect; it had been written at a period of struggle against bourgeois conceptions of a cosmopolitan character and that explained certain omissions; but there was no intention of ignoring the influence of Western philosophy. Chaloyan pointed out the poor planning of the

110/book which

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book which did not show the specific features of the development of philosophy among the various nations of the U.S.S.R. He said that it was wrong to start with the ninth century A.D. True, the Russians had no philosophy before that date simply because there was no Russian nation, but in Georgia, Armenia and Central Asia there was an established philosophical tradition going back to the third and fourth centuries.

106. This last criticism by Chaloyan was accepted without much protest by the Moscow philosophers. One gets the impression that special allowance had been given to the Armenian philosopher to express rather daring views. Generally speaking, ever since Stalin's death and to a certain degree even before, there had been a special ideological regime in Transcaucasia which was accepted by the Moscow philosophers as a manifestation of national peculiarities, without necessarily being a sign of bourgeois nationalism. Another sign of the independence of Marxist thought in Georgia was the publication, in 1955, of a special text book, in Georgian, for students of Marxist Leninist philosophy entitled "Questions of Dialectical Materialism". It was published in Georgian under the auspices, and with the collaboration of the same Professor Bakradze who had been accused, in the discussion on logic of over-estimating formal logic at the expense of dialectical logic.

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107. The Russian reviewer in Voprosy Filosofii claims that the Georgian work is original, that it successfully shows the historical connection of dialectical materialism with pre-Marxist philosophy as well as the qualitative difference between both and that it is relatively free from the defects of quotationism, set pattern and rubber stamp formulations. There can be no doubt that Professor Bakradze departs from the usual style of 'diamat' text books when he deals with the epistemology of dialectical materialism. He gives much space to the analysis of the concept of truth and the examples he quotes to illustrate what he is saying are not without daring. For instance, he cannot accept the definition of truth as of knowledge which has been verified in practice and comments: "Was the theory of Marx not true before it had been verified by practice? Or was the statement on the building of socialism in one country not true before socialism was built? And is the possibility of building communism in our country not true, even before communism is built?"

108. There is no indication, however, that this fresh wind coming from Transcaucasia will fill the sails of the Moscow boat. A report on the meeting of the Institute of Philosophy of the Academy of Science (25th December, 1956) to discuss the work of Voprosy Filosofii shows clearly that the Moscow philosophical organizers were on the defensive:

112/against too

against too far-reaching reforms. The main speaker at the meeting was Kammari, who had never been an enthusiast for the new look. "It is now necessary to resist and reject all elements which are against Marxism/Leninism and are trying to make use of the criticism of the cult of the personality of Stalin to smuggle in under this flag their anti-Marxist, anti-Leninist theories and contentions". "Some comrades", Kammari goes on, "have come to the conclusion that the whole struggle of the Party against idealism which plays up to the Mensheviks is wrong. And yet, the basic features of this idealism are a development of the most dangerous dogmas of the Second International, a divorce of theory and practice and a smuggling in of Hegelianism under the banner of Marxism".

109. Who "some comrades" are, and who the elements inimical to Marxism/Leninism are, remains unsaid. The only named people who had made dangerous pronouncements are the same Nazarov and Gridnova who are accused of having put forward statements directed against Party guidance of the Arts. This was, however, obviously done with the knowledge and the support of the editorial board over which Kammari presides. And yet, no purge has so far taken place among the members of the editorial board. The method adopted now is obviously to take the criticism of the cult of personality firmly in hand and to carry it out on approved Party lines.

113/Kammari..

Kammari promises a number of "serious articles" which will criticize the cult of personality and discuss methodological problems of the history of philosophy.

110. This is the situation on the philosophical front with regard to the main problem, the one of de-Stalinization at present. We have devoted much space to the discussion of this problem, the very existence of which had been implicitly denied for a long time and which is now mentioned only occasionally, because we believe that this was and remains the main problem in the minds of those who are entrusted with carrying on "philosophical" work. We have seen that, so far as a revision of the cultural situation existing under Stalin is concerned, philosophy lagged behind other branches of cultural activity in the Soviet Union. The new look was much more forcibly expressed in literature, where a determined struggle for a new approach has been waged ever since Pomerantsev's famous article on sincerity in literature (December, 1953). Nothing like it is noticeable in philosophy and the ripples which have passed over this backwater of Soviet cultural life are only consequences of the high wind blowing over literature and science.

111. This is, of course, explained by the special position of the philosophers under the Stalin regime. They were compromised to a far greater extent by their subservience to the

114/Stalin regime

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Stalin regime than anybody else, except the secret police. Whereas the physicists, the biologists, the novelists and even the economists could retire in the last years of Stalin's rule from the front line of the ideological struggle and carry on some useful work in a small way waiting for things to change, the philosophers were forced to justify their existence by remaining in the forefront. Any attempt to justify their existence by politically innocuous research into the history of philosophy or some abstract branch of knowledge such as mathematical logic, was just as compromising as active resistance to the demands of Zhdanov and Stalin. There was nothing in philosophy on which Stalin could not claim, or would not claim, to be an authority, and there was no escape for the philosopher to an ivory tower.

112. It is open to a poet like Simonov to confess and deplore his weakness in having toed the Stalinist line because he has something in his past to atone for it: his patriotism and his achievements as a poet and writer. The majority of the philosophers and all those responsible for the organization of the philosophical front have no such achievements to fall back upon, to facilitate a renunciation of their Stalinist past. Therefore, they welcomed the technique of exposing the personality cult without attacking Stalin, which was applied before and up to the XXth Congress. The revolutions made at

115/the XXth Congress

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the XXth Congress obviously caught the philosophers unaware. They found themselves in a difficult position because they had been the main instrument in the establishment of what is now conventionally called the cult of the personality of Stalin. They had indeed taken pride in being such an instrument. When Kammari now explains the mistaken attacks on Marxism by the fact that present-day critics have read the last works of Stalin but have read neither Marx nor Lenin and are therefore unable to distinguish between the correct Marxist ideas in the works of Stalin and "separate formulations lacking exactitude" - Kammari speaks of his own shortcomings. Between 1950 and 1953, he and his like all readily and willingly forgot anything they had read in Lenin and Marx and undertook with enthusiasm the task entrusted to them of dressing up Marx and Lenin in the style of Stalin.

113. The tension caused by the denunciation of Stalin at the XXth Congress increased during the summer and autumn of 1956. The crisis threatened to become a personal one: those who were compromised by their attitude to Stalinism since 1947 were obviously faced with the alternative of either being isolated and ostracized or with the necessity of leaving their leading positions. Their line of defence was to try and demonstrate their usefulness to the Party. Stalin had no need of ideological high priests because he laid down the dogma of

116/the Marxist

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the Marxist faith himself. But the collective leadership might want the support of ostensibly independent scholars in questions of Marxist theory. And this such people as Fedoseev, Karmari or Stopanyan were ready to provide. They were helped in their efforts to stabilize their positions on this basis by the October events in Hungary. The danger of an uprising of the intellectuals, of a general ideological stampede, the danger of a breakdown of official double talk and double thought, which would threaten the very existence of the regime, became apparent. Indeed, such a danger must have become far more apparent in academic ideological and even Party circles in the Soviet Union than can be ascertained from abroad. On the other hand, of course, such people as Karmari all had an interest in exaggerating this danger in order to increase their own importance as the main bulwark against ideological deviations.

114. This is the situation at the present moment. The question is: will the revisionists continue their attacks on everything Stalin stood for, upsetting and freely discussing even orthodox Marxist views, or will they be silenced by a clique of ideologists whose academic integrity is compromised and who have nothing to lose but their academic posts? Will the new approach to philosophy maintain itself on the so-called periphery of the Soviet Union - in Georgia

117/or Armenia -

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or Armenia - and will the struggle develop on the basis of decentralization? Or will the reaction of Karmari and his like provoke a further stiffening of the resistance of younger men in the universities and in the Academy of Sciences who will organize themselves in the same way as the dissident poets and writers appear to be organizing themselves? There are signs favourable to each of these trends of development; there is the demand for philosophical magazines in the Union's Republics, there is the pressure of scientists and artists and writers who do not want to fall again under the control of discredited Party ideologists, and there is the ever-increasing outcry on the part of the latter giving warning to the Party of the imminent danger to the existence of the regime presented by ideological vacillations.

115. The process of de-Stalinisation and the attempts to camouflage it are the main features of the development in what was still called "philosophy" in the Soviet Union in the period after Stalin's death. At the same time changes occurred in other directions. The most outstanding one is an opening of eyes to realities in the philosophical development in the West. We have mentioned a special branch of Soviet philosophy which developed after the war and was officially called "Criticism of Bourgeois Ideology". Originally this branch was supposed to satisfy Zhdanov's demand for a militant

118/denunciation

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denunciation of Western philosophy as an instrument of capitalism and imperialism. Any attempt to acquaint even the restricted number of the readers of philosophical magazines with the contents of the works of Western philosophers and the general trends of Western philosophy would, at that time, have been a dangerous thing and those who risked doing so would have laid themselves open to accusations of cosmopolitanism and objectivism.

116. Criticism of Western ideology was therefore restricted to the most violent and ridiculous abuse directed against a few names such as Dewey in the U.S.A. and Bertrand Russell in England. Pages and pages were filled with the most fanatic abuse. One passage from an article by E. Kolman, "Bertrand Russell, the Armbearer of Imperialism" in Voprosy Filosofii, N° 2, 1953 can serve as an example. Speaking of the conflict as a result of which Russell had to leave the U.S.A. in 1943, Kolman says: "Why did Russell fall out of favour with the 'Uncle from America'? The Yanks, both Quakers and Catholics, did not understand at that time that Russell's free-thinking which shocked them is actually helping this agile pedlar of obscurantism to spin his web around those social strata which resisted the influence of their own all too rigid and primitive propaganda", and the article concludes by saying that Bertrand Russell is the "sworn enemy of all working people, an

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experienced and clever agent of imperialism who has now become one of the main purveyors of Hitlerite theories 'turned the other way round'. The counterpart in America of Bertrand Russell as a war-mongering pragmatist is John Dewey, who comes in for the same kind of abuse. The fact that he had been the Chairman of the Independent Tribunal, which investigated the case of Leo Trotsky after the first two Moscow show trials in 1936/37 had taken place, is never even mentioned. Apart from these abusive allusions hardly anything can be found conveying information on philosophy in the West before the death of Stalin.

117. The contrast in the treatment of Western thought after Stalin's death can be appreciated only by comparison with this preceding state. This contrast is possibly even greater than that of the treatment of Stalin before and after his death. Here again, however, the real reason for the change has not been admitted until very recently. Steps had already been taken to allow more or less reliable communist and 'progressive' thinkers in the West to report on their activity under the capitalist yoke. We have mentioned already Garaudy's appearance in Moscow in 1953. Joliot-Curie was frequently mentioned as a supporter of progressive ideas and a leading fighter in the ranks of the Peace Congress, but for some reason he did not contribute personally to the

12./rapprochement

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rapprochement between Soviet official philosophy and 'progressive' Western thought. Approximately at the same time as Garaudy's visit to the Soviet Union, Professor J.D. Bernal came to Moscow with a delegation of 'progressive scientists'. In a conversation with members of the Institute of Philosophy of the Academy of Sciences, Professor Bernal commented at length on the backwardness of scientific development in England and the divorce of theory and practice and of science and social life. Professor Bernal has acquired a reputation in the Soviet Union as a leading British progressive thinker, and was elected an Honorary Professor of Moscow University in September, 1956.

118. During 1954/55 a systematic and controlled effort was made to acquaint Soviet readers with what is going on in Western philosophy. Every major Western country had been allowed one or two representatives to explain ideological developments on accepted Marxist lines; France was represented by Garaudy; the U.S.A. by Harry Welles, a teacher at the Jefferson School of Social Sciences in New York; Italy by Marius Finella and Togliatti; and Great Britain by Maurice Cornforth. The contributions of all these "foreign correspondents" were obviously intended to follow a certain pattern and give an account of the struggle of revolutionary and progressive thinking against the official reactionaries in their respective countries. But not all the contributors have followed this pattern.

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119. Thus Cornforth, instead of giving an account of the struggle of Marxist philosophy in England against reaction, provides Voprosy Filosofii with a lengthy article on the opponents of idealism in contemporary English bourgeois philosophy. The article opens with a risky declaration that not all those who champion peace are socialists; not all those who champion healthy realist art and literature are followers of socialist realism; and not all those who raise their voices against idealism in philosophy are Marxists. After a few introductory remarks on Collingwood, Alexander and Whitehead, who are all represented as materialists who had missed their opportunity to develop their views consistently because they failed to appreciate Marxism, Cornforth gives an account of the latest work of Gilbert Ryle. He refers to Ryle's "bashful materialism" and explains it by his desire not to be drawn into the social and party struggle of our days and to remain a free-lance, which is a characteristic feature of English philosophers and English intellectuals in general. According to Cornforth, this prevents them from carrying on an effective struggle against idealism which is possible only from the position of an openly professed materialist explanation of the world. Cornforth concludes with an appeal not to ignore and snub anti-idealist tendencies in bourgeois philosophy, but to make the best use of them, for

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they are the first steps which will lead an opponent of idealism towards revolutionary criticism of the social conditions on which idealism is based.

120. An editorial note in Voprosy Filosofii points out that besides the information contained in it, Cornforth's article is particularly valuable as it is a pointer towards an incorrect, simplified and non-differentiating approach to the various trends of bourgeois philosophy. However, the editors of the magazine reinsure themselves against malevolent criticism by saying vaguely that some of the contentions of the author "require further discussion".

121. When this discussion took place (as late as the spring of 1957) Soviet criticism was mainly directed against Cornforth's interpretation of Alexander's and Whitehead's views. The Soviet philosophers did not seem to be able to say anything about Ryle. The Soviet critics (Bogomolov, Pomogaeva and Trofimov) do not agree with Cornforth, that the study of Alexander or Whitehead can be of any use for the struggle against idealism: "It is our duty", says one of them, "to expose and denounce everything dead, everything impeding the development of fresh progressive thought. The philosophical inheritance of Alexander and Whitehead belongs, according to our opinion, to this category". The other two critics point out that the enlisting of idealists into the

123/camp of the

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camp of the adversaries of idealism, of which Cornforth made himself guilty, in no way reinforces the camp of materialism, but on the contrary weakens it by wiping out the demarcation line between materialism and idealism, and by diverting the energies of materialists and of all the fighters for science from the struggle against the idealist schools and trends in contemporary bourgeois philosophy.

122. Cornforth's answer to his critics is most significant. He admits that the common purpose which he shared with his critics is the struggle against idealism. But every philosophical system, he says, is always a mixture of various trends. The philosophies of Descartes, Locke and Leibnitz, as well as those of Alexander and Whitehead were "neither pure idealism nor pure materialism, but are characterized as a combination and a confrontation of both". "No philosophical system can be criticized", Cornforth goes on, "and appreciated by a certain abstract standard: this is materialism, that is idealism". Only by finding the materialist element in academic bourgeois philosophy, can one establish a contact with many philosophers who are not materialists, but who can still be "forced to join" the materialists. Therefore, according to Cornforth, one should not miss the opportunity of building bridges between different philosophical positions. Such opportunities are far more frequent, says Cornforth in conclusion, "than we have been ready to assume in the past".

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123. The polemics of Cornforth and his opponents are typical of the diffident attitude of the Moscow philosophers towards Western communists and follow-travellers. Cornforth's contentions are very much the same as those we mentioned when dealing with Chaloyan's criticism of the official Soviet approach to the problems of history of philosophy. If it is true that Karmari's attack on those who are using criticism of the cult of Stalin's personality for anti-Leninist purposes was aimed at Chaloyan, it is certainly also aimed at Cornforth's position. The fact that Cornforth is a militant communist and sympathiser, would not, in Karmari's view, make the situation any better. On the contrary, it only shows how dangerous it is to have ideological allies whose education and intellectual habits are basically different from those of the Soviet philosophers, and who cannot be controlled by the same methods of Party supervision as are Soviet citizens.

124. Nonetheless, it is deemed necessary in Moscow to create the impression that there is a complete unity between the Moscow conception of Marxism and the communist ideologists of the West. This is illustrated by the review of the "Marxist Quarterly" Voprosy Filosofii, No 2, 1956 signed by B.A. Lapidus. It quotes Pollitt's article in number 3 of the quarterly, Campbell's review of Cornforth's three volumes on Marxist philosophy, Campbell's attack on Welden's "Vocabulary of

125/Politics",

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Politics", and John Lewis' analysis of the works of authors who have "approached communism", according to Lewis' opinion, "after a more or less serious study of Marxist classics". These works are Carew Hunt's "Theory and Practice of Communism", which, according to Voprosy Filosofii, is a "reference book for the employees of the Foreign Office", and John Planenatz' "German Marxism and Russian Communism". Lapidus concludes his article by saying that the propaganda of Marxism in the Magazine "Marxist Quarterly" is remarkable for its creative approach to theory and for the connection it establishes between theoretical ideas and the practical problems with which the English people are now faced.

125. Gradually, information about philosophical trends in the West which was originally confined to articles by communist contributors from abroad, has become available also in articles by Soviet contributors. It does seem that the long period of isolation in which philosophers in the Soviet Union have lived makes it difficult for them to appreciate present trends and their origins at the beginning of the century and in the period between the two wars. There is, however, a definite desire in certain circles to convey what is believed to be objective information on what is going on.

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126. In an article by Gorsky and Burkhard in Voprosy Filosofii, No 3, 1956 an account is given of the English philosophical magazine "Analysis" in which the article by George Paul on Lenin's "Theory of Perception" is mentioned. True, no account of Paul's masterly criticism of Lenin's "Theory of Reflection" (written in 1936) is given, but the mere fact that the article is quoted is significant. The necessity of filling in the gap in the education of Soviet philosophers by conveying to them some knowledge of the discussion which took place in the West in the last fifty years was emphasized in a recent article by a corresponding member of the Academy of Sciences, S.L. Rubinshtein, a leading psychologist in the Soviet Union. The article is outstanding for its courageous attempt to explain the origins of modern realism and positivism as a development of the psychological discussion of the beginning of the century. It is exceptionally well-informed and quotes its sources liberally. It also makes a serious attempt at an objective explanation of Russell's "epistemology" and refrains from any accusations of class subservience, even as far as Dewey himself is concerned.

127. An article by the "progressive American philosopher", Harry K. Welles, specially commissioned by Voprosy Filosofii to acquaint Soviet readers with the history of Freud's psychological theories, falls in the same category as

127/Rubinshtein's

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Rubinshtein's contributions. The article strikes one by its "objectivism". The only concession to the negative attitude to Freud is a treatment of him as of a frustrated physiologist who - having failed to find a physiological explanation for the "behavior" he observed - invented a pragmatically useful but unrealistic theory to explain it. The article is skilfully written and conveys most of the relevant information. And yet, obviously this proved too much for the editorial board of Voprosy Filosofii. They made no correction to Welles' article but in the next issue they published a review of the work of a Japanese communist, Singo Sibata. According to Sibata, Freud's doctrine, which had been imported into Japan by the Americans, "is useless as an ally of progressive forces". "Freud and his followers are not only cutting off human mental activity from its physiological foundation and socio-historical conditions but they even exclude the possibility of a connection between the two", writes the Voprosy Filosofii reviewer. He goes on to quote Sibata as saying: "Freudian determinism is therefore profoundly idealist".

128. As compared to the whiffs of fresh air which are blowing in the secluded atmosphere of Moscow philosophical circles in the form of articles from abroad - even of such articles as those by Welles or P. Togliatti (e.g. on early Hegel) - the occasional contributions from the Western

128/satellites

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satellites are of less interest. In 1954, a delegation of Polish philosophers came to Moscow to establish contact with the Institute of Philosophy of the Academy of Sciences. They explained the special circumstances of philosophical development in Poland where several trends, inimical to Marxism, are firmly rooted. The leader of the delegation, Adam Schaff, mentioned the activity of the Catholic Institute in Ljublin where, in 1953, seven hundred students were systematically indoctrinated in Thomist philosophy. Some of these students, Schaff pointed out, would not become priests and would later take part in normal civil activities. Apart from Thomism, there was the neo-positivist school founded by Kasimir Twardowski and a movement started by the neo-Kantian philosopher Tatarkiewicz. Schaff proposed to establish close contact with Soviet philosophers in order to help Polish communists in their struggle against neo-Thomism. There is little indication that such collaboration has, in fact, developed. Either it was deemed in Moscow inexpedient to enter into detailed and serious arguments with the Catholic point of view, or else the Poles themselves understood that Soviet ideology developing in conditions of strict regimentation could produce no effective weapons for a struggle which was to be carried out in the circumstances of semi-freedom prevailing in Poland.

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129. As far as philosophy of the Eastern peoples is concerned, there have been a number of articles on Chinese and Indian philosophy. Their main tendency was to show that everywhere in the East there had been a strong materialistic tradition which had been suppressed by the ruling classes on the spot and ignored or slandered by the bourgeois philosophers of the West. Recently, their Chinese colleagues seem to have been putting pressure on the Soviet philosophers to give more information about Chinese and Indian philosophies. One can only imagine the reaction of the Moscow philosophers to these insistent proposals. They cannot believe that acquainting their leaders with the works of obscure Chinese materialists of the past can be of any use. They will probably pay lip-service to collaboration with Chinese philosophers and then, at most, start the publication of a special magazine for the study of Eastern philosophy under the auspices of Oriental Studies.

130. From all these new developments of the post-Stalin era in philosophy, such as information on philosophical trends in the West, contacts with the ideological struggles in the Satellites, as well as from the increased interest in the history of Russian radicalism and early Marxism which produced a flood of articles in connection with the anniversary of Plekhanov in 1957, we can draw the general conclusion that a certain "objectivism" in the approach to these themes and a

130/tolerance

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tolerance towards higher academic standards is mainly dictated by the desire to increase the academic prestige of Soviet philosophers, a consideration which had little weight with Stalin. In other words, speaking crudely, at a time when co-existence and academic contacts are encouraged, it is impossible to have teachers of philosophy in universities who know nothing more about Froud than that he was an "instrument of capitalist oppression".

131. There is, however, no real attempt to pursue the study of divergent views to the point when an open discussion of the essential differences can become useful. The Soviet philosopher has to know what the miscreants believe. He has to know that they are wrong, and that they should be silenced. He has to know the answers he should give in order to save his face, but there is no attempt to show him the way he should set about refuting his opponents' views. One gets the impression that those responsible for philosophical education have long abandoned any hope that this can be done. Nor is it necessary - in their view - to do so. Did Lonin refute the views of his opponents? His methods of polemics were violent abuse and insinuation and he was proved right, not by his arguments, but by the victory of the cause he championed. The Soviet philosophers are still working on the same Leninist line and nothing which happened in the period of de-Stalinisation can be interpreted as an abandonment of this line.

131/132.

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132. And yet, although the policy as far as philosophy remains unchanged, the situation in which the philosophers find themselves has considerably altered. The increase of information, both about Western theories and about the development of social and political thinking in Russia itself, is considerable. Even in the most abusive articles in which such specialists in ideological vituperation as Arab-Ogly or Episkoposov attack bourgeois thinkers and scientists, Catholic critics of Marxism such as Wetter or emigre Russian philosophers such as Lossky and Zenkovsky, a considerable amount of bibliographical information is conveyed. One is tempted to think at times that the authors of these libels might themselves be using this channel to convey information for the use of their colleagues which it would be impossible to convey otherwise. In the last years of Stalin's rule even such smuggling of information into propaganda literature would have been very dangerous for the authors.

133. These changes were not without their effect on the "philosophical discussions" which we selected as examples in the third chapter of this survey. We have seen that contacts between Polish and Soviet philosophers did not yield any results until recently. However, a Polish philosopher and logician who visited Moscow in the spring of 1957 gained the impression that the official philosophy represented by the

132/Institute

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Institute of the Academy of Sciences had lost all contact with the young people who are really interested in philosophical and logical problems, the majority of whom are studying mathematics and theoretical physics. They are well acquainted with the work of modern logicians abroad and are eager to learn as much as possible. All their sympathies are with the neo-Positivist trends in the West which have been officially denounced as crypto-idealist. The professors of mathematics and theoretical physics at the large universities in the USSR are, according to this Polish philosopher, willing to provide opportunities for gifted young men to study logic and epistemology as it is understood in the West. He also received the impression that philosophy in Georgia under Bakradze has a different standing from that in Moscow, where the people in the Institute of Philosophy are merely Agitprop officials. The contact between physicists was far more fruitful and affected the development of the philosophical discussion on the foundations of modern physics. There was an interchange of articles between Soviet physicists and Polish physicists and Academician Fok even published in Voprosy Filosofii his private scientific correspondence with the Polish physicists. According to the Rector of Leningrad University, Aleksandrov, it was Fok who personally established contacts with Louis de Broglie in France. De Broglie had for years doubted the

133/soundness

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soundness of the Bohr-Heisenberg interpretation of the principles of indeterminacy and complementarity. De Broglie is possibly the leading physicist who is strenuously trying to re-establish a strictly determinist theory of micro-physical events. He is neither interested in philosophical or materialist determinism as such, nor does he claim to have substituted something better for the theory of the Copenhagen School. But he believes he has found the best way of doing so and he is looking for fellow physicists who would carry on his research. As far as can be judged, his is a far more radical attempt at a revision of Quantum mechanics than that of Blokhintsev. Voprosy Filosofii, No 6, 1956 published a translation of an article by de Broglie on this subject.

134. The same issue carried an article by Professor Vigier of the Institut Henri Poincare, specially written for Voprosy Filosofii, in which Vigier makes a direct appeal for the collaboration of Soviet physicists and for their support of de Broglie's theory. Vigier writes: "I consider it absolutely indispensable for all opponents of the Copenhagen School to unite on a platform of dialectical materialism to fight back against all Machist and idealist influences in modern physics". The militant and, indeed, military phraseology of Vigier is quite in tune with the pronouncements of the most militant Soviet philosophers. Vigier offers the Soviet physicists his

134/ideological

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ideological support of Marxism in order to get some kind of technical co-operation in carrying out research in the fields of submicro-physics. At the same time, Vigier warns his Soviet colleagues against Marxist ideologists in France who may be pure Marxists but are physical ignoranuses.

135. De Broglie's name is also involved in the other discussion studied in Chapter 3, that on mathematical logic. The new development in mathematical logic began shortly after an article was published in Voprosy Filosofii over the signature of "Materialist". Attacking cybernetics as a pseudo-science invented by capitalists as a new instrument of oppression of the working-classes, the article speaks of "the ideologists of imperialism who -seized by panic in the face of the energetic creative activity of human thought - were led to invent such misanthropic theories as cybernetics". From time to time, a jibe at cybernetics can be found in the philosophical literature of the period between 1953 and 1955. The inventor of cybernetics, Wiener, is always denounced as a "reactionary". The situation changed abruptly in 1955 when Kolman<sup>x</sup> revealed, in an article in Voprosy Filosofii, No 4, that the attacks on cybernetics had been organized by "progressive thinkers" all over the

135/world

<sup>x</sup> Note: Kolman's attitude to Bertrand Russell is referred to in paragraph 116 above.

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world and that the views expressed by materialists had been shared both by French and Polish supporters of Marxist philosophy. Kolman admits that this approach to cybernetics was profoundly mistaken, as had been demonstrated by the fact that "one of the greatest physicists of our time", de Broglie, had spoken in favour of cybernetics. Kolman proceeds to rehabilitate the founder of cybernetics, Norbert Wiener, as one of the most prominent American mathematicians. According to Kolman, Wiener is not a boastful charlatan inventing pseudo-theories, but a serious scientist who even quoted the works of Russian and Soviet colleagues with sympathy and went so far as to criticize certain conditions prevailing in capitalist industry. Thus cybernetics was restored to a place of honour as "one of the major hopes of progress in industry".

136. It remained to explain why cybernetics had been originally attacked. No direct answer is given, although an Academician, Sobolev, and two other authors in an article following that of Kolman admit that the Soviet press had "slandered" the inventor of cybernetics, who had been accused without any reason of having made statements to the effect that automation must be directed against the workers and become an instrument of oppression. Sobolev and his colleagues reveal that considerable work had been carried out in the Soviet Union on cybernetics and that Soviet mathematicians, biologists

136/and physicists

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and physicists co-operated in this work with mathematical logicians. Kolman, on his part, regrets very much that philosophers had kept aloof from this work on mathematical logic. He asserts that the use made by bourgeois ideologists of the theory of information and mathematical logic for reactionary ends had confused Soviet philosophers and led them to adopt a sharply negative and incorrect attitude towards both of these disciplines. In a footnote, Kolman says: "A typical example of such a nihilist attitude towards mathematical logic can be found in the article by V.P. Tugarinev and L.E. Maistrov 'Against Idealism in Mathematical Logic', although there is no question in this article of 'liquidating' mathematical logic". Kolman goes on to say that both the "theory of information" and mathematical logic are now being successfully developed by mathematicians but not by philosophers: in consequence, problems of epistemology remain in the background. Kolman makes it clear that the study of mathematical logic has been saved from liquidation to a great extent because of this work on cybernetics which requires some application of symbolic logic such as, for instance, the Algebra of Logic of Boole.

137. One would think that Soviet philosophers, like Kolman, would draw a lesson from the bankruptcy of the attacks on symbolic logic and would be more cautious in ascribing ridiculous conceptions to bourgeois philosophers. But far

137/from it,

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from it, Kolman argues that just as a nihilistic attitude towards the theory of relativity and quantum physics among Soviet philosophers had been provoked by the use which was made of these theories for idealist purposes, so have Soviet philosophers been induced to reject cybernetics as a pseudo-science because of the reactionary uses to which it is put in the capitalist world. Cybernetics is being used in the capitalist world, according to him, to frighten the strata of medium intelligentsia into submission to work at low salaries. "Hold on to your jobs", - the capitalists are alleged to say to the intellectuals, "soon the machines will put you out of them and only highly qualified scientists will remain". The situation in the Soviet Union is quite different, according to Kolman; here the medium intelligentsia is really needed. As in other respects, Soviet philosophers when altering their attitudes to these discussions are, as we see, making a strenuous attempt to give up as little as they can of the methods and attitudes they had adopted in the Stalinist period.

138. There are, at present, about fifteen hundred teachers of philosophy in the various universities and institutes of higher education in the U.S.S.R. They are organized in units attached to the Chair of Philosophy of the Institute in question. In some institutions, philosophy plays an important part, in others it seems to be limited to the humdrum indoctrination

138/of the accepted

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of the accepted text books on dialectical and historical materialism. Not all the universities have a faculty of philosophy comprising a number of Chairs such as the Chairs of Dialectical Materialism, of Historical Materialism, of History of Philosophy and even of Criticism of Bourgeois Philosophy. Such faculties exist only in Moscow, Leningrad and, apparently, recently established in Kiev. But certain Departments of Philosophy are themselves rather large bodies, numbering some ten or more members. Teachers of Philosophy in other institutes of higher education of the same town take part in the discussion of theoretical and organizational questions which are going on in such Chairs. Important Chairs of Philosophy can be found in Yaroslavl, Sverdlovsk and in some of the capitals of the Union Republics. Among the latter the Chair of Philosophy of the Tbilisi University is outstanding for its activity and its rebellious attitude towards leadership and guidance coming from Moscow. Besides carrying on with the teaching of the curriculum established by the Ministry of Higher Education, the Chairs or Departments of Philosophy are the bodies in which post-graduate studies are organized.

139. Any discussions which take place in such Departments of Philosophy remain private and no Chair has, as yet, managed to publish anything but occasional selected collective works of its members. Demands have now been raised several times

139/for the publication

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for the publication of philosophical magazines on the periphery or in the Union Republics, which would compete with Voprosy Filosofii, the only philosophical periodical appearing in the Soviet Union. It is remarkable that such demands have been voiced and that they have not been immediately suppressed, but it is most improbable that they will be satisfied. They are accompanied by complaints about the arrogance and self-importance of the Moscow philosophers coming from provincial teachers ever since Voprosy Filosofii was published.

140. In Moscow itself, the main body/which the direction of all philosophical activity is concentrated is the Institute of Philosophy of the Academy of Science. A visit to this Institute by the Oxford University delegation was scheduled in September, 1956 but was cancelled at the last moment. The delegation was told that the philosophers were still on vacation in September and, besides, they quarrelled with each other so violently that it was no pleasure meeting them. The Institute of Philosophy of the Academy of Sciences is closely connected with the editorial board of Voprosy Filosofii, which occupies a key position in the philosophical world.

141. The persons who play an important part in both the Institute and the editorial board of Voprosy Filosofii are also regular contributors of ideological articles to the Party press as well as Heads of Departments in the Higher

140/Party School.

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Party School. The Party press organs sometimes take the overflow of philosophical discussions which start on the pages of Voprosy Filosofii. Sometimes the political significance of these discussions is more apparent in articles in Kommunist than in Voprosy Filosofii, where they are cocooned in an academic cobweb. For example, the discussion on basis and superstructure was finally transferred to Kommunist.

142. In an unsigned article entitled "For a Creative Study and Development of the Theory of Basis and Superstructure" in Kommunist, No 4, 1957, Stalin's conception of the liquidation of the superstructure after the revolution is said to be, if not necessarily wrong in itself, at least wrongly interpreted by commentators. In order to reconcile the theory of the liquidation of the bourgeois State, law, etc., with the maintenance of national and cultural traditions, the article falls back on the suggestion, made by Kammari and others, of a distinction between the 'bourgeois superstructure' and the 'superstructure of the bourgeois State'. Roughly speaking, this hair-splitting definition means that those parts of the superstructure which serve the bourgeoisie in its effort to maintain its supremacy - such as the legal and State apparatus, religion, etc. - are 'bourgeois superstructure' and will be liquidated, whereas other elements of the superstructure of a bourgeois regime such as progressive thinking, communist

141/parties and

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parties and other workers' organizations which also belong to the superstructure, will be modified and some of them will expand into the superstructure of the new socialist or communist society.

143. The emptiness of all this scholasticism becomes clear when one looks for a principle by which one could determine whether a certain element of the 'superstructure of the bourgeois State' belongs to the 'bourgeois superstructure' or not. But it must be admitted that the article in Kommunist shows far more clearly than anything written in Voprosy Filosofii what the discussion on basis and superstructure is about. It emerges clearly as a by-product of the struggle for survival waged by those who are fighting for the maintenance of the 'cultural inheritance of the past' against nihilist tendencies in the Soviet Union. It also shows once more that the development of a so-called philosophical thinking in the Soviet Union cannot be carried out successfully without a study of the function assigned to it by the Party in the political development of the Soviet Union.

144. It would be, however, futile to look in this philosophical development for any independent initiative in the struggles and tensions which are noticeable in Soviet cultural life in recent months. There has been no such overt professional deviation among philosophers as that which has been exposed

142/and censured

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and censured by Kommunist among historians. Possibly the outcome of the conflict between the editorial board of Voprosy Istorii and the Communist Party will determine the future attitude of the philosophers. One can hardly expect, however, the people who are now in charge of the Moscow Institute of Philosophy of the Academy of Sciences to show any ideological daring. It would be naive to expect that in the event of another split at the top of the Party hierarchy, the real protagonists of the struggle would require the support of philosophical arguments to strengthen their position. The task of the philosophers would only be to produce an ideological facade for a situation which would be the outcome of a struggle by intrigue and political power and not by theoretical argument.

145. The composition of the Institute of Philosophy and of the editorial board of Voprosy Filosofii is such that one could hardly expect sufficient polarization of opposite tendencies to produce a split among the philosophers except in the eventuality of a split at the top of the Party. And yet, certain divergencies of opinion and reactions are noticeable among top level philosophers. There are a few representatives of the old generation of Marxists like Mitin and Rozental who are trying to restore their reputations as independent Marxist scholars; there is the inevitable Fedoseev, a representative

143/of the Byzantine

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of the Byzantine opportunism of the last years of Stalin's rule who can now turn to his advantage the reprimand addressed to him by Suslov for having supported Vozenensky, but who is generally despised for his ignorance and weathercock tactics; there is Stepanyan who could be considered as the representative of the Stalinist line and who has been silent ever since the XXth Congress; there is Kamari, the chief editor of Voprosy Filosofii, who, like his predecessor Kedrov, is a master at providing an academic dress for every new ideological campaign started by the Party. It is impossible to believe that such people could have any theoretical interests for which they would stand up and fight. The other members of the editorial board of Voprosy Filosofii are even more insignificant (for instance, Shishkin, whose recent book on 'Communist Morals' is possibly the most vulgar, commonplace Soviet propaganda patchwork, particularly at a time when the real moral problems are being acutely discussed in Soviet works of fiction). There is, however, on the editorial board of Voprosy Filosofii, Professor A.D. Aleksandrov, the present Rector of Leningrad University. He joined the editorial board as an outsider and a specialist on physics after Stalin's death and as the discussion on the theory of relativity and the principle of indeterminacy was developing. He has now become a rather prominent figure in Soviet cultural life. In the autumn of

144/1956 he attacked

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143/of the Byzantine

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144/1956 he attacked

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1956, he attacked the Ministry of Higher Education for its rigid policy with regard to curricula and the question of attendance at lectures. And ever since, he has been a protagonist of a certain measure of academic freedom. It is a fair guess that it was through him that the article of Nazarov and Gridneva was forced upon the reluctant editorial board of Voprosy Filosofii. At least views which he expressed privately on the disastrous effect of the regimentation of arts are practically the same as those in that article.

146. Quite recently, Aleksandrov came out with an article entitled "The Education of the Students is a Political Task of the Utmost Importance" in Vestnik Vysshei Shkoly. In it he pays lip service to the principles of Party control and Party leadership in the education of university students. He does so in the strongest terms and, at the same time, he is no less determined about the way in which Party control should be implemented. He is against administrative measures except in cases where formal breaches of discipline have taken place. The students should be allowed to speak their minds as long as they do so in an orderly manner. He reports a students' meeting at his university in which criticism of the Ministry's educational policy was aired on the very same lines as in his own article published in Literaturnaya Gazeta at the beginning of the term. The students wanted to pass a resolution asking

145/for reforms

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for reforms and Aleksandrov claims he had dissuaded them from doing so because "one should leave such matters to the competent academic bodies". Aleksandrov is also in favour of close co-operation between students and factory workers and collective farmers at harvest time, and attaches great educational importance to these contacts. He claims that a benevolent and tolerant attitude in all cases where there is no gross violation of academic discipline is the only right policy in fighting "liberalism and anarchism". The presence of this man in the councils of Soviet official philosophers might become important if he succeeds in introducing some of the people who share his views into their central organs. This type of benevolent and intelligent servant of a reactionary regime who claims that, provided one is firm and does not tolerate disorder, one can with advantage introduce liberal methods and adopt a tolerant attitude towards progressive elements, is typical of Russian tyrannies in general. Loris-Melikoff in the nineteenth, and Stolypin in the twentieth centuries belonged to this type. The emergence of such characters in politics has always been a sign of the lack of self-confidence felt by a despotic regime. They were mostly tragic figures who fell victims to both sides which they believed they could serve and save from ultimate disaster. But it was under the influence of such men that tyranny

146/learned subtler

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learned subtler ways of control and a greater measure of understanding of the social phenomena to be controlled, and it was also under the protection of such men that opposition to tyranny became organized and disciplined.

147/CONCLUSIONS.

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CONCLUSIONS

147. The history of philosophical development in the post-war period in the Soviet Union falls into four clearly distinguishable periods which are possibly followed by at least a fifth one, the initial stage of which we are now witnessing. At the beginning we note that the philosophers were about the last people in the Soviet Union to learn anything from the war-time changes inside the country. They ignored the strength of nationalist feeling, which Stalin was to exploit for building up impenetrable barriers between the West and the realm of his power. At that time, G.F. Aleksandrov's book on the 'History of Western Philosophy' was selected as an example of the shortcomings of philosophers and Zhdanov gave the philosophers a severe lesson, telling them how they should mend their ways. At the same time, he saved them from far more drastic punishment such as, for instance, was meted out to Voznesensky and other people accused of cosmopolitanism.

148. Zhdanov's intervention inaugurated a new phase in which the philosophers applied themselves dutifully to the tasks indicated in his speech. But as they did so, they tried to maintain the initiative in ideological work, tried to act as specialists of Marxist thinking, who can be trusted to develop a theme of their own choice in accordance with the general instructions hinted at in the pronouncements of the

148/supreme

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supreme leadership. In this task the philosophers failed lamentably and incurred the wrath of Stalin by giving support to the building up of Marr's authority as a Marxist. After Stalin's rebuff in 1951 a general freeze-up of independent activities by the philosophers set in. Work was practically confined to commentary on and exaggerated praise for Stalin's contribution to Marxist theory. Simultaneously the isolation of philosophical thinking in the Soviet Union from any philosophical discussions going on in the outside world reached its utmost limits. This isolation meant not merely ignoring what was going on in the West, but active and systematic misrepresentation on a gigantic scale. The philosophers were carried away by this anti-cosmopolitan campaign and began attacking general ideas in other branches of human knowledge, in particular in theoretical physics. This brought about a reaction on the part of the physicists which became manifest even before Stalin's death. We can, therefore, say that, as perhaps in other branches of Soviet cultural activity, the process of de-Stalinisation in philosophy had already begun in the last months before the dictator's disappearance.

149. After Stalin's death, the change in the tendency of Soviet philosophical writing is very marked, and yet it is far less so than in literature, science or even in economics and legal theory. This may partly be explained by personal

149/considerations

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considerations on the part of the philosophers who are among the persons most compromised by their own sycophantic exploits in the last years of Stalin's rule. The people at the head of philosophical departments and institutes have everything to lose by too sharp a change in the general trend of Soviet philosophical work. They are obviously not sufficiently academically equipped to produce a revision of the foundation of Marxism which would make it a theory defensible in modern conditions. Nor have they the necessary authority to preach any change of heart to the ruling clique in the Soviet Union. They are also in a particularly exposed position: whereas a man of letters or a scientist can easily take cover behind his professional interests and achievements when putting forward demands which are frowned on by the Party, a philosopher openly deviating from the Party line would simply be usurping the right of ideological propaganda which has been declared a monopoly of the Communist Party since 1921.

150. This situation explains why official Soviet philosophy has been lagging behind in the process of de-Stalinisation and why it has been over-keen in the reaction against it which set in after October, 1956. Manifestations of philosophical and ideological thinking which showed independence from Party guidance have been limited, as far as official publications are concerned, to two instances. They were caused

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either by intruders on the philosophical field coming from literature or science, or by philosophers from the national minorities in the Caucasus who, like the Armenians or the Georgians, are to a certain degree independent of the Russian-speaking Moscow centre of philosophical research at the Academy of Sciences and are possibly enjoying the special protection of certain members of the ruling group. Whatever rebellious attitudes towards official Soviet philosophy may have developed in the Soviet Union and even inside Moscow University itself, they have never been directly reflected in print. Indirect indications, however, can be found in certain warnings given to the Party by recognized philosophical authorities such as Kammari or Fedoseev that all is not well in the ranks of philosophical students and that there have been dangerous deviations from the officially accepted view. Hints at the existence of such deviations can be found in articles such as that by A.I. Lutchenko in Vestnik Vysshei Shkoly for September, 1956. The abortive attempt to propagate certain views on the theatre, which was made by Nazarov and Gridneva in Voprosy Filosofii, has shown that any philosophical discussion of claims for loosening Party guidance and controls on ideological questions is at least premature.

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