

political affiliation.⁹ (I do not refer here to countries in which the Party is illegal.) This desire to hide its political identity—especially necessary for activity in front organisations—is part of the latent ideology of the Communist movement, and it is not surprising to find it reflected in what amounts to a piece of technical terminology.

One of the curious aspects of this usage is that, like “*provocation*”, it can only baffle the uninitiated. Sometimes the denial of Communist membership is transparently untruthful, as indeed it was in the Vancouver case. Moreover, from the point of view of the very outsider whom Communist propaganda wishes to influence, why should a Communist label be so vigorously resisted by Communist spokesmen? Doesn’t this invite the impression that it is shameful to be a Communist? Here again we see something that is strange to the outsider, illogical, and self-defeating to the Communist propagandist.

The term appears only in English although the camouflaging occurs everywhere. We don’t expect a one-to-one relationship between language and ideology,¹⁰ but we might speculate on

⁹ Perhaps the first prominent Communist who did this was also the founder of the first Communist front organisations, the German Willi Münzenberg. (Münzenberg later employed Arthur Koestler in Paris.) Afterwards he broke with the CP, and was mysteriously assassinated, apparently by the Soviet secret police. See David Pike, *German Writers in Soviet Exile* (1981).

¹⁰ Discussion about the nature of the language-culture relationship tends to centre on the “Sapir-Whorf hypothesis.” For a balanced statement, see the article by Charles F. Hockett, “Chinese Versus English: An Exploration of the Whorfian Theses”, in Harry Hoijer (ed.), *Language In Culture* (1954).

¹¹ Just so is a man freed from feelings of guilt. Koestler has spoken of the Communist’s “blissfully clean conscience” when engaged in what others would consider wrong: in *The God That Failed* (ed. Richard Crossman, 1949), p. 33. A similar explanation has been advanced for the Rosenbergs’ consistent protestations of innocence in the face of overwhelming evidence that they were spies. See Ronald Radosh and Joyce Milton, *The Rosenberg File* (1983), pp. 340, 547.

why the term is absent elsewhere: perhaps the small American and British Communist movements, lacking mass parties and mass followings, rely even more than those of the Continent on dissimulation, disguise, concealment. While Communists in France and Italy can get a respectful hearing under their own label, this is only barely possible in the English-speaking world. Perhaps the appearance of “*red-baiting*” as a term is related to the relative importance of the hidden when compared to the open Communist.

THE INTERPRETATION of the latent content in Communist language, like that of dreams, can offer temptations for loose theorising. The exegeses I have offered so far—a Communist penchant for conspiracy, a Communist tendency toward disguise and dissimulation—are not very daring because there is ample non-linguistic evidence for them. But I wish to offer two final suggestions of a more speculative nature.

(1) Both “*provocation*” and “*red-baiting*” give the impression of a Communist who is acted upon rather than acting on his own responsibility. He is victimised (“*baited*”), and when he acts it is not because he wishes to but because he is pushed (“*provoked*”).¹¹

(2) The second suggestion is of an altogether different nature. I have tried to show that the Communist’s persistent use of technical vocabulary is related to latent ideology and strikes the outsider as strange, illogical, and self-defeating. Yet Communist propagandists persist in this usage, from the highest authorities in the Kremlin to the minor functionary in Canada. By doing so, I suggest, they give evidence that ideology, properly understood as including the latent, can take precedence over an opportunist desire to influence the Western public. Another way of putting this is that no matter how worldly-wise the Communists may be, they remain, at least to some extent, the prisoners of an irrational ideology that prevents them from any real communication with the rest of us.

Talkback

I used to squat and watch the mangle trickle
As she twisted suds and water out of towels.
We’d chatter while the tin bath filled,
A torrent running out on cockney vowels.

Big holds of words nudged wet wharfs, tongued
Fogged quays around the East End docks;
Slight h’s, t’s, all sunk, knocked off; demolished
Like these red and yellow building blocks.

Nan’s dead, but words bud in the baby’s mouth,
Though her new wordstock is still green.
It’s as if I hear live echoes round my house,
No distance dropped like bricks between.

Kim Baker

LETTERS

Zinoviev's Fallacy

I HAVE READ very carefully the arguments put forward by Professor Zinoviev in conversation with George Urban, published in the April and May 1984 issues of ENCOUNTER. Looked at as the subjective perceptions of one who is both a Russian nationalist and a believer in the ultimate triumph of Communism in its Soviet form, his opinions and insights are both entertaining and informative. It is his claim to "scientific objectivity", to have established a theory based on empirical evidence giving rise to objective universal laws "with the force of the laws of physics", which requires closer scrutiny.

Professor Zinoviev takes as his basic premise the assumption that only a product of Soviet society is capable of understanding and evaluating that society. Other assumptions and personal opinions, fundamental to his argument, include the following: "Communism has fundamentally changed human relations"; "Once a Soviet man, always a Soviet man"; "Soviet society cannot be destroyed in a thousand years." Having adopted these premises as the starting point of his reasoning, he attempts to give his subsequent arguments the force of logical inevitability. But since these statements are themselves open to doubt and conflicting opinion, they do not provide a valid *a priori* basis for establishing universal laws. Any conclusions drawn by Professor Zinoviev are therefore philosophically questionable; and his claim to scientific method must be suspect.

The other aspect of Zinoviev's reasoning technique further demonstrates its essentially non-philosophical nature. In requiring the empirical evidence to support the conclusions, he dismisses out-of-hand all argument, evidence, or opinion which tends to support other conclusions. In particular his attribution of base motives to Western historians and Sovietologists seems to be the result of prejudice rather than reason. For example, on the subject of General Hackett's scenario for a Third World War he says: "General Hackett wants the Soviet Union to disintegrate, and he predicts events in accordance with his own wish." This is at variance with General Hackett's own statements on the subject. General Hackett believes, and has publicly expressed the view, that the continuing existence of a stable Soviet power-bloc is in fact a safeguard to world peace. Is Zinoviev unaware of this, or does he merely choose to ignore it?

THIS TENDENCY on the part of Zinoviev to regard empirical fact only as a means of establishing the validity of his opinions leads him into some curious contradictions. In an attempt to refute the widely held belief that the non-Russian republics of the Soviet

Union are subject to a relentless campaign of Russification, he states, with the assurance of one expressing an incontrovertible truth, that "it is virtually impossible for a Russian to get a job in the Ukraine." But later, when his requirement is to explain the non-existence in Ukraine of opposition to the siting there of Soviet nuclear weapons, he says, with equal certitude: "He [the Ukrainian] will find that he is helpless. He is part of a Russian group at his workplace and in his living quarters. He will lose his job if he steps out of line." Zinoviev has spent much time in Ukraine and claims to know it well. Both the above statements cannot at the same time be true. Therefore one or the other must be a deliberate falsehood, uttered only to support the opinions he has reached independent of empirical evidence.

Professor Zinoviev also gives us totally contradictory evidence on Soviet consciousness and the character of his so-called "Homo Sovieticus" where these examples support the particular conclusion he wishes us to reach. Denunciations, and a preoccupation with material welfare and promotion within the system, seem incompatible with "Soviet life is imbued with a sense of common purpose, which imparts a firm orientation and a new and rich consciousness."

In conclusion, it would seem that the "empirical evidence" used by Professor Zinoviev to establish his theory could be equally used to reach radically different conclusions. It is only his personal beliefs which lead his arguments in one particular direction, and such a basis cannot give rise to "objective universal laws."

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Kampelman's Russia

MAY I comment on Ambassador Max M. Kampelman's contribution to his dialogue with Dr George Urban in your February and March issues?

Kampelman claims to have opened a new front against the Soviet Government via the Helsinki process and that the Madrid Agreement of 1983 already reflects a measure of Western success. The Communist nations who signed it, he tells us, now find themselves more "accountable" than before. He may well be right. Few governments in the world, however wicked, do not endorse some code or other of human values, this being the tribute that vice normally pays to virtue. By acting as a humanist terrier and worrying the Kremlin, this American Ambassador may at times make it feel a little worried.

But is not Dr Kampelman's general perspective somewhat provincial? When George Urban tentatively puts it that Russia has never been much of a place for human rights, he replies thus: "There is something within every human being that strives for a measure of freedom and a measure of mutual respect. One guarantee that this is so is the

continuing influence of Christianity in the Soviet Union. Another is the heritage there of 19th-century Russian socialism and its great interest in French and German thought. . . ."

True, late 19th-century Imperial Russia was humming with every kind of social idea within its few-million-strong intelligentsia which wished to be rid of autocracy. But none of the activists ever managed to gain a large distinct following. The main reason, I suggest, was that Russia was a *religious* society, held together not by "mutual respect" but by the sense of coexistence before God. All the great literature shows this togetherness right up to Chekhov. Into this huge, primitive, half-great country the victorious Bolshevik wing of Russian Marxism injected not justice or human dignity or reason (all alien to the mass) but a facile, flattering and nonsensical messianism. As Nicolai Berdyaev well saw, the phenomenon was, what it could only be, collectivist; and the organisational result the "*muzhiko-military*" régime of Lenin and Stalin.

This régime is still on the march. And why not? Dissidence is sparse. It is quite unashamed of the use of force. But it has not "arrived." And human rights, surely, are characteristic of successful, grand, arrived societies such as 18th-century France. It would be a pity if Ambassador Kampelman's useful harassment of Soviet functionaries, men quite without "hearts or minds" in his sense, ever induced him to imagine that he was influencing Soviet society itself. That task will be the business of radio, television and written propaganda over many decades; until, that is, so-called European Russia is stimulated to become European.

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Replying to Mishan

WHAT WOMEN REALLY want—to answer Freud's famous question, and E. J. Mishan's criticism of the Women's Movement (in ENCOUNTER, January)—is to have the opportunity to discover the real scope of their natures, and not to find themselves trapped into any one role, however convenient, or even essential to others. It is very dangerous to generalise on what is "natural" to a group, as this is the classical method of justifying exploitation.

Speaking of inborn tendencies, however, any anthropologist will point out that primitive tribes, even hunters, rely heavily on the food-gathering of women. Protection is another matter, since we belong to the only race which habitually preys on its own members. Then, are women always motivated by a wish for prestige and material advantage, let alone a desire to compete with men, when they seek to take part in the world's work? Perhaps they only wish to use