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Karl Korsch
Marxism, State and Counterrevolution

Aufsätze und nachgelassene Schriften
1938–1956

Herausgegeben von
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ruling philosophy of a state, different but not entirely different from such other state philosophies as fascism in Italy and democracy in the U. S. A. Even the last remnants of the proletarian »unrest« following the war had flickered out with the crushing defeat of the English general strike and miners' strike in 1926 and the bloody termination of the first and so-called »communist« phase of the Chinese revolution. Thus, the European intelligentsia was quite ready to accept, along with the hitherto unknown earliest philosophical writings of Marx which were now published in a princely fashion by the Marx–Engels–Lenin–Institute in Moscow, the equally »piquant« philosophical revelations of his great Russian disciple who, after all, had swept the empire of the Czar and until his death maintained an unchallenged dictatorship there. 5 10

But those strata of the West-European proletariat who had been the first and the most serious and persistent readers of Lenin's revolutionary pamphlets of 1917–1920 had apparently disappeared from the scene. They had been replaced in the public eye either by those all-adaptable careerists of Stalinism who form the only stable sector of the rapidly shifting membership of all extra-Russian Communist parties today, or as typical of recent English C. P. development, by progressive members of the ruling class itself and its natural supporters within the better educated, most cultured, and well-to-do strata of the old and new intelligentsia who have practically replaced the former proletarian membership. Revolutionary proletarian communism seemed to survive only in isolated individual thinkers and in such small groups as the Dutch Council Communists from which the pamphlet under discussion originated. 15 20 25

We might expect that Lenin's book when it was finally made available to the West-European and American public for the express purpose of spreading there those philosophical principles of Marxism which form the basis of the present Russian state and of its ruling Communist party would have met with almost universal applause. Nothing of the kind has happened. No doubt the philosophy of Lenin as expressed in that book is infinitely superior, even from a strictly theoretical viewpoint, 30

12 there] Ms.: over a territory much bigger and more important than the Italy of Mussolini **16** scene] Im Ms. folgt: altogether **22** replaced] Ms.: ousted (Siehe dazu Korsch an Mattick am 7. 12. 1938; vorl. Ausg. Bd. 8. S. 700ff.) **24** only in] Im Ms. folgt: some **25–26** the pamphlet ... originated.] Ms.: the here discussed pamphlet of the last remaining theoretical exponent of Marxist left wing radicalism, A. Pannekoek, has originated.

Kollektivierung in Spanien

»Nur die Spießbürger, die die Weltgeschichte an der Elle und der jedesmal ›interessanten Zeitungsnachricht‹ messen, können sich einbilden, daß in dergleichen großen Entwicklungen zwanzig Jahre mehr als ein Tag sind, obgleich nachher wieder Tage kommen können, worin sich zwanzig Jahre zusammenfassen.«^[1] (Marx an Engels, 9. 4. 1863).

Der erste Zweck dieser Schrift¹ besteht darin, jenen Ring des Schweigens und der Entstellungen zu durchbrechen, mit dem ein wesentlicher

1 Collectivisations. L'œuvre constructive de la Révolution Espagnole. Recueil de documents. Avant-propos de A[ugustin] Souchy. Éditions Tierra y Libertad. Barcelona 1937. (244 S.; Pes. 3.–) [Neudruck: Toulouse 1965. Dt. Übers. in: Erich Gerlach/Augustin Souchy, Die soziale Revolution in Spanien. Kollektivierung der Industrie

1–6 »Nur die ... 9. 4. 1863)] Fehlt in ZfS und LM. **53.7–54.17** Der erste Zweck ... Spanien ergibt.] LM: In a previous issue ([Anm.:] See [Karl Korsch, Economics and Politics in Revolutionary Spain] Living Marxism, Vol. IV, No. 3, May 1938, pp. 76–82) we have endeavored to refute one of the main fallacies that conceal from the international working class the particular importance of that new phase of the Spanish revolution which was inaugurated by the events of July 19, 1936. In spite of the rapidly increasing amount of literature on Spain today there is not available up to now any full report of what from our point of view we would call the real contents of the present struggles in revolutionary Spain. Of course, one would not expect such information on the really interesting facts from those progressively-minded people who even today go on to interpret the intensified class struggles, wars, and civil wars of contemporary history as so many expressions of an ideological struggle between a fascist and a democratic »principle«. Yet the actual content of that so-called spiritual struggle is not revealed any better by those apparently objective and realistic historians who dismiss the civil war aspects of the present developments in Spain (not to speak of the less conspicuous conflicts between the various groups of the loyalist popular front) as a very subordinate phase of that battle between various imperialistic groups that according to them constitutes the essence of all present-day political developments on a world-wide scale. As against both the »idealistic« and the »realistic« superficiality of the bourgeois historians, the proletarian reader is referred once more to the illuminating report of the first seven months of so-called collectivization in revolutionary Spain published by the Spanish workers themselves for the express purpose to break the conspiracy of silence and distortion by which of all the aspects of the recent events in Spain just this one truly revolutionary aspect has been almost entirely annihilated. ([Anm.:] See Collectivisations. L'œuvre constructive de la Révolution Espagnole. Recueil de documents. Editions C.N.T.-F.A.I., 1937, 244 pages.) In LM folgt ein neuer Absatz.

		Constructs		Assumptions (Basic Theorems)
		<i>operational definition</i>	<i>conceptual properties</i>	
5	Psychological tension (t)	empirical syndrome need	tendency of spreading to neighboring systems (C 1)	Relation between intention and needs $(S^G) = F(n^G)$ (A 1), (A 1a), (A 2)
10	psychological force (f)	psychological locomotion	vector (C 3)	Relation between tension and force $f_{PG} = F(t(S^G))$ (A 3), (A 3b).
15	fluidity (fl)		factor deter- mining the velocity of eq- ualization of tension with neighboring systems (C 2)	Relation between tension and force on the level of thinking (tendency to recall): $f_{PR} = F(t(S^R))$ (A 3a).
20				Fluidity as a function of tiredness (A 4)
25				Fluidity as a function of irreality (A 5)
30				Levelling of tension in different systems by emotional waves (A 6)

side to win the upper hand in the religious wars. An influential part of the population had become aware of the fact that they had begun to care much more for the newly opened ways of acquiring material wealth than for any further sacrifices of their personal comfort for the sake of a truer form of religion. The great revolutionary driving forces of the new bourgeois class that had made their first historical appearance in the fury of the Religious Wars and were to reappear in the violent social and political battles of the French Revolution were not weakened or destroyed during the intervening period of the so-called *Enlightenment*. They were only repressed and had gained tremendous future momentum just because of this temporary state of repression.

The phases of the historical development of war and revolution from 1789 to 1941 should not need a detailed explanation. It is of course a great shock for those naive democrats of Europe and the U. S. who until recently had quite honestly believed in the opposite claims of the Nazi propaganda to be reminded of the historical fact that modern »total war« is by no means one of the devilish inventions of the Nazi revolution but is really in all its aspects, including its very language, the genuine product of democracy itself and more particularly the fruit of the American War of Independence and of the great French Revolution. Nevertheless this is such an obvious fact of the most recent history of our society, and it has been so often expounded in unambiguous terms by all historical and military experts⁹ that its utter neglect by the public

9 See for a most up-to-date, factual report on the gradual rise, survival and (hypothetical) decline of the mass army and other implements of modern total war the above quoted book of Hoffman Nickerson. For a masterful treatment of the same matter in condensed form see the chapter on »The Impact of Democracy and Industrialism upon War« in Toynbee's work, vol. IV, pp. 141–155.

5 religion.] Hdexpl. stenogr. Zusatz: Hier vielleicht Gibbon zitieren, zitiert bei Toynbee IV, p. 148 **13–15** The phases of the historical development of war and revolution from 1789 to 1941 should not need a detailed explanation. It is of course a great shock for] Hdexpl. hschr. korrigiert in: In spite of **17** propaganda to be reminded of the historical fact that] Hdexpl. hschr. korrigiert in: propaganda, **22** Nevertheless this is] Hdexpl. hschr. korrigiert in: The surprising thing that calls for an explanation is that **23** and it has been] Hdexpl. hschr. korrigiert in: that was **24** that its utter neglect] Hdexpl. hschr. korrigiert in: could have been so utterly neglected **27** Nickerson.] Hdexpl. stenogr. Zusatz: Siehe auch meine Rezension 1941 **29** pp. 141–155.] Hdexpl. stenogr. Zusatz: Ein [.?.] andere Zeuge, hübsches Zitat von Gibbon, Toynbee p. 148 oben

aroused enthusiasm – into the service of the revolutionary war. This was indeed, within the limits set by the degree of technical and industrial development, a »universal draft« and a veritable »total war«. If we disregard for a moment the abysmal difference in language – between a period when the revolutionary spirit of the bourgeois class was genuine and powerful and the present phase of its beginning decay – what we read in the speeches of the National Convention and in the text of the revolutionary decree itself might indeed have been written yesterday. »The young men shall fight; the married men shall forge weapons and transport supplies; the women will make [tents and clothes and will serve in the hospitals; the children will make] up old linen into lint; the old men will have themselves carried into the public squares to rouse the courage of the fighting men, to preach hatred of kings and the unity of the Republic.

»The public buildings shall be turned into barracks, the public squares into munition factories; the earthen floors of cellars shall be treated with lye to extract saltpeter.

»All fire-arms of suitable caliber shall be turned over to the troops: the interior shall be policed with shotguns and with cold steel.

»All saddle-horses shall be seized for the cavalry; all draft horses not employed in cultivation will draw the artillery and supply wagons.«¹⁰

Yet even that, the highest point ever reached in the history of bourgeois warfare, the revolutionary total war, showed the fateful marks of an intrinsic ambiguity. This war for the defense of the revolution and for the delivery of all oppressed peoples was inevitably conceived and carried on from the outset as a national war of the French people against foreign countries. From a war of defense it soon developed into a war of conquest; the promised delivery of the oppressed peoples degenerated into a mere propagandistic pretext for the annexation of their territories, and the revolutionary war was at all times conducted indiscriminately against every country, free or unfree, which did not side with the French republic in its mortal struggle against the coalitions of its enemies. It is characteristic that the first steps toward the »war of revolutionary expansion«, that is, toward the use of revolutionary

10 Translation by Hoffman Nickerson, l. c., p. 64.

14 Republic.] Hdexpl. stenogr. Zusatz: Wohl von . . . ? K **27** countries.] Hdexpl. stenogr. Randbemerkung: einfach [. ? .] **35** Nickerson,] Hdexpl. stenogr. Zusatz: Meine Rezension in Studies in Philosophy and Social Sciences IX, 2, 1941

over us as though against our will and usually without our knowing. The myth of Tristan and Iseult, thus conceived, is not merely the romance that appeared under this title about the middle of the 12th century. It is also the peculiar type of social relations together with the corresponding reactions which the romance illustrates. In this twofold character the myth of Tristan has controlled passion by setting it into a definite framework of social and religious compulsions, so efficient that thereupon in the epoch of its first historical formation adulterous passionate love in its most exalted form became equivalent to an unhappy mutual love that asked for no more than symbolical satisfaction. Actually the only »consolament« that the troubadour who had embraced that highest form of love, ever got from his beloved (who in real life was, and remained, the wife of another man) consisted therein that »in token of love a lady gave her poet-paladin a golden ring, bade him rise, and then imprinted a kiss on his brow«.⁵ At the same time, such control and repression was not meant to destroy the forces inherent in the original passion. The repressed passion was to subsist nevertheless and even to gain in intensity under its repression. Thus the myth is »at one and the same time a passion sprung from dark nature, an energy excited by the mind, and a pre-established potentiality in search of the coercion that shall intensify it.« (pp. 6–12) From this secret collusion between the passion itself and its formal repression resulted that tremendous new force which passionate love after its first institution during the 12th century was to exert, both in its immediate forms and by »transference« to other fields of human social activities, through all future developments of Western society up to the tremendous passions of the great French revolution and the present totalitarian war.

Such statements must indeed appear very paradoxical to the modern sociologist who would rather explain the peculiar intensity of a passion that thrives on misfortune and obstruction by the old – yet extremely doubtful – physiological assumption on which even Lycurgus,

5 See Otto Rahn, *Der Kreuzzug gegen den Gral*, 1927 – quoted by de Rougemont, p. 72. (Here follow some extracts from 12th sources dealing with the distinction between »Hohe Minne« and »Niedere Minne«.)

8 formation] Folgt gestrichen: , and later in all moderately sane periods of European history, **29–30** the modern sociologist] Ms. 2: that kind of modern sociologists **34–35** (Here ... Minne«.)] In Ms. L. hschr. Zusatz; fehlt in Ms. 2 und Ms. 3.

The right of every nation to complete political autonomy »including the right of secession« as proclaimed by Lenin before the first world-war and since then rigidly upheld by his disciples within the strongly and even violently centralistic structure of the Russian multi-national state, has proved to be more than a mere ideology. It reveals its practical significance much more distinctly (at least for the outside observer) in the foreign policies than in the internal regime of present-day Russia. It is strictly applied to all countries within Russia's European sphere of influence and it reaches decisive importance in her policies with regard to the independence struggles of the Far East – China, Korea, Japan, Malaysia (Philippines, Dutch Indonesia, British Malaya, French Indochina), in Siam, Burma, and India. The US is today inescapably involved in those grave struggles and will become even more involved in the near future. There is no doubt that she, too, will have to take her stand and to develop her own characteristic variety of the new form of imperialism.

For all these reasons it becomes increasingly important to study the different forms in which the practically ubiquitous struggle for and against independence is waged today in various smaller and greater parts of Oriental Society. Each of these varieties can be taken as representing, within certain limits, the character of the whole development in view of the strikingly similar pattern which the struggle for independence seems

1–12 The ... India.] Ms. 4 geändert in: Here, too, we are faced by the same irreconcilable contradiction between a highly exalted theory and a much more earthbound practice. There seems to be an unbridgeable gulf (at least for the foreign observer) between the *right of every nation to complete political autonomy »including the right of secession«* as proclaimed by Lenin before the first world-war, and the manner in which this principle is applied by his disciples today within the strongly and even violently centralistic structure of the Russian multi-national state. The outlook changes, however, if we turn from the internal regime to the foreign policies of present-day Russia. There we find the right of independence formally upheld for all countries within Russia's European sphere of influence. And we see Lenin's principle reaching out for world historical importance what up to now – in spite of waverings and hesitations – seems to have been at least on of the main tendencies underlying the Russian policies with regard to the independence struggles of the Far East – China, Korea, Japan, Malaysia (Philippines, Dutch Indonesia, British Malaya), French Indochina, Siam, Burma, and India. **13** struggles] In Ms. 1/ Ms. 2 folgt getilgt: of the oriental societies **17** For ... study the] Ms. 4 hschr. Korr.: There are, of course, many **345.22–346.3** which ... without] Ms. 4: which the movement seems to assume in widely separate regions. It is also quite evident that this similarity is rooted in the essential likeness of objective conditions. The surprisingly strong conformity of organizational structure, tactics, ideologies and slogans is not produced but only superinduced, as it were, by the models of early Russian or, more likely, present-day Chinese communism, or by

to assume in widely separate regions – with or without a perceptible influence of the models presented by early Russian or, more likely, by present-day Chinese communism, and with or without the efforts of the often legendary, sometimes real emissaries of Moscow or Yenan who are reported to spread their activities to the remotest corners of Eastern Asia. 5

In this series, we propose to discuss the present developments in the Philippine Republic in the following order:

The first problem, which to the present writer seems to be already on its way out but still contains certain significant lessons, is posed by the particular Philippine development of the quasi-universal issue of Collaborationism. In a much more definite sense than all previous types, the new type of imperialism can be described as an imperialism based on »friendly governments«, puppets, Quislings, and all other kinds of collaborators, including certain brands of so-called resistance movements. 10 15

The second problem revolves around the new meaning of »independence« that has already been discussed in its mere general aspects in the preceding introductory analysis. The remaining task in this respect consists in an empirical investigation of the manner which the granting of political independence is used today for the purpose, not of lessening, but of significantly enhancing the economic and social dependence of the Philippine Republic from its great Western paymaster. 20

The third problem is posed by the unfolding of the decisive conflict

7–8 In ... order:] Ms. 4: The main contributions to the investigation of the nature of the new colonialism of the present period, that can be gained by a study of the particular development of the Philippine Republic, seem to revolve around the following three problems: **7** In this series,] Ms. 1/Ms. 2 ursprünglich: To make a beginning. Ms. 2: In the following articles **7** the present developments] Ms. 1/Ms. 2 ursprünglich: the main problems that have arisen from present developments **9–10** which ... lessons,] Ms. 4 gestrichen **12** Collaborationism] Ms. 4 hervorgehoben **13** imperialism ... imperialism] Ms. 4: colonial policies developing today can be described as a colonialism **17–20** The ... granting] Ms. 2 hschr. Korr.: The second problem revolves around the changed meaning of »independence«. The more general aspects of this new phenomenon have already been touched upon in the preceding introductory analysis. There remains, however, the task of analysing the concrete forms Ms. 3: The second problem revolves around the changed meaning of »independence«. What is needed here, is an empirical investigation of the concrete forms Ms. 4: The second problem consists in the changed meaning of »independence«, and the changing significance of the various attitudes taken in the struggle for and against »independence« by various groups and interests in our time. A critical analysis of the Philippine example reveals the typical forms **20** granting] Ms. 3/Ms. 4: grant

between the forces of the »New Imperialism of the Western powers and the equally new emancipatory tendencies that arise within the womb of Oriental Society. The material basis of this struggle for freedom is provided by the forces of the agrarian revolution. It is just in this respect that a closer study of the Philippine example will be most useful by disclosing the extent of the existing potentialities and their gross neglect during the forty years of United States rule. As one of the most foremost specialists in this field has recently summed up his research, »American efforts to improve the land laws for the benefit of the average Filipino proved woefully inadequate.«⁴ Thus the distant background of the »agrarian unrest« that is advertized so much by interested groups in the press of the US and the Philippines today, has not been substantially changed since the times when it was described in the great novels of the Filipino martyr, Jose Rizal, who was shot by the Spaniards as a traitor. Under such conditions it is no longer surprising that, in the words of a fervently anti-Japanese Filipino patriot, even »the Jap invasion was a blessing to the peasant.«⁵

- 4 Robert L. Pendleton, [Land Utilization in Southeastern Asia,] in: »Pacific Affairs« [Published Quarterly by the Institute of Pacific Relations], vol. XIX No. 1, March 1946, p. 105. – The author has been engaged for 25 years in agricultural work in Central India, Philippines, China, and Siam.
- 5 Hernando J. Abaya, *Betrayal in the Philippines*, New York, 1946, p. 212. – The author lived through the Japanese occupation and took part in many of the underground struggles he describes. His intimate knowledge of persons and events during the occupation makes his book a most valuable source for the problems to be discussed in our second article.

1 »New Imperialism] Ms. 4: »New Colonialism« **3–7** The ... rule.] Ms. 4: The material basis of this conflict is provided by the struggle for and against agrarian reforms. This struggle, under present day conditions, is no longer different from or opposed to but is closely connected with the struggle for industrialization. Nowhere, perhaps, appear the contradictions between the extent of existing potentialities and their gross neglect by the policies of the colonizing power more gloomingly striking, than they can be shown to exist in the »brown America in the Pacific«. **4** revolution] Ms. 3: reform and revolution **13** was] Im Ms. 2 folgt: first **13** great] Ms. 2/Ms. 3/Ms. 4 getilgt **25** for] Ms. 1/Ms. 2 ursprünglich: mainly for

Anmerkungen des Herausgebers

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- 12 Karl Marx, Provisorische Statuten der Internationalen Arbeiter-Assoziation. (1864). MEW, Bd. 16. S. 14.

Anton Pannekoek: Lenin als Philosoph

Unveröffentlichtes Manuskript, 3 Bl., deutsch, Nachlaß Korsch Nr. 87, IISG, mschr. D. mit hschr. Korrekturen. Auf der ersten Seite des Ms. befindet sich der Vermerk: »Draft of a review that was *not* accepted for publication by *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung* (1938)«. Die Lesarten sind im Apparat verzeichnet.

Korsch bespricht: J. Harper (d. i. Anton Pannekoek), Lenin als Philosoph. Kritische Betrachtung der philosophischen Grundlagen des Leninismus. (= Bibliothek der »Rätekorrespondenz« Nr. 1.) Ausgabe der Gruppe Internationaler Kommunisten in Holland, Amsterdam 1938 (hektographiert). Neuausgabe: Anton Pannekoek, Lenin als Philosoph. Mit einer Rezension von Karl Korsch und einer Einleitung von Paul Mattick. Hrsg. von Alfred Schmidt und Claudio Pozzoli. Frankfurt/M.–Wien 1969. Der Hrsg. hat die Seitenangaben der beiden Ausgaben von 1938 und 1969 in [] in den Text eingefügt.

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