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REVOLUTION AND ITS BUREAUCRACY  
AN ANALYSIS OF THE SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES OF  
REVOLUTION AND ITS BUREAUCRACY OF IGNAZIO  
SILONE AND MILOVAN DJILAS

Dieter Anton Halbwidl

A THESIS  
in  
The Department  
of  
History

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for  
the Degree of Master of Arts at  
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By Dieter Anton Halbwidl

Entitled Revolution and Its Bureaucracy: An Analysis of the Similarities and Differences of Revolution and Its Bureaucracy of Ignazio Silone and Milovan Djilas

Complies with the regulations of this University and meets the accepted standards with respect to originality and quality

For the degree of:

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Signed by the final examining committee:

<u>John J. Raftery</u>	Chairman
<u>Spring Smith</u>	
<u>Medwin Mark</u>	
<u>  </u>	
<u>  </u>	

Approved by the Dean of Faculty or Chairman of Department (or authorized representative):

April 27th 1973 ← Kenneth E. Wallace

Name  
Dean of Faculty or Department  
Chairman

John J. Raftery

Name  
Supervisor of Thesis

Frederick A. Bode

Name  
Chairman, Committee of Graduate  
Studies

## ABSTRACT

Revolution and its Bureaucracy, a comparative analysis of Revolution and its Bureaucracy by Ignazio Silone and Milovan Djilas, describes the views of two European social writers about the state, church and party bureaucracies. In his attempts to radicalize the Abruzzi peasants and thus bring about a social revolution in Italy, Silone changes from a Marxist adherent to a democratic Socialist, in the late 1920's. Djilas undergoes a similar change some twenty years later while Vice-Premier of Yugoslavia. His objections to a one-party state and his criticisms of the state apparatus resulted in his two, post-World War II imprisonments. While interned, Djilas continued to analyse the uniqueness of Yugoslavia's Socialism and the possibility of its peaceful, transformation from a one-party state to a two-party, parliamentary system.

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A thesis involves not only research but also help and suggestions from many people. There are several people to whom I must express my sincerest gratitude. I would like to thank my parents and friends for encouraging me to continue my academic studies. To the late Professor, Dr. Rudolf Schlesinger, I owe my greatest thanks. His enthusiasm for social progress and political analysis, even when differing from his students, was an invaluable experience. His idealism in revolutionary work was contagious. My advisor, Dr. John F. Laffey, aided me untiringly in the development of the thesis. Without his help the paper would not have reached its final stage of presentation. To my friend, Professor Voyo Kovalski, a former Partisan in the Yugoslav Revolution (1941-1945), and now head of the Department of Economics at Dawson College, I owe the title of the thesis. I am also grateful to him for the many hours spent in discussing Yugoslavia. During the past two years, Dušan Carićević, M.D., D.D.S., and his family, Yugoslavs, elaborated on the history and problems of Yugoslavia. Dr. Carićević's lucid explanations and theories of the social psychology of Yugoslavs aided me greatly in understanding some of these major difficulties.

My friend, the Reverend George Predelli, now living in Milan, Italy, encouraged me throughout the past years to work on Signor Silone's ideas. His sincere, social ideas and arguments have been morally and politically stimulating. Dr. Frederick Krantz, one of my teachers, offered me encouragement and help in the completion of this

work. To Dr. Cameron Nish, I am grateful for helping me to gain employment at the École des Haute Études Commerciales during 1969-1971. Without this help, I would have been financially incapable of completing my studies.

Further, I owe my thanks to Alexander Liros, friend, librarian, and fellow history student, of Carleton University, Ottawa. He kindly supplied me with several articles and newspaper clippings by Gospodin Djilas which were unavailable here in Montréal. I am also indebted to the staff of the Embassy of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Ottawa, for their kind assistance in obtaining research material. Altiero Spinelli, the Director of Istituto Affari Internazionali, in Rome, supplied me with the address of Signor Silone. Finally, I have to thank the following publishing company and libraries for the many books and articles which they provided: Arnoldo Mondadori Editore of Milan, who sent me a copy of Luce D'Eramo's L'Opera di Ignazio Silone; and the libraries of Congress, Washington, D.C., the University of British Columbia, the University of Manitoba, the University of Toronto, and McGill and Sir George Williams Universities in Montréal.

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### DEDICATION

I express my admiration and support for those who through their political and moral integrity suffer and fight for the attainment of freedom and equality for man in all spheres. They range from Pjotr Jakir, Alexander Solzhenitsyn, Vladimir Dedijer, Andreas Papandreou, Mikis Theodorakis, Willi Brandt, Angela Davis, Rudolf Schlesinger, Giangiacomo Feltrinelli, Martin Luther King, to the students who idealistically, if not always rationally, rebelled here in 1969 at this university. The paper is in part dedicated to them. The fight against all forms of oppression must continue.



Man wird uns schlagen und umbringen, aber die Menschen werden weiterhin von ihrem Recht Gebrauch machen, ihre eigenen Gedanken zu denken.

--Pjotr Iwanowitch Jakir

## INTRODUCTION

The twentieth century is unlike any other in modern history. It is a time of unprecedented socio-economic, political, technological, and cultural changes and great tragedies. Two World Wars (1914-1918) and (1939-1945), innumerable small wars and skirmishes, two world-shaking Revolutions: the 1917 Russian Revolution, the Chinese Revolution (1929-1949), as well as several minor Revolutions took place. Some of these violent changes constitute great socio-political experiments in the creation of new societies. The end of World War I heralded the coming of new, political, one-party states. The Russian Revolution (1917), evolved into a totalitarian government; modern Italian Fascism (1922) and German Nazism (1933) perfected the means of socially and politically oppressing most of the population. Although these three governments had distinct similarities, they were not identical. To equate them would be erroneous and a gross oversimplification. The Soviet dictatorship took roughly ten years to cement itself. After the ouster of Leon Trotzky in 1927, Josef I. Stalin was the undisputed leader of Soviet Communism. The Russian dictatorship, Italian Fascism and German Nazism came to the political fore largely through the combined weakness and ineptitude of the Russian Duma or parliament, and Italian and German "democratic" institutions. In the West, industrialists and big business, fearing expropriation or nationalization by the possible election of Socialist governments, generally sided with Fascist or Nazi forces to protect their "vested interests".

In Russia, big industry and the monied aristocracy supported Great Britain, France, the United States and other Western countries. After the 1917 Revolution, many Russian industrialists and aristocrats sabotaged their enterprises, and fled to the West. Western governments, particularly Britain and France, and some less economically powerful nations, played a vital part in bringing about Fascism and German Nazism. Italy was largely denied the promises of the Secret Treaty of London (1915), thereby creating a national crisis and a popular dislike of Western powers. Germany received harsh treatment at Versailles (1919), giving rise to excessive, nationalist tendencies under Adolf Hitler and other narrow-minded, conservative demagogues.<sup>1</sup> Russia, perhaps, suffered the most. The Russians bore both the brunt of the German attack (1914-1917) and the 1917 Revolution, and later most Western nations refused to trade with them and their revolutionary government. The country was politically and economically isolated. After initial, temporary growth and financial success, social and economic fluctuations reached a climax in the Western hemisphere in 1929, and again in 1931, when the Viennese Credit Bankanstalt collapsed. The Depression set in. Once again, the "capitalist" systems experienced a fundamental crisis. Millions of people faced economic hardships and cultural shock.

In this turmoil, democratic Socialism and a Bolshevik type Communism were locked in a struggle. To some Socialism can be found in democratic institutions, to others, in totalitarian, political

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<sup>1</sup>German chauvinistic tendencies developed largely during Kaiser Wilhelm II's reign.

governments. Both systems profess to have instituted Socialism, while in reality both types of political organizations lack many of the fundamentals of Socialism, particularly the freedom of man. Modern Socialism, born of the eighteenth century French Enlightenment, was developed by Encyclopedists, European philosophers, workers, artisans, and other creative minds. However, it was the genius of Karl Marx (1813-1883), in association with Friedrich Engels, which largely formulated the disputed science of modern Communism or Marxism. Marx and Engels analysed a nineteenth century, socio-political European society. They stated in their studies that a social Revolution was inevitable in an industrializing Western Europe--Germany, France and England. Marxism strived to effect radical, social changes by revolutionary means, to overthrow governments with the participation and leadership of workers. Marx praised the revolutionary workers' action and the participation of various political parties in the Paris Commune (1870), although he criticised, among other things, the Commune's lack of nationalization of banks. On the other hand democratic Socialism, a combination of pre-Marxian Socialist and Marxian ideas, endeavours to attain Marxian goals, such as the right to work and to unionize, a basic wage, and better working hours and conditions, by peaceful, evolutionary means. Some of Marx's proposed goals were instituted in Bismarck's Germany and Franz-Joseph's Austro-Hungary because of the threat of Marxian-Socialist popularity among the workers. The German and Austro-Hungarian imperial governments thereby attempted to discredit the Socialist forces and to obtain the working-class support, but they were unsuccessful. A similar pressure force existed in the latter part of the nineteenth century in England, France and Italy. In

Russia, the socio-economic and political situation differed greatly from Western Europe. In the early twentieth century Russia possessed a weak, capitalist economy, which was partly foreign owned. The tragedy of the First World War with its immense human sufferings drove Czarist Russia to Revolution and Civil War. But, the Revolution which was to create a new democratic society was not completed. Another oligarchical government, under the dictatorship of the Communist party bureaucracy, with the formal or nominal assent of the Soviet working man, now rules the entire state. The Soviet Union became collectivized and industrialized. Socialism of the mind and heart, which was attempted unsuccessfully by Communist and Socialist parties, has yet to be humanely instituted by and for a novus homo.

At the beginning of this century, both Marxian Socialist revolutionaries and reform minded Socialist parties faced a harsh existence. They were often outlawed, physically assaulted and politically intimidated. Such repressions are not only a major contradiction of a nominally democratic society, but point to the political brutality of "democratic establishments", a generally interchangeable, two-party, political monopoly in many countries, such as Britain, Germany, France, Italy and the United States. The support received by Communist and Socialist parties is a protest against the inefficiency and corruption of the two-party "democratic" system. Workers, intellectuals and sometimes peasants often turn to these parties, in the hope that they will quickly institute radical socio-political changes. The recent example of Chile (1970) gives credence to this. Many members join these parties in the hope of creating, or at least attempting to build, a more democratic and socially

egalitarian society. It is not unusual to find writers in the political vanguard of such movements. In fact, they play an essential role in describing the urgent need for social change and the action necessary to effect it. Silone and Djilas are two such writers who were part of the leadership of Communist movements which attempted to bring about major alterations in their countries.

Ignazio Silone and Milovan Djilas are peasant-born intellectuals whose awareness of the decrepitude of the Italian and Yugoslavian monarchies caused both of them to join the Communist party at a youthful age. Many of their former countrymen were destitute, starving and sick; their governments did little to alleviate this social malaise. Silone and Djilas dedicated themselves to the Socialist Revolution in the hope of radically altering society and generally bettering life. However, only Djilas experienced a Socialist Revolution. The Italian Communist party (PCI) was unable to bring about radical social change, since the Fascists, under Benito Mussolini, took power in 1922 and disbanded parliament altogether in 1926. Silone and Djilas were high-ranking party members, for ten and seventeen years respectively. Both visited Moscow and the International several times. It was because of their experience of Soviet-Marxism under Stalin, and their perception of its lack of a humane morality, that both began to question the values of Soviet Socialism, and, later, of their own Communist parties in Italy and Yugoslavia. Silone was the first to break away from Moscow, the International, and the Italian party. While in Switzerland in 1929 for a rest and cure, he became inactive in party work. Two years later, 1931, he was expelled from the Italian Communist party. He remained in Switzerland until 1944. Silone evolved from a Marxist to a democratic

Socialist, undergoing spiritual torment about his political beliefs.

Some twenty-two years later, Djilas underwent a similar change. Before this, he and Marshal Tito left Moscow's camp and Soviet Socialism in 1948, but soon were to differ on the methods used in achieving Yugoslavia's Socialism. Djilas' reasons for disenchantment with, first, the Soviet, and, then, the Yugoslav system were not similar to Silone's. Djilas was still too immersed in Marxism. It is likely, though, that the causes for his eventual rejection of Marxism were even then developing. Although the Yugoslav Communist party was subjugated to Stalin's stifling influences, even after Josip Broz Tito became its head in 1937, the traditional South Slav sense of autonomy and independence still persisted. The possibility of a political clash between the two leaders increased with the establishment of Yugoslav Socialism, the increase of Soviet pressure (1945-1953) and the outright Soviet attempt at domination after 1945. This conflict deeply affected Djilas and resulted in a dramatic change in his political ideas and life.

From 1948 Djilas became more critical in his analyses of the Soviet Union and its Eastern European satellite states, and more independent of the Yugoslav party. Eventually he rejected many Marxist notions. Djilas began to realize that the powerful party apparatus or bureaucracy hindered the attainment of Socialist Democracy. He opposed the Soviet-bureaucracy in 1950, and then the Yugoslav apparatus in 1953. During that time, several attempts were made to limit the Yugoslav bureaucracy, but Djilas considered them narrow in scope and ineffectual. He understood that the development of a party bureaucracy

for purposes of industrialization was necessary, though it might seem to be a contradiction of the Socialist Revolution, inasmuch as the establishment of an egalitarian society is hindered by an elitist bureaucracy. But the bureaucratic monopoly of the state and the apparently permanent, privileged, social positions of the many bureauctechnocrats angered the former Revolutionary, Djilas. He opposed the powers of the bureaucracy and party, and attempted to found another Socialist party, which he was unable to do within a one-party state.

The political metamorphosis of both writers is recorded in their many works. However, the main problem encountered in this research is that the material used is limited to that obtainable in North America. The editorials of Silone in L'Avanguardia (Rome) and Il Lavoratore (Trieste), two labour papers of the early 1920's, as well as many other articles by both authors are unavailable in Canada. Astonishingly, the early poems of Djilas are extremely difficult to obtain. Research here has been concentrated on the materials available, on the works and books of both writers printed in Italian, English, German and Serbo-Croatian. Ideally a more comprehensive study could have been undertaken with financial aid and might have included research in Communist party archives in Italy and Yugoslavia and in European libraries, and possibly interviews with these two writers. As the thesis stands, it is at best a circumscribed piece of research in the social and intellectual backgrounds of two twentieth century, European, political men. More work in this area is necessary for both historians and non-academics alike, in attempting to comprehend some of the basic moral and political notions of modern man when faced by a near



omnipotent force such as the state.

This thesis is simple in intent. It analyzes some of the major, political ideas of Ignazio Silone and Milovan Djilas, and endeavours to account reasonably for their personal rebellions and commitment to revolution. It traces their subsequent metamorphoses from Marxists to democratic Socialists. The work is divided into two sections, the first dealing with Silone, the second with Djilas. Chapter One presents the reader with a general introduction to nineteenth and twentieth century Italy. Chapter Two, centers on Silone's personal background, his political work and the problems faced by his Abruzzi cafoni. Chapter Three deals with Silone's descriptions of the many social and psychological difficulties involved in the encounter between an intellectual and the peasantry. Chapter Four describes the peasants' traditional opposition to government and church.

Part Two presents the ideas of Milovan Djilas. Chapter Five is an introduction to nineteenth and twentieth century Yugoslavia and its development as a state. A short account of the history of the Yugoslav Communist party (League) concludes the chapter. Chapter Six, presents the reader with some important facts in Djilas' life. Chapter Seven studies Djilas' lucid treatise on the Soviet and Yugoslav Revolutions, and their differences from the 1789 French Revolution. Chapter Eight examines the author's arguments of the contradiction of Marxism in the Soviet and Yugoslav Revolutions. Industrialization led to the party bureaucracy's socio-political stranglehold over the state and its people. The Conclusion seeks to highlight the similarities and differences in the lives and views of these two men.

PART ONE

IGNAZIO SILONE

Fatta L'Italia, bisogna fare gli Italiani!

--Massimo D'Azeglio

## CHAPTER I

### The Italian Background

Modern Italy is enigmatic. While some areas are highly industrialized, others are totally backward. Language varies from region to region. Italian political attitudes range through a wide ideological spectrum. It is this remarkable diversity which leaves one even today with doubt as to whether Italy can be considered as a nation. A unified Italian state did not exist in the mid-nineteenth century. Austria's Prince Metternich arrogantly dismissed Italy as "ein geographischer Begriff", a geographic expression. Instead of a modern unified Italy, there existed several, independent states. In the north was the kingdom of Piedmont, and to the east Austrian-dominated Lombardy and Venetia. At the centre, the Papal states dominated the area around Rome. In the south, the Bourbons reigned over the kingdom of the Two Sicilies, including the island of Sardinia. Further, there were several independent duchies. It was not until after 1870, when unity was achieved, that Italy's national problem of regional disparity received attention. Little, however, was done to better the lot of most Southern Italians.

To facilitate a better understanding of some of the important problems of modern Italy, this introduction is divided into four general themes: regionalism, class analysis, some vital economic dilemmas, and the rise of Italian Fascism.

Generally, Italy can be divided into two large geographic regions: the north and the south. These regions are still known to some northerners as Italia civile or civilised Italy and Italia barbata or uncivilised Italy.<sup>1</sup> The north is endowed with arable lands and some mineral wealth, whereas the south is not. Its main export was and probably remains cheap manpower, because of the incapacity of its agriculture to absorb surplus population.<sup>2</sup> However, this seems to be slowly changing, according to two reliable sources, a recent report in Italy Chooses Europe, and the more dated one of the Italian Information Service.<sup>3</sup> Regional disparities play an important role in the making of Italy's class structure largely through the geographical influence upon the environment. A larger numerical part of the peasantry was and remains concentrated in an unindustrialized south, while the prospering middle class of shopkeepers, artisans and specialised workers lived and increased during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century in the growing, northern, industrial towns. Interestingly, the population distribution between the south and the north is similar, contrary to what one might expect. In 1861, the population of northern Italy amounted to about 12,000,000 people. That of the south as well as the island of Sicily was around 10,000,000. The total Italian population in an 1861 census amounted to 26,128,000. The population expanded

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<sup>1</sup>Sidney G. Tarrow, Peasant Communism in Southern Italy (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1962), p. 12.

<sup>2</sup>G. Schachter, The Italian South, Economic Development in Mediterranean Europe (New York: Random House, 1965), p. 20.

<sup>3</sup>F. Roy Willis, Italy Chooses Europe (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971), pp. 165-167. and, Italy, Presidency of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Italy Information Service Italy Today (Rome: E. Di Mauro, 1962), p. 181.

greatly when one considers the 1961 census of 50,463,762.<sup>1</sup>

The mid-nineteenth century population index is not in any way indicative of the Italian power structure. In fact a minority ruled over a vast majority. A numerically small Italian aristocracy monopolised nearly every lucrative government or ecclesiastical position. Compared with the privileged aristocrats the amorphous mass of peasants had few rights. It was not until 1912 that the peasantry received the right to vote. However, the aristocracy's influence did not last long.<sup>2</sup> The ubiquitous, if quite small, upper middle class, made up of lawyers, doctors, notaries and other professionals, allied itself to the developing business enterprises such as Fiat, Agnelli, Pirelli, Volpi and Martini and Rossi. Soon after, the middle class was greatly influenced by the laissez-faire philosophy, and the accumulation of private profits and savings while keeping the worker's wages as low as possible. The business magnates used the talents and social desires of the new professionals to push the ruling aristocracy into a minor, political position.

The geographic division of Italy was further reinforced by economic development. Geography plays a great role in the economic woes of the south. Hydroelectric power which is necessary for a growing industry is lacking due to the scarcity of water in the south. The north is well supplied with water resources. There, industry was

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 12.

<sup>2</sup>Guiseppe di Lampedusa, in his brilliant novel *Il Gattopardo* (The Leopard), describes the gradual disappearance of the southern, Italian aristocracy as a class, and the loss of its influential social positions, partly as a result of the growing Republicanism of the late nineteenth century.

expanding at a fast rate. Turin was already in the late nineteenth century an industrial bastion, and serves as an example of industrial growth. In 1862 Turin had about 5900 metal workers. The entire working force at that time was around 50,000 men and women, of which 15,000-20,000 could be considered the nucleus of a modern proletariat.<sup>1</sup> Between 1821 and 1921, Turin's population increased by over two hundred thousand.<sup>2</sup> This large increase is not dissimilar to that of other European industrialized towns. Southern Italian cities also grew but with different consequences from those of the north. Cities such as Bari, Palermo, Naples and Salerno increased their populace with slum dwellers, unemployable toilers, and artisans in flight from the countryside. This was largely due to the inability of impoverished peasants to buy or rent the available lands. Northern cities such as Genoa and Milan multiplied their inhabitants and slum citizens. But there, in contrast to the south, many of the poor workers were readily employed. Their small wages often meant the difference between hardship and destitution.

The disappearance of the common usage of land, between 1800-1860, added to the difficult social problems. Feudalism slowly disintegrated. This threw thousands upon thousands of southern peasants out of work. They became homeless and landless, while some monied aristocrats bought up most of the available lands. Without sufficient lands to subsist, the southern peasants became understandably bitter, frustrated with and further alienated from any

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<sup>1</sup> Paolo Spriano, Socialismo e Classe Operaia a Torino dal 1892 al 1913 (Turin: Giulio Einaudi Editore, 1957), p. 17.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 14.

local government.<sup>1</sup>

This bitterness also produced a state of almost total alienation between the southern peasants and the national government. The government did not diminish the socio-economic discrepancies between the south and the north. In fact, its economic policies exploited the south to the extent that it left southern inhabitants desolate.<sup>2</sup> Schemes for developing Southern Italy failed to materialize, although over one billion lire was invested there from the late nineteenth century to the twentieth century. Indeed, it was not until the mid-1950's and 1960's that a continuous flow of money visibly aided the south.<sup>3</sup> Political unity combined Italy into one huge trading zone or market. Another pressure force was the socio-political impact of Garibaldi's guerilla wars upon some southern peasants and urban, lower middle class, artisans and specialised workers. The diplomatic skills and sly ingenuity of Count Emilio di Cavour, Piedmont's Minister, cannot be discounted in the bringing about of the unification of Italy. With unity, the royal government was forced to attempt to diminish the many crass, socio-economic differences between south and north. The building of railroads was one such attempt to connect southern Italy with the north, mainly for economic and military purposes. More importantly, there was widespread dissatisfaction and unrest among the many thousand urban workers and artisans. Little was done to realistically improve the lot of the southerners. In fact, the industrialization of the north enhanced the discrepancies between the two regions. Italia barbata became economically and politically

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<sup>1</sup>Tarrow, pp. 51-52. <sup>2</sup>Willis, p. 161. <sup>3</sup>Ibid., pp. 165-167.

isolated. It can even be argued that the Italian south not only played a subservient role to Italia civile, but was near to being a colonial area of the north.

The First World War brought further social friction and political unrest in Italy. In mid-1915, Italy joined the Allies. The war and Italy's participation in it were not desired by most people, with the exception of staunch conservatives, monarchists, and many industrialists. The country was, until late in the war (1916), totally unprepared as well as unwilling to fight.<sup>1</sup> The war was disastrous for Italy. Even though the country technically won the war, her economy was ruined. Inflation became accentuated by the war, and ate away at the middle class' meagre reserves or financial savings. Unemployment was rampant. Besides, Britain and France failed to fulfill many of their promises of the Secret Treaty of London (1915) of obtaining more African colonial markets. Dissatisfaction with the generally bleak, post-World War I, Italian scene caused demobilized and unemployed soldiers, officers, some professionals and students to join the fasci, fascisti or Fascists, in 1919. The rise of Italian Fascism after the First Great War is inextricably interwoven with socio-political problems and developments, as well as with the professional ineptitude and cowardice of many Italian officials and politicians. Clearly, the monarchy and the several Liberal, post-war governments were unwilling to stem Fascism. Its effects on the Italian constitution and people were termed as neurasthenic by the eminent historian Gaetano Salvemini.

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<sup>1</sup>Robert Paris, Histoire du Fascisme en Italie, des Origines à la Prise du Pouvoir (Paris: Francois Maspero, 1962), p. 103.



Events moved swiftly. The Fasci di Combattimento, largely situated in towns, reacted violently to several irresponsible governments and opposition parties.<sup>1</sup> In October 1922, the king, ill-advised by the Liberal Antonio Salandra, called on Benito Mussolini to form a minority government.<sup>2</sup> From here on, the Fascists took quick control of all Italy. The general election held in 1924 was labelled a fraud by the Centrist-Socialist, Giacomo Matteotti. He proved his allegations in parliament and was afterwards murdered by Fascist thugs under orders from several high-ranking Fascist officials.<sup>3</sup> Two years later, 1926, all legal, parliamentary opposition was suppressed. Many opposition leaders were murdered, some were jailed, other disappeared, while still others left the country and went into exile. Italian Fascism became a tragic reality and gripped the country for the next nineteen years.

<sup>1</sup>Ignazio Silone, Der Faschismus, seine Entstehung und seine Entwicklung. Translated from Italian into German by Gritta Baerlacher (Zurich: Europa-Verlag, 1934), p. 284.

<sup>2</sup>Mussolini was a former Socialist and former editor of Avanti, a socialist newspaper.

<sup>3</sup>G. Mammarella, Italy After Fascism (Toronto: MacMillan Limited, 1965), p. 45.

The political similarities between the murder of G. Matteotti and the assassination of Dr. Gregory Lambrakis in Thessaloniki (Salonika) 1963 are striking. In both cases, the highest officials involved were not prosecuted. In Greece, the gendarmerie officials were brought to trial and found guilty of instigating murder. In Italy, a similar trial took place. But there, the assassins were let go after a short while. In Greece, after the colonels coup in 1967, the officers were reassigned to their former police functions. For more information about the Greek case see the novel Z, based on the murder of the Greek deputy, by Vassilis Vassilikos.

## CHAPTER II

### Silone: Revolutionary and Critic

Under Fascism, Italian peasants, industrial workers and dissident intellectuals led a grim existence. Police repression, military intelligence, and fascist political organizations made the establishment and maintainancy of underground activities precarious, and often impossible, for the revolutionary. The peasant's socio-economic situation deteriorated through measures implemented by the government. He was forced to remain on the land, while the price of his goods fell. His traditional aloofness to the outsider, the city and the government deepened. In spite of these grave difficulties, some intellectuals still tried to organize the peasants, to better the lot of the Southern Italian peasantry or cafoni. Ignazio Silone was a dissident intellectual who attempted to politicize the Abruzzi peasants. In order to fully appreciate the significance of their obstinate refusal to become politically involved, a study of Silone's and the peasants' backgrounds is necessary. Since little material on the Abruzzese is available, most of the material of this chapter is derived from Silone's novels.

Ignazio Silone was born Secondo Tranquilli in 1900,<sup>1</sup> at Pescara

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<sup>1</sup>Tranquilli assumed the pseudonym Silone in 1923, while interned in Barcelona, Spain. Luce D'Eramo, L'Opera di Ignazio Silone, Saggio Critica e Guida Bibliografica (Milan: Arnoldo Mondadori Editore, 1971), p. 503.

in the Abruzzi. In this mountainous region of Central Italy, some fifty-odd kilometers from Rome, Silone grew up as a peasant, with "an almost completely medieval Christian background".<sup>1</sup> From an early age, he was exposed to the Christian ethic and morality of his peasant family. He was given a classical education taught by Jesuits. While at liceo, he met a remarkable priest, Don Orione, whose humanitarian ideas and humility deeply impressed the young Silone.<sup>2</sup> Already in his school days, Silone rejected a corrupt and compromised Italian society. He and a few idealistic village youths attempted to take control of some police barracks during the First World War, and to establish Socialism amongst the poor and tradition-bound Abruzzese peasants. The plan was realistically abandoned, since it was bound to fail.<sup>3</sup> As a Socialist Youth organizer and leader, Silone joined the newly-found Italian Communist party at Livorno in mid-January 1921. The party had scarcely begun to recover from its internal feuds and to change its tactics when the Fascists became the legal, minority government in late 1922. Any non-Fascist, political activity became hazardous, and difficult to organize. Silone, as well as all other underground organizers and members of the Italian Communist party, was hunted by the Fascists throughout the country.

In 1923, L'Avanguardia, the socialist newspaper of which Silone was the editor, was suppressed. Soon after he left on party work for

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<sup>1</sup>Ignazio Silone, Emergency Exit. Translated from Italian by Harvey Fergusson II (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1968), p. 64. Emergency Exit (Uscita di Sicurezza) was originally published in Italy in several articles from 1949-1953, and again in 1965.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 25. <sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 59

Germany, Spain and France. In 1925, Silone returned to Italy to work with Gramsci in the party headquarters at Milan.<sup>1</sup> It was probably around the mid-1920's that Silone comprehended the rejection of Marxism and Fascism by the Abruzzi peasants. This experience would influence him greatly in his later development as a democratic Socialist and rejection of a Moscow-oriented Marxism. But, during the mid-1920's, Silone was still too immersed in party work and its underground organization to be concerned with ideological disputes. As an influential and important member of the Italian party, Silone, while underground, visited Moscow and the International on various occasions between 1922-1927.<sup>2</sup> There he noticed and disapproved of the increasingly dogmatic approach to Marxism and the growing tendency of Communist institutions to treat human beings as expendable. The harshness of underground work undermined Silone's health. His doubts about the validity of the Italian party's version of Marxism increased. More importantly, his youngest, and remaining brother, a non-political man was jailed by the Fascists because of Silone's activities in the party.<sup>3</sup> On the advice of P. Togliatti, the acting party leader after Antonio Gramsci's imprisonment, Silone went to Switzerland. Rest and cure should have restored the young revolutionary's fervour for political work. They did not. After much political thought and spiritual torment, Silone decided to cease active party, and to

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<sup>1</sup>D'Eramo, pp. 506-507.

<sup>2</sup>Charles F. Delzell, Mussolini's Enemies, The Italian Anti-Fascist Resistance (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1961), p. 127.

<sup>3</sup>Silone's parents and brothers were killed in an earthquake in 1915.

concentrate on writing about the Abruzzese's socio-economic problems. Soon after, in the summer of 1931, he was expelled from the Italian Communist party.<sup>1</sup>

Silone stayed in self-imposed exile in Switzerland from 1929-1944. There he gradually evolved from a Marxian thinker and proponent of democratic centralism within a one-party state into a more democratic Socialist and adherent of a parliamentary system, or a governmental system with an opposition party. Years later, reminiscing about his intellectual, political change and personal isolation, he said that "writing became an only means against despair".<sup>2</sup> In his novels, Silone has given us a record of his evolution. He himself states that each work is the continuation of the preceding one. Silone wrote some of his best works in Switzerland: Fontamara, Der Faschismus, seine Entstehung und seine Entwicklung, Bread and Wine, The Living Thoughts of Mazzini, The School for Dictators, and The Seed Beneath the Snow. In all these works he analyzes modern Socialism and the rise of Fascism and Nazism. In 1931, in cooperation with other artists, Max Raphael, J.P. Samson, E.F. Burckhardt and others, Silone founded a German political review Information which dealt with sociological and cultural European affairs. Some of the topics considered were the political causes of German immigration, the revolutionary and counter-revolutionary tendencies shortly before the Civil War in Spain, technocracy and Marxism, and the cinema and

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<sup>1</sup> Ignazio Silone, Fontamara. Translated from the Italian by Harvey Fergusson II, and with a foreword by Malcolm Cowley (New York: Atheneum Publishers, 1960), p. x. Fontamara was first published in 1933 in Zurich, Switzerland.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

architecture. The review lasted for two years.<sup>1</sup>

For nearly ten years Silone kept away from active politics. Illness and his inner struggle with the question of the relationship between morality and political allegiance resulted in his physical and political inactivity. But the outbreak of the Second World War found Silone once more politically active. In Zurich, he became the head of the Partito Socialista Italiano's Foreign Centre (Centro Estero), 1940-1944.<sup>2</sup> This work was unlike that of his early revolutionary days (1917-1927) in Italy.<sup>3</sup> While in Switzerland, Silone was fairly safe, though still hunted by Mussolini's dreaded secret police. By now Silone had worked out a moral and ethical stance for modern man confronted with the ever growing bureaucratic powers of the state. He favoured an "ethical conception of Socialism and European reorganization along federalist lines".<sup>4</sup> In 1942, the writer and a few dedicated men attempted to infiltrate pamphlets (Manifesto per la disubbidienza civile) into war-torn Italy urging the population to public disobedience. Swiss police became aware of this plan and imprisoned Silone for over a year.<sup>5</sup> Afterwards, Silone took over the editorship, from February to October, 1944, of L'Avvenire dei Lavoratori ("Workers' Future"). In October 1944, he returned to liberated Rome, where he was named the editor of the well-known Socialist paper Avanti. Later, he was voted into parliament as a Socialist representative. During the 1950's and 1960's he was

<sup>1</sup>D.Eramo, pp. 510-511. <sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 515. <sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 504.

<sup>3</sup>Delzell, p. 196. <sup>5</sup>Ibid.

occupied in the Italian capital as a writer and was a co-editor of Tempo Presente ("Modern Times").<sup>1</sup> Silone remains "a moralist deeply concerned with ethical problems and the political reality of present times."<sup>2</sup>

As he suggested in The Secret of Luca (English edition 1958), Silone has moved to a non-political view of the individual's oppression by the state.<sup>3</sup> He has come full cycle. From Christian egalitarianism he turned to democratic Socialism, then to Marxism, returned to democratic Socialism, and now writes of a Christian ethic beyond political affiliation. It is not surprising that Silone, a former peasant himself, writes such vivid, humane, and detailed descriptions of the hardships and despondency of the Abruzzese, or the cafoni's social plight. In the last forty years, there has been little change in their way of life. They remain in a socio-economic vacuum. The Southern (Mezzogiorno) peasants still comprise a vast social sector which is largely politically unsophisticated. Their allegiance and identification are parochial rather than national.<sup>4</sup> These attitudes

<sup>1</sup>Tempo Presente ceased publication in 1968.

<sup>2</sup>Marc Slonim, review of "The Fox and the Camelias", by Ignazio Silone, The New York Times, May 1st, 1961, p. 1.

<sup>3</sup>Paolo Milano suggests that Silone does not think, as most Marxists do, that literature is subject to politics. For Silone, literature should be free of any political dogmas. Milano writes that Silone is a Socialist with a modern base of Christianity. Paolo Milano, "Silone the Faithful", review of "A Handful of Blackberries", by Ignazio Silone, The New Republic, Volume 128-129, October, 1953, p. 16.

<sup>4</sup>Joseph LaPalombara, Interest Groups in Italian Politics (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1964), p. 56.

were fostered throughout the centuries by the subservience of the countryside to the towns. A direct result of this quasi-colonial status of the countryside is the peasants' lack of a formal education.<sup>1</sup> The peasants remain culturally ill-adapted to a society demanding technological proficiency. Further, educational deprivation forces the peasants into an ever-increasing isolation from the towns, or migration to northern towns, and to other countries: Germany, France, Belgium, North and South America, and Australia.

Today the Mezzogiorno cafoni is a large, socially dissatisfied, amorphous mass in a relatively backward area. But Southern Italy is not altogether backward. Heavy industries, like the steel plant at Taranto and the industries of Brindisi and Bari, are imposed upon a traditionally isolated south. This isolation is being broken down by the construction of roads, and railways and air transportation. An important social feature of this developing society is its lack of a distinctive class of peasants. Southern cafoni did not develop, and are not developing, into a cohesive and single-minded social interest group as, perhaps, the Po valley agricultural workers or the small, landowners of southern France did.<sup>2</sup> The Mezzogiorno peasants' occupations and interests are too disparate to be representative of a class.

Generally, the peasantry can be divided into three social groups. First, there are the large numbers of agricultural day laborers--rural proletarians, who are entirely dependent upon the landowners' demands

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 50. <sup>2</sup>Tarrow, p. 51.



for manpower. This group consists mostly of farmers who hire themselves out to supplement their incomes.<sup>1</sup> Second, there are the coloni or transitional share tenants. They are distinguished from each other by their eleven internal divisions of labor. They each have different tasks of work to do. The coloni rely on being seasonally contracted to landowners. Third, there are those peasants who rent out land in return for cash payments. Usually, the pattern of landownership of all these peasants is so fragmented that they work on minute pieces of lands.<sup>2</sup> Another contributing factor to the divisions of peasants is the meddling of crafty middlemen. They rent the lands of the poor peasants and then lease them to richer peasants. It is this group of middlemen who receive most of the profits of the lands.<sup>3</sup> Further, the peasants whose lands they rent are often small farmers with several titles. In 1935, they numbered above 350,000.<sup>4</sup>

The Southern peasants' lack of class cohesion and interest stems from their lack of group interests and/or common goals. Such diversity can only imperil any common desire that the peasants may have. Indeed, the lack of a coherent class structure within the South is probably one of the most serious retrogressive forces with which the peasants must deal. Concurrently, the central governments at Rome did very little for development.<sup>5</sup> This negligence might have angered some, but not surprised most, peasants, who were traditionally aloof to and mistrustful of governments. During Fascism (1922-1943), the Southern peasants faced a bleak period.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 52. <sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 53. <sup>3</sup>Ibid. <sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., pp. 36-37.

With the Fascist advent to power, November 1922, repressive laws were promulgated against the entire Italian peasantry. For example, in January 1923, Law 252 annulled the peasants' right of occupancy of untended lands belonging to the latifundists or large landowners.<sup>1</sup> This clearly suggests that the Fascist government had a basic interest in obtaining support from the large landowners and was unmoved by the Southern peasants' hardships. In 1925, further legislation was passed which strictly controlled internal migration. These and other laws were detrimental not only to the Italian peasantry, but also to the entire Italian economy.<sup>2</sup> Although thousands were employed in the construction of highways, the drying up of swamps around Rome, and the modernization of railroads, unemployment was chronic. By 1936, 15.4 million were unemployed, as a result of Fascist economic policies and the general economic world crisis or depression.<sup>3</sup> In such unpromising times, it is not surprising to find Silone's Abruzzese living in utter squalour and misery, devoid of any realistic hope of bettering their or their childrens' lives.

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<sup>1</sup> Joseph Lopreato, Peasants No More, Social Class and Social Change in an Underdeveloped Society (San Francisco: Chandler Publishing Company, 1967), p. 31.

Since the 1950's, however, the social sector of the Southern peasants diversified itself amongst the large latifundists and small, private properties. Here, we now find transitional roles ranging from the old form of organization and the modern consolidated farms. They are: the small rentiers or affitti, the share tenants, mezzadri, the share tenants who are not supplied with farmhouses and/or equipment known as the coloni, and sharecroppers known as the compartecipanti. Tarrow, pp. 32-33.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> David Horowitz, The Italian Labour Movement (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1963), p. 4.

Fontamara's peasants are found vegetating. Their Via Crucis is one in which "...generations have worked from dawn to sunset, sweating blood over a minute and sterile patch of dust".<sup>1</sup> Silone depicts the housing crisis in these brutal, but realistic terms:

Most of these hovels have only one opening, which serves as door, window, and chimney. In the dry-walled interiors, which seldom possess a floor, the men, women and children and their goats, chickens and donkeys live, sleep, eat and reproduce, sometimes all in the same corner.<sup>2</sup>

The inhumanity of the industrialized north and the government at Rome, which left people barely subsisting, is partially responsible for the unbridgeable, cultural and political gaps which exist between central-southern towns and countryside.

Fictionary Fontamara is situated in the 1930's south of the former Fucino, near Marsica in the Abruzzi.<sup>3</sup> Its inhabitants, perennially impoverished peasants, work by hiring themselves out, besides "sowing, weeding, pruning, sulphuring..."<sup>4</sup> About ten thousand peasant-laborers till the lands of the owner Prince Torlonia. He in return rents out many of his lands to lawyers, teachers, doctors, notaries, rich farmers, and others.<sup>5</sup> They either hire the poorest farmers of the region or till the land themselves. The peasants' wages are low. They walk a distance of three to nine miles to work.<sup>6</sup> In contrast to their poverty, Torlonia's lands produce per annum a crop of 800,000 quintals of sugar beets, 300,000 quintals of wheat, and

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<sup>1</sup>Silone, Fontamara, p. 9. <sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 4.

<sup>3</sup>Ignazio Silone, Fontamara. Translated by Michael Wharf, First Edition (New York: Harrison Smith and Robert Haas Incorporated, 1934), p. vii.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. ix. <sup>5</sup>Ibid., pp. xi-xii. <sup>6</sup>Ibid.

10,000 quintals of different vegetables.<sup>1</sup> Ironically, the peasants who work the lands, and who aid in the production of these goods, are not able to afford them. The sugar goes to an important European refinery. Most of the wheat is shipped to towns and made into refined white bread, noodles, and biscuits, while the peasants have to satisfy themselves all year with Indian corn.<sup>2</sup>

Part of the Fontamarans' economic problem is based on the drying of the lake bed which occurred some eighty years ago on the orders of the older Prince Torlonia. As a result, the peasants' olive yards, grape hills, and lands became stony and dry. The Fontamarans did not receive any compensation for this wanton destruction of their lands. Since then, they try to live on their barren "few square yards".<sup>3</sup> Their food intake is based on corn bread, providing they do not run out of it.<sup>4</sup> A small contemporary poem in Mr. Aristotle describes the listless routine of their diet:

When September comes to Fontamara the cornmeal mush is  
already bitter tasting:  
The last year's meal is running low, and this year  
is not in.<sup>5</sup>

It does not take much imagination to see their hopelessness and the alienation of the central Italian peasants from the rest of their society. Their near-complete estrangement from any authority, either government or ecclesiastical, is obvious in their class analysis:

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. xiii.    <sup>2</sup>Ibid.    <sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. x.

<sup>4</sup>Ignazio Silone, Mr. Aristotle. Translated by Samuel Putnam, First Edition (New York: Robert McBride and Company, 1935), p. 155. Mr. Aristotle was published under the title Un Viaggio a Parigi, in 1935, Zurich.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 153

At the head of it all is God,  
 lord of heaven,  
 Then comes Prince Torlonia,  
 lord of earth,  
 Then comes the armed guard of Prince Torlonia,  
 Then come the hounds of the armed guard of Prince Torlonia.  
 Then nobody else.  
 And still nobody else.  
 And still again, nobody else.  
 Then come the farmers.<sup>1</sup>

The peasants' clear analysis of their social positions is substantiated by other views. For example, Ponzio Pilato, a peasant in Fontamara claims that the authorities are divided between the third and fourth position, or between the armed guards and their hounds. Their social category or positions depend upon their wages.<sup>2</sup>

There have usually been some individual peasants who, in their social estrangement from oppressive authority, turn to banditry, or sometimes even to social rebellion.<sup>3</sup> Their numbers are few. Seldom have peasants united against continuing social oppression. However, peasants sometimes do unite when they have little to lose, and are no longer obsessed with petty grievances of landownership, which often result in generations of struggle and lawsuits.<sup>4</sup> Unity of socially diverse group is perhaps the most difficult, though essential, goal to achieve. Without it, the peasantry is deprived of the socio-economic and cultural equality which is its moral right. The Solitary Stranger, who appears at the end of Fontamara, propels some peasants into

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<sup>1</sup>Silone, Fontamara, p. 23. <sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>For a detailed study of peasant rebellions see Eric Hobsbawm, Primitive Rebels, Studies in Archaic Forms of Social Movements in the 19th and 20th Centuries (New York: William W. Norton Company, 1959).

<sup>4</sup>Silone, op. cit., p. ix.

political action, but not before the majority has endured an endless series of inhuman and despicable acts by the fascisti.

## CHAPTER III

### The Problem of Revolution

#### The Intellectual and the Peasants

"Your real leftist must be without a nose,  
just as your real rightist must have no ears".<sup>1</sup>

Intellectuals have sometimes played a vital role in organizing and leading peasants against the socio-economic stranglehold of government and church. In the first half of the twentieth century, with its great social oppression in Fascist Italy, some intellectuals attempted to arouse a beaten peasantry into opposing Fascism and bringing about social change. They desired the peasants to ally themselves with city-based workers and Socialists in open opposition to Fascism. Ideally, this ought to have culminated in a social Revolution. However, few of these ideas materialized. To establish or coordinate any peasant action, political or otherwise, unity amongst the peasantry had first to be achieved.

In the quest for social emancipation, unity between peasants and town-based workers is for Berardo Viola, a peasant who died for the Solitary Stranger in Fontamara, a prerequisite.<sup>2</sup> By his death, he unleashes the pent-up social anxieties and frustrations of his fellow

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<sup>1</sup>Ignazio Silone, The Seed Beneath the Snow. Translated from the Italian by Frances Frenaye (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1942), p. 56.

<sup>2</sup>Silone, Fontamara, p. 218.

villagers who have been subjected to rape, starvation and utter humiliation. They unite in open opposition to the Fascist government.<sup>1</sup> This is the only instance in all of Silone's modern works where Abruzzi villagers openly defy Fascists. Most peasants, according to Silone, fail to offer any active opposition to Italian Fascism. Some socially conscious peasants follow the modern intellectuals into the underground and opposition to Fascism, but these are a mere handful. The majority remain politically inactive. The exclamation, "God what a people!"<sup>2</sup> by A. Cipriani, the Communist idealist in The Secret of Luca, portrays the intellectual's frustration with the peasants. The impoverished and forgotten cafoni simply do not want a Revolution or even social change. According to the village priest, Don Serafino, in The Secret of Luca, these poor peasants are neither serious nor tough enough for a Revolution.<sup>3</sup> They continue to vegetate, divided amongst themselves, and jealous of any material benefits their neighbour derives from a good crop or some other windfall. Yet, these peasants remain deeply skeptical, and morally, fiercely independent.<sup>4</sup>

The peasants' logic is simple. It evolves around and concentrates on their daily worries of existence, including perhaps the blessing of an animal.<sup>5</sup> Although the peasants are, contrary to Don

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid.

<sup>2</sup> Ignazio Silone, The Secret of Luca. Translated from the Italian by Arnoldo Mondadori Editore (London: Jonathan Cape, 1959), p. 79. The Secret of Luca, was first published in Italy, in 1956.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 47.

<sup>4</sup> C.J. Rollo, review of "A Handful of Blackberries", by Ignazio Silone, Atlantic Monthly, November, 1953, p. 112.

<sup>5</sup> Silone, The Seed Beneath the Snow, p. 3.



Serafino's opinion, "one of the toughest, hardest, and most enduring peoples in the whole of Italy",<sup>1</sup> their lives have been quite unchanged throughout the last century.<sup>2</sup> Consequently, their socio-psychological oppression creates in their minds a genuine feeling that any action with social change as its objective is bound to fail. Even if it were successful, it would bring with it only tax increases, since the peasants have little say in government. Nevertheless, hope is found amongst them, as can be seen in their maxim: "...when all hope is lost, we can still hope for a miracle".<sup>3</sup> Hope is an essential ingredient for the contemplation of any future socio-political action by these peasants. Further, it seems doubtful that the Abruzzi peasants could have withstood their crushing social and economic problems without the psychological aid of hope. Without it, social change is unlikely ever to occur amongst these peasants.

In contrast to the older intellectuals, Silone's modern peasant-intellectuals try to manipulate the peasants into some sort of social action. Many older intellectuals, such as the lawyer Don Zabaglione, a former Socialist, and now turned government supporter, play an extremely limited social role in the peasants' struggle for existence

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<sup>1</sup>Ignazio Silone, The God That Failed. Edited and with an introduction by R. Crossman (New York: Bantam Book, 1965), p. 79

<sup>2</sup>"Canning the Dictators", review of "The School for Dictators", by Ignazio Silone, The Times, January, 1965, p. 5.

Some Italian peasants believed that social trauma or oppression has always existed. Ignazio Silone, And He Hid Himself, A Play in Four Acts. Translated from the Italian by Darina Silone (New York: Harper Brothers Publishers, 1945), p. 9.

<sup>3</sup>Silone, The Seed Beneath the Snow, p. 19.

under Fascism. This type of intellectual usually involves himself in small lawsuits over thorn bushes or pieces of parched lands, and/or writes letters of recommendation for jobs in town.<sup>1</sup> The peasantry considers them as mere intermediaries between themselves and the authorities.<sup>2</sup> The modern peasant-intellectuals such as Don Paolo Spada, Andrea Cipriani or Rocco de Donatis, in Bread and Wine, The Secret of Luca, and A Handful of Blackberries, differ basically from the older intellectuals. They are intermediaries and idealists who desire to show the peasants the need for social change. They oppose Fascism and attempt to interest the peasants in fighting it. They group together a few trustworthy cafoni and go underground. Their main, fulltime occupation is to stay alive. This is, at first, the extent of their social revolt. Undoubtedly, not many known underground revolutionaries were successful in staying alive in the framework of a Fascist dictatorship.<sup>3</sup> In remaining alive through the cooperation of the peasants, the modern peasant-intellectuals achieve their first, really viable success against a dangerous enemy.<sup>4</sup> But the majority of peasants do not agree with the intellectuals in opposing Fascism, and respond unduly as pragmatic cynics who think of them as

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<sup>1</sup>Ignazio Silone, Bread and Wine, A New Version. Translated from the Italian by Harvey Fergusson II, and with an afterword by Marc Slonim (Toronto: The New American Library of Canada Limited, 1967), p. 121.

Bread and Wine was originally published in Zurich (1936) and translated into 29 languages and Braille.

<sup>2</sup>Silone, loc. cit. <sup>3</sup>See the Appendix for more information. p. 141.

<sup>4</sup>In Silone's later works, such as A Handful of Blackberries, or The Fox and the Camelias, his intellectuals become more sophisticated in their social rebellion, in that they physically combat Fascism. This can be compared to the author's highpoint of Christian brotherhood of And He Hid Himself, and The Seed Beneath the Snow, where political actions were relegated to secondary importance.

likeable, but bereft of all reason.<sup>1</sup> Some peasants see this madness, or seeming lack of reason, as the general opposite of the commonly denoted term of madness.<sup>2</sup> Fundamentally, the peasantry had difficulty in understanding the reasons for any educated person living among them.

These modern peasant-intellectuals and men of action were social revolutionaries during and after the Fascist era (1922-1943). Moreover, they took part in the ensuing bloody guerilla and civil war against both the fascisti and the occupying Nazi forces (1943-1945). Later, the peasant-intellectuals, such as A. Cipriani in The Secret of Luca, were ousted from the Italian Communist party, or PCI (Partito Comunista Italiano), due to "deviationist" leanings in the early 1950's. The peasant-intellectual, physically but not mentally cut off from the working class, remained with the peasants and still attempted to bring about social changes by organizing land laborers. By the 1940's and 1950's, Silone and his fictional intellectuals had become reformists, since Revolution was not successful in the past, and there was no indication that a Socialist Revolution would succeed in Italy. An ideal example of this is seen in A Handful of Blackberries in which Rocco de Donatis, after visiting the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe after the Second World War, returns to Italy disillusioned.<sup>3</sup> Rocco's disillusionment lies with Stalin's regime in the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe and the Italian Communist party. Soon after his return, he

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<sup>1</sup> Silone, op. cit., p. 128, or The Secret of Luca, p. 44.

<sup>2</sup> Silone, And He Hid Himself, p. 6.

<sup>3</sup> Ignazio Silone, A Handful of Blackberries. Translated from the Italian by Darina Tranquilli-Silone (New York: Harper Brothers, Publishers, 1953), pp. 116-117.

falls at odds with a dogmatic party bureaucrat and leaves the party. This portrays the deeply-rooted, moral differences between Silone and his former, Communist party friends. Already in the first edition of Bread and Wine (1936), the Communist party becomes similar in style and behaviour to the Catholic Church, with its vice-like grip over most of its members. Both clerical and party bureaucracies exercise a high degree of control and influence over the individual member of each institution.

In fact, religious fanaticism and official Communist dogmatism seem to complement each other for Silone. But, as with most institutions, the vast majority of both the Church or the Communist party stand in direct contrast to a few incorruptible, Christian brothers or party leaders.<sup>1</sup> Institutionalized Christianity was and likely remains more interested in reaching a rapport with governments in power than in adhering to its basic Christian principles.<sup>2</sup> The agreement concluded between the Fascist government and the Catholic Church in Italy in 1929 stipulated the support of this "Christian" Church for a dictatorial government. It also ended a socio-political stalemate between these two bodies until the decline of the Fascist government in the early 1940's.

Within such a political and spiritual vacuum, the peasants were

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<sup>1</sup>Silone, Emergency Exit, p. 20.

<sup>2</sup>In 1929, the Fascist government signed the Lateran agreement with the Vatican. The Vatican was clearly intent on achieving a close liason with the Fascists of Mussolini's government, probably trying to assure a more benevolent neutrality towards itself. Hence, the Church stayed tax free or exempt in the centre of a tax-ridden and generally poor country.

characteristically cynical and distrustful. They trusted neither the Church nor the government, nor, perhaps, the Communists. Their distrust and downright alienation from any authority did not lead them to become anti-Catholic, radical or even Socialist. The peasants wanted to be left alone.<sup>1</sup> They were alien to anything based in or originating from the city, since it automatically meant to them some sort of social oppression. Their faith in religion or Catholicism was present, even though they did not think much of the Church and most of its priests. Before 1922 and after 1945, some peasants belonged to a Socialist agrarian union. They desired to see some radical, social changes. But, they were in a minority and socially isolated. Their belief in a unique mixture of Christianity and Marxism was largely misunderstood not only by their fellow peasants, but also by most people in the city.<sup>2</sup> These were the peasants around whom the peasant-intellectuals built their political underground cells during Fascism. These cells were a harmonious fusion of Christianity and democratic Socialism, and perhaps showed other peasants a political alternative which they might come to understand and adhere to in time.

Establishing personal relations between a peasant-intellectual and the peasantry is a problem involving several psychological difficulties. To gain the trust of and communicate with the peasants a peasant-intellectual has to live amongst the peasants and eat their food. Once this rapport is established, then, the intellectual can begin his political work. This evolves around the necessity for

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<sup>1</sup> Ignazio Silone, "Letter to his Friends", in The New Republic, November 2nd, 1942, p. 582.

<sup>2</sup> Silone, The Secret of Luca, p. 126.

peasant unity and the eventual development of a homogeneous, peasant interest group(s). At the same time, the creation of a unity and a common interest group will enable the peasants to perceive the dire need for social change and political action. While the peasants are undergoing this political preconditioning, that is, the perception of the need for socio-political action, the intellectual presupposes that the peasants will later unite with the workers' party, either Socialist, Communist or the left-wing of the Christian Democrats. When Silone wrote his early works he favoured the Communist party, but has since opted for the democratic Socialist party in Italy. Hopefully, the peasants and the three political parties will aid the emancipation of the peasant interest group(s). Through pressure groups, the peasants can make their cause known in government, church and other organizations, and with time and excellent group coordination might achieve many of their goals. But the peasants first have to unite in a mass movement and earnestly organize themselves in the country. Because of the Abruzzi peasants' divided interests and apolitical attitudes, the intellectuals were unable to convince them of the need for organizing themselves. Added to this were the intellectuals own political problems. The peasant-intellectuals slowly began to analyze their own commitment to the Italian Communist party, and motivation to organize resistance groups facing certain death under Fascism.

Silone's intellectuals are usually landborn peasants who receive an education in the city, and consequently are no longer peasants, nor

are they able to return to the land and their former occupation.<sup>1</sup> Their existence is one of being neither a peasant nor a city individual, and, therefore, presents a unique predicament. These men are social humanitarians who, because of their peasant background, are probably the only people capable of convincing the peasants of their need of internal unity, as well as combined action with the Socialist or Communist parties based in the cities. More important, they represent the only chance of recruiting peasants for the then outlawed Communist, Socialist and other parties and their causes. The intellectuals have to convince the peasants of their need to act, and to rid themselves of resignation, an ever-recurring peasant trait.<sup>2</sup>

Literally nothing prodded the Abruzzese into action. The peasant-intellectuals attempted unsuccessfully to stimulate the peasants, but were hardly able to arouse the desire for social change. Such initiative as existed was simply insufficient to propel them into political action, or even to cause them to contemplate such action. Clearly, it would have taken years, perhaps several generations of dedicated intellectuals, to convince the peasants of the necessity to act. Silone's intellectuals, in their political predicament in Fascist Italy, were unable to undertake such a long-term political task. Moreover, the earnest desire needed for political or social change and action cannot be superimposed upon the peasants by anyone. Genuine desire for social change must, therefore, originate with the peasantry themselves, reflect their opinions, and can then be channelled into

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<sup>1</sup> Silone, Bread and Wine, 1967 edition, p. 84.

<sup>2</sup> Silone, The Secret of Luca, p. 127.

political action. Of course, the latter can take the forms of demonstrating, refusing to pay taxes, or in the case of Italian Fascism, going underground and combatting the dictatorship. Whatever the choice, the peasant had several alternatives, none of them easy, and each involved the risk of losing his life and endangering the lives of his family. Although the peasants were socially inactive, they were constantly dreaming of a better society. They naively desired to return to a Christian brotherhood. This is political retrogression within an industrializing society, such as Fascist Italy, since they still would not own land which they sorely needed. The peasants hoped to eat better and more, and wanted to be governed by one of their equals.<sup>1</sup> This is a far cry from political astuteness, but a very basic and essential step to it. These desires for a more humane society were described by Sciatàp, a peasant, in Bread and Wine:

A beautiful dream. The wolves and the lambs will graze together in the same pasture. The big fish won't eat the little fish anymore. A fine fable. Every once in a while they talk about it.<sup>2</sup>

The sincere wish for a more egalitarian, or Christian-like, existence and society should not be scoffed at by anyone. It represents a moral base for the future development of society. But the peasants' desire is not strong enough to realize such a society, nor do they indicate what type of action is necessary to bring about their humane society. Grascia, another peasant, would change society by abolishing all laws. Most likely this would seem to many academics, politicians and social scientists as anarchistic, and would ideally conform to their slogans,

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<sup>1</sup>Silone, Bread and Wine, p. 137.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.



analyses, and formulas of southern, Italian peasants in general. Grascia's idea, however, is somewhat more sophisticated than many would concede. He thinks that most, if not all, social problems originate in laws.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, if possible, he would abolish them. This political vision of an illiterate peasant shows succinctly that some of them held social views. Added to that is the fact that Grascia could think of possibly solutions to many of the peasants' problems. He renders his idea politically poignant when he says that he would retain one law. This would give every Italian peasant the right to leave Italy. The peasants concluded that if such a law were ever implemented they would all leave.<sup>2</sup>

Their views indicate that some peasants possessed a good understanding of their social situation. Some of them even had a political alternative mapped out. But the majority of the peasants were unable to break their psychological and physical attachments to the soil. A Capucin friar, a former peasant himself, shrewdly analyzed the roots of all their social problems as "the greed for property" which is "...like a chain on a dog".<sup>3</sup> More land meant more food for the peasants, but to buy land the peasantry needed money. Their only means of raising money was by mortgaging the land and property they already owned. Some of them, in their blind lust for land and money, mortgaged nearly everything they owned. This mortgage fever sometimes ran so high that peasants would mortgage their intestines or other human parts, if these were in any way found unusual by a physician, and could, therefore, be

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 138. <sup>2</sup>Ibid. <sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 115.

used for medical research upon the death of the mortgagee.<sup>1</sup> Because of the peasants' small incomes, few were able to break this vicious cycle of the demand for land and finances. By mortgaging all their possessions, the peasants remained in the position of non-owners until their deaths. Then, their offspring were liable for their debts. The children, in a social position similar to their fathers, were often unable to pay off the debts and, hence, could not better themselves.

Sometimes the younger peasants are still the best and only hope for the peasantry to bring about any changes. These younger peasants are detached from the land since they live in villages and not on the farm. They are often socially conscious, some of them students, some land laborers and sons of small Fascist officials or village bureaucrats, who prove troublesome to their parents. The parents are influential, political people who form a village clique and without whose aid the government could not remain in power for any considerable time. The problem with the youths is, according to their parents, that they take slogans and ideas far too literally. Ironically, one major topic amongst the youths is derived from the early writings of Mussolini sent from Rome which, while censored, nevertheless abounded with slogans for the abolition of the monarchy, the church and the capitalist system.<sup>2</sup> Apparently, the village youths want to see the original writings of B. Mussolini while he was a Socialist, before 1915. Naturally, their distraught parents cannot allow this. The

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<sup>1</sup> Ignazio Silone, Bread and Wine, Translated from Italian by Gwenda David and Eric Mosbacher (London: Methuen and Company, 1936), p. 133.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 147.

books are appropriately removed, and later taken out of the library. Don Zabaglione, the well-known lawyer, grasping the crux of the problem, makes oblique reference to the Soviet Union and its problems with the newly instituted 1936 Constitution which was taken too literally by some Russians.<sup>1</sup> Here, Silone underlines a similarity between the two dictatorships, Italian Fascism and Stalinist Communism.

In spite of their parents' protests, the village peasants continue their underground work, and call for corporatism, a sort of state capitalism, and the second Revolution "to carry out what's in those books".<sup>2</sup> Silone's stipulation of the second Revolution can suggest that the first socialist Revolution in Russia (1917) did not complete its program. Similarly, he may be thinking of a second Revolution, which would then evolve into a socialist one.<sup>3</sup> Or he may be analyzing, as Dr. J.F. Laffey suggests, the socially radical and idealistic components in Italian Fascism.<sup>4</sup> This reasoning is more plausible than all the others, since the village youths proposed the abolition of capitalism, the institution of a more equal distribution of wealth, as well as a return to Mussolini's early socialist ideas, while he was the fiery but insincere editor of Avanti (1912-1914). These political ideas constitute an idealistic return to the basic notions of Socialism or to those of early Fascism, circa 1917-1918.

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<sup>1</sup>Silone, Bread and Wine, 1967 edition, p. 153. <sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>This would be rather difficult to achieve, since Italy did not have a Revolution resembling the French Revolution of 1789. The 1848 Revolution throughout Italy was successful in some major cities for a very short period. Thereafter, a conservative social oppression wiped out most advances instituted by the 1848 Revolution.

<sup>4</sup>Comment made by Dr. Laffey, Sir George Williams University.

Mussolini had integrated many socialist ideas, such as the abolition of the monarchy and capitalism, into his Fascist program. A return to these ideas for Mussolini and Italian Fascism seemed unthinkable and impossible, without uprooting them from their dictatorial power structure and denying their methods and existence from 1922 to the mid-1930's.

During the 1930's, the possibilities of a socialist Revolution were next to non-existent in Fascist Italy. However, preparing interested people for the eventual overthrow of Fascism and subsequent radical social change was necessary and vital. The organization of the countryside would not be as important as that of the insurgent forces in the city. Silone's modern intellectuals are aware of this. They also know that if real changes are to come about, the peasants must be involved and must cooperate with the city insurgents. The centre, the Schwerpunkt, of social change is the city.<sup>1</sup> The revolutionary Pietro Spina sees this vividly and explains it to his peasant friends in these words:

No; the struggle will be begun by others, without you, and as it's going to be a struggle for everybody's truth, including yours it will end by attracting and convincing you too and sweeping you into it along with the rest.<sup>2</sup>

The hint of an idealistic, all-embracing, social change is present. Pietro implies the necessity of a workers-peasants alliance which is symbolically and physically carried out by Berardo Viola in Fontamara, and by the peasant-student Luigi Murica in And He Hid Himself. Pietro's gentle rebuke to the peasants makes it clear to them that

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<sup>1</sup>Silone, And He Hid Himself, p. 13. <sup>2</sup>Ibid.

they will have to change psychologically in order to bring about social change. Their psychological change would enable them to break away from their centuries-old submission and their status as a landless, agrarian mass. If this does not take place, then, the real possibility exists for a greater cultural gap between town and country. The Abruzzese cafoni would thus constitute a lost people, totally alone and alien to an increasingly technological society.

In the context of a fairly socially stagnant Abruzzese region, Spina's imaginative explanations may have served as a sadly needed morale booster for the peasants. This was likely to be of greater importance to Spina in trying to reach some peasants than the state of his own morale. Without their help or, at least, neutrality, his underground existence is endangered and may possibly be curtailed. The peasants are largely non-political and socially inactive. They alone cannot change their economic dilemmas. They remain in the same or similar social positions for generations. Even though many peasants hope, which is essential for any future action, committing themselves or even learning to trust the peasant-intellectuals remains an agonizingly slow process. The behaviour of some younger peasants suggests that the father's social isolation is being slowly undermined by the son's social and, often, political actions. A start has been made. The dangerously slow development of the peasants' social involvement and activity indicates that it will likely take several generations to bring about real, viable, social change.

## CHAPTER IV

### The Problem of Bureaucracy

"Man has no real existence except insofar as he fights his own limitations".<sup>1</sup>

Social reform is often hampered by a modern state or a party bureaucracy. This realization by Silone and his intellectuals is a major reason for their anti-bureaucratism. Because revolutionary ideals have become secondary, and sometimes irrelevant to the party bureaucracy, they oppose it. The bureaucracy organizes workers, peasants, and intellectuals by wholly subordinating them to the state and party. Never before in modern history have people been so subjugated to a bureaucracy or an institution as they have been in the first half of the twentieth century. People have been categorized, manipulated, and conditioned. In many instances, they have lost not only their freedom, but also their ability to think for themselves. There are always some men and women who refuse to be socially oppressed. Men like Silone and his fictional intellectuals provide opposition to such oppression.

Silone's distrust of the bureaucracy is of long standing. It

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<sup>1</sup>Silone, And He Hid Himself. p. 59.

began with his writing of three articles in Avanti, at the age of seventeen (1917), depicting the corrupt Italian government, and reached its high point when he analysed Italian Fascism and Soviet Communism in the mid-1930's.<sup>1</sup>

In the 1950's Silone Spoke out against the nearly omnipotent bureaucracy of a modern state whose stifling powers endangered some, if not most, of the personal freedoms which he fought to preserve by joining the Socialists. In repudiating bureaucracies, Silone is not a political anarchist or nihilist; he is a purist, an ethical moralist,<sup>2</sup> whose aim is to aid in the achievement of a new man or humanity.<sup>3</sup> Underlying all his social comments on the various political, religious or state institutions, such as Italian Fascism and Communism, the Catholic Church, and the modern State, is the absence of a humane morality within these institutions. Like Luca, in The Secret of Luca (1957), Silone believes that "every act of moral selflessness is by its very nature improbable", nevertheless one must never cease attempting to attain the improbable.<sup>4</sup> This "act of intellectual frustration"<sup>5</sup>, is

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<sup>1</sup>Specifically the misadministration of the reconstruction of the Avezzano district, which was destroyed in the earthquake of 1915. Luce D'Eramo, p. 503.

<sup>2</sup>Slonim, p. 1.

<sup>3</sup>Silone, Bread and Wine. 1936 Edition. p. 288.

<sup>4</sup>Irving Howe, "The Power of Example", review of The Secret of Luca, by Ignazio Silone, New Republic, Volume 138-139, January-December, 1958. p. 18.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

the moral cornerstone on which the author builds his opposition to any dogma which subordinates men to institutions, because institutions are usually bent on becoming ends in themselves.<sup>1</sup>

The years after the First World War were crucial for the budding Communist parties. E.H. Carr terms this time as the "...earliest and genuinely idealistic period."<sup>2</sup> Most party members endorsed the idea that the dictatorship of the proletariat was a necessary, but temporary, measure for achieving the Socialist society. In the Communist society, the dictatorship and the government would voluntarily relinquish their powers. People would be free to govern themselves. In fact, the dictatorial government became a permanent fixture with ever increasing powers. The "totalitarian mould", or the adherence to Moscow's Marxian dogma, was in the making and smothered any individual initiative and creativity. After 1927, Moscow demanded unconditional adherence to its interpretation of Marx's ideas, and unquestioning support for its political actions. One either accepted the Soviet policy, or left the party. Intellectual integrity was still more important to Silone, and some others, than the existence of Moscow and its Marxian dogma.<sup>3</sup> Thus, he rejected the once revolutionary Soviet party for its political dogmatism, and the Italian party for its subjection to Moscow. The ideological and moral integrity of

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<sup>1</sup>Ignazio Silone, The School for Dictators. Translated from the Italian by Gwenda David and Eric Mosbacher (New York: Harper Brothers, Publishers, 1938), p. 49.

<sup>2</sup>Isaac Deutscher, Heretics and Renegades and Other Essays. (London: Jonathan Cape Limited, 1969), p. 3.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.



the Italian party suffered when P. Togliatti kowtowed to Moscow while attempting to preserve party unity. Perhaps, no one knows better than Silone, because of his familiarity with the International, the intellectual and physical horrors experienced by many Italians, who were subjected to Moscow's political philosophy.

The crises which party members underwent in the late 1920's and 1930's were severe. Most of them faced political dilemmas which taxed their physical and moral strength to their limits. The intellectuals suffered personal crises when confronted with the problem of political opportunism. Silone analysed his and his intellectuals' moral predicament in the following manner:

What remained in him of that generous impulse towards the masses of the people? He had broken with a decadent church, rejected opportunism and declined to compromise with society. But had he not succumbed to another kind of opportunism, the opportunism dictated by the interests of a political party? He had broken with the old world and all its comforts, cut himself off from his family, abandoned his favourite studies, set himself to live for justice and truth alone, and entered a party in which he was told that justice and truth were petty bourgeois prejudices. Did he not feel himself betrayed?<sup>1</sup>

Their strict morality was in conflict with the opportunism of the Communist party supporters. Political beliefs, coloured by Christian morals, had no place within the party. In some of Silone's works, The Seed Beneath the Snow (1942), And He Hid Himself (1945), and in The Secret of Luca (1957), moral integrity seems to border on a dogma-like attitude. Silone and his fictional intellectuals are not prepared to condemn a human being to death for the sake of party unity.

<sup>1</sup>Silone, Bread and Wine. 1936 Edition. pp. 79-80.

They value human beings more than anything else. Possibly, such a notion is necessary, for if men compromise themselves, they are unlikely to be morally independent of their institutions. Silone objected to the moral and political degeneration which was both the cause and result of opportunism within the church, the state and/or the party bureaucracies. Since man's nature is corruptible, he is tempted to justify human sacrifices for the establishment of his ideas. The recourse to sacrifice diminishes his humanity, and, therefore, Silone rejects it.

Social thinkers like Silone who were admitted to the Italian Communist party brought with them a complete dedication to the party's cause.<sup>1</sup> This did not mean that they could not hold opinions differing from the party's. In the late-1920's, when Communist parties fell under Stalin's sway, diversified opinions ceased. In 1927, Silone and Togliatti attended a meeting of the Communist International in Moscow, when the internal power struggle between V.I. Stalin and L. Trotzky reached its apex, and when Stalin coerced every member of his "majority" into agreement.<sup>2</sup> During one of the numerous meetings of the Executive of the International, a resolution was read out by E. Thälmann, the German representative, condemning Trotzky for a letter which allegedly censured the Soviet's China policy.<sup>3</sup> Togliatti and Silone asked to see the document. They were told by the German representative that, except for the Soviet delegates, none had seen

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<sup>1</sup> Crossman, ed., p. 87.

<sup>2</sup> Silone, Emergency Exit, p. 74.

<sup>3</sup> Crossman, ed., p. 96, or Emergency Exit, pp. 75-76.

or read it. Most party members, except Togliatti, Silone, J. Humbert-Droz (who recently died, October, 1971), and A. Treint, supported the resolution and condemned the unseen document. The following evening the Bulgarian V. Kolarov was given the thankless task of convincing Togliatti and Silone that the Soviet's internal convulsions made it necessary for them to align themselves with the winning side.<sup>1</sup> Kolarov failed. Thereafter, Silone and Togliatti wrote a letter to the International's Political Office complaining of the methods used to force an agreement condemning an unseen document. It also stated that although the Soviet's position was preeminent, it did not include the right to force decisions upon others in an authoritarian manner. The letter was withdrawn on the advice of Bukharin, who noted that their political positions were perilous because of their refusal to condemn the document.<sup>2</sup> Still not persuaded by the explanations given and the threats made, Togliatti, quoting the words of the dying Goethe asked for "Licht, mehr Licht" to be thrown on the Trotsky affair.<sup>3</sup> This was to no avail. A few years later (1930), he compromised his integrity and submitted to the Soviets.<sup>4</sup> The mysterious

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<sup>1</sup>It was Stalin, claims Silone, who told Kolarov to convince the two Italian representatives, Togliatti and Silone, of the need to support the condemnation of the unseen document. Crossman, ed., op. cit., p. 97.

<sup>2</sup>Silone, op. cit., p. 81.

<sup>3</sup>Crossman, ed., p. 94.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 92.

document was later published by Trotzky himself in the well-known and devastatingly accurate analysis, Problems of the Chinese Revolution. Its contents showed that Stalin had committed a grave error in supporting Chiang Kai-shek who turned about and liquidated the Chinese Communists and labour leaders in Shanghai (1927). This shows that those representatives of the International at Moscow who had reserved their judgement of the unseen document had acted prudently.

The institutionalization of some Marxian ideas, such as the right to work, minimum wages and job security, resulted in the industrialization of the Soviet Union and the creation of a huge state party bureaucracy. One major drawback caused by the party bureaucracy was the scarcity of personal freedom in a socialist state such as the Soviet Union. The elitism of the party and state bureaucrats, their socio-political manipulations of society, and their political and moral degeneration are generally described in Silone's The School for Dictators (all editions):

I do not mean that it is moral sense that prevents the moderns from regarding politics as pure technique and the people as merely clay because contempt for the masses and the tendency to try to use them as though they were a mere passive instrument still prevail among the majority of politicians today, and persist according to my experience even among the so-called revolutionaries.<sup>1</sup>

The support of the masses is essential for any political party or movement to obtain power; the use of the masses as "passive instruments" is necessary for a dictatorship to remain in power. During and after the 1917 Russian Revolution, the Soviet people became secondary to the

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<sup>1</sup>Silone, The School for Dictators. 1938 Edition. p. 36.

Communist party, specifically the party bureaucracy or apparatus.<sup>1</sup> The Soviet people had little or no political power and yet they were one of the main forces which carried out industrialization and economic development. The Communist party became the dictatorial government, while a bureaucratic minority ruled a vast majority, not necessarily with its consent. Thomas the Cynic claims that the dictatorship of one party is nonsense.<sup>2</sup> By denying other political groups the right of existence, the Communist party abuses its own strength.<sup>3</sup> In fact, it suppresses ideas that might further party or Communist development. Such actions cause the party to lose its democratic base, transform it into an organ of the state, with the result that it ceases to be, and to function as, a party.<sup>4</sup> The state controlled and managed by the party bureaucracy becomes more important than the members of the state, as well as the party members. Silone denounces the idea that the party is politically superior to its members. The party and the program of Socialism must be inseparable, or political degeneration will set in.

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<sup>1</sup>G. Serati, the eminent Italian Socialist wrote in a letter to Lenin (1919) that although the Soviet party had gained "six times as many members now as before the Revolution...it has not gained much so far as quality is concerned. Your ranks have been joined by all slavish elements who always serve the powerful. These elements constitute a blind and cruel bureaucracy which is creating new privileges in Soviet Russia." Angela Balabanoff, My Life as a Rebel Third edition, (New York: Greenwood Press, Publishers, 1968), p. 276.

<sup>2</sup>Silone, op. cit., p. 302.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 303.

When the party bureaucracy became so indispensable to the party and the state that in fact the bureaucracy was a state within a state, the result was political orthodoxy and monolithism. A political commissar in A Handful of Blackberries could order an Italian party member to stop his personal friendship with a third person, if the latter differed politically from the current party line.<sup>1</sup> This utterly senseless misuse of a political idea by an ideologue, based upon blind adherence, did much harm to both the party and its program. At the inception of the Italian Communist party (1921), blind adherence was rarely the case. But, with the party's subordination to Moscow, most party members underwent psychological changes. Certain psychological conditions were imposed upon once humane revolutionaries. This resulted in the intellectual and ideological acquiescence of most revolutionaries and party members. There are several reasons for this. While many Communist parties faced an uncertain underground existence, their members became ideologically united in order to ensure the physical survival of the party. By this action, the party was able to withstand internal and external opposition. The submission to Moscow was beneficial to the Soviet Union and not to the individual party. Revolutionaries in their underground existence in Italy, or in other countries, saw that some of the party's socio-political theories on Italian Fascism, German Nazism, and Capitalism, were proven true, and were largely persuaded to believe in the validity and veracity of its other socio-political theories. Slowly, many members molded themselves into authoritarian adherents to Moscow's version of

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<sup>1</sup>Silone, A Handful of Blackberries, p. 118.

Marxism. The Communist party became supreme and infallible. This opinion reflected little of the idealism of the nascent Communist party, and none of the political tolerance of the early Internationals.

Although all members of the Third International adhered to Lenin's Twenty-one Conditions, there was at first no coercion into orthodox, political beliefs. Silone attributes this to the countries' differing developments, which produced attitudes ranging from the Bolsheviks' dislike of Western liberties, to leftist, Socialist, splinter group's support of democratic Socialism.<sup>1</sup> Silone cites many examples of intellectuals who, for various reasons, were disillusioned with the Third International and its policies of establishing Socialism throughout the world. L.O. Frossard favoured parliamentary democracy. Revolutionary trade unionists, P. Monatte and A. Nin, opposed the submission of their unions, and unions in general, to Moscow. They naively misunderstood Soviet democracy. A. Tasca and others disapproved of the collaboration with Social Democrats. Finally, there were the ultra-left wingers, A. Bordiga, R. Fischer and B. Souvarine, who became disenchanted with opportunism.<sup>2</sup> All of them disagreed with Moscow and Stalin's doctrine of subordination to the Soviet Union and most left the party.<sup>3</sup> Those who idealistically chose to combat orthodoxy were removed from their political positions, and banished into exile and death.

The molding of authoritarian opinions and political theories

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<sup>1</sup>Crossman, ed., p. 89.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid. <sup>3</sup>Ibid.

originated from the top of the party hierarchy. The chief Soviet intellectual leaders, Lenin and Trotzky, disliked to discuss views differing from theirs, and dictated their opinions to other party and/or government officials.<sup>1</sup> A difference of opinion, says Silone, even in good faith, was treason to these Soviet leaders and other Communists and, inasmuch, traitorous to the cause of Soviet Communism.<sup>2</sup>

To understand this fossilization of Soviet Marxism, one has to realize what the Soviet's internal and external political and economic situation was during the 1920's, for it influenced the formulation of policies. From the late 1920's until the Soviet domination of most of Eastern Europe in the late 1940's, its international position was precarious. While the country was undergoing industrialization, it was geographically surrounded by hostile states. Political conservatism and orthodoxy, but not political dogmatism, seemed necessary. This was possibly the reasoning, shortly before and after Lenin's death (1924), of the Soviet party and bureaucracy. When all opposition within the Soviet Communist party was stifled by the ousting and later banishment of Trotzky (1927 and 1929), political orthodoxy was transformed into dogmatism. Communist discipline evolved into an Inquisition-like ruthlessness.

P. Togliatti,<sup>3</sup> on a visit to Silone in Switzerland (1930),

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<sup>1</sup>Balabanoff, p. 271. <sup>2</sup>Crossman, ed., p. 90.

<sup>3</sup>Togliatti and Gramsci were born on the island of Sardinia. Both were impoverished students who became acquainted while studying at the university of Turin, 1911. Giuseppe Fiori, Vita Di Antonio Gramsci (Bari: Gius Laterza e Figli, 1965), p. 107.



rationalized this ruthlessness in a tempting, though undemocratic manner:

The forms of the Proletarian Revolution were not arbitrary. If they did not accord with our preferences, so much the worse for us. And besides what alternative remained? Other Communists who had broken with the party, how had they ended up? Consider, he said, the appalling condition of Social Democracy.<sup>1</sup>

Togliatti's political reasoning, with its suggestion that Stalin's acts of subordination and political oppression were for the benefit of the Soviet Union and all other Communist parties, shows that he consents to a brutal dictatorship as the consequence of having to choose between a degenerate Social Democracy and Soviet Communism.<sup>2</sup> His analysis may be politically expedient, but lacks an immediate morality, foresight, and political independence. An important question to be answered by adherents of Togliatti's view is whether or not it is possible to regain a humane morality after having abandoned it in favour of political expediency. Silone considers this unlikely, if not impossible. Togliatti serves as an example that the Stalinist mold of opinion left no room for moral, social, and political independence of any sort. On the other hand, many former Communists who, like Silone, were appalled at the lack of humanity within Communist parties became, unlike him, "Stalinists in reverse".<sup>3</sup> Disenchanted with modern Communism, they

<sup>1</sup> Silone, Emergency Exit, p. 92.

<sup>2</sup> Togliatti in the early 1930's repressed Gramsci's letters of discontent with Stalin's policies and tactics and the political subordination of the Italian party to Moscow. Both Gramsci and Togliatti wanted to preserve party unity, hence Gramsci's refusal to address them to the party. He wrote these for discussion by the party leadership. Togliatti however, suppressed them. Christian Riechers, Antonio Gramsci Marxism in Italien. (Frankfurt am Main: Europäische Verlagsanstalt, 1970), p. 100.

<sup>3</sup> Deutscher, p. 3.

became staunch, anti-Communists and ultra-Conservative propogandists. They now attempted, in the 1930's, to crush the Communist menace in Europe. Later, in the United States many of them helped Senator McCarthy, during the early 1950's, to incite the hysterical reaction to "The Menace" in as ruthless and immoral a manner as they accused former Stalinists of employing against opponents. In comparison to them, Silone and a few others, such as A. Tasca and A. Balabanoff, are exceptional. Silone did not stay in the party, nor did he become a Conservative. Instead, he developed into a democratic Socialist, or as he calls himself, a freelance Socialist.<sup>1</sup>

Silone is aware that the political degeneration of the Communist movement under Moscow has historical precedents, that successful revolutionary movements tend to evolve into dictatorships. Already in the early 1920's the party was organizing its members like a mass of laborers, placing them under the direction and control of the bureaucracy. The bureaucrats employed methods which subordinated all political and social power to themselves. Uliva, the enraged Socialist turned anarchist because of the similarities between Italian Fascism and Soviet Communism, said about the dogmatisation of ideas that:

...Every idea is crystallized into formulas for the purpose of propagation; it is entrusted to a body of interpreters for its preservation. They are carefully chosen, sometimes appropriately paid, and in any case put under a superior authority, which has the job of resolving doubts and repressing deviations. And thus every new idea always ends up as an obsession, immobile and regressive. When this idea becomes the state's official doctrine, there's no escape. Maybe a carpenter or a plowman could get along in an orthodox totalitarian regime and eat, digest, procreate and generally mind his own business. But,

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<sup>1</sup>Silone, op. cit., p. 108.

especially for an intellectual, there's no escape. He has to bow down and enter the dominant clergy, or resign himself to being hungry, and to being eliminated at the first opportunity.<sup>1</sup>

For Uliva, intellectuals confronting a dictatorial government must choose between self-preservation and elimination. The threat of elimination encourages most of them to conform to the government's opposition. Some, nevertheless, oppose it. Uliva's suggestions, that though some intellectuals have difficulty in accepting a dictatorial state a "plowman generally minds his own business", can be considered as intellectual elitism.<sup>2</sup> Uliva fails to point out that a plowman has little time to think of the affairs of the state. He is too occupied trying to survive. Contrary to this, the intellectual is theoretically trained to criticize the actions of government or state. Generally, though, most intellectuals fail to criticize their government. Many of them are neutral or non-committal, and thus directly or indirectly support the government. An opposing social group or force to the intellectuals are the fanatical followers of a religious or political movement. They often constitute the backbone of their various organizations. The dictatorial powers of the leaders, sometimes demagogues, depend largely upon the unquestioning, hysterical support of many men, women, and sometimes even children. This can be due to their wish or desire to believe in an idea, rather than to the belief itself. Fanaticism often indicates political or religious conditioning, indoctrination, or brainwashing, in many followers. This type of mass

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<sup>1</sup> Silone, Bread and Wine. 1967 Edition, p. 178.

<sup>2</sup> Suggestion made by Dr. J.F. Laffey, Sir George Williams University.

hypnosis and behaviour is evident in the first half of the twentieth century in Fascists, Communists, Falangists, other political parties and religions. Modern societies are marked with fanaticism as a social malaise. The age of mass phenomenon and hysteria has been reached. There seem to be few indications that people desire to think for themselves. In spite of this general lethargy there are men and women who oppose the "dominant clergy", governments, dictatorships, and try to point out viable alternatives to man's dilemma.

The Italian social critic Ignazio Silone is one of the few men who opposed a corrupt, royalist government, a sluggish Fascist state and church bureaucracy, and later a budding Soviet dictatorship. Silone's works are pervaded with the idea that the tragedy of modern man arises from his lack of morality, or more specifically the lack of a humane morality of his government or church institutions and bureaucracies. Although Silone as an idealist staunchly believes that "every act of moral selflessness is by its very nature improbable",<sup>1</sup> he attempts to achieve democratic Socialism and the general freedom of man. At the very early age of sixteen, Silone was organizing the Abruzzi peasantry. Then, at twenty, he considered and joined the Italian Communist party as the social vehicle which would institute his ideals. Ten years later, he was disillusioned with the party and its subordination to Moscow. He joined the Socialist party (Partito Socialista Italiano) in Switzerland and became its Foreign Centre chief. At the end of the war, Silone began to describe and attack the bureaucratic powers of the modern state. Most of his works deal with

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<sup>1</sup>Howe, p. 18.

the Abruzzi peasants' economic dilemmas and their socio-cultural encroachment by the town, as well as the peasants' rejection of any state, church or political authority. Silone's peasants are culturally and psychologically isolated in an increasingly technological Italian society. The tragedy of the Abruzzi peasantry, and indeed of modern man, is inextricably enmeshed with personal freedom. The modern phenomenon of the state or party bureaucracy is generally not responsible to the people of a nation, but often to itself, and seldom to some or any political masters. Thus, a population is not so much directed or guided by a government, as by the mechanism through which modern government works: the bureaucracy. Man is therefore free to choose between resistance or manipulation.

PART TWO

MILOVAN DJILAS

The horrible truth about Yugoslavia is that it is so complex that it cannot be simplified or conceptualized without also being distorted out of all recognition.

--Stevan K. Pavlowitch

## CHAPTER V

### The Yugoslav Background

Throughout ancient and modern history, the lands of the South Slavs have been invaded by various migrating people. In fact, South Slav territory has become and remains a meeting place of a Western or Christianized and an Eastern or Moslem-Turkish civilization.<sup>1</sup> The entire Dalmatian coast came under the influence of the early Greeks. Later, nearly every region of modern Yugoslavia was incorporated into the Western Roman Empire.<sup>2</sup> With the decline of the Empire, the Roman influence in the Balkans was replaced by the Byzantine; subsequently, the Serbian and other South Slav tribes were defeated by the invading Ottomans in 1389, at Kossovo.<sup>3</sup> The Turkish grip on Serbia lasted well into the nineteenth century. While the south, Serbia and Montenegro, endured the impact of Islamic military power, religion and culture, the north, Slovenia and large parts of Croatia, faced an ever-growing, Germanizing pressure. Nationalism arose as a natural reaction against

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<sup>1</sup>M. George Zaninovich, The Development of Socialist Yugoslavia (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1968), p. 5.

<sup>2</sup>The South Slavs originated between Kiev and the Baltic Sea, and migrated in search of new land in the sixth century to what is now modern Yugoslavia. Stevan K. Pavlowitch, Yugoslavia (London: Ernest Benn Limited, 1971), pp. 25-26.

<sup>3</sup>The Balkans are usually referred to as the peninsula between the Adriatic, Aegean and Black Sea.

the non-Slav oppressor.<sup>1</sup> Napoleon I contributed greatly to South Slav nationalism. By attacking the Illyrian coast, he neutralised Austrian influence (Der Drang nach Süden). Then, when he conquered the coast, he created the 1809 Illyrian Commonwealth. The anti-Austrian stance of the Illyrian Commonwealth or Provinces aroused, particularly in intellectuals, the latent, national consciousness of the coastal Croatians, Slavonians, and Slovenians.<sup>2</sup> The Illyrian experiment lasted less than a generation, but its effects were felt for a long time. The national pride which it kindled was furthered by intellectuals and writers. Already in 1835, Ludjevit Gaj, known as the Illyrian apostle, stated that there was an urgent need for South Slav unity.<sup>3</sup>

Further inland, some Serbian intellectuals were propagating a different sense of national consciousness --Serbian chauvinism. One of them, Vuk Karadžić, claimed that the Serbs were "the greatest people on the planet".<sup>4</sup> Such a feeling could easily lead, as it did in the twentieth century, to an identity crisis and national hatred between Serbs and Croats. In Serbia during the early nineteenth century, the Serbian peasants under the Karadjordjevic family rose to oppose the occupying Turks. Rebellion after rebellion was fought against odds

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<sup>1</sup>Oscar Jaszi, The Dissolution of the Habsburg Monarchy (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1929), p. 260.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 261.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 262.



overwhelmingly in the Turks' favour. Continuing economic and cultural oppression by the Turks became too heavy a burden for the Serbian peasants and nobility to endure. Hence, the memory of the shame of Kossovo (1389), as well as their fierce national pride and independence, kept the peasants and nobles in a spiritual and mental preparedness and temporary alliance to expel the Turks in the mid-nineteenth century.<sup>1</sup> Further, the Serbs possibly saw themselves as the most culpable South Slavs in the Kossovo defeat, and, therefore, it was imperative for them to oust the Turks. The Serbian military success became a political one also. Serbia developed as the embryo of the future South Slav state. In late 1918, the age-old dream of a united South Slav state emerged as a reality.<sup>2</sup>

This modern kingdom, under the Karadjordjevic dynasty, faced tremendous internal and external difficulties. Some of its internal problems were of a long standing. Religious and nationalist differences, or the conflict between the Catholic and the Orthodox, the Croatian and Serbian population, were increasingly accentuated by some Croatian and Serbian politicians, thereby stressing the dissimilarities rather than the common views and interests of South Slavs. The language issue between the Slovenians, Croatians, Serbians, Montenegrins, and Macedonians was another problem. It was further complicated by the demands of the many minorities, Germans, Italians, Hungarians, Rumanians, Bulgarians, Greeks, Albanians, and others. These national minorities

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 404.

<sup>2</sup>Stephen Clissold, ed., A Short History of Yugoslavia from Early Times to 1966. (Cambridge: At the University Press, 1966), p. 164.

fought for ethnic continuity within South Slav national majorities. Latin and Cyrillic alphabets were and are used and constitute little of a problem for the younger generations. The older people, though, were tradition-bound and often abhorred any changes in their language(s).<sup>1</sup> Finally, there were the extremely complex, socio-economic distinctions between the more industrially developed north, Slovenia and northern-central Croatia, and the largely undeveloped, but mineral-rich, south, Bosnia-Hercegovina, Serbia, Macedonia and Montenegro.

Today, the country is a Federalist state consisting of six autonomous Socialist Republics, Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia-Hercegovina, Serbia, Macedonia, and Montenegro.<sup>2</sup> Yugoslavia in 1918 was quite different from today. According to the Vidovdan Constitution (1921), the country consisted of one administrative region and 391 districts.<sup>3</sup> In 1931 the administrative areas were reorganized into nine Banovine.<sup>4</sup> These administrative changes had little impact upon the political crisis of Yugoslavia. The viability of the newly-founded state, prior to World War II, was doubtful. A general mistrust of the Serbian political and administrative domination over the rest of the country caused much national friction and disharmony. In all probability, it

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<sup>1</sup>In northern Yugoslavia, many people still were tied to the former Austro-Hungarian empire, while in the south, Croats, Serbs and Moslems represented a potential problem.

<sup>2</sup>Vojvodina and Kossovo-Metohija (Kosmet) are considered as two autonomous territories within the Yugoslav Federation.

<sup>3</sup>Jack C. Fisher, Yugoslavia, A Multinational State Regional Differences and Administrative Responses (San Francisco: Chandler Publishing Company, 1966), p. 21.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

enhanced the latent chauvinism of a minority of Croats who, during the war, became known as the Ustashe, the Croatian separatist-wing allied to Hitler.<sup>1</sup> Centralization of political power in the hands of Serbians was largely due to Serbia's historical development as a state. The Serbians and Montenegrins were the only large, autonomous, political forces amongst the South Slavs. Perhaps, it is not surprising to find many Serbians and their monarchy allotting as much power as possible to themselves. Certainly, this created dissension and a feeling of second class citizenship among other Yugoslavs, especially the ethnic minorities.<sup>2</sup>

Yugoslavian economic problems between the two World Wars (1918-1939) were deeply rooted in the socio-political system. Before the First World War northern Yugoslavia (Slovenia and part of Croatia) was incorporated into Central and West-European economic and industrial regions.<sup>3</sup> Consequently, it was almost as industrialized as Austria, but because it played a subservient, semi-colonial role to the Austro-Hungarian monarchy it lacked a developed professional and commercial class. The rest of Yugoslavia, Serbia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Macedonia, and Montenegro, was comparatively unindustrialized and generally backward.<sup>4</sup> Even after 1918, only approximately fifteen

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<sup>1</sup> Ante Pavelich was the Croatian separatist leader, or poglavnik, while Dimitiye Lotich was the Serbian militia leader of Zbor ("Rally"), a fascist organization.

<sup>2</sup> Zaninovich, op. cit., p. 24.

<sup>3</sup> Fisher, op. cit., p. 36.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 41.

percent of all Yugoslav factories were situated in Serbia.<sup>1</sup> If underdevelopment was a major problem prior to World War II, foreign ownership was another. Few Yugoslav-based industries were nationally owned; fifty percent of Yugoslavian mining and industry were foreign controlled. Some Yugoslav banks were also dominated by foreigners, if not owned outright.<sup>2</sup> Foreign ownership and the general lack of industrialization placed an economic burden upon the peasantry and workers. Before World War II, in contrast to today, approximately eighty percent of the total Yugoslav population of 15,569,000 (1939) lived on the land.<sup>3</sup> In the cities, the working class was small, but often well-organized. With the drastic increase in unemployment in the 1930's, around 750,000 industrial workers out of a labour force of 1,133,000 were without work.<sup>4</sup> Such social phenomena could only aggravate existing regional and social disparities.

The assassination of the radical Croatian peasant leader, Stjepan Radić, in parliament at Belgrade (1928), further complicated an already highly complex situation.<sup>5</sup> He was murdered by a tempestuous

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<sup>1</sup>Fisher, *op. cit.*, p. 41.

<sup>2</sup>Ahmet Donlagic, Žarko Atanacković, and Dušan Plenca, Yugoslavia in the Second World War, Jugoslavija u drugom svetskom ratu. Translated by Lovett F. Edwards (Belgrade: Medjunarodna Interpress, 1967), p. 12.

<sup>3</sup>After 1918 Yugoslavia experienced a tremendous population increase of over four millions. Zaninovich, p. 11.

<sup>4</sup>Donlagic, Atanacković, Plenca, p. 13.

<sup>5</sup>Radić had a shortlived connection with the International at Moscow, but thought the Soviet model ill-suited for Croatia.

Serbian parliamentary deputy.<sup>1</sup> The hostility between Croats and Serbians deepened, parliament was divided into many antagonistic factions, and ceased to function for some time. The king acted on January 6th, 1929. He abolished parliament by decree and announced his personal dictatorship.<sup>2</sup> Although the king's action was opposed by students and intellectuals, political parties were dissolved, public opinion stifled, and censorship established. Five years later (1934) while in Marseille on a state visit to France, the king was murdered by the Croat right-wing extremist group, the Ustaše, which was aided by Fascist Italy and Hungary.<sup>3</sup> Since the crown prince, Petar Karadjordjevic, the future Petar II, was too young to ascend the throne, his uncle, Prince Paul, was appointed Prince-Regent. With the Prince-Regent securely in power, a new, apparently pragmatic, Yugoslav foreign policy emerged, a pro-German policy.<sup>4</sup>

Yugoslavia's social, political, and economic woes increased, causing dissatisfaction amongst most of her peoples, and creating more internal, national stress which was difficult to alleviate. The dependence of Yugoslav foreign trade upon the Third Reich (thirty-two

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<sup>1</sup>Ivan Avakumovic, History of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia, Volume I (Aberdeen: The Aberdeen University Press, 1964), p. 91.

<sup>2</sup>Clissold, ed., op. cit., p. 185.

<sup>3</sup>Donlagić, Atanacković, and Plenca, p. 112.  
For a more up to date study of the assassination of Alexander I. see the work of Roger Colombani and Jean-Rene Laplayne, La Mort D'un Roi, La Verité sur L'Assassinat D'Alexandre de Yougoslavie (Paris: Albin Michel, 1971).

<sup>4</sup>Petar II. died in exile in 1970 in the United States.

percent in the mid-1930's and even higher in the late 1930's) did not lessen the traditional, anti-German feeling of most Yugoslavs. On March 26/27, 1941, an army and airforce coup d'état, popularly sanctioned, nullified Yugoslavia's non-aggression pact with Germany, and reversed her government's pro-German policies. The Prince-Regent abdicated and went into exile.<sup>1</sup> Days later, April 6th, German, Italian, Hungarian and Bulgarian forces aided by planes brutally attacked Belgrade, declared an open city, and invaded Yugoslavia.<sup>2</sup> The country fell in barely fifteen days. Two months later, civil and guerilla war broke out. For the next four years, Yugoslavia was embroiled in a bloody struggle for her existence, during which some 10.8 percent of her population were either killed or permanently maimed.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Dragiša N. Ristić, Yugoslavia's Revolution of 1941. With a Foreword by General Dušan T. Simović and a preface by Wayne S. Vucinich (University Park/London: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1966), p. 121.

<sup>2</sup>Belgrade was declared an open city but this did not prevent the combined Axis bombing of the city. Large areas of Belgrade were devastated and resulted in a great loss of life. After the war the city was completely rebuilt.

<sup>3</sup>Donlagić, Atanacković, and Plenca, p. 212. The socio-economic situation of Yugoslavia immediately after the war was one of near despair. Two thirds of her national industry was destroyed, and three and a half million people were homeless. Dr. Stanko Grozandić and Momčilo Radosavljević, eds., Workers Management in Yugoslavia. Translated by Anđelija Vujovic (Belgrade: Medjunarodna Politika, 1970), p. 12.

An Introduction to the Yugoslav Communist  
Party or League of Communists

Pre-Marxian socialist ideas reached the South Slavs long before the modern Yugoslav Communist party was formed at Vukovar in 1920.<sup>1</sup> South Slav intellectuals were familiar with the political ideas of Eastern and Western philosophers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. P.J. Proudhon, N. Chernyshevsky, and D.I. Pisarev were the most widely read authors.<sup>2</sup> Later, in the twentieth century, K. Marx, V.I. Lenin, E. Bernstein, and K. Renner influenced the political opinions of many intellectuals and some workers. In comparison to the rapid progress made by Communism in 1920 and shortly afterwards, Socialism made only slow inroads amongst nineteenth century South Slavs. Illiteracy, censorship, and the outlawing of Socialist parties in the Austro-Hungarian occupied territories hampered the growth of Socialism. The impact of the 1917 Russian Revolution, and the dissatisfaction of many Yugoslavs resulted, at first, in the gaining of votes and legality of the Yugoslav Communist party.

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<sup>1</sup>There is sometimes a confusion about the founding date of the Yugoslav Communist party. One wing was formed by Yugoslavs in Russia during the Revolution (1917), while another one sprung up in Yugoslavia. The commonly accepted date today is that of Vukovar (1920) when various socialist organizations came together to found the Communist party of Yugoslavia. Phyllis Auty, Tito A Biography (London: Longman and Group Limited, 1970), p. 45.

<sup>2</sup>Avakumovic, op. cit., pp. 1-2.

The municipal and national elections of 1920 established the Yugoslav Communists as a political force to be recognized. In Zagreb alone, the second largest city of Yugoslavia, and capital of Croatia, the party polled thirty-nine percent of the vote in the municipal elections. The Communist party also became the third largest party in the National Assembly or Skupština, at Belgrade.<sup>1</sup> The Communist success was likely due to the radical disposition of many peasants and workers, but their votes in no way suggested that they were staunch Communists.<sup>2</sup> Theirs was largely a protest vote against the royalist government, its policies, and promises of land distribution to the returning peasant-soldiers of World War I. Since the Communist party was only founded in 1920, the same year that the elections were held, it was extremely unlikely for the party to have recruited thousands of genuine supporters, notwithstanding the number of votes it had received. It is safe to assume that these votes were at least sympathetic to the program of the Communist party, since the party promised land reform for the peasants, a minimum wage, better working conditions and shorter hours for workers.<sup>3</sup> The royalist government probably thought the Communists to be dangerous to their parliamentary and socio-economic set-up. In late 1920, the coalition of Democrats and Radicals instituted a decree outlawing all Communist organizations.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Auty, op. cit., p. 46. <sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Rodoljub Čolaković, Dr. Dragoslav Janković, and Pero Morača, Storia della Lega dei Comunisti della Jugoslavia, Pregled Istorije Saveza Komunisti Jugoslavije. Translated by Eros Sequi and Sergio Turconi (Milan: Edizioni del Gallo, 1965), pp. 42-43.

<sup>4</sup> The Serbian Radical party originally started out as a nineteenth century Socialist party. It soon changed its thinking when it realized the improbability of getting elected. Auty, p. 46.



Every Communist member and sympathizer faced a semi-legal underground existence and constant harassment by police, a situation which lasted till the outbreak of the Second World War. Until 1929, there were several periods when Communists could run or retain their parliamentary seats. Nevertheless, during the period between 1920 and 1941 the Communists lost many, if not most, of their members and sympathizers, and their popularity waned. Still, they were able to organize a few successful strikes in the cities. Generally, the party and its affiliated trade unions suffered from police and state persecution.<sup>1</sup> The Communist trade unions declined from a peak of 300,000 in 1919, to a low of 22,000 in 1928.<sup>2</sup> The party, too, was depleted from about 120,000 in 1919 to about 8,000 in 1941.<sup>3</sup> Milovan Djilas estimates that the 1941 membership was around 10,000.<sup>4</sup> In fact, modern Communism ceased to be an important force in Yugoslav politics until 1941. Furthermore, until the ascendancy of Josip Broz Tito (1937), the party was racked by internal dissension and the overbearing, external influence of Moscow. In the mid-1920's, the dismissal and disappearance of Sima Markovic and others was detrimental to the party. This caused some party members to be expelled from the party for heterodoxy, and others to harden their political beliefs into a dogma, as well as to subordinate themselves to Moscow's dictates. A

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<sup>1</sup>There existed prior to the founding Congress of the Yugoslav Communist party (1920) several Socialist and Communist trade unions and affiliated organizations in Yugoslavia.

<sup>2</sup>Avakumovic, p. 187. <sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 185.

<sup>4</sup>Milovan Djilas, The New Class, An Analysis of the Communist System (New York: Frederick A. Praeger Publishers, 1957), p. 23.

revolutionary worker (a car mechanic) and former trade union official, J.B. Tito (1892- ), participant in the Russian Revolution (1917) and Moscow trained (1934-1936), became the new party leader. He directed the Yugoslav party at first from Paris and Vienna. Later, in 1937, he returned to Belgrade, and set about reorganizing the considerably weakened party.<sup>1</sup>

The reorganization of the party included the incorporation of some 700 returning volunteers, out of a total of 1,600, who had fought for the Republicans in the Spanish Civil war. They were a very important asset, experienced fighters who formed the backbone of the Partisans during World War II. In political and military value they were next only to Tito himself. They saved the Communist party not only from certain annihilation during the war, but helped to form a new Yugoslav state. Within a very short time, the Communist party evolved into an extremely well-coordinated, tightly knit group of professional revolutionaries. They included, besides Josip Broz, the well known Moša Pijade,<sup>2</sup> Milovan Djilas, Alexander Ranković, Eduard Kardelj, Ivo Lola Ribar, Boris Kidrić, an economist, and many sympathizers, such as the young intellectual and future historian, Vladimir Dedijer.<sup>3</sup> With the outbreak of the Second World War, April 6th, 1941 in Yugoslavia,

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<sup>1</sup>Vladimir Dedijer, Tito Speaks, His Self Portrait and Struggle with Stalin (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1953), p. 109.

<sup>2</sup>M. Pijade was an internationally recognized Yugoslav (Belgrade) writer, editor, and publisher who translated Das Kapital, into Serbo-Croatian, while interned as a Communist party member.

<sup>3</sup>Vladimir Dedijer, The Beloved Land (London: MacGibbon and Kee Limited, 1961), p. 268. Dedijer joined the Party a year later, after completing a hazardous party apprenticeship, mostly as a courier throughout Europe.

the Communists, soon to be known as the Partisans or partizani, began an unrelenting fight to oust the invaders and their allies.<sup>1</sup> The national liberation and civil war had begun.

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<sup>1</sup>Dedijer, op. cit., p. 147

The Partisans were one of two major groups combatting the German and Axis powers. The other major group, until 1943, was the loyalist, conservative Chetniks (Band), who often blindly attacked the Communists and their allies. The Chetniks were indirectly guided by the royalist government in exile at London. General D. Mihailović was made their Minister of Defense, and thus was their representative. After the war, he was caught, tried and shot by the Communist government for having allowed, or for not controlling, the collaboration of some of his men with the enemy.

For more information on the national liberation see Vlado Strugar's, der Jugoslawische Volksbefreiungskrieg 1941-1945, Jugoslovenski Oslobodilacki Rat Translated into German by Dr. Martin Zöllner, 2 Vols.; (Berlin: Deutscher Militärverlag, 1969).

An English edition of the Serbo-Croatian edition is unavailable as of 1972.

## CHAPTER VI

### Djilas: Revolutionary and Critic

Milovan Djilas, born in Montenegro of a poor, peasant family in 1911, grew up to become a poet, writer, social outcast, revolutionary, and politician.<sup>1</sup> Some fifteen years ago, in his autobiography Land Without Justice, he wrote that it was neither Communist literature, difficult to obtain in mountainous Montenegro, nor the underground Communist party which drove him to embrace a theoretically egalitarian Marxian dogma.<sup>2</sup> It was rather classical and humanist literature, which inspired him at an early age with a belief in social equality. Later, the existing class disparities and King Alexander I's dictatorship convinced him that the Marxian Revolution was the only possible means of obtaining his ideal of social justice and equality.<sup>3</sup>

Djilas' political underground work with the Yugoslav Communist party began in Belgrade, where he studied for and completed his law degree. He was jailed from 1933-1936 at Sremska Mitrovica for propagating revolutionary Marxism.<sup>4</sup> There he met A. Ranković, a Communist

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<sup>1</sup>Milovan Djilas, Land Without Justice. With an introduction by William Jovanovich (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Incorporated, 1958), p. 6.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 352. <sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 353.

<sup>4</sup>Thirty years later, Djilas was incarcerated, in the same prison as Yugoslavia's former Vice-Premier, for anti-governmental ideas.

tailor, who was later the head of the Yugoslav police forces from 1945-1966. It is possible that the first imprisonment at Sremska Mitrovica, hardened Djilas' Marxian beliefs, for by the age of twenty-seven he was a member of the Yugoslav Communist Central Committee.<sup>1</sup>

During the Second World War, Djilas rose higher in the party. This period can be considered as the high-point of his revolutionary enthusiasm. He was often ruthless with the enemy--Chetniks (Serbian royalists), Ustaše (Croatian separatists), and Germans. At that time, Djilas and the entire Yugoslav Communist party accepted unquestioningly Moscow's Marxian interpretations, or the usurpation of political power through the national liberation war, nationalization of all private-public property and capital, and the establishment of the dictatorship of the Communist party in the liberated areas of Yugoslavia. With the end of the war, Yugoslavs faced the enormously difficult task of rebuilding their country. The national liberation and civil war had been completed, the ouster of German, Italian, and Yugoslav pro-Fascist and Nazi forces had been achieved; the revolutionary ideals had yet to be instituted. Their institution presented new political and intellectual problems to many revolutionaries. The most pressing of these matters was Soviet expansionist policies. Stalin attempted from 1945-1953 to dominate

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<sup>1</sup>Milovan Djilas, The Unperfect Society, Beyond the New Class Translated by Dorian Cooke (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Incorporated, 1969), p. vii.

Yugoslavia politically and economically.<sup>1</sup> When he realized that Tito could not be coerced, Yugoslavia was expelled from the Cominform (1948). Stalin and the Soviet party expected, as a result of this action, that Yugoslavia would collapse economically and its people would rise to oust Tito. In fact, the opposite took place. Most Yugoslavians supported Tito, and the country withstood Soviet and East European pressure.

Stalin's duplicity astounded Djilas. Like most orthodox, Moscow-oriented Communists, he was bitterly disillusioned. But disillusionment was soon replaced by a more pragmatic approach; Djilas became one of the main spokesmen for Yugoslavia's national and political self-determination abroad (at the United Nations) and at home. In 1950, he began to attack the political hegemony of the Soviet party bureaucracy (apparatus).<sup>2</sup> This marked a climactic change in Yugoslav ideological reaction to the Soviet Union, inasmuch as politicians began to criticize the Soviet Union and its lack of personal freedom. For two years, Soviet propaganda had made slanderous statements about Yugoslavia and its leaders, statements which were not publicly challenged. In 1950, Yugoslavia finally responded, Djilas accused the Soviet party bureaucracy of being a major contradiction of the 1917 Russian Revolutionary ideals.

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<sup>1</sup>For a detailed account of these Soviet attempts to dominate Yugoslavia, see Djilas' Conversations With Stalin. Djilas had firsthand experience with the Soviet dictator, since he visited him officially three times (1944, 1945, and 1948).

<sup>2</sup>Milovan Djilas, On New Roads to Socialism, Address delivered at the Pre-Election Rally of Belgrade Students, March 18th, 1950 (Belgrade: Jugoslovenska Knjiga, 1950), p. 18.

During the Soviet-Yugoslav ideological struggle (1948-1956), Djilas was preoccupied with defending Yugoslav Marxism, and thus devoted little time to analyzing its internal developments.<sup>1</sup> In late 1953, months after Stalin's death, Soviet political belligerency declined. Djilas could now take a more critical look at Yugoslavia's political system. He discovered that the Yugoslav party bureaucracy was no different from the Soviet's and publicly denounced it. At a hastily summoned party meeting on January 17th, 1954, Djilas officially recanted, and was rebuked. He resigned his official positions, but remained a party member until 1956. Some months after his resignation, he and his friend V. Dedijer, the Partisan historian, suggested the establishment of a second, democratic Socialist party. Tito rejected the idea.<sup>2</sup> However, they continued to press for more democratic reforms within the party and state. In January, 1955, both Djilas and Dedijer were tried in camera for providing "hostile propaganda" to Western newspapers, and were given suspended sentences. A year later, Djilas criticized Soviet action in quelling the attempted Hungarian Revolution. Already a stranger to political power, he was now relegated to obscurity and unimportance by the party. His anti-Soviet criticisms and the pending American publication of The New Class led to his imprisonment for five years (1956-1961). During his internment he wrote his early

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<sup>1</sup>1956 is the official date of the ideological agreement of Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union. However, it did not mark the end of ideological differences.

<sup>2</sup>Pavlowitch, p. 252, or see also Fitzroy Maclean's Disputed Barricade, p. 434.

autobiography Land Without Justice (1958) and his Conversations With Stalin (1962). While on probation in 1961-1962, he received another sentence because of the American publication of Conversations with Stalin.<sup>1</sup>

On December 31st, 1966, Djilas was unexpectedly pardoned and released on order of Marshal Tito. However, he had to agree not to publish any political works until 1972.<sup>2</sup> But Djilas had written three works on toilet paper while in jail. These were Montenegro (1963), The Leper and Other Stories (1964), and his greatest work, Njegoš, Poet, Prince, Bishop (1966). They were published in the United States by Harcourt, Brace and Jovanovich. After the Czechoslovak crisis (1968), he was permitted to travel to the United States for two months where he lectured at Princeton and received the Freedom Award of Freedom House.<sup>3</sup> In 1970, when Djilas was again invited to visit the United States for a lecture tour, his passport was confiscated and he had to remain in Yugoslavia.

Today, his political ideas are more akin to democratic Socialism than to Marxism. His writings reflect a long intellectual transformation. While in The New Class, he was already a reformist Marxist, fifteen years later he has evolved into a democratic Socialist

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<sup>1</sup>His sentence was actually nine years, but Tito pardoned him before the end of the full term. This was perhaps due to Djilas' uncertain health at that time, as well as the aura of liberalization in the mid-1960's.

<sup>2</sup>Pavlowitch, p. 351.

<sup>3</sup>Djilas, The Unperfect Society, p. x.



and an advocate of the parliamentary system, or an opposition party, which Dedijor and he had proposed as early as 1954.<sup>1</sup> In his politically secluded life, he now lives with his family in Belgrade as a pensioner and political writer. Djilas continues to write of Yugoslav Socialism expressing hope that its one-party state will be peacefully transformed into a multi-party, Socialist government.<sup>2</sup>

To date, Milovan Djilas has produced three major works and several articles on Revolution and its Bureaucracy. His contribution to Borba (Struggle), the daily state newspaper published in Belgrade (1953-1954), dealt mainly with the degeneracy of many Yugoslav state (party) bureaucrats. These were published in the West in (1959), after Djilas had become a celebrity, in a book entitled Anatomy of a Moral.<sup>3</sup> His second and most sensational work The New Class, An Analysis of the Communist System (1957), was a best seller in North America.<sup>4</sup> This work is a Marxian analysis of contradictions in the Soviet and Yugoslav socio-political systems, particularly the powerful Communist party bureaucracies. His latest and most mature political exposition

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<sup>1</sup>Djilas' political thoughts in 1953 (see Chapter VIII), already indicated his opposition to democratic centralism, but in order to coerce the reform of the party bureaucracy and its socio-economic monopoly, he would likely have consented to democratic centralism and abolition of the bureaucracy's monopoly.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 187.

<sup>3</sup>Milovan Djilas, Anatomy of a Moral. Edited by Paul Rothberg, Introduction by Paul Willen (New York: Frederick A. Praeger Publishers, 1959), p. ix.

<sup>4</sup>The Montreal Star, February 28th, 1970, p. 23.

on present Communist society is The Unperfect Society, Beyond the New Class (1969).<sup>1</sup> Here the post-Marxian Djilas, still using Marxism as a helpful analytical tool in laying bare basic un-Marxian by-products of the Revolution, propounds several views on reform.

One major cause for Djilas' change from dogmatic Marxism to a more democratic Socialism is his belief that Marxism, as formulated by Karl Marx (1813-1883), is basically a nineteenth century philosophy which has scarcely been modernized.<sup>2</sup> Although they present many contradictions, the valid, and often humanistic, adaptations of Marx's ideas by people such as V. Lenin, Mao Tse-tung, and J.B. Tito must be acknowledged. Djilas analyses a basic contradiction in Communism--the socio-political hegemony of the party bureaucracy. This alone renders Marxian dogma and democratic-centralism obsolete, because it impedes freedom of expression.

To be fully appreciative of the value of Djilas' arguments, a summary of his interpretations of Marxian philosophy is useful. Djilas states that Marx's genius lay in his ability to synthesize the ideas of those social scientists, writers, and philosophers who impressed him.<sup>3</sup> They include the English political economists Adam Smith and David Ricardo, the French Socialists Comte Saint-Simon and Charles Fourier, and the German philosophers Immanuel Kant, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, and Ludwig Feuerbach.<sup>4</sup> Marx's ideas reflect a combination of

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<sup>1</sup>The Unperfect Society was published in Yugoslavia, but banned six months after its publication. Pavlowitch, p. 351.

<sup>2</sup>Djilas, The Unperfect Society, p. 10.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 41. <sup>4</sup>Ibid., pp. 41-42.

three powerful attributes, those of "prophet, scientist and writer".<sup>1</sup> Above all, he was a revolutionary and revolutionary theorist. He conceived of the socialist revolution as effecting the destruction of the capitalist system, and subsequently creating a more egalitarian, socialist society. In the attempt to achieve this type of society, a violent struggle would be waged between workers and the owners of the means of production, or in nineteenth century terms, the bourgeoisie. For Marx and many of his followers and contemporaries this clash seemed inevitable. His analysis of nineteenth century, English, capitalist, market society seemed to validate his allegations. There, as in industrializing France, and Germany after unification, poverty and wealth were rapidly increasing. The workers became poorer as the many business-entrepreneurs and the great owners of capital increased their wealth.

At the time of its publication, Das Kapital evoked little response from Marx's contemporaries. The acknowledgement which he desired for his brilliant scholarship came only after his death (1883). Then the debate became voluminous. Marx's revolutionary ideas not only led to controversial debates between his followers and opponents, but also created schisms among moderate and radical Socialists. Two extreme examples were V. Lenin's wing in Czarist Russia, which later became the Bolsheviks, and E. Bernstein's reformist-minded Marxists in Germany.<sup>2</sup> In the attempts to adapt Marxism to the existing socio-economic conditions of their countries, little of the original Marx was left in either political movement.<sup>3</sup> Most of Marx's ideas were dissipated, though

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 43. <sup>2</sup>Djilas, The New Class, p. 9. <sup>3</sup>Ibid.

remnants of Marxism were brilliantly incorporated by men such as A. Gramsci and Herbert Marcuse. Nevertheless, Djilas expounds the belief that Marxism faces a general decline and a slow death.<sup>1</sup> Still, many radicals, more conservative than anything else, in the Soviet Union and in China claim to be the true followers of Marxism. In the East and in the Soviet Union, some Marxian formulas prevail, as a direct result of the Russian Revolution and the Bolshevik take-over in 1917, and the Chinese Revolution of 1929-1949, respectively.

The Russian Revolution and indeed all other Communist Revolutions differ in several important aspects from preceding Revolutions, specifically the French (1789). A major characteristic of the French Revolution (1789) and Otto von Bismarck's coup d'etat "from above" in Germany, in contrast to the modern Communist Revolutions, was that they ended in a type of political democracy, and eventually in some sort of parliamentary democracy.<sup>2</sup> Djilas' argument is considerably weak, since both in France and in Germany parliamentary democracy did not include every political party. Often the entire population was not allowed to vote. In fact, a small minority dictated the needs of the larger majority. The Socialist Revolutions in the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia,

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 19.

Djilas' interpretation of the eventual establishment of political democracy in Germany after Bismarck is questionable. Neither Bismarck nor Kaiser Wilhelm II were proponents of a democratic parliament. Before Hitler's advent to power, Germany's only real attempt at democracy was to be found in the short-lived Weimar Republic.

and Eastern Europe established a one-party rule or dictatorship.<sup>1</sup> Another major difference between the Socialist Revolutions and the 1789 Revolution in France is their use of "revolutionary force and violence".<sup>2</sup> While these forces soon abated during the French Revolution, in the Communist countries they did not. Indeed, revolutionary violence and terror were essential for the development of industrialization, and continued long after the initial stage of industrialization was concluded.<sup>3</sup> Perhaps one of the most important differences between modern Communist Revolutions and the French Revolution of 1789 lies in the conditions prior to each Revolution. War was unnecessary, writes Djilas, in bringing about the French Revolution (1789), though it was important in its "radicalization",<sup>4</sup> whereas war was vital for the modern Communist Revolutions.<sup>5</sup> He reasons, that the effectiveness of war lay in the lack of a developed capitalist economy with its markets, and colonies. Czarist Russia in World War I, and monarchical Yugoslavia during World War II, were

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 9. <sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 21.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 22.

The Communist Revolutions and the institutionalization of Marxian ideals created new, social relationships. To achieve these, the Communist parties had to nationalize all private property and capital, and then attempt to begin industrialization in earnest. This was the only way the Communist parties could stay in power. Djilas, The New Class, pp. 19-20.

<sup>4</sup>Comment made by Dr. Laffey, Sir George Williams University.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 22.

The American wars prior to the outbreak of the French Revolution played an important part in bringing about the 1789 Revolution. Comment made by Dr. F. Krantz, Sir George Williams University.

ravaged, resulting in the economic and political collapse of the state. In the ensuing chaos, a small group of professional revolutionaries with temporary, popular support were able to take over political power.<sup>1</sup>

The success of every Revolution depends upon the centralization of all forces of the state. The 1789 French Revolution is one of the first modern examples of this. Mathiez writes of this Revolution that "all resources of a people at war were placed in the hands of the authorities: people, food, clothing."<sup>2</sup> In Communist Revolutions this centralization was most important and took on unprecedented forms. Control of property and conformity of ideas were achieved by the party bureaucracy. Intellectual monolithism or democratic centralism, created by and for the carrying out of the Revolution, caused grave problems to many unorthodox intellectuals and workers once the Communists became the government. Ideological and intellectual unity, or monolithism is more easily attainable in the process of obtaining political power than in the exercise of that power. Once power is gained, intellectual dissension arises since some party members believe that the goals of the Revolution have been achieved and democratic centralism is no longer necessary, while in reality the goals of the Revolution are being laboriously implemented.

The success of the Yugoslav revolutionary war (1941-1945) depended not only on Communist unity, but also on alliance with other

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 23.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

political parties or groups interested in defeating the Nazi and Fascists.<sup>1</sup> During the Second World War, the Communist-led People's Liberation Movement membership increased from approximately 10,000 (1939-1941) to over 300,000 (1943).<sup>2</sup> Many of these guerilla fighters and the 7,413,214 people<sup>3</sup> who voted in 1945 for the People's Front and Marshal Tito, a coalition government of several non-Socialist and non-Marxian representatives, like I. Subašić, of the former royalist government in exile at London (England), were not Communists.<sup>4</sup> They attempted unsuccessfully to stop the leftward trend of Marxist socialism being instituted in Yugoslavia. Most of the seven million voters in mid-1945 were at best sympathetic to the Communists and their program. Part of the program was the abolition of the monarchy by the Constituent Assembly in late 1945. From this symbolic date on, the Communist party was in power. Already in late 1944, the Communist-led coalition government manifested itself as the major political force within the state. In 1946 the new constitution came into force, closely modelled on the Soviet constitution of 1936. The Yugoslav constitution guaranteed equal rights between Croats, Serbians, Macedonians and Montenegrins, which had been a stated but unpracticed law under the monarchy.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>The Communist party membership also increased considerably during the war from 50,000 to 141,066. Čolaković, Janković, and Moraca, p. 509.

<sup>2</sup>Donlagić, Atanacković, and Plenca, p. 135. <sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 224.

<sup>4</sup>Ivo Subašić was a wartime minister with the royalist government in exile at London. His coalition with Marshal Tito lasted until 1947.

<sup>5</sup>Čolaković, Janković, and Moraca, p. 523.

With the finalization of this constitution every non-Communist government member faced increasing and unsurmountable difficulties from his Communist colleagues. Most of these non-Communists soon left their official positions and retired. Others persisted in opposing the government and the Communist party. They were politically and socially isolated, and jailed or expelled from the country.<sup>1</sup> Such a development, states Djilas, is contrary to the varied political aftermath of the 1789 French Revolution. The French political parties did co-exist and cooperate after the Revolution, though not for long.<sup>2</sup> A power struggle soon ensued after 1789, between the various revolutionary groups. Several years later with the expulsion of the radical leftists, the Jacobins, Napoleon Bonoparte succeeded in gaining power by becoming a consul and then a dictator and emperor. Nineteen years later a type of democracy dominated by the aristocracy was restored. Few of the 1789 ideals were instituted.

While one of the major goals of the Yugoslav Revolution was to industrialize the country, and Djilas was one of its chief instigators, he critically re-evaluated Marxian revolutionary methods between 1957-1969. In 1957, Djilas seemed to indicate that revolutionary methods-- confiscation, nationalization, ration cards, force and terror, were necessary, if the initial stage of industrialization was to be achieved. These means, which also included centralization of all power and intellectual monolithism, were justified by the attainment of the desired goal: industrialization.<sup>3</sup> In the Unperfect Society (1969), Djilas no

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<sup>1</sup>Djilas, loc. cit., p. 25.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid. <sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 29.



longer upholds his former belief. He affirms that Marx's and Lenin's ideas are realistic and revolutionary while destroying the fibre of "reactionary regimes", such as Czarist Russia and Kraljevina (Kingdom) Yugoslavia. Clearly, in Djilas' mind, most Marxists in power who adhere to age-old dogmas have ceased to be progressive and are deluding themselves with rationalizations of a "distorted world of reality".<sup>1</sup>

Djilas' rejection of Marxian dogma and the many pseudo-Marxian ideas of those who vociferously claim strict adherence to Marx's ideas denotes a Realpolitik in his analysis of modern Communism. He is not an anti-Communist or pro-capitalist, as claimed by many of his adversaries. His rejection of dogmatic Marxian thinking partially derives from the belief that Capitalist and Communist "model societies" are defunct. Indeed, since Marx's nineteenth century analysis, Capitalism and Communism have evolved to such an extent that neither of them resembles its original ideal. Modern societies are too complex to be labelled with such simplified and outdated terms as Communism and Capitalism, although some basic remnants of both systems are still present and are of profound importance. Socio-political structures are constantly changing in order to adapt themselves to reality. The imposition of the "ideological framework" that modern Communism has inherited in the Soviet Union, China and to some extent in Yugoslavia does not enable those societies to adapt themselves fast enough to reality.

Another related idea, and one which received more attention in The Unperfect Society, is the assumption that "every Communist state

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<sup>1</sup>Djilas, The Unperfect Society, p. 166.

born out of Revolution" evolves into a purely nationalist government, instead of Marx's proposed, internationally oriented state.<sup>1</sup> Djilas reasons that national Communism results from a state's desire to obtain its independence from the two Communist super-powers the Soviet Union and China.<sup>2</sup> As proof of this assertion, he cites the political antagonism between "the Soviet Union and Albania, between the Soviet Union and China, and between China, Cuba and the Soviet Union".<sup>3</sup> In the struggle to keep its political hegemony, internal and external, the Soviet Union represents the primary, Marxian, conservative force.<sup>4</sup> Without such conservative policies, the monolithic political structure would possibly be faced by an internal crisis, the result of the need for reform. Reform can easily lead to the destruction of political monolithism (as seen in Czechoslovakia, 1967-1968), and thus is opposed by many conservative Marxists. Yugoslavia's non-aligned, national Communism, argues Djilas, is indicative of the weakness and contradiction in the theory and practice of Communism, and its disintegration.<sup>5</sup> He attacks the narrow-mindedness of conservative, Marxist Soviet leaders. Djilas is, however, specific enough to suggest that every socio-political system and Revolution produces its own disintegration, if no adaptive socio-political changes are implemented, and if the essential rights of man, such as the freedom of speech, are not reinstated.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 184.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., pp. 184-185.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 187.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

Concurrently, Djilas seems to hint that Yugoslav Communism can serve as "the model" for other totalitarian socialist states by undergoing a peaceful transformation from a one-party government to a multi-party, democratic socialist state.<sup>1</sup> He also realizes that each "nationalist" Communist country has to be analyzed separately, and its socio-political role vis-a-vis the two Communist super-powers, the Soviet Union and China. It is obvious, though, that many Soviet and Yugoslav dogmatists and conservative Marxists would oppose such a "transformation", at almost any cost, unless unforeseen changes occur within the Soviet Union. There are two major forces for transformation within Yugoslavia today. One is the tenuous Yugoslav unity, the other is Marshal Tito. Since 1945, an ever loosening federalist system has achieved unity amongst a culturally diverse Yugoslav and non-Yugoslav population. This unity was partially realized while the country passed through three important phases: Revolution or the national liberation and civil war (1941-1945), the instituting of socialist concepts (1945-19 ), and the stabilization of the collective leadership (oligarchy).<sup>2</sup> An essential factor of Yugoslav independence may have been that the country underwent these three stages under the brilliant guidance of one man--Josip Broz Tito. Although Stalin infiltrated and dominated the Yugoslav party in the 1930's, he could not repeat this successfully

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>The New Class. p. 168.

after the Second World War.<sup>1</sup> Djilas points out that because Stalin was unable to dominate Tito and the Yugoslav party it became an oligarchy.<sup>2</sup> The support he received from the party and many Yugoslavs augmented Tito's personal and political power. Djilas witnessed former partisans, now advisors in 1948, submitting without question to Marshal Tito's ideas. Such incidents, as well as his personal experience in 1953 when Tito quietly urged Djilas to voice an opinion similar to his, caused Djilas' disenchantment with their type of socialism.<sup>3</sup> But in 1948 Yugoslavia was in a critical international position, perhaps the most crucial in its recent history. If any Yugoslavs (and there were a few hardline Stalinists) adhered to Moscow and Stalin, they were detained, shot, or incarcerated.<sup>4</sup> This was the only way Yugoslavia could have stayed relatively independent of the

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<sup>1</sup>A recent publication in Yugoslavia of Stanko Lasić's, "Conflict of the Literary Left 1928-1952", has apparently caused dissension in academic and party circles. Lasić argues that "Stalinism created the new Communist party of Yugoslavia". He claims that the Yugoslav party was given the choice of bolshevization or disintegration in the 1930's. Stanko Lasić "Conflict of the Literary Left 1928-1952", Socialist Thought and Practice edited by Stipe Dužević. Number 42, January-March 1971 (Belgrade: Štampa Nišp Obzor Bač, 1971), pp. 94-95.

<sup>2</sup>Djilas, The Unperfect Society, p. 29.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., pp. 30-31.

<sup>4</sup>Vladimir Dedijer, the internationally known Yugoslav scholar, disclosed in one of his most recent works, The Battle Stalin Lost, some disconcerting news about the Stalin-Tito conflict. He writes that internment camps were established on the Adriatic coast, and names Goli Olok as an example. These camps housed Yugoslav-Stalinists and other anti-government forces who were supervised by Soviet trained Yugoslav security officers. Vladimir Dedijer, The Battle Stalin Lost, Memoirs of Yugoslavia 1948-1953 (New York and Toronto: The Viking Press and MacMillan Limited, 1970, 1971), p. 305.

Soviet Union. Marshal Tito and his government remained in power. The socio-political effects of Tito's defiance of Stalin reverberated throughout the world and are still felt in the Soviet bloc and the West.<sup>1</sup>

As a result of the break with the Soviet Union in 1948, Yugoslavia underwent far-reaching socio-political changes. The economy was liberalized and the state decentralized.<sup>2</sup> Recently (1969-1971), adaptations were effected in the federal Constitution granting more autonomy to the six Socialist Republics. It is in such a dynamic political context that Milovan Djilas' hope for a peaceful transition is rooted. Djilas considers that the Yugoslav party today is neither Stalinist nor Leninist. The difference between these two Communist groups seem to be more a matter of dogma and orthodoxy within democratic centralism, but a significant one, nevertheless.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>The influence of Marshal Tito's actions upon other Socialist politicians cannot be completely ascertained. The most obvious, though unsuccessful, attempt at emulating Tito was that of Czechoslovakia's Alexander Dubček. Tactically alone, he and his government played into the Soviet's hands by officially inviting them to observe their reforms. Moreover, the Yugoslav government and its people were prepared to physically defend their country, whereas the Czechs offer passive resistance (see Der Spiegel, "Liebe Gäste", January 8th, 1973, p. 65.) Soviet leaders were unwilling to physically confront Yugoslavia and, therefore, concentrated on aiding any dissident (separatist) force in Yugoslavia. But this tactic proved unsuccessful and was officially stopped immediately preceding Party Chairman Leonid Brezhnev's visit to Yugoslavia, September 1971. For more information on Yugoslavia's proposed self-defense see "Konzeption der Allumfassenden Verteidigung Jugoslawiens", Opštenarodna Odbrana Jugoslavije, Translated by Anica Karalić (Belgrade: Medjunarodna Politika, 1970).

<sup>2</sup>Djilas, op. cit., p. 208.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 210.

Stalin forged a monolithic party through the most brutal means possible. Lenin allowed, in "an erratic and limited fashion", the public expression of a variety of opinions.<sup>1</sup> Djilas insists that the Leninist stipulations of guaranteed party rights and a majority party vote do not exist in contemporary Communist societies. The lip-service they are paid makes a travesty of them, and precludes the readoption of democratic principles by the Communist government parties and their societies.<sup>2</sup>

This criticism can partly be construed by some as a comment on Djilas' past, political actions. In 1952, while a party theoretician, second to M. Pijade, he sought to implement democratic measures. Djilas urged the Yugoslav party to adopt as a name the "League of Communists".<sup>3</sup> More important, shortly before the Sixth Party Congress (1952), Edvard Kardelj and Djilas discussed the viability of multigroups and multiparties within the Communist League.<sup>4</sup> Tito, on hearing of the discussion, thought the adoption of a multigroup structure more advisable than a multiparty system. Presumably, the essential difference between these two systems was that the Communist League as a multigroup would remain in a socio-political monopoly position, whereas with multiparties this monopoly would cease. Djilas explains in The Unperfect Society that

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Djilas writes that, at first, he was not conscious of Marx's having used the same name for his organization some one hundred years prior. Djilas remembered this only later. Djilas, op. cit., p. 219.

<sup>4</sup>There is, though, no guarantee that within a parliamentary establishment, as is often the case in Western democracies, such as the British Isles, the United States, or Canada, political monopoly will not be carved out by one party.

democratization of the party and, thus, of the country was curbed at the top.<sup>1</sup>

Djilas and Kardelj's suggested endorsement of a multiparty system was valid, but untimely. If institutionalized, it might eventually have led to more drastic liberalizations, but Stalin was alive at the time of its proposal, and Yugoslavia was not free from economic and political pressures from the East. Presumably Marshal Tito realized the danger that a multiparty posed for Yugoslavia's newly-found, national unity.<sup>2</sup> There were also the fears of many Communists in power who opposed the multiparty system because it would leave them without a political monopoly. In retrospect, Tito's opting for a multigroup within the League of Communists seems opportune and has overshadowed Djilas' and Kardelj's arguments for some time. The problem of national unity remains the main concern of most sincere Yugoslav statesmen. Considering the progress made since 1945 in three Constitutions, 1946, 1953 and 1963, and local "self-government", Yugoslavia is today an extremely loose federal structure of six socialist republics and two autonomous regions. It is not unrealistic, despite the current wave of conservatism, to predict that further intermittent democratizations may possibly lead to a multiparty or two-party socialist government. If unforeseen circumstances arise, such as Soviet or foreign intervention, or the separation of one republic, then democratization will be hampered, but

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>The havoc created by their recent civil war (1941-1945) is surely in the minds of most middle-aged Yugoslavs.

this seems unlikely.<sup>1</sup> Few can forecast how long such a socio-political process will take. It is impossible to say whether this form of democratization will include Milovan Djilas. It is nearly certain that the recent adjustment in the Constitution and the impending (within five years) retirement of Marshal Tito may present some answers for Yugoslavia.<sup>2</sup>

Yugoslav reforms undoubtedly had an impact upon Djilas. In 1971, he wrote a simplified newspaper article in The Montreal Star, "The Evolution of the Revolution". It is primarily a continuation of some arguments in The Unperfect Society. He argues that the Chinese Revolution in 1949 did not eliminate the traditional differences between China and the Soviet Union, nor has it opened the way for World Communism and its success. His brilliance is once again obvious in his statement that:

"Every Revolution sets in motion forces that separate it not only from the old system, but from the rest of the world."<sup>3</sup>

Nothing is more dangerous, writes Djilas than an imitation of a Revolution. Clearly, every revolution has a character of its own, although it may possess similarities with other revolutions. The

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<sup>1</sup>Constitutionally, the separation of a republic is at least theoretically possible.

<sup>2</sup>Marshal Tito's pending retirement may not be so far off as some people in both the East and West may speculate. He recently stated that he is "tired", and has little time left to bring about badly needed changes within both the Communist party and state. Dara Janeković, "President Tito's Interview for Vjesnik", Review of International Affairs, Volume XXIII, October, 1972. p. 22.

<sup>3</sup>Milovan Djilas, "The Evolution of the Revolution", The Montreal Star, April 2nd, 1971. p. 7.



Chinese Revolution was fought mainly by peasants and not by the proletariat or workers. Therefore, the army and some intellectuals, the only revolutionary and educated group in China, took over the role of the Communist party. However, the army's transformation into a new class could only have taken place with prolonged, technological, Soviet aid. Chairman Mao realized that such aid would limit the characteristic independence of the Chinese Revolution. In order to remain independent, Mao split the party, and urged the creation of the Cultural Revolution, to be aimed at the "top-heavy", party bureaucracy which, nevertheless, remained in power. Neither the Chinese nor the Russian Communist party is powerful enough to subdue the other, or the United States. A tenuous division of the world between the United States, the Soviet Union, and China is the inevitable result.<sup>1</sup> While some look upon the Soviet Union and China as socialistic, others view them as dictatorships.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid.

<sup>2</sup> Writers and intellectuals such as Djilas, Leszek Kolakovsky, Gajo Petrović, Mihailo Marković, and others attempt to present a morally sound, and politically viable, socio-economic alternative to the three super-powers. Some of them propose an open Marxism, or neo-Marxism, free of dogma. Djilas and Kolakovsky urge radical socio-economic and political changes within Communist societies. It is important to note here the intellectual transition the Polish-Marxist Kolakovsky underwent during the last years as he developed a similar political stance to Djilas'. In a recent article, Kolakovsky terms both Chinese and Soviet systems, thereby implicating almost every East European state, as oppressive. He calls for the political left to become a viable alternative as a social defense for those who are unemployed, hungry, and unable to air their grievances (Rede und Handlungsfreiheit Beraubten). It is likely that he is one of the brilliant and humane intellectuals who may yet point to, or in fact, may have already indicated, realistic political alternatives to the United States, the Soviet Union and China. Leszek Kolakovsky, "Giebt es noch Hoffnung für die Linke?" Der Spiegel, August 2nd, 1971, p. 108.

In conclusion, K. Marx analysed English and European nineteenth century capitalist societies, and predicted their downfall and replacement by socialist governments. Indeed, "socialist order" came about, but it proved quite different from that envisaged by Marx. Socialist Revolutions broke out in Russia (1917-1918), China (1929-1949), and Eastern Europe, including Yugoslavia (1941-1945). There, generally, conditions were ripe for change. While in Czarist Russia a weak capitalist base developed with little industrialization and heavy economic dependency upon the more industrialized and wealthier Western nations, it was largely World War I which precipitated the downfall of the Russian state. A small, dedicated professional party of revolutionaries, the Bolsheviks, allied itself to other political parties, undermined the Czarist government and soon became the only political force in power. Afterwards, similar revolutionary upheavals took place in China and Eastern Europe. In Yugoslavia, after the invasion of Nazi and Axis forces (1941), a national and civil war broke out, ending with the creation of a Communist government. All over Eastern Europe, excluding Yugoslavia and Albania, dictatorial governments were largely imposed by the Soviet armies, which nominally represented the dictatorship of the workers. Although all Communist parties were convinced of the absolute necessity for industrialization, the problem of adapting Marxian dogma to each society's varying socio-economic standards caused immense difficulties. Because of the varying conditions, the adaptations of Marx's ideas left little of the original Marx. Long after the Revolutions became instituted, socio-political changes took place within modern Communist societies. Communist party bureaucracies remain in absolute control over national, social, and political life marked by

constant change. Radical changes, such as the democratizations of Yugoslavia since 1949, have pointed to the necessity for further liberalizations. Without these, the country may face the internal dissolution of national Communism, and thus an end of the dictatorship. Still, Djilas suggests that Yugoslavia's democratizations, in part caused by the Stalin-Tito rift (1948-1956), represent a type of a peaceful national Communism ensuring the possibility of a peaceful transition from a one-party state to a two-party Socialist government. Though the Revolution was institutionalized and many of its principles implemented, the party bureaucracy, its incongruous product, still has to be dealt with.

No society is so just and open as to deserve unqualified  
defence from the attacks of the young.

--Milovan Djilas

## CHAPTER VII

### The Problem of Bureaucracy

Milovan Djilas' theory of the emergence of the party-bureaucracy as a new class in Communist societies is not itself new. The discussion on whether the party bureaucracy constitutes a new class had been going on for at least forty years prior to his publications. Books and articles had been written by both Marxists and non-Marxists on the subject. Some of the more prominent writers were V.I. Lenin, his last writings (1922), L. Trotzky, New Course (1923), C. Rakovsky, Les Dangers Professionel du Pouvoir (1928),<sup>1</sup> and J.B. Tito, Worker's Management in Economic Enterprises (1950)<sup>2</sup>, who was one of the first Communist leaders to criticize and attempt to limit the "top heavy bureaucracy in administration".<sup>3</sup> He cited Lenin's statement that the bureaucracy would be controlled when the people had a direct say in government.<sup>4</sup> Non-Marxian authors, too, have written on the subject, including S. and B. Webb, and B. Russell. Djilas claims that when he published The New Class (1957), he was unaware that B. Russell, N.J. Bukharin and N.A. Berdyaev had already used this name for the party.

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<sup>1</sup> Léon Trotzky, Eugène Préobrajensky, and Christian Rakovsky, De La Bureaucratie (Paris: Francois Maspero, 1971).

<sup>2</sup> Henry M. Christman, ed., The Essential Tito, With an introduction by Henry M. Christman (London: David and Charles Publishers Limited, 1971), p. 84.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid. <sup>4</sup>Ibid.

bureaucracy.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, he contends they predicted the emergence of the new class whereas he analyses the actual phenomenon. Before the publication of The New Class, other well-known Yugoslavians, among them Z. Kristl and Y. Stanovnik had remarked to Djilas that the party bureaucracy represented a class in socialism.<sup>2</sup> Any analyses made prior to Djilas' New Class in no way diminish the value and validity of his opinions. Several years after the printing of The New Class, high ranking Communist leaders publicly discussed the dilemma of the bureaucracy and called for solutions similar to those originally proposed by Djilas.

His anti-bureaucratic remarks were meant to undermine the bureaucracy. His attacks upon the bureaucracy in 1957 were not impartial. Today, Djilas admits that when he wrote The New Class, he took "occasionally...a strange and demonic delight in the havoc I was wreaking on my own work and beliefs".<sup>3</sup> This suggests to us that his orthodox Marxian ideology, already under a heavy strain, became further undermined in the important transition from Marxian-Socialism to a more democratic Socialism. His confession of non-objectivity in The Unperfect Society was an act of intellectual honesty that few others could emulate. Despite this, his early analysis of the contradictions in Soviet and Yugoslav Marxism is generally sound. Djilas' "demonic delight" in creating "havoc" could be based on several factors.

When he resigned from his official positions, he became a social outcast, and was forbidden to make any public statements. He was not

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<sup>1</sup>Djilas, The Unperfect Society, p. 10. <sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 10.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 7.

the type of person who would forego the chance of voicing his opinion, and he soon made known his disagreement with the Soviet interference in Hungary in 1956. Undoubtedly this tragedy proved to be another catalyst in the erosion of Djilas' Marxism. As he himself says in The Unperfect Society (1969), he was then perhaps only capable of revealing the "incongruities of Communist realities".<sup>1</sup> His pronouncement on his earlier work is in direct contrast to the intellectual and political bias of many North American and European reviewers who praised Djilas' works without stating any of their obvious shortcomings and without indicating his continuing commitment to Socialism. This uncritical approach must be seen in the context of the post-McCarthy era in the United States, and the general Cold War tensions between East and West. Moreover, those reviewers who were expatriates of Communist countries cannot be expected to be unbiased. Djilas' present (1969) acknowledgement of these earlier drawbacks indicate the tremendous intellectual changes he has undergone from Marxist to Socialist.<sup>2</sup>

It was his revolutionary analysis that led Djilas to be wholly dissatisfied with the de-bureaucratization of 1949-1953. The numerical and political limitations, such as the transfer and ouster

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>C.L. Sulzberger's article on Milovan Djilas, "Prison Purifies the Soul: Djilas", clarifies several important aspects of Djilas' intellectual metamorphosis. Sulzberger cites him as claiming that "prison made me more courageous prison purified me", and that he has become more sincere and open, as well as "a more integral man". For more information, see the article by C.L. Sulzberger, "Prison Purifies the Soul: Djilas", The Montreal Star, (August 18th, 1972), p. 7.

of thousands of bureaucrats and the redistribution of political power between the federal and the provincial levels, which occurred barely four years after the Revolution, indicate the seriousness of the imbalance of power held by the party bureaucracy. Generally any bureaucracy hampers political and economic democratization, especially when such change threatens the curtailment of its power. Despite its numerical limitations, the bureaucracy's socio-political monopoly was not in the least curtailed. It still controlled and managed the state and its people. However, a precedent was established for possible future limitations of its power. Part of the liberalization and democratization of the political and economical framework was the creation of Workers' Councils (1950). To many Yugoslav Communists this creation was probably akin to the 'withering away of the state', although to others it presented no change since the party bureaucracy controlled all major decision making. As early as 1949, E. Kardelj said that:

the development of Socialism can follow no other road but that of the continuous strengthening of socialist democracy, implying broader autonomy of the working masses, their enlistment on an ever wider scale in the operation of the state machinery from lowest to highest level, and their growing participation in the management of every enterprise, institution, etc...<sup>1</sup>

Basically these councils, adapted from the Italian Consigli di fabbrica (1919), enabled workers to participate in the decision-making process or the affairs of the enterprise of any plant or business in Yugoslavia.<sup>2</sup> The workers' role can be somewhat likened to the role of

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<sup>1</sup>Grozandić and Radosavljević, ed., p. 19.

<sup>2</sup>The Consigli di fabbrica or soviets originated with the Italian Marxist A. Gramsci in 1918. At first, these soviets or workers' councils were formed with five of the best workers in each factory of Turin. These workers in turn represented and discussed their problems and the



a Western stockholder, with this difference -- no one could have a majority vote. Everyone has one vote and is equal in decision making. The Yugoslav worker, in any enterprise with more than five employees, has a say in the socio-economic role of his factory, and thus indirectly in the economy. These workers councils were concerned with:

...the enterprise plan, work regulations, measures for the promotion of production and productivity, the more efficient organization of work, production quotas, deployment of labour force, vocational and technical training, standards of hygiene and safety, etc.<sup>1</sup>

A strong base for further liberalizations was created by the workers councils. In 1950, in an effort to limit the bureaucracy, some 100,000 bureaucrats were dismissed from their positions. They constituted mainly professional, political personnel who were hired (1945-1950) during the first stages of industrialization.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, light industries were handed over to the independent socialist republics as another integral part of decentralization.<sup>3</sup> But these changes were insufficient for Djilas, since the party bureaucracy made most, if not all, of the important socio-economic and political decisions.

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views of the reformist trade unions. Later (1919), and mainly through Gramsci's rational influence, about 50,000 Turin factory workers were able to transform the workers' councils into "political organisms and the national territory of working class self-government". These councils should have included management personnel and highly qualified workers. For Gramsci the councils would establish a solid base for the Socialist Revolution before the actual, physical take over of the bourgeois state. John Cammett, Antonio Gramsci and the Origins of Italian Communism (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1967), pp. 75-80.

<sup>1</sup>Grozandić and Radosavljević, ed., p. 21. Workers councils were extended into fields of education, culture, health, social welfare, social insurance, etc., p. 27.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 18. <sup>3</sup>Ibid.

In 1950, when Djilas attacked the Soviet bureaucracy, at the height of the ideological struggle between Tito and Stalin, he stated that the Soviet bureaucracy was a force above society.<sup>1</sup> But, at that time, he did not imply that the same was true of Yugoslavia's bureaucracy. Three years later, Djilas attacked the Yugoslav party bureaucracy. He suggested that the bureaucracy had become degenerate and asked that it be severely limited. What led Djilas to air his anti-bureaucratic grievances at this moment? When he began to write his articles in Borba, the state newspaper, in the fall of 1953, and to criticize his party bureaucracy, he was at the height of his political career. He held one of the most important political positions in Yugoslavia, was greatly respected and even feared. He was already an internationally known figure. Did Djilas object to his and his friends privileged, soft, upper middle-class life at Dedinje, a luxurious, diplomatic and government residence section of Belgrade? Undoubtedly, he saw this life style as a contradiction of the Partisan ethic of revolutionary days. Perhaps, Djilas was initially encouraged by the fact that Tito himself had expounded ideas on limiting the bureaucracy (1949-1950).<sup>2</sup> But no one, possibly not even Djilas himself, knew beforehand that his analysis would prove to be so devastating. In a relatively peaceful time, he attacked the bureaucracy with a venomous zeal reminiscent of the heyday of Revolution. He desperately attempted to instill in an already corrupt party bureaucracy a sense of morality or to awaken in it the ethic which pervaded the party ranks during the Revolution and which was one of the prime causes for the party's

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<sup>1</sup>Djilas, On New Roads to Socialism, pp. 16-17.

<sup>2</sup>Christman, ed., op. cit.

victory over the degenerate and inefficient governments of King Alexander and Prince Regent Paul. Djilas miscalculated the impact of his articles upon the party hierarchy.<sup>1</sup> The persistent call for more drastic reforms led him into open conflict with the League of Communists.

The rift was precipitated by Djilas' writing, in October 1953, that the hard-won Yugoslav Revolution (1941-1945) had to free itself from the party bureaucracy.<sup>2</sup> A radical decentralization of political power and the subsequent elimination or control of political monopoly of the party-bureaucracy need not result in a slowing down of industrialization. One major mistake which Djilas made in his anti-bureaucratic fervour was to attack publicly the degeneracy of the bureaucracy, to portray it as similar to the capitalist, profit-inspired bourgeoisie.<sup>3</sup> Even if the comparison was apt, it was inopportune. Before January 1954, E. Kardelj and others, often quite unofficially, tended to agree with Djilas about the needed reform of the party-bureaucracy. But, Djilas' open anti-bureaucratic statements rendered any probable implementation of his and Kardelj's bureaucratic reforms impossible. Djilas also reprimanded the party bureaucracy for recruiting civil servants not according to their qualifications, but according to their Marxism.<sup>4</sup> Liberalization, "or peaceful reform", said Djilas, was the only alternative.<sup>5</sup> He did not suggest how it was

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<sup>1</sup>The party hierarchy reacted only the fourth month after Djilas had published his first articles in Borba. Milovan Djilas, Anatomy of a Moral, p. xxiv.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 37-38. <sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 36. <sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 44.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 180.

to be achieved, thus leaving himself open to all kinds of criticism. Months later he was accused by a well-known Yugoslav diplomat, A. Bebler, of being "fascinated by your international position".<sup>1</sup> Anyone who knows Djilas would not seriously suggest that international publicity preoccupied him. This is rather an insubstantial argument of Bebler, attempting to explain to the party and public the sudden explosion and political change of Djilas. Djilas' implication that not only qualified Marxists but non-Marxists too ought to be accepted in the civil service not only seem farfetched to his government, but also represented a radical departure from the party's policies. Djilas' ideas were unacceptable to anyone in power in the Yugoslav government, with the exception of the Partisan historian V. Dedijer and other proponents of a two party system.

Djilas' most vociferous denunciation of his former comrades came in late December, 1953. He spoke of the retrogression of many former Partisans into ultra-conservative men. He wrote: "Once men gave everything, even life itself, to become professional revolutionaries. They were then indispensable to social progress. Today they are obstacles to it."<sup>2</sup> This new critique constituted a grave problem within the Yugoslav League of Communists. It posed a direct threat to party unity and undermined the credibility of the party as a viable government. Whatever Djilas may argue to the contrary, it is possible that had he discussed these problems within the party hierarchy, he might have achieved results. Instead, he chose to publicize his findings in a most unpleasant, though democratic manner. He also chose

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. xv.    <sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 109.

to disregard Tito's views on democratic-centralism in the party. The Marshall said of Djilas' unorthodox behaviour:

Why did Djilas separate himself from old comrades with whom he had collaborated for seventeen years? Comrade Djilas had every chance to say what he wanted to say about our crisis, and even more than he had written. We knew him and we discussed everything among ourselves, and joked with him, and in jokes everything can be said.<sup>1</sup>

It is also futile to argue, as P. Willen does in the Foreward to Djilas' Anatomy of a Moral, that although Tito's consternation was genuine, Djilas did not really have freedom of expression.<sup>2</sup> Genuine public freedom in either the West or East is seriously limited by the type of society. One only has to consider the freedom any cabinet minister has in a Western democracy, and then, compare it, if a comparison is adequate, to Djilas' case in Yugoslavia. A Western cabinet minister or important government official is often not allowed to air comments on unpublicized government policies or similar matters. If he does, he may face an abrupt end to his political career. Conversely, because of the inefficacious, past attempts to limit the Yugoslav bureaucracy, it is also possible that had Djilas argued his case in the Central Committee, few changes would have been instituted immediately. The party hierarchy was clearly under the impression that the party bureaucracy was a vital component of the socialist state and presented little or no danger to democratization and the furtherance of Yugoslav socialism. Djilas thought otherwise and in his attempt to convince the hierarchy of the urgent need for drastic measures to curb the bureaucratic forces, he stepped beyond the bounds of what the party could endure, and still remain united.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. xvi. <sup>2</sup>Ibid.

In the heat of his bureaucratic criticisms in late 1953, Djilas called for a series of bureaucratic limitations, though he hardly considered them as an elimination of the bureaucracy. Elimination would be impossible in any industrial state. He suggested that the party bureaucracy had replaced the mass of the Communist party in influence and control of organized state power. In turn governmental power was largely based upon government administrators and bureaucratic parasites.<sup>1</sup> Djilas claims succinctly that just as every artisan is not a bourgeois, so all members of the bureaucracy are not parasites. This small, though vitally important distinction is necessary in understanding Djilas' bureaucratic analysis. It is generally conceded that most European and Western bureaucrats are privileged members of their society. Djilas becomes more specific. The distinction between a parasitic and non-parasitic bureaucrat in a socialist state lies in the individual's function and social position, and the political administrative monopoly over the state and thus over its people.<sup>2</sup> Parasitic bureaucrats are usually members of the party, with a party record of political orthodoxy, and are often former revolutionaries.

Unfortunately for the clarity of Djilas' arguments, he did not describe or analyze the evolution of former revolutionaries into parasitic bureaucrats. Such an analysis would have complemented his theories of the socialist bureaucratic phenomenon. Further, he did not base any of his analysis on such Marxian or non-Marxian authors as V. Mahajski's Die Evolution der Sozialdemokratie (1899), C. Rakovsky's

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<sup>1</sup>Djilas, The New Class, p. 40. <sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 39.

letter on the development of a ruling, Soviet bureaucratic class, A. Ciliga's Au Pays du Grande Mensonge (1937), and B. Rizzi's La Bureaucratisation du Monde (1939). These writers discussed the problem of a "bürokratischen Kollektivismus" within socialism and capitalism.<sup>1</sup> Few writers concentrate on the vital question of how people attain prominent state or party positions. Although in the socialist revolutions only party members were instituted in the bureaucracy, some older bourgeois bureaucrats sometimes became part of the new bureaucracy. These bureaucrats either were preeminently suited to their work or they compromised themselves politically to such an extent that they represented no danger to the new government.

Although Djilas wanted to bring about many socio-political changes within the socialist party bureaucracy, he realized that it is an essential part of any government trying to industrialize the country. He cites and seems to approve of Stalin's dictum: "If we had not created the apparatus, we would have failed".<sup>2</sup> But Djilas disagrees with Stalin's insistence that bureaucrats need to be a "special type of men".<sup>3</sup> Men who are "aware of the ultimate goals" of socialism, but who are separated from society because of their preeminent socio-political positions.<sup>4</sup> The need to industrialize forced the socialist governments to sacrifice some goals of socialism. One vital goal was the relative equality of men. Since the socio-political monopoly of the bureaucracy of Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union in the early 1950's was similar,

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<sup>1</sup>Svetozar Stojanović, Kritik und Zukunft des Sozialismus, Translated from Serbo-Croatian by Fred Wagner (Munich: Carl Hanser Verlag, 1970), pp. 41-42.

<sup>2</sup>Djilas, The New Class, p. 40. <sup>3</sup>Djilas, Anatomy of a Moral, p. 106.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

it was natural for Djilas, the idealistic revolutionary, to oppose them. He further noted the bureaucrats' attempts to remain in their exclusive socio-political positions as long as possible. Djilas' unrestrained analyses of the party bureaucracy in 1953 led the author to an impasse.

In late 1953, in what is without a doubt his most radical statement of that period, he suggested in Borba that the League of Communists and Socialist Alliance should meet only once when the delegates are chosen and/or when a change in policy is contemplated.<sup>1</sup> Djilas implied that other government business could be taken over by the people, the workers' councils, for example. Furthermore, he said that the people's revolutionary consciousness had reached the stage where the state could do away with many bureaucrats and their functions. He commented that revolutionary consciousness is "profound" when nationalization, brotherhood and unity, and Yugoslav independence are "in question".<sup>2</sup> In this respect, he differed little from his party colleagues. One of the major differences between Djilas and the Communist League was that he wanted the radical reforms to take place at a quicker pace than the Central Committee would approve.<sup>3</sup>

In retrospect, it becomes evident that Djilas, consciously or not, intended to undermine the party and the bureaucracy by his articles. It is almost certain that his literary and political journal Nova Misao (New Thought), which had a very short-lived existence because of its reform-minded articles, was to provide a means of

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 108. <sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 105. <sup>3</sup>Auty, p. 281.



establishing a viable political opposition to the party. Djilas' articles had the divided League 'seething' with excitement.<sup>1</sup>

E. Kardelj attempted to mediate between Djilas and Tito, stating that their ideas should be printed in Borba. The suggestion was rejected by the party hierarchy and the more orthodox elements within the League of Communists. The venerable M. Pijade said that if Djilas would have succeeded in getting what he wanted --he would have brought about the splitting of the party leadership, and thus a new opposition party.<sup>2</sup> Outmanouvered and politically isolated Djilas' only choice was to agree first with the party's view and then resign his official positions. He was partially aided in making up his mind by the confiscation of his parliamentary seat in his Belgrade constituency. Meanwhile, Djilas had started to work on his now famous The New Class, An Analysis of the Communist System.

He became increasingly estranged from modern Communism. The New Class was written when Djilas was removed from political power. This may have engendered in him a new realism, or a new resentment, which is evident in his argument, that Western and Socialist states are permeated with bureaucratic apparatus. Undoubtedly, there are several distinct differences between the bureaucracies of the East and West. Djilas concedes that Western bureaucracies form a special body.<sup>3</sup> They are not identical to their Communist counterparts, although similar in many aspects. One basic difference is that the Western bureaucracies have political 'masters', often elected, whereas the socialist

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<sup>1</sup>Djilas, Anatomy of a Moral, p. xiv. <sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Djilas, The New Class, p. 44.

bureaucracies have no political administrators directing them,<sup>1</sup> They are an autonomous body. Djilas stated that "the Communist political bureaucracy uses, enjoys, and disposes of nationalized property",<sup>2</sup> As such they represent the new class within modern Communist society.<sup>3</sup> The political bureaucracy is the sole, conscious, socio-political, monopolising force within the one party state. Djilas' Marxism in The New Class (1957) can be seen in his analysis of socialist societies born of revolution, as well as the Communist parties' dedication to industrialization and its byproduct, the political bureaucracy or the new class. Djilas utilized the Marxist method to lay bare some essential socio-political contradictions upon which Communist societies are based.<sup>4</sup> However, Western state-bureaucracies are part of the ruling stratum of society, since they constitute a permanent body of administrators, regardless of the political party in power. They do not constitute in Marxian terms, a class, since they do not own the state. The differences between Western and Socialist bureaucracies are rapidly diminishing, due to the ever increasing centralization of powers in Western states. In 1957, Djilas declared that the Communist bureaucracy considered itself to be an irreplaceable component of the socialist society. Few, if any, deny this. The Communist bureaucracy, stated Djilas quite characteristically, glories in its self-importance. An astonishing belief of the bureaucrats is that without their expertise and know-how Communist society would "regress" and

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<sup>1</sup>Djilas wrote little on corporate bureaucracies in the West in The New Class,

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., <sup>3</sup>Ibid., <sup>4</sup>Djilas, The Unperfect Society, p. 88.

"flounder".<sup>1</sup> Moreover, they are not aware that they belong to or constitute the main force within society which directs, and delegates socio-political power, or the means of production, to lesser individuals of the state. Their unawareness is hard to believe, since the various social disparities between workers and highly placed bureaucrats are all too obvious. They adhere, writes Djilas in The New Class, to "prescribed ideas, aims, attitudes and roles", which result in the bureaucracy's unawareness of belonging to the "ownership class".<sup>2</sup> Politically, the bureaucracy is conservative, and thus able, by controlling any reformist tendencies, to retain a socio-political monopoly over the state. Djilas' democratic Marxism of 1953 and 1956, already a version of democratic-socialism, was directly opposed to this socio-political monopoly.

In his latest political tract, The Unperfect Society, Beyond the New Class (1969), Djilas moved perceptibly, as the title suggests, beyond the new class and beyond Marxism. In essence the book is a continuation of the old argument that the party bureaucracy, notwithstanding the many internal and external changes, remains, though not unchallenged by the intellectual technocracy, the ruling force within modern Communist societies. Djilas predicts the downfall of the socio-political monopoly of the party bureaucracy.<sup>3</sup> He realistically asserts that the various socio-political changes which have been instituted in Yugoslavia curtail the powers of the bureaucracy. He assumes the decline of the power of the bureaucracy--its socio-economic privileges

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<sup>1</sup>Djilas, The New Class, p. 59.   <sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Djilas, The Unperfect Society, p. 190.

and political monopoly of the state, as well as the ascendancy of various non-political social groups which are emerging from the technological strata.<sup>1</sup> As soon as this occurs, the bureaucracy will cease to exist as a ruling force and will probably recompose itself into a social stratum. Once the socio-political monopoly of the bureaucracy is eliminated, then the ownership of the state, its powers and property, will truly belong to the people, since no monopoly of power will be exercised by any social strata.<sup>2</sup> Djilas' ideas on the bureaucracy have not changed much since 1953 and his critique in Borba. He still calls for far-reaching institutional adaptations to modern realities, in

The Unperfect Society:

The emancipation of national property under Communism cannot take place without changes in political and social relationships; once change has been achieved, it will bring about further changes-- both in social and in property relationships.<sup>3</sup>

Diverse socio-political changes have been taking place in Yugoslavia, since the beginning of de-Stalinization in 1949. Now, it is still much of an academic question whether or not the one-party state directed by the bureaucracy will be forced to reconcile and compromise itself to the Realitât of Yugoslavia. Either the party bureaucracy will remain in its social, political monopoly over Yugoslavia or it will be forced out of its position by the combined socio-political pressures of the technological, intellectual and working stratas. Before this can be accomplished, the bureaucracy must first cut the "umbilical cord tying it to the myths of revolutionary tradition", since the bureaucracy is no longer revolutionary, in any sense of the word.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 206. <sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 190. <sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 192.

<sup>4</sup>Milovan Djilas, "Lots of Idealism But Few Ideas on Meeting Problems of Our Age", The Ottawa Citizen (March 11th, 1970), p. 7.

This statement, perhaps, indicates that Djilas has become a social rebel and therefore can no longer be considered revolutionary. It points to his political astuteness and ingenuity in theoretically adapting modern Communism to the emerging developments of Yugoslavia. In practical politics, Djilas isolated himself through his past actions.<sup>1</sup> Most importantly, he emphasizes the urgency with which reforms are needed in present day Yugoslavia. The opposition to bureaucratic and orthodox party members is great. Reformist elements are present in party government, academic and private circles, but they are as yet uncoordinated. A well known Marxian journal, Praxis, was in part responsible for changing government policies by publicizing some of the more blatant, arrogant and dogmatic mistakes committed by the party bureaucracy.<sup>2</sup> The published and unpublished criticisms of Djilas, though officially censored, may influence the government's policy of limiting the bureaucracy. Djilas the socialist revolutionary may some day be overshadowed by Djilas the reformer.

Djilas' political views were slow in the making, but reflect great changes for a lifetime. In Borba (1953), he publicly criticized the arrogant, power-hungry party apparatus, with its opposition to further democratization and viable social progress. In 1956-1957, in The New Class, he saw the necessity for a bureaucracy in the quest for

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The bureaucracy could theoretically regain its revolutionary tradition by freely relinquishing its state powers and socio-political monopoly. It would be a world-setting precedent, although an extremely unlikely action.

<sup>1</sup>Comment made by Dr. F. Krantz, at Sir George Williams University.

<sup>2</sup>Praxis was forced to cease publication due to government pressure (1968).

industrialization, but not for its socio-political monopoly of the state. Between 1953-1956, Djilas' insistent call for reforms, to limit not only the power of the bureaucracy but that of the party also, landed the former Vice-Premier in jail. To Tito and the Yugoslav government controlling a state precariously perched between the Socialist East and the Capitalist West, Djilas' ideas were untenable and a threat to party unity, and thus to national unity. Djilas' arguments centered around the need for a two-party, democratic socialist state, and the need for radical socio-political changes. Reforms are being implemented and the Constitution (1946, 1953, 1963) is being readapted to suit the realities of the modern state. Despite having being jailed twice during the post-war period (1956-1961 and 1962-1966), Djilas enjoys, in comparison to other political prisoners in the East, a relatively comfortable private life with his family. He receives a government pension and the stipends from his American publishers, Harcourt, Brace and Jovanovich.

He continues to write on and to formulate new ideas about political reform. Today, Djilas is not a revolutionary, but a rebel, a reformist within a socialist state. He is not alone. Not surprisingly, internal opposition groups are pushing for change in the government and in the private sectors. Tito himself is constantly calling for reform and adaptations. How these reforms will affect the socio-political structures of the various, independent Socialist Republics is still unclear. The stage may yet be set for a two-party, socialist experiment in Yugoslavia, the first of its type in the world. Assuredly, the socialist experiment of Marshal Josip Broz Tito (even

after his impending retirement) and his former Vice-President, Milovan Djilas, is not yet over.

THE CONCLUSION

A tous ceux qui poursuivent la lutte pour rendre au socialisme son visage humaine.

-- Arthur London



Ignazio Silone and Milovan Djilas are peasant born intellectuals. They became Marxian revolutionaries, writers, politicians and, above all, social idealists who attempted to build a better and more egalitarian society. Only Djilas attained the goals which he had been fighting for. The Socialist Revolution took place in Yugoslavia after the completion of the national liberation and civil war from 1941-1945. Such a revolution did not happen in pre- or post-Fascist Italy, before 1922 and after 1943. The success of the Yugoslav socialist revolution is important in explaining the differences in the political development of both authors. The Yugoslav revolution resulted partially in Djilas' political orthodoxy, since it validated many Marxian axioms, such as the class analysis and the workers' revolutionary consciousness. The Italian Socialists' inability to bring about a revolution, before 1926, as well as his experience with the Abruzzi peasants are two major causes of Silone's unorthodoxy. Djilas' background provided him with a tradition of rebellion. Silone grew up, in contrast to Djilas, in an area where there was a marked lack of political participation. But, both the Abruzzi and Montenegrin peasants are traditionally independent-minded, notwithstanding the Abruzzese's social subordination to the state, the church and private enterprises. The Montenegrins differed from the Abruzzi peasants inasmuch as they dreamed of a Greater Serbia, and possibly a unified South Slav state, once the kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes had been proclaimed (1918). Whether the Montenegrins then felt as part of a state is questionable, since they resented a centralistic, Belgrade

oriented government, as well as the abdication of their king, Nikola Petrović.

With such backgrounds, Silone and Djilas reached high-ranking party positions in the Partito Comunista Italiano (PCI) and Savez Komunista Jugoslavije (CPY) for eleven and sixteen years respectively. It was Silone who, because of his eleven years age difference with Djilas, first gained a deeper insight into the Soviet party state bureaucracy, through his various visits to Moscow during the 1920's as an Italian delegate. He was subsequently "expelled" from the Italian party in 1931, because of his refusal to submit to the Soviet party and to slander former colleagues and friends, whom the Soviets found to be deviationist or simply independent-minded. Some twenty years later in 1950 as a result of the Tito-Stalin conflict, Djilas, Yugoslavia's Vice-Premier, openly criticized the dictatorial powers of the Soviet state bureaucracy. Three years later, he extended his attacks to his own Yugoslav party apparatus labelling it as "bourgeois" and degenerate. At first, little happened, for not only did Marshal Tito agree with Djilas' ideas, but the latter was known to be one of the most orthodox members of the Central Committee. Because of Djilas' unrelenting attacks on the bureaucracy, and, more importantly, his verbal and written comments urging the creation of a second, socialist opposition party, the Communist League asked Djilas to recant. He complied, and soon resigned all of his official positions in mid-1954. Djilas remained a party member until 1956, when he spoke out against the crushing of the Hungarian Revolution by the Soviet Union. These statements landed Djilas in jail, for President Tito did not want to endanger the negotiations

with the Soviet Union by allowing anti-Soviet views to be spread by a former Vice-Premier. By 1957, the date of Djilas' publication of The New Class, he received another term of imprisonment until 1961. A year later, he published Conversations with Stalin, which resulted in another sentence. He was pardoned by Marshal Tito in 1966. Tito had no intention of making a martyr of his former colleague and friend. These experiences were to leave a lasting physical and possibly an indelible intellectual mark upon Djilas.<sup>1</sup>

Early in their careers of Silone and Djilas, both revolutionaries were exclusively interested in the making of the socialist revolution in Italy and Yugoslavia. Their work became a question of applying and adapting Marxism to the daily needs of Italian and Yugoslav peasants, in the larger and more important socio-economic context of their society. Nearly from the start of their political work differences evolved between Silone and Djilas. While Silone's peasants refused to involve themselves in revolutionary activity, except for the odd peasant rebel, who was usually in some fashion an anarchist, Djilas' Montenegrin or other South Slav peasants participated enthusiastically in fighting the Axis or Partisan forces. The Montenegrins' fighting spirit can be likened to that of the legendary haiduk (highway robber), renowned for cold-blooded ferocity in their long struggle against the Turkish invaders. The Abruzzi peasants obstinate refusal to physically oppose the Italian Fascists slowly influenced Silone's political thoughts. It aggravated the existing conflict between his dedication to the PCI and his Christian morality. He became alienated from the Communist party.

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<sup>1</sup>Sulzberger, loc. cit.

Silone's fictional intellectuals or peasant-revolutionaries, in Bread and Wine, The Seed Beneath the Snow, and A Handful of Blackberries, were constantly frustrated with the non-political behaviour of the Abruzzi peasants. At best, Silone and his intellectuals found the odd, peasant anarchist or social rebel who would oppose the Fascist government and claim like Berardo Viola in Fontamara that:

The law is made by townsmen, is applied by judges who are all townsmen, and is interpreted by lawyers who are all townsmen. How can a farmer ever be right?<sup>1</sup>

This is a summary of the feelings of most Abruzzi peasants, but their prolonged socio-economic subjugation by the city, state, church or private enterprise left them incapable of seriously contemplating and finally acting out their pent-up social desires, and of establishing themselves on an equal social footing with city inhabitants.

Fontamara marked the only instance in which the Abruzzese rebelled and moved beyond a "What can be done" phase. This motto is slightly reminiscent of Lenin's "What's to be done". Since this book was written in 1930, it might indicate Silone's lingering attachment to Marxism, which slowly but perceptibly disappeared in his later works of the 1930's such as Bread and Wine (1936). However, in Fontamara, the peasants put up a stiff resistance against the Black shirts, encouraged on by the death of Berardo who literally sacrificed himself for a dedicated Communist party member, The Solitary Stranger. This work reflects Silone's high-point of revolutionary literature based upon his humanist passion for his fellow-man. In Berardo, Silone's novus-homo was created

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<sup>1</sup>Silone, Fontamara. 1960 edition. p. 85.

and was followed by his other peasant-revolutionaries such as Rocco in A Handful of Blackberries (1952), and Andrea in The Secret of Luca (1956). In these books, the peasant-intellectuals had already left or were about to leave the Partito Comunista Italiano. Silone and his fictional intellectuals had become social reformists, and thus proponents of the Italian parliamentary system. The change of political allegiance suggests that Silone's commitment to humane social change did not alter, but rather that the Communist party during the 1930's had become an intellectually stifling machinery subjected to Moscow's directives. During these harsh years prior to and during World War II. Silone matured into a Third Front socialist. He advocated a European federalism, an alternative to Communist and Western, bourgeois parties.<sup>1</sup>

This transformation is evident in Silone's writings in the late 1930's and early 1940's. While one easily detects sympathy for the revolution in The School for Dictators (1938), an analysis of Italian Fascism and German Nazism, it is difficult to find this feeling in The Seed Beneath the Snow and And He Hid Himself; works which were published when the fall of Fascism and Nazism was near (1941, and 1944 respectively). Hence, Silone's political metamorphosis came about slowly, or perhaps, had existed in him since he wrote in Fontamara:

In this human situation, which always seems hopeless, what can we, what shall we, do to enhance the dignity of man?<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>For a detailed interpretation see Altiero Spinelli's -- a man of similar experiences to Silone -- works on European federalism.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. viii.

This moral view brought Silone closer to his apolitical stance in The Secret of Luca (1956). He has moved from the sphere of a physical revolution and the adherence of Marxism, to that of a spiritual revolution and the return to the basic principles of Christian philosophy, such as the love for his fellow-man, and the nascence of a novus homo-- in which the possible goodness of man is a principle factor. Silone's change is inextricably connected with his reasons for joining the Socialists in 1917. He desires to see and fight for the basic freedom of man which is necessary for him to exist as an independent individual within a community of people.

Silone's anti-bureaucratic views have not changed remarkably since his criticisms in Avanti (1916-1917). He has remained honest to his ideals of personal freedom, which a bureaucratic power or any force in the state limits and controls, and respect of man, which is nullified by such control and limitation. The Secret of Luca represents an ideal example of the "brutish" unbridled strength of the legal bureaucracy in Italy. In this work, Andrea aids an old peasant who is innocently condemned to spend his adult life in prison for an alleged murder. The old peasant's simple code of honor is not to reveal and compromise the identity of the woman of his heart, and her reputation in a small Abruzzi village. The state proceeds to crush one man's life with flimsy evidence, and although the village inhabitants know that the peasant is innocent, they refuse to help him. Influenced by such examples, Silone calls for an honest reappraisal of one's values and political motivations. This moral revolution represents the author's greatest strength as well as weakness. The actions of his peasant-intellectuals, as well as those

of Silone himself, border on a humane, saint-like Christian existence. Silone is adamant in his refusal to harm any living creature. Such emotion is admirable in any human being. But because of his moral stance his political revolutionary work suffers greatly. Such morality, as that found in Bread and Wine or And He Hid Himself, does not allow Silone to go beyond his self-set limitations when revolutionary work requires him to do so.<sup>1</sup>

Another weakness in his works is that Silone in no way suggests how his peasant-intellectuals are to convince the bureaucrats of their "dogmatic" actions, nor does he indicate if or how his intellectuals or anyone else can successfully fight the bureaucracy. A main deficiency in Silone's treatment of his peasants is that he does not describe any probable, workable alternatives to man's subjection to the state, except by his own and those of his reformist peasant-intellectuals examples of humanity towards fellow human beings. More importantly, these acts of human compassion are usually isolated cases, which remain obscured in the greater context of a brutalized and dehumanized Italian society. The apolitical views his intellectuals express in their quest to wrest themselves free from bureaucratic entanglement are suited to an author with no social message. They seem inadequate for a social writer such as Silone. He has been thus termed a "romanziera della miseria", and his works likened to those of Danilo Dolci's.<sup>2</sup> A social critic cannot allow himself the luxury of being apolitical, since modern man operates within

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<sup>1</sup>A similar statement was made by the late Professor, Dr. Rudolf Schlesinger, in a debate with the Rev. G. Predelli on Bread and Wine, at Sir George Williams University during 1967.

<sup>2</sup>D'Eramo, p. 75.

the narrow confines of political parties and only thus adaptations to society are made. But for Silone all institutions using a bureaucratic machinery are oppressive to man. They subjugate him. Therefore, he expounds apolitical views of modern man's subordination to institutions. One is almost tempted to describe Silone's writings as anarchistic, a presumptuous analysis, since it would belittle his attempts to harmonize his Christian morality with his political beliefs.<sup>1</sup> Albeit Silone the writer and former political activist works within the self-imposed limitations of a Christian morality, he is above all a moralist, or at best, a social philosopher. He cannot achieve the difficult balance between morality and political activism without sacrificing or compromising one or the other. He is not prepared to do this. His works in the mid and late 1930's, such as Bread and Wine, and The Seed Beneath the Snow, give credence to this. In these novels, his intellectuals, still revolutionary in their attempts to fight Italian Fascism, are not very active in underground work for two very pertinent reasons. They are sick and convalescing with the aid of some peasants. At the same time, the intellectuals are coerced by their morality into fighting the omnipresent Fascist and underground Communist party bureaucracies. Because of this intellectual dilemma within the peasant-revolutionaries, their actions are limited to hiding from Fascist forces and attempting to stay alive. The intellectuals have not found the answer to their moral and political dilemma.

Silone's apolitical works, such as The Secret of Luca (1956)

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<sup>1</sup>See the letter of E.H. Carr in the Appendix. p. 139.



differ distinctly from his earlier works of the 1940's. Here his intellectuals are democratic socialists, and thus reformist-minded. They have either left or have been "expelled" from the Italian Communist party. This book shows how man is controlled by a bureaucracy, but not, and this seems most important, how such a bureaucracy could be forced to transfer its powers of government to the people below, such as the Abruzzese or other Mezzogiorno cafoni's. The writer is weak inasmuch as he does not describe this necessary advancement in the possible emancipation of the cafoni. One assumes here that even a probable delegation of power below, by a duly elected, democratic leftist government in Italy, would entail a bureaucratic procedure, but not necessarily a degenerate bureaucracy at the outset. Any leftist or socialist government coming to power does not automatically imply an immediate transfer of political and governmental power to the people below, as some election slogans might have indicated. The struggle between the reformist Social Democrats in West Germany and the more rigidly inclined, elitist-like establishment "socialists" exemplify these points.<sup>1</sup> Is it possible to construe a humane, relatively incorrupt state bureaucracy, or is it necessary to delegate power to bureaucrats and thus create an aura of constant fear in the administrative body of government? Mao Tse-tung solved some of these pressing matters, but for how long? The answer is not forthcoming in Silone's works, which makes it difficult for most readers to grasp what type of governmental system Silone and his peasant-intellectuals and thus the Abruzzi cafoni desire. It is certain, that if political power were given to the Abruzzese, or for that matter the

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<sup>1</sup>Herman Schreiber, "Alpha und Omega auf dem Schrottplatz". Der Spiegel. (March 19th, 1973) p. 21.

Mezzogiorno peasants, they would be at last presented with a chance to direct their lives and possibly emancipate themselves from being landless or impoverished peasants to being self-sufficient. Their subordination to a bureaucracy remains.

In contrast to Silone and the Abruzzese, Djilas and his Montenegrins constitute a different, a distinctly rebellious, breed of people. Many cooperated with the Partisans or the Ustáshe. Very few, indeed, are unconcerned about their personal freedom and the social future of their families and clans. Social participation and emotions are an integral part of the daily life of most Montenegrins. They were war-like mountain clans, possessing the all important psychological and physical edge, the necessary precondition to fight for their freedom and beliefs. A nineteenth century poem by Montenegro's most brilliant poet and distinguished public figure, Bishop Njegoš, singles out many of the obvious, different traits between Montenegrins and Abruzzese:

Say what would become of Montenegrins,  
 Hemmed in as they are by fiend and devil,  
 If by awful sacrifice and bloodshed  
 They lived not e'en as their days were numbered.  
 For they carry on no kind of commerce--  
 They know naught of it and have none of it;  
 Their most fertile fields and all their lowlands  
 Are the prey of the oppressor's forces,  
 Which destroy their grain and hay, their harvest;  
 Neither have they any skill as craftsmen.  
 If one gives the matter any thinking,  
 How can a Montenegrin change his being  
 And still truly be a Montenegrin?  
 All in vain, if we were burning a candle,  
 Still we never could be any other  
 Toward the foe of our true faith and freedom.  
 Let us rather strike the foe of freedom,  
 While there is still breath in any of us,  
 Who shall die, in glory shall he perish;

Who remains, he shall abide in glory;  
 For to God of all the dearest off'ring<sup>1</sup>  
 Is the blood that gushes from a tyrant.

It is in such a tradition of rebellions and uprisings that Djilas, at first a poet in harmony with his craggy mountain environment, became a cynical and dogmatic Marxist, and then matured to a refined humanist writer and democratic Socialist in the mid-1950's. His recent works from the mid-1950's to 1971, such as Anatomy of a Moral (1953 and 1959), Land Without Justice (1958), Conversations with Stalin (1962) Montenegro (1963), Njegoš, Poet, Prince, Bishop (1966), and Under the Colors (1971), indicate this metaphysical transformation. Although these works are a mixture of political analysis and fictional stories based on historical events, such as the Montenegrin peasants struggle against the Turkish, and later Austro-Hungarian invaders (1914-1918), they all indicate clearly that Djilas has once more become a political humanitarian. Two, excellent socio-political treatise have sprung from his continued analysis of the Yugoslav Socialist Revolution: The New Class, An Analysis of the Communist System (1957), and his more balanced work, The Unperfect Society, Beyond the New Class (1969). Djilas reveals some of the major Marxian contradictions within socialist societies born of revolution. Already in 1950, at the height of the Tito-Stalin ideological conflict, Djilas argued that the Soviet apparatus is a privileged government machinery which has unlimited, dictatorial powers at its disposal. In 1953, he stated that in Yugoslavia, too, the party bureaucracy holds a complete sway over its people. He furthered his attacks by saying that

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<sup>1</sup>Milovan Djilas, Njegoš, Poet, Prince, Bishop. Introduction and Translation by Michael B. Petrovich and a Preface by William Jovanovich (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Incorporated, 1966), p. 385.

the bureaucracy is as corrupt as its bourgeois counterpart in the Western societies. Djilas' findings are more substantiated than Silone's, because of the nature of his treatise on the makings of a state-apparatus (The New Class). There is a similar weakness in both authors, neither states specifically what alternative might be used to curb the powers of the bureaucracy. Djilas is much more precise in The Unperfect Society, Beyond the New Class (1969), in which he claims that the socio-economic monopoly by the apparatus has to be eliminated, and that the various "self-governing" units or self-management bodies are largely ineffective and politically inefficient in overcoming the socio-political monopoly of the bureaucracy. Similar statements by Yugoslav government and labor leaders express the belief that more efforts must be made to "strengthen self-management".<sup>1</sup> Once the changes have been achieved, these would then lead to an effective and direct, "self-governing" society. This partially substantiates Djilas' view as well as being reminiscent of Kardelj's earlier statements about self-management (1949). However, Djilas comments that the various organizations such as communes, labor unions and self-management machinery, as well as the combined, largely unorganized public, scientific and academic pressure groups present a potential threat in that they undermine the socio-economic stranglehold of the apparatus. The Yugoslav political system is unique, declares Djilas, in that it shows the decline of national Communism and, most important, that the Yugoslav structure may

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<sup>1</sup>Jović, Dr. Borisav, "Yugoslavia's Economic Policies of 1973". Review of International Affairs. Ed. by D. Blagojević, Volume XXIV, (January 5th, 1973). p. 1., and for a view from a trade union official, see Petrović-Šane, Dušan, "The Decisive Role of the Working Class in a Self-Managing Society". Review of International Affairs. Ed. by D. Blagojević, Volume XXIV, (March 5th, 1973). p. 2.

enable a peaceful, legal evolution from a one-party state to a two-party, parliamentary government. Many reforms in Yugoslavia during the last twenty years, specifically in the last ten, point to fundamental transformations within the socio-political structures. Various amendments to the Constitution (1963), the latest having been finalized in 1971, were instituted along with the delegation of federal powers of Belgrade to the various, independent, socialist Republics and the two autonomous territories. These changes have played vital roles in the complex decentralizations throughout Yugoslavia. Hence, it is impossible to predict or even indicate the probable socio-political "Fortsetzungen" of this socialist experiment. There are too many internal and external factors which must be considered, and in time, a more complete analysis of these evolving developments may be rendered.

There are several issues of Djilas' political ideas which are precise and direct. In retrospect he has become a political reformist, a proponent of a two-party state, and as such cannot be considered to be a revolutionary anymore. While Djilas is deeply involved in socio-psychological arguments and moralistic issues of killing for one's freedom, as his Montenegrin peasants show, he is not a moralist as Silone appears to be. Djilas' has matured into a political philosopher and theorist, who apparently has achieved harmony between political theory and the humane morality which he proposes in The Unperfect Society. He espouses transformation of Yugoslav society by peaceful, legal means, and not by revolutionary methods. Unlike Silone, he has not become an anti-Communist. Djilas sees the intrinsic value of the Socialist Revolution furthered in his suggested reforms. His major weakness in

such proposals, however, is similar to Silone's. Djilas fails to fully work out or give the reader a blueprint of any viable, alternatives, except for his general views on Yugoslav society. Such opinions indicate the nature of his work and profession. Djilas is a political theorist who is more concerned with proposing social changes, partially due to his enforced political inactivity and incapability to bring about transformations, than the exact formulae for instituting his ideas. There is no doubt that Djilas has developed his ideas and has, in the words of Professor Petrovich, moved "farther than even Silone", his fellow, Italian ideologue.<sup>1</sup> Djilas proposed radical limitations of the bureaucracy in late 1952, albeit in an irrational and hasty manner through the media, whereas Silone waited to be "expelled" because of his refusal to submit to questionable tactics employed by the Partito Comunista Italiano, and then wrote about his experiences. Djilas' early opinions in The New Class are by no means original, though they seem to be more developed than Trotzky's and even Marshal Tito's. Djilas' arguments and their implications are by no means ineffectual, since they are given some indirect consideration by Communist politicians in Yugoslavia in discussing the bureaucracy.

It is interesting and important to note that few political writers and theorists have analysed the makings of a state bureaucracy, though sociologists, such as C.W. Mills, have suggested possible remedies. Leading Yugoslav theorists, Vladimir Bakarić for example, have published little serious work on this subject, except to state that self-governing bodies will help the limitation of the state powers as

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<sup>1</sup>Djilas, op. cit., p. XV.

well as be the cause and result of a direct Socialist Democracy. But they have not realistically confronted their government with the limitations of their ideology. To some extent, E. Kardelj, with whom Djilas had worked on the question of self-managing bodies twenty years ago, has examined some of the problems created by the power of the apparatus. Kardelj is the intellectual center of the reformist-minded government officials, although he is semi-retired and performs few official functions. In his writings, Kardelj seems to link the Yugoslav policies with the early, more flexible ideas of Marx. Kardelj's thoughts on the present limitations of the state-apparatus (techno-bureaucracy) can represent a logical, intellectual bridge between some of Djilas' opinions and those of the more reform-minded party delegates.

The outcome of the struggle between the reformists and the more rigid Marxist theorists will be seen in either the continued development of a market society, a reformist policy, or a return to more stringent economic measures, the readvent of economic and political conservatism and thus Marxist rigidity. Further democratizations may prepare and bring about radical transformations. The distinct, though distant, possibility exists of an evolution from "Yugoslav communism to a socialist pluralism, a type of centralized pluralism" or Bund.<sup>1</sup> It should not be overemphasized, since the complexity of these problems are overwhelming and could tend in a very short time to dismiss any such "possibilities". The Central Committee is faced with the economic dependency not only on the European Common Market, but also on Eastern Europe, specifically the Soviet Union. Recent Yugoslav economic

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<sup>1</sup>Pavlowitch, p. 386.

proposals and President Tito's attempts to obtain a loan from the Soviet Union of about 600-700 million dollars or more characterize a new Yugoslav policy.<sup>1</sup> If this reorientation is not balanced by trade increases with the European community, then it might indicate a drastic, political realignment, although Tito has denied this. It is certain that Yugoslavia is in the most critical phase of the revolutionary development of her unique, Socialist experiment.<sup>2</sup> It is feasible that Yugoslavia's political position will remain similar to that of her recent past--a precarious balance between the Socialist East and the Capitalist West. Her unaligned stance is not ambiguous; her people are traditionally independent-minded and individualistic. Her government's attempt to reach the desired goal of a society bridging Western and Eastern Europe is a reminder of the traditional epic struggle of her people. Much has been done, but much more is planned.

It is evident that many striking similarities and differences exist between Silone and Djilas. There are two, all important differences. Silone's experience was limited by the failure of the Socialist to effect a revolution and his inability to revolutionize the Abruzzese. In contrast, Djilas experienced in toto the brute forces of revolution and was also a leading figure of the revolutionary government. Moreover, Djilas' physical endurance of imprisonment in Yugoslavia seems much harsher than Silone's exile in Switzerland and subsequent return to a

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<sup>1</sup>Dara Janeković, "President Tito Gives Interview to Vjesnik". Review of International Affairs. Ed. by D. Blagojević, Volume XXIV, (March 5th, 1973). p. 18.

<sup>2</sup>David Floyd, "The Queen and the dictator". The Daily Telegraph. (October 16th, 1972). p. 16. In particular see the summary of the critical phase by Stane Dolanc, Secretary of the Executive Bureau of the Presidium of the League of Communists, a Slovene and Tito's right hand man.



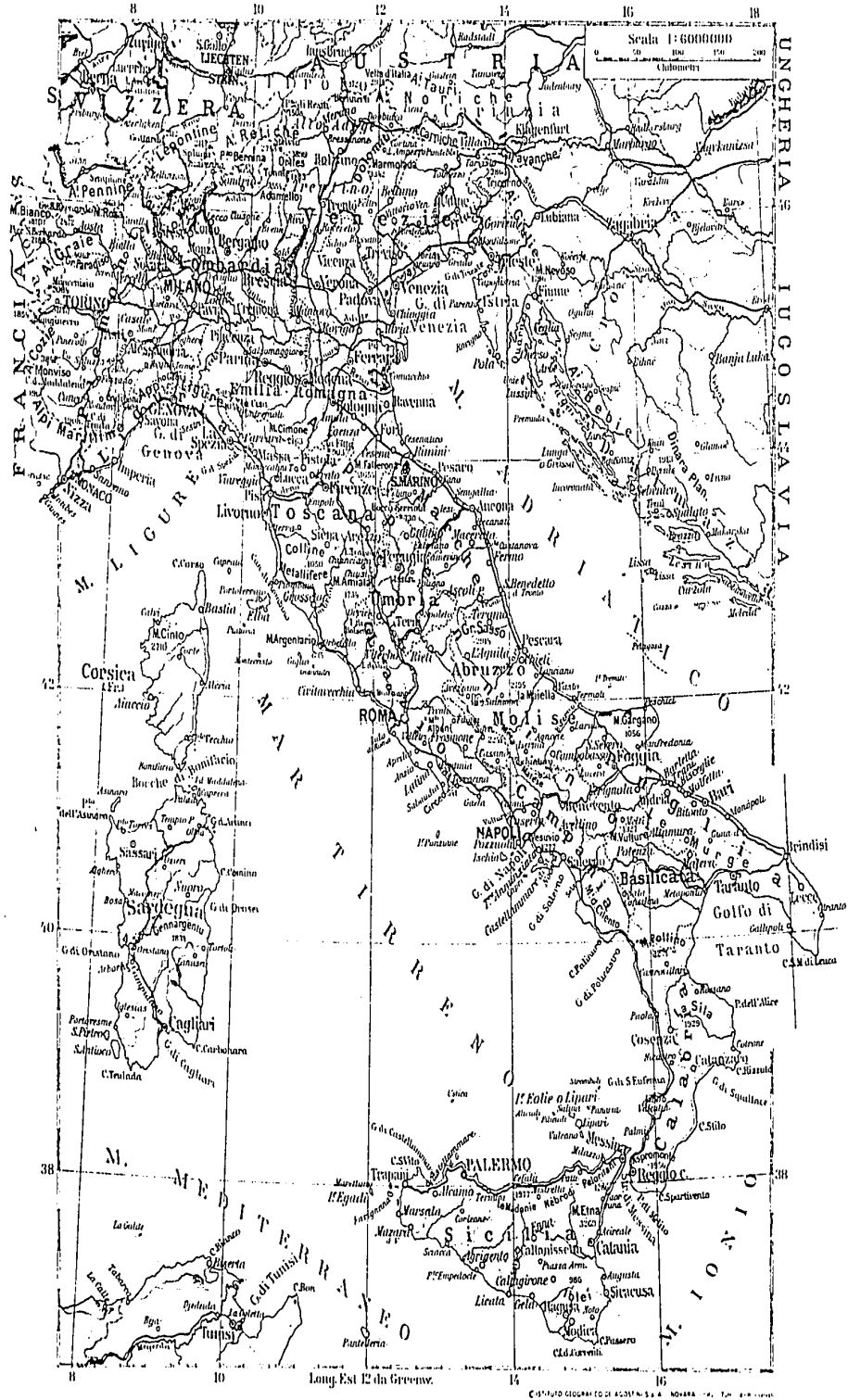
somewhat democratized Italy. Fundamentally, the major differences between them grew out of their environments--the Abruzzi and Montenegrin peasants traditional attitude to rebellion, their countries' socio-economic conditions, and the vital role World War II played by polarizing the revolutionary forces in Yugoslavia. Silone is primarily a social moralist and an apolitical writer strongly influenced by his Christian upbringing. Djilas is today a humane, political theorist, less concerned with Christianity than with humanity. They resemble each other in that they both call for the elimination of man's subjugation to a bureaucracy, but only Djilas offers some tentative proposals on how this could be achieved in Yugoslavia. Both believe that the attainment of personal freedom of a peasant, a cittadino and gradjani is an essential objective of any social transformation. Although their ideas are incomplete, they provide the invaluable experience of their life's work in the creation of a more humane and democratic society, "in einer anderen Periode wird die Ernte heranreifen".<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Rudolf Schlesinger, Die Kolonialfrage in der Kommunistischen Internationale (Frankfurt am Main: Europäische Verlagsanstalt, 1970), p. 125.

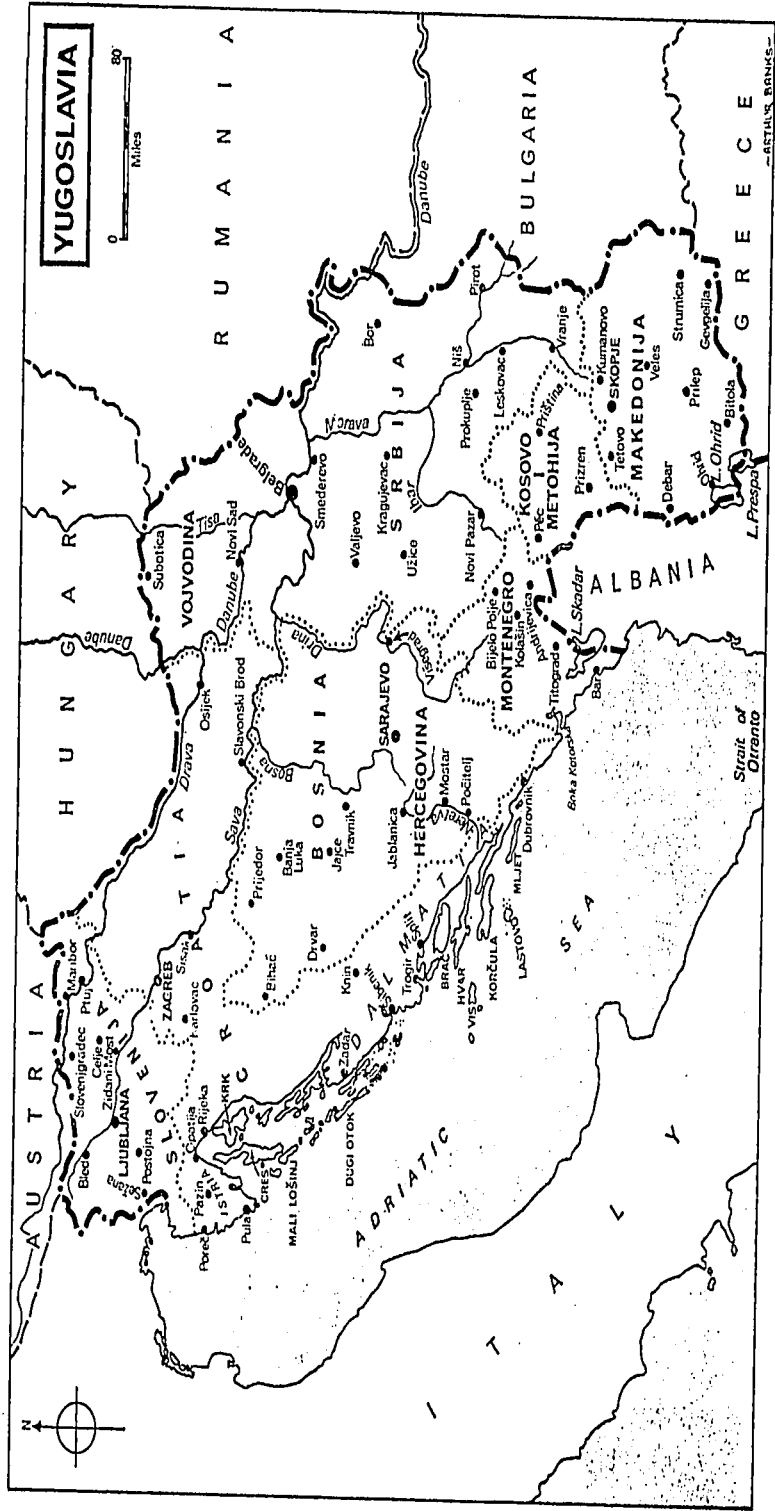
APPENDIX

### CARTA POLITICO-AMMINISTRATIVA D'ITALIA



Long. Est. 12<sup>th</sup> Greenwich.

Carta Geografica di AGOSTO S. A. ROMA - S. A. ROMA - S. A. ROMA



Trinity College,  
Cambridge, England.

29 July 1970.

Dear Mr Halbwidl,

I have your letter of July 16, and do not know of any analysis of the kind you suggest.

It seems to me that both Silone and Djilas are quasi-anarchists, who dislike all government and, therefore, cannot cope with the fundamental problem of bureaucracy, which we all detest, but which no modern state can do without. Bureaucracy has grown enormously everywhere in extent and influence, but it does not seem to me useful to call it a new class.

If you really want to study the Russian Revolution in relation to bureaucracy, you should at any rate look at Lenin's original ideas in State and Revolution, and his last writings which made some attempt to grapple with the problem.

With best wishes,  
Yours sincerely,

*G. F. ...*  
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IGNAZIO SILONE  
VIA VILLA RICETTI, 66  
ROMA

le 3 juillet '70

Cher Monsieur,

je vous remercie de votre lettre. Je ne crois/que  
l'opinion de votre professeur marxiste soit le résultat  
d'une confrontation des différentes éditions de mes li-  
vres. Probablement c'est une hypothèse, d'ailleurs, du  
même ordre de ma supposition le concernant. Jusqu'à  
maintenant la critique n'a pas remarqué une modification  
de jugements politiques dans les corrections que j'ai  
apportées à mes livres d'avantguerre et sur lesquelles je  
me suis largement expliqué dans les trois préfaces qui  
précèdent "Fontamara", "Le pain et le vin" et "L'école des  
dictateurs."

Je vous conseille, pour élargir votre connaissance  
de ma pensée sur "la révolution et sa bureaucratie", de  
lire "Sortie de secours" ( en anglais "Emergency exit") et  
"L'aventure d'un pauvre chrétien", en anglais sous presse.

Malheureusement je ne peux pas vous envoyer des cou-  
pures de journaux ou revues avec mes articles. Mais vous  
trouverez une très large documentation là-dessus dans un  
ouvrage de Luce d'Erano, "Ignazio Silone, bibliografia e  
linguaggio", sous presse chez Mondadori, Milan.

Mes meilleures salutations

*Ignazio Silone*

Year	Emigration to France	Emigration to all Europe (including France)	Emigration to non-European countries
1921	44,782	84,328	116,963
1922	99,464	155,554	125,716
1923	167,982	205,273	184,684
1924	201,715	239,088	125,282
1925	145,529	177,558	101,873
1926	111,252	139,900	122,496
1927	52,784	86,247	132,687
1928	49,351	79,173	70,794
1929	51,001	88,054	61,777
1930	167,209	220,985	59,112
1931	74,115	125,079	40,781
1932	33,516	58,545	24,803
1933	35,745	60,736	22,328
1934	20,725	42,296	26,165
1935	11,666	30,579	26,829
1936	9,614	21,682	19,828
1937	14,717	29,670	30,275
1938	10,551	71,848	27,994
1939	2,015	56,625	16,198 <sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Delzell, p. 34.

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