10. Economic Theory

Of few lectures are devoted wholly or mainly to the exposition of Economic Theory, in an abstract form, or with special reference to S.A. Economic analyses are included, but incidentally to some other purpose, in another group of lectures. In these lectures, these passages dealing with the economic bases of imperialism are omitted from this review, as also the "Lecture Notes" Series.

12. Two of the Dunebo Summer School lectures are on economics. One, by M. Goldberg, traces the growth of an African working class and its present position. It contains no theoretical proposition, and cannot be allocated to a specific ideology. The second lecture, on the "Natural Economy," is written entirely from the standpoint of Orthodox Capitalist Economics.

Sunsame teacher, incidentally, is another of economic theory, firstly in an exposition of Socialism, and, secondly, in discussing the causes of war. In both cases he states...
that part of Socialist doctrine which is
Common to all Schools of Socialism,
Marxist and non-Marxist. He differs
from accepted Marxist theory in suggesting
that even economic depressions "for
a long time" led increasing expenditure
on war goods. He does not employ
the classical theory of value, which is
the essential element in Marxist
economics.

The tract "Why Socialist" by
March is a statement of the labor
theory of value. It includes an
analogy of crises, dictatorship,
the class struggle, and the dictatorship
of the proletariat. It is Marxist
in form and content.

The "Elementary Course" follows a similar pattern. It also
appears to be wholly Marxist,
though I should add that a definite
opinion can hardly be given
unless the doctrine is compared with
appropriate Marxist texts.
Document:

One is struck by the almost inappropriately large amount of attention given to economic theory—at least, if the material considered here is a fair guide. There is no evidence of a systematic effort to make propagandists for socialism, such as would be the chief characteristic of a Marxist, or any other working class, party. I draw the conclusion that Congressmen, however much they extol the merits of socialist countries, are interested less in their socialism than in the stand they take up against colonialism and socialism. This too confirms the view that Congress is not a socialist, and therefore not a Marxist, movement, even though it appears from the material some of the people associated with it are Marxists.

Their contributions, too, are limited in this field. There is no marked trace of a materialist (economic) interpretation of the social phenomena discussed, nor, as has been mentioned, does a class analysis appear as a prominent feature.
11 Politics

Reference is made in many lectures to some aspect of South Africa's system of government, but usually in the course of a discussion of policy and legislation. Only a few documents purport to describe our political institutions, or discuss profound political theory.

One of the latter group concerns, for the most part, an outcast of the Constitution, which does not differ substantively from Sog's. Prof. Murray's treatise, the concluding paragraphs deal with the "bureaucracy," and describes it as the agents of the "ruling class." This is well defined, and in the context means merely that the government, which rules, commands the services of paid officials to carry out enforce the laws.

"What Every Congressman Should Know" contrasts the democracy of the pitso with the U.D. state in which "power is held by the ruling classes of White mineowners, living both in S.A. and in Britain and America," large factories owners and financiers, and Afrikaner farmers - these all represented by the Nationalist and United Parties. Congress is said to aim at substitute for the a "people's democratic state" on the basis of the shalter."
The Marxist-Leninist theory of the "dictatorship of the proletariat" is set out in the lecture by L. Chiche, and in "Nests in Lecturing."

A reference is made in "Economics and Politics in SN. " to "Peoples Democracy," which is described as "the destruction of the entire political and economic set-up in the country, the establishment of the most democratic system yet devised by man.

Since the writer expresses socialism, also in the Marxist form, he must also be taken to understand to mean by "Peoples Democracy," the form of government found in Eastern European Socialist States. There is also an indication that he does not regard his own interpretation as the one generally accepted by members of Congress, for he contends: "Whilst it is true that national democratic slogans are relevant and have mass they must be given content as time goes on."

This slogan, he must be given the content he desires at some future date.

Forms of government and political aims are discussed from a different angle in the "Elementary Course." It outlines the development of parliamentary government, the extension of the franchise, etc.
claims that it is backward in not giving the vote to the non-European. "Full political rights" should be demanded, for "only in this way can it become a real democracy", described in Lincoln's phrase. The dangers of a capitalist dictatorship are outlined, as an added reason why people should "value democracy, struggle to get it, and fight as hard as we can to defend it" - this last passage from John Stuart Mill.

Comment

Another surprisingly poor yield. Why so little discussion of the nature of the State? Of what kind of state Congress should aim at? Probably because the questions seem remote, according to people who have no say in the existing state. Their aim is free citizenship under a parliamentary system; they have no idea of wanting to destroy it - which is how Marxism sees their ideal (though do not necessarily see it here). The objective, there is so little discussion of the defects of the parliamentary system as an institution or of "dictatorship of the proletariat". Parliament is not inherently bad; the conflict unfolds when it is so. Hence - get rid of colonial laws, not a parliament. This is for
Removed from Marx's theory on the Paris Commune, or Lenin's "dictatorship of the proletariat".

12. Organization and Action

As has been remarked, the lectures are, for the most part, didactic and agitational. Some, however, discuss the execution of programmes, forms of action or organization, both generally or briefly in relation to one or the achievement of other campaigns.

In the first group are two lectures on the pass system. The first is explanatory and narrative; it gives an account of the different ways in which Africans have shown opposition to pass laws, but does not advocate any. The second, dealing with women passes, promises "hardship" to those who struggle, leads calls on them "never to rest" until all pass laws have been abolished. No particular form of action is suggested.

A similarly indecisive note is struck in notes on the Western Areas removals. Under the heading "What Shall I Do About It?" people are urged to "join your Congress,"
and recruit others; spread the facts; demand decent housing, equal rights; "Stop the Nyozi scheme to destroy a community."
But, again, no mention of where this is to be effected.

The same absence of explicit directions for action as appears in "Speakers' Notes," "The people are being placed in a desperate situation by the Government. We must take action here if we are to save ourselves." (p.1) What action? "The only thing necessary is that we show unity and determination to win our rights." (p.3)
"Now is the time to organize your union, and to organize your Congress. Now is the time to defend your trade union and to support your Congress." (p.4)

A more detailed and considered plan of action is outlined for resistance to continued education. A list of "needs" is drawn up, e.g., for providing education outside the official state schools, for abolishing illiteracy, teaching the Bible, and using other mediums, such as cinema.

This is the kind of thing that might have been attempted by the Act had it not made it illegal. The Memorandum was evidently drafted before the State took over the schools. Were the suggestions ever put into effect?
Advice on how to organise is given in a memorandum on "political organisation". This seems to be meant for Congress organisations, and is therefore a valuable guide to that body's structure and methods of operation. It is technically administrative, and could be applied mutatis mutandis to almost any political, even cultural, organisation.

The "Suggested Programme" drawn up after the C.P. and the drafting of the Freedom Charter gives an even more useful insight into the intentions of the leadership. It calls for (a) propaganda - generalised circulation of the Charter "into every home"; (b) education on the aims of the Charter; (c) boycott of government schools for which reliance must be placed on; (d) persuasion and logic mainly, "plus any other weapons that can be employed"; organisation, improving that of the All India Political Education; (e) a Volunteer corps of 50,000 men; (f) a finance; (g) co-ordination with other Congresses in a National Defence Council.

I have discussed the National
Freedom Council in a note in the A.N.D., as well as certain aspects of the policy put forward after the C.O.P. This memorandum (which is misplaced?) leaves one with the impression that Congress had come to another dead end; the preparatory for the C.O.P had exhausted all its energies - and what was it going to do with its creation? The only specific activity mentioned is the boycott of schools - and the writer, to be cautious, has grave misgivings about its success. Events showed that his doubts about the people's attitude were well justified.

As I have mentioned elsewhere, the problem of action politically action is peculiarly difficult for a disenfranchise people governed by an parliament. What forms of pressure can they apply to support demands, secure redress of grievances, even exercise satisfy the universal human urge to grange?

People in these circumstances must be hard pressed when even so orthodox and moderate a critic as the economist who lectured on the "Natural economy" could advocate the use of every possible weapon including the industrial and