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Some Notes on an Interpretation of Stalin's Contribution to the Linguistics Controversy

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but the -v- comes from -g- (Tatar *agach*), the -b- from -dh-. Or Georgian *i-tan-s* with Latin *tangere* (touch) but the Latin -n- is an infix (cf. *tetigi*, *tactum*). Or German *Himmel* (heaven) with Russian *zemlya* (earth), from *hi-mel*, *ze-mel*, but the Russian -l- is not original — compare Polish *ziemia* beside *mleko* (milk) with Church Slavonic *zemlja*, *mlěko*.

There is not space here to give full proof of these generally-recognized etymologies, nor, which comes to the same thing, to give the myriad other similar examples³ ('I can only recommend' as Ross, p. 58, says on the distinct, and debatable, question of ancestral languages '... handbooks of comparative philology, e.g. A. Meillet, *Introduction à l'étude comparative des langues indo-européennes*' or, we may add, many of the articles in *Bulletin of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR, Literary and Linguistic Section*, for 1950), but it will be seen that once Marr's chain of reasoning is brought out into the light of day, as it has been by the Soviet controversy, a vital link in it is exposed as false, and it becomes impossible to continue regarding his as a serious contribution to scientific general and comparative linguistics (though, as Stalin acknowledged, others of his works are of value).

J. ELLIS

SOME NOTES ON AN INTERPRETATION OF STALIN'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE LINGUISTICS CONTROVERSY

The purpose of these notes is to examine a number of points in Dr. M. Miller's provocative article on 'Marr, Stalin and the Theory of Language'.¹

1. Dr. Miller gives the following characterization of what she describes as the 'Soviet notion of "Marxism"':

Stalinist thought, and Soviet thought in general . . . uses the name of Marxism to bring together, at any particular moment of our contemporary time, all methodical usages in all sciences and disciplines which have proved their capacity for the increase of knowledge, both as against their competitors, and, of course, as judged by those responsible in Soviet society. Two general consequences follow from this: that all such methodical usages, whatever their origins, are related (with or without critical modification) to the principles which have their roots in Marx's own work, and so are brought in to the general constellation of ideas which goes by the name of Marxism; and that all methodical usages *in any field* which have proved less valuable are designated as non-Marxist.²

In the case of certain of the sciences, Dr. Miller continues, the basic principles are more or less the same both inside and outside the Soviet Union, and here

³ As just one more example, and with reference to note 73 in 'The Crisis in Soviet Linguistics' (*Soviet Studies*, II, 3), I am indebted to Mr. R. Browning for pointing out that there is in fact a Russian word *suka*, 'bitch'.

¹ *Soviet Studies*, vol. II, no. 4, pp. 364ff.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 366-7.

'the difference between the Soviet and non-Soviet positions seems to lie mainly in the Soviet emphasis on consistent adherence to these principles, as contrasted with the non-Soviet wariness about a consistent rigidity of thought which might militate against a more naive accuracy of observation'. It follows, in Dr. Miller's opinion, that 'in certain respects, and for certain departments of inquiry, the Soviet notion of "Marxism" is closely parallel to the non-Soviet notion of "scientific method"'. There is, of course, a very important difference even within the sciences for which this parallel is valid: Russian thought has been adopting 'the name and principles of Marxism — or, in superficial cases, its idiom and terminology — as the means of acquiring exact knowledge', whereas non-Soviet thought 'has pursued the same end through concentrating on the logical and mathematical criticism and analysis of concepts'. This difference is described by Dr. Miller as one of 'tradition and custom'.

It is certainly true that Marxism has been considerably *developed* in the Soviet Union and elsewhere during the last half-century. Marxism was never regarded by its leading exponents as a collection of dogmas, automatically applicable to all periods and countries: its importance as a 'method' and a 'guide to action' has always been stressed. Competent Marxists have always emphasized that every historical period has its own laws, and that conclusions and formulae of Marxism which are correct for one period of historical development are not necessarily correct for another. It follows that Marxism is always in the process of continuous growth and development as its method is employed in the analysis of new phenomena.³ 'Marxism as a science cannot stand still', Stalin emphasized in one of his contributions to the linguistics controversy, 'it develops and improves'. And he continued as follows:

In its development Marxism cannot but be enriched by new experience, new knowledge — consequently some of its formulae and conclusions cannot but change with the passage of time, cannot but be replaced by new formulae and conclusions, corresponding to the new historical tasks. Marxism does not recognize invariable conclusions and formulae, obligatory for all epochs and periods. Marxism is the enemy of all dogmatism.⁴

Dr. Miller's characterization of 'Soviet Marxism', however, although it is by no means unambiguous, would seem to imply that a process of development of a rather different type has been taking place in the Soviet Union. Dr. Miller does not document her characterization, and it is accordingly impossible to know the nature of the evidence upon which she relies. The only concrete example which Dr. Miller provides in this section is designed to illustrate her statement that 'all methodical usages *in any field* which have

³ The most familiar example of this development of Marxism is provided by Lenin's analysis of the new phenomenon of imperialism. See the evaluation of Lenin's contribution by Stalin in the latter's interview (1927) with the first American labour delegation in Russia (reproduced in vol. I of the *Selected Works* of Marx — hereafter *S.W.M.* — pp. 74ff).

⁴ Quoted from p. 40 of the collection of Stalin's contributions to the linguistics discussion published by *Soviet News* under the title *Concerning Marxism in Linguistics* (hereafter *C.M.L.*).

proved less valuable are designated as non-Marxist'. 'The acceptance of Pokrovsky's historical work at one time as Marxist and at another as non-Marxist', she writes in a footnote, 'is perhaps the most familiar example of this habit.' But surely the main reason for the eventual defeat of Pokrovsky's school was simply that a number of his fundamental theories, when re-examined in the light of the higher standards of Marxist scholarship prevailing in the Soviet Union in the middle 'thirties, were found to be non-Marxist — not in Dr. Miller's sense of the word 'Marxist' but in the more usual sense of contradicting certain basic concepts and tenets put forward by Marx.⁵ It is of course true that examples can be found in Soviet discussion of an almost metaphorical use of the term 'Marxist'; that 'bourgeois' science, both consciously and unconsciously, quite often makes use of certain principles which may legitimately be described as 'Marxist';⁶ and that what is regarded in the Soviet Union as 'Marxist' work in the sciences requires the employment of many 'methodical usages' which are also employed in the West. These facts alone, however, do not in my opinion permit us to maintain that 'the Soviet notion of "Marxism"' — even if only for certain (unspecified) departments of inquiry — is 'closely parallel to the non-Soviet notion of "scientific method"'. It seems clear that 'Marxism', both in the Soviet Union and in the West, is, and is customarily regarded as, something much more than this.

It is not difficult to find fairly precise definitions of 'the Soviet notion of "Marxism"' in the work of the Soviet Marxists themselves. Zhdanov, for example, in his celebrated speech to the philosophers,⁷ went into the matter at some length. Marx and Engels, said Zhdanov, 'created a new philosophy, differing qualitatively from all previous philosophies, however progressive they were'. Dialectical materialism, as Lenin had said (paraphrasing Engels), 'no longer needs any philosophy standing above the other sciences. Of former philosophy there remains the science of thought and its laws — formal logic and dialectics. And dialectics, as understood by Marx, and in conformity with Hegel, includes what is now called the theory of knowledge, or epistemology,

⁵ See *Soviet Studies*, vol. I, no. 4, p. 298, where Dr. Schlesinger says that 'Pokrovsky's attempt to interpret history in purely economic terms, with emphasis on the market, clearly contradicted the conception of history as a succession of different forms of social life'. Since Marx himself was so directly concerned with historiography, it might be suggested that evidence for Dr. Miller's thesis should more appropriately be sought in some other sphere. If her thesis were true, it might be expected, for example, that the Lysenko controversy would abundantly confirm it. In that controversy two opposing sets of 'methodical usages' — one set, presumably, being officially regarded as more 'valuable' than the other — were brought into open conflict with one another under circumstances particularly favourable to indulgence in the 'habit' of which Dr. Miller speaks. The verbatim report of the final debate ('The Situation in Biological Science') contains a number of fairly precise definitions of what is meant by 'Marxism' in the Soviet Union (e.g., pp. 310, 565-6 etc.) and also several important statements (e.g., pp. 189-90) concerning the basic differences between Soviet and 'bourgeois' science. But there is remarkably little in the report to suggest that 'the Soviet notion of "Marxism"' bears any substantial resemblance to Dr. Miller's characterization.

⁶ In this connection, it is perhaps necessary to point out that there is all the difference in the world between using Marxist principles consciously and using them unconsciously.

⁷ The quotations are from the translation of the speech published in the booklet *On Literature, Music and Philosophy*, pp. 76ff. A stimulating report on the speech, by J. and M. Miller, will be found in *Soviet Studies*, vol. I, no. 1, pp. 40ff. See particularly p. 45.

which, too, must regard its subject matter historically . . .’ Dialectical materialism, the ‘philosophy’ or ‘method’ of Marxism, continuously develops and enriches itself in the very process of its application:

Marxist philosophy, as distinguished from preceding philosophical systems, is not a science above other sciences; rather, it is an instrument of scientific investigation, a method, penetrating all natural and social sciences, enriching itself with their attainments in the course of their development . . . Many of our workers still do not understand that Marxism-Leninism is a living, creative theory, continuously developing, continuously enriching itself on the basis of the experience of socialist construction and the achievements of contemporary natural science. Such underestimation of this living revolutionary aspect of our theory cannot but lead to the abasement of philosophy and its rôle . . . Our philosophers . . . should analyse and generalize the results of contemporary natural science, remembering the advice of Engels that materialism ‘with each epoch-making discovery, even in the sphere of natural science . . . has to change its form’

It is this philosophy of dialectical materialism, according to Zhdanov, which constitutes ‘the scientific world outlook of the proletariat’. The basic principle of materialism is its *partisanship*.⁸

What relation does this ‘Soviet notion of “Marxism”’ bear to the ‘non-Soviet notion of “scientific method”’? Dr. Miller’s argument suggests that the parallel which she draws may rest, at least in part, on the assumption that ‘Soviet Marxism’ is, as it were, merely a sort of box, into which those ‘methodical usages’ which have ‘proved their capacity for the increase of knowledge’ are periodically dropped. This does not seem to me to be a very useful way of looking at the matter. ‘Marxism’ in the Soviet Union is not just a name which is attached to any ‘methodical usage’ which has proved itself to be useful. ‘Marxism’ provides a set of *guiding* principles which are regarded as essential equipment for any investigator seeking to extend man’s knowledge and power. These principles are regarded as essential, not because they provide a convenient framework into which ‘methodical usages’ which have already proved their utility may be fitted, but because their skilful use will assist the investigator both to fashion new ‘methodical usages’ which are likely to possess utility and to test the potential utility of existing ones. And in this respect, it is important to note, the scope of Marxism is far wider than that of ‘scientific method’. There is little in the principles of inductive logic, so far as I am aware, which would assist an investigator to distinguish, say, between an idealist and a materialist interpretation of any given phenomenon, or between a mechanical materialist and a dialectical materialist approach to it. Not only this, but Marxism insists upon the adoption of a synthetic viewpoint, whereas Western ‘scientific method’ tends to resist synthesis and to encourage a piecemeal approach to

⁸ Quotations from pp. 79, 80, 83, 84, 90, 106 and 110. For an interesting discussion of the manner in which Marxism enriches itself ‘on the basis of the experience of socialist construction’ see F. V. Konstantinov, *The Role of Socialist Consciousness in the Development of Soviet Society*, section 3 (reviewed in *Soviet Studies*, vol. II, no. 1, pp. 60-3). Zhdanov’s quotation from Engels is taken from *Ludwig Feuerbach*, p. 36.

the job of knowledge-getting. A parallel which abstracts from these vital characteristics of Marxism would appear to be hardly worth drawing.

2. In the course of her interesting comments on Stalin's first observation on linguistics, Dr. Miller discusses what she calls Stalin's 'raising of the fact of production to the status of a category within society'. This pronouncement by Stalin is interesting, Dr. Miller suggests, because previous Marxist discussions (including that of Stalin himself in his 'Dialectical and Historical Materialism'), while they had recognized the phenomenon of productive activity, had not accorded it 'categorical status'.

The facts are as follows. Stalin's answer to the question 'Is it true that language is a superstructure on the basis?' begins with the following definitions:

The basis is the economic structure of society at the given stage of its development. The superstructure is the political, legal, religious, artistic, philosophical views of society and the political, legal and other institutions corresponding to them.

Every basis, Stalin continues, has its own corresponding superstructure. The superstructure, however, although it is a product of the basis, is not merely a passive reflection of the basis. Having come into being, the superstructure 'becomes an exceedingly active force, actively assisting its basis to take shape and consolidate itself, and doing everything it can to help the new system finish off and eliminate the old basis and the old classes'. In this respect language differs radically from the superstructure, since language 'was created for the satisfaction of the needs not of one class, but of the whole of the society, of all the classes of the society'. Language also differs from the superstructure by reason of the fact that the superstructure is the product of one epoch while language is the product of a whole number of epochs. And, finally, language differs from the superstructure for another reason:

The superstructure is not directly connected with production, with man's productive activity. It is connected with production only indirectly, through the economy, through the basis. The superstructure therefore reflects changes in the level of development of the productive forces not immediately and not directly, but only after changes in the basis, through the prism of the changes wrought in the basis by the changes in production. This means that the sphere of action of the superstructure is narrow and restricted.

Language, on the contrary, is connected with man's productive activity directly, and not only with man's productive activity, but with all his other activity in all his spheres of work, from production to the basis, and from the basis to the superstructure. For this reason language reflects changes in production immediately and directly, without waiting for changes in the basis.⁹

In the absence of any specific reference in Dr. Miller's comments, it must be assumed that it is these passages which she has in mind when she speaks of Stalin 'raising the fact of production to the status of a category within society'.

⁹ Quotations from *C.M.L.*, pp. 3-7.

How, if at all, does Stalin's statement differ from those to be found in the classics of Marxism? The basic source here is, of course, Marx's famous preface to his *Critique of Political Economy*. The relations into which men enter in social production, Marx wrote, 'correspond to a definite stage of development of their material forces of production. The sum total of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society — the real foundation, on which rises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. The mode of production in material life determines the social, political and intellectual life processes in general'.¹⁰ The nature of the three categories concerned, and the relationships between them, are set out clearly in this passage. The prime mover is the 'material forces of production'. The 'relations of production' correspond to a definite stage in the development of the material forces. And the sum total of these 'relations of production' (the 'economic structure of society') constitutes the 'real foundation' — i.e., the 'basis' — upon which the ideological superstructure is erected. I can detect no essential difference between this set of ideas and that which Stalin employs in his first observation on linguistics. In Marx's view, as in Stalin's, the superstructure reflects changes in the level of the development of the forces of production 'through the prism of the changes wrought in the basis by the changes in production'.¹¹

Dr. Miller states that Stalin, in his 'Dialectical and Historical Materialism' (written in 1938), still discusses the phenomenon of production as a fact merely, and does not afford it categorical status. 'The philosophical development', she proceeds,

has therefore taken place in the years 1938-50, and coincides in time with the emergence of coexistent capitalist and socialist productive relations that form capitalist and socialist 'bases', resting on generally identical large-scale industrial productive techniques. The formation of the new category therefore implies a considerable modification of the rather mechanico-determinist view of the relations between productive techniques and productive relations in classical Marxism, and emphasizes the part played by human consciousness and will in the formation of human economic and social organizations.¹²

This passage calls for two comments.

¹⁰ *S.W.M.*, p. 356.

¹¹ This is not say, of course, that Stalin was merely echoing Marx. In the process of shaking out the implications of Marx's analysis, Stalin gave a lucid exposition of the relationship between basis and superstructure — an exposition which in several respects constitutes an important contribution to Marxist thought. (Cf. *Soviet Studies*, vol. II, no. 3, pp. 259-60, and, in particular, the summary of an article in *Bolshevik* given in footnote 81 on p. 260). For example, the term 'basis' had often been used equivocally. Sometimes it was used as a synonym of 'mode of production', in order to give expression to the idea that the determining force in history is to be sought for in the method of procuring the means of life; and sometimes it was used as a synonym of 'relations of production', in order to give expression to the idea that the foundations upon which the superstructure is erected are to be sought for in the mutual relations which men enter into in the process of production. (Cf. Engels' use of the word in *S.W.M.*, p. 391, and in *Anti-Dühring*, p. 32). Stalin clarifies the position by adopting the second usage, which seems to correspond to that usually employed by Marx (cf. *S.W.M.*, pp. 373-4).

¹² Pp. 368-9.

First, it will be noted that Dr. Miller replaces the Marxist expression 'productive forces' by the expression 'productive techniques'. This change is of more than merely terminological significance. Marxists, when they use the expression 'productive forces', mean to include not only the instruments of production but also the people who operate the instruments and the experience and skill of these people.¹³ If one identifies 'productive forces' with 'productive techniques', as Dr. Miller here seems to do, then the Marxist account of the relations between 'productive forces' and 'productive relations' may possibly appear at first sight to be 'rather mechanico-determinist'. In actual fact, however, Marx and Engels made no such identification. They were well aware of the importance of the rôle played by human consciousness in social and productive activity, and often emphasized the planned and premeditated character of such activity. The crude notion that the productive relations of a society would automatically and mechanically change when its productive techniques reached a certain level was quite alien to the whole spirit of their work. Such factors as 'the traditions which haunt human minds' also play an important part.¹⁴

Second, Dr. Miller states that Stalin's thought has undergone a considerable change since 1938 — a change which 'implies a considerable modification of the rather mechanico-determinist view', etc., etc. Now in 'Dialectical and Historical Materialism' Stalin discusses at some length the relations between productive forces and productive relations, and places emphasis upon the manner in which the latter influence the development of the former.¹⁵ In the same work there is a long section explaining the manner in which 'social ideas, theories, political views and political institutions . . . reciprocally affect social being, the development of the material conditions of the life of society'.¹⁶ Dr. Miller's argument would seem to suggest that if Stalin were to rewrite his 'Dialectical and Historical Materialism' today, he would place even more emphasis on 'the part played by human consciousness and will', etc., than he did in 1938. If this were true, it might have been expected that Stalin would have given at least some slight overt expression to this extremely important development in his contribution to the linguistics controversy. Yet in that contribution, so far as I can see, there is nothing at all which directly concerns the relations between productive forces and productive relations, and the short passage¹⁷ dealing with 'the part played by consciousness and will', etc., appears to be little more than a summary of the section dealing with the same topic in 'Dialectical and Historical Materialism'. Enough has been said, I think, to suggest that Dr. Miller, at least in the present instance, may have read into Stalin's observations on linguistics something which is not in fact there.

¹³ Cf. Stalin, 'Dialectical and Historical Materialism', in the *History of the CPSU (B)* p. 120: 'The *instruments of production* wherewith material values are produced, the *people* who operate the instruments of production and carry on the production of material values thanks to a certain *production experience* and *labour skill* — all these elements jointly constitute the *productive forces* of society'.

¹⁴ See, e.g., *S.W.M.*, pp. 381-3, and Engels' article on 'The Part Played by Labour in the Transition from Ape to Man'.

¹⁵ *History of the CPSU(B)*, pp. 121-2.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 116-7.

¹⁷ *C.M.L.*, p. 4.

3. The most important — and most startling — of Dr. Miller's interpretations relates to her discovery, in Stalin's second observation on linguistics, of a passage in which Stalin allegedly moves forward to a 'fourth stage' in 'the development of Marx's own theory of "class-struggle" as set forth in 1848'.¹⁸

The second stage, Dr. Miller states, was 'due to Engels, when he altered "All history is the history of class-struggle" to "All *written* history is the history of class-struggle".' The impression given by Dr. Miller, no doubt quite unintentionally, is that Engels, in his second footnote to the 1888 English edition of the *Communist Manifesto*, made a significant amendment, not expressly sanctioned by Marx, to Marx's 'own' theory of the class struggle.¹⁹ In actual fact, of course, Marx and Engels, even before they wrote the *Manifesto*, were well aware of the existence of tribal ownership in primitive society;²⁰ and Engels' work on the dissolution of primeval communities was carried out with the constant advice and assistance of Marx.²¹ It does not seem particularly useful, therefore, to describe Engels' footnote as marking a 'stage' in the development of Marx's 'own' theory.

The third stage in the development of the theory, according to Dr. Miller, is found in Stalin's statement that economic classes exist in socialist society, but that they are 'not antagonistic' to one another. This statement was originally made in the course of Stalin's report on the draft Constitution of the USSR to the eighth Congress of Soviets in 1936. The draft of the new Constitution, Stalin said, 'proceeds from the fact that there are no longer any antagonistic classes in society; that society consists of two friendly classes, of workers and peasants'.²² It seems hardly likely that Marx and Engels would have been surprised that this state of affairs should come about under socialism, or that they would have regarded Stalin's description of it as constituting a 'stage' in the development of their theory of class struggle.²³

¹⁸ It seems a little arbitrary to select 1848 (the date of the *Communist Manifesto*) as the starting-point. Marx and Engels arrived at their theory of class struggle only by degrees, and development took place after 1848 as well as before it. In particular, they learned a great deal from the experience of the Paris Commune.

¹⁹ The *Manifesto* said: 'The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles.' Engels' footnote was as follows: 'That is, all *written* history. In 1847, the pre-history of society, the social organization existing previous to recorded history, was all but unknown.' Since then, Engels continued, the work of Haxthausen, Maurer and Morgan on primeval communities had been carried out. 'With the dissolution of these primeval communities', Engels concludes, 'society begins to be differentiated into separate and finally antagonistic classes. I have attempted to retrace this process of dissolution in my *Origin of the Family*.'

²⁰ See, e.g., *The German Ideology*, pp. 9-11. Dr. Schlesinger (*Marx, His Time and Ours*, p. 216 footnote) goes so far as to describe 'the later restrictions of the validity of the concept (of class) to the period from the decomposition of the tribal community to the eventual achievement of a classless society' as 'purely tautological'.

²¹ See, e.g., Engels' preface to *The Origin of the Family*; the references to primitive communism in the *Selected Correspondence* of Marx and Engels (especially pp. 235-7); and the various prefaces to editions of the *Manifesto* in which Engels attributes the fundamental propositions of historical materialism (including the idea expressed in his footnote) entirely to Marx.

²² *Problems of Leninism*, p. 549.

²³ It is apparent from many passages in the works of Marx and Engels that they visualized fairly clearly that something of this nature would occur in the period of transition from capitalism to communism. See, for example, the extract from Engels'

The fourth stage, according to Dr. Miller, is found in a short passage occurring in Stalin's second observation on linguistics. Those who maintain, Stalin says, that language always was and is class language, and that there is no such thing as a non-class language of a society's entire people, 'conceive the opposition of interests of the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, the fierce class struggle between them, as meaning the disintegration of society, as a break of all ties between the hostile classes'. Stalin compares those who think in this way with the so-called 'troglodytes' who advocated, after the October Revolution, that the 'bourgeois' railways should be torn up and new 'proletarian' railways built. Then follows the passage upon which Dr. Miller apparently relies:

It is of course wrong to say that, because of the existence of a fierce class struggle, society has disintegrated into classes which are no longer economically connected one with another in one society. On the contrary, as long as capitalism exists, the bourgeois and the proletarians will be bound together by every economic thread as parts of one capitalist society. The bourgeois cannot live and grow rich unless they have wage labourers at their command; the proletarians cannot exist unless they hire themselves to the capitalists. If all economic ties between them were to cease, it would mean the cessation of all production, and the cessation of all production would mean the doom of society, the doom of the classes themselves. Naturally, no class wants to incur self-destruction. Consequently, however sharp the class struggle may be, it cannot lead to the disintegration of society.²⁴

What Stalin's statement means is surely quite clear. It means that capitalist *relations* of production continue to exist until the time when, as a result of the 'fierce class struggle', they are replaced by socialist relations. It means, in other words, that the class struggle does not assume forms which would mean 'the cessation of all production'. This idea, which has long been familiar to Marxists,²⁵ is clearly implied in Marx's theory that 'society' — i.e., the productive relations in their totality²⁶ — during the stages in its development when antagonistic classes exist, develops *by means of* class struggles. It is therefore surprising to find Dr. Miller speaking as if Stalin had made the statement that 'the "class-struggle", even in its "antagonistic" form, is conducted within societies; and that the classes concerned prefer to maintain their society rather than pursue their contentions blindly into a common ruin'. This version of Stalin's statement bears only a superficial resemblance to what he actually said, and is obviously capable of a radically different interpretation.

²⁴ *C.M.L.*, pp. 8-14.

²⁵ See, e.g., *Dialectics*, by T. A. Jackson, p. 125.

²⁶ *S.W.M.*, p. 264. It is difficult to understand how Dr. Miller can describe what she calls 'taking the class rather than the society . . . as the *phenomenal* unit' as being 'otherwise' (i.e., apart from Stalin's work) 'endemic in the Hegelian-Marxist tradition'.

article on 'The Peasant Question' reproduced in the *Selected Correspondence of Marx and Engels*, pp. 526-7; Marx's letter to Engels of August 16th, 1856; Marx, *Critique of the Gotha Programme*, pp. 16-8; and so on.

What Stalin means by his statement is clear enough, but what Dr. Miller believes he means by it is not nearly as clear. If one extrapolates from the two previous 'stages' identified by Dr. Miller, and then reflects upon her use of the phrase 'more than class-consciousness' to describe the phenomenon to which Stalin is allegedly referring, one is led to the conclusion that she believes Stalin to be contending that the class struggle in capitalist society has now assumed a form very different from that described by Marx and Engels in the *Communist Manifesto*. But it is not at all clear from Dr. Miller's comments *who* is supposed to be 'more than class-conscious', and what, precisely, this implies. If Dr. Miller is referring to the phenomenon (frequently noted by Marx and Engels²⁷) of 'bourgeois respectability' among the working classes, it would seem more accurate to describe this as a *less* than class-consciousness rather than a more than class-consciousness. If she is referring to phenomena such as the institution by the bourgeoisie of the 'welfare state' and of various 'planning measures', it would surely be difficult (especially since the Varga discussion²⁸) to find any warrant in recent Soviet thought for the opinion that such actions of the bourgeoisie are motivated by a 'more than class-consciousness'. And if (as her curious reference to Professor Carr's work might perhaps appear to indicate) she is referring to the fact that the bourgeoisie are often hesitant about overthrowing the feudal order because they are aware that their action is likely to prove merely the prelude to their own overthrow by the proletariat,²⁹ she cannot at the same time assert that 'there is not much evidence that Marx noted it himself'.³⁰ However, these speculations concerning Dr. Miller's meaning are a little academic, since there is really nothing at all in Stalin's observations on linguistics to suggest that his views on the manner in which the class struggle is being carried on have changed (at least in the direction indicated by Dr. Miller) since his exposition of the matter in 'Dialectical and Historical Materialism'.³¹ One may believe, as Dr. Miller apparently does, that a 'more than class-consciousness' is now 'one of the most important political factors' in certain capitalist societies — although it would be difficult, I think, to

²⁷ See, e.g., *S.W.M.*, p. 415, and *Selected Correspondence* of Marx and Engels, p. 461. Cf. Stalin, *The National Question and Leninism*, p. 14.

²⁸ Cf. *Soviet Studies*, vol. I, no. 1, p. 28ff.

²⁹ Dr. Miller's reference is to *The Bolshevik Revolution*, vol. I, p. 42. In the passage referred to Professor Carr discusses what he believes to be a significant cause of the hesitancy of the Russian bourgeoisie in 1905. 'They were always conscious', he writes 'of the growing menace to themselves of an eventual proletarian revolution . . . The Marxist scheme of revolution required the bourgeoisie to overthrow the feudal order as a prelude to its own overthrow by the proletariat. The weakness of this scheme was that, once it had penetrated the bourgeois consciousness, it could no longer be carried out.' But it is difficult to believe that it was this type of 'more than class-consciousness' which Dr. Miller had in mind when she ascribed to Stalin the statement that 'the classes concerned prefer to maintain their society rather than pursue their contentions blindly into a common ruin'. Professor Carr's bourgeoisie do not anticipate a common ruin at all. They anticipate merely their *own* eventual ruin, and for this reason are hesitant about hastening it by overthrowing the feudal order.

³⁰ Engels' articles on *Germany: Revolution and Counter-Revolution* (written in close collaboration with Marx) are virtually a series of essays on this very theme.

³¹ *History of the CPSU(B)*, p. 111. Cf. his statement, *C.M.L.*, p. 20, that development by 'leaps' (or 'explosions') 'applies of necessity to a society divided into hostile classes'.

demonstrate that the phenomenon is of sufficient importance in the world as we see it today to call for a revision of the Marxist theory of class struggle. But to seek in Stalin's observations on linguistics for authority for this belief is surely nothing more than an example of wishful thinking.

4. Two points may be made in conclusion:

(i) The lesson which Dr. Miller draws from the interpretations discussed above is that Stalinist and Soviet thought have adopted 'a more flexible approach than Marx's own to the problem of sociological causality and process'.³² This 'more flexible' approach is associated with what Dr. Miller calls Stalin's movement 'away from the comparatively mechanico-determinist view of classical Marxism'. Dr. Miller therefore suggests that 'some small identity of a conclusion' may now have been established between the Marxist and non-Marxist streams of thought, and that 'a new and more fruitful period in their interaction' may be 'forming under our eyes'. This familiar conclusion rests largely on the interpretations which I have discussed above, and therefore does not require to be separately considered.

(ii) Although I have criticized Dr. Miller for reading into Stalin's observations on linguistics certain meanings which are not actually there, I do not of course deny either (*a*) that Marxists in the Soviet Union may be able to attain to a more complete understanding of some of Stalin's comments than Marxists in the West, or (*b*) that Stalin used this occasion to make a number of significant contributions to the 'general treasury of Marxism'. I do deny, however, that either of these considerations operates in the case of the particular passages which Dr. Miller has selected for interpretation.

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³² It might be more plausibly suggested that the advantage of superior 'flexibility' actually lies with Marx, for reasons connected with the historical circumstances in which the USSR has grown up.