

The Communist As Bogey-Man

The Moulding of Communists: The Training of the Communist Cadre by Frank S. Meyer. Harcourt, Brace, and World, New York, 1967. Paper. Originally published in hard cover in 1961.

By Murray N. Rothbard

Frank S. Meyer is by far the most intelligent, as well as the most libertarian-inclined, of the National Review stable of editors and staff. Of all the National Review editors and contributors, for example, Meyer is the only one to lend his name to the recently organized Council for a Volunteer Military, which calls for abolition of the draft (and even though Meyer is not unequivocally against the draft for all times and places.) But, tragically, Meyer is also, of the war-mongering crew of intellectuals on the Right, perhaps the most frankly and apocalyptically war-mongering of them all (with the possible exception of L. Brent Bozell.) Meyer's libertarian inclinations are fatally warped by his all-consuming desire to incarcerate and incinerate all Communists, wherever they may be. Meyer is, therefore, an interesting example in microcosm of the swamping of any libertarian instincts on the current Right-wing by an all-pervading passion for the Great Crusade to exterminate Communists everywhere.

Meyer is also a microcosm of the Right in that he is a former leading member of the Communist Party of the United States--a fact clearly related to his passion for destroying his former comrades. In fact, Meyer was one of the highest ranking members of the C. P., having been a party member for over a decade, a member of the national

committee of the CPUSA, and head of the Workers' School, the Communist training school in Chicago second in rank only to the famous Jefferson School in New York. While not as publicly well known as such defectors from the Communist Party as Louis Budenz, Meyer apparently out-ranked them all in the Communist cadre. During the Smith Act and other similar trials, Meyer appeared as expert witness for the prosecution on Communist theory; and this book was the fruit of his experience as organizer and a leading member of the "Communist cadre." When the book appeared, in 1961, it was uniformly lauded in the scholarly journals, where the reviewers buried their hostility to conservatism in the interests of the common anti-Communist cause, while the left-wing journals ignored the book altogether. It is very possible, therefore, that this is the first unfavorable review of the Meyer book--now reissued unaltered in paper-back--to see publication.

Americans were bombarded, throughout the nineteenth century, by "confessional" literature --by tracts and volumes by defectors and renegades from various groups and causes--purporting to expose and decry the all-pervading sins and horrors of their former colleagues. The land abounded with tracts carrying such titles as: "I Fled From a Nunnery"; "The International Catholic Conspiracy Exposed!" "The Horrible Secrets of Freemasonry", etc. Americans, one would suppose, had learned to take this literature with a liberal dose of salt, and had learned not to take these fulminations very seriously. The problem with this literature is not simply the outright lies and fabrications; the problem is the deeper one of a total loss of perspective that leads the defector, in guilt at his former actions as well as resentment against his former colleagues for not seeing the light, to blow up unpleasant incidents into a uniquely diabolic movement that needs to be exposed, reviled, and universally condemned.

Let us take, for example, the hypothetical case of a man who spends a decade or two of his life as an active and leading battler for some cause--say, vegetarianism. Then, after this length of time, he becomes converted to an opposite position: say, to be extreme, that vegetables are a positive evil and that one should eat virtually nothing but meat. Think of the enormous weight of guilt that this man now feels; a decade or more of the best years of his life, he now believes, had been spent in promoting what he now believes to be a great and monstrous evil, and in undermining what he now believes to be a positive good.

Is it any wonder that he tends to go off half-cocked on the problem, denouncing both his former beliefs and the purveyors of them as the ultimate evil, attacking the "international vegetarian conspiracy" which must either be destroyed or it will conquer the innocent meat-eating and meat-needing world? It would take much greater fortitude, of course, for our ex-vegetarian to say: "well, vegetarianism is relatively unimportant, and those decades were really a big waste of time" and then to forget about the whole affair. It is, instead, the easier course to do the opposite and thus to justify still, if not the goals of one's lost decades, then at least the overriding importance of those years.

Generations of experience, then, with this kind of confessional literature had supposedly toughened Americans against taking it too seriously; but all this experience went by the board with the advent of the Cold War. Every lurid "I Was A Communist" horror tale was rushed into print to a national acclaim that would have done credit to the reception of a book "exposing" the "international" Jesuit order in the Georgia backcountry of forty years ago. Being an intellectual, Meyer did not publish the usual ex-Communist flim-flam of personal memoirs and denunciations; instead, he was the only ex-Communist to build out of his experience a general theory of the Communist training of their hard-core members: of the forging of "Bolshevik man." But while very different in content from the usual ex-Communist confessional, critical analysis reveals the Meyer work to be suffering from the same basic stigmata: the blowing up of events and actions common to many groups into a monstrous and diabolic pattern of actions unique to the group from which the author had traveled. Specifically, Meyer points with horror to a pattern of action of the Communist cadre which is, in actuality, common to almost all modern organizations. His uniquely diabolic and re-moulded Bolshevik Men turn out to be, on further inspection, simply Organization Men, with the sins of all Organization Men everywhere.

The central thesis of the Meyer book, then, is the unique diabolism of the Communist movement and of the Communist cadre as persons. We read time and again of the "profoundly different character of Communist consciousness---different from anything with which we are acquainted" (4); "for the Communist is different. He thinks differently. Reality looks different to him." (4) The personality of the Communist, says Meyer, is totally transformed, transformed by the "training process that moulds the Communist cadre."

He becomes a new man--a "Bolshevik"--and this new type is the same throughout the world Communist movement, regardless of the country involved. (This transcendence of any national or cultural boundaries is important for Meyer to establish, else he would have to admit that not all Communists are uniquely diabolic "Bolshevik" types.) As a result of this training, he declares, "they acquire a strength and confidence which, like the fearful evil they bring into being, can only be described as Luciferian." (71) "Luciferian" is indeed the operative word, for the thesis of Meyer's book is the radical difference between Communists and all other men, a difference that makes them non-human, that makes them in effect agents of the Devil--all-cunning, almost always successful in the pursuit of their evil ends--and against whom force and violence are called upon by Meyer to extirpate root and branch: "Against this vision of . . . Communist man, there is no recourse in compromise, reasonableness, peaceful co-existence . . . Communist man poses two stark alternatives for us: victory or defeat" (171)---kill or be killed, except, of course that modern weapons are such that both are likely to occur together--a highly important fact that Meyer somehow neglects to mention.

What, then, of Meyer's central contention of a uniquely Satanic Communist organization and training? The big problem is that all of the characteristics he mentions can be found in almost any organization of dedicated men, regardless of what that dedication happens to be. Thus, the major feature of the "Bolshevik" is his absolute dedication and loyalty to the decisions of the Communist Party, a Party which takes on the right to run the lives of its members for its own benefit. And yet, this phenomenon unfortunately exists in all sorts of organizations. Much of this process occurs, for example, in the typical corporate Organization Man of our time. Take, for example, the rising young junior or middle-rank executive at GM or IBM. He begins as an ordinary quasi-independent human being, an individual. Then, as he works and rises up the ranks of the IBM "cadre", his values and therefore his personality begin to be moulded, to be transformed into the typical Organization Man. He begins to believe that his own personal tastes and values and pursuits must be subordinated to an over-arching "loyalty to the company." An eccentric hobby is given up as too outré for the company "image"; any tendency to obesity is reprimanded and stamped out by his friendly company bosses; even the choice of a wife is thoroughly checked and corrected by the criterion of whether or not she fits into the company

executive mould. Yet Mr. Meyer seems to believe that only the Communist Party has presumed to dictate the private lives of its members!

This phenomenon of re-moulding and the reducing of the member of an organization to a "loyal" cipher is particularly marked in organizations that Meyer undoubtedly admires: the CIA, Army Intelligence, or the FBI. Meyer expresses shock that the Communist, through processes of training, holds the good of the Party above the good of his family, his friends, his private life, or even himself. But what of the "good CIA man"? Is he not taught the same thing and moulded in the same way? Is he not taught to lie, to cheat, even to kill, if the "interests of his country"--as interpreted of course by his government bosses--so demand? Isn't he taught to disregard the interests of himself or his family, if they conflict with these "larger" interests? Is he not taught to keep secrets from his own family, to lie to them for his "country's sake?" How does all this differ from Meyer's picture of the cadre Communist? At one or two points, Meyer comes close to this truth by describing the Communist as a kind of soldier in the ranks; granted, but what then of all the other soldiers of this world? What of the American soldier? If Meyer should reply that the ends of the two are different, then this would concede the destruction of the central thesis of his book, for it is not his end (socialism) but his means and his personality and his type of organization that make him, for Frank Meyer, "Luciferian." It is the latter--the Communist's means and organization--that is supposed to make peaceful coexistence with him impossible. For if socialist goals were the distinctively Luciferian feature, then whole hordes of people--including Norman Thomas and Sidney Hook and perhaps even Walter Reuther and the ADA would, according to Meyer, have to be exterminated.

If, then, the Communist is taught that his end--the good of the Party as a whole--justifies any means to attain it, and this is his Luciferian quality--then so is taught the American or British or German soldier, so is the intelligence officer---and so, after all, is every politician. For are we not told, again and again, that the State and its politicians (regardless of what State or what party they belong to) cannot be bound by the ordinary rules of individual and social morality? Are we not told, again and again, that overriding "reasons of State" compel them to lie, cheat, kill, for the sake of the "national interest"? Every State, every government, every politician, follows such a path; how then does this differ from the Communist?

The objection might be raised: If we say that Communists are not uniquely monsters, how can they bring themselves to justify such brutalities as Soviet slave labor camps, as the suppression of the Hungarian Revolution, etc? Don't such justifications make the Communists diabolic and especially inhuman--as Meyer claims, and as he bolsters his claim with his and Whittaker Chambers' depictions of the "crises" faced by Communists as they wrestle with the problem of the "screams in the night"--of those butchered by the Soviet and other Communist governments.

Well, let us investigate this "screams in the night" problem. Here again, it will become clear that such justification by Communists is not only not unique, but is unfortunately almost universal, and is engaged in by the supporters of all States, everywhere and at all times. For example, Harry S. Truman and his cohorts deliberately and wantonly annihilated hundreds of thousands of innocent Japanese civilians, including women and children, in A-bomb blasts at Hiroshima and Nagasaki. How many Americans have listened to their screams in the night? Have Meyer or Chambers? How many Americans have failed to "justify" --in the name of the "national interest" or whatever-- this monstrous act? How many "cadre Americans"---either in the government or out---jumped off the American-State bandwagon, because of this act? How many have even expressed remorse or indignation? And the same can be said of countless American actions, including the bombing of hundreds of thousands of German refugees at Dresden, the sending of hundreds of thousands of refugees back to the Soviet zone of Germany, etc. and down to the current genocidal napalming of the innocent peasantry of South and North Vietnam. Justifications, rationalizations, for butchery and mass murder have been served up by every State and cheerfully adopted by the overwhelming majority of their citizens. One amusingly ironic example from U. S. annals: the U. S. went to war against Spain in 1898 ostensibly to free the Cuban people from the activities of such as "Butcher Weyler", the Spanish general who inaugurated the "modern" policy of concentration camps for the native civilian population. Yet, a short time later, and in direct consequence of our conquest of the Philippines in the self-same war, the American Army used the exact same tactics--to which were added the burning of native villages, along with all of their inhabitants--against the Filipinos who were fighting for their independence against our occupying forces. Who in America remonstrated? Who jumped off the cadre-American bandwagon?

Apart from its concerted problems, the Russian suppression of the Hungarian Revolution needed no special justification by Communists; for every State in history, with no exception, has ruthlessly fought to suppress every revolution against its rule. The U. S. Army ruthlessly suppressed rioters and rebels a few years ago in the U. S. colony of Okinawa. On a larger scale, the British, in their ruthless war of suppression against Malayan revolutionaries fighting for their independence, razed and burned whole villages to the ground, using the very principle of "collective guilt" for which Americans and British had self-righteously denounced the Nazis at Lidice. Who protested in the West? Did Frank Meyer? On the contrary: for Meyer himself has an enormous number of anti-Communist-created "screams in the night" to account for and justify before the bar of morality. Meyer, for example, along with his fellow editors of National Review, supported the French war to suppress the Algerian national revolution, a war in which the French used every barbarism of which the Soviet government can be accused: collective guilt, mass slaughter, torture of prisoners, etc. And yet, Meyer, and his fellow "anti-Bolshevik men", in the name of "anti-Communism" and "Western civilization", wholeheartedly supported these and numerous similar actions--capped by the monstrous war in Vietnam. Do not Meyer and his fellow anti-Bolsheviks have at least as many screams in the night to justify and alibi for, as have the Bolshevik men? In fact, they may end with infinitely more: for Meyer and his confreres look forward almost with enthusiasm to a nuclear holocaust against the Communist nations that would annihilate tens, if not hundreds, of millions of human beings. The devastation and suffering caused by nuclear war would bring about so many more "screams in the night" than Communism has ever done as to defy comparison. So are Communists then, unique monsters, unique justifiers of criminality?

If, then, Communist cadres are dehumanized, or brutalized, by their fealty to their organization, or by their justifications of its actions, the same is true--even more so--for other groups and especially other States: for the soldier who is deliberately brutalized by his training to kill unquestioningly at the command of his officers; for the especially brutalized paratroopers; for CIA men and espionage agents, etc. "The "anti-Bolshevik" man and his organizations can be--and are--just as brutal, just as inhuman, as the Communist, if not more so. Indeed, if we compare the enormous number of defections from

the Communist party with the negligible number of defections from the CIA or from the American State, then we can conclude that the training and transformation of the Communist is much less effective than the training and moulding of the anti-Communist patriot. And this is especially true if we consider something which Meyer, in his portrayal of the monolithic world Bolshevik, does not even hint at: the astonishingly rapid breaking up, since the death of Stalin, of the International Communist "monolith", both within and between countries. Where has been the equivalent disintegration and "polycentrism" of the anti-Bolshevik or the American-State cadre?

Apart from political and governmental organizations, other examples of dedication, of absolute organizational loyalty, abound in our society. Innumerable ideological movements, and religious movements, dictate to the lives of their members. The monk or nun must subordinate himself completely to ecclesiastical discipline--which is interpreted as defining the will of God. The Jesuit pledges willingness to obey the Pope in all things whatsoever, to submerge his individuality completely in the Jesuit Order as commanded by the Pope. ~~The priest was obedience.~~ The lives of the Buchmanites--the Moral Rearmament movement--are run totally by the movement itself, to which absolute fealty is pledged. The attitude of the Buchmanite is just as "totalitarian" over its members, just as "moulding" of the new man, as the Communist. An acquaintance of mine, who had been born into the 'cadre' of the Buchmanite Movement, was ordered by her superiors not to go to college, because they decided that she wasn't fit for the move.

Some of the allegedly unique characteristics of the Communist and his "moulding" are not only reflected in numerous large and small organizations, and in all governments, but also in almost any profession. Thus, Meyer describes how the beginning Communist, first revolted at certain aspects of his work, gradually becomes "steel-hardened" to his work and gives up his former scruples. This is supposed to show the unique diabolism of Communist training. But isn't this true of many quite ordinary and undiabolic professions? Doesn't the surgeon, the nurse, first squeamish about the grisly details of their professions, eventually become a "Bolshevik man of steel" about them? Doesn't the worker in a slaughterhouse follow the same "path of training"?

Throughout the book, Meyer describes in awed, portentous, almost breathless fashion situations which are ordinary, even commonplace, rather than diabolically unique to the Communist movement. One particularly absurd--almost unconsciously humorous--passage deals with Communists finding that they don't make close friendships outside the Party. "Communists . . . seem to find their really enjoyable recreation in informal, relaxed Party talk: talking shop, post-mortem, anecdotes, reminiscences, semi-theoretical argument, Party gossip. The drying up of personal connections of depth with the outside world is compensated to a considerable degree by the comradeship that undoubtedly exists in the Party, born of common association . . ." (129). Now Good Heavens! Has Meyer never heard of friendships being formed on the basis of deeply-shared interests? Has he never heard, for example, that musicians, dedicated to music, tend to associate largely with other musicians? Writers with other writers? And don't libertarians tend to form their deepest friendships with other libertarians (if they can be found?) Doesn't Meyer himself largely associate with anti-Communists of the National Review variety? This is all very natural and very common, and there is nothing sinister about it. And yet, as in so many cases throughout the book, Meyer once more treats a common event as the uniquely sinister product or aspect of the "Communist conspiracy".

Another typical piece of diabolism is Meyer's discussion of how the C. P. recruits new members. Each man is carefully screened, his strengths and weaknesses assessed, his susceptibilities played on, etc. His personal friend will be the one to ask him to join, and after he joins he will be greeted in comradely-fashion by other Party members. Again, Good Heavens! Consider any group in our society, whether it be a corporation considering hiring an executive, the President selecting someone for a White House appointment, or your local lodge or Kiwanis inviting a member to join. Will he not be screened and considered? Won't his friend be the one to invite him? Won't he then be greeted cordially by his fellow-members? In short, the supposedly sinister tactics of the C. P. are tactics used by almost any group, from government down to the local sewing circle, in treating potential or actual new members or "recruits". What's sinister about that?

Then again, we find that the C. P. particularly hates "renegades", those who have defected from the Party, and whom it suspects will be uniquely anti-Party. But here again, this phenomenon is true of any creed, any organization. Suppose again that a man is a vegetarian,

part of a weak or a strong vegetarian movement. He does not hate a man who has never become interested in the vegetarian movement: that man is, to the vegetarian, simply ignorant, not yet apprised of the vegetarian truth, not yet raised to "vegetarian consciousness". But let a man join the vegetarian movement, rise high in it, and then desert its ranks and become anti-vegetarian, and hatred for this renegade--the man who has seen the truth and then spurned it--will almost inevitably well up in the ranks of the faithful. This again--while perhaps deplorable--is one of the most natural phenomena in the world. It is present in the Catholic Church, which has hope for the pagan but scorn for the apostate, it is present in every ideological or any other type of movement, it is present in the minds of General Motors men when one of their rank moves to Ford, it is present, even (as the work of Caplow and McGee, The Academic Marketplace, attests) in faculty members of "Siwash College" when one of their colleagues leaves for a job at any other college. His former colleagues somehow feel that he has betrayed them, has betrayed Siwash, and usually have little further to do with him. Again, Communists are simply acting like any other Organization Men or any other ideologists.

Meyer also considers unique and somehow sinister that the Communist, while fighting hard for his point of view within the Party, will stick with the Party and fight for its decision, even when it has decided contrary to his own views. But, once again, this attitude is true of all Organization Men, regardless of the organization. The loyal Democratic Party man remains with his party if his candidate or point of view loses in the primary or in party councils; he works hard for the winning candidate, and then, as cadre Communists are supposed to do, "bides his time" to see if he can make his views prevail later. The government bureaucrat does the same thing in inter-bureaucratic struggles; the general when he argues for his point of view in the General Staff; the corporation executive who wishes to pursue a new policy, etc. This attitude might not always be commendable, but it is hardly sinister or unique to Communists--again, it is almost universal.

We have seen that time and again, ^{Meyer} imputes sinister attributes unique to Communism, to aspects that are common to many, or even all, organizations, ideologies, or dedicated people. But his error goes deeper than this, for in some cases, he attributes the sinister to qualities that we should consider virtuous or even admirable. For

example, Meyer describes with some horror that the Communist tries to control his subconscious mind by his conscious, tries to mold his emotions to serve his reason. What in the world is wrong with that? On the contrary, such control, such rationalism, is admirable. That men should be more rational, and have complete mastery over themselves, is an ideal to be sought, and not something to be regarded as a sinister device of "Bolshevik Man".

Similarly, Meyer makes a big to-do of the Communist principle of the "unity of theory and practice", which he claims to be mystical, unique, etc. Yet, on his own evidence, what is this mysterious 'unity of theory and practice'? It is simply the desire to avoid two polar errors: the fashioning of theory which will be arid, sterile, and unrelated to human life; and the acting in day-to-day practice without having that practice guided and moulded by theoretical principles. Again, far from being something sinister, this is a highly admirable doctrine. And it can be applied to any theory which one wants to advance, whether Communist, libertarian, or vegetarian. Thus, again, the cause of vegetarianism is being hampered if vegetarians only study and develop vegetarian theory, with no attempt to agitate for vegetarianism in practice, to recruit new vegetarians, etc. Conversely, the cause of vegetarianism will suffer if vegetarians only act and never study, refine, or advance their theoretical principles--they will inevitably end by betraying or abandoning their own goals. Communists try to avoid this, as any sensible movement should; the difference only is that Communists have thought longer and harder about such problems than most other groups.

In trying to attach a unique, and sinister, quality to the Communists' "unity of theory and practice", Meyer reaches the heights of absurdity by pointing out that Lenin, Stalin, etc. wrote no systematic work, but that their main theoretical writings (Marx even included--except for Das Kapital) were not systematic theory, but intertwined in daily polemical struggles. Meyer says that "Marxism-Leninism has no Summa, no Institutes, etc." Once again, Good Heavens! Doesn't Meyer know that the same was true of the Christian Fathers? St. Augustine, the greatest of the Fathers, wrote no Summa, no theoretical work either; all of his theoretical doctrines were intertwined in polemical and daily struggles (in his organizational work as Bishop of Hippo, in his polemics against heretics, etc.) The same was true of the other Church fathers. It took a thousand years of developing Christian speculation and theology before St. Thomas and others began to write

their Summas. The Communists have not had a thousand years.

Another admirable virtue which Communists apparently possess and which Frank attacks them for, is that they are taught to have an attitude, a position, on all political events, regardless of where they take place on the globe. They are, in short, taught to think responsibly in politics. What, again, is wrong with that? This is the highest form of political thought: to concern oneself, and to formulate a position, on all important and relevant political events of one's time, and even on events in past ages.

This error of Meyer's is bound up in his deprecation of Communists for trying to integrate all their thought, all their views on the humane and even natural sciences, into one great philosophic system. This aim, far from being sinister or diabolic, can only be considered wholly admirable, and in the best tradition of reason and science. To carve out an architectonic, a system which enables one to hold a consistent and integrated view of all the disciplines of man is a great and noble aim, and a rationalist individualist philosophy can also accomplish this goal. Clearly, it is the goal of science to be able to explain more and more phenomena. What's wrong about the Marxists, contrary to Meyer, is not their aim of an integrated systematic approach to philosophy and its allied subjects, but the fact that this particular system is almost totally wrong. Yet, instead of rejecting the Marxian system only, Meyer attacks system per se. One instance Meyer gives of this is that the Marxist-Leninist considers himself able to instruct the physicist, for example, in the basic philosophic errors of the Principle of Indeterminacy or Uncertainty. Meyer treats this aim as ludicrous, but, on the contrary, the Marxist-Leninist would be right. The principle of indeterminacy is philosophically incorrect (though not necessarily for Marxist-Leninist reasons), and general philosophers are entitled to criticize it. Similarly, aesthetic philosophers are entitled to criticize modern art even though they are not at all artists. This aim of Marxism is simply the old Greek rationalist aim to make philosophy once more the queen of the sciences and of the intellectual disciplines.

Similarly, Meyer considers it sinister that the Communists want to purge their judgments of all "subjectivity" and to render them "objective". What in the world is wrong with that? This has been the aim of every rationalist in the history of the world; the rationalist tries to be scientific

and objective about arriving at truth, to rise above his own emotions and biases. This has been generally considered a noble aim, yet Meyer implies it to be vicious and Bolshevik. Objectivity in searching for truth is indeed to be sought, and "subjectivity" spurned; where the Communists go wrong is to identify truth and objectivity not with their own careful judgment of the matter, but in other persons: in the Party. This--the identifying of reason and reality with a specific group of people--is their cardinal error, and not their attempts to be objective and rational.

The injunction of objectivity is also used, in the Communist movement, to assure that one's views on events are guided by rational rather than emotive considerations--a highly commendable position surely. Thus, a man whom I have known for many years, and who professes to be an ardent libertarian, expressed a few years ago his hope that the Freedom Riders be jailed; here is an example, for a libertarian, of non-objective thinking--of allowing his emotional dislike for left-wing Freedom Riders to swamp his libertarian principles. This problem is therefore hardly uniquely Communist, nor is the Communist striving for keeping objective principles in mind anything but commendable (though the content of those principles, of course, is a different matter.)

Again, Meyer considers it rather sinister that Communists are highly concerned with "correct formulation" of position, and are concerned to oppose any "deviations" from this formulation. As he points out, the Communists do this because they realize that "ideas are weapons", and that a slight deviation from fundamental premisses can mean large divergence from final conclusions. But this realization is not sinister, but simply an indication that Communists are serious about ideas, and realize the critical role that ideas play in public affairs--materialists though they may be. Of course, Communists may tend humorlessly to push this concern with correct formulaton to extremes--but probably less than did the innumerable Christian arguments about shadings of meanings of a Greek word, etc. that led to countless heresies, schisms, and even religious wars. Once again, the Communists are neither unique nor necessarily to be condemned for being precise and serious about their ideas.

Another presumably sinister attribute of the Communist is quoted by Meyer: "The basic principle of modern Soviet didactics is the principle of conscious understanding . . . The Bolshevik insists on man's responsi-

bility for his behavior and on his ability to make his own destiny". (189), Again, what could be more admirable than a striving for consciousness, for rationalism, and for self-responsibility? What could be more individualist, in fact? Of course, the Communist errs when "He follows the Party line because the Party is right" and because he presumably understands why it is right", but at least we can commend the Communist for trying to understand rationally why the Party is "right" rather than merely accept orders for the sake of accepting. This puts the Communist far ahead, say, of the soldier--in the American or any other army--who is told to obey orders unquestioningly. Surely, that is a far more brutalizing and dehumanizing way of conducting an organization than is the Communist.

Meyer plunges once more into unconscious humor when, again with portentousness and awe, he describes the Communist as not being emotionally indignant against his enemies but being cool and sober. (73 f.) Meyer admits that, in public agitational speaking, the Communist will work himself into emotional indignation, but that "in private conversation", his attitude, the attitude of the "developed Communist", is "highly sober". Now, again, really! Surely what Meyer is describing is not sinister Machiavellianism but simple maturity! The libertarian, for example, hates the State, particularly the Leviathan State of today. But he does not, if he is mature and sensible, go around frothing at the mouth; his attitude of indignation at the State is so deep-seated that he can afford to be, and will be, sober, cool, even humorous at times, about the whole problem. Again, this is simple maturity, not Communist machination, and does not connote a "new type of man" or "psychosurgery" or anything of the sort.

To turn now from instances where Meyer is attacking Communists for their virtues (responsibility, sobriety, rationalism, etc.) to other instances where he is attacking them for supposedly unique faults which are actually widespread: Meyer speaks, again portentously, of the prevalence of the "our" "they" dichotomy in Communist thinking and conversation. This is supposed to symbolize the depth of Communist alienation from all other people. But again, Good Heavens! This, again, is true of any ideological movement, regardless of what it is. The followers constitute "us" or "our side"; the antagonists "them" and the "other side". How often do libertarians or conservatives, for example, ask: "Which side is he on?" "Has he come over to our side?", etc. I am sure

that the vegetarian, or the anti-flouridationist, or whatever, holds the same attitudes.

Again, Meyer thinks it strange and somehow diabolic that the Communist divides himself into the cadre and the rank-and-file, who serve as transmission belts for the cadre. Much is made, throughout the book, of this cadre vs. rank-and-file distinction as one of the essential facts of the "moulded" Communist man. But, once again, the distinction between cadre and rank-and-file is true of any organization, ideological or non-ideological. The local Kiwanis club will have inactive, passive rank-and-file members; and it will have a "hard core" -- a cadre -- of active leaders, who will be a minority in relation to the rank-and-file, but who will effectively "run" the rank and file and take the leadership in the organization. This is almost a sociological law of all organization, and not unique with Communists. Whatever the organization or profession, whether it be lodge meeting, Democratic Party, or General Motors, there will be a minority of the more interested and/or more able who will be the cadre leaders to a majority of passive, less able and/or less interested rank-and-file. Again, there is nothing particularly sinister here.

Another instance of absurdity in the book is Meyer's statement that in Marxist party-training schools, economics is called "political economy" (167). Now, put baldly like this, the reader once more sees another sinister aspect of Communism: for here Communists twist economics and make it political: "political economy". Another weight in the scales of supposed evidence of Communist diabolism has been made. But Meyer does not inform the reader that the explanation for this is very simple, and non-sinister. The reason is that the Communists follow the economics of Karl Marx, and Marx wrote at a time when all economics was called "political economy." Hence, the Communists still cleave to the name--just as do the clearly non-sinister Henry Georgists, and for similar reasons. The term "economics" only came in toward the end of the 19th century.

Another favorite indictment of the Communists, and one used by Frank Meyer throughout this book, to demonstrate their unique diabolism, is that Communism is a "conspiracy." How often have we read of the "international Communist conspiracy"! Other socialists are not bad, the cry runs, because they are not "conspirators", whereas Communists

are. Communists, say Meyer and others, are trained to deceive, they cooperate in secret, etc.

Let us, in the first place, analyze this much-used term "conspiracy". What does it mean? It was introduced into the common law by panicky kings who wanted to stamp out all dissidence and opposition and who called their opposition "conspirators". The law of conspiracy is, as a result, in very bad shape, for it outlaws A and B agreeing to do things together which are perfectly legal for them to do separately. In actuality, "conspiring" is just a "smear" term for doing something in secret and in private. If A and B agree to push C for nomination in the local lodge meeting, and you and I are against C, we can denounce A and B as engaging in "conspiracy". In other words, if you and I agree to do something, it is simple and justifiable private agreement; if other people, whom we dislike, agree to do something, this becomes ipso facto "conspiracy". Let us abandon this loaded term, "conspiracy", and refer to agreements made in private or in secret.

What, then, is wrong with private or secret agreements or actions? (The ends might be bad--such as agreeing to rob a bank--but this is not the fault of the secrecy, but of the end involved. An open, public agreement to rob a bank would be morally just as bad. But we have agreed to prescind from the ends in view--in the case of the Communists it is socialism--and simply consider the means, the form employed by them: in this case, "conspiracy".) There is surely nothing wrong with them; one of the most precious rights of an individual in a free society is privacy, and this includes the right to make private agreements with others, to form secret societies, etc. Attack on privacy and secrecy is an expression of massification and collectivist spirit at its worst and most meddlesome. Yet this spirit has always seen something sinister and diabolic in the secrecy of others: one of the most important political parties in American history was the "Anti-Masonic Party", dedicated to the coercive extermination by the State of the "international Masonic conspiracy"; the Catholic Church and its rites have been denounced as secret and conspiratorial; so have the Knights of Columbus, etc.

Furthermore, what about those "dedicated anti-Communists", the FBI, the CIA, the Army Intelligence, etc.? Are they not trained exclusively in secrecy, and in deception? Do not our espionage agents live by secrecy and

double-dealing? What of their humanity, and their moral principles?

Furthermore, the Communist Party, believe it or not, is far less secretive than, not only the CIA, but also ~~such~~ approved groups as the Masons or the Knights of Columbus. For the Communists openly publish their views, proclaim their ends, etc. If they are secretive, they are far less so than innumerable secret societies which are considered perfectly appropriate to American life and whom Frank Meyer would not think of denouncing--but which, on his own terms, he should.

Finally, there is good reason for secretiveness in the Communist movement. That is, that a good portion of the time, Communists are either outlawed or in a state of semi-outlawry, harassed by government officials and espionage agents. Certainly, with the Smith and McCarran Acts, etc. this has been true in the United States. Much of the need for secrecy is imposed upon it from outside.

Moreover, all organizations are secretive to some extent: (in the jargon of "hard anti-Communism", they are all partly "open" and partly "underground"). The Americans for Democratic Action issue open resolutions, but they do not bare all their inner deliberations and arguments to public view. And why should they? Neither do Democratic Party leaders bare their deliberations, nor do union leaders, nor do corporation executives. So are they all "conspirators".

Basic to Meyer's analysis of the Communist movement is his view of world Communism as a monolith, with the Politburo of the Soviet Union at its head. Now to the extent that this was true, this was only true during the Stalinist Period of the movement (approximately 1929 to 1948--the date of the defection of Marshal Tito.) Before and after, the Communist movement was never a monolith; disagreements, schisms, etc. were substantive, grave, and open. As early as the 1920's, Mao-tse-tung disobeyed Stalin's advice to coalesce with Chiang-kai-Shek, and took to the hills to form a guerilla army. And since 1948, and especially since 1956, the world Communist movement has clearly been far from a monolith; it is perhaps not coincidental that Meyer's own personal experience in the Party was only in the Stalinist period; but there is still no excuse for him to ignore the last 19 years of extremely important Party history. Tito's split opened up another fissure in the world Communist movement; and, in 1956,

Khrushchev changed the face of the world Communist movement for all time--how? by castigating the errors and and even crimes of Stalin. This attack on Stalin cannot be interpreted as simply another change in "line". For what this meant was that the Communist Party of the Soviet Union was openly repudiating its formerly revered leader--in fact, repudiating its own past actions. This means the open rejection of what Frank Meyer claims is the central tenet of every Communist: that the Party is always right. Now that the Party has acknowledged that it, even its central core, can make grievous mistakes, it is impossible for the CP ever to become a monolith again, for every Communist now knows that the Party can be proved wrong, even in its central leadership.

Meyer maintains that the world Communist movement is a monolith run by the Soviet Politburo, yet we have seen strikingly and increasingly in recent years that this is certainly not the case. That Meyer's statements are pure assertion unbacked by convincing evidence is shown, further, by his failure to cite any sources dealing with the Russian or Asian or other non-European Communist parties. And there is another important point vis a vis "Communist man" that Meyer fails to consider. In countries where the Communist movement is out of power, we can be sure that its members are eager, dedicated ideologues. But in countries where Communism is in power, the situation inevitably changes. For this means that the only way to rise in society, to rise above the level of ditch-digger, is to join the Communist party. It is then inevitable that Communist parties in Communist regimes will become heavily infected with the virus of "careerism", "opportunism", etc., men who will of course spout the slogans, but do so only ritualistically, and who will act increasingly as Russian--or Yugoslavian--or whatnot bureaucrats rather than ideologues. And as time goes on, this process is bound to accelerate. Yet, by omitting this element, Meyer's policy conclusions in relation to Communist countries and their leaders become totally misleading.

We must conclude that Frank Meyer has not in the least established his thesis: that his discussion distorts the picture, and that one cannot concur in the special diabolism of the Communist organization. But if that is true, then the only thing really wrong about the Communists is their end: socialism, and this is an end pursued by a great many other people, people who are far more influential

in the direction of socialism or statism than is the negligible CPUSA.

If the Communist is not uniquely disabolic, then what is he? I think we can pretty well summarize the Communist by saying that he is, in form, structure, and means: an Intellectual Organization Man, and his end is socialism, of the proletarian-Marxian variety. Like all other Organization Men, he is devotedly loyal to his organization, in this case his Party. In the ranking of organizations and their men, it is fair to say that he is more subservient and dehumanized than a General Motors executive, but far less subservient and brutalized than a soldier, a paratrooper, or an agent of the CIA. If he rationalizes and justifies brutality, then so do the members and defenders of every State. He is far more independent than the soldier, paratrooper, or CIA man, as witness the numerous schisms, defections, etc. that have taken place in Communist ranks, as compared to the scarcity of mutinies in the ranks of the armed forces. The Communist has many admirable qualities which other people might well emulate: the striving to be rational and objective, the striving to integrate all of man's knowledge and social philosophy into one great philosophic system, the wish to be serious and responsible, the striving for an ideal which (he believes) will bring about a Paradise on earth for the human race. He has two major errors: one is that the philosophical system that he has adopted, Marxism, is incorrect; and, as a consequence, that his goal of socialism is a grave error. But we have seen that the goal (socialism) must be ruled out of this discussion, because there are a great many socialists, and Communists then become no worse than any of the others. His second error is that he is an Organization Man: that he tends to place the locus of science, or reason, or reality, in other persons: i.e., in the ones who constitute the leadership of his organization. But while this is unfortunate, we have seen that this is a trait which the Communist shares with all too many millions of others today, in innumerable organizations of all types throughout the world. What we see here is not the compulsory bondage of an individual to the State, but the voluntary bondage of an individual to some external Organization. It is, indeed, incumbent on individualists and libertarians to give profound attention to this entire problem; for while we have thought and written a great deal about the State, we have done little to consider the problem of the individual vis a vis organizations.

Since there are Organization Men everywhere, and since the Communists are far better individualists than Army officers, etc., we must conclude that Communists are not uniquely diabolic, that the main thing wrong with them is their end goal; but that this is a goal which they share with much more respectable groups, groups whom few would attack as diabolic.

Finally, it is important to note a disquieting passage or two which indicates that one reason that Meyer is so fiercely opposed to Communism may be that it, in turn, is opposed to the State (or, at least, to the non-Communist State.) Thus, Meyer, in the course of his anti-Communist phillipic, says:

Previously, the policeman on the corner has been for him, as for most Americans or Englishmen, a neutral symbol at the worst, at the best a source of information and ultimate protection against robbers and other malefactors. Now he is transformed into an immediate symbol of danger, an agent of the enemy, the bourgeois state, with whom one's only potential relations are those of warfare. An alienation from the mores of the society is being artificially created. . .

Through theory, through atmosphere, through interpreted experience in demonstration or picket line, the sense of community with the nation is shattered. Very concretely, the idea of a commonwealth within the established commonwealth, and in bitter battle with it, is instilled. (127-128)

Let us note this passage very carefully. For what Meyer is doing is to identify "the society", "the nation", and "the commonwealth" with the State--with the "cop on the corner." Now this is the grievous error that has been made by every writer who has opposed liberty: this identification of the public, of the citizenry, with the State apparatus. It does not salvage Meyer's position to add his wish that the State be "the limited government of a constitutional republic"; the damage is done. (Also, see page 68, where Meyer is opposing the Communist view of the State as pure force--which, of course, is precisely what the State is.) It is unfortunate, but perhaps not astonishing, that Frank Meyer should reveal a deep-rooted and

fundamental statism in his political philosophy; for it is almost impossible to agitate for the State to kill Communists throughout the world without adopting statism at the root of one's social philosophy.