

[Marxism and other western fallacies]

Modern Calamities

THE MODERN CALAMITIES that are leading to the deformation and decline of humanity may be placed under two main headings: 1) Social systems and 2) Intellectual systems.

Within the two outwardly opposed social systems that have embraced the new man, or that invite him into their embrace, what is plainly felt is the tragic way that man, a primary and supra-material essence, has been forgotten.

Both these social systems, capitalism and communism, though they differ in outward configuration, regard man as an economic animal; their differing contours reflect the issue of which of the two will provide more successfully for the needs of this animal.

Economism is the fundamental principle of the philosophy of life in western industrial capitalist society, where, as Francis Bacon put it, “science abandons its search for truth and turns to the search for power.”

The material “needs” that are generated every day and progressively find increase (so that the scope of consumption may be enlarged in quantity, quantity, and variety alike, to feed the vast engines of production as they race on in delirium) transform people into worshippers of consumption. Day by day, heavier burdens are imposed on a frenetic populace, so that modern technological prodigies, who ought to have freed mankind from servitude to manual labor and increased people’s leisure time, cannot do even that much, so rapidly have artificial material needs outpaced the tremendous speed of production technology. Humanity is every day more condemned to alienation, more drowned in this mad maelstrom of compulsive speed. Not only is there no longer leisure for growth in human values, moral greatness, and spiritual aptitudes, but this being plunged headlong in working to consume, consuming to work, this diving into lunatic competition for luxuries and diversions, has caused

traditional moral values to decline and disappear as well.

In communist society, we find a similar downward curve in human moral values. Many intellectuals, contemplating the political and economic contrasts between the communist and capitalist societies, account the former different from the latter from the standpoints of anthropology, philosophy of life, and humanism. But we see clearly that communist societies, although they have attained a relatively advanced stage of economic growth, closely resemble the bourgeois West with respect to social behavior, social psychology, individual outlook, and the philosophy of life and human nature; that what is at issue in communist societies today under the name of Fourierism,¹ embourgeoisement, and even liberalism is nothing other than an orientation to fashion and luxury now prevalent in both individual lives and the system of state production arises from the fact that, practically speaking and in the final

¹ The literal transcription here is “furalism.” We also surmise that the word intended might be “formalism”. (TR.)

analysis, Marxist and capitalist societies present a single kind of man to the marketplace of human history.

Democracy and Western liberalism- whatever sanctity may attach to them in the abstract- are in practice nothing but the free opportunity to display all the more strongly this spirit and to create all the more speedily and roughly an arena for the profit-hungry forces that have been assigned to transform man into an economic, consuming animal.

Thus we have: state capitalism in the name of socialism; governmental dictatorship in the name of “dictatorship of the proletariat”; intellectual tyranny in the name of the one Party; fanaticism of belief in the name of “diamat”;¹ and finally, reliance on the principles of mechanism in the name of quickly attaining “economic abundance in order to pass from socialism to communism”! All are burdens that have befallen humanity In the name of a sacred, free, and creative will and that cast it like a “social artifact” into a most blatant state of the same political and

intellectual alienation that Marx spoke of in relation to bourgeois man.

The second category of modern calamities is that of ideological calamities. (Here we employ the term “ideology” in its broadest possible sense. The various contemporary ideologies, claiming as they do to be based on contemporary science, all negate the concept of man as a primary being; even those that boast of their humanism do so.)

Historicism presents as a single determinative material current that in its course constructs out of the material elements, in accordance with the inexorable laws of the historical process, something called man. Thus, in the final analysis, historicism leads to a materialistic determinism in which man is a passive element.

Biologism, which assigns precedence to the laws of nature, regards man just as it regards an animal, but sees him as the latest link in the chain of evolution; otherwise, it looks upon all human spiritual manifestations and unique qualities as occasioned by man’s physical constitution, like the natural instincts!

Sociologism views man as a vegetable growing in the garden of his social environment, and thus needing the proper climate and soil; it supposes that only as the garden is changed will the human harvest change, and that, as in the preceding case, this process operates according to scientific laws beyond possible human intervention, laws governing man’s actions and even his personality.

If we add to these schools those of materialism and naturalism (which view man as, respectively, a material artifact and an animal), a picture of the ideological calamities in the present age comes to hand.

¹ Diamat: a contraction of “dialectical materialism,” the materialism that is supposed to be “the principles of belief to which education of the young; scientific research, literature and the arts, philosophy, and the scientific outlook must conform.” That is to say, it is a kind religious rule without religion!

In this context, the situation of Marxism is a confused one. Marx in one

of his phases is a materialist, and thus in no position to regard the being man as anything but an element within the confines of the material world. (We find him writing to Engels, after studying the works of Darwin, “I accept this view as the biological basis for my philosophy of history.”)

In another phase, he is an extreme partisan of Sociologism. Thus he grants society its independence vis-à-vis naturalistic and humanistic tendencies and then, by arbitrarily and categorically grouping its elements under the headings of either infrastructure or superstructure (the former representing the mode of material production, and the latter, culture, morals, philosophy, literature, arts, ideology, and so forth), he in effect presents man as equivalent to this superstructure, in that man is nothing more than the sum of these parts. In short, humanity turns out to be the product of the mode of material production. Since Marx also specifies the mode of production as consisting of the tools of production, in the final analysis, the primacy of man in Marxism derives from the primacy of tools; that is, instead of humanism one might speak of “utensilism,” or one might say that mankind is not considered, as in Islam, the progeny of Adam, but rather that of tools!

By annexing “dialectical” to “materialism,” Marx not only withholds from humanity a crown of glory, but also sets up a materialistic determinism over and above the force of historical determinism in man, which, at the level of practical application, amounts to another chain. For this truly leads to the fettering of the human will, the source of man’s primacy in the world, and ultimately plunges humanity into the same pit of fatalism that upholders of superstitious religious teachings (or rather, philosophers and theologians dependent upon the political establishment) dug for it.

The chain is one and the same –its far end now affixed not to the heavens but to the earth. Thus, it is more than a casual slur to refer to this materialism as “fanatical.”

WE SEE THAT THE CALAMITY faced by humanity today is first and

foremost a human calamity. Humanity is a species in decline; it is undergoing a metamorphosis and, just like a pupating butterfly, is in danger because of the success of its own ingenuity and labors.

What is more astounding; throughout history humanity has usually been sacrificed to the idea of its own deliverance. In a kind of historical reversal, it has been the longing for deliverance that has forged the chains of human captivity and, by offering hope of release, led people into the trap!

Religion, both a powerful love and an invitation to perfection and salvation, after issuing from its primal, limpid springs and coursing through history, underwent a change in its flavor and quality; its course came under the control of those very powers that held the crown of history and that had led in the “social era.”

Thus, in China, the school of Lao Tzu at first constituted a summons to deliverance from captivity in an artificial life, a fragmented intellect, and a rude civilization that drew true man into bondage, distorting and tainting primordial human nature, which in reality accords with

the Principal Nature, the Tao. This school of Lao Tzu became in time entangled in the worship of innumerable gods, gods who exploited mankind financially, sapped its intellectual powers, and condemned it to endless fears and obsequies.

Confucius, in order to free the people from the thralldom of those imaginary forces, fought against superstition. He guided the people out of the embrace of senseless fantasies, endless sacrifices, vows, supplications, and debilitating self-mortifications and toward history, society, life and reason. He set forth the principle termed *li*¹ as the intellectual basis for a rational organization of social life. In later times, however, this same fundamental principle was to take the form of immutable customs subject to an unthinking conformity that killed any sort of social transformation. People grew like the animals frozen in the polar ice caps; they fell into quiescence and a state of fanatical

conservation. One sociologist noted, “If we see that the society and civilization of China in the course of twenty-five hundred years has neither fallen into utter decline, nor progressed or experienced upheavals, the cause is the conservative and traditionalist rule of the Confucian mind!”

Indian religion, which had within it a clear knowledge of man coupled with a deep understanding of the unity of God, nature, and man—an understanding that infused spirit into the body of the world and served as a force for sublimating the human spirit—was transformed into a horrifying mass of superstitions, in which people were set upon by swarms of untold gods. These gods stole the last crumb of their hapless worshippers and then proceeded to condemn exponents of deliverance (moksa) and the high Eastern mysticism (vidya) to deadly superstitious austerities and to abject servitude under the official religious establishment.

The Buddha came to deliver the Hindus; he summoned them to freedom from the bondage of worshipping the astral divinities. But his followers became Buddha-worshippers, so much so that today, in Persian, the word bot, derived from “Buddha,” appears in the compound botparasti (“idol-worship”), the common expression for the most serious form of shirk²—that is, idolatry.

The Messiah—the promised Savior—came to deliver humanity from the bonds of materialism and rabbinical ritualism, to free religion from servitude to the merchants and racists of Israel, to establish peace, love and the salvation of the spirit. Thus he wanted to liberate the peoples who were under the spell of the superstitions of the rabbis and Pharisees and condemned to slavery under the crushing imperialism of Rome. But we have seen how Christianity itself succeeded to the throne of the Roman Empire, with the Roman Church perpetuating the imperial order; how scholasticism came to provide the intellectual underpinnings of medieval feudalism, and how it came to murder free thought, free human growth, and free science. We have seen how the “religion of peace” spilled blood more freely than any known to previous history, and how,

whereas man should have become Godlike (that is, spiritually and morally), God became man-like.

¹ This may be an error for I, “morality,” as: “The superior man comprehends righteousness [i: the “oughtness” of a situation] the small man comprehends gain [li: profit]” (Analects of Confucius, 4:16). (TR.) ² Shirk: making something a “partner” with God; setting something along side god as worthy of worship. (Tr.)

Finally we come to Islam, the last link in the development of the historical religions, which arrived under the standard of tauhid¹ and salvation, in order that, in the words of the Muslim soldier, it might summon mankind “from the lowliness of the earth to the heights of the heavens, from servitude to each other to the service of the Lord of the Universe, and from the oppression of the religions to the justice of Islam.”² We know how it was reshaped under the Arab Caliphate, how it became a rationale for the acts of the most savage conquerors, and how in time it became a powerful cultural force, which, in the name of jurisprudence, scholastic theology, and Sufism, cast an aura of religiosity over the feudal order of the saljuqs and Mongols and bound the Muslim people in the chains of predestination. The road to salvation was no longer mapped out through tauhid, pious acts, and knowledge. Instead, it lay either through an inherited tradition of blind conformity, entreaties, vows, and supplications; or else in flight from reality, society, and life into astral worlds, a way characterized by pessimism concerning human history, progress, and the salvation of man in this world, and the repression of all natural human wants and proclivities.

DURING AN AGE in which religion had emerged as a regressive force in relation to scientific and social progress – inhibiting the intellectual, spiritual, and volitional flowering of humanity; giving rise to a mass of formalities, taboos, and superstitions; presiding through its official custodians, headed by the Church and the Pope, over the fate of ideas and nations- the Renaissance (which we will take to be the upsurge of society’s motivating spirit, rather than the rising of the intellectuals), by contrasting the stagnation of the Middle Ages under the rule of the

religious custodians to the Golden Ages of Greece and Rome, issued a call to freedom to its people through nationalism, as against the Latin imperialism of the papacy, and to humanity at large through science, as against the rigid and superstitious Catholic scholasticism.

What were the watchwords of this upsurge? Human freedom from the bonds of the all-compelling will of heaven, release of the intellect from the dominance of religious belief, release of science from scholastic dogma, a turning from heaven to earth to build the paradise that religion had promised for the hereafter, right here on earth!

What exciting slogans! Freedom of the intellect; science to be our guide; paradise on the spot! But what hands were to build this paradise on earth? Those of colonized nations exploited human beings with the assistance of scientific technology.

So we come to science and capital.

Science was freed from subservience to religion only to become subservient to power and at the disposal of the powerful. It was transformed into short-sighted, rigid scientism, which killed the Messiah and became another lackey to Caesar. The machine that was to have been humanity's tool for ruling nature and escaping enslavement to work was transformed into a mechanism that itself enslaved man.

¹Tauhid: the profession of divine unity. (Tr.) ²This celebrated statement was made by a Muslim soldier in the army that conquered Isfahan, addressing himself to the commander of the Persian garrison. (Tr.)

Finally, let us look at the gatekeeper of this paradise: capitalism, but capitalism armed with science and technology- a new magician bewitching humanity into new captivity amid the massive pitiless wheels of mechanism and techno-bureaucracies. And man? An economic animal whose only duty to graze in this paradise. The philosophy of “consume, consume, consume”!

And the watchwords, Liberalism! – That is, apathy. Democracy! – That

is, “Elect those who have already chosen your lot for you.” Life! Material existence. Morals! Opportunism and egoism. The goal! consumption. The philosophy of life! Satiation of the natural appetites. The ultimate aim! A life of leisure and enjoyment. Faith! Ideals! Love! The meaning of existence! The meaning of man! Forget it!

But Adam rebelled, even in this paradise on earth.

MARXISM: the repudiation of capitalism; the repudiation of classes; the repudiation of exploitation, the state, specialization, accumulation of wealth, the ethics of self-seeking- above all, the repudiation of human captivity, that deformation of man’s essential nature in the system of production and social order. How marvelous! A society to be founded not simply upon “to each according to his work,” but upon “to each according to his needs”!

What does this mean? It means the absolute equality of all people! That is, above and beyond each person’s receipt of his due, it promises a society in which each will receive more than what he is owed! A vision! A utopia! No! This time it is not religion speaking of paradise, nor philosophy devising the Virtuous City,¹ nor is it the idealists, the ethical socialist utopians, but rather it is “scientific philosophy” taking on the question.

What hands will construct this ideal society? Well, it is not so much a matter of constructing as of its being constructed- with the discovery of the ineluctable laws of history come the “good news” that its realization is inevitable! The workers, pressed beyond endurance by poverty and exploitation under capitalism, the intellectual, in rebellion against the bourgeois paradise, and the thinkers who envision human liberation – what do they seek?

Once again we find, instead of “the withering away of the state,” the dictatorship of the proletariat; instead of “a free society and freedom in one’s work,” a society completely planned from top to bottom, in which each individual is assigned a role; instead of the elimination of

mechanism, greater emphasis placed upon the “revolutionary acceleration of production,” itself based on the mechanistic philosophy of capitalism; instead of “human freedom from bourgeois bureaucracy,” human captivity in a monolithic governmental bureaucracy; instead of ending the increased human specialization caused by capitalist expansionism, having still more specialization due to governmental expansionism; instead of human liberation from “capitalist economic-administrative organizations,” human enslavement to a hyper-organized society; instead of an increase in human freedom, the molding of human society culture, and morality; instead of blind imitation of, and devotion

¹ The virtuous city (Madine-ye Fazele): the concept having its roots in Plato’s Republic and in the Muslim philosophy associated most closely with Abu Nasr Mohammad Farabi (874-950), meaning a city that is ruled by sages and whose inhabitants strive to attain true justice, happiness, and perfection. (Tr.)

to, the Church, the very same behavior toward the ideological committee; and instead of the denial of personality in history, the cult of personality. Ideologically speaking, since the fall of humanism at the hands of the base materialism of Economism, humanity, having lost its self aware and sensitive will, which had meant the superior capacity to master existence, has become a pawn in a blind his cal contest and the unwitting product of the material dialectics that governs it!

As we consider capitalism’s liberated man and Marxism’s man in fetters, capitalism’s pseudo-man and Marxism’s molded man- can we say which is more tragic?

EXISTENTIALISM revolted against both of these. The humanitarians, who had always sought human freedom and independence, sensed the dangers in the inhuman character of capitalism and mechanism as early as the eighteenth and, more particularly, nineteenth centuries, and began attacking them on aesthetic and moral ground, as well as on grounds of scientific analysis and logic. Along these lines, they produced a rich and vivid literature, from which Marxism also drew much nourishment. (As Raymond Aron has said, “Marxism is nothing but the intelligent

compilation of what non-Marxists have said.”)

What is interesting here is that, following the brilliant successes of the capitalist system and its definitive triumph in the blossoming of European civilization, the most advanced of the present age, a considerable and very powerful opposition of the human spirit has been brought to bear against it-to combat it has become the most basis duty of humanitarian intellectuals?

Capital is the producer, capital is the criterion for the value of goods, and capital is the repository of truth. Work, this highest manifestation of humanity, is placed at the disposal of capital!

How strange! Capital has become the great idol of our age. Next to it, man is nothing; he is alienated from himself, a mere slave, a votary.

And the other adventure of man's that took shape alongside this was also disastrous and bitter.

Marxism, half a century after the perfection of its ideology, was put into practice in an unexpected quarter, one that certainly would not have been approved of by Marx, as witness his early polemics against Russia. And now we see a new idol. Man, the child of society- so society itself, together with the human mind, conscience, values, morals, culture, ideas, sensibilities – arises from the means of production, which today means the machine!

It's the old story of the poet who broke off relations with his beloved to free himself from the dangerous bewitchment of her eyes. To forget her, he devoted himself to horticulture. He hoped to replace his obsession with those mad eyes with this new occupation; however, he complained:

Just as the winter clouds have fled,

The coy narcissus ailing lies. Its stalks are all in blossoms hid; In each, alas, I see her eyes.¹

Those very men who, fleeing mechanism, were caught up in Marxism

(which issued the strongest attacks on mechanism), became, after the triumph of that ideology and the rise to power of communist regimes, still more trapped in mechanism. For “material abundance” was proclaimed the essential prerequisite for realizing the ideal communal society, and the prerequisite for this abundance, in turn, was the transformation of society into a massively industrialized system. This transformation would be based on principles that, in Lenin’s words, “must be learned from capitalism”! – That is to say, specialization, a typical techno- bureaucratic institutional framework, and competition based upon individual self-interest. Beyond all this, there would be a single organization working rapidly to embrace all members of society and, over it, a new class of rulers consisting of the leading bureaucrats-likewise capitalists!

Isn’t Marxism really just the other side the coin of Especially after World War II, the people of Asia and Africa embarked on a path of progressive, anti-colonialist nationalism coupled with a return to their authentic cultural values and renewed contact with their historic roots- a revival of their national characters. Meanwhile, a generation severed from religion, disgusted with capitalist mechanism, and now disillusioned with the promised land of communism, found a breath of fresh air in existentialism. At the heart of it was Sartre, who consciously, powerfully gave expression to the affliction brought on by these calamities.

IN COMPARISON WITH capitalism, which reconstituted man as an economic animal; in comparison with Marxism, which found man an object made up of organized matter; in comparison with Catholicism, which saw him as the unwitting plaything of an imperious unseen power (the Divine will); in comparison with dialectical materialism, which saw him as the unwitting plaything of the deterministic evolution of the means of production – existentialism made man a god! It paid him the grandest worship: “All the beings of this world realize their existence after their essence is determined, except man, who creates his essence subsequent to his existence.”

It is clear what the tree or talking parrot will be prior to its existence, but

man is the first entity about whom it is unclear: what will he be? What will he become? What will he make of himself? What will he choose for his essence?

Man, therefore, is not God's creation, nor nature's creation, nor is he the offspring of the means of production. Man is a god who creates himself? Given all the disrespect paid man by the Church, capitalism, and communism, it is easy to see what an incentive this call could be to souls believing in the miracle of man!

¹ From a Chinese original very capably translated by Hamidi Shirazi, without, of course, any mention of its source!

In our time, it was natural that this call would be made by Sartre, a man who enjoyed the most forceful personality and literary style of all modern philosophers.

Yet Sartre suffers from the same contradictions as Marx, who tries to compel the workers and intellectuals to destroy the capitalist system and begin building a socialist order. That is, he has recourse to human thought, ideas, will, and choice, but at the same time he elaborates a system in which no role remains for a man endowed with those qualities.

In dialectical materialism, qualitative and quantitative changes are determined by pre-existing contradictions, operating according to deterministic laws. These laws operate to effect the destruction of capitalism and the realization of communism, which leaves no room for the operation of human choice and responsibility.

Sartre, by distinguishing between what inherent in man and what inheres in nature, admits a dualism. A dualistic cosmogony of the type we see in the "historical" dualism of Zoroaster, the "essential" dualism of Mani, and the "human" dualism of Islam may be explained. But Sartre, coming after Nietzsche, Hegel, and Marx and two centuries after the encyclopedists, cannot, or will not, present himself as a religious spirit. He remains loyal to materialism and, in order to show existentialism to

be a school in the Marxist tradition goes so far as to sever it from its roots in Heidegger and graft it onto Marxist stock. He is determined to have it regarded as a post-Marxist school, not a pre-Marxist one. The pitiable decline of his exalted existentialism from the peaks of the “god man” to the desert of useless anxiety ensues from this.

It is dialectical materialism or dualism? Materialism is a sort of material monotheism. How, then, has this dualistic shirk, this dichotomizing of man and world, entered in?

Sartre (in contrast to Marx, who considers even the most exalted human qualities and the most sacred human ideals outgrowths of the system of production – that is, like goods, arising from the exigencies of technological hardware) proclaims, “If a person born paralytic doesn’t become a champion runner, then that individual alone is responsible!”

Bravo! But how is a Marxist to account for this assertion? Faced with the question of where such a supernatural, supra material will, which can triumph over the social environment and even over the natural human constitution, finds its well springs, what is the materialist to reply? Has matter itself produced a being that is immaterial?

An affirmative answer by a materialist admits to the occurrence of a miracle and, likewise, to a belief in the creation of the world by an unseen God and a denial of materialism.

The difficulties with Sartre’s existentialism, however, do not end at this level of philosophical underpinnings. Rather, a still more serious difficulty arises from the fact that this school centers its full weight on human action, and it is precisely here that it falls lame:

Man makes himself by his own act. What is meant by “his own act?”

In a word, choice. What is meant by “choice?”

That to which human free will, itself arising from no external cause, divine or material, relates as a first or independent cause: affirmation or negation.

Here, apart from Sartre's inability to explain how this metaphysical will has sprung into the materialist's universe and entered into the chain of material causation, a greater, indeed a very basic dialectical conflict arises automatically and proves insoluble, and that is that choice, however free and independent, must have some criterion, must take shape on the basis of values.

Thus, at basis point we see arising that same old question of good and evil, of morals. Of course, Sartre is fully aware of the problem, and addresses it:

What is "good"? What is "evil"?

Dialectical materialism need not answer this question. No determinism need do so, be it theological or materialist, since only in the event of human free choice, with its "what is one to choose?" and "why?", does the issue of responsibility arise.

But Sartre, having carried the question of human choice to its metaphysical zenith, must provide some rule by which to distinguish good and evil; that is to say, he must specify some criterion for the choices human individuals must make in practice.

Heidegger, Sartre's intellectual lodestar, says, "Man is a solitary being hurled into this desert- world." Sartre designates this mode of apprehension *délaissement*, meaning being thrown back upon oneself. This resembles the concept of "assignation" [tafviz]¹ in our philosophy.

This man, freed from God, nature, and deterministic historical and environmental laws, possessing a quasi-divine free will, is still responsible as he puts this free will into practice, but responsible toward what? (This is the second question mark left standing before Sartre!)

He struggles to answer these two questions, but, unfortunately, in neither do we see any further evidence of his great reasoning powers, his sound logic, or his brilliant literary skills.

Sartre makes the principle of good sense the criterion of good, which must be affirmed, and evil, which must be rejected: “If in the course of exercising choice an individual feels that this choice should have a general applicability and be imitated by others, and then this choice embodies the good. If he feels that only he should act thus, and others should not follow him, the act is evil.”

For example: “A butcher who sells meat fraudulently wishes that no one else do this, but when he sells good meat at less than the prevailing rate, he would like to see everyone transact his business in the same way.”

¹ Assigination: the effective delegation to man by God of certain of his functions with respect to the ordering of creation. (Tr.)

So the criterion of good and evil is, first, personal sentiment, and secondly, a totally idealistic matter! How strange that a materialist aligned with Marxism should render such an individualistic and subjectivist account of human behavior!

Could Sartre be unaware that his existentialist morals are so weak and ill-founded and have such unfortunate consequences? Absolutely not!

‘There is no other recourse.’ This is his own answer.

When we start by assuming a materialistic universe, Sartre- along with anyone else who wishes to exalt human freedom and dignity, to deliver it from the grasp of naturalism (the older materialism) or dialectical materialism (the new one), and to have man stand on the two feet of his own free will – inevitably either casts man back into the dungeon of unseeing, unconscious materialistic determinism, or else keeps him standing there, but vain and meaningless, with no purpose, while all human values go tumbling down – and with what terrible speed!

We hear: heaven is idiotic; existence is empty; nature is in blind, determinative motion. Intelligence, feeling, direction, and will are lacking in the universe. Existence has no particular meaning. In this terrible void, man, a stranger, thrown back upon himself, torn free from

every bond, is a free will that must create its own meaning, value, goals, and truth.

We see, however, that existentialism has given the individual a sports car called Will and Freedom, while at the same time whispering in his ear, “There’s really nowhere to go. But go wherever you like, knowing that whatever direction you choose, it is your personal choice – nothing more – and is otherwise no different from the direction anyone else would choose, since there is no civilization anywhere.” There can be no doubt that such a gift is entirely worthless, and might even be termed a menace!

To make man, like God, a free will that can act in any way it wishes, and then to answer the question “how should he act?” by saying, “However he wishes,” is to create a destructive vicious circle.

Sartre, though, has no other recourse since, on the one hand, he accepts dialectical materialism as his world-view, and, on other, he proclaims human freedom of choice; in such a meaningless and materialistic universe, he can propose no criteria for choice, no standard of values other than personal “good sense.”

Sartre is fully aware that his social and moral existentialism may be thus summed up: 1) “You have the ability to accomplish anything.” 2) “Whatever you accomplish – if you do it in freedom – is permissible, since outside your choice there exists no criterion that would stand in the way of it.”

The conclusion! Therefore, any action whatever is permissible for this free and capable man.

In fact, Sartre himself draws this conclusion. He frequently echoes with approval Dostoevsky’s well-known saying, “If we remove God from the universe, every act is permissible for a person.”

Finally, as all objective moral criteria and human spiritual values fall away, is it possible that Sartre’s existentialism, by proclaiming the

human will free and independent in the world and in society, has brought forth, instead of a god, a demon?