



# PRODUCTION OF THE NEW MAN

efforts and failures of the future-makers in East and West  
by Dr Klaus Bockmühl

UNTIL RECENTLY the question of creating a 'new type of man' was considered just a specialised internal subject of certain ideological systems. 'What do you mean - a new man?' people would ask. 'What is wrong with the present one?' Behind this attitude was the robust self-assurance of a seemingly successful and self-satisfied mankind.

The self-satisfaction has lessened considerably in the last few years. Things are not going as well as in the day of undisturbed affluence. Much clearly needs to change, and at many points we are being forced to recognise that man himself must become different.

I would like to mention just two problem areas where the need for a change in man has forced itself into the public consciousness: the crisis of the environment and inflation.

## Devouring caterpillar

We are learning today to see civilisation as a huge caterpillar eating its way through the forest of precious natural resources, devouring everything that comes in its path and leaving behind it a wide trail of the waste of civilisation where nothing will grow for a long time. That is an essentially different picture from the one our father passed on to us - where man is a gardener who neither exploits nor destroys, but cares for and tends his surroundings, thinking also of those who follow him.

The 'Club of Rome' comes to the conclusion that 'only a basic change in human behaviour, and thereby in the whole structure of present-day society, can save mankind'.

The public is also slowly beginning to realise that the octopus of inflation, that other monster of today's society, is similarly a product of false human conduct, ie a moral issue.

'Employers want to invest more than they have earned, workers demand wages

higher than the increase in productivity warrants, people want to consume more than their current income allows.' Millions of individuals do it and the Government does it by increasing the supply of money to an extent that is far from covered by the growth in the gross national product. Unbridled demand, impatience and the inflation of 'what I want' are the father and mother of monetary inflation.

It is on this level of our demands, of motivation and mental attitudes in man, that change must start. Both inflation and pollution demand a complete change in the values and aims of individuals and of the masses. Both problems show, too, that a mere change of structure, the exchange of one economic system or state constitution for another, would make only a slight difference.

The question of how to create a new type of man dominates today's discussion among scientists in East and West. In this the Marxist East is ahead. Karl Marx realised from the beginning that it was necessary to change man if a better society and a happier future for humanity were to be achieved. The urgency of the creation of 'the new type of man' increased with the growing awareness that the 1917 revolution in the realm of production, power and property did not automatically produce the new man.

## Threat of deterioration

In the West, it is the natural scientists who are searching for 'the new man'. Unlike the Soviet philosophers and educators, they are not concerned with a concentrated final push into the Golden Age in which, according to Ovid's portrayal, 'men would from inner motivation and without laws or compulsion achieve loyalty and justice'. They are concerned far more with the saving of humanity, threatened by a continuing

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deterioration in quality, and with simply maintaining a fairly tolerable state of affairs. Only in second place do they think of a possible improvement.



## The West or the breeding of the new man

The scientific discussion on 'Man and his future' which the Swiss Pharmaceutical firm Ciba organised in London in 1963, with a considerable number of Nobel Prize winners, made clear to the public for the first time the state of research and also the intentions and plans of leading natural scientists in the West.

On the one hand they start from the view that the genetic material of humanity is constantly deteriorating; diabetics and others, who otherwise would not live, thanks to the achievements of medical science can be stabilised over a long period and are thus able to reproduce themselves. Moreover, say the scientists, humanity is confronted today with problems, such as the threat of self-annihilation, which cannot be solved with normal intelligence or average good - or bad! - will. It is the tasks which face us in preserving mankind which make it necessary to manipulate or change man.

The zoologist Herman Muller, Nobel Prize winner for medicine from the USA, strongly advocated the establishment of sperm banks, with the sperm of donors of high character and human quality, and artificial insemination. He sees it as a specially moral act that people should not just want to reproduce and propagate themselves, but by artificial insemination to cooperate in the





general genetic improvement of humanity.

The qualities which he wants to develop by means of this human, selective breeding, are, for example: brotherhood, the capacity to express oneself, creativity, health, long life, high intelligence and a general attitude of friendliness. Muller seems to start from the premise that moral conduct is genetically passed on, ie hereditary, and that heredity is therefore responsible for moral behaviour.

Joshua Lederberg, a geneticist from Stamford, USA, with a Nobel Prize in 1958 for medicine, seconded Muller with the demand for the conscious planning of human development through genetic engineering and the manipulation of heredity. Besides genetic engineering he recommends as a further important possibility the changing of the size of the brain by hormone treatment of the embryo.

### Notorious suggestion

In the discussion the molecular biologist Frederick Crick from Cambridge, England, a Nobel Prize winner for medicine in 1962, supported vigorously the idea of a 'selection of the best' and grappled with the question of how this could be carried through on a large scale, as it otherwise would have no point. His view is that voluntary birth control can never achieve the object; man is too unreliable for that.

He therefore made the now famous or notorious suggestion that first the whole population should be made infertile by an addition of chemicals to the water supply, and that then those with high-quality heredity should be individually supplied with an antidote and made capable of reproduction. He did not see any fundamental reason why human beings should have the right to have children. That might be a claim of Jewish and Christian ethics, but definitely not of his 'humanist' ethic.

At the London Ciba Symposium in 1963 there was naturally no lack of critics pointing out that the proposed paths would turn out to be blind alleys, leading into a forest of problems but not out of the other side.

The first objection to the proposals of the biological engineers was that the bad

qualities of prominent men are just as obvious as the good ones. Who could tell which of the two would predominate in succeeding generations? Those who know the sons of geniuses are often far from enthusiastic about such an idea. It seldom happens that several generations in one family can maintain the same level. In the history of science, for example, one finds a constant change of names, and the great industrial families, too, could tell the same tale.

Moreover, what use is an improvement of intelligence if people then become criminals? In any case, such a technique of genetic manipulation would probably soon fall into the hands of politicians, totalitarian ones included. And for what ends would they then breed men? Quite conceivably they would breed men of uninhibited brutality in order to force through their own aims.

### Pointless argument

Paul Medawar, himself a Nobel Prize winner, showed that there was scarcely any evidence that moral qualities are genetically based and therefore inheritable. Just as in the breeding of cattle, so with human beings one cannot reckon that breeding would produce an ideal type capable of reproduction.

The English computer expert McKay finally reduced the criticism to a formula: we are constantly arguing, he said, with our point of orientation on the bow of the very ship we are standing on. As long as we are not agreed on our aims, on *what* we want, it is pointless to argue about methods, the *how*, the technical feasibility.

In fact, the mechanical emphasis in this programme of manipulating man is striking. The arguments are usually ones of method and technique only—the only method available at present would be to increase the size of the brain. But what use are intelligent criminals—or a criminal intelligence which serves dictators? The whole programme slides into the murky machinations we know so well from the Hitler Reich. To become good by biological means, painlessly, is impossible, or at least only at the price of freedom and humanity.

### Reorientated will

Medawar, himself a biologist, earlier made the point that, on the contrary, positive social developments were often started by conscious moral decisions in the lives of individuals. (One only needs to think of Wesley or St Francis of Assisi.) Therefore, it is a question of extra-biological or cultural mutation, says Medawar—in the last analysis of a *moral mutation* which can give man a new, reorientated will.

It is precisely on this subject of moral change that we hear more from the Marxist philosophers.



**The East**  
or the  
formation of  
the new man

The Russian Marxists describe 'the new man' in considerably more concrete terms. They do not see increased physical intelligence, but creative independence and capacity for team-work as the qualities most needed.

The most interesting statements on the essential qualities of the new man are to be found in recent Soviet educational writings and in novels from the time after Stalin's death.

The educator Sukomlinski has remarkable things to say about the first point—the inner independence of the new man. 'True communists,' he says, 'have an independence and will power which does not arise in the first instance from the decisions of a collective. Communists are men who are not led by the opinion of other people but by their own conscience. Such men have already attained Communism by their state of moral development: they need no further control over the extent of their work or their needs. A man who has never taken an important step from his own conviction cannot be a conscious creator of Communism. Such a man is at best a disciplined executor of another's will, but that is no longer sufficient for the man of tomorrow.' Independence and spontaneity in doing good—those are the characteristics of the new man.

In the same way, novels try to paint the true man of the future. There are some rather Utopian ideas. The man of the future, in the opinion of the much-read natural scientist and writer of science fiction, Jefremev, will not be a specialist in the wrong sense of the word, but 'a universal expert equipped with a healthy, well-developed body, with a high consciousness and capacity for thought, with model moral qualities and an inner wealth of feeling'.

Jefremev, however, is thinking of an age one or two thousand years ahead of our own. Others are searching for this reality already in the present and describe the qualities of their 'positive hero' as 'trust, benevolence, a readiness to forgive, patience, chastity and purity of heart, compassion with the needs of others, loyalty to one's aims, simplicity, wisdom of heart as opposed to cold intellect'. Finally, 'courage, incorruptibility and an unswerving fight for truth'.

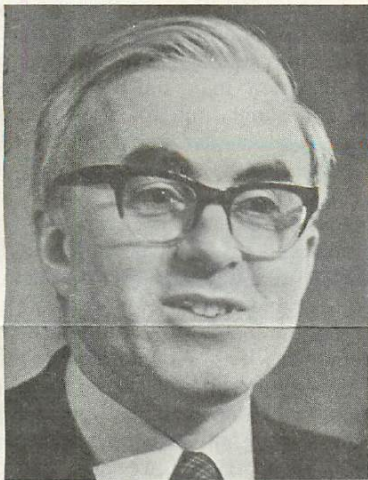
But, how do we reach this point?



The Communist Party tries to achieve 'the new man' by the method of many-sided education, whether in education at school or through work and the mutual discipline in labour collectives.

Soon after the revolution of 1917 the hope that 'the new man' would be the automatic result of the revolution proved to be vain. In connection with Pavlov's dog experiments in 'conditioned reflexes' some people played for a time with the thought of transposing to man the training of the unconscious and so - by means of habit training - producing the conduct needed for the construction and maintenance of every society.

In more recent times the thought has been more to educate the younger generation through the influence of school. This is expressed in the Soviet statement: 'The teacher is the number one ally of the Party in the creation of the new man.'



**Dr Klaus Bockmühl, 43, from Germany, is a lecturer in theology now living and teaching in Switzerland. He is working particularly in the field of ethics, and has been interested in the problems of Marxism since his doctoral dissertation in 1961 on Marx' view of man.**

There is similar thinking in China. An article in the Indian weekly *Himmat* (24 September 1965) stated: 'Through the whole history of Chinese Communism there runs, much more than is the case in Russia, the emphasis on "re-education" and "a change of heart" as the methods to be preferred to massive social purges.' The writer reports that Chou-en-Lai in the days of Yenan before the Second World War led hours of discussion on the question of how human nature could be changed, as if he had foreseen that one day this would be the central issue of our age; how one could tame the tiger of human selfishness in its manifold forms.

However, in the East also insuperable

difficulties seem to be arising in the creation of 'the new man'.

In the novels of recent years there is abundant evidence of the difficulties that are met in the attempt to realise these human ideals. Here we need to pay special attention, because, as Alexander Herzen points out, 'For a nation which has no political freedom, literature is the only platform from which it can force the world to hear its cry of indignation and conscience.' It is here above all that we find the evidence for 'the power and secret of evil' as one penetrating analysis described it.

### Longing for truth

After the years of the Stalin period and the many lies of convenience, justified on an ideological basis - the secret and open lies - we see a new dawn in Russian literature of man's insatiable longing for the unembellished truth: give us rather a bitter truth than a sweet lie!

Stalin had in his time issued to party and administration the slogan: 'Trust is good, control is better.' But his saying about 'healthy mistrust as the best foundation of cooperation' is reversed by the modern authors in loud protest. Trust between men, they say, is our most valuable, even if always our most precarious, possession.

Yet, evil makes its appearance not only as lies, but also in every other form of selfishness. Daniel Granin in his novel about a physicist describes the 'rake's progress of a scientist': 'It is strange. Lagunov was once an able brain in the realm of electrical theory and produced a number of useful things. Then they made him chairman of a committee. He learned to make speeches, and how to destroy others, and so it went on. Works written by other candidates appeared under his name, and then only brochures or interviews like "My impressions of the congress in England". And now he is trying to get himself elected as a corresponding member of the Academy...'

### Shrivelling of feeling

And there are not only those who want to be on top themselves but others who, in order to get advantages for themselves, create through flattery an empire around an influential man while a factory or a whole nation goes downhill.

But it is even more shattering to realise that men cannot be comfortably divided up into good and bad, progressive and reactionary - as one Russian author writes - but that the 'weeds are in us ourselves!' They talk of mistakes which we made earlier really out of love of comfort and selfishness, mistakes, though, which have a lasting effect: we have lost our own freedom. And the hero of one story begins suddenly to



discover in himself - how does it come about that on the one hand I am completely possessed by the struggle for the lofty, just world of communism and yet that from time to time I am dominated by quite different passions?

More than anyone else the Yugoslav revolutionary, Milovan Djilas, has characterised this evil in man, even after the revolution, as two-fold: the lust to possess and the lust to rule. Djilas notes 'a will for power and domination which goes beyond material greed'. This has not become less under Socialism, but rather all *the more intolerable because* of the greater instruments of power available in the totalitarian state. It produces the soullessness of bureaucracy which totally regiments man. Here we see both the power and powerlessness of this ideology. It actually ends in the shrivelling of human feeling and the withering of human relationships, the blossoming of which the revolutionaries had originally promised themselves and others.

So, we find ourselves back at the beginning. The decisive question is not yet answered. The conquest of selfishness in man is still before us.



## The Birth of a new man

A change in man is necessary, and what West and East have been looking for is possible.

Or, in the words of the German poet, Mathias Claudius, 'Man must be improved and, I would suggest, not from the outside.'

The first precondition for the new type of man is the liberation of man from his natural selfishness. It is no use demanding an improvement of society in general: change must take place in the individual. In this respect the Soviet conception is superior to the Western one,



but still far too nebulous.

There is no way to 'the new man' except by the destruction of the old man. The Cross comes before the Resurrection. That is also valid for the individual today. Truth comes to power only by conflict. Man is confronted with absolute moral standards and experiences a general stock-taking in his life. The old man dies, and God's pardon brings the new man to birth. Man gives up his self-will, leaves the old ways and makes restitution.

## Liberation from selfishness

Such a renewal in man must also immediately affect his relationships with others. Change does not stop short at his own inner life, but is related to the smallest social unit, the brick of human society: 'You and your brother'. 'When you go to the altar,' says Jesus of Nazareth, 'and remember that your brother has something against you, go and first be reconciled with your brother...'. A new creation also means reconciliation; and the breaking down of the walls between us and our neighbours Jesus calls the prerequisite for our further communication as men with God. Change creates unity.

In this way, to use the language of the revolutionaries, 'liberated pockets' can be established, areas of human life liberated from the dominion of selfishness and division, action groups who actually radiate out into society, in other words what Lenin once tellingly described as 'the selfless initiative of small groups, through whose committed fight a turning in the mood of the masses becomes possible'. There are numerous examples of this in the history of Christianity.

This is how the change of society would be affected: changed men would work as initiating groups for the welfare of society, on the basis of democracy and persuasion, until new laws have achieved solid ground in public opinion and can then be passed. These labours can nowhere be avoided without opening the door to dictatorship and moving further away from the goal of a humane society.

## Truly humane society

Compulsion, too, belongs to the rusty weapons of an old world which will never produce the quality of brotherhood.

The future lies with the small, spontaneous groups who live the government of God and reconciliation among men in the decisions of everyday life, or, as Marx puts it, 'in their empirical life, their individual work and their individual relationships'. It could well be that high

politics is of secondary importance as far as the development of the truly humane society is concerned.

Some politicians know this and are looking out for initial evidence of new life and spontaneous, responsible action everywhere. However good a government's intentions may be, say, towards a reconciliation with a neighbouring country, if they are not supported by voluntary initiatives which change the attitude of the public towards reconciliation and away from traditional feelings of arrogance or revenge, these good intentions will come to nothing. In a democracy the Government cannot after all make politics without the people and in the long term even a dictatorship cannot do so.

Small groups of 'renewed' men who create reconciliation—these are the real 'renewers' of society, men who do not simply invent some cost-saving technical innovation, but are 'renewers in the social sphere' such as the Soviet philosophers of today are searching for. For the real problem is that the development of human relationship has not kept pace with technical progress.

The new man is the one who independently, from his own inner conviction, does what is salutary and necessary for the community. He is the one who has the capacity for teamwork and knows the power of reconciliation. This theoretical model of the East is absolutely right. The question, though, of how to realise it is becoming more urgent than ever. And we must not remain stuck in the disillusion and cynicism which take over if a man fails his ideals.

## We cannot escape

For both East and West the fact remains that 'the new man' is the prerequisite and guarantee of freedom, the foundation on which alone freedom is possible. There is no point in wasting one moment shaking our heads or making fun of the fight for the new man in Soviet Marxism. For these are tasks which we all face. We cannot escape from them.

The motto of Marxism is 'Prometheus is the finest saint in the philosopher's calendar'. The new man must be created by man himself. He must help himself. There is no one else to do it.

As against that the Bible says: man cannot himself cope with guilt, sin and evil. 'The emancipation of man from selfishness' must be *received*, it must come from God. We may hear what God has to say to us. In this way we find a strength and a wisdom which overcomes human fallibility and makes us new men. From listening to God grows the doing of good without



material incentives.

We have hundreds of examples of this. While do-it-yourself, the refusal to listen and lack of openness soon become an obstacle to the development of life and—as we have seen—lead to an impoverishment of humanity, listening to God produces spontaneity for good, human sympathy, creative ideas, brotherhood and reconciliation.

So I come to the conclusion: it is necessary to continue to teach unconditional moral standards to support the ideals of a new man and a new society, but at the same time to show that the *dynamic comes out of silence*. Man must come to the point where he *acts out of receiving*.

Finally, let us look back on what has been said and decide what it means for our own thinking, perspective and action.

The demand for the new man was based on the belief that humanity cannot remain as it is. As Lederberg rightly says, it is a question of taking measures to preserve life itself. The Biblical story says the same: only ten just people, and a city is saved. Either we shall find the creative minority of men who, renouncing self, live for the salvation of the world, or we shall have chaos and destruction.

## An unfolding story

The other significance today of the issue of the new man is that it is an issue which is already built into every human life. Each one of us is confronted again and again with the question of renewal of life. For it is the destiny of each one of us to be the new man.

The new man in each one of us has a history running through our earthly life—lessons learnt, new beginnings, perhaps an abortion of the new creation we should have become, or the birth of the new man, his growth, his training. Each of us should consider for himself or talk over with someone he trusts, where he stands in this unfolding story—the story of the new man which we are to become.

Graphics in this issue by Jim Sharp