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The quest for purity in communism

Erik van Ree

Purity and Leninism: the vanguard

In the summer of 1903 the second congress of the Russian Social Democratic Workers Party was convened. It was the setting for violent disagreements between the moderate Mensheviks and the radical Bolsheviks of Vladimir Il'ich Lenin. Lenin was of the opinion that only those who were active in one of the party organizations should be permitted to become members. To his opponent Martov this was unnecessarily restrictive. But Lenin was convinced that an open-door policy would create a situation in which 'every striker' and 'every professor' could call himself a party member. He abhorred that perspective. In a comment on the congress he made the following resumé of his views:

'(It is) my wish, my demand, that the Party, as the vanguard of the class, should be as **organized** as possible, that the Party should admit to its ranks only such elements as allow of at least a minimum of organization. My opponent, on the contrary, **lumps together** in the Party organized and unorganized elements, those who lend themselves to direction and those who do not...This **confusion is indeed dangerous**' (Lenin 1961b: 258).

Already in 1902 Lenin had created the theoretical foundation of his concept of a vanguard. He developed the separation between party and 'mass' which can be found in Marx' works only in a rudimentary form. In 'What is to be done?' the future leader of the Soviet Union put it thus:

'Since there can be no talk of an independent ideology formulated by the working masses themselves in the process of their movement, the only choice is either bourgeois or socialist ideology. There is no middle course... There is much talk of spontaneity. But the spontaneous development of the working-class movement leads to its subordination to bourgeois ideology...' (Lenin 1961a: 384).

The author pleaded for a sharp dividing line between the party and the working class. The party was the repository of socialist consciousness. By themselves the masses could only develop a 'bourgeois' consciousness; they could never submit themselves to the necessary discipline. Lenin's party was a voluntary covenant of 'professional revolutionaries' who would never agree to lose themselves in a broad party of the type Martov envisioned.

Marxist communism in general is known for its labour ethic. That is, except for the inevitable clown in the company, Marx' son-in-law Paul Lafargue, author of *The Right to be Lazy* who depicted communism as the highroad to mankind's glorious idleness. The apostolic principle 'He who does not work shall not eat' was explicitly approved by Marx and Engels. The two prophets of modern communism, taking the working class as their point of reference, disliked the same type of groups as the Puritans did: the Lumpen-proletariat of beggars, and the group of wealthy parasites into which in their opinion the capitalist class was changing, not to speak of other economically superfluous institutions like monasteries. This labour ethic, too, was to be an instrument for purification. In revolutionary Russia the organization of a disciplined economic process became the focus of Lenin's attention. Labour became a 'matter of honour', if necessary enforced by draconian laws. For Lenin the organization of labour was the central problem after a successful revolution. In his article written in March April 1918 'The Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Government' he expressed this point thus:

'In every socialist revolution, after the proletariat has solved the problem of capturing power, and to the extent that the task of expropriating the expropriators and suppressing their resistance has been carried out in the main, there necessarily comes to the forefront the fundamental task of creating a social system superior to capitalism, namely, raising the productivity of labour, and in this connection (and for this purpose) securing better organization of labour' (Lenin 1965: 257).

In these two respects, the vanguard and the labour ethic, Communism resembles the New England Puritans. Walzer (1982: 317f), in a comparative analysis of Puritanism, Jacobinism and Bolshevism, pointed to the similarity of these radical movements. He sees them as agents of modernization in periods of social transition. They are 'bands of chosen' who act purposefully, élites of 'saints' who cut themselves loose from traditional contexts. They live according to voluntary self-discipline and are involved in a permanent warfare with the existing order in the name of a new one. While the Puritans were the instrument of God, the Bolsheviks had a more impersonal but an equally powerful master: the laws of history, which they wished to serve obediently. The quest for purity was central to all.

For later communist leaders of a more radical kind, such as Joseph Stalin, Mao Zedong, Pol Pot and Kim Il-song, purity became increasingly important. The four leaders liquidated the traditional Leninist party oligarchies and replaced them with their own autocracies, though retaining the façade of party rule. This 'second revolution' was accompanied, and partly motivated, by a continuing process of 'purification'.

Stalinist purity: unity of will

In the transitional period from Lenin to Stalin, a drastic change in the concept of the communist vanguard took place. The Leninist party model set rigid membership criteria, enforced 'iron discipline', but it did not exclude factions, opinion groups within the party. The permanent existence of different 'lines' was recognized and accepted. This Leninist party concept was only a half-way-house between the Menshevik type and a new 'monolithic' kind of party. During the final years of Lenin's life - in 1921 - factions were forbidden in the Russian party. This was probably considered as a temporary measure of expediency. But Stalin turned this measure into his theory of the 'monolithic' party. The essence of this concept was the thesis that the battle of ideas within the party should always lead to 'unity of will' (Stalin 1972: 160) as he formulated it in 1924. All those who did not agree to the new line were 'opportunists'. They had to be expelled.

'Unity of will' put an end to possible differences of opinion as a legitimate phenomenon. Henceforth the party was no longer the party of the communists, but the party of those communists with the 'correct line'. Stalin himself would have turned it around: only the

followers of the correct line are communists. The exclusiveness of the vanguard, its sectarian character, became much more pronounced. This revision of Leninist orthodoxy had dramatic implications.

Communist parties consist of opinion groups. Such factions naturally struggle for hegemony. In some communist parties these contests result in more or less lasting coexistence between various factions. The result is a party in which the prominent leaders of the different factions are represented (unofficially) in the Central Committee. The party leader is the *primus inter pares* who guarantees stability. The Communist Party of Vietnam is a good example of this set-up, and so was the Soviet party in Lenin's days, as it is again at present.

The Stalinist theory, however, excluded any compromise. It demanded the definitive victory of one faction (the leader's) and the periodic destruction of all others. This gave the debates in the Soviet party in the 1920s a dramatic undertone. The integrity of the debaters (Stalin, Trotskii, Bukharin et al) as communists was at stake. This struggle led to the downfall of the 'left and right opportunists' by 1930. That was only the prelude to the apocalyptic storm which raged in the years 1935-1939 when even the moderate Stalinists were exterminated by their more ruthless colleagues. Hundreds of thousands were expelled from the party and the lives of many ended by a shot in the neck. In that way conformity to the will of the leader was established. The vanguard had purified itself.

The 1960s witnessed a similar struggle in China, the Cultural Revolution, where the vanguard started another war against itself. The followers of pure Maoism gained a victory and eliminated the other factions and their leaders, such as president Liu Shaoqi. Since much is widely known about the Stalinist and Maoist purges I shall not discuss them any further. Instead, I will focus on a self-purification that offers clear insights in the devastating power of the quest for purity, that of the party in Pol Pot's Kampuchea and North Korea.

To purify the race and sanitize the country: Kampuchea

The notorious Pol Pot became General Secretary of the communist party of Kampuchea in 1963. At that time he was by no means an autocrat. There were a number of factions which were strongly represented in certain regions, called Zones. The leader himself had his headquarters in the inhospitable Northeast among the mountain tribes. The Eastern Zone was controlled by the moderate 'Internatio-

nalists', who were in favour of friendship with the Vietnamese communists. In the Southwest the pro-Chinese 'Maoists' held strong positions. There were several other factions which were less regionally concentrated.

As he told Yugoslavian journalists in 1978 Pol Pot regarded the mountain tribes as belonging to his 'backing base' (Kiernan/Boua 1982: 251). These minorities were, according to his brother-in-law Ieng Sary, faithful to the revolution, non-commercially minded and they possessed 'class hatred' (Kiernan 1985: 274). Pol Pot recruited his followers among the poorest of the peasants and among young people. The Pol Pot faction cherished the thought that the poor are pure and honest and therefore reliable. The young were not yet too much contaminated by the old society, still more pliable.

To the annoyance of their Vietnamese colleagues the Kampuchean communists started a guerilla war in 1967-1968 against Sihanouk. After the coup d'état of Lon Nol in 1970 the united resistance, comprising the communists and the prince, was formed. The war was successfully concluded in 1975 by what Pol Pot called a 'total, definitive and clean victory' (Kiernan/Boua 1982: 233). But the internal history of the Communist Party of Kampuchea after 1970 was also a war, a long drawn out 'purging war' which ended in 1977-1978 with the liquidation of all the factions by Pol Pot's group.

Craig Etcheson (1984) described the means by which the leader accomplished his 'revolution within the revolution'. The party centre set up camps to give members of the communist youth league and the women's organization a political and administrative training. From there young and fanatical cadres were sent out all over the country to take control of the Zones. In a document of the youth league from 1973 the young are described as 'the central force in the revolutionary movement' (Carney 1977: 33). The youngsters, Pol Pot's right hand, got their own name of honour, 'the dictatorial instrument of the party' (Sihanouk 1980: 28). They spread like waves across the country.

If that was not sufficient to settle the matter, the party centre showed some muscle. It did not shrink back from armed confrontation with the troops of the other factions. For this purpose Pol Pot entered into an alliance with local 'war-lords' such as Ta Mok with whose help he had taken over the Southwest by 1975. Apart from this the General Secretary had a praetorian guard at his disposal, consisting of several divisions which were loyal to him and which were named the 'Unconditionals'. These troops established Pol Pot's hegemony by force of arms. In some areas the leader's soldiers got the nickname 'blackshirts' (Kiernan/Boua 1982: 278) because of their

invariably black traditional pyjamas. The last building bricks of their structure of terror was a network of torture camps. In 1975, 'S-21' was founded in Phnom Penh under the command of Brother Deuch, Pol Pot's security chief. Probably some 20,000 party cadres were killed in this temple of horror (Etcheson 1984: 178). By 1977-1978 Pol Pot had succeeded in crushing the factions and established a monolithic party.

Democratic Kampuchea was and remained a rather decentralized, weakly integrated society, held together by the young militants and the army. Regional differences in policy could not be completely eradicated. In 1973 the Democratic Revolution was carried out in the areas under central control. Only by 1977-1978 it could be carried out throughout Kampuchea. The aim was, according to a party document, 'a clean, honest society' (Kiernan 1985: 368). It was a society built upon two basic values: labour and purity.

Pol Pot may have been inspired by the production campaigns in Maoist China. He strived for a 'super great leap forward' (Kiernan/Boua 1982: 228) which had to lead to a very high rate of development in the country. All villages had been divided into *kroms*, groups of 10 to 15 families which worked the land under the command of a chief appointed by the *Angkar* (the Organization, i.e. the Communist Party). The *krom* was a work unit and a social-political entity at the same time. The land and means of production were collectivized. The working days were long and work discipline was very harsh. Many people were 'killed in action' in this labour process, organized on a footing of war. In order to have the women available for production the meals were taken in communal halls. In some villages individual houses were replaced by separate camps for men, women and children. In some cases children were raised apart from their parents by *Angkar* so that the parents could be fully mobilized for work on the fields. Kampuchea became one huge work site. The people built dams and dikes by hand until they literally dropped dead.

According to Etcheson the CPK was inspired by the ideal of a 'pure Khmer society' and the wish 'to purify the race and sanitize the country' (Etcheson 1984: 28-29). Typical reforms were implemented such as the prohibition of wearing colourful sarongs. Ith Sarin, a former Khmer Rouge, described the mental outlook of the Kampuchean communists in his paper 'Life in the Bureaus of the Khmer Rouge'. According to him the party leaders instructed everybody to act as poor peasants. 'Study from the people in order to be like the people' (Sarin 1977: 46) was the slogan. The rule for a proper lifestyle was: work hard and be humble. All party members

(with the exception of the most prominent) were expected to perform manual labour. They had to raise pigs, plant rice and dig canals. All human behavior had to be purged from impure elements. One of the rules for a Khmer Rouge read: 'Speak, sleep, walk, stand, sit, eat, smoke, play, laugh in a refined unobtrusive manner following the traditions of the people' (idem: 51). Every week so-called 'Lifestyle Meetings' were organized where:

'they criticize each other back and forth on this matter of 'liberalism' in 'drinking, sleeping, walking, talking' which means that some comrades eat differently than they are told, or are sluggardly morning risers or talk too much...Mutual surveillance is the duty of each member...This is a step in 'taming' a man to become a 'machine'...Each member must 'freely' hand himself over to the Organization 'to build'. One must trust completely in the Angkar because the Organization has as many eyes as a 'pineapple' and cannot make mistakes (Sarin 1977: 47-48).

Those who did not react positively to criticism had to expect a harsh fate. Michael Vickery, who conscientiously rebutted incorrect horror stories about the Khmer Rouge in his book *Cambodja, 1975-1982* (1984) concludes that one could get capital punishment for laziness, verbal resistance, boasting or pretensions, refusal to work, quarreling with your husband or wife, flirting. Executions because of 'illicit flirtations' were quite common. An extremely rigid sexual order was upheld by the laws of the gun and the axe. Children were punished for laughing or joking during work.

To breathe and act in conformity with the will of the leader: Korea

Like the Communist Party of Kampuchea the Korean party consisted of factions. In 1945 the Red Army defeated the Japanese in that country. In its wake two groups of Korean communists who had lived in the USSR for a long time came home. One of these was a group of Koreans, who had obtained Soviet citizenship and were members of the Soviet Communist Party. There was also the 'Kapsan' faction under the leadership of Kim Il-song. During the occupation they had waged a guerilla war against the Japanese in Manchuria, but in the beginning of the 1940s they had fled to Siberia. Kim was Stalin's favourite. He was helped into the saddle by the Red Army. The third faction, the 'local communists', who had organized resistance during colonial occupation in Korea itself, was headed by

Pak Hon-yong. And finally there was the 'Yanan-group' which had fought the Japanese with Mao Zedong in China.

Prior to the armistice in 1953 Kim had already carried through small purges which had resulted in limiting the influence of the three rivalling factions. After the war he destroyed them. Pak Hon-yong was made the scapegoat for the failure of the North Korean troops during the war and executed in December 1955. In 1956-1958 a fierce fight broke out between Kim and the two remaining factions. The Soviet Koreans and the Yanangroup felt stimulated by Khrushchev's destalinization speech and attacked Kim's flirtations with autocracy. Kim arrested them. A massacre was only prevented by strong pressure from Moscow and Beijing.

In 1953, on the eve of the liquidation of the 'local' faction, Thought Examination Meetings were organized in cities and villages (Nam 1974: 114). Party members had to screen their own thoughts, feelings and opinions. In 1958-1959 this was repeated on a larger scale with the Concentrated Guidance Campaign. Every North Korean was obliged to examine in public his or her life history to discover every trace of 'disloyalty' to the leader and root it out. Refugees described this period as one of 'intense and sustained emotional pressure' (Scalapinoel 1972: 833). At the same time the whole country was divided into groups consisting of five families with a party member as chief. The party paper, *Kulloja*, described the tasks of these small leaders in 1962: 'In this way they can accurately grasp and understand, through their everyday contacts with each family and person, that person's level of knowledge, talents, hopes and ideological trends' (idem: 592). As a result the population was divided into those with 'spotless records' and those with 'complicated backgrounds'.

In 1965 the Resident Perception Project repeated this process once again. This was the stepping stone to a new purge at the top. Ilpyong Kim described this in his *Communist Politics in North Korea* (1975). The first victims were moderate 'Kimilsongists', who were mostly employed in the ideological and economic sphere. They disappeared in 1967. Only two years later it was their opponents' turn to go down - a group of radical military diehards. Both these groups of leaders were convicted to penal servitude or death (An 1983: 16f). Scalapino and Lee (1972: 855) remark that in the course of these campaigns the concept of 'class' in North Korean ideology changed, assuming the added meaning of 'a state of mind, a set of behavior patterns, a life style'. Korean communism set itself to wage a permanent war against 'anti-Party' attitudes in daily life.

As far as we know Kim did not have to resort to such large purges again after 1970. The accent has now shifted to the consolidation of the newly established monolithic regime. The preparation of Kim's eventual succession by his son Kim Chong-il was put on the agenda. In February 1973 the Three Revolution Team Movement emerged (An, 1983; Scalapino Kim, 1983). The movement comprises about forty to fifty thousand youngsters, teaming up in groups of twenty to fifty. They are sent to the major national institutions in order to lead the 'three revolutions': ideological, technical and cultural. These teams of vigilantes, who sometimes have the word 'Loyalty' tattooed on their arms (Aims 1983: 15), have their own hierarchy outside the party. In this way they are also able to carry out the 'revolution' within the party. The movement has been under Kim Chong-il's direct control from the very start.

By now this youthful vanguard has been engaged in securing the future succession for their leader for ten years. Cadres who are critical of the idea of a communist dynasty are brushed aside, if the teams have their way. Beside political purges it is a crucial task for the teams to stimulate the masses to perform 'miracles of labour', while being encouraged by slogans like 'speed-war' and '100 day battles', in accordance with the tradition of the Chollima Movement. Chollima was a mythological flying horse which could cover a thousand miles a day. Under this motto the Korean variant of Stakhanovism was organized from the end of the 1950s onwards. Thus, the workers organized themselves in Chollima Teams and tried to break records. Labour was war.

In *Communism in Korea* (1972: 1286f) Scalapino and Lee describe the daily routine of a North Korean worker. The country has an official 48 hour working week, divided over six days. Every morning before work the workers collectively study the writings of Kim Il-sung for half an hour. Several times a week they have to take part in military drill for two hours. At least twice or three times a week political meetings have to be attended in the evening, which last two hours each. Then there are monthly get-togethers of Chollima Teams, trade unions, other mass organizations or the party itself. North Korean workers are subjected to a very severe and fatiguing discipline.

Recently Pyongyang published a collection of articles and speeches by Kim junior under the title *On the Juche Idea of our Party* (1985). The concept of Juche is difficult to translate, but its meaning comes close to 'selfidentity'. It is a nationalist concept which makes Korean identity the scope of all thinking. The Kim communists feel that Korea should be self-supporting and follow its

own model in every respect. The Koreans should shape their own future. According to Kim Chong-il great conflicts were fought out within the party, especially in 1956 and 1967 against the 'factionalists', but finally the leader triumphed. In the 1970s the time had come for the Juche program to be fully implemented. Despite Kim Chong-il's preference for the repetition of abstract formulas, a quote may show the North Korean ideological concepts in their mutual relation:

'It is an essential requirement of a working-class party to ensure the unity of ideology and leadership. This is effected by establishing the Party's monolithic ideological system. Only when this is done the whole Party can be armed with the leader's intention and become a living organism, breathing and acting in conformity with his idea and will... Our Party defined new principles of establishing its monolithic ideological system and strengthened this work to meet the needs of the revolution in the 1970s when the proposition was put forward that the whole of society should be modelled on the Juche idea. Today our Party has grown into loyal ranks, and the whole membership thinks and acts according to the will of the Party and the leader...The leader is the centre of the Party's unity and cohesion... The important thing in the Party's unity and cohesion is to achieve the unity of idea and will' (Kim 1985: 96-99).

The psychology of purity

Lenin's concept of the vanguard party was that of an entity which could act *en bloc* in face of the outside world. Discipline was 'externally oriented'. Party members had to support the party program, but otherwise they were only required to be active and carry out decisions. They were not expected to agree with party orders. The Stalinist innovation was to pursue further purification of the already relatively 'pure' Leninist party by excluding anyone who did not show total 'unity of will' with the leader. Bloody purges, culminating in the autocrat's ultimate triumph, resulted. The drive for purity also intensified the labour process, up to and sometimes beyond the limits of human endurance. It also led to excessive control over the individual's lifestyle, which had to be totally cleansed of everything that was frivolous or considered superfluous. On all fronts the Stalinists pushed the quest for purity in Bolshevism much further, a tendency that is part of the explanation for the apocalyptic events in some communist countries.

The communist picture reveals striking similarities with the ethos and the habits in Puritan New England. The rituals for powerful

social control, the permanent suffocating mutual surveillance, are examples. In New England sermons were held several times a week. Notes had to be taken down to be discussed in meetings at home. Puritans had to write individual diaries in which their 'progress' in the correct spiritual direction was recorded. In these churches the same typical combination of obedience and a very high level of activism prevailed as in Stalinist parties.

Even more fascinating is the fact that protestant Puritanism also experienced a second, more radical stage: a further purification of the already 'pure' church. It had been a Puritan tenet from the start that 'sinners' should be excluded from the church. But of necessity the church included people who were predestined to go to hell. In the 17th century Calvinist orthodoxy was revised in Massachusetts. Henceforth only 'saints', the future population of heaven, were coopted. Decent, religious people who were not sure of being in God's favour dropped out. Total unity with God (like total unity with the leader three centuries later) now became the hallmark of the community (see Staples, this volume).

These people of New England thought of a way to know who was destined for eternal bliss. The procedure, vividly described by Edmund Morgan (1965), shows a striking similarity with communist 'criticism and self-criticism' sessions. Beside a confession of faith and a promise to live 'without scandals' applicants now had to perform a third act, a 'declaration of their experience of a work of grace' (idem: 62) (see Van der Meijden, this volume). The candidates had to make detailed reports of their lives' progress and the ways in which they had come to the conviction of being in God's grace. While being cross-examined by the elders and the congregation the candidates had to remain firm and give the 'correct' answers (see Broeyen, this volume). In the end the ability to convey convincingly the personal feeling of being chosen was decisive.

The occurrence of similar ultra-puritan phases in protestantism and communism might be partly explained by similar psychological tensions inherent in both the original Leninist and Calvinist systems. For the Calvinist the eradication of sin from one's own life was as essential as the expulsion of sinners out of the church. Being sinful was a sign of being predestined by God to reprobation. On the other hand, being successful and leading a worthy life might be a sign that one was among God's chosen. This in itself leads to a morbid introspection, a permanent urge to root out one's own sins. Protestant sectarians wage two wars, during their whole tiring lives: against Satan's armies and against themselves. But then, one could never be sure of victory. Only God knows one's destiny. However

worthily one lived, eternal damnation was always a possibility to be reckoned with.

In orthodox Leninism a similar phenomenon can be observed. Every human thought is class based, and therefore either 'bourgeois' or 'proletarian'. There is no third possibility, Lenin remarked, and he never wavered in this respect. The individual Leninist has constantly to fight against his own 'bourgeois' thoughts, which make him go by the 'wrong line'. This would be like swimming against the current of history, the ultimate crime. On the other hand Lenin never thought the party or himself to be always right. There was no infallible fountain of truth. Party membership was no guarantee of a 'correct line'. However hard one tried to cleanse oneself of bourgeois thought, there was no guarantee against becoming 'objectively a counterrevolutionary'.

Here we find ourselves confronted with a major contradiction. Puritanism and Leninism forced their followers to search obsessively for the pure and righteous path, while God and History were swinging as veritable swords of Damocles over their heads. But then (and this means a horrifying anti-climax) these believers were denied the gratifying feeling of certainty when they made a choice. Thus, individuals and organizations alike may be thrown into a whirlpool of anxiety, fear and feelings of guilt. It is only natural that some parties and churches searched for a way out, in order to destroy the elements of insecurity in their ideologies. They found refuge, an illusionary peace of mind, in a pure and unconditional relation with God or the leader.

Becoming 'ultra-puritan' is a shattering experience, not only for a party or a church but also for individuals. Puritan theologians in America developed a fixed scheme of ten stages through which every person had to pass through reaching the glorious conclusion of being a 'saint'. Morgan (1965: 68f) described these stages. At first the subject becomes acquainted with the church and God's commandments: he is an ordinary believer. But a deeper understanding soon leads to the realization of one's own sinfulness and false pride. It brings him in a state of panic. Eventually one becomes convinced of being doomed ('salvation panic'). But in this deep valley of despair some hope of salvation flickers up. In the end the profound personal conviction of enjoying God's grace triumphs. But the story ends in a paradox, because doubt remains. He who does not doubt is certainly doomed. In this way the Puritan created his own obedient self-confidence, his loneliness, his gloomy happiness. This was the tortuous road of the radical believer.

In 1961 the American psychiatrist Robert Jay Lifton wrote *Thought Reform and the Psychology of Totalism* (1967). He interviewed 40 people who had been in prison in the Chinese People's Republic. In the course of their stay many of them had come to justify their own captivity. The mental changes in the prisoners were brought about by a powerful combination of physical pressure and 'patient re-education'. Lifton also distinguished ten stages of 'being convinced'. To begin with the prisoner is convinced on a political level that the world is not what he thought it was, so the subject accepts the fact that until now he has been a 'tool of imperialism'. He feels guilty. His self-esteem is being undermined, and in long sessions of 'criticism and self-criticism' such overwhelming feelings of guilt are aroused. A 'basic fear' arises, a feeling of being totally and irretrievably lost. Then the helping hand is stretched out. The prisoner gets the chance to make a fresh start on the condition that he is prepared to rewrite his own personal history in communist terms: in other words, to construct a new identity. The victim seizes this way out with both hands, aided by jailers and fellow-prisoners alike, and he experiences a spiritual rebirth.

Lifton remarks correctly that the whole Chinese population went through such a process (in so far as they were in the grip of the authorities), the major difference being that the effects of force is stronger in jail, while outside it is more a question of persuasion. The term 'brainwashing', often used in this context, is misleading because the process has nothing to do with conscious and direct manipulation. The most 'brainwashed' people are the jailers. They make their prisoners by means of shock experience what they themselves have gone through.

The stages mentioned by the Puritan theologians and by Lifton show remarkable similarities. In both cases a new religious or political view of life and the world is the starting point. This is soon mixed with feelings of guilt and fear, leading to a breakdown of identity, a feeling of existential panic. A deep crisis is followed by the creation of a new purified identity, built around a purified notion of the world. A new radical 'saint' is born.

Conclusion

The Leninists (like the Puritans) were inspired by the idea of a disciplined, pure vanguard organization (a church or a party) which excluded either 'sinful' or 'bourgeois' people. This new vanguard was

prepared to enforce rigid labour-discipline and an ascetic morality on the population to build up a new, healthy society according to God's commandments or the laws of history.

A process of further 'sectarianization' took place in which the vanguard was still further 'purified'. Only the select intimates of God or the leader were still acceptable. In the case of the movements of Stalin, Mao, Pol Pot and Kim Il-song, this was accompanied by frenzied labour drives and propaganda for an extremely ascetic and totally controlled lifestyle.

Finally we saw that in both original ideological systems (the historical Puritans and Leninism) certain psychological tensions are present which could cause followers to take refuge in this quasi-certainty of unity with the leader or God.

The extreme variants of Puritanism have remained marginal phenomena, mostly concentrated in American church communities. In the international communist movement Stalinist ultra-puritanism was dominant for decades and actively now influences the lives of one third of the world's population.

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