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When the Short Course history of the Communist party was published in *Pravda* in 1938, it was accompanied by a decree which emphasized the role of the intelligentsia in the construction of Soviet society. The decree bitterly condemned the ‘Makhaevist’ belief that the intellectuals — party officials, factory and farm managers, army officers, technical specialists, scientists — were an alien breed of self-seeking men who had nothing in common with the worker at the bench or the peasant behind the plough. This hostile attitude towards the intelligentsia, declared the decree, was ‘savage, hooligan and dangerous to the Soviet State’.

A number of *Pravda* readers, puzzled by the strange expression ‘Makhaevism’, wrote to the editors asking them to explain it. (Some readers, it seems, confused ‘Makhaevism’ with ‘Machism’, the philosophy of the Austrian physicist Ernst Mach, which Lenin had severely criticized thirty years earlier.) In a scathing polemic, Pravda replied that ‘Makhaevism’ was a crude theory which slandered the intelligentsia by branding them as the new exploiters of the workers and peasants; its adherents were ‘aliens, degenerates, and enemies’, whose slogan was ‘Down with the intelligentsia’. Ve-

hemently denying that the intelligentsia constituted a new class of oppressors, *Pravda* asserted that the intellectuals and the toiling masses were 'of one bone and one flesh'. Yet *Pravda*'s barrage of vituperation merely thickened the mist of confusion surrounding the term 'Makhaevism', which, by the 1930s, had become little more than a convenient epithet for intellectual-baiting. But what, in fact, was 'Makhaevism'? Who was its originator, and what influence did he have during his lifetime?

Jan Wacław Machajski was born in 1866 in Busk, a small town of some two thousand inhabitants, situated near the city of Kielce in Russian Poland. He was the son of an indigent clerk, who died when Machajski was a child, leaving a large and destitute family. Machajski attended the *gimnaziya* in Kielce and helped support his brothers and sisters by tutoring the schoolmates who boarded in his mother's apartment. He began his revolutionary career in 1888 in the student circles of Warsaw University, where he had enrolled in the faculties of natural science and medicine. Two or three years later, while attending the University of Zürich, he abandoned his first political philosophy (a blend of socialism and Polish nationalism) for the revolutionary internationalism of Marx and Engels. Machajski was arrested in May 1892, for smuggling revolutionary proclamations from Switzerland into the industrial city of Łódź, which was then, in the throes of a general strike. In 1903, after a dozen years in prison and Siberian exile, he escaped to western Europe, where he remained until the outbreak of the 1905 revolution.

During his long term of banishment in the Siberian settlement of Vilyuisk (in Yakutsk province), Machajski made an intensive study of socialist literature and came to the conclusion that the Social Democrats did not really champion the cause of the manual workers, but that of a new class of 'mental workers' engendered by the rise of industrialism. Marxism, he maintained in his major work, *Umstvenny rabochi*, reflected the interests of this new class, which hoped to ride to power on the shoulders of the manual workers. In a so-called 'socialist' society, he declared, private capitalists would

merely be replaced by a new aristocracy of administrators, technical experts, and politicians; the manual labourers would be enslaved anew by a ruling minority whose capital', so to speak, was education.

In evolving his anti-Marxist theories, Machajski was strongly influenced by Mikhail Bakunin and by the economists of the 1890s. A generation before the appearance of *Umstvenny rabochi*, Bakunin had denounced Marx and his followers as narrow intellectuals who, living in an unreal world of musty books and thick journals, understood nothing of human suffering. Although Bakunin believed that intellectuals would play an important part in the revolutionary struggle, he warned that his Marxist rivals had an insatiable lust for power. In 1872, four years before his death, Bakunin speculated on the shape the Marxist 'dictatorship of the proletariat' would assume if ever inaugurated:

> That would be the rule of scientific intellect, the most autocratic, the most despotic, the most arrogant, and the most insolent of all regimes. There will be a new class, a new hierarchy of genuine or sham savants, and the world will be divided into a dominant minority in the name of science, and an immense ignorant majority.

In one of his most important works, *Gosudarstvennost i anarkhiya*, published the following year, Bakunin elaborated upon this dire prophecy in a most striking passage:

> According to the theory of Mr. Marx, the people not only must not destroy [the state] but must strengthen it and place it at the complete disposal of their benefactors, guardians, and teachers the leaders of the Communist party, namely Mr. Marx and his friends, who will proceed to liberate [mankind] in their own way. They

> will concentrate the reigns of government in a strong hand, because the ignorant people require an exceedingly firm guardianship; they will establish a single state bank, concentrating in its hands all commercial, industrial, agricultural, and even scientific production, and then divide the masses into two armies — industrial and agricultural — under the direct command of state engineers, who will constitute a new privileged scientific-political estate.

According to Bakunin, the followers of Karl Marx and of Auguste Comte as well were 'priests of science', ordained in a new privileged church of the mind and superior education'. They disdainfully informed the common man: 'You know nothing, you understand nothing, you are a blockhead, and a man of intelligence must put a saddle and bridle on you and lead you'.

Bakunin maintained that education was as great an instrument of domination as private property. So long as learning was preempted by a minority of the population, he wrote in 1869 in an essay entitled *Integral Instruction*, it could effectively be used to exploit the majority. 'The one who knows more', he wrote, 'will naturally dominate the one who knows less.' Even if the landlords and capitalists were eliminated, there was a danger that the world 'would be divided once again into a mass of slaves and a small number of rulers, the former working for the latter as they do today'. Bakunin's answer was to wrest education from the monopolistic grasp of the privileged classes and make it available equally to everyone; like capital, education must cease to be 'the patrimony of one or of several classes' and become 'the common property of all'. An integrated education in science and handicrafts (but not in the jejune abstractions of religion, metaphysics and sociology) would enable all citizens to engage in both manual and mental pursuits, thereby eliminating a major source of inequality. 'Everyone must work, and everyone must be educated', Bakunin averred, so that in the good

Machajski remained at his editorial post until his death from a heart attack in February 1926, at the age of sixty.

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society of the future there would be 'neither workers nor scientists, but only men'.

The gulf between the educated classes and the 'dark people' of Russia was broader than anywhere else in Europe, During the 1870s, when the young Populist students from Petersburg and Moscow went to the people in the countryside, they ran into an invisible barrier that separated them from the ignorant *narod*. Their pitiful failure to communicate with the rural folk led some disillusioned Populists to abandon the education which they thought was dividing them from the masses. Others wondered whether the education gap could be bridged at all, whether the Populist philosopher Nikolai Mikhailovski was not right when he observed that the literate few must 'inevitably enslave' the toiling majority.

Nor was the situation really improved when the peasants came to the city to work in the factories, for they brought their suspicion of the intellectuals with them. One labourer in St. Petersburg complained that 'the intelligentsia had usurped the position of the worker'. It was all right to accept books from the students, he said, but when they begin to teach you nonsense you must knock them down. 'They should be made to understand that the workers' cause ought to be placed entirely in the hands of the workers themselves.' Although these remarks were aimed at the Populist Chaikovski circle in the 1870s, the same attitude persisted in succeeding decades towards both the Populists and the Marxists, who were competing for the allegiance of the emerging class of industrial workers. In 1883, Georgi Plekhanov, the 'father' of Russian Social Democracy, felt constrained to pledge that the Marxist dictatorship of the proletariat would be 'as far removed from the dictatorship of a group of *raznochintsy* revolutionists as heaven is from earth'. He assured the workers that Marx's disciples were selfless men, whose mission was to raise the class-consciousness of the proletariat so that it could become 'an independent figure in the arena of historical life, and not pass eternally from one guardian to another'.

Notwithstanding repeated reassurances of this sort, many factory workers eschewed the doctrinaire revolutionism of Plekhanov and his associates and bent their efforts to the task of economic and educational self-improvement. They began to manifest a tendency (in which they were joined by a number of sympathetic intellectuals) which later acquired the label of 'economism'. The average Russian workman was more interested in raising his material level than in agitating for political objectives; he was wary of the revolutionary slogans floated by party leaders who seemed bent on pushing him into political adventures that might satisfy their own ambitions while leaving the situation of the workers essentially unchanged. Political programmes, wrote a leading spokesman of the 'economist' point of view, 'are suitable for intellectuals going "to the people", but not for the workers themselves… And it is the defence of the workers' interests … that is the whole content of the labour movement'. The intelligentsia, he added, quoting Marx's celebrated preamble to the bylaws of the First International, tended to forget that 'the liberation of the working class must be the task of the workers themselves'.

Underlying the anti-intellectualism of the 'economists' was the conviction that the intelligentsia looked upon the working class simply as the means to a higher goal, as an abstract mass predestined to carry out the immutable will of history. According to the 'economists', the intellectuals, instead of bringing their knowledge to bear on the concrete problems of factory life, were inclined to lose themselves in ideologies that had no relation to the true needs of the workers. Emboldened by the Petersburg textile strikes of 1896 and 1897, which were organized and directed by local workmen, the 'economists' urged the Russian labouring class to remain self-sufficient and reject the leadership of self-centred professional agitators. As one bench worker in the capital wrote in an 'economist' journal in 1897, 'the improvement of our working conditions depends on ourselves alone'.

twist us around their fingers, and they will betray us. The workers, he thundered, can triumph only through 'direct combat' with their oppressors.

When Machajski returned to Russia in 1917, he made no effort to channel these sentiments into a coherent movement. His heyday had passed with the revolution of 1905, and now he was prematurely old and tired. After the October revolution, he obtained a non-political job with the Soviet government, serving as a technical editor for *Narodnoye khozyaistvo* (later *Sotsialisticheskoye khozyaistvo*), the organ of the Supreme Economic Council. He remained, however, sharply critical of Marxism and its adherents. In the summer of 1918, he published a single issue of a journal called *Rabochaya revolyutsiya*, in which he censured the Bolsheviks for failing to order the total expropriation of the bourgeoisie or to improve the economic situation of the working class. After the February revolution, wrote Machajski, the workers had received a rise in wages and an eight-hour day, but after October, their material level had been raised 'not one whit!'. The Bolshevik insurrection, he continued, was nothing but 'a counterrevolution of the intellectuals'. Political power had been seized by the disciples of Marx, 'the petty bourgeoisie and the intelligentsia … the possessors of the knowledge necessary for the organization and administration of the whole life of the country'. And the Marxists, in accordance with their prophet's religious gospel of economic determination, had chosen to preserve the bourgeois order, obliging themselves only 'to prepare' the manual workers for their future paradise. Machajski enjoined the working class to press the Soviet government, to expropriate the factories, equalize incomes and educational opportunity, and provide jobs for the unemployed. Yet, as dissatisfied as he was with the new regime, Machajski grudgingly accepted it, at least for the time being. Any attempt to overthrow the government, he said, would benefit only the Whites, who were a worse evil than the Bolsheviks.

all, is the Intelligentsia?, Lozinski paraphrased the central idea of Machajski's philosophy: 'Socializing the means of production liberates the intelligentsia from its subjugation by the capitalist state, but does not liberate labour; it leads to the reinforcement of class slavery, to the strengthening of the workers' bondage'.

Similar echoes of Machajski's writings were to be found in numerous pamphlets and articles by anarchists, Maximalists, and other extreme left-wing sectarians. But with the stern repressions of Stolypin in the years following the revolution of 1905, these echoes rapidly faded away and the men who produced them disappeared into prison or exile. Machajski himself, who had returned to Russia in 1905, was compelled to flee again two years later.

Russian radicalism, at a low ebb during the next decade, quickly revived with the outbreak of the February revolution. Although neither the Workers' Conspiracy nor any other organization of Makhayevtsy reappeared in 1917, the spirit of Makhaevism was much in evidence within the labour movement. As in 1905, Machajski's influence was particularly strong among the anarchists and Maximalists. In September 1917, for example, in phrases evoking Bakunin and Machajski, an anarchist workman exhorted the delegates at a conference of Petrograd factory committees to launch an immediate general strike. There were no 'laws of history' to hold the people back, he declared, no predetermined revolutionary stages, as the Social Democrats maintained. Marx's disciples — both Mensheviks and Bolsheviks — were deceiving the working class with 'promises of God's reign on earth hundreds of years from now'. There was no reason to wait, he cried. The workers must take direct action — not after more centuries of painful historical development, but right now! 'Hail the uprising of the slaves and the equality of income!" At a factory committee gathering the following month, another anarchist speaker opposed the approaching Constituent Assembly on the grounds that it was certain to be monopolized by 'capitalists and intellectuals'. 'The intellectuals', he warned, 'in no case can represent the interests of the workers. They know how to

The anti-political and anti-intellectual arguments of Bakunin and the economists' made an indelible impression on Machajski. While in Siberia, he came to believe that the radical intelligentsia aimed not at the achievement of a classless society, but merely to establish itself as a privileged stratum. It was no wonder that Marxism, rather than advocating an immediate revolt against the capitalist system, postponed its 'collapse until a future time when economic conditions had sufficiently 'matured'. With the further development of capitalism and its increasingly sophisticated technology, the 'mental workers' would grow strong enough to establish their own rule. Even if the new technocracy were then to abolish private ownership of the means of production, Machajski said, the 'professional intelligentsia' would still maintain its position of mastery by taking over the management of production and by establishing a monopoly over the special knowledge needed to operate a complex industrial economy. The managers, engineers and political officeholders would use their Marxist ideology as a new religious opiate to becloud the minds of the labouring masses, perpetuating their ignorance and servitude.

Machajski suspected every left-wing competitor of seeking to establish a social system in which the intellectuals would be the ruling class. He even accused the anarchists of Kropotkin's *Khleb i volya* group of taking a 'gradualist' approach to revolution no better than that of the Social Democrats, for they expected the coming revolution in Russia not to go further than the French revolution of 1789 or 1848. In Kropotkin's projected anarchist commune, Machajski held, 'only the possessors of civilization and knowledge' would enjoy true freedom. The 'social revolution' of the anarchists, he insisted, was not really meant to be a purely 'workers' uprising', but was in fact to be a revolution in the 'interests of the intellectuals'. The anarchists were 'the same socialists as all the others, only more passionate ones'

What then was to be done to avoid this new enslavement? In Machaiski's view, as long as inequality of income persisted and the

instruments of production remained the private property of a capitalist minority, and as long as scientific and technical knowledge remained the 'property' of an intellectual minority, the multitudes would continue to toil for a privileged few. Machajski's solution assigned a key role to a secret organization of revolutionaries called the Workers' Conspiracy (*Rabochi zagovor*), similar to Bakunin's 'secret society' of revolutionary conspirators. Presumably, Machajski himself was to be at the head. The mission of the Workers' Conspiracy was to stimulate the workers into 'direct action' — strikes, demonstrations, and the like — against the capitalists with the immediate object of economic improvements and jobs for the unemployed. The 'direct action' of the workers was to culminate in a general strike which, in turn, would trigger off a world-wide uprising, ushering in an era of equal income and educational opportunity. In the end, the pernicious distinction between manual and mental labour would be obliterated, together with all class divisions.

Machajski's theories provoked passionate discussions within the various groups of Russian radicals. In Siberia, where Machajski hectographed the first part of *Umstvenny rabochi* in 1898, his critique of Social Democracy 'had a great effect upon the exiles', as Trotsky, who was among them, recalled in his autobiography. By 190l, copies of *Umstvenny rabochi* were circulating in Odessa, where 'Makhaevism' was beginning to attract a following. In 1905, a small group of *Makhayesvsky* calling itself the Workers' Conspiracy, was formed in St. Petersburg. Despite Machajski's criticism of the anarchists, a number of them were drawn to his creed. For a time, Olga Taratuta and Vladimir Striga, leading members of the largest anarchist organization in Russia, the Black Banner (*Chernoye znatnya*) group, were associated with a society in Odessa known as the Intransigents (*Neprimirimiye*),which included both anarchists and Makhayevtsy and the principal anarchist circle in Petersburg, Without Authority (*Beznachaliye*), contained a few disciples of Machajski. If some anarchist writers took Machajski to task for seeing everything as a clever plot of the intelligentsia, more than a few,

as one of Kropotkin's followers admitted, found in the doctrines of 'Makhaevism' a 'fresh and vivifying spirit in contrast to the 'stifling atmosphere of the socialist parties, saturated with political chicanery'.

The foremost Anarcho-Syndicalist in Russia in 1905, Daniil Novomirski, clearly echoed Machajski's suspicions of the 'mental workers':

> Which clan does contemporary socialism serve in fact and not in words? We answer at once and without beating about the bush: Socialism is not the expression of the interests of the working class, but of the so-called *raznochintsy*, or declasse intelligentsia. The Social Democratic party, said Novomirski, was infested with political crooks ... new exploiters, new deceivers of the people". The long social revolution would prove to be a farce he warned, should it fail to annihilate, together with the state and private property yet a third enemy of human liberty: "That new sworn enemy of ours is the monopoly of knowledge; its bearer is the intelligentsia". Although Novomirski believed that a 'conscious minority' of farsighted 'pathfinders' was needed to stir the labouring masses into action, he admonished the workers not to look for outsiders to save them. Selfless men simply did not exist – "not in the dark clouds of the empty sky, nor in the luxurious palaces of the tsars, nor in the chambers of the wealthy, nor in any parliament.

Machajski's views influenced another ultra-radical group born of the revolution of 1905, the SR-Maximalists. In fact, the chief animator of 'Makhaevism' next to Machajski himself, a man who barely acknowledged his master's existence, was a Maximalist named Yevgeni Yustinovich Lozinski. In his most important book, *What, after*