



Foreword in Brandt “The Search for a Third Way”

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(1967c-e)

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History is written by the victors of the moment. Sometimes we remember the vanquished, and they are allowed to take their historical place. Ordinarily this happens when their ideas have ultimately prevailed, at a later point in historical time. This can take a generation, or perhaps centuries. Frequently the participants and their ideas and convictions are trampled to death by the victorious ideas or, worse still, distorted and adjusted to the victor's historiography.

The unusual importance of this book lies in the fact that it was written by one of the vanquished. Yet it was written by one whose defeat could not shake his faith, who did not yield to doubt regarding his convictions, who did not accept the victor's representation of reality, and who did not sink into the slough of cynicism.

In June 1961, Heinz Brandt, a socialist and an editor of the West German trade-union newspaper *Metall*, traveled to West Berlin to represent his newspaper at a trade-union congress. Suddenly he disappeared. The following day the East German press announced that he had been arrested while conducting an espionage mission for the Western powers. A subsequent statement alleged that he had been found asleep in the East sector in the S-subway, which at that time linked West with East Berlin. The flagrantly contradictory character of these reports, as well as what they knew of Heinz Brandt's personality, convinced his friends that he had been kidnaped by agents of Ulbricht's State Security Service and forcibly brought to {XII} East Berlin. (This took place before the Wall, when not only visits to relatives but also kidnappings were easy.) After being kept in jail for a year in total isolation from the outside world, Brandt was secretly tried and sentenced to serve a war sentence--a thirteen year term in a penitentiary.

In May 1964, Brandt was released and returned to the Federal Republic to tell his story. He had in fact fallen into the hands of the Eastern security police. At the interrogations he was offered an immediate release on condition that he make a public declaration stating that he had returned voluntarily from the Federal Republic. Brandt rejected this without a moment's hesitation. During both the pretrial investigation and the trial itself, he refused to play the game and receive a lighter sentence at the price of betraying his principles. His abduction and his release made him into a cause *célèbre*, which was reported in newspapers all over the world. But the sensational events of his case did not answer the crucial questions: why was he kidnaped, and why was he released?

This book answers these questions, but it does more than that: it reveals to us a



man with an unshakable faith and hope--a man who is utterly imbued with his convictions. And as Brandt's fate unfolds, the book goes beyond the personal sphere; it provides a portrait of a group of socialists and Communists who were born before the First World War, who experienced the impact of the Russian Revolution and the seizure of power by Hitler and Stalin, who never accepted the falsified socialism purveyed by either the right-wing Social Democrats or Stalin and who therefore stood in opposition to their leadership, whether socialist or Communist.

This generation of authentic revolutionaries has almost been forgotten--on the one hand because most of them were liquidated by Hitler or Stalin, on the other because Stalin's victory strengthened the world's belief that his terrorist state capitalism represented the principles of Marxist socialism. Perhaps there is also a third reason. Events since the First World War have increasingly shaken and shattered illusions about ideas and principles. A cynical attitude of disbelief, which is presented as realism, has become dominant, and persons who uncompromisingly adhere to their beliefs and their principles are frequently viewed as neurotics, madmen, or worse.

The author of this book was a Communist while he was in school and at the university. But although he believed in the revolution, which was to usher in a better and more human world, he very soon began to have doubts about Stalin's aims and methods and to fight against them with a small group of friends. When Hitler became Chancellor in Germany, Brandt fought Nazism; he was arrested and brutally mistreated. After his release from the notorious Nazi barracks on Hedemannstrasse he again threw himself into the struggle, although as a Jew he could have emigrated without feeling he was a deserter. He continued to fight in the anti-Nazi underground until he was arrested again. He survived six years in a penitentiary and four years in a concentration camp until he was finally liberated by Allied troops. Throughout all these years he never once was persuaded to give up the struggle or to abandon his hopes. None of the sadistic humiliations he suffered at the hands of his jailers could break his spirit or diminish his intellectual independence, which was evidenced by the increasing sharpness of his criticism of Stalin and Stalinism.

He opposed the suicidal and irresponsible policy that branded the Social Democrats „Social Fascists.“ He never doubted that the show trials were the expression of an insane dehumanization. He never let himself be led astray by the „non-aggression pact“ between Hitler and Stalin. But he mustered new hope when Russia entered the war against Hitler. Perhaps the war against fascism and the alliance with the Western democracies would result in the development of a „humanistic socialism“ in the Soviet Union, despite everything that had previously transpired there (a hope also cherished by many anti-Stalinists in Russia and by many Americans).

This hope was given new impetus after the war when the Social Democratic and Communist parties of East Germany merged. Was this not a renunciation of the old Stalinist policy? Was not Germany, with its cultural and civilizing tradition, the country in which a humanistic socialism had a chance? Brandt believed so for some time. But soon he clearly perceived that the Ulbricht regime was failing morally, humanely, and politically. Again he swam against the current and more and more found himself in opposition to the regime he was serving. Finally, since he feared he would be arrested, he fled with his wife and three children to the Federal Republic where he found a position as an editor with the trade union newspaper *Metall*, representing the interests of the organ-



ized workers in the metal industry.

Many others in his situation would have sought to make capital out of their break with communism by becoming professional {XIV} anti-communists and spokesmen for the Cold War. Brandt is not of this breed. All the persecutions he had suffered at the hands of the Nazis and the Ulbricht regime did not make him into a fanatic, did not diminish his faith in reason and peace. This attitude has made him even more hated by the East German Communists than if he had become a spokesman for the Cold War. He was a living attestation of humanistic socialism, which Stalin and the Communist party destroyed through the most catastrophic of all methods: absolute degeneration.

From the time of his abduction and during his three years in prison, Brandt was not allowed to talk with anyone, so he knew nothing of the campaign to obtain his freedom which began almost immediately. Liberals, socialists, pacifists, and trade unionists, as well as organizations such as Amnesty International, staunchly demanded Brandt's release. The miracle was wrought when Bertrand Russell gave the campaign its greatest impetus by returning a medal awarded him by the East German Communists for his efforts on behalf of peace. The Ulbricht regime yielded to the pressure of the noncommunist „Left,“ amnestied Brandt, and allowed him to return to the Federal Republic.

Here Brandt faced what was perhaps the greatest temptation of his life. But not even the desire for popularity and the understandable rancor and resentment he felt against Ulbricht's people could shake his faith in peace and coexistence and his steadfast rejection of fanaticism. He remained true to his principles and convictions, even though by remaining true to himself he could only increase the number of his enemies.

As I write this I suddenly realize that my remarks may sound confusing and disconcerting, indeed nonsensical to many readers. I write about Brandt as a man of faith, a humanistic socialist who at the same time has been a Communist. How does this fit together? Didn't Stalin show that communism is the opposite of all that is spiritual and all that is even remotely concerned with humanism? One of Stalin's accomplishments is indeed incontestable: he succeeded in convincing many of his own people and even more people in the rest of the world that his ideas and program represented „Marxism“ and the Marxist principle of socialism. Stalin needed the myth of (Stalinist) Marxism to be able to play the role of successor to Marx and Lenin; and the West, by accepting this myth, helped Stalin achieve his goal. But to believe that Stalinism and the stamp {XV} it put on communism are the realization of Marxist socialism is, as Schumpeter has already said, like viewing the Grand Inquisitor as a successor to Christ. There are many historical examples to show how men, once they have achieved positions of power, falsify an idea and transmute it into its opposite, asserting that they represent the original principles by making use of the words of the founder. There is no more striking example of this than Stalinist communism passing itself off as Marxist socialism.

Marx was one of the greatest representatives of the Western Enlightenment and of humanism. In his view man's fundamental mission was to develop his human capacities--his love, his reason, and his artistic abilities. In order to be rich, man must *be* much, not *have* much. He was opposed to capitalism for two reasons: one was its materialism which made man greedy for more possessions and new consumer goods. The other was that the method of production and consumption under capitalism obstructed a further development of the productive forces that, once freed from the fetters of capitalism, could assure for all men the material basis of an existence worthy of human beings.



Marxism is the most important religious movement of the nineteenth century if we could only grasp the fact that a religious movement does not necessarily have to be bound up with a theistic concept. (Taoism and Buddhism are classic examples of nontheistic religions.)

What distinguishes Marx from all other great humanistic idealists--from the prophets up to Spinoza, Goethe, and Herder--is not his ideals for human existence but his insight that culture alone does not suffice to create the new man or the kingdom of heaven on earth. He saw that the average man in his daily life could not escape his social class, and that therefore society must change, especially its method of production and its class structure, in such a way that it became the foundation for a full development of the individual:

Toward the end of their lives, Marx and Engels recognized that they had erred in their assumption that this great upheaval, which would bring the new man in its wake, was imminent. They also erred in other assumptions. Marx did not see how deeply and persistently irrationality and evil had ensconced themselves in human nature; in the spirit of the Enlightenment he believed that once man was freed from external fetters, he would be ready and indeed eager to become the „new man.“ He also erred in respect to the durability and elasticity of capitalism. He did not perceive the possibilities of {XVI} a Hitler or a Stalin. Marx, like so many other men permeated by their world of ideas, wrongly judged the time that it would take until the „kingdom of heaven“ was established on earth. But he never wavered--neither the young nor the old Marx in his humanistic idea of man and his future. The same was true of his disciples of the first generation. Then the socialist movement began to degenerate. Socialism was expounded as a purely economic movement: the socialization of the means of production under the leadership of the working class increasingly became the definition of socialism and of communism. Man--the root and aim of all social transformations according to Marx--was again subordinated to the economic order.

Humanistic socialism received its death blow from the right wing as well as from the Communist interpretation. This does not mean that there are not still individual humanistic Marxists who have preserved a deep faith in the Marxist idea of a better future. Actually they have not been many, and most of them were snuffed out by Hitler or Stalin. Heinz Brandt is one of the few surviving humanistic socialists in Germany who has retained the strength to tell his story. This story is not only a shattering human document of faith, courage, and independence. It is also an important historical document, above all because only a few eyewitnesses of this epoch have survived whose vision has not been blurred by helplessness, cynicism, or disenchantment.

This book is the gripping story of a man who was born five years before the outbreak of the First World War and who became a brave and strong fighter against National Socialism and the Stalinist distortion of Marxism. Altogether he spent fourteen years in Nazi and Communist jails and never lost his faith in his vision of a society of free and productive men--of a society whose all-encompassing goal is the development of the whole man. His autobiography shows how the influence of his grandfather, a rabbi and important Talmudic teacher, merged with the influence of his liberal, anti-nationalistic parents and finally with the German philosophical tradition of Goethe, Hegel, and Marx. Besides being the biography of an unusual personality, this book also constitutes an important historical source for the history of German socialists and Com-



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munists under Hitler and their struggle against the dictator. It portrays the different political tendencies among the resistance fighters, outside as well as inside their jail cells and concentration camps. It shows their political conflicts, splits, and struggles. Here for the first time is a portrait of the resistance fighters against Hitler by a man who combines extraordinary courage and intellectual in dependence with a clear and perceptible judgment of social and political events.