

National Caucus of Labor Committees

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# Strategy for Socialism

Volume I

Reprints from  
**THE CAMPAIGNER**

**Socialism or Fascism ?**

**Toward a Dialectics of Art**

**Centrism as a Social Phenomenon**

**The New Left, Local Control, and Fascism**

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# Strategy for Socialism Volume I

With this volume, **Strategy for Socialism**, we begin a series of reprints from **New Solidarity**, **The Campaigner**, and other publications of the **National Caucus of Labor Committees**. The articles in this first volume were chosen because of the necessity of having them reprinted rather than for chronological reasons. In future volumes we plan to print other vital documents not presently available to the public.

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# ***SOCIALISM OR FASCISM?***

**Fascism: Final Stage of Capitalism**

**Why The Monetary Crisis Happened**

**Emergency Reconstruction Program**

Published by  
The National Council of Labor Committee



35¢

# **Socialism or Fascism?**

Originally published as a series in *New Solidarity* in 1971.

## PREFACE

This pamphlet offers the reader an analysis of the current situation by one of the few groups of economists whose professional competence has survived the aftermath of August 15, 1971. As a political tendency in the U.S. and European socialist movements, our organization's existence dates from the issuance of a set of memoranda in late 1958 and early 1959, in which the following firm predictions were made:

(1) That the 1957-58 U.S. recession represented a turning point in postwar capitalist development, a point of exhaustion of the "endogenous" U.S. potential for further expansion of the domestic **productive** labor force. These economic developments meant an extended period of rising youth and minority ferment, without immediate new radicalization among trade unionists.

(2) That no **immediate** depression was to be expected, since continued growth of the U.S. economic satrapies in Western Europe and Japan provided a prop to the U.S. dollar on a world scale.

(3) That the basis for continued healthy capitalist expansion in Western Europe would begin to be exhausted about the middle of the 1960's, after which the international monetary system must begin to unravel in a series of classical capitalist monetary crises.

(4) That these late-1960's developments, leading toward a new world depression, would resurrect the political working-class struggle in Europe and in the U.S. itself.

During the weeks following August 15, there can be no doubt that the analysis presented in those theses has been fully and precisely confirmed.

We do not represent the only group of economists to foresee a breakdown of the Bretton Woods system for the late 1960's. Professor Robert Triffin of Yale is one of the best-known among a tiny minority of academic economists who warned of such developments. Some central bankers, typified in the U.S. by former Federal Reserve Chairman William McChesney Martin, have also repeatedly warned against such dangers. A small minority of the socialist movement in Europe has maintained broad views to the same effect since about 1963, partly as a result of our influence on this subject. Our own analyses stand out principally because of the greater detail and precision with which we have dated each phase of impending developments.

By contrast, the overwhelming majority of academic, business, and socialist economists have pledged their reputations on the promise that it couldn't happen. It has been generally assumed in papers submitted to government agencies by professional economist "advisors," in textbooks used in college economics courses, and in the writings of most socialist "experts," that the Bretton Woods system with its "built-in stabilizers" represented an essentially depression-proof form of capitalist economy.

Among the followers of Paul M. Sweezy and other leading "New Left" economists, it was assumed and energetically argued that finance capital and its cyclical problems no longer existed, that the new capitalist economy, "monopoly-capital-giant-corporationism," did not correspond in any meaningful way to the sort of capitalist boom-bust process analyzed by Karl Marx.

All the leading "official Communist" experts attempted to fit views resembling Sweezy's schema within the Soviet orthodoxy of Lenin's **Imperialism** as they understood the latter work, seeing a rise in "inter-imperialist rivalries" but no foreseeable repetition of the 1931-34 crises. Others assumed that the "war economy" had solved the "boom-bust" problems of pre-1940 capitalism, or simply explained the "depression-proof" character of modern capitalism along the lines of the Belgian, Ernest Mandel, as "neo-capitalism."

So August 15 has totally discredited Nobel prize-winner Paul Samuelson, Chicago's Milton Friedman, Galbraith, and Keynesians in general. It has also discredited the pretensions of expertise by the Communist, most "Trotskyist," and "New Left" economists generally. Under such circumstances, responsibility for presenting the thinking working man and woman with competent orientation on the present situation falls largely to our own organization. If it may be granted that the Triffins, the William McChesney Martins, and a handful of other non-socialist economists have also demonstrated a slightly lesser degree of competence on this subject, those "experts" are unfortunately on the other side of the fence, lending their advice to those engaged in driving down the material conditions of life of employed and unemployed working people alike.

Our object in the three following items in this pamphlet is to identify briefly and clearly our situation in the present and the immediate future, and to plainly state what we propose be done about the challenge confronting us. We do not propose that readers simply take our word on faith. Even so, we have clearly established exceptional professional competence in this field, and on that account honest readers will want to know our views and give them careful study.

### The Present Economic Situation

At this moment of writing, the entire capitalist world is barely inches from that general collapse of world trade and production which will represent a Second

Great Depression. Since the exact timing of such a collapse depends considerably on the interacting subjectivities of leading central bankers and governments, it is impossible to predict absolutely the exact week or even month the inevitable general collapse occurs. All the objective conditions for a collapse have been fulfilled; only the triggering of the actual collapse is lacking.

In the U.S., whose government plays the most important role in determining when the bottom falls out, the Nixon administration has proceeded since August 15 in a rather effective way toward delaying the collapse within the U.S. economy itself while behaving in the most reckless and irresponsible fashion concerning the decisive area of interrelations among currencies and trade balances in the world as a whole. Unless the Nixon regime abruptly abandons its "non-negotiable demands" position toward leading foreign bankers, the depression could conceivably have begun by the time this pamphlet gets back from the printers, or might arrive just in time for Christmas. If the Nixon regime abruptly turns toward a more sensible world monetary policy, the depression might be delayed into early or middle 1972.

The depression cannot be prevented, but it could be delayed. The principal means by which it might be delayed into late 1972 or even slightly beyond would amount to a general regimentation of both the domestic U.S. economy and a rigid system of flexible currency and credit controls in the world market, a system which would have to be based on a de facto gold devaluation of the U.S. dollar and adjustments in the prices of other leading currencies.

For reasons summarized in the first of the following three items, such police-state-type economic controls would be most difficult to maintain. Under the most favorable conditions they would have to be considered short-term measures, even though they could conceivably postpone a collapse for as much as a year. In sum, such controls cannot work effectively over a long period in any capitalist economy, and they inevitably threaten the very existence of present U.S. and European forms of government by bringing the employers and the state into the most direct confrontation with working people as a whole.

The most essential thing to be said about the impending new Great Depression is that it must be potentially far, far worse than that of the 1930's. For a comparison of the kind of general economic breakdown crisis it will potentially represent, we have to go back three centuries and more, to the general collapse and widespread depopulation of Europe during the hundred years following the Spanish and Portuguese bankruptcies of the late 16th century. If we do not establish socialism in North America and Western Europe during the years just ahead, the potential depths of such

widespread human misery will inevitably become the lot of all of us. We have a chance, a difficult but very real chance, to prevent this new depression from reaching such low points. The final item in this pamphlet states how.

If the reader is to fully understand our views on these subjects for himself or herself, a serious commitment to studying theoretical economics is absolutely necessary. The second of the following three items summarizes all the main points which have to be studied and mastered for that purpose. Our unique success in this discipline is not some gift of prophecy or any other mystical phenomenon; it is simply a result of applying the theory summarized in the first item to the empirical subject matter of modern capitalist economy. Properly understood, theoretical economics is a science which could be mastered by any intelligent working person.

In the main, we trust that the crisis confronting us all and the proven success of the science we offer on this subject will supply numerous working people with the desire and determination to apply their intelligence to this subject.

There is nothing mysterious, either, about the exceptional success of L. Marcus's development of the theses cited at the outset. Those theses were developed out of an intensive 1956-59 study of capital formation and credit expansion processes then occurring within the Dollar Empire. Where other economists, such as Triffin, obtained more limited success by treating mainly the monetary side of the economy, Marcus followed Karl Marx's approach, which dictates that the growth of capital must be seen in contradiction to the development of the real productive forces. So, where Triffin and others made projections based on so-called illiquidity trends (ratio of gross public and private debt to total current product), Marcus contrasted these illiquidity trends with the rate at which North American, European, and Japanese expansion of employment in tangible production of useful wealth was approaching its relative limits in capitalist terms of investment. It was on this basis that Marcus related post-1958 "stagflation" in the U.S. to its effects on youth and minority layers, and predetermined the point in time at which current combined rates of European and Japanese productive expansion would converge on their approximate combined limits during the middle 1960's.

This was the empirical correlative for what Marcus describes in the second of the following items as the contradiction between the growth of capital — stocks, bonds, mortgages, acceptances, etc. — and the expansion of the rate of social reproduction. Triffin, like most pseudo-Marxian economists, explicitly or implicitly assumes a mathematical consistency between the growth of capital (simple accounting of Gross National Product) and the growth of production of real wealth. Marcus, following Marx, treated these two processes as contra-

dictory — thus his exceptional success in forecasting what is now accomplished history.

New York City  
October 10, 1971

## **FASCISM: FINAL STAGE OF CAPITALISM**

**The following is a summary of the major political resolution adopted by the September 12 plenum of the NCLC's National Committee. The plenum also adopted a complementary resolution being published as part of an editorial in a German sister-publication of New Solidarity. The same session approved a reorganization of efforts which will lead towards a 50,000 weekly circulation of an enlarged New Solidarity in the course of the months ahead.**

**For explanation of technical economic terms included in parts of the following, refer to L. Marcus's "Why Depressions Happen," Part Two of this pamphlet.**

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Unless socialist governments are established in the U.S.A. and key sectors of Western Europe during the next several years, the coming capitalist depression means an end to the existence of humanity as we know it. From the standpoint of theoretical economics, the predicament of the entire advanced capitalist sector during the coming depression will be like that of the German economy in 1933. The continuation of the capitalist system into the latter part of this decade means fascism. Fascism, in turn, means nuclear holocaust by the end of the 1970's, unless the U.S.S.R. and China are prepared to permit the foreign enslavement of their populations without a struggle.

This need not be a cause for pessimism. The capitalist class cannot simply decide to institute fascism at any instant it chooses. The precondition for fascism is a process of exacerbated social crisis, in which now miniscule and embryonic socialist forces can secure leadership of the majority of the population in North America and Western Europe.

In the U.S.A. itself, provided that the present Left parties are swept aside during the next year or so, and on the condition that the best socialist cadres from all organizations are brought together either in a common organization or a united front with a competent perspective and program, socialism can be established before fascism has the opportunity to consolidate itself.

However, if we fail to destroy the present obstacles of the CP and Barnesite-SWP hegemonies during the

period immediately ahead, those centrist groups will gain an unshakeable hold over the majority of emerging radicalized layers of the population, as the CP did during the 1930's. If we do not commit ourselves to the ruthless destruction of such groups' hegemonies during the months ahead, and unless sectarian opposition to united fronts is overcome, there is no hope for the future of humanity. Everything else we might accomplish as second or third-rate influences would be an isolated if noble glimmer of light in the night of general catastrophe.

The experiences of the 1920's and 1930's, in particular, warn us that most working people will **initially** brush aside our warnings. Not on grounds of reasonable contrary evidence: they will pooh-pooh the force of reason for the sake of the more persuasive arguments of wishful thinking. As long as possible, they will hide their heads from the unthinkable reality, as within a barrel lined with pretty pictures.

No matter: historical precedent also warns us that the problems of immediate popular credibility must not deter us from telling it as it is. Those who have the mental and moral resources to face the truth now are the potential revolutionary intelligentsia from the ranks of educated socialists, trade unionists, oppressed minorities, unorganized and unemployed. Provided that we now proceed to win over these exceptional potential leaders, we shall have the indispensable nucleus of socialist leadership to which the masses of people will later turn, at the most critical points in tomorrow's social crises.

To understand why fascism is the only capitalist alternative to early socialist transformation, we need consider three interrelated sets of facts. The first of these describes the processes leading up to the depths of the coming depression. This initial phase simultaneously produces the conditions for mass socialist struggles, and also "educates" the capitalist class and its potential allies in the "need for fascism." The second set of processes is that confronting capitalism in the depths of the coming depression. The third topic is complementary to the first; it is the present emergence of popular, characteristic elements of fascist ideology among both radical-conservative and certain "left-radical" strata. It is this present appearance of fairly widespread fascist ideas which creates the subjective possibility for the sudden growth of mass fascist movements during the crisis ahead.

### **Fascist Tendencies**

The most basic forces at work for fascism now are economic. This has two aspects. The first is reflected in the U.S. wage-freeze and in austerity programs in Western Europe. The second is the emergence of imminently genocidal policies toward a "final solution" of the welfare question.

The wage-freeze campaign reflects the explosive discrepancy between the rate of fictitious capital accumulation and the much lower rate of social reproduction ( $S'/(C+V)$ ). In order to maintain the "price-earnings"-structure valuation of existing masses of stocks, bonds, mortgages, etc., in a period of relative stagnation and decline in useful production, the total mass of profits, debt-service, and rents required can be obtained only by driving down real wages.

This capitalist solution to the problem for today merely worsens the same problem tomorrow. Wage-austerity without massive expansion of productive employment reduces the mass of Circulating Capital for useful production. This lowers the rate of production of useful wealth. At the same time, the profits, debt-service and rents collected at the expense of real wages increase the mass of **non-productive** capital holdings. As a combined result of these two developments, the mass of required profit, debt-service and rent increases during a period of decline in real production. Thus, the increased demand for profits can be met only by driving real wages down much lower.

In this fashion, the magnitude of the problem and the rate of depression of workers' real incomes tend to increase geometrically. The productive base becomes constantly narrower, while the mass of fictitious values grows cancerously.

This means that mere trade-union methods of resistance fail. The trade-union organizations are threatened with liquidation, since no section of that movement can even minimize the wage gouging by simple trade-union methods. Even rear-guard defense of living and working conditions demands political mass strikes by alliances of organized and unorganized workers with unemployed generally, oppressed minorities within the working class, and socialists per se. The union that keeps out "outside agitators" in such a period is cutting its members' throats.

So, ironically, as only political mass strikes can defend the existence of unions from total destruction, so the relative value of unions as **self-contained** fighting organizations rapidly evaporates. In any case, the capitalists reach the point that they will no longer tolerate even a George Meany, let alone serious unionists or political mass strikes.

The welfare issue is the other side of the attack on the unions. As unemployment increases, and as capitalists resort with increasing frenzy to every possible trick to reduce the costs of maintaining the working-class population as a whole, that section of the working class thrown onto the scrap-heap by reduced production and employment becomes the obvious expendable item for programs of cost-cutting.

Already, in Reagan's schemes, in Rockefeller's

slave-labor welfare law, in the thinly-veiled overtones of genocide from Nixon's recent address to the congress, we see the Hitlerian idea of a "final solution" to the problem of the oppressed-minority unemployed **beginning** to emerge in the mind of the capitalist class generally.

The complementary threat to the existence of oppressed minorities is located in the various "Community Action" or "community control" schemes previously developed by the British Colonial Office for efficient subjugation of colonial populations. These techniques have been knowingly adopted by such capitalist agencies as the Office of Economic Opportunity, the Ford Foundation, and the Prudential Life Insurance Company.

"Community control" has two complementary objectives. Its immediate value to the capitalists is the mobilizing of sections of the oppressed minorities as scabs and union-busters around fascist scoundrels like LeRoi Jones. The only benefits actually passed out to the oppressed for such services are the porkbarrels given to the handfuls of wretches like Jones and his paid goon squads. For the mass of oppressed minorities swindled in supporting "community control" schemes, the real pay-off is a deepened estrangement between the employed and unemployed, making it more difficult to mobilize forces among the employed workers to come to the aid of oppressed minorities threatened by genocide in the months and years just ahead.

Apart from trade-union and welfare-movement resistance to these economic repressions, crisis-ridden capitalism finds an important short-term resistance to draconian measures in the political anarchy of existing capitalist parliamentary machines.

The various parochialist interests represented within the Democratic, Republican, and Conservative parties each fight for special privileges and exemptions contrary to the general interest of capitalism as a whole. The "liberal" factions of these special-interest groups within the parliamentary parties attempt to strengthen their particular interests by various alliances with duped trade-unionists and other workers who have been suckered into the "two-party system." At this juncture of economic crisis, the parliamentary parties represent a reservoir of "parliamentary cretinism," of sabotage and footdragging against the sort of police-state executive programs which collective capitalist interests so desperately require. It begins to become increasingly clear even to pragmatists like Nelson Rockefeller that capitalist democracy is something they could better do without.

A most important special contribution to future mass support for a fascist machine is being provided now by the CP and SWP, in their role within the "Popular Front" organizations such as NPAC and PCPJ. In these



organizations, the goon squads of such centrist parties function to defend their allies, the capitalist politicians (e.g., Senator Vance Hartke) from embarrassment by references to working-class interests or socialist politics. To the extent that the CP and SWP manage to gather most of the mobile "left" forces into such assemblies, and prevent these assemblies from becoming organizations for independent working-class politics, the centrists effectively sabotage the emergence of a serious political alternative in a period of crisis. When Communist and other reformist and centrist socialist parties carry such treachery to its logical next step, of "Popular Front" electoral alliances between capitalist and socialist politicians, the pathway for fascism is virtually cleared.

Any alliance between socialist and capitalist forces assures that working-class interest must be sold out completely, and yet that basic capitalist interests cannot be competently served. For this reason, the "Popular Front" is never more than a brief, imbecilic charade, which discredits the leading socialist organizations, and, in a crisis-period, discredits the last vestige of capitalist democracy.

The vile treachery of leading socialist groups, like the Communist parties, in attempting to establish or work within alliances between labor and capitalists (as the SWP's role in NPAC), virtually ensures the victories of the Bruenings and Hitlers in the following period.

Superficially, it might appear that a depression removes the immediate monetary pressures pushing society toward police-state rule and fascism, by devaluing the greatest portion of fictitious values in stocks, bonds, mortgages, etc. This is absolutely not the case.

### In the Depression

To re-start real production requires that the rate of social reproduction ( $S'/(C+V)$ ) provide the basis for a comparable rate of profit. Or, lacking this, that the capitalist system must have open to it some new area of **primitive accumulation** outside capitalist production (looting of new natural resources, of previously-accumulated wealth, of farmers, or wars of conquest, etc.)

Under depression conditions, the rate of social reproduction is **negative**, such that the possible rate of capitalists' profit based on real social reproduction (alone) would also be **negative**. At a time when production is running way below the levels of existing capacities, as in a depression, capitalists do not productively invest (realize) surplus value. This fact itself would suffice to reduce the rate of profit to **zero**. For the same reason, masses of idled capacity, capitalists do not productively invest even the major portion of constant capital; on this account, the resulting rate of social reproduction is negative.

The possibility of re-starting a depressed capitalist economy depends on primitive accumulation.

**In part**, such a possibility always tends to exist during a depression, because of the opportunities for primitive accumulation against existing productive capacities and the working class itself. When idle existing plants can be purchased for a fraction of their cost of production, and when wages are depressed below the cost of reproducing existing qualities of labor-power, a depressed capitalist economy can slightly raise the level of production from the absolute bottom of the crash by cannibalizing the wealth (productive capacities and labor-power) produced during the preceding period of development. However, this cannot provide a basis for recovery, since this discounting of previously produced wealth means that production must be proportionately way below the level of output and employment during the pre-crash period.

This problem is demonstrated by the cases of the U.S.A. and Nazi Germany from 1933 onwards, with the introduction of statist war-economy forms by F.D.R.'s NRA and the Nazi steps introduced under Schacht. In the U.S., a modest increase in production from bottom levels occurred because wages had already been driven down below the cost of reproduction of labor-power. Similarly, in Nazi Germany, fascist labor laws had fixed nominal wages at depression-bottom levels, and rapidly-reduced real-wage levels fell precipitously under pressures of Nazi inflation. Germany, unlike the U.S. of that period, began to reach "full employment" conscription of the unemployed for C.C.C.-type projects. However, this more rapid development of the Nazi war-economy simply impelled Hitler to undertake the most desperate military looting adventures, gambling his regime's existence (between 1936-38) on such facts as the French army officer corps' corruption by sympathy for fascist regimes.

In the U.S. under F.D.R., full employment was not realized, nor did real employment-recovery begin, until 1940. The delay was not caused, as some have suggested, by Roosevelt's slowness to recognize the potentialities of war expenditures for recovery. On the contrary, the U.S. was able to finance the gigantic debt of war-spending only in anticipation of the primitive-accumulation revenues to be squeezed out of ally and conquered alike at the end of that war.

In Nazi Germany, the process was accelerated and carried much further. Schacht's efforts to "bootstrap" Nazi Germany out of the depression brought the economy to the brink of monetary collapse again at about the mid-1930's. Lacking the foreign sources of primitive accumulation available to the U.S.A. and other World War I victors, Germany was impelled by the nature and situation of its "independent" capitalist economy to embark on successive conquests of its neighbors, in pursuit of the loot with which to meet payments overdue on the account of an inflated mass of Nazi capital.

As the Red Army finally established geographic limits for Nazi looting, the fascists were impelled toward more intensive cannibalizing of the previously-conquered region and its subject populations. In addition to the secondary, longer-pull measures, such as settling German farmers in depopulated slavic regions, the main source of new capitalist wealth for Krupp et al. was the super-exploitation of "Gastarbeiter" and slave labor; the latter was ground up for the stored wealth of its very bodies and then subjected to cost-reduction, the depleted slaves sent to the gas chambers and ovens along with the "non-productive culls." The practice of collecting clothing, hair, gold fillings, and so forth from the bodies of these "culls" epitomizes the character of every capitalist economy in its final stage.

The present "ecology crisis," the abysmal material conditions of life below the Tropic of Cancer, and related phenomena symptomize the fact that the past quarter century of the Dollar Empire has depended on depleting those remaining natural and human resources on which a non-fascist form of capitalism could continue in the advanced sector. In short, the coming depression confronts the entire advanced-capitalist sector with the same general form of problem facing the Nazi economy during 1933-45: the early attempted conquest of the non-capitalist sector (USSR, China, etc.) and the cost-reduction elimination of the "useless" (unemployed) human beings of the entire world

### **Fascist Ideology Today**

The most conspicuous, widespread element of fascist ideology rampant in the U.S. today is the radical-conservative impetus toward a "final solution" for the "welfare question." The same philosophy is also widespread in a liberal-radical guise as a movement not-accidentally partly initiated by John D. Rockefeller III, the "Zero Population-Growth" cult, whose "rational goals" could be attained only by genocide on a world scale.

A related fascist ideology is found in another branch of the "radical" "ecology movement," the "People Pollute" madmen, whose filth is subsidized by corporations, foundations and advertising agencies. These wretches insist that "people," not capitalism, cause the "ecology crisis" by "over-consumption." In this we see a resurrection of the anti-labor arguments which used to be heard from the now-defunct proto-fascist "Praxis" cult of Carol Nieman, Greg Calvert, Dave Gilbert et al.

In addition, we already have in the U.S. (and Western Europe) a cancerous ferment called the "rock drug counter-culture" movement, a mass of alienated pot-heads identical in every essential feature with the German Youth Movement from which ex-bohemian Adolf Hitler recruited the worst scum for his Nazi S.S. The process of fusion of the radical right with this "rock

drug counter-culture" has already begun in an embryonic way, as luminaries Ti-Grace Atkinson and Bob Dylan have moved into support of the fascist alliance organized by Rabbi Meir Kahane, Joe Colombo, and Dr. ("Black Capitalism") Matthews.

As for Nazi-type academics, it is guaranteed that many logical positivists and behaviorists will soon be lisping fascist tunes. We have already a foretaste of that development as the dean of U.S. behaviorists, B.F. Skinner, proposes a "1984" nightmare, seconded by his co-thinker, chief proponent of "community control," Dr. Kenneth Clark.

## **THE MONETARY CRISIS: WHY DEPRESSIONS HAPPEN**

**by L. Marcus**

In September 1931, at a time when the pound sterling had the same general sort of relationship to world trade that the dollar held until this month, the British government, acting under circumstances like those facing Nixon, decided to let the value of the pound "float" free of a fixed price for gold. The immediate result was the Great Depression.

Although it is not impossible that a new Great Depression could be delayed for even months, provided a new set of parities is quickly rigged, Nixon's chattering about a new period of prosperity is simply buncombe.

The technical reasons for an immediate depression-threat are elementary. All capitalist world trade depends upon the negotiability of letters of credit and bills of exchange proper in the currencies of both the buyer and the seller. Considering the volume of world trade conducted on credit, if the relative prices of the principal currencies fluctuate widely within a period of thirty days, the risk of loss to buyer, seller, and bankers, because of currency fluctuations, causes a collapse of credit and a cessation of the major part of world trade as a whole.

Under these conditions, those economies which are at the moment the most expansionary — such as Japan, Holland, West Germany — will find themselves plunged the most deeply into the abyss. For, if the total tangible product of a national sector is in the order of ten to thirty percent committed to an export market, a collapse of world trade means immediately something approaching a ten to thirty percent plunge in national output and employment. When we go further, to consider that much purely domestic production itself depends upon income from exports, it is not difficult to

show that even a significant partial decline in present Japanese exports could set off a spiralling collapse of that entire economy. Similarly, West Germany, Holland, Belgium, etc.

During recent years, various U.S. and European charlatans presenting themselves as economists, have offered the credulous "explanation" that U.S. post-1965 monetary difficulties reflected the emergence of Western Europe and Japan as new economic "super-powers," duelling the weakening U.S. economy to death in the world-trade market. More contemptible nonsense was never written on this subject.

The entire development of Western Europe and Japan during the past quarter-century has been based on massive loans to world trade by the U.S., and on the role of the U.S. dollar as the principal reserve currency and rock of stability on which an orderly growth of world trade could be premised. Since the first threat of inflationary crisis, which confronted the dollar immediately following World War II, U.S. money-managers have correctly and repeatedly warned the U.S. Presidents and Congresses that any instability in the dollar would wreck the international monetary system and bring the entire capitalist world down into a new depression.

Indeed, the very deficits which the dollar has incurred during recent years have been the indispensable margin for continued prosperity in the other advanced sub-sectors. Now that the dollar has been devalued, the world market staggers toward collapse for the inability of the dollar to continue sustaining such losses! The capitalist system veers toward depression for the lack of \$35 gold parity to give stability to trade, and the protectionist measures taken to stop U.S. border losses directly and indirectly undermine the major portion of that export activity on which the prosperity of the U.S. "competitors" depends.

The dollars which will actually suffer the burden of immediate devaluation are precisely the Eurodollars in European and Japanese central bankers' vaults, dollars held as reserves ensuring the liquidity of the pound, franc, guilder, Deutschmark, and yen. Devalue the Eurodollar by any significant amount and the currency of the U.S.'s competitors faces threat to its liquidity as well.

Unlike such ignorant charlatans as Ernest Mandel, or unlike various "wise" Communist Party (CP) officials, every competent pro-capitalist economist and banker of the past quarter-century has understood these ABC's of post-war international finance. Every responsible European and Japanese official involved has understood that they could not "defeat" the dollar without thereby immediately plunging their own economy toward collapse. That "negation of the negation" has been the continuing basis for foreign bankers' ever-loving faith

in and support of the dollar in each moment of its difficulties.

There are only two things, in the fashion of bandaids, which the ruling bankers and government officials can attempt to accomplish at this juncture — within the capitalist framework. The first: they must desperately attempt to accomplish the nearly impossible. They must somehow manage to establish a new system of approximately-fixed parities among the leading European and the Japanese currencies...within less than ninety days!

If they do not succeed in this, then, as all those currencies must then fluctuate independently with respect to the dollar, they must also fluctuate with respect to one another — the condition of monetary anarchy that immediately precedes a general collapse.

The second of these band-aids, since they are capitalists, is to attempt to drive down real wages in the U.S., Europe, and Japan simultaneously, and at the most rapid and vicious rates. When the values of existing stocks, bonds, and mortgages are threatened by a shortage of profit, rent, and debt-service payments, the capitalists can save the value of their paper only by massive increases obtained out of a shrinking national income. The only admissible source, from their point of view, is the current incomes of wage-earners and farmers.

Beyond these band-aids, as Mr. Edwin Dale of the New York Times has so eloquently conceded, neither he nor they have any notion of what to do.

### **Thieves Fall Out**

It will not be easy for leading bankers to agree on either fixed parities or even a narrow range of fluctuations among the principal non-U.S. currencies. For example, each of the Europeans will wish to convince the Japanese to up-value the yen by approximately 20% of its July pegged dollar price. The Japanese will object with all the vehemence permissible among financial gentlemen. Similar objections will arise when the French and Japanese representatives express their solicitude for the proper valuation of the Deutsche-mark. It is not entirely impossible that matters might be worked out; merely astonishing.

Whether actual world depression can be postponed for a few months has little fundamental bearing on the situation as a whole. Only total regimentation along the lines of wartime or fascist regimes could postpone inevitable collapse for a significant period. Indeed, Messers Galbraith and Lindsay, among other "liberal" leaders, seem to have the bureaucratic approximation of such labor-crushing schemes prominently in mind.

In general, one must also say that the thesis of Baran and Sweezy, in **Monopoly Capital**, seems extraordinarily silly at about this time, to say nothing of Mr. Mandel and the CP "experts." Forty years after September 1931, we are again plunging into a new world depression out of the pages of **Capital** and Luxemburg's text, with a good, old-fashioned political class struggle to boot. Not that there aren't some qualitatively new features to modern capitalism; merely that all the fundamental features — that make capitalism capitalism — have remained inevitably the same.

This ought to suggest the query: precisely what is it in Marx's method which makes his century-old text so brilliantly up-to-date when, since August 15, nearly all living economists are so pitifully ignorant? Begging the reader to follow our occasionally sophisticated arguments closely and patiently, we propose to throw some light on this question.

### Twofold Nature of Value

Every serious economist since Adam Smith, whether otherwise competent or not, has recognized that there are two distinct values associated with every capitalist commodity. One value is that associated with "price." The other is the notion of the commodity's "intrinsic usefulness" as a material object.

The source of the inevitable ineptitude of every pro-capitalist and pseudo-Marxian economist is located in their general effort to uncover some completely mathematical relationship between these two kinds of value in the particular commodity.

Here we make a point which we must at least identify for the reader, because of its importance, yet granting in advance that few readers have the educational background to understand exactly what is involved. The point must nonetheless be made, or head nor tail cannot be made of the most basic issue of economy theory. We shall therefore develop it to the degree that readers can at least identify the point: the practical implications will be more obvious as we proceed.

The distinctive methodological achievement of Karl Marx in this respect is his recognition that a completely mathematical relationship between particular prices and use-value was not only impossible, but that the reasons for this impossibility constitute the fundamental principle of competent economic theory.

The educated economists should have made their blunder is better understood but no less a blunder if we consider their obvious motives. No known body of mathematical procedures can completely analyze, even in logical-positivist terms, processes which involve two absolutely independent maximizing processes, such as the maximization of the price of capital and the maxi-

mization of produced use-value. That is, a process in which the same event, object or "fact" as a particular variable is subject to two entirely different definitions of content. For this reason, once a competent mathematician conceded that economics presented such a problem, he would thereupon concede the impossibility of a mathematical economics and apply for employment in a different profession.

This may seem to be a strange problem confronting the highly-regarded "Queen of the Sciences," unless one really knows something of the history of the problem. Kant and Hegel, in particular, successively demonstrated in a proof that must necessarily last for all time, that a logical positivism is a vicious absurdity. Despite the fanatical philosophical imbecility rampant among most English-speaking mathematicians who violently deny this fact, it has been demonstrated repeatedly throughout the modern history of philosophy and mathematics that any formal-logical system based on a paralogical postulate of "identity" ( $A=A$ ) is axiomatically incapable of providing a complete description of any real process in nature.

If the success of mathematical science seems to argue for a contrary judgment, this superficial impressionistic view overlooks the most essential things about the history of such science. Mathematical procedures were developed, as we know them, by restricting the domain of inquiry into nature to those processes which could be regarded in mechanistic terms without incurring a hopeless lack of correspondence between the calculated and experimental results. When these same procedures are applied to attempts to comprehend more complex processes such as the process of life, or attempts to simulate human intelligence, the mathematical formalist inevitably presents himself as a hopeless quack.

Indeed, as we shall shortly consider this point, it was Hegel's fundamental solution to the paralogism of identity, presented in **The Phenomenology of Mind**, which offers the complete replacement for all formalist procedures, so-called, and represents the general basis for Marx's method.

Mathematics is, of course, not only useful but necessary to any working economist, Marxian included. This usefulness is however limited to describing momentary states of an economic process in terms agreeable to non-mathematical noetic processes of mentation. Any attempt to go beyond that limitation, to develop a complete mathematical interpretation of economic processes, inevitably leads to absurdities.

This observation is absolutely not debatable. Marx proves his point in this connection by showing (**Capital**, Vol. III) that the two-fold antagonistic optimizing processes of capitalist economy are uniquely "reconciled," demonstrated as "fact," in the form of periodic break-

downs of capitalist accumulation. Thus, the fact of recurring depressions is itself singular proof of the entirety of Marx's philosophical world-outlook and at the same time a singular disproof of opposing philosophical views.

If the reader troubles to search the existing economic literature, he will find there ample evidence for the correlated point we make in the foregoing connection.

No pro-capitalist economist is capable of predicting a depression-crisis, except on the verge of such a debacle when all of the preconditions for collapse have been fully matured. The best they can accomplish, and the mass of analytical literature produced on the 1929-33 crisis is the best example of this, is to state the immediate contingencies under which a depression seems to occur.

Milton Friedman, whose reputation was discreetly buried by the Nixon regime one recent moonless night, is an appropriate example. He, like Keynes, mistakenly assumed that an impending world monetary crisis would be prevented by manipulating contingent phenomena, to the effect that the "accident" of 1929-31 would not be repeated. Professional bankers and economists can define certain circumstances which have immediately preceded this or that bad market development; they have no comprehension of the actual longer-term processes by which such immediate, contingent preconditions themselves unavoidably come into being.

This is the sort of ineptitude which is inherent in empiricist attempts to realize mathematical "completeness" in economic theory. The point is elementary. Since mathematical systematizing proceeds on the assumption that prices and use-values are related to one another by a single optimizing process, empiricists thereby deny the reality of the two antagonistic but interpenetrating "optimizing" processes which are the actual economic process. They therefore cannot foresee the build-up toward a depression, since they have denied the existence of the very phenomena which must be studied to foresee the actual processes leading toward every depression.

This observation applies with equal specificity to the cases of Paul M. Sweezy and Ernest Mandel. For a decade, Sweezy has been concerned to explain why Marx's **Capital** is obsolete. The methodological basis for this silly blunder is obvious from study of Sweezy's classic text. His (actually Malthusian) notion of the connection between use-value and value is the mechanistic or mathematical-positivist approach otherwise commonplace among pro-capitalist contemporary economists, notably the Keyensians.

In the second case, Mandel's eclectic two-volume mish-mash, we encounter under the heading "Marx's Theory of Value" nothing but a bowdlerized version of Ricardo. Empiricist Mandel has thus been not-accidentally occupied in denying the imminence of conjunctural crises up to the instant they actually occurred, while soliciting more or less anarcho-syndicalist "alternatives" for his certainty that the conjunctural political class struggle orientation was hopelessly out of date.

### "Use Value"

We shall now examine the two, antagonistic processes of a capitalist economy. We begin with the process of evolutionary social reproduction, which determines "use-value." Since most professed "Marxists" do not know that this side of the economic process even exists, we shall necessarily award to this subject the greater portion of the space available in the remainder of this article.

Figure 1 introduces the notion of social reproduction along the lines specified by Marx in the **Critique of Political Economy**. For the sake of compactness, we have abstracted (momentarily) from capitalist society a society made up entirely of the potentially-productive working class. (Since a true social class corresponds to a species, this abstraction is strictly admissible.)

The large bar on the left-hand side of the figure represents the entire population. By apportioning the young, aged, etc., we have determined that part of the entire working class of a healthy productive age. By then subtracting from the latter persons who must perform socially-necessary but non-productive functions within the working class (such as teachers) we arrive at the productive labor-force. This latter we have represented separately in the right-hand figure.

As a first approximation, now, we follow the example presented to Marx's critical scrutiny by the 18th century Physiocrats (cf. **Theories of Surplus Value**), by dividing the output of the entire labor force into two major segments. The shaded segment is that portion required for the material consumption of the entire working-class population. The residue, or unshaded portion, corresponds to "social surplus" or "free energy."

From this we adduce a first approximation of the notion of social reproduction. The shaded portion is the material "input" which reproduces the entire species (whole working-class population) by producing the material means of its existence. The species, the working-class population as a whole, in turn collectively produces the labor force. The collective productive activity of the class through its labor force is "realized" as the totality of direct material changes in the order of nature on which collective human existence entirely depends.

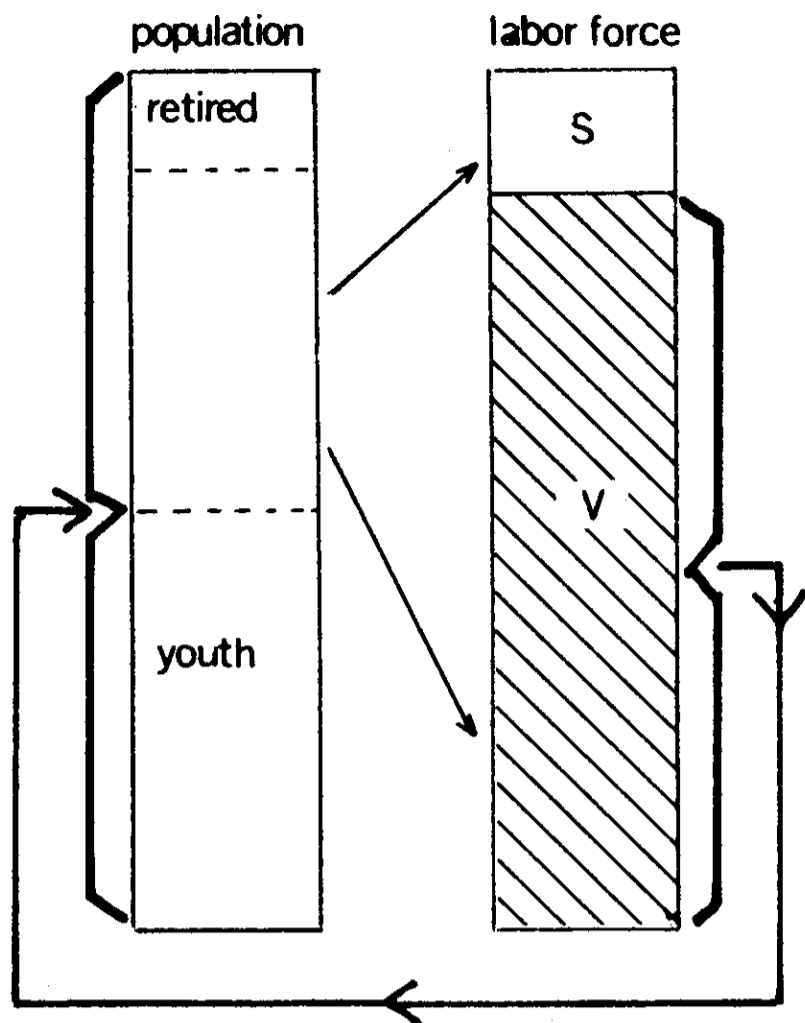


Figure 1: The Notion of Reproduction

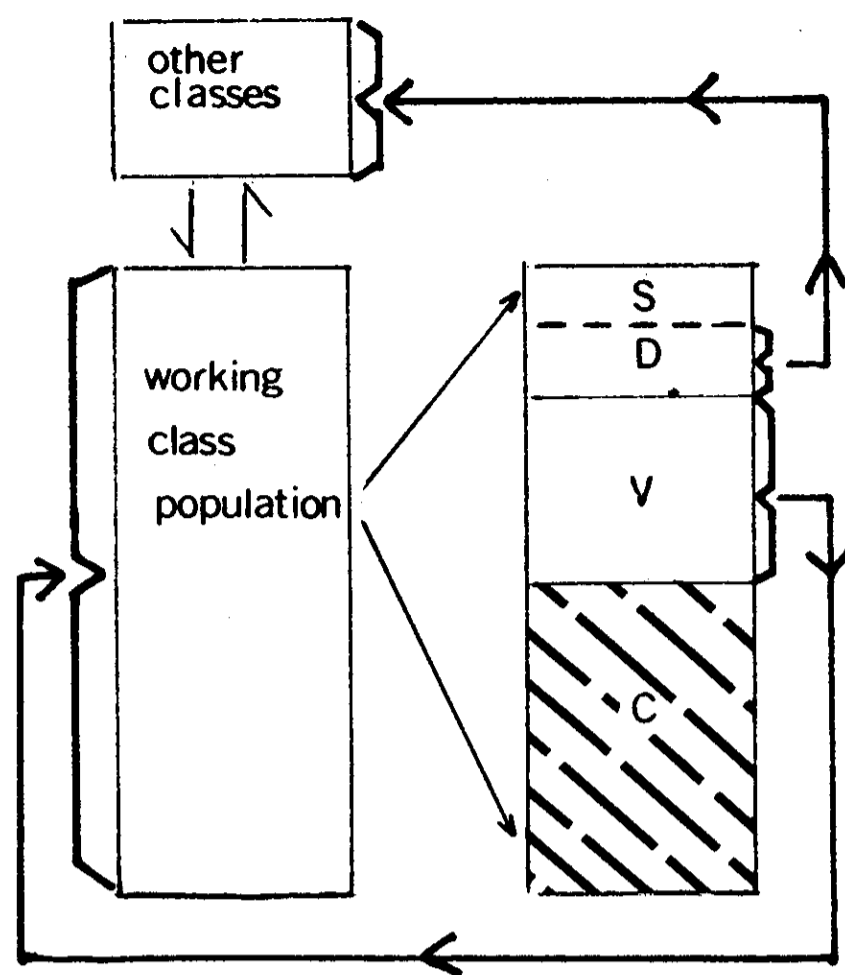


Figure 2: Simple Reproduction

The peculiarity of the working class as a species distinguished from other classes is that it and it alone has the potential to become what Hegel defines as Being-in-and-for-itself, a self-reflexive (sic!) Being (the collective working class) for the reproduction of its own existence. Provided that the class as a whole disposes of its productive activity according to an economic program of centralized expanded socialist reproduction, it becomes class-conscious, or, as Marx expresses it, a political **class for itself**. This notion of the “class for itself” is the kernel of all Marx’s political and economic thought from 1843 (**Critique of the Hegelian Philosophy of Right**) until his death.

Let us now assign the letter “V” to the shaded portion of the smaller bar, and the letter “S” to the unshaded portion. The resulting ratio,  $S/V$ , seems to then express the potential rate of social reproduction for the entire working class as a species. “S,” as social surplus (or, free energy), represents that margin of total output which is “available” to either expand the population, or to partially expand and partially improve the quality of working-class existence. As “V” tends to express simply maintaining the existence of the working class,  $S/V$  is the ratio of growth (quantitatively and qualitatively).

This ratio, however, overlooks the essential relationship of man to nature. Turn therefore to Figure 2, in which we consider the actual reproductive process in greater detail. First, the striped segment, “C.”

Production is the collective relationship of the species to universal nature (cf. Part I, **The German Ideology**), in which man depletes nature as man before him has previously depleted it, and also improves nature for social reproduction of the species as a whole. So, the more successfully a society merely reproduces the material conditions of its own existence (V), the more “successfully” it thereby depletes existing natural and man-improved means of production. Even to continue to exist as a society of that sort, man must effectively apportion his total output to provide for repairing nature, tools, developing new resources, etc. It is by this portion of his output, “C,” that man maintains the “equi-potential” of nature for human existence.

Thus, our ratio for social reproduction becomes  $S/(C+V)$ .

Continuing with Figure 2, consider now the sub-segment of “S” labelled “D.” We now concede the existence within the society’s entire human population of classes other than the working-class “species.” “D,” as a portion of social surplus, corresponds to the material existence of all other classes (excepting farmers), or “capitalists’ consumption.” This includes not only the consumption of capitalists, of managements, of police, armies, governmental bureaucracies, but also the consumption of such non-productive but socially-necessary activities (and populations) as physicians, scientists, teachers, etc. (We

shall see below the profound reasons why such persons must not be considered “productive.”)

Now, our expression for social reproduction has become  $(S-D)/(C+V)$ , or  $S'/(C+V)$ .

### Economic Development Begins

We have so far considered the elementary social-reproductive relations encountered in a capitalist society; we now consider the new conceptions of these relationships imposed upon us as we turn to examine the process of economic development. For this, refer to Figure 3.

First, we stipulate that the population of the working class has increased in progress from bar “a” to “b.” Immediately, the alert reader has raised a protest: “But you have drawn Figure 3a at the same height as 3b!” Thus, we confront the first of several fundamental conceptual problems to be considered here. There is no error in the diagram; in the dialectical method, since the whole rather than the individual object is elementary, it must be the whole which does not change in its analytical magnitude. To make judgments respecting successive periods in a reproductive process, it is absolutely mandatory to regard the differences between wholes as restricted to differences in the internal relations of composite parts within the whole of reproduction.

The following are the changes in internal relations to be taken into account. (1) The value of the ratio,  $S'/(C+V)$ , has increased. (2) The value of the ratio,  $C/V$ , has increased. (3) The value of the ratio,  $D/V$ , has increased, but within the bounds of a rising value for  $S'/(C+V)$  — admittedly not the case for the U.S. economy over the past decade, especially.

The obvious decrease in the ratio,  $V/(S+V+C)$ , does not generally imply a lower standard of consumption. (The transition from guild to manufacturing labor is a notorious exception.) In the illustration, the absolute material consumption level per capita has increased (including creative leisure — e.g., education). Part of the initial increase in productivity has been “absorbed” as a higher living standard.

We see immediately that in this illustration, the maintenance of a linear growth in  $S'/(C+V)$  demands an exponential momentary tendency for such growth at each point. Strange and arbitrary as this might first appear to be, no other interpretation of the law of social reproduction is in agreement with the simple fact of historical human existence. If this interpretation were not correct, then, along the lines of Engels’ argument against Malthus’ “Law of Population,” modern civilization does not exist, and the human race today does not exceed a million or so baboon-like homonids fearfully scattered about the earth. If the critic imagines he

has disproved our point, let him consider that he has thereby “proven” conclusively that neither he nor his criticism exist.

We make this important addition to our case: As a society either simply persists or expands in scale, it is compelled to overcome the problem of marginal resources by higher degrees of “negative entropy” in the mode of production as the precondition for continued social reproduction.

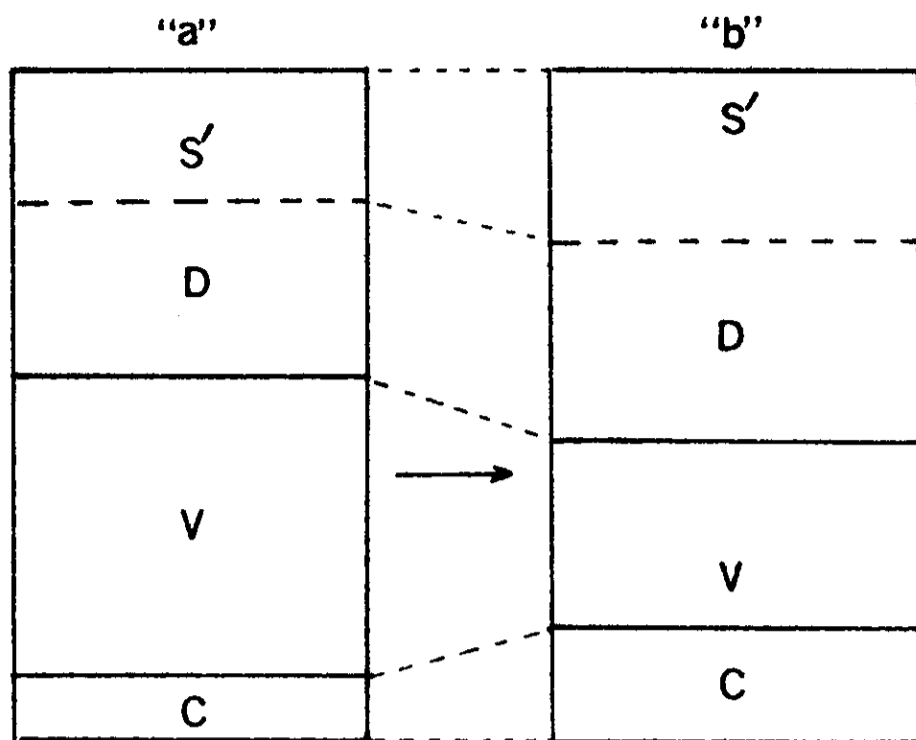
There are not two absolutely indispensable points to be made to settle the definition of “use value.” Firstly, we shall prove Marx’s notion of “productive” by situating the social reproductive process within the “eco-system.” Then, the “hardest” and most essential notion must be presented — if the reader is to be presented with the basic principle of competent economic theory. We define the dialectical notion of “use value” as “productive use value” from the reference standpoint of Hegel’s solution to the paralogism of “identity.”

At the start we permit the reader to employ any ontological notion of “energy” he may choose from among those in currency today. That granted, we propose that he consider the earth as a “biosphere.” Essentially, that the total “throughput” of “energy” available to the “biosphere” at each moment is relatively finite. Accumulated mineral energy-resources and radioactive and gravitational heating augment the major source, solar radiation.

The evolution of the earth as a biosphere is associated with rising “efficiency” of the aggregate biological process in capturing and embodying greater proportions of the relatively-finite total energy-flow at hand. This process must be evaluated not only for the “thermal” content of biological material as a whole, but, more emphatically, for the increase in this thermal content and for the rise in the rate of effective capture of the total available energy. This increase in “negative entropy” is exactly analogous to the notion of an exponential function of  $S'/(C+V)$  accomplishing a simple rise in  $S'/(C+V)$  for a series of successive states of social reproduction.

### “Ecology”

This connection between social reproduction and the biosphere must be interpreted with respect to “C” — the “constant capital” of social reproduction (as distinct from the quite-different “constant capital” of capitalist accumulation). A mode of social reproduction, viewed in relationship to the earth as an eco-system, represents a state of “negative entropy.” With this effect: that the mode of social reproduction defines the boundaries of human population in quantity and quality. Thus, the notion of “productive” is restricted to the realization of those direct alterations in the order of



Note:

$$\begin{array}{l} S'_a < S'_b \\ D_a < D_b \\ V_a > V_b \\ C_a < C_b \end{array}$$

Figure 3: Expanded Reproduction

nature which immediately increase the material potential for human existence. Only "useful" direct material changes in nature are "productive."

For example, the development of fusion power and its applications is at this moment an absolutely imperative means for establishing the material conditions necessary for continued human existence of the existing population. Recently, Nixon has slashed an already contemptibly small budget for fusion-power research and development. This cut is perhaps not accidentally in the immediate interests of private utilities, the oil interests, and GE's and Westinghouse's investment in selling primitive boiling-water reactors. Here is one of Nixon's major but less advertised crimes against humanity itself.

Marx's term for "negative entropy" is either "self-subsisting positive" (1844 Manuscripts) or "self-expanding value" (Theories of Surplus Value). Productive activity, for Marx, is limited to the labor-process which directly materializes self-expanding value. Socially-necessary activities, such as science, education, art, etc., do not represent value since they can only increase the potential of the labor-process, a potential which has no self-expanding value until the labor-process directly realizes this "locked-up" potential in the material form of self-expanding value.

That is, the "use-value" of an object is not something intrinsic to it as an object, nor is it something located within the private material or subjective rela-

tionship of consumer to commodity. The "use-value" of an object is the "infinitesimal" increase in the value of an exponential function-tendency ( $S'/(C+V)$ ) for the entire society, the entire social-reproductive process.

### Use-Value Socially Determined

Hegel introduces his solution to the problem of the "law of identity" by means of the following metaphor: "A-acorn (subject)=A-oak-tree (predicate)." Following Descartes' and Spinoza's method, Hegel recognized that statements of the form "A=A" and "A=A=A..." do not represent the true subject-predicate relationships that formal logic assumes. Rather, both elements of the statement, like the acorn and the oak, are themselves each predicates of a subject which has not been mentioned in the statement. Provided that a "universality" of such associated predicates is systematically defined, this universality of predicates defines the necessity of the subject which must be supplied. Thus, the content of the acorn and oak cannot be found "inside" either object, but is located uniquely in the process of reproduction which determines each.

That is, instead of attempting to explain objects and isolated systems in terms of dissecting their "self-evident" material or mechanical internal relations, one finds the content of these objects in something outside them as individual things. Reality is located in the process of change which connects particular objects (as predicated) within a single reproductive process. This methodological approach is the ground of all Marx's method, without which one can make head or tail of neither Marxian economics nor economic processes themselves.

To restate and develop this indispensable notion. Not only is the content, the reality of the particular object located within the process of reproduction determining its existence, but this process of reproduction is the reality of the object.

This is analogous to asserting that the content of a "quantum of energy" is not some undifferentiated "substance-like" thingness called "energy in general." Rather, that the content of the quantum must be defined as some functional notion of "negative entropy" or "free energy" in that sense, thus expressing a moment of the rate of "negative entropy" for the entire process of which it is a part.

Or, to name the mere slogan which many professed "Marxists" repeat without the slightest comprehension: reality is located not in the things-in-themselves, but in processes. Not just any process, but processes which qualify as "universals" by virtue of representing a self-subsisting reproductive process of society.

The concrete expression of this idea in economy is expressed in two practical ways. The first concrete



representation is that already outlined. Provided that we consider the social-reproductive process as a whole, in the form of internal relations we have presented here, then the expression,  $(S-D)/(C+V)$ , in terms of **proportions** of the entire productive activity of the working-class population (proportions of unity), is concrete and susceptible of objective analysis and application.

To present the other form of concreteness, in respect to the micro-structure of capitalist production, we can resort to conventional administrative tools of the industrial engineer and marketing analyst. These are as follows. The Process Sheet, which breaks down into steps involving particular labor-skills and equipment. The Bill of Materials, which lists the required materials and semi-finished parts required. The Bill of Consumption, which is the elegant equivalent of a household budget. Tracing the connections among these three things, we obtain a remarkable result usually overlooked.

### A "Worldwide" Cup of Coffee

Starting from any item in a typical U.S. working man's bill of consumption, such as a twenty-cent morning cup of coffee at the shop. Taking into account the coffee beans, the cream, the sugar, the cup, and the conveyance which brings the coffee-service to his part of the shop, analyze what has gone into this cup of coffee. Without actually going through each step here, it is obvious enough that the study takes us several times around the world before we have accounted for the ultimate production of everything in the way of supplies, etc., going into that cup. We may, for the sake of space, simply assert what is axiomatic to any undergraduate economics student, that unless the scale of production behind a cup of coffee went several times around the world, that cup of coffee would cost must more than twenty cents (which is already too much!)

The immediate point is that the entire world's productive population is directly and indirectly involved in the production of the material objects which make up the necessary material consumption of every working man's family in the U.S. Indeed, relating these productive workers to the larger population which produces them, virtually the entire world's population is **positively** involved in the material existence of each individual working person in the U.S.

Thus, an increase in social productivity by a single person anywhere in the world has a potentially infinitesimal beneficial result for every other person in the world. These improvements in the production of real wealth reduce the proportion of required production needed to meet human needs in an improved way, and thus increase the value of  $S'/(C+V)$  by such an infinitesimal amount!

Perhaps the dialectical definition of use-value does not appear to be so esoteric and "abstract" now!

### Capitalist Accumulation

Capitalist accumulation, as it first appears in the form of merchant's capital, has absolutely no systematic connection to the determination of  $S'/(C+V)$  for use-value as just defined. That is the more immediate key to the impossibility of a mathematically-complete description of the "price"/"use-value" relationship in the particular commodity. It is also, in the final analysis, the key to capitalist depressions.

The price of capital, and of a commodity as capital, is immediately determined by a "price-earnings" ratio, which has no direct connection to any costs of production. The best illustration of this point is provided by U.S. urban real estate valuations, especially in the buying and selling of old apartment-buildings, in which the current market price of the structure has no relationship either to the original or even depreciated cost of the original structure. The building is "worth" simply a currently-prevailing multiple of whatever the landlord can gouge out of the tenants and savings banks.

Granted, capital values are not determined in each case by the same arithmetic average multiple of income. A generally-prevailing rate of profit nonetheless prevails. The differences in applicable price-earnings ratios are essentially variations which take into account varying degrees of expected "risk" and "liquidity." That taken into account, a stock is "worth" a multiple of its combined dividend and capital gains income expectation. A bond or mortgage is "worth" some multiple of the debt-service yield. A commodity for resale is "worth" a prevailing multiple of the gross profit which the reseller expects.

### "Marxist" Illiterates

At this juncture we hear much shrieking of protests from those "Marxists" who own an unread copy of Volume I of **Capital**. "But Marx says that capitalist accumulation is subject to a Law of Value!" they howl. Indeed it is — "subjected to" a Law of Value.

To be precise, the systematic looting of feudal Europe by mercantile capitalism from about the end of the 13th through the middle of the 16th centuries, from the House of Bardi through the Spanish and Portuguese bankruptcies, simultaneously introduced the rudiments of capitalist juridical relationships and class relations without developing capitalist production as the principal source of capitalist wealth. Mercantile capitalism, by bringing Europe to a state of general ruin and even depopulation during this period, brought the rate of accumulation of capital into contiguity with the outer limits of looting of the wealth of existing European

society. Thereafter, the possibility for the continued existence of mercantile capitalism came to depend largely on the rate at which the wealth of society (the available loot) was augmented by capitalist production. In this way, the permissible average rate of profit tended to converge on the rate of profit determined by the rate of social reproduction ( $S'/(C+V)$ ) of the emerging working class.

### Economy as a Whole

That is also to emphasize the absolutely indispensable rigor demanded by Rosa Luxemburg. The relations of capitalist accumulation are by no means located in the local point of production and employment, but in the relationship between capitalist accumulation as a whole and social reproduction as a whole — in the contradictions between capitalist accumulation and the development of the “productive forces” (*Capital*, Volume III).

Capitalist accumulation involves the capitalization of part of the previously “earned” profit, debt-service and rent taken by capitalists as new capital — thus increasing the total mass of capital demanding new profit, and thereby increasing the absolute mass of profit demanded by capitalists as a whole. However, this considered, once the boundary conditions of the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were encountered by mercantile capitalist accumulation in Europe, the mass of profit available to be taken by capitalists tended to be bounded by the mass of “s” created by capitalist production in terms of the labor - process (the process of social reproduction of the working class). Indeed, a large part of capitalist profit has always been obtained to this day from “primitive accumulation:” the looting of nature (“ecology crisis”) and looting of the proletariat (genocide, mass impoverishment, starvation of hundreds of millions of unemployed workers in the colonial sector). However, since this looting is delimited by a relatively-fixed available mass of such loot to be taken, the rate of production of surplus value (S) is the absolute boundary for capitalist accumulation. It is this fact which **subjects** capitalist accumulation to a Law of Value, a subjection which is singularly manifest as a tangible “fact” in recurring capitalist depressions and wars.

It is by no means a mere metaphor to assert that the immediate empirical relationship between capitalist accumulation and the Law of Value is never explicitly, tangibly demonstrated except in periodic depressions. The depression is not an accidental feature of capitalism, but is a most lawful feature. To understand a capitalist economy the analyst must interpret the economy as a process connecting successive depressions.

The Law of Value operates in the following elementary way. The ability of the capitalist to obtain profit is bounded by the process of social reproduction, that is

by the ratio  $S'/(C+V)$ . Since “V” represents the material cost of producing a working class in terms of current production as a whole, the capitalist cannot significantly underpay that class (from the standpoint of prevailing productive technology) without reproducing a working class either too physically debilitated or culturally deprived to carry on modern production... except as he can dump sections of the class on a human scrap-heap (e.g., Speer-Himmler-Krupp or Nixon-Lindsay-Rockefeller) or cause other classes (e.g., peasants) to bear the social costs of producing new workers. Similarly, within the bounds of looting nature (e.g., pollution of air, water, etc., oil monopolies), the necessary current costs for “C” are a determined portion of existing useful production. So, as “C” and “V” are thus approximately determined, and as technology and the social-political system created by the capitalists themselves determines “D,” the mass of “S” left to provide real payments for profit, debt-service and rent, is delimited by the scale of production and the productivity of the social-reproductive process. The general rate of capitalists’ accumulation is asymptotically bounded by the rate of social reproduction — thus, the capitalist accumulation process is **subject** to a Law of Value!

Crises occur under capitalism because of the **rising** productivity of labor-power! It is not a lack of workers’ productivity that causes capitalist crises, but “the irrepressible tendency of workers to become constantly more productive.” In short, the “wage-price spiral” is simply hogwash!

The reason lies in the nature of capital itself. When the productivity of labor rises, all commodities are reduced in their socially-necessary cost — as we indicated in the preceding section. Or, in other words, the commodities produced yesterday have been depreciated in value.

This has little effect on what is called Circulating Capital — the mass of capitalist investment in current labor and materials. However, as the ratio of Fixed Capital (plant and heavy equipment) to Circulating Capital increases, the depreciation of old capital tends to be greater than the increased profits resulting from higher productivity. Thus, in any industrial economy in which dead costs are capitalized on the basis of previous rates of productivity, this problem must arise.

### Credit System

Now, because of the credit-monetary system under capitalism, some remarkable consequences ensue. Through the credit-system, the capitalist is able to price the aggregate mass of produced commodities at an inflated price which covers both the actual value of current production and also his losses due to productivity-caused depreciation of Fixed Capital. So, the total price of all commodities tends to exceed the money put

### U.S. Consumer Debt Payments

(Billion \$)

	1946	1950	1955	1960	1965	1969
I. Outstanding Debt (Mortgage debt and consumer debt)	31.4	66.7	127.0	197.3	303.2	389.3
II. Interest on Total Debt (I above)	2.6	5.4	10.2	17.2	28.2	38.7
III. Total Payment on Debt (principle and interest)	9.4	23.8	43.8	63.3	88.2	143.3
IV. Consumer Disposable Income	160.0	206.9	275.3	350.0	473.2	629.6
V. Percent of Debt Payment to Disposable Income (III/IV)	5.9%	11.8%	15.9%	18.1%	18.6%	22.8%

Source: Economic Indicators

Chart shows the astronomical rates of debt (consumer, mortgage, interest payments) that the working class has been saddled with in increasing amounts since 1946. By 1969, almost 23% of consumers' real disposable income has gone into paying off outstanding debt.

### Liquidity Ratio (Nonfinancial Corporations)

Year	Cash & Govt. Securities (Billion \$)	Current Liabilities (Billion \$)	% (Liquidity Ratio)
1946	38.1	71.9	73.4%
1951	50.7	92.6	54.8
1956	50.7	130.5	41.3
1961	53.9	155.8	38.4
1966	64.7	254.4	25.4
1969	64.3	333.8	19.3

Source: Economic Report of the President: Feb. 1970.

The liquidity ratio is the relation between short term liabilities (wages, debt payments due) and short term liquid assets of the firm (cash and government securities). Since 1946, the solvent "liquid" position of many nonfinancial corporations has been threatened by a burgeoning mass of liabilities, mostly in the form of outstanding debt.

gin to constrict useful production, thus reducing the basis for real profit. In some parts of the capitalist world (e.g., below the Tropic of Cancer, U.S. poverty in the 1960's, etc.) this produces a growing mass of permanently unemployed, while the number and ratio of productive workers to the entire population becomes smaller and smaller (U.S.A., 1957-71). Furthermore, although the profits taken on commodities prices over their value is purely fictitious capital, this capital is capitalized and demands its share of profit — so that the rate of growth of capital (stocks, bonds, mortgages, etc.) runs way ahead of the rate of growth of real production. Capitalists begin to divert their capital from useful production into wild wasteful forms, such as military production, which produces nothing of reproductive value, and pure speculation. As a result, a wild inflationary spiral ensues — and superficial capitalist prosperity thus continues until the rate of inflation, which discounts all existing capital, compels all capitalists to make a run for either gold or whatever other forms of tangible wealth seem to offer a refuge from the impending collapse of paper. Then, finally, rationality appears in the perverse, vengeful disguise of a new depression.

into circulation on account of current production — apparent "over-production"! At the same time, a rising productivity of labor, instead of causing a decline in prices — as would seem the sensible arrangement — obviously causes an inflation in prices!

From that beginning, everything begins to go haywire. In response to "overproduction," capitalists be-

At this juncture, our problem is not a lack of productivity of labor, nor a lack of the potential to produce prosperity. Our problem is that our economy, on which our lives depend, is crushed under a mass of stocks, bonds, mortgages and other capitalist paper. Destroy that paper, and prosperity could emerge. However, since that requires socialism, all pro-capitalist experts, like the New York Times' Mr. Edwin Dale, have inevitably not the slightest notion of what to do.

## EMERGENCY RECONSTRUCTION PROGRAM

### 1.1 What Is a Depression?

In order to cure a disease — in this case, a capitalist depression — it is necessary to know a few facts about the disease itself. In brief, then, what is a depression?

A depression is the inevitable result of the way a capitalist economy is organized. A capitalist economy is organized on two levels. At the “bottom” a capitalist economy involves the production and distribution of (among other things) useful goods and services. “Above” this real process of production and distribution, there sits a mountain of paper — stocks, bonds, mortgages, and so forth, or “paper values.”

What makes an economy capitalist is not just the paper itself (the stocks, bonds, mortgages and so forth), but the fact that this paper is bought and sold on the basis of its “earnings.” These earnings are obtained, in the final analysis of a sometimes complicated process, from part of the **real** production of useful goods and services. What concerns us is not the portion of earnings used to generate and buy more paper (more stocks, bonds, mortgages and so forth). It is the growth in the total amount of paper values of this sort which is capitalist accumulation, or capitalism.

In order to understand how this arrangement leads to inevitable depressions, we need to recognize the distinction between useful and non-useful forms of production and distribution. For our purposes let us limit ourselves to explaining why military production is not useful.

The term **useful production** is limited to that production which is consumed in such a way that the total production of useful products and services by a society is increased. For example, the consumption of food, clothing and so forth by members of wage-earning families results in productive individuals, and the production of machinery and useful raw and semi-finished materials is, of course, necessary for production itself. By comparison, can a tank, gun, etc., be eaten or worn in such a way that it makes an individual member of a wage-earner’s family potentially more productive (as food or clothing is essential to producing and maintaining productive individuals)? Can a tank or plane be used as a machine-tool?

Let us extend this illustration to the subject of office buildings. Granted, existing technology demands that a certain number of scientists, engineers, production schedulers and so forth be employed for every hundred production workers on the line in each kind of industry at some stage of its development. Suppose that we hold the number of productive wage-earners in the economy fixed (as we have during the past seventeen years) and meanwhile increase the number of clerks and so forth at

a rapid rate. Is this productive? So, while an office building may be useful as a kind of thing produced, too many office buildings may represent unproductive expenditures.

Now, back to our point under consideration. As long as the capitalist system is reinvesting in expanding the number and quality of productive jobs (production of useful goods and services), the absolute amount of useful production is increasing, so that the ability of the economy to produce capitalist earnings is growing. Therefore, the earnings can be plowed back into buying new capitalist paper (stocks, bonds, mortgages and so forth) at the same rate (approximately) that production is being expanded.

Suppose, however, that investment is going into war production rather than useful production, or that new paper is being created on the basis of new and bigger mortgages on old buildings, or that speculative paper is multiplying without much relationship to any real production (e.g., conglomerates). Under these conditions, we should be able to see with a little thought about it, the mass of capitalist paper is growing faster than real production. That means that the demand for earnings on paper is growing faster than production can supply those earnings without cutting into wages or production costs themselves.

Exactly why a capitalist economy invariably expands its paper much more rapidly than its production (at current price-equivalents of paper capital costs) is an involved point which we cannot consider in the space we have allowed ourselves here. It is sufficient to realize that during the past six years the world’s leading bankers and capitalist governments have been discussing the dangers of a crisis of just that sort. We have seen the British pound devalued, the French franc devalued, the German Deutschmark up-valued, and inflation, stock market scares and general problems of liquidity crisis. It is no longer necessary to prove that capitalism is moving toward a new boom-bust-cycle bust; the world economy is already on the edge of such a bust.

The important thing to bear in mind is the connection between real values and paper. The thing to remember is that it is the **paper** that is in crisis; it is the crisis of paper that causes and prolongs a depression. If we can get rid of the paper, we can get rid of the depression.

### 1.2 How a Politically-Organized Labor Movement Takes Over

The technique for taking over a depression-ridden capitalist economy is similar to the procedure by which bankrupt individual capitalist firms are reorganized (as the Penn Central is being reorganized under the bankruptcy laws today).

There are three factors involved in this takeover. (1) The fact that within capitalism there already exists

an administrative apparatus for processing the mass of paper which has to be called in under bankruptcy procedures: the centralized banking system. (2) The fact that the persons who have to do the processing of the paper at each point in the banking system are themselves wage-earners — the clerks and minor officials of banks, insurance companies and so forth. (3) That the agency responsible to issue policy directives and replace the old management is assumed to exist: the organized political labor movement and its allies, capable of electing representatives to assume specific executive duties over the centralized banking system.

The implementation of the policy can be accomplished in an orderly way, provided that the general policies involved are accepted by the majority of the population, and by significant numbers of the clerks and minor executives in the banking system itself. Also, provided that the clerks and others in the banking system, with the assistance and guidance of local executive agencies of the political labor movement, understand clear policies which are sufficient to guide them in making immediate decisions and carrying out certain essential duties in a routine fashion.

The general policies are as follows: (1) That the machinery of the U.S. Treasury and Federal Reserve System be used to assimilate all regional and local financial institutions into a single, nationalized national banking system, also appropriating the administrative machinery of the Internal Revenue Service and State treasuries and tax-gathering agencies. (2) That all stocks, bonds, mortgages and other forms of paper capital be immediately called in within five days (or a comparable period) and that all payment on these obligations be suspended pending subsequent evaluation for compensation at a future date. Thus, all real properties and income previously the subject of paper capital instruments and equivalent contracts and other agreements become the immediate property of the nationalized banking system. (3) These assets provide the basis for issuance of credit by the nationalized banking system for payments of wages, pensions, and for payments necessary to production and essential public services.

In order to continue and expand production and provide orderly distribution, it is merely necessary that the banks customarily servicing various firms continue to supply sufficient credit and monies to meet payrolls, purchase materials and machinery, extend similar credit through customary banks to State and Local governments and to small businesses.

### 1.3 National Income Policies

The heart of national reconstruction policies must be our personal income and employment policies. The establishment of wages and employment policies immediately determines consumer and related production

and distribution requirements, providing thus the "base line" for organization of national production at stable levels for further reconstruction measures.

The principle for national income policy is that the latent productivity of a population's potential labor force depends upon the level of material and cultural existence of its families and individuals. Existing studies by the U.S. Department of Labor are sufficiently indicative to show that we cannot accept a lower level of personal family income than \$7,500 a year in 1967 dollars, and that a range between \$7,500 and \$15,000 (in 1967 dollars) should provide the range for reconstruction policy until a more scientific basis for incomes policy has been established.

The following emergency measures are therefore appropriate at the point of takeover. The political organization of labor and its allies must declare the current dollar level of payments equivalent to \$7,500 and \$15,000 in 1967 dollars. All persons employed immediately receive not less than the minimum; all unemployment compensation, welfare payments, pension payments, and similar personal income disbursements are immediately not less than the current equivalent of the \$7,500, and no income disbursements in excess of the equivalent of \$15,000 are paid.

For a brief period, pension and unemployment compensation should be disbursed by the same agencies as before takeover. As soon as possible, these disbursements should be processed through the reorganized machinery of the social security and state employment offices.

Organization of sufficient production to meet these income payments is no great difficulty. Marketing techniques developed for use by manufacturing and wholesaling firms, applied to known consumption requirements by income-levels of families for various regions of the nation, permit us to promptly develop total requirements for consumer goods production, and distribution through existing local channels.

### 1.4 Cost-Reduction Policies

The U.S. economy as presently organized is a mass of accumulated waste, redundancy, obsolescence and managerial incompetence. Especially vulnerable for rationalization in the shortest period is the mass of persons employed in "paper-shuffling" occupations. Meanwhile, the rise in point-of-production costs of backward consumer-goods industries caused by wage policies and the need to free labor for employment in new industries will compel us to increase productive and administrative cost-efficiency at the most rapid feasible rate. In order to accomplish this, it is imperative that the organization of wage-earners as a whole adopt certain policies governing the displacement of

persons from existing jobs and changes in methods and working conditions at place of employment:

(1) That no person be compelled to move from a higher to lower rate of compensation or skill.

(2) That physical intensification of labor ("speed-up") is prohibited as a method of improvement in productive efficiency.

(3) That persons undergoing training for new employment shall receive the rate of compensation of their previous employment or better.

(4) That displacement shall be made, where psychological hardship is involved in job-changing, on the basis of those persons (especially the young) who can most easily adjust to new employment.

(5) That, regarding older workers, forced or compulsory retirement shall be eliminated, and part-time work provided if desired.

Where capitalist production locates improvements in cost at the point of production in the particular firm or skill, the socialist approach to cost-reduction considers the economy as a whole as the only context for judging costs. At the same time, where capitalist practice considers cost-reduction as a goal in itself, socialist development aims at increasing the cost of productive labor at the most rapid rate (in terms of material and cultural standards of living) possible through increased productivity by the society as a whole. In particular, this means the elimination of categories of cheaper labor associated with less developed countries.

### 1.5 Reconstruction Policies

The first political acts of the government must include immediate negotiation of total disarmament with the U.S.S.R. and China, setting the pattern of worldwide disarmament and development policies among all sectors of the world's population. We can safely assume, even at the present moment, that all of the capitalist sectors of Europe, Japan, Australia-New Zealand will immediately follow the U.S. example, the instant the political labor movement takes over management of the U.S. economy, and that the sundry reactionary regimes of Africa, Latin America and Southeast Asia will simply be toppled quickly when deprived of U.S. military and economic support.

(For anyone who knows the realities of the "Cold War" and the oppressive domestic political and social issues which arms production represents in the U.S.S.R., China, Eastern Europe, etc., it will be appreciated that negotiation of suitable policies with these countries will require perhaps fifteen minutes — after the necessary speechmaking is done.)

The conversion of military-aerospace porkbarrels into

their potential useful equivalent of capital goods production will permit an annual rate of real economic growth for the U.S. sector of between 20% and 25% per year, through additional new productive plants, modernization of existing industries and associated structural changes in the so-called "infrastructure" (power, transport, natural resources, etc.).

The following seven major projects should be considered the immediate priority allocations of the productive capacity which is liberated from present waste in military-aerospace production and related anomalies of the U.S. economy:

(1) **Regional Inter-Urban Development.** A program of constructing 5 million modern dwelling units a year as the central feature of a program of inter-urban reconstruction of balanced living-place, workplace, school, medical facilities, etc., until all the shortages have been solved.

(2) **A National Transportation-Warehousing Development Program.** Realizing that transport is the conveyor-belt of the economy, and a major social cost of production and distribution, the integration of rail and trucking transport with regional depots. Depots receive goods by type from manufacturing and related sources in bulk, break bulk to make up orders for delivery to local distribution points, and computer-organize integrated truck-rail delivery.

(3) **National Thermonuclear Power Development Program.** The rate of power consumption will be as explosive as our rate of economic growth, upsetting all present projections of power requirements to (say) the year 2,000 A.D. While it is not inconceivable that petro-chemical, hydro-electric, tidewater hydro-electric and nuclear sources might be sufficient for these needs, reliance on those methods is unacceptable on grounds of pollution problems and misuse of finite petro-chemical resources. Furthermore, thermonuclear development opens up new dimensions of productive technology necessary to the human race during this period. While certain aspects of thermonuclear technology represent a challenge to basic science, other pragmatic accomplishments in this field could be made ready for use in a relatively short period were even modest funds being expended for their development.

(4) **Conservation of Natural Resources.** Man has become so significant a part of the eco-system in which he lives that we must abandon the practice of the past of considering technology apart from the consequences of its use on a large scale. The cure of present "pollution" and other degradation of the means of production must be accomplished immediately, and maintenance of nature hereafter regarded as an immediate social cost of production.

**(5) National Administrative Technology Development.** If "optical page-reading" technology were widely applied, and if present computer design were improved to reduce maintenance and breakdown (because many present computers are built like junk to begin with — for greater profit), the economy could develop and apply rational systems through which most of the paper-shuffling occupations could be eliminated, freeing millions of persons from mind-dulling office routine for creative, productive work. This development is a necessary correlative of our work in expanding the number of productive workplaces in the new industries to be created.

**(6) A General Program of Replacement of Obsolete Production Facilities, Concentrating Emphatically On Those Which Represent Unsatisfactory Working Conditions.** Why should a human being have to monotonously sew garments on a jazzed-up version of a nineteenth century device (sewing machine), when seam-impregnation (or cloth impregnation) and inductive "welding" methods can be applied? It is criminal and idiotic to demand that human beings be subjected to the man-killing pace of repetitive assembly operations when a combination of intelligent product and process design permits such assemblies to be made automatically? Why must men die and destroy their bodies otherwise in mines? We have, or are within reach of developing, productive technology so that jobs may be designed to fit our conception of what it is suitable for a human being to do.

**(7) International "Infra-Structure" Development.** The U.S. sector of the world economy has a growing dependence upon the world economy as a whole which is grossly understated by the rigged prices at which our sector purchases. It is not only humane but in our self-interest that we, along with the entire advanced sector, contribute at least 5-10% of the annual product of the advanced sector for the immediate upgrading of living standards and the economic development of the undeveloped nations.

### 1.6 How An Economy Is Managed

Policies of the sort we have outlined above are merely the essential starting-point for transition from a bankrupt capitalist economy to a socialist democracy. What we must build is not an economy managed by an elite of "experts," but an economy governed through the increasing "expertise" of its entire population. To the extent that militant rank and file leaders from the ranks of organized labor, oppressed minorities and radical youth discuss the present program, debate its subsequent elaborations, we are proving that such political democracy is actually possible, we are proving and helping to develop the capacity of the population to competently formulate its own national economic policies.

Admittedly, such a democratic process will initially

cause us to make mistakes that might not be made by a smaller group of "experts." The goal after all is to develop a population which can democratically manage its own affairs; a few mistakes are a small price to pay for that result.

Unless we wish to have an economy managed by "experts" with the resulting army of bureaucrats, the procedure must be that the entire population (or, at least all wage-earners and their allies) decides the general economic policies, priority projects, generally allocation of resources. The same population, through local agencies, through factory organizations, and so forth, then supervises and audits the performance of those policies at the "local level."

### Why Working People Can't Run The Economy Today

A capitalist society is essentially an anarchist society. In fact, capitalist society is the only form of anarchist society that could actually exist. If capitalist nations have governments, that is only because no anarchist society could exist without a government. In fact, the only kind of radical-anarchist movements that ever took political power were the fascist movements organized out of the ranks of Italian and German anarchists and populists by Mussolini and Hitler (and similar governments in pre-World War II Eastern Europe).

The problem of finding a replacement for anarchistic society (capitalist or fascist) is that the economy is actually a delicately-balanced whole. If one traces the various successive steps required to produce each product used in personal consumption, including the production of required machinery, delivery facilities, and so forth, one would discover that the simple articles that make up personal consumption in the U.S. today are the result of a series of very many steps making up a network covering almost the entire world. Therefore, in order to replace the capitalist system, it is necessary to approach the problem of economic management on a large scale, or at least a national scale and preferably something of a world scale.

In the U.S. today we have also the essential techniques, ranging through industrial engineering, computer technology, marketing analysis methods, and so forth, to manage the economy on just that scale. That doesn't mean that a handful of brains sit in some super-computer center and manage every detail from there. It means that overall production can be planned in the sense of budgeting resources and production allocations, letting local people work out the details within general policies.

The problem — the main problem — is that working people are conditioned to think anarchistically. That is, the guy in one particular skill-pay bracket considers himself in competition for "goodies" with those from

another industry. Those with jobs consider themselves in competition with those on the unemployed lines, and so forth and so on. Capitalist organization of working people puts one group of working people against the others so that it seems that no understanding of common interests could be achieved — and therefore, obviously, no agreement on a common national economic policy.

The kinds of policies we have described for the takeover in the first section of this program illustrate the fact that all working people do have **fundamentally** common economic interests and therefore the basis for agreeing on a common economic policy of national development. That, however is merely abstract **at this instant**. In fact — in practice, not in abstraction — working people are organized in separate organizations, as separate ethnic groups, and whatnot. They think in terms of these localized groupings — since that is where today's bread is buttered for them. Any thinking or action which is not based on existing organizations is rightly considered too abstract to be "practical."

As long as present conditions exist, working people will have to accept what capitalism is able to offer them — since they are presently incapable of thinking or acting for their own interests. Unless the working people are organized on a broader scale. If they were so organized, the labor movement could and perhaps would take over the economy tomorrow — without any further advice from the National Caucus of Labor Committees.

The problem is therefore how to reorganize the labor movement and its allies.

## 2.2 Objective Conditions Favoring Re-Organization

Present conditions are already providing the necessary opportunities for beginning to organize in the way we must.

(1) Trade union methods are not enough to defend wages, working conditions and job security under conditions of inflation, rising taxation and recession, with increased employer militancy. (2) Wildcats and even larger labor resistance become illegal strikes which cannot be won (in most cases) without active support from outside allies. (3) Not only are union rank-and-file layers being thrown toward alliances with one another (although these alliances have yet to develop), but alliances are beginning to develop between militant unionists or unorganized workers and militant oppressed minority groups and militant groups of radical youth.

In sum, in order to win, unions are being compelled to orient toward alliances with other sections of labor, with radical youth and with oppressed-minority groups. In order to establish such alliances, agreement must

be reached on the nature of the common interests of the various forces participating. Effective struggle requires programs which express the broader common interests among wage-earners and their social allies throughout the nation.

As the political overtones and contents of labor struggles increase, the alliances of labor with other sections of the population, which began to be noticeable with the General Electric strike and with the 1970 teamsters' strikes, will become more frequent.

## 2.3 Trade-Unionism As an Obstacle

In this situation, trade-union organization plays a double role. Trade unions are an important advantage in protecting day-to-day rights of working people — as anyone knows who has experienced conditions in both organized and unorganized employment. Yet, trade unions also act as a brake against necessary forms of organization beyond mere trade-unionism. Trade-union bureaucracies, with or without goon squads, act as gingermen against militants and as an effective machine for breaking up militant formations within the industries where they dominate. Certain trade-union bureaucracies are notoriously stooges for the FBI, CIA and other anti-labor agencies. The National Labor Relations Board has a documented relationship with labor bureaucrats through which the NLRB acts mainly to ensure the suppression of independent caucuses within existing unions.

Trade-union ideology also acts against the interests of working people in a similar way. Militant rank-and-file leaders within the labor movement tend to expend their energies in impotent efforts to organize internal-power-struggles against the incumbent bureaucrats. Under today's conditions, the militants either lose such fights or simply become pawns of the maneuvers of one section of the bureaucracy against another. By limiting their organizing efforts to "the guys in my shop," potential mass leaders from the rank and file are reduced to impotence within the labor movement, whereas they might constitute a future power if they gave as much effort to organizing **outside** their shop or union as to organizing within. However excellent his intentions, the rank and file leader who limits his caucus-efforts to the "guys in my shop" is playing into the hands of the employers and labor bureaucrats...he is re-enforcing the division of the labor movement and its allies along the lines of existing divisions of the movement, and thus strengthening the organizational grip of the employers, government and labor bureaucracy (as a whole) on the labor movement as a whole.

## 2.4 How the Labor Movement Is To Be Organized

The basic principles of an actual science of socialist organization are as follows:

(1) The processes of capitalist society are such that



only a small proportion of its members are susceptible of commitment to socialist work **except under conditions of mass political struggle**. These persons, who are disposed to make a profession of socialism, manifest their existence by seeking to affiliate with what seems to be the best choice of socialist organization. It is upon the **quality** and the efforts of this critical minority that everything else to be considered depends.

(2) During periods of intensified struggles among working people, these small cadre layers are able to engage in close collaboration with the sort of militant activist "organic" leader of the labor, oppressed minority and related movements, to form organizations **across** trade-union and other parochialist lines of organization — forming caucuses around programs of a consciously socialist orientation. Such caucuses represent various sections of the labor movement and its allies simultaneously.

(3) These organic leaders, organized or organizable in such cross-union caucuses, are, in turn, embedded in mass organizations of the majority of working people and their allies, such as local trade-union rank-and-file caucuses.

The process of socialist organization involves the exertion of organized efforts through this concentric system of organization of mass forces by the cadre-layers. It is the development of such relations (concentric circles) in the course of day-to-day struggles in a period like this which ought to be the main general purpose of day-to-day work.

## 2.5 How the Transformation Occurs

In order for a socialist transformation to occur in the U.S.A. under general conditions of social organization like those of the present, a dual state of organization among working people has to be established first.

At present the organized sector of wage-earners is controlled by trade-union bureaucrats through trade-union organization, and these trade-union bureaucrats are controlled, in turn, by the Democratic and Republican political machines, through various "deals." At the very top of the pyramid sits the tiny political leadership of the capitalist class surrounded by its Praetorian Guard of elected officials, judges, police agencies and military.

In order to become the government, the labor movement and its social allies (the majority of the population!) must first develop a counter-organization.

In the vanguard of this counter-organization is a tiny layer of organized individuals who distinguish themselves by devoting themselves as professionals to the vocation of socialism. These individuals are the key, without which nothing else is generally possible.

Second in the system of "concentric circles" of organization is a larger stratum of individuals who rise above trade-union militancy, minority-group militancy, student militancy, to form vanguard organizations of day-to-day struggle, organizations uniting and representing militants from a variety of distinct organizations of working people.

Third in the system of "concentric circles" of organization are the local "rank and file" caucuses in which more advanced individuals from the second stratum play a leading role as leaders or principal contenders for leadership.

Fourthly, around these local "rank and file" caucuses there is the larger mass of working people and their allies in each special situation.

The organizational relationship among these four concentric layers is defined by program.

In order that a socialist transformation occur there must be, first, a faction among the socialist organizations which develops a program competently addressed to the historic problems of the society at that time. This program must be propagated for discussion and evaluation among the various concentric strata. Organization then develops around those persons and groups who either agree with the main thrust of the program or who are sufficiently in agreement with the idea of need for program to be actively engaged in discussing this program. It is essential that a minority of the forces at each stratum accept such a program and that a larger layer around each of them (in each stratum) know of the main features of this program. Under those conditions it is possible to form **meaningful** parties of working people.

Socialist transformation then depends on winning a majority of working people and their allies to the program. Two lines of development in this direction must be considered. In order that a program for action by a majority of the working people be treated seriously by working people themselves, they must be convinced that they are organized or capable of becoming organized as the force sufficient to carry out and defend such a program. Provided that conviction is established, the majority of working people tend to be won to a correct program through the lessons of experience. They do not **discover** the necessary program through daily experience; but, provided that such a program has been developed and circulated among them, they can compare this program with other programs, can evaluate the program by the lessons of daily experience.

Even tactical defeats by the labor movement can thus contribute to victorious takeover of the economy, provided that a tactical defeat demonstrates that working people are capable of becoming organized in a necessary way, and provided that the defeat is analyzed by socialists to make clear what must be corrected.

At the point that it becomes clear that action must be taken, and when only the socialist program offers an immediate effective course of action, the masses of working people and their allies will mobilize around local rank and file caucuses, which will, in turn, mobilize around vanguard organizations across trade union, industry, etc. lines of division. The mass-vanguard layers, in turn, have the necessary executive agencies for mobilization in the leading professional cadres of the socialist organizations.

This should not be regarded as a mechanical process of development toward a socialist transformation. On the contrary, such a development occurs through a series of "dress rehearsals" of various scales and degrees. The form of socialist organization may be rehearsed in a major strike struggle in which unemployed and youth support the strikers, or in mobilization of unionists, oppressed minorities and radical youth around the housing issue. It is these experiences in which working people experience working closely with their potential allies under conditions of day-to-day struggle which begin the psychological transformation of working people necessary to their acceptance of socialist world-outlooks and socialist ideas of mass democratic organization of the majority. It is through these "rehearsals," or transitional forms of struggle and organization, that the world-outlook and temper for transformation are imbued in a significant large number of working people.

### 2.6 "Competing" Socialist Organizations

As the radicalization deepens within the U.S. today, more individuals are making the choice to join, variously, the Labor Committees, the Communist Party, the Socialist Workers Party, the Black Panther Party, and so forth. Not all the "good" radicals join the Labor Committee and it is not only the "bad" radicals that join the Communist Party, SWP, and so forth. The individuals who have chosen socialism as a vocation, the individuals who have the key job to do in working toward socialist transformation, are therefore scattered among various socialist organizations. Unless some way is found to bring significant numbers from all these organizations together for certain tasks, socialist transformation is impossible.\*

There is another layer of self-styled professional socialists, the so-called "independents." Since the process of socialist transformation is a matter of organizing mass forces for that work, the socialist "independent" is a person whose mind has achieved independence from any real understanding of socialism itself. Not accidentally, it is these "independents" who usually degenerate into liberals at the moment of crisis and who play the most treacherous, opportunistic roles at every critical turn in the situation. This does not mean that we are hostile to all independent socialists; rather, we seek to encourage them to progress beyond their presently misguided world-outlook. It does mean

\* N.B., this article was written in 1968. Refer to *New Solidarity* 1968-73 for following developments. — Ed.

that the so-called "independents" are not a positive factor in the making of human history, and are by disposition no better than "fellow travellers" of the labor movement.

The issues which divide the various socialist organizations from one another today are generally legitimate issues. These are issues which must be fought out within the movement and settled, as a matter of getting the movement organized for its main tasks. To attempt to artificially fuse these organizations would be a foolish and counterproductive effort.

At the same time, the issues separating various socialist organizations are issues which will be settled in experience by the events immediately preceding socialist transformation. No doubt, every socialist faction which is not simply idiotic or otherwise useless will tend to be brought together with most other socialist organizations at that juncture.

So, the relationship among various socialist organizations is properly violently contradictory. The issues which divide these organizations involve the future of humanity and therefore permit no compromise and demand the most polemical approach. Yet those persons engaged in such properly-embittered disputes represent, in large part, the forces to be brought together as a precondition for socialist transformation. Therefore, the relationship among the various socialist organizations must be **simultaneously** one of sharp polemics and increasing collaboration on practical matters of the movement. While it is necessary for each organization to sometimes follow a course independent of other organizations, the socialist organization which habitually refuses to form joint organizations for common practical purposes with other socialist organizations, which always runs away from factional debate, which considers itself already "the one and only" revolutionary party — such an organization is an organization of pitiable fools.

It is therefore an indispensable part of the process of transformation that the programs of various socialist organizations be debated among all socialist organizations in view of all working people, and wherever there is possible principled agreement, there must also be an energetic effort for practical collaboration in matters of the labor movement's struggles.

### 2.7 Day-To-Day Struggles

Day-to-day socialist struggles must be organized on the basis of both demands and forms of organization which unite the majority of working people. These demands will properly coincide to a limited extent with the objectives of transformation. In general, we must struggle for the policy of \$7,500-\$15,000 annual incomes in 1967 dollars for all wage-earners, unemployed, welfare victims, pensioners, and so forth. We must struggle for issues of consumption such as hous-

ing, mass transit, quality and quantity of education, always specifying that the funds for these improvements be taken from the wasted income of the capitalist class. We are for all programmatic struggles which pose solutions in terms of creating additional productive employment to meet urgent material and related needs of working people and their allies — whether for items of personal consumption, correcting the “ecological rot,” or producing new modern workplaces to employ still more productive labor.

We are also for transferring the tax burdens from the wages of working people to the incomes (not just the profits so-called) of capitalists. We are for anti-inflation programs (such as a cost-of-living automatic increase for all wage-earners, pensioners, unemployed) at the expense of the capitalist system. We can be for these things because we know that if the capitalist economy

collapses as a result of our successful struggles, we are prepared to get the economy going immediately and solve precisely the problems the capitalists either are unable or refuse to solve.

Our approach to this sort of struggle is generally as follows. We always attempt to approach these struggles in terms of practical alliances with socialist organizations. It is a principle for us that these alliances must focus on creating across-union-lines caucuses of more politically-conscious vanguard layers, and that that vanguard must be simultaneously rooted in the struggle organizations of the larger forces. It is a principle for us that each struggle, whatever its other immediate objectives, must bring the fragmented forces engaged into closer, organic relationship to one another, approximating the mass solidarity of democratic socialist institutions.

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# The CAMPAIGNER

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Fidel "Joins" the Labor Committee

Dialectics of Art

Greece at a Turning Point

Towards a Socialist Perspective for Ireland

War and Revolution in the Middle East

1971

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## THE CAMPAIGNER

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# Toward a Dialectics of Art

Originally published in *The Campaigner*, Vol. 4, Nos. 1, 3 and 4, 1971.

by Christine Berl

The chief defect of all materialism up to now (including Feuerbach's) is, that the object, reality, what we apprehend through our senses, is understood only in the form of the **object or contemplation**; but not as **sensuous human activity, as practice**; not subjectively.

Marx, "Theses on Feuerbach," 1846

We believe that the supreme task of art in our epoch is to take part actively and consciously in the preparation of the revolution. But the artist cannot serve the struggle for freedom unless he subjectively assimilates its social content, unless he feels in his very nerves its meaning and drama and freely seeks to give his own inner world incarnation in his art.

Andre Breton, Diego Rivera, "Manifesto: Towards a Free Revolutionary Art," 1938.

Philosophy is thus expected...not so much to bring chaotic conscious life back to the orderly ways of thought, and the simplicity of the notion, as to run together what thought has divided asunder, suppress the notion with its distinctions, and restore the **feeling** of existence. What it wants from philosophy is not so much insight as edification. The beautiful, the holy, the eternal, religion, love — these are the bait required to awaken the desire to bite; not the notion, but ecstasy, not the march of cold necessity in the subject-matter, but ferment and enthusiasm — these are to be the ways by which the wealth of the concrete substance is to be stored and increasingly extended.

Hegel, "Preface" to **The Phenomenology of Mind**, 1807.

**T**he severance of consciousness from self-consciousness has led to the artistic degeneration of our time in which art, only appropriately, should find itself playing the part of seducer into a world of an equally degenerate state of human knowledge. All questions of aesthetics ultimately become questions of epistemology, and any serious Marxist critic of art must go beyond the usual questions such as "who is art for?" to propound a theory of knowledge **as revealed in art**. That is the purpose of this article.

The creative process at its finest is simultaneously intuitive and conscious, or in Hegel's terms a process of self-consciousness. Great artists in the past have always sought a fluidity between theory and practice. The resistance that they have met with in existing on that level is grotesquely illustrated in the story of the great Surrealist poet, actor, theoretician and founder of the Theatre of Cruelty, Antonin Artaud.(1)

Invited to lecture the students and professors at the Sorbonne on "The Theatre and the Plague," he began by first tentatively advancing the theory that great works of art occurred when the artist was whipped by the fear of death. Then imperceptibly, to the horror of his audience, his face became contorted, his eyes dilated and his muscles contracted as he began to act out dying by the plague. When he finally collapsed with a last gasp on the floor of the schoolroom, he was greeted with laughter, hissing and comments of disgust from the audience who was totally unable to cope with such a performance. They didn't understand that Artaud made no separation between knowledge arrived at as a theorist and as an actor.

Similarly, Andre Breton in writing his "Manifesto of Surrealism" (1924) obliterates this distinction by using Surrealist method to put forward Surrealist method. Is it theory, poetry?

What Hegel claimed for philosophy in **The Phenomenology of Mind** must today be claimed for art if art is to once again become capable of the most profound social transformation. For the artist to merely refer to society does not fulfill this function, as is the case with so many so-called "political artists" who merely graft social references onto an art of alienated and fragmentary perceptions of the world. The self-sufficiency of a great work of art consists in this, that it summons up by means of the process of self-consciousness the whole of man's knowledge about the world in symbolic form. When the delicate balance that exists

between consciousness and self-consciousness is disrupted, decadent elements creep in.

The Romantic movement had the tendency to destroy the balance in favor of intuition; the music of Schumann is a good example of a very fine intuition disintegrating first into banalities and finally into insanity. In the opposite case, Arnold Schoenberg's **Quintet for Wind Instruments, Op. 26**, remains unconvincing, not because the twelve-tone theory, or any theory for that matter, is inimical to composition, but because the theory had been but incompletely transformed into sensuous material. More than just a tendency away from the dialectical creative process, however, are the more drastic departures taken by some of the artistic developments of the twentieth century.

### Flight

In a society where true creativity is prevented from functioning, it is not surprising to find that the artist himself is no longer certain where to locate his creativity. Suffering frequently from the delusion that creativity is to be found in pure intuition, he resorts to desperate acts to recover that intuition and thereby to exorcize the spectre of his own impotence. He often refers to this as the recovery of his "freedom." Because he sees all social avenues of communication blocked, he comes to associate his freedom to be creative with asocial behavior.

It is at this point that he turns to Freud and the unconscious; in Hegelian terms, he has chosen consciousness over self-consciousness. In this regard, it is interesting to compare Kubie's concept of the pre-conscious process, as put forth in his book **Neurotic Distortion of the Creative Process**, to Freud's concept of the unconscious. Kubie's "preconscious" is liberated from blind neurotic compulsion and reaches its ultimate fulfillment in social relations. What fascinated artists, however, about Freud's "unconscious" was that it made acceptable their feelings of hatred for society and a desire for revenge.

This distorted view that sees freedom inextricably bound up with social irresponsibility has had, of course, its justification in what social responsibility has come to mean in the swiftly deteriorating capitalist society of the twentieth century. As the economic basis of that society became increasingly unstable and threatening to the ruling class, the demands made on the individual by that ever more desperate class brought the individual closer to self-annihilation.

Many artists in the twentieth century saw this only too clearly. Hence the subject matter of much of their work was concerned with the question of how to escape. The theme of perpetual flight in the writing of Anais Nin and the pleasure associated with taking on different social identities so brilliantly displayed by Mann in the character of Felix Krull are some among many ex-

amples of the artist's awareness that for the individual to allow himself to be responsible to the demands made on him by capitalist social relations is tantamount to committing suicide.

### Flight Into Insanity

The deflection of creativity away from social relations towards duplicity in order to maintain a freedom denied by society (the theme of the double in **Felix Krull**) brings us to that frontier of art bordering on insanity.

Insanity, like art, often has its origins in the necessity of extricating oneself from the repressive mechanisms of an exploitative society. Hence the Surrealists' "rebellion" against logical certainty has as its counterpart certain pathological states of mind. While totally engrossed in sensorial dissociation, the victim of insanity asserts his "freedom" by taking from a question posed to him only that material which is of use to his subjective preoccupations. For example, in the symptom of mental disorder known as echolalia, the answer to a question such as "how old are you?" would be "you." From the question "what is your name?" the patient extricates himself by answering "forty-five houses."

Speaking of the insane, Breton writes: "I am willing to admit that they are, to some degree, victims of their imagination, in that it induces them not to pay attention to certain rules — outside of which the species feels itself threatened — which we are supposed to know and respect. [Breton is wrong here; he should have said **inside** of which the species feels itself threatened.] But their profound indifference to the way in which we judge them and even to the various punishments meted out to them, allows us to suppose that they derive a great deal of comfort and consolation from their imagination, that they enjoy their madness sufficiently to endure the thought that its validity does not extend beyond themselves. And, indeed, hallucinations, illusions, etc., are not a source of trifling pleasure." (2) He is speaking of the madman but he is also speaking of the artist. In answering the question who, the doctor or the madman, got the better of the exchange, Breton, identifying with the madman, says that it was he who got the better of the exchange **because he was not the person asking the questions** (Artaud imposing his method on the audience). The sources of Surrealism can be traced back in part to this perversion of dialogue.

From the artist and the madman, it is not far to the artist and the criminal, as Genet has shown. In present society, the unleashing of creativity becomes a "criminal" act. Breton, with his characteristic irony remarks: "Whatever reservations I may be allowed to make concerning responsibility in general...however difficult it may be for me to accept the principle of any kind of responsibility, I would like to know how the first punishable offenses, the Surrealist character of which will be clearly apparent, will be **judged**. Will the

accused be acquitted, or will he merely be given the benefit of the doubt because of extenuating circumstances?...as soon as Surrealist methods begin to enjoy widespread favor...a new morality must be substituted for the prevailing morality, the source of all our trials and tribulations.”(3)

### Escape to Childhood

The flight into childhood — not accidentally an occurrence in both Romanticism and Surrealism, both of which have opted for consciousness over self-consciousness — is another wrong turn taken in search of a way to restore the damaged creative process. Breton, praising the state of childhood, writes: “There, the absence of any known restriction allows him the perspective of several lives lived at once (again Felix Krull); this illusion becomes firmly rooted within him; now he is only interested in the fleeting, the extreme facility of everything.”(4) The facility, too, with which Felix Krull takes on different social identities displays nothing less than artistry. The key words here are “the fleeting,” “the extreme facility of everything,” (Breton speaking of dreams, “the ease of everything is priceless”), fragmentary phrases that act as “the bait awakening the desire to bite,” which awaken the desire to catch hold of the whole creative process.

If Breton continues to use childhood as “bait” it is only because he incorrectly locates creativity in the realm of the unconscious. Comparing the Surrealist method to childhood, he writes: “The mind which plunges into Surrealism relives with glowing excitement the best part of its childhood. For such a mind, it is similar to the certainty with which a person who is drowning reviews once more, in the space of less than a second, all the insurmountable moments of his life. Some may say to me that the parallel is not very encouraging. [It is at this point that Breton senses the incompleteness of his knowledge and the danger inherent in only recognizing half of the dialectical process: that of losing the whole, of drowning.] From childhood memories, and from a few others, there emanates a sentiment of being unintegrated and then later of **having gone astray**, which I hold to be the most fertile that exists.”(5)

Here finally it is clear that Breton holds the key only to a fragmentary state of knowledge. Ironically, he saw in the Surrealist method of psychic automatism what Hegel had seen in philosophy, the means by which to express the actual functioning of thought; but what a difference between that which each regarded as thought.

Unable to integrate opposite modes of consciousness, Breton’s attack on formal logic leads then to the disintegration of his own mind. “The only thing that might prove fatal to me would be the slightest loss of impetus. Words, groups of words **which follow one**

**another**, manifest among themselves the greatest solidarity. It is not up to me to favor one group over the other. It is up to a miraculous equivalent to intervene — and intervene it does.”(6)

While he rejects the linear progression of formal logic, he doesn’t notice that he has accepted that same linear progression as the organizational principles of his associations. The clue to the grasp of the whole that he misses is the notion of simultaneity. Breton plunged himself into this form of mental suicide in 1924, a plunge that marked the beginning of the Surrealist movement as one of the significant intellectual movements of the twentieth century. Fourteen years later, in 1938, Breton and Diego Rivera were to publish a manifesto in which was written “we cannot remain indifferent to the intellectual conditions under which creative activity takes place, nor should we fail to pay all respect to those particular laws which govern intellectual creation.”(7) The two modes of consciousness that he had attempted to sever with his experiments in automatic writing were brought together again as he now struggled with the difficult problem of becoming a Marxist artist.

### Degeneration of Music

In music today, two unacceptable choices confront us that correspond to the separation of phenomenology and mind. There is the music of “pure experience” such as Rock (aleatory music of the Cage school and the music of certain untalented composers today in whose hands “free” atonality pulverizes into meaningless sounds would also fall in this category), a music which usually prides itself on its spontaneity and its “liberation” from theory. When we examine what goes under the name of “theoretical” music, best exemplified in the post-Webern school of composers, Milton Babbitt et al., associated with Princeton University, it becomes apparent why the reaction against theory has taken the infantile form that it has. Just as Breton in rejecting formal logic in favor of the unconscious found himself temporarily in a state of childhood, those musicians who come in contact with the absurd formalism of logical positivism applied to musical theory, as exemplified in the Princeton school, are forced to conclude that theory can explain little and experience is all. Those musicians who are struggling to restore an intellectuality to music that sheds light rather than destroys the ambiguity of musical creation find themselves uncomfortably located in the interstice between the other two unacceptable choices.

The problem is further complicated by the social implications of what would otherwise have remained an epistemological controversy. The “experience” school of Rock and Cage has given evidence recently that it thinks it is on the side of revolution. Only half conscious of itself, however, it is not surprising to discover that its consciousness of present historical conditions is also rather feeble. It falls into the category mentioned

earlier of most "political" art at present, which is to say that its musical language still retains all the defects of bourgeois knowledge through which an occasional glimmering of the need for revolution sometimes penetrates.

Furthermore, Leftists who see in it the music of the present and future Socialist movement fall into the trap of assuming that everything written for the least musically developed person automatically has social relevance. (Is Marx's *Capital* socially irrelevant because it cannot be immediately understood by everyone?) Needless to say, the Princeton school on the other hand dissociates itself from any concern with the role of art in the transformation of society, continuing the tradition of so-called "pure" art which, as Breton correctly points out in his "Manifesto," "generally serves the extremely impure ends of reaction." (8)

### Rock: A Reactionary Development

The myth that Rock is or will become the music of the revolutionary Left must be once and for all dispelled. The existence of Rock on a purely phenomenal level — for to see ideas of far reaching consequence in already rudimentary musical concepts would only further reduce them and finally threaten them out of existence — has disqualified it as the embodiment, in the symbolic form of musical language, of Marxist world outlook. Nor does it occupy a revolutionary place by any means in the history of musical thinking. Furthermore, taking it on its own terms, its pretensions to spontaneity and rhythmic complexity are utterly fallacious, as will be proven in the following.

Those who defend Rock maintain that it has brought the rhythmic element, always subordinated to tonal relations in classical music, (9) to the fore. But in reality, it has done precisely the opposite; the classical conception of rhythm, namely regular meter, having been in fact **perpetuated** by Rock, only in the more rudimentary form of a "beat."

What Stravinsky said about jazz in 1959 applies today (because of certain recent developments that have taken place in jazz since) more to Rock. In his famous caustic remarks on jazz (a music which incidentally, he subsequently admits respect for), he says nonetheless: "the stage has to be set, and there must be heat. The percussion and bass (not the piano; that instrument is too hybrid and besides, most of the players have just discovered Debussy) function as a central heating system. They must keep the temperature 'cool,' not cool. It is a kind of masturbation that never arrives anywhere (of course) but which supplies the 'artificial' genesis the art requires. The point of interest is instrumental virtuosity, instrumental personality, not melody, not harmony, and certainly not rhythm. Rhythm doesn't exist really because no rhythmic proportion of relaxation exists. Instead of rhythm there is 'beat.' The players beat all the time merely to keep up and to know

which side of the beat they are on." (10)

The real attack on classical notions of rhythm came not from Rock but much earlier from Stravinsky via the rhythmical as well as tonal ambiguity of Debussy (cf. the superimposed measures in 6/4 and 4/4 in *Nuages* with *Les Noces* and *L'Histoire du Soldat*). It was Stravinsky who developed asymmetry and the tension of opposites as the basis of rhythmic complexity and development. The idea of simultaneous levels of antagonistic rhythmical and harmonic elements in *Le Sacre du Printemps* which contributes to the magnificent instability of that work was perfected to such a degree that the work has had as yet no issue in the half-century since it was written. To explore this asymmetry further it will be necessary to do what Marxists writing on music always avoid doing, namely to show how the dialectical process manifests itself **in the music itself**.

In the *Danse sacrale* of *Le Sacre* Stravinsky makes use of two opposite rhythmical forces. The opening measures can be at first broken down into three rhythmic cells: A, the rhythmic cell associated with the repetition of the opening chord marked in the example below as I; B, the rhythmical cell associated with the melodic-harmonic phrase marked II; and C, the rhythmical cell associated with the melodic-harmonic phrase marked III. (11)

While it appears that three elements are in play, the underlying force is in fact dialectical. As the *Danse sacrale* unfolds, the three rhythmical cells appear in linear succession. The order that they appear in varies, as does the number of sixteenth-note divisions per cell. This can be represented as follows, using arabic numerals to indicate the total number of sixteenth-note divisions per cell: A-7, B-7, A-5, B-7, A-3, C-8, A-4, B-7, C-5, A-5, B-4+3+4, A-8; B-4, A-2, B-4, A-8, B-4, C-7. (The semi-colon indicates the binary division of the section under discussion.) Behind the appearance of three rhythmical elements, is the duality of the changing and the unchanging rhythmical cell (B is unchanging in each section). Furthermore, B undergoes a transformation from a unit of 7 divisions in the first part, to become a unit of 4 divisions in the second, a change from a prime to a non-prime number. The opposition of the variable and invariable rhythmical cell here and its perpetuation on two levels simultaneously (B in relation to A and C; B in relation to itself) is an example of an idea that both illuminates the musical material and transcends it.

Compare the opening measures of the *Danse sacrale* with the opening measures of "Street Fighting Man" from the Stones' *Beggars Banquet*. Throughout the latter the length of the measures remains invariably the same, although certain elementary rhythmic shifts (known as syncopation) take place within this uniformity. Almost all Rock is consistently written in simple meter, in the simplest in fact, that of 4/4. In



Stravinsky, *Danse sacrale*

## MUSICAL EXAMPLE

A, I                      B. II                      C. III<sup>8</sup> - - - - - 7

**Beggars Banquet** the only deviation from this are the two instances of compound meter in the songs "Dear Doctor" and "Factory Girl" which are in 6/8.

### Ideas in Music

In this manner it becomes possible to talk about ideas **in music**, not only about ideas **imposed on music** by its social and intellectual context.

Most Marxist writers on music, underestimating the difficulty of mastering musical concepts as they are revealed in musical language, ignore the former and, subsequently, can only incompletely grasp the significance of the latter. These are usually the same people who too readily declare that music, in order to be socially relevant, cannot exist independently of words. Such philistinism was even maintained by someone like Eisler, a pupil of Schoenberg who collaborated with Brecht in the thirties and forties. Quite the opposite view was taken by the Russian Hegelians in the 1830's and 40's around Alexander Herzen who used to have endless debates about the ideas expressed in Beethoven's music. Today, because most musicians as well are convinced that music doesn't exist in the realm of ideas, they would sooner look for ideas in Beethoven's letters than in his music.

The fact remains that to deny the importance of instrumental music is to say that ideas can only be transmitted in words. To deny the existence of ideas in the symbolic form of musical language is to trivialize music, to reduce it to the pure sensuality of phenomenal experience.

It is important that Rock has not as yet become acquainted with the year 1913 as regards rhythmical

development in music. What of the sad demise of tonality? Has the news reached those "avant-garde," "experimental" groups such as the Stones or The Who, groups which continue to write not only tonal music but tonal music employing relationships so limited that one wonders if they had access to equal-tempered instruments?

Tonality, like modern capitalism, reached its definitive stage as a result of scientific progress, namely in the discovery of equal temperament. Prior to that, the older, unequal systems of tuning were useless when the harmonic demands of the early 18th century reached out toward modulations to more remote keys, requiring the use of semitones which, until then, had not been tempered to produce a uniform set of intervallic relationships. The first quarter of the 18th century saw remarkable progress in establishing a truly equal temperament, and the masterpiece crowning this achievement and at the same time pointing the way to the full possibilities of the tonal system in the future was Bach's *Wohltemperiertes Klavier* (the two volumes of which appeared in 1722 and 1744 respectively) consisting of preludes and fugues in each of the twenty-four major and minor keys. It is interesting to see that the very process that brought tonality to its highest stage, the extension outwards to more remote tonal relations, also brought about its downfall — an idea that should not be unfamiliar to Marxists.

The history of the development and disintegration of tonality runs parallel to the development and disintegration of capitalism. The threat to tonality which had manifested itself after 1870 with the increasing tonal ambiguity of Debussy and the chromaticism of Strauss and early Schoenberg was also the period in history in which capitalism began to be noticeably inimical to the progress of civilization. Arnold Schoenberg who, in his

twelve-tone system (established more or less in 1923), succeeded in freeing the twelve notes of the chromatic scale from the diatonic associations they had retained as vestiges of the tonal system as even under chromaticism, like Marx saw this system as a historical necessity and always insisted that his theory was not a break with the past but a continuation of the most important achievements thus far in a historically appropriate musical language. Thus he regarded what subsequently became known as the Second Viennese School (Schoenberg and his two "pupils" Alban Berg and Anton Webern) as having been born in the womb of the earlier Viennese School of Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven (the chronological link was Brahms) and in that sense part of the classical tradition.

Today, tonality as the musical language for our time is about as viable as capitalism. Tonality is dead, and any music pretending otherwise is ahistorical and reactionary. (It should be absolutely clear that I am speaking here of the musical language as used by contemporary composers, and not the language of tonality at its appropriate historical period, the brilliance of which was one of the great achievements in the history of music.)

However, as was suggested earlier, the Rock scene has not as yet heard and one cannot help but feel like Nietzsche's madman as one runs with a lantern in the morning to tell them the news. To the extent that the breaking down of tonality can be seen as the mirror in art of the dissolution of capitalism, the fact that these Rock groups look back nostalgically towards a past, out-moded musical language reveals the inconsistency between the revolutionary pretensions of many of them and the underlying bourgeois constructs of their thought.

This doesn't mean, of course, that Rock doesn't try to appear "modern," just as capitalism tries to put on a progressive face. In fact, the reactionary musical language of Rock is frequently veiled by certain instrumental effects, as often as not electronic, in an effort on the part of the Rock musician to establish himself as "contemporary."

An examination of the correspondence between sound and idea in music reveals to what extent the dialectical process is or is not functioning. As we have seen, in Rock the sound is extraneous to the musical concepts. In the case of much electronic music, its present state of decadence can be explained as a plunge into the purely phenomenal experience of sound severed from musical ideas.

Compare such degradation of the sensuous qualities of music to Debussy's masterful use of sound to capture the most subtle inflection and transformation of musical idea — a true act of love. As Debussy said himself, speaking of *Images* in 1908, "I am trying to introduce something new — realities, so to speak. What idiots

call 'impressionism' "(12) (This idea would seem to have its visual counterpart in the paintings of Arshile Gorky, so remarkable for the swiftness with which ideas attach themselves to sensuous forms.)

The shift away from idea in sensuous material towards a seeking of pure sensation is the dominant trend in art today, and understandably has had its corresponding degradation in the personality of the artist himself.

While a change in social and intellectual conditions in the coming years may move musicians to grope for a revolutionary consciousness, their music will not reach the level of a historical necessity until they have mastered the process of self-conscious consciousness as manifested in the dialectical relation between sound and idea. Until this happens their music will be inappropriate as an embodiment of Socialist world outlook. But just as Marxist theory of knowledge cannot be mastered without having thoroughly assimilated the intellectual tradition that Marx himself continued, it is impossible to bring music today to a level of self-conscious consciousness without having mastered the most advanced musical thinking of the past.

Not only are Rock musicians incapable of this with their present mental equipment, but they are even totally unaware that there is such a past, finding great novelty in their "independent" discoveries without knowing that they already occurred, developed and declined several centuries ago.

The present narrowness of the Socialist movement, due in part to the alienated conception that socialism is only concerned with economic and political issues, will make it very difficult for significant intellectual and artistic movements to take place within it. The resistance meeting attempts to establish a Socialist art within the movement will be a tribute to the vigor of bourgeois ideology still struggling for supremacy among us.

Other obstacles exist as well. As long as socialists continue to believe that to become a socialist the individual has to sacrifice his individual identity to a collective, homogenized, group identity, artists and creative intellectuals in general will stay clear of the movement. This is particularly true in the case of the artist who realizes to what degree the vitality of his art and its impact on society depends on his knowledge of himself.

Vulgar Marxists, with characteristic lack of imagination, conclude that it is necessary to suppress individuality altogether because they are incapable of locating it creatively in society. Thus, while the individual is prevented from realizing himself socially under capitalism, the vulgar Marxists have seen to it that he should also be prevented from realizing himself under socialism. Until the artist is given a place of importance in the

Socialist movement, which he will hold because of his ability to reveal the highest stage of knowledge man is capable of (a knowledge which must be at the center of socialist thought), the ghost of Mayakovsky will continue to haunt us.

## PART II TOWARD A DIALECTICS OF ART

It is a fallacy to believe that experience in itself is a determinant of consciousness. The notion that human identity is a response to "objective" conditions in no way mediated through the individual's consciousness of his response is a lapse into the worst sort of behaviorist theory — astounding, but nonetheless a prevalent notion held by Marxists. Rather, it is the activity that occurs in between the starting point of experience and the concepts produced by concept-forming processes that properly speaking is the determinant of our identity. This creative activity made self-conscious is education. Put another way, we can only know ourselves objectively as we know ourselves subjectively. Thus the relativity of objective existence to subjective judgment is as true in the determination of identity as it is of all scientific truth in general.

Placing creativity on a scientific basis for the first time in history is to be considered within the realm of a possibility now that education, as defined above, is being undertaken within a revolutionary organization. Such self-conscious practical-critical activity takes creativity out of the shadowy realm of naive insight and places it within the historically-oriented consciousness of species being. However, the obstacles to the location of creativity within species consciousness under conditions of capitalist social relations demands that we consciously formulate the way in which this type of consciousness is formed. To do this it is necessary to distinguish between our identity as determined by scientific social practice. Gramsci in "The Study of Philosophy" presents the alternatives when he asks "is it preferable to 'think' without having critical awareness, in a disjointed and irregular way, in other words to 'participate' in a conception of the world 'imposed' mechanically by external environment, that is, by one of the many social groups in which everyone is automatically involved from the time he enters the conscious world...or is it preferable to work out one's own conception of the world consciously and critically and so out of this work of one's own brain to choose one's own sphere of activity, to participate actively in making the history of the world, and not simply to accept passively and without care the imprint of one's own personality from outside?" The fact that the working out of "one's own conception of the world consciously and critically" can now be conducted upon the foundation of an institution involved in the transformation of social practice provides that basis for the notion of creativity as an aspect of scientific inquiry. A new conception of creativity, in practice as well as in art, can be put forth

now on the basis of new social forces coming into being, of a class-for-itself institution representing a new, higher form of society in an abbreviated form, one which subsumes the entirety of the division of labor in the process of social reproduction. On the basis of this concentrated form of self-subsisting species being it can be put forth now, not as the imaginatively deprived conceive, only after the emergence of a socialist state. It not only can be put forth now, it must be put forward now if we are to determine the realization of that socialist state. If creativity in general is explored in this paper through a comparison of artistic and scientific creativity it is relevant to the question of creative practice within a revolutionary organization to the extent that both art and political practice suffer from the cult of spontaneity.

Creativity arises from the fact that certain kinds of concepts are required by society if it is to reproduce itself on an expanded scale. The self-conscious process that leads to the formation of these concepts constitutes the creative process placed on a scientific basis. This is the meaning of progress in art: conceptual innovation which makes new discoveries about man which, if extended into social practice, would lead to a reproduction of society on a qualitatively higher level. Therefore an art that stands still, that merely skillfully reproduces old concepts, is a decadent art since it does not meet the requirement of the human race for an augmented power of understanding. Progress is demanded of art as much as it is demanded of science. There is no artistic truth beyond this task any more than there is in science. Einstein in his essay "What is the Theory of Relativity" verges on the boundaries of this notion, saying that "the development of physics has shown that at any given moment, out of all conceivable construction, a single one has always proved itself decidedly superior to all the rest." However, he does not draw the conclusion from this observation that scientific knowledge is relative to existing productive relations but returns instead to Leibnitz's notion of a "pre-established harmony" between theoretical principles and phenomena. For a Marxist that harmony is not "pre-established" but created self-consciously through an awareness of the historical task to which the "bridge between phenomena and their theoretical principles" is oriented. It requires the acceptance of scientific knowledge as appropriately false positive knowledge in place of immutable scientific laws existing beyond the domain of human behavior.

The self-conscious production of creativity, the pre-conscious processes made deliberate, is placed on a scientific basis when its approximation of truth is demonstrated by opening up new areas of socially creative practice. The significance of ideational progress, as manifested in art and science, lies in its implicit command over social forces, its implications with regard to social practice. Therein lies the relationship of culture to political practice, not in any directly instrumental use. The question to pose in determining this

relationship is what concrete forms of social practice, what kind of man would be produced if the world-view implicit in a particular form of cultural expression were put into practice? While this world-view will include ideational representations of existing social practice, to assume that cultural expression does no more than reflect this aspect of reality is to ignore its self-reflexive nature, what is often an unconscious capacity to make judgment. The work of Beethoven in general, as has been demonstrated through the example of the "Diabelli Variations," represents not a mere reflection of early 19th century reality, since no such "mere reflection" exists, but an objective reality known only subjectively by Beethoven and expressed characteristically by an irony mediated through the formal aspects of composition. The conception of objectivity severed from such a process of judgment is one which can have no place in a Marxian theory of scientific knowledge in which man is the measure.

It is vitally necessary, with regard to our own identity, to locate the modernity question positively by locating it in relation to the evolutionary development of man. Once the rigid objective determinism theory has been thrown out, one can also dismiss the fallacious but prevalent conception among Marxists that there can be no ideational progress in a period of social decadence. Marx himself would seem to suggest that this is not the case in his discussion of Greek art and society at the end of his **Critique of Political Economy**, where he points out the discrepancy between the high level of art and the social backwardness of Greek society. Through the self-reflexive process of judgment, in art through a highly critical appraisal of reality through selection, breakthroughs in conceptual power can occur which have implicit in them the potential to synthesize new concepts, both ideationally and in social practice. Such creativity is dialectical when it succeeds in creating a crisis within existing consciousness-in-general by creating apparently insoluble paradoxes and in some form containing within it the "germ of a new world-outlook" which offers the possibility of coherence as an alternative for the chaos of inconsistency which it has provoked. Great art has always created a crisis in the existing state of consciousness. However, most modern art cannot fall into that category. The Dadaists and Surrealists and their grotesque little reproductions running around today, such as Frank Zappa, in unveiling the unintelligibility of the world did not display great genius. The crisis of unintelligibility had already been vividly created for them by bourgeois society with its fragmentation and idiocy of life, a crisis thoroughly lived out by every member of bourgeois society. Who isn't aware of the meaninglessness of such an existence? What is required is to provoke a crisis in the consciousness of that unintelligibility and a world-view which leads to the creation of concepts which have the potential to liberate men from such a monstrous social existence. Are there modern thinkers who have been able to do this or do we dismiss the

modern period since approximately 1848 as one of total social and ideational stagnation?

Since it seems unnecessary on this occasion to praise the most important contribution of modern thought, namely Marxism, perhaps we can pass immediately to figures who might otherwise be regarded as hopeless bourgeois ideologues.

Let's consider Goedel's contribution which was made within the field of mathematics. By demonstrating the impossibility of consistency even within the very large class of deductive systems, he made it possible to conclude that no closed system could be free of internal contradiction. Such a demonstration of what knowledge was not was the necessary first step towards a positive conception of knowledge, as any dialectician would concede. While Goedel himself has not been able to follow through the consequences of his own discovery, only having very gingerly stepped outside the limits of his own discipline and onto the plateau of Platonic realism, his discovery is one which can and should be assimilated into a Marxist world-view.

Schoenberg's thorough subjection to doubt of musical laws which for several centuries had been regarded as immutable was historically necessary in order to shake the foundation of music to achieve greater freedom for the composer in the formation of new concepts. Unfortunately, the exploration of this new freedom did not lead to a theory of music in any way comparable to Einstein's theory of relativity. The banality of the twelve-tone system as a theory compared to the rich array of complicated musical problems which we must credit Schoenberg himself for having uncovered in his compositions antedating the system, is a striking discrepancy. Selectively ignoring his own discoveries, Schoenberg created an ideology which has been waved about by academic composers since who want to get on the bandwagon of what they are deluded into believing is modernity. Although the crisis provoked by Schoenberg in assuming the relativity of musical concepts which until then had been held to be absolute could not be met by a simple-minded set of rules based on axiomatic deduction, his iconoclasm, not to be confused with anarchy, opened up the possibility of philosophical conceptions unique in the history of music. Nevertheless, he is chided by CP hack Sidney Finkelstein in his anachronistic book **Composer and Nation** for having lost touch with the masses and is promptly deposited by him into the category of "philosophical loneliness," a judgment that goes further toward demonstrating Mr. Finkelstein's philosophical loneliness. Schoenberg's exploration of this new freedom through which he had hoped to arrive at a new classicism, a preoccupation which he shares with other important modern thinkers, was considered of sufficient historical importance by that other philosophically lonely thinker, Thomas Mann, to make it the subject of his novel **Doctor Faustus**. It is not perhaps reckless to suggest that a theory of atonality has been historically necessary since

the first quarter of a century, but has not yet been produced. What has been produced are various musical ideologies, all of which rest on pluralist notions of reality, as pluralist even as claiming that every composition has its own theory.

A new conception of Self and Freedom was required in the late nineteenth century, and Rimbaud provided it by creating a crisis in the prevailing consciousness of the limits of human power. It was the Faustian theme made specific to the period of the commune. The notion of extended being overflowed in the lyrical brilliance of this extraordinary poet. Understanding in an intuitive way the material interdependency of human existence he could write, "It is wrong to say I think. One should say: I am thought....For, I is another. If brass wakes up a trumpet, it isn't to blame. To me this is evident: I give a stroke to the bow: the symphony begins to stir in the depths or comes bursting onto the stage." The same thought had been expressed similarly by Feuerbach in the "Preface" to the *Essence of Christianity*, in which he says, "I have many things outside myself, which I cannot convey either in my pocket or my head, but which nevertheless I look upon as belonging to me." Rimbaud, however, was not merely content to be a "natural philosopher in the domain of mind," but was searching for a way to translate poetic being into action, his own poetic being into the poetic being of all men. Like Shelley, for whom poetry was a "sword of lightning, ever unsheathed, which consumes the scabbard that would contain it," Rimbaud wanted poetry to be used at all times as a powerful way of creating change. For this a new man was required, a Prometheus unbound. The poet's identity as a thief of fire, Rimbaud extended to all men, writing that the "Poet will define the amount of unknown arising in his time in the universal soul; he will give more than the formula of his thought, more than the annotation of his march toward Progress! Enormity become norm, absorbed by every one, he will truly be the multiplier of progress! This future, as you see, will be materialistic. As a matter of fact it will still be Greek poetry in a way. This eternal art will have its functions since poets are citizens. Poetry will no longer rhythm action: it will go ahead." Thus with Rimbaud, poetry became a science in the Marxian sense; its task was to lead man towards a conscious mastery over his existence.

Rimbaud's impatience for progress led him to an increasing level of abstraction of language, an abstraction which grew out of an impatience to experience more within a shorter period of time, an impatience not to be satisfied until he had experienced a simultaneity of being. It was a consciousness appropriate to a revolutionary period in which centuries are suddenly speeded up. His formal iconoclasm was absolutely necessary to this search for heightened being, the awareness of his own richness outside himself in the simultaneity of the multiple being of species existence. This is clear in his last prose poems in which the acceleration of experience is conveyed through per-

ceptual elision, very similar to the harmonic elision in late Beethoven. Both had moved toward abstraction through a concern with the paradox of objective versus subjective time.

Having talked about some of the positive aspects of modernity we now sadly have to turn to the trash, since the trash is far more popular than any discoveries talked about so far. Almost all music produced since WWII has been one form or another of ideology, a highly particularist world-outlook that interpreted reality from a limited perspective. If the academic serial composers have given us a caricature of mind by employing the conceptual banalities that set theory provides, jazz has given us a caricature of passion, of Feuerbach's notion of sensuous being. Jazz represents a false consciousness of the problem of how to become human. It is the worst sort of sentimental romanticism, an inundation of feeling severed from any self-conscious reflection of what part those feelings play in a whole being which in music can only be thought out through a rigorous grappling with formal problems solved creatively. Oh so human, this alienated sensuality, so redeeming that religious feeling of Coltrane, the pathos of the inarticulate, the heat of the inchoate. As though we didn't have enough of this alienated being under capitalist society. Great art has never been merely a compensation for a deprivation of some one aspect of whole being, but has contained within it the seeds of whole being. This is what is meant by a classical art, as Hegel clearly lays the basis for in his *Phenomenology*. And yet we have the Coltrane mystique. This we are supposed to accept as lyricism, when we have ample evidence of what lyricism can be in its classical composition as provided for us in the work of composers such as Mozart, Beethoven and Brahms, and in a unique way by Rimbaud who was able to contain lyricism within the most scathing satire? We are supposed to forget this historical perspective and sink ourselves in the moans of jazz. The first task of the artist today who is modern in a positive sense, is to destroy this sickly romanticism for which Marx himself, along with every other important modern thinker had only contempt, and to move towards a new classicism which at this point only Marxism can provide the basis for. Hegelian dialectics has already been completely assimilated by Beethoven; the modern artist has to thoroughly assimilate the meaning of dialectics as the method of Marxian anthropology. For as Marxists we demand progress in art, not nostalgia, not sentimental drivel.

The best critique of the fetish of improvisation in jazz and some Rock today is Shelley's description of creativity as the skimming off of ideas at boiling point in order to reflect on them and discard the trash. The way improvisation takes place in Rock and jazz as a substitution for this whole creative process displays certain signs of the most undesirable exhibitionism. Instead of struggling with conceptions over a period of years, as all great artists have done, only making public

the finest distillation of this process as only that worthy of contribution to humanity, improvisation viewed in this manner as a social act is really saying "Let me go through a catharsis in front of you, let me purge myself, let me spew out every association that comes to my head and, furthermore, let me subject you to this over as protracted length of time as possible. Please don't ask me to reconcile improvisation with a thought-out, coherent musical world-view because I can't do it." But of course there have been composers who could. Beethoven, for example. An entirely different kind of self-revelation is present in his music in the form of an abstraction of the creative process which includes an abstraction of the process of improvisation. The clue to this self-revelation, the revelation of how creative discovery occurs, is usually in an extended harmonic language allowed a certain vagrancy until the point at which it would threaten the coherence of the whole in which it is located. Improvisation is thus written into the music in the form of harmonic exploration but is subjected, through elements of formal composition, to a rigorous process of critical judgment.

This brings us back to the question of abstraction touched on earlier, which must be dealt with in discussing modern thought. Creative abstraction, despite the evidence in its favor as a potentially creative force, is confused by many Marxists, Lukacs included, with empty formalism, and so has been thrown out from consideration as a basis of art in favor of some sort of realism, socialist or otherwise. In fact, it is frequently given as a reason to reject modern art, although it is tolerated in the realm of science and mathematics. But why should it be accepted in that domain and not in art? Would any Marxist suggest that art is concerned with a different reality than science? Lukacs, great denouncer of modernity, is forced to praise Schoenberg, Stravinsky, Bartok and Berg for continuing to use forms such as the opera, ballet, cantatas, essentially for continuing to associate music with realism. What he would be reluctant to do, but would have to do if his realism were applied in a thorough-going way, would be to attack abstraction in Beethoven, in fact in all purely instrumental music. He misses the point that truthful art is not necessarily realistic, as "socialist realism" demonstrates by its paucity and the purely instrumental music of Beethoven by its richness. What is seriously wrong with Schoenberg escapes him, namely the mishandling of creative abstraction which could not be remedied by merely attaching formalism onto realism, as a study of Schoenberg's dramatic works will show.

To explore the relationship between abstraction and reality further, and the distinction between creative abstraction and a formalism based on axiomatic deduction, it is directly relevant to quote from Einstein's essay "Geometry and Experience." "How can it be," he asks, "that mathematics, being after all a product of human thought which is independent of experience, is so admirably appropriate to the objects of reality? Is

human reason, then, without experience, merely by taking a thought, able to fathom the properties of real things?...[The axiomatic viewpoint] purges mathematics of all extraneous elements, and thus dispels the mystic obscurity which formerly surrounded the basis of mathematics. But such an expurgated exposition of mathematics makes it also evident that mathematics as such cannot predicate anything about objects of our intuition or real objects....Yet on the other hand it is certain that mathematics generally, and particularly geometry, owes its existence to the need which was felt of learning something about the behavior of real objects. The very word geometry, which, of course, means earth-measuring, proves this....It is clear that the system of concepts of axiomatic geometry alone cannot make any assertions as to the behavior of real objects of this kind....To be able to make such assertions, geometry must be stripped of its merely logical-formal character by the coordination of real objects of experience with the empty conceptual schemata of axiomatic geometry....Geometry thus completed is evidently a natural science; we may in fact regard it as the most ancient branch of physics....We will call this completed geometry 'practical geometry,' and shall distinguish it from 'purely axiomatic geometry'....I attach special importance to the view of geometry which I have just set forth, because without it I should have been unable to formulate the theory of relativity."

The new freedom of conceptualization afforded by early twentieth century exploration of abstraction in art, as well as in mathematics and science, need not have led to empty formalism, but did so in the historical context of the fragmentation of knowledge inherent in bourgeois society. To ignore, under the guise of the "sociological approach," this exploration in favor of a revival of 19th century realism displays signs of historical amnesia. Schoenberg's claim that his music was a historical necessity is not entirely false. The problem of freedom that his music posed, not his solution, was historically necessary and remains to be developed creatively. The twentieth century thinkers mentioned earlier, as well as others, in science and art represent the preliminary explorations of a revolution that has yet to be accomplished concretely. It is no coincidence that the shaking of the foundations of artistic and scientific thought occur in the same period in which a socialist revolution is urgently needed to shake the foundations of society on a world scale. The insight displayed by many modern thinkers occurred despite their historical disorientation, their alienation from their own creativity. These insights remain to be placed on a scientific basis by revolutionaries who can see in them their present historical specificity, who can uncover in these insights the latency of socialist concepts. In their original context they too represent an attempt to go beyond the prevailing ideology to a closer approximation of a historically appropriate consciousness.

There still exists a gulf between ideas that have the potential to extend the conceptual boundaries of man-

kind and their social realization, a gulf which it is the revolutionary's task to bridge by finding the creative use for these ideas demanded by present historical needs. Most creative discoveries have led an aborted existence, in the realm of potentiality rather than realization. It must be realized that no creative contribution is ever complete but remains a process. It is therefore impossible to locate creativity in any one place, including in a specific work which at best can represent an artist's understanding of the process at a given moment. The creative process always remains to be completed through the development of society in whose development lies its only real existence. The relativity of a creative contribution is also its greatness.

### PART III

#### TOWARD A DIALECTICS OF ART

Counterculture today appears on the horizon as a phenomenon of *deja vu*. In fact, it is the ghost of a ghost, the first ghost, of the French Revolution, having appeared in the guise of the rhetorical hero of decadent Romanticism in the period of reaction following the failure of the 1848 revolution. Unlike the Promethean hero that had inspired the leaders of the French Revolution, these new anti-heroes passively mocked the bourgeois way of life. Goethe called them the "sentimental people" who when put to the test always fail and show themselves to be petty and bad. The task of carrying on the revolutionary tradition was beyond the incoherent ravings of these "heroes" who, lacking the real force that comes from a trained mind, stimulated in themselves instead doubts and problems that they were not able to master, and who flung themselves headlong into dangers in which they perished. Many youth of this kind were eventually drawn into politics at the end of the nineteenth century in the service of the most reactionary nationalism, and their contribution to the fascist youth movement in the twentieth century has already been documented. The widespread anti-intellectuality even among intellectuals, which has its counterpart in student layers of our own society today, manifested itself then most acutely in the swamp of cultural eclecticism that was so characteristic of the Second Empire in France. Then, as now, serious art met with little approval, and a concern among artists with ideas that might have universal significance was regarded as pretentious, as today it is regarded as a sign of elitism.

Marx in *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* qualifies Hegel's observation that cultural phenomena in history repeat themselves by adding that such phenomena occur the first time as tragedy, and the second as farce. He writes that "the tradition of all the dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brain of the living. And just when they seem engaged in revolutionizing themselves and things, in creating something that has never yet existed, precisely in such periods of

revolutionary crisis they anxiously conjure up the spirits of the past to their service and borrow from them names, battle cries and costumes in order to present the new scene of world history in this time-honored disguise and this borrowed language." But Marx differentiates between the conjuring up of the dead in order to perform one's task of the present, giving as an example the heroes of the French Revolution who performed the task of setting up modern bourgeois society in Roman costume and phrases, from the conjuring up of the glories of the dead in order to serve the forces of reaction, as Louis-Bonaparte did behind the death mask of Napoleon. In the former the ghosts served to glorify the required task at hand, as Marx points out in the example of the English Revolution that clothed itself in the phrases and illusions of power found in the Old Testament. He humorously remarks that as soon as the revolution was an accomplished fact, Locke was permitted to supplant Habakkuk. In the references to the French Revolution that occurred after 1848, the parody of the old was clearly an escape from the task of real revolution confronting the society.

Today counterculture, terrified by the perils of an impending revolution, like the mad Englishman cited by Marx yearns to return to the "fleshpots of Egypt." In New York City, heart of the world-capitalist system and headquarters for world financial interests, the communitarian wakes up in the morning and prepares for another day on the farm. "And all this is expected of me," he sighs, "me, a free-enterprising American — to make my own candles and soap, sew my sandals and and weave my own clothes." Out of this ambience emerges the languid babbling of Bob Dylan and the other folk charlatans who reassure the communitarians that indeed they do not live in an industrial society but are still back cutting firewood safe and sound in New Harmony (Example: Dylan's recent song "Copper Kettle").

The delusions appealed to in the folk cult also appear as part of the ecology movement, in the form of a deep suspicion of all artificial improvements made upon nature through technology. In reality it is the capitalist system that loots nature without making any provision for the reinvestment necessary to avoid the destruction of man's basis of existence and to provide for the needs of an expanded reproduction. This is because the motive for capitalist production is not the satisfaction of social consumption needs, but rather the production of profit. In fact, in order to produce a more productive humanity today a society would continually lower the social costs of production by increasing productivity through the immediate application of developing technology. That is the reality of the situation. In those terms, the return-to-nature cult that is so much a part of the folk revival and manifests itself in that form in the backward peace movement and the hunting-and-gathering existence of the Yippies must be clearly understood at this point to mean a return to a state that is less than human. Thus this particular manifestation of

counterculture can today claim for itself the privilege of historical backwardness which the utopians in America already in the 1820's and 1830's had the privilege of claiming for themselves.

However, there is a more sinister aspect to the situation. There is currently facing us a different kind of austerity from the one self-imposed by the lunatics who are living out some wild historical fantasy. That is the austerity facing the working class as a result of the current world monetary crisis. While Dylan whines about the pleasure of a log cabin, his soul-brother in the ecology movement is begging for restricted consumption and curbing of technological growth as an answer to the ecology crisis which, if taken seriously, would pollute and starve us all out of existence. Similarly, in the recent spectacle of "Earth Week," people jubilantly welcomed a return to a more archaic mode of transportation as they "walked for health" rather than demanding the immediate construction of cheap mass transportation to supplant automobiles and to be paid for by taxing the speculative income of capitalists who are the cause of the problem. The Nazis, who were not without a certain ironical talent of their own, took the ideology that dominated their society the way a return to nature dominates ours, namely the German mystique surrounding work, and showed what its logical outcome would be under capitalism in a state of crisis: over the entrance to one of their concentration camps they placed the motto "Arbeit macht Frei" ("Work Makes Us Free"). In the coming depression the Bob Dylan cult will afford us the opportunity of creating a "happening" appropriate to our own historical situation, as we gather thousands of unemployed workers to hear him sing their favorite song, the one with the refrain: "And never more will you toil."

What Marx said about the revolution of the nineteenth century applies even more urgently to our own time: "The social revolution of the nineteenth century cannot draw its poetry from the past, but only from the future. It cannot begin with itself before it has stripped off all superstition in regard to the past. Earlier revolutions required recollections of past world history in order to drug themselves concerning their own content. In order to arrive at its own content, the revolution of the nineteenth century must let the dead bury their dead. There the phrase went beyond the content; here the content goes beyond the phrase."

In 1821 Shelley wrote "In Defense of Poetry" as a rebuttal to a critic who advanced the point of view that "a poet in our times is a semi-barbarian in a civilized community," the future dimensions of which he probably didn't realize at the time. Shelley, however, was quick to understand the significance of such a statement for the future of poetry and man, and in his "Defense..." reasserted the poet as a force of light and as such one of the "unacknowledged legislators of the world." By the end of the nineteenth century the alienated sensuality and concomitant incoherence of

the decadent Romantics degenerated further into a cult of irrationality, unleashing its full fury in the barbarism of the twentieth century. Today we can study the cultural prototype of this phenomenon in the Rock cult.

However, before proceeding with this matter, it is necessary to take a scenic side tour without which the phenomenon that we are discussing cannot be fully understood. In order to understand why the cult of irrationality appears to be an appropriate response, we must first understand what other ideology exists in our society that has completely discredited rationality. It is necessary to understand how the possibility of any certainty of human knowledge was discredited by the currently hegemonic academic school of thought of scientific empiricism.

The essential predicament facing man with regard to knowledge about the world is that different "facts" regarded in and of themselves appear to be contradictory when compared with each other. To overcome their hysteria in the face of this problem of human knowledge and its consequent loss of power for the individual confronting it, the scientific empiricists declared "meaningless" any attempt to compare one set of facts with any other set of facts which threatened to expose this inherent contradiction which existed as long as "facts" were presumed to have an existence in themselves. Throwing out this fundamental problem crucial not only for an abstract understanding of the limits of human knowledge but for the basis of an understanding of human identity, i.e. man's control over his world, the scientific empiricists acclaimed themselves as the "modest" philosophers, a euphemism for what anyone else would have identified as a simple-minded solution for a difficult problem. While most of society suffered a historical reality that was desperately in need of not only an explanation but of explanation that would lead to a qualitative change in the condition of human existence, the so-called rational people threw up their hands in "modest" despair at having any solution to this "metaphysical" problem that was an eminently material reality for most other people, and "modestly" set about inquiring into some limited domain of what they thought were verifiable "facts." The only problem was that those "facts" didn't really exist in themselves, as Hegel could have pointed out to them, but rather represented a judgment abstracted from a process whose probability for truth decreased in proportion to its severance from that process taken as a whole. These were the very polite barbarians in business suits who systematically set about destroying the basis of real knowledge, an opportunity uniquely afforded them by their almost total social isolation.

In the period following World War II, the same period that produced the school of mathematical economics, a type of composition emerged out of the ruins of music codified by Arnold Schoenberg and passed on



by Webern, namely serial composition. As yet another manifestation of the prevailing hegemony of the so-called scientific empiricism, this school of composition bore certain resemblances to the contribution of another duo, von Neumann and Morgenstern in the field of economics, who tried to prove that the law of value was to be located in the formal correspondence of the price and utility of commodities. The headquarters for both of these schools, as no doubt for their equivalents in other areas of knowledge as well, are to be found at Princeton University. In contrast to the Law of Value developed by Marx in the "Feuerbach" section of the **German Ideology**, these mathematical economists believed that a particular object could have an intrinsic value in itself which was translated into its price, instead of locating intrinsic value in the relationship between the whole society and the entirety of the material conditions required to continue the existence of the entire society on an expanded scale. What was left out of consideration by the mathematical economists was a consideration of the effect that subtracting or adding the particular part would have on the reproductive power of the whole. This important aspect of human knowledge had been relegated by the scientific empiricists to the rubbish heap of "meaningless questions" identified by them as the realm of inquiry only of concern to "metaphysicians." Similarly the serialists almost went so far as to make concern with some formal musical problem totally devoid of human relevance a condition for acceptance as a professional composer. The premises in both systems was that truth was to be found "intrinsically" in the examination of a particular to the exclusion of its relationship to the rest of society. Not surprisingly then, the mathematical economists turned economics into a non-human science, while the serialists produced a non-human music.

What both the serialists and the mathematical economists have in common is the assumption that reality can be reduced to a form of mechanical equilibrium of the sort that explains the stability of a physical object where equal forces pull in opposite directions. From a demonstration of equilibrium of this particular "fact" the mathematical economist goes on to develop this notion as the politically hegemonic explanation of capitalist so-called stability in which the myth of "built-in stabilizers" plays an important part, conveniently ignoring, of course, all empirical evidence to the contrary, such as breakdown crises which history so sympathetically supplies. Similarly, in a period of obvious social crisis, the serialist composer is busily constructing his version of the economist's pseudo-scientific "model." An example of such music is Milton Babbitt's composition for synthesizer, an electronically synthesized, but unfortunately not artistically synthesized composition by the leading spokesman of the Princetonian school. Some might say that this is an art expressing the alienation of modern man. I would suggest that it is an alienated art, and thus one which is incapable of making a self-conscious statement on alienation. It cannot do this because it cannot step

outside of itself and its own alienation and thereby include itself in a statement on alienation in general.

For the serialists, logical positivism was a very useful way for people who found themselves uncomfortably forced to play a role of a composer rather than a stockbroker to ignore that "metaphysical" question that has haunted all great artists: how to reconcile the formal aspects of composition with a statement on man. What neither mathematical economists nor serialism can take into account in their theory of knowledge is the crucial factor of reality, namely change. That this factor is one of the prime concerns of the German Critical Philosophers is not incidental to the empiricists' violent rejection of this philosophy. What destroys mathematical economics as a viable theory of reality is that disequilibrium is a fundamental feature of capitalism and not an "infinitesimal" fact to be relegated to a footnote. What finishes serialism as either the basis for an explanation of music in general or a theory for producing new music is also the factor of disequilibrium. Great music, such as Beethoven, has always been a process-statement that reflected upon the nature of change and has been self-conscious to the extent that it mirrors the flux of reality in such a way as to include the artist's changing consciousness of that reality. Musical events occur, change in their surroundings and are themselves destroyed by the changes they create, as I will demonstrate at a later point with respect to the **Diabelli Variations**. The logical-positivist composers, in ignoring this aspect of music, have delivered the final death blow to any possibility of musical creation, just as the formal mathematicians with their axiomatic viewpoint have destroyed the possibility of creativity in mathematics.

In order, then, to lay the basis for a non-bourgeois art, it is necessary to replace the formal mathematical conceptions which have permeated the social activity of producing music as well as all other aspects of social life. It is necessary to attack the concepts imposed upon the present social processes by the present bourgeois forms of social organization and the ideology appropriate to the perpetuation of bourgeois social practice with concepts empowered by a different form of social consciousness. However, as Marx points out in his third thesis of Feuerbach, this must be done self-consciously, or in his words, "the educator himself must be educated." He goes on to say that "the coincidence of the changing of circumstances and of human activity or self-changing can only be comprehended and rationally understood as revolutionary practice." An artist who wishes to find an alternative to an art that is actually a subtle expression of bourgeois ideology must have a profound understanding of the difference between bourgeois and socialist consciousness and how to go about producing the latter in a society thoroughly permeated with the former. This demanding task is urgently required of both the artist and the revolutionary leader.

Unfortunately, because of the polluted air of scientific empiricism, breathed in by self-proclaimed Marxists as well as other people, to refer to Hegel's contribution to the dialectical method, namely his recognition of the indeterminacy and the relative falseness of the particular viewed in itself, is regarded by many on the Left to be a deliberate obfuscation and a petit-bourgeois flight from the more sober classical materialism that they along with Mao are submerged in. Impatiently brushing aside dialectics, they demonstrate their total saturation with scientific empiricism by accepting the various fragmented social groupings on the Left, such as students, blacks, women, as being tantamount to a working class organization. Like the scientific empiricists they believe that you merely add up the parts to get the whole.

Another way of explaining this particularist worldview is to use the analogy of language, as Gramsci does in the following: "If it is true that any language contains the elements of a conception of the world and of a culture, it will also be true that the greater or lesser complexity of a person's conception of the world can be judged from his language. A person who only speaks a dialect or who understands the national language in varying degrees necessarily enjoys a more or less restricted and provincial, fossilized and anachronistic perception of the world in comparison with the great currents of thought which dominate world history. His interests will be restricted, more or less corporative and economic, and not universal."

In this manner we can regard the various kinds of music that are sold today under the name of Acid Rock, Soul, Folk, Protest, Black Nationalist jazz etc., as nothing more than dialects, all of which have a highly particularist and thus alienated perception of the world. They cannot locate their identity positively with respect to their contribution to shaping history because they have no understanding of the class forces which shape history. It is no coincidence that these musical dialects are quickly adopted by equally parochialist political groups such as the black cultural nationalists or the SWP, which represents the sum total of all parochialist social groupings within the conceivable imagination. A music expressing the parochialist outlook of national self-determination will be the musical expression of a false and alienated consciousness from the standpoint of humanity because it does not take positively into account the nations that are not their own. For example, the protest music that has come out of Latin America so far has lacked this self-consciousness and at best has been a reiteration of similar sentiments expressed by other countries in the Third World. The fact that a plurality of nations are all expressing the sentiment of national self-determination does not make it international. Furthermore, it is based on the false notion of the Menshevik theory of stages, in this case the idea that each nation must inevitably pass through its bourgeois stage before reaching socialism. Thus when a musician of Uruguay talks about the meaning of revolutionary art in the following terms, saying "the

artist must have a fighting attitude and must be prepared to accept the risks and consequences of his work. All countries must speak in their own language. New forms are good if they integrate with the idiom of the people..." he is resorting to a cultural expression of the Popular Front. The role that Palacio assigns to the artist is the same role that the SWP and CP assign to the revolutionary: that of tailing after the present consciousness of the masses.

What we have been discussing until now is music whose basis of existence is ideology, specifically bourgeois ideology. It was Feuerbach's great contribution to unmask the nature of ideology in general by unmasking it specifically in religious practice. Not unlike the cultural manifestations we have been discussing, religion represented symbolically the social relations that appeared to man as being appropriate to his survival as a species. As Freud pointed out later, it was a necessary delusion. While it is false as an explanation of reality as a whole, it is believed to the extent that it intersects with reality at certain points. So that Rock, which is a caricature of the demonic, a caricature in fact of Nietzsche's earlier caricature of Promethean man, seems to be the appropriate expression of a revolutionary force, having taken in isolation merely the destructive aspect of a creative force and turned it, in its own inimically puerile fashion, into a neurotic distortion. Why its irrationality appeals particularly to students and so-called intellectuals has already been explained with reference to academic rationality.

What is so fascinating to observe in the Left today even among so-called Marxists is the phenomenon of schizophrenia. People who very soberly engage in socialist political practice can seemingly without any difficulty undergo a sudden transformation of personality and engage in a cultural manifestation of the most hysterical form of religion. Rock is a nominalist music of the first order, hysterically reiterating the triad, its pseudo-tonality, as a substitution for the tonal process that was an appropriate expression of the 18th and 19th centuries. This vulgar nominalism, in addition to its Dionysian cult of irrationality, are what make it eminently bourgeois. Despite this evidence that Rock is an expression of alienated bourgeois existence, many leftists will continue to wail "But I like it, I like Dylan too. Don't you like the Stones?" and will vigorously resist anyone who threatens to take away his right to this fanatical religious belief, suggesting that your failure to join him stems from artistic and intellectual elitism.

One of the familiar shrieks of pain to emanate from one attacked in this manner, such as the phenomenon of a Zappa fan, is to claim that one form of Rock is a satire on another, as though this music of miniscule human self-consciousness is capable of satirizing any social phenomenon today let alone its musical brother. Here it is again useful to return to Marx's **Eighteenth Brumaire** since the distinction between genuine and

phony satire is the same as the distinction made by him between recollections of the past in order to go beyond the present and recollections of the past in order to add those nightmares to the copious collection of our own. Great satire looks to a way out of the present; phony satire doesn't comprehend the dilemma of the present. Viewed this way, one can't help but make the further point that Zappa's form of satire, really just an eclectic collection of past nightmares, is not really that different from the world outlook of the SWP, as the May 9-14, 1971 issue of *New Solidarity* shows. Phonies like Zappa also make a fetish of improvisation of "creative discovery," usually of the kind that a small child or house pet makes when he first discovers the existence of a keyboard in the living room.

### **The Problem of Creativity in Music**

The phenomenon of improvisation as it presents itself in the work of some jazz musicians is another matter, one for serious discussion. The positive aspect of jazz improvisation lies not in the genre, which is anyway eclectic, but in its representation of the creative process. It locates itself in the heart of the problem confronting the artists by creating in the presence of others where under the strain of the situation he sometimes may have breakthroughs to formal problems that he could not have achieved in a more relative isolation, although it must be understood that physical isolation at certain points does not mean that the composer or any other creative intellect is not in contact with the needs of his society. Under the former conditions creativity usually occurs in spurts, amid stretches of impasse which the person listening to the improvisation will view sympathetically to the extent that he sees its significance in relation to the creative spurts forward, providing of course that he has already seen evidence of such creativity. If this is not the case, and it usually is not, he would do better to walk out instead of getting drunk while waiting until two in the morning for the musician to possibly have his breakthrough. But under more favorable circumstances the listener sees the improvisation as symbolic of the creative ability that is in himself extended symbolically in the transformation of musical material. The poetry inherent in such improvisation is its transitory nature, where moments of brilliant inspiration are as fleeting as the human circumstances that gave rise to them.

What is lacking in this kind of musical practice is the element of time within which to reflect self-consciously on the dialectical problem confronting the artist: how do the particulars within the composition contribute positively to the larger process-statement about society? This is no task for people lacking a trained musical mind, although it should be pointed out that the training does not necessarily take place in the conservatory as it is presently constituted. The fact is that great musical compositions of the past have always included the positive features of jazz improvisation outlined above and then superceded them in the working out of a more polished statement. To all but the average conservatory-trained performer it should be

immediately obvious that there are long stretches of improvisation in Beethoven which are written into the composition, as most apparently in the first movement of the "Tempest." This was one of the features of his music that startled those whose consciousness was still in the previous age when a composer's identity was not that of a dominating intellectual but that of a servant of the aristocracy, a situation from which Mozart suffered particularly acutely. What was startling was the idea that a composition that included a documentation of the composer struggling with the problems of composition could be considered by the composer himself to be of interest to his listener. The assertion of the composer's will in this manner was the musical expression of the Promethean hero. Thus in Beethoven we have the first self-conscious artist, not unlike Hegel's prototype of the philosopher in *Phenomenology*, whose musical statement on man included a statement on the nature of his own identity as a composer. Lukacs points out a similar feature in literature, comparing the naive enthusiasm of the 18th century realists who created the modern novel without thinking much about form, and which gave way to what he speaks of as "a forced reflection on the problematical character of this reality and the artistic forms adequate to it." The fact that Beethoven proceeded in this manner not only very seriously but at times by means of ironical rhetorical devices closely associated with rhetorical devices in poetry and sometimes even with raucous humor is what permits us to speak of satire in music.

Let's take the example of the *Diabelli Variations*, written in 1823. It is based on the somewhat banal theme, not unlike a popular song today, of a contemporary of Beethoven. In Variation V there is a satire on the pre-revolutionary aesthetic of balance based on literal symmetry. Dutifully composing in this manner, at the end of the variation however Beethoven forgets himself and impatiently speeds up the rate of harmonic change, just as suddenly slipping back into the earlier symmetry in the last few beats, as if to deny that any such outburst has occurred. In Variation XIII, taking a rhythmical pattern associated with the final cadence of a piece written in the classical period, Beethoven makes it the basis for virtually an entire variation. Thus he is perpetually ending this variation. This variation has certain harmonic peculiarities which are also treated humorously. While most of the variations are in the key of C major, this one plunges into the key of A minor and then stops short. Throughout the variation the listener is kept wondering what he will do next in this regard. The variation starts out as though it will stay in the key of A minor, but as it unfolds the meaning of the opening becomes increasingly ambiguous. At the end of the first part he reaches the dominant as if to say, "Aha, you thought it was in the key of A minor but now we're in G major, so maybe the piece started out just like all the others in C major." Having established these doubts in the listener with regard to his perception, before giving him time to recover Beethoven plunges back into the key of A minor and perpetrates the same joke again. In the second section he does the

same thing with B flat major. Variation XVI is a somewhat raucous "take-off" in addition to other things on the banality of the original theme. This aspect of satire, for Beethoven only the most obvious, is the only kind known to Frank Zappa, whose lack of compositional ability prevents him from realizing even this limited kind of satire musically. Imagine to yourself the first three measures of this variation repeated over and over again for the duration of an entire evening and you have some idea of what a Zappa concert is like. The written-out improvisation that occurs so often in Beethoven is all the more remarkable when it appears in a variation whose underlying harmonic structure has already been made familiar by the theme and nineteen subsequent variations. Yet this is achieved in Variation XX where, instead of submitting the listener to hours of real time in which only a few events occur, Beethoven collapses real time into a few moments, thus simultaneously abstracting the process of improvisation and reflecting on that process by resolving the contradictions that certain harmonic leaps impose on the variation as a whole. The haunting and somewhat elusive quality of this variation is the clue to this process of condensation that occurs.

It is clear that the social turmoil during Beethoven's time is reflected in an abstract, not in a literal way in his music, a point which having mastered should enable us to throw over all the bunk on the subject of Beethoven as a revolutionary composer that parades under the name of Marxism. The cramming of many musical events within a short time span was the musical idealization of the paradox demonstrated socially that few events can occur over a long stretch of time and many compressed into a relatively short time-span. The latter was the reality of a revolutionary period. That is the meaning of the strange harmonic leaps in Beethoven's late work; they are the product of elisions, i.e., harmonies left out, in order to accelerate the rate of harmonic change.

### **Relation of Art and Revolution**

It is art of this caliber, not popular culture, that should be of concern to the revolutionary. Popular culture is hegemonic in periods of the most utter philistinism and vulgarity, a level of existence which it is the revolutionary leader's task to destroy. The artist does not pander to this consciousness any more than the revolutionary does. All forms of parochialism, including cultural "dialects" of militant national self-determination, or black cultural nationalism is inimical to a revolutionary movement. Just as under conditions of vast social upheaval, such as the mass strike, the ideas of a relatively tiny handful of intellectuals (which up to that point had appeared esoteric and even irrelevant) suddenly are comprehended and begin to draw larger numbers of the population into the process, so too the artistic expression of those ideas begins to reach layers of the population to whom under conditions of capitalist hegemony these artistic expressions would have been inaccessible. This was the case during the period of the

French Revolution, as Shelley points out in his "Defense of Poetry." Poets and philosophers who would have in a reactionary period manifested the greatest philistinism, under the stress of a massive upheaval which promised to change the productive forces on the largest scale possible were driven to express the revolutionary spirit of their time. The socialist revolution will hopefully sweep away the artistic trash which has accumulated since the 19th century and the present widespread popular mongoloidism that even anti-intellectual Marxists opportunistically accept.

In a period of rapid social decay like our own there is a tendency for art to sympathize with that decay. A genuine artist, like the revolutionary, speaks a language which is needed by his contemporaries but which they are prevented from understanding by the quality of their social existence. But the fact that they cannot at present understand him does not mean that he doesn't continue to speak that language, despite the fact that this language is regarded by most people in their present state as irrelevant. Only in this way will both the artist and revolutionary be able to offer a positive alternative to the philistinism with which he and everyone else is surrounded. Ceasing to tail after popular consciousness, he will be ready for the time when a drastic change in social life brings about its equally drastic change in consciousness and an understanding of ideas which in the present remain to be fully realized.

The idea of a group of revolutionary cadre deliberately fostering the production of workers' songs and poems, to deliberately create a popular art, was incomprehensible to Rosa Luxemburg. As Nettl points out in his biography, art for her was a genre of its own. "It had above all to reflect the realities of its time, at most foreshadow the immediate future but never extrapolate into the distance; what made art timeless was not vision but quality."

The problematical character of modern art is already noted by Marx in his observation that capitalist production is hostile to certain aspects of spiritual production, such as art and poetry. This hostility has advanced to a point today where it is almost impossible to produce anything in this sphere at all. The contradiction facing the modern artist is concisely stated by Lukacs in his essay "Correspondence between Schiller and Goethe." Either a system of artistic laws can be derived from a study of past forms for the purpose of expressing the specific character of modern life, e.g. Bartok's string quartets in relation to Beethoven's; or a study of the past leads to the creation of timeless laws which lead to the creation of a classical art which must out of self-preservation exclude any reality that is hostile to such expression.

The dangers of the former are that making the reality which is hostile to art the subject matter of art destroys the forms needed to give this reality coherence. The dangers of the latter are that in the interest of art reality must be held at a distance, as the central concerns of

bourgeois society are inimical to classical beauty and simplicity. Most schools of modern art have followed the course of the first to its most pathetic conclusions, a most eloquent testimony having been made perhaps by John Cage in his composition called "Silence" which consists of absolutely no music at all. It seems clear that an artist who is concerned with a relentless expression of his society today is particularly caught up in this contradiction. He cannot ignore reality to the extent demanded by classicism. However, history has shown that if modern bourgeois reality is going to be hostile to art, art will have to be hostile to certain kinds of reality. However, to refuse to deal with the kind of animal reality that Rock deals with does not make a carefully selected reality less real. The artist who today is concerned with the horrors of contemporary reality has to continually guard against the dissolution of artistic coherence. Schiller, who of course chose classicism, warns of this predicament. "The modern concerns himself laboriously and anxiously with incidental events and secondary conditions, and by attempting to approximate reality as closely as possible he burdens himself with idle and insignificant things wherein everything really poetical resides. He would like very much to copy a real situation but does not reflect that a poetic description, precisely because it is absolutely true, can never coincide with reality."

Some very great artists during the 19th century and since have rejected classicism without rejecting artistic coherence, among whom were Balzac and Goethe himself in **Wilhelm Meister** and **Faust**. Both Balzac and Goethe referred to **Faust** as "this barbarous composition" by virtue of its autonomy of parts and fragmentation of the whole, revealing the conflict he felt between the aesthetic demands of the work and the demands of modern reality. In the twentieth century those few artists that have not accepted the total dissolution of form which characterizes this century, those who were genuinely concerned with the relation of form to content such as Berg and Bartok (as opposed to the glib formalists previously discussed), have always proceeded uneasily between the two, only at moments bringing the two together.

The few serious artists of the twentieth century, and there have only been a few and usually not closely associated with any of the theoretically bankrupt schools, in order to be fairly evaluated must be regarded as having been transitional. They should be spoken of the way Luxemburg speaks of Dostoyevsky and Tolstoy. "Dostoyevsky, especially in his later writings, is an outspoken reactionary, a religious mystic and hater of socialists. His depictions of Russian revolutionaries are malicious caricatures. Tolstoy's mystic doctrines reflect reactionary tendencies, if no more. But the writings of both have, nevertheless, an inspiring, arousing, and liberating effect upon us. And this is because their starting points are not reactionary, their thoughts and emotions are not governed by the desire to hold on to the status quo, nor are they motivated by social hatred, narrow-mindedness, or caste egotism. On the contrary, theirs is the warmest love for mankind

and the deepest response to social injustice. And thus the reactionary Dostoyevsky becomes the artistic agent of the 'insulted and injured,' as one of his works is called. Only the conclusions drawn by him and Tolstoy, each in his own way, only the way out of the social labyrinth which they believe they have found, leads them into the bypaths of mysticism and asceticism. But with the true artist, the social formula that he recommends is a matter of secondary importance; the source of his art, its animating spirit, is decisive."

#### Towards a New Art

The dialectical handling of the problem must locate the reality of modern existence positively with respect to a final statement on the meaning of existence. As Feuerbach suggests, it is necessary to start with man's sensuous being, in music the feeling of existence, as the beginning of artistic expression if we are to avoid the severance of feeling and thought that Hegel warned of in his **Phenomenology**. In his "Preliminary Theses" Feuerbach writes, "The resolute consciousness become flesh and blood, that makes the human the divine and the finite infinite, is the source of a new poetry and art which will surpass all previously created in energy, depth, and brilliance...Suffering is the source of poetry. Only a person who experiences the loss of a finite essence as an infinite loss has the power of lyrical brilliance. Only the painful fascination of the memory of what is no more is the first artist, the first idealist in man...The philosophy [he could have said art] that drives the finite from the infinite, the specific from the undetermined, never attains a true position in regard to the finite and specific." And in that same work he says, "Only out of the negation of thought, out of being determined by the object, out of passion, out of the source of all pleasure and want is produced true, objective thought, and true, objective philosophy. Perception gives essence which is immediately identical with existence, while thought gives essence mediated from existence by differentiation, by separation. Therefore, only where existence is united with essence, where perception is united with thought, where passivity is united with activity, where the anti-scholastic sanguinary principle of French sensualism and materialism is united with the scholastic phlegm of German metaphysics — only there can there be life and truth."

The chief defect of all music of the twentieth century up to now, including my own, is that it has suffered reality passively. Music being a highly emotional art, it is easy for the composer to allow himself to be inundated with the sensuous impressions of the world. Like Feuerbach, "who wants sensuous objects really distinguished from the objects of thought," practice for the musician "is understood and established only in its 'dirty Jew' appearance. He therefore does not comprehend the significance of 'revolutionary,' of practical-critical activity.' "

Such art, however, is not fully conscious. The distortions found in artists such as Berg and Max Beckmann, both of whom were associated in some sense with German Expressionism, are the effect of a reality

suffered passively. At just those moments in their art which call for illumination on the cause of this suffering, at just those moments they become rhetorical. Under the most demoralizing circumstances their response has been one of blind moral outrage and pathos. Thus Beckmann can up to a point movingly depict the horrors of fascism during his hiding in Amsterdam during the Second World War, and lacking an understanding of why fascism occurred, can end up in the U.S. after the war spouting liberal rhetoric to art students without making the connections between that rhetoric and the monster that he had compulsively painted over and over.

Bartok is an interesting case in that he, more than other artists, seems to have understood that his art was transitional. Unlike Stravinsky who facilely reproduced the current ideology depending on what "period" he was in, Bartok's music was metaphysical in that it sought to transcend its formal limitations in order to make a true statement on its time. Not unlike Beethoven, he comments through the process of composition on the difficulty of writing music. He does this by first trying to pose difficult concepts within a form inappropriate to them, namely the folk melodies (the only aspect of his music accessible to CP critics), showing in the course of the composition that the form is unsuitable, and then discards the old forms at a point when his audience should understand why they had to be discarded. Here is a musical case, then, of a composer who fairly consciously forces his content to go beyond the phrase. Only in this sense is Bartok's music to be regarded as didactic. Perhaps this kind of approach could be the basis of a more self-consciously transitional art. As Marx states in the **Eighteenth Brumaire**, "A beginner who has learned a new language always translates it back into his mother tongue, but he has assimilated the spirit of the new language and can freely express himself in it only when he finds his way in it without recalling the old and forgets his native tongue in the use of the new."

As the new culture develops with the development of social relations, the old language can be gradually discarded and a new one emerge which is a more consistently coherent expression of recently assimilated concepts. Gramsci speaks of this transitional process in the following way: "What exists at each new turn is a varying combination of the old and the new, creating a momentary equilibrium of cultural relationships corresponding to the equilibrium in social relationships. Only after the creation of the State does the cultural problem pose itself in all its complexity and tend towards a concrete solution. In every case, the attitude preceding the State can only be critical-polemical; never dogmatic, it must be romantic in attitude but with a romanticism that consciously aspires towards its own classical composition.'

The art that will emerge as a result of a self-conscious

change in social practice will shed light on the art of darkness that preceded it. It will begin with the feeling of existence, for it cannot be classical at the outset. But it will not be a human existence conceived in a sensually alienated way, but a feeling of human existence for itself. A feeling of existence that emerges from an understanding of what man must do if he is to self-consciously reproduce his existence on a higher level and an understanding of what kind of consciousness is appropriate to this task. Like Don Juan, he will understand that his own richness is to be found in the multitude of others, which is a case for expanded reproduction and an increase in the population so as to produce a multitude of activities, contrary to prevailing Zero Population Growth advocates. Only when artistic anthropology, which defines self-conscious evolutionary reproduction as the sole premise for human knowledge, only then will the previously mysterious "preconscious" processes, in art known as inspiration, be put on a scientific basis. When an artist comprehends this necessary course of social development, then the immediacy of particular experience will be positively understood, not suffered in an alienated way, not ignored in favor of some schematic future reality or, in the case of Socialist Realism, non-reality. For an artist to create **through** the darkness of matter in order to emerge with an art of light, at this particular historical point, he must be engaged in revolutionary practice. For the source of poetry today is the challenge to become truly human for the first time in history.

#### Footnotes

1. As told by Anais Nin, **The Diary of Anais Nin 1931-1934**, New York, The Swallow Press and Harcourt, Brace and World, 1966, pp. 191-193.
2. Andre Breton, "Manifesto of Surrealism" (1924) in **Manifestos of Surrealism**, Ann Arbor, University of Michigan, 1969, p. 5.
3. **Ibid.**, p. 44.
4. **Ibid.**, p. 3.
5. **Ibid.**, pp. 39-40.
6. **Ibid.**, p. 33.
7. Andre Breton and Diego Rivera, "Manifesto: Towards a Free Revolutionary Art," **Partisan Review**, Fall 1938, p. 49.
8. **Ibid.**, p. 51.
9. The term "classical" as used here applies chiefly to the music of the late 18th century and early 19th century, although the concept applies to a considerable degree to the music that preceded it and followed it as well. The definitive break with the classical concept of rhythm, however, was not made until the 20th century.
10. Igor Stravinsky and Robert Craft, **Conversations with Stravinsky**, London, Faber and Faber, 1959, p. 116.
11. Based on Pierre Boulez's analysis in his essay "Proposals," included in Pierre Boulez, **Notes of an Apprenticeship**, New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1968, pp. 61-71.
12. Quoted in Herbert Eimert, "Debussy's 'Jeux,'" which appeared in **die Reihe** No. 5, Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania, Theodore Presser Company, 1959.

# Labor Organizers Defense Fund

P.O. Box 1901, GPO, New York, N. Y., 10001

The Labor Organizer's Defense Fund exists to provide financial and legal assistance to organizers of the working class who face judicial frameups or who are otherwise forced into the courts by government harassment aimed at preventing the working class from freely and openly expressing and mobilizing support for its political views.

The need for such a fund is demonstrated by:

- The campaign by the CIA, the Nixon Administration, and subordinate governmental agencies to wipe out the formal vestiges of democracy in the United States.

- Specifically, the mounting campaign of frameups and terror directed against militant trade union organizers and unemployed organizers. Documented instances of such frameups include cases now being prosecuted against organizers within the National Caucus of Labor Committees, welfare organizers allied with the National Unemployed and Welfare Rights Organization and its predecessor organization, the Committee to Rebuild the National Welfare Rights Organization, and trade union militants such as the United Auto Workers' Louis Smith, and the Amalgamated Meatcutters' Jerry Menapace.

- The fact that such traditional civil liberties defense groups as the American Civil Liberties Union, The Emergency Civil Liberties Committee, and the National Lawyers' Guild have collapsed in the face of this wave of government frameups and are refusing to defend framed up working class organizers.

- The fact that the government's frameup drive is undergoing significant expansion.

The Labor Organizer's Defense Fund will be a standing contingency fund, initially established at the sum of \$25,000. This money will be extended to organizers to help cover court and related legal costs.

The Fund pledges to assist all organizers who become involved in legal actions resulting from their efforts to defend the living standards and political rights of the working class, without regard for any organizational affiliations. The Fund will issue monthly reports to its sustainers and contributors describing its activities, and furnishing an accounting of expenditures.

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# THE CAMPAIGNER

Publication of the National Caucus of SDS Labor Committees

## CENTRISM as a social phenomenon

How Not to Build a  
Revolutionary Party

JAN-FEB

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# Centrism as a Social Phenomenon

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by L. Marcus



As recently as the Winter of 1967-68, it was axiomatic for most New Left spokesmen that the main distinction between the new radicals and the so-called Old Left was the latter's **sectarianism**. Why was the Old Left sectarian? A wide variety of the explanations offered can be reduced to variations on a single basic theme. According to this general view, the fatal error of the Old Left was mainly its selection of membership on the basis of actual or implied concurrence with some particular theoretical world-outlook. The assumption that such a particular, coherent world-view could be right, implied that all differing views were necessarily wrong.

In consistency with their criticisms of the Old Left, New Left spokesmen proposed to ostracize all searches for a coherent theoretical world-view, and to await the gradual emergence of a new-radical ideology, "organically" (syncretically) evolved from the various best contributions of a wide variety of radical currents. The code-word for this process was **relevance**, which **used to mean** (prior to the Spring-Summer of 1968) that radical ideology must shade into the issues and hegemonic conceptions among liberal layers of the population, must accommodate to the "new reality" of the fifties and sixties, as liberal ideology had come to broadly define that "new reality."

In some instances, this prescription was associated with a highly-colored retrospective, affectionate regard for the old "all-inclusive" Socialist Party of Victor Berger and Morris Hillquit. Some went so far as to blame the left wing (the founders of the Communist parties) for wrecking the continuity and progressive further development of "all-inclusive" socialism. It was necessary for them to overlook such facts as Berger's virulent racism — to overlook his use of the U.S. Congress to further a witch-hunt against the left-wing of his own Socialist Party — to overlook other similar, charming features of the actual SP of the 1912-1919 period, as well as ignore the base of the IWW as SP left-wing cadres in **actual** mass struggles.

The significance of those past New Left reifications of history does not lie in historiography, but in the religious needs of the particular New Left spokesmen who concocted such myths. The point of the myth-making was, of course, that theoretic Marxism as even the nominal basis for constituting the Communist Party was the "original sin" of the Old Left. The point of the New Left myth was to propose that the new-radical movements of the sixties pick up the shattered threads of the "all-inclusive" socialist movement. In the

prospectuses for such an undertaking it was proposed to constitute a renaissance of real socialism after the Dark Ages of the Leninist plague.(1)

Until the Spring, 1968 Columbia strike, this was the dominant tendency within the New Left's main organization, Students for a Democratic Society. SDS was explicitly non-exclusive, opposed to suppression of any rigid membership formulas, firmly opposed to suppression of any minority views within its ranks, and horrified by the occasional manifestations of goon squad practices among certain other socialist organizations. Admittedly, there had been changes brewing within SDS throughout the preceding year, symptomized by the demise of **Studies On The Left** and the emergence of the Andre Gorz fad.(2) These were mainly limited to rumblings, whose implications did not break out into the open until the factional explosion within the Columbia strike movement.(3)

Then, beginning with the June, 1968 national conference of SDS the palpable leadership tendency of the organization has repeatedly undertaken and initiated "expulsions," and more recently has constituted itself into the nucleus of roving political goon-squads (Revolutionary Youth Movement — RYM),\*seeking bloody confrontations with one another as well as their non-RYM opponents. Apparently, the New Left "alternative" of the pre-1968 period has produced not an alternative to "Old Left sectarianism," but rather the worst manifestation of sectarianism since the "Third Period" hooliganism of the Communist Party.(4)

The more likely solution to the problem of sectarianism is at least suggested (if not proven) by the cited "progress" of the **old** New Left. The fact that the most rabidly-sectarian organization in the U.S. today (the "Weathermen" caucus of RYM) bases its politics precisely upon the most virulent hatred of any coherent theoretic world-outlook(5) underlines the point. The history of both suggests that the sectarian disorders of both the Old Left and New Left have a common root — in the social conditions under which left-radical organizations are developed in capitalist society.

The phenomenon we have to examine in this connection is not, however, sectarianism. Sectarianism is, for scientific sociological practice, a nonsense- or noise-word, which may identify the affective state of the user but specifies little respecting the object of his manifest derision. We must first redefine this phenomenon under consideration in terms which admit of scientific treatment.

What we have to consider, first, is the fact that the best possible revolutionary-socialist organizations are **typically** egregious in a very special way. Under normal conditions of capitalist life, under conditions of social and economic stability, any person or group styling itself as revolutionary-socialist is almost automatically

\* This refers to the short-lived RYM, an anarchist grouplet formed by Mike Klonsky, a right-wing leader of SDS in 1968. — Ed.

regarded as the most narrow of religious sectarians.

This does not serve as a basis for a definition of sectarianism, since those organizations or organized political-theoretical tendencies which have won the active support of the broadest masses of people have been previously regarded as exotic horrors by even the majority of those who subsequently accepted their theoretic hegemony. Lenin, for example, had no more than thirty correspondents in all Russia during a period following the 1907 onset of reaction. Popular prejudice, commonplace agreements respecting political organizations is more likely to tell us a great deal about the disorders of the popular mind than the slightest about the subjects of such popular opinion.

A term such as "sect" is useful in political science only as it specifies something of importance respecting the **future** of what each subject organized grouping has the potential of **becoming** under conditions of mass radical ferment and major social crises. For rather obvious reasons, the appropriate method to be developed ought to restrict the investigation to those social formations which regard themselves as revolutionary-socialist.

Obviously, any social formation which is a viable seed-form of some future mass revolutionary-socialist movement, a mass movement capable of appropriating power, cannot be meaningfully termed a sect. This same qualification subsumes the correlative, that the present existence of such a seedling, its present activities, stand in some meaningful, positive relationship to the establishment of such a mass revolutionary-socialist organization in an appropriate point in the future.

Our practical concern, then, is as follows. To establish a method for distinguishing among those organizations which call themselves "revolutionary socialist," those whose "lawful" social processes and activities do and do not correspond to the development of a future, effective, mass-revolutionary organization.

This question has been previously considered as solved, following the success of the Russian revolution of 1917, by those persons who consider the adoption of "Leninist 'democratic centralism'" and "Leninist 'doctrine'" as abstract forms, as a guarantee of the necessary qualifications, despite the fact that Lenin himself repudiated such silly conceptions in his **Left-Wing Communism**.(6) While accepting, in the main, Lenin's own systematic denunciations of the organizational theories of the CPUSA, SWP-YSA, PLP, etc., in that cited source, and the general validity of Lenin's own outlined (but over-broad) alternative in the same location, what we have to summarize in this present article is a replacement for both self-styled "Leninist

doctrine" and the errors and general lack of scientific coherence in Lenin's own views of the problem of sectarianism and viable "vanguard" organizations.

The clinical basis for such a study is properly located in an examination of the process of degeneration and failure of those revolutionary-socialist (by profession) organizations which have come within actual reach of political power and nonetheless failed so miserably at just such junctures. That includes the pre-World War I German Social-Democracy (SPD), the mass Communist parties of Western Europe — and should include study of those leading U.S. parties, the CPUSA and SWP, which, while never approaching the circumstances of imminent political power, otherwise demonstrate their inability to take power even under the most favorable circumstances.

In this investigation, we shall provide a rigorous sociological definition for a term, **centrism**, already in the "Leninist" lexicon. As a descriptive term, centrism signifies those organizations which maintain a commitment to revolutionary-socialism in ideology, as auspices for recruiting additional members, etc., and which yet **systematically** veer away from actual revolutionary practice. Not self-styled revolutionary parties which make mistakes, but parties whose characteristics as social formations predetermine that they will systematically avoid the practical road to revolutionary power in all but the most extraordinary circumstances.

The classical prototype of such an organization is the pre-World War I German Social-Democracy, especially from 1907-1914.(7) After defining the centrist process within SPD as a social phenomenon, we shall then examine the same social phenomenon as it is encountered in the "mass" parties of the Comintern and their post-war (WWII) successors. Then, we shall bring the study home to the cases of the CPUSA and the Socialist Workers Party.

Having examined the lawful sociological processes governing the degeneration of the SPD, Comintern, CPUSA, SWP, we shall, by implication, have dealt with the more exotic mutations of centrism encountered locally in the instances of PLP, YAWF, Spartacist, etc.

It ought to be obvious that our purpose here is not to develop epithets of better quality against the CP, SWP, etc., but, through a compassionate regard for the mistakes which led to those organizations' degeneration, to demonstrate the urgency of the positive policies by which an actually-viable mass-oriented revolutionary socialist organization can be built in today's capitalist sector, in particular.

Our procedure will now be as follows. First, we shall locate and develop (summarily) the relevant sociological theoretic apparatus of Karl Marx, noting its relationship to certain leading currents within modern

sociology and psychology. In this process we shall show that socialist consciousness among masses of working people (and their potential social allies) can be established only under very special conditions and in a very specific fashion. We shall also point out why the failure to implement precisely such a practice results (in cases to be studied) in a peculiar fusion of revolutionary-socialist **terms** and **phrases** with world-outlooks which embody both hostility toward specific capitalist institutions and also a method of problem-solving which is identical with the world-outlook imposed upon working people (and others) by capitalist social relations. We shall define centrism systematically as a "religious" fervor for a socialist society with a capitalist-ideology-guided practical approach to working-class struggles within capitalist society. In other words, that their daily practice inevitably leads not to socialist mass-consciousness, despite ineffable if vigorous intentions. So long as any social formation fails to comprehend and implement Marx's sociological method, it is compelled to continue to define "socialism" and "socialist practice" in the terms agreeable to perpetuation of capitalist social relations.

### Marxian Sociology

In the period 1890-93 Friedrich Engels wrote a series of letters (to E. Bloch, G. Schmidt, F. Mehring)(8) of extraordinary importance in general, but also of particular, two-fold bearing on the subject of our present inquiry.

The subject of that correspondence was the assault on theoretical Marxism being launched by one Paul Barth. Barth, basing himself substantially on the writings of simplistic Social-Democrats, had portrayed Marx as a mechanistic materialist. That is, charging that Marx explained human behavior in terms of an instinctual quality of "individual greed" and had thereupon constructed an edifice of mechanistic economic determinism.

Engels cited Marx's **Eighteenth Brumaire** in refutation of Barth's "straw man" portrait of Marxism.(9) However, Engels promptly conceded, self-styled Marxists had in fact veered toward mechanistic economic determinism, at least sufficiently to lend credence to Barth's charges. It was urgent, Engels proposed, that this situation be remedied.

Engels went further in his concessions. Apart from such models of Marx's historical method as the **Eighteenth Brumaire**, both Marx and Engels, in their published writings to date, had been necessarily preoccupied with the materialist side of the leading political issues. This emphasis was forced upon them by the nature of the theoretical problems associated with the development of **Capital**, and by the persistent danger embodied by the influence of "cultural" and other

idealistic chimeras within the workers' movement, beginning with Stirner and his co-thinkers.

Unfortunately, Engels' warnings had little influence on the systematic thinking of the various "official Marxist" groupings from the Social-Democracy on. Thus, the two-fold implications of Engels' cited letters for this inquiry: **The "official Marxist" movement has not only proceeded in a state of general ignorance respecting Marxian sociology, but has been dominated by a contrary methodology.**

This does not in itself suffice to settle one immediate question: the validity of Marxian sociology. However, if one moots, for the purpose of outlining the point, that Marx's sociology is valid, then it would follow that this offers the only admissible basis for analyzing and correcting the deadly errors into which previously-established socialist organizations have fallen.

If Marx never elaborated a sociology, he did not fail to found a distinct sociological method or — again referring to works like the **Eighteenth Brumaire** — to apply it in ways susceptible of analysis for this purpose. In fact, one encounters its employment through all Marx's writings.

In settling the first question, the elements of this method, we have to overcome two formal difficulties.

First: Marx **develops** his dialectical method only in certain writings of the 1844-46 period, the "1844 Manuscripts," the "Theses On Feuerbach," and the first section, "Feuerbach," of **The German Ideology**.(10) Of these writings, only the "Theses On Feuerbach" had been published at the time of Engels' 1890-93 correspondence; the others were not widely published until the 1920's and 30's, and were then promptly dubbed "apocryphal" mootings of the "early" Marx by the most influential "official Marxists" of that time.

Second: these writings are not in the literary form suited to the general socialist audience of either the late nineteenth century or the twentieth century. They were addressed to a specialized audience steeped in the study of German Critical Philosophy generally and Hegel most emphatically. Nor are they presented as independent works which stand by themselves amid the writings of German Critical Philosophy generally. They are mainly written as marginal notations on the then-well-known principal writings of one Ludwig Feuerbach, and include many positive statements which cannot be interpreted without reference to alluded passages in what is now an almost-unknown 1843 publication, Feuerbach's **Principles of a Philosophy of the Future**.

Provided that the indicated prerequisites for study of Marx's 1844-46 writings are met, the result is a set of unequivocal statements representing the most earth-

shaking discoveries in every domain of human knowledge and practice. What we have from this source is a complete definition of Marx's dialectical method — bearing no resemblance for what is taken as “dialectical materialism” within any existing “official Marxist” organization. This same dialectical method is also most emphatically a complete foundation for psychology, sociology, economics.

Lest the latter claim seem too extravagant, it should be announced here that the concept of psycho-physical parallelism discovered by Sigmund Freud(11), and the elementary conceptions advanced by Emile Durkheim (cf. **Elementary Forms of the Religious Life**) are, in part, independent replications of the conclusions advanced in Ludwig Feuerbach's 1841-43 writings(12), and that Marx's respective systematic differences with Freud and Durkheim are congruent to Marx's differences with Feuerbach. (It is on related grounds that contemporary “orthodox Marxist” mechanists have attacked representations of Marx's actual dialectical method as “Freudian” or “bourgeois sociology.”) This relationship justifies and permits advances in Marxian psychology and sociology in terms of the empirical ground explored by Freudians and certain sociologists — we can advance Marxism significantly by using this material, provided we bear in mind the elementary fallacies which inhere in Freud's and Durkheim's views from Marx's standpoint. Proceeding in this way, we can also simplify the task of proving the validity of Marx's psychology and sociology in empirical terms. But, that is a topic of its own.

Now, having identified the analytical equipment we have to define for treatment of centrism, let us turn to describing its internal features.

### The Problem of Knowledge

Religious belief, we know today, contains two fundamental truths, albeit in fantastic disguise. These are the notion that human identity originates and in some sense exists outside of and independent of the individual physical organism **as such**, and that the primary concern of the human individual is not his simple biological needs but the maintaining of his human **identity** through employment of a more-or-less propitiatory array of **moral** practices.

The vicious flaw of religious belief, in the practical sense, is that it attributes these truths to metaphysical entities apart from actual human practice. Religion provides man with no orderly way to deliberately relate his human identity and moral code to practice. Religion knows only “mysteries.”

Therefore, the explosive development of new technologies and new social relations had, by the middle-to-high Renaissance, compelled some leading thinkers to

tilt the balance away from existing religious premises to emphasize the compulsions of secularized practice, leading ultimately to secularized philosophy in persons like Hobbes and the French classical materialists.

Materialism affords man spectacular advantages over blind religious practice in problems affecting nature in its simplest aspect. In terms of **mechanical** objects, in terms of mechanistic practice, classical materialism fails because it leaves **real man** out of consideration, replacing man with purely-imaginary biological individuals whose reasoning process is a simple secretion of the physical brain and whose motivation is conceived to be individual greed.

The implications of these observations will be fully clear only when we have attained the necessary solution to the real problem involved — shortly ahead. The point is, in sum, that neither religion nor classical materialism could solve, could provide a means for solving the most fundamental problems confronting man under conditions of emerging capitalist development. Religion, which alters its conception of moral practice only blindly, could not accomplish the urgent task of systematically re-codifying human practice under conditions of rapid technological and social change. Materialism is a considerable advance over religion in one necessary respect, but is unable to progress beyond crude, mechanistic conceptions of natural processes and unable to define the questions confronting man as man.

It was German Critical Philosophy, beginning with Immanuel Kant, which set out to solve this predicament in the only possible way (cf. Marx, Thesis No. 1, “Theses On Feuerbach”).(13) That is, to secularize the two fundamental truths previously disguised within religious belief: **to establish the secular basis for a human identity imposed upon the biological individual by an outside agency.**

Classical materialism's conception of individual man had been destroyed by its own devastating contradictions. The notion that individual biological man attained actual knowledge of objects through experience is easily shown to be a wild fallacy. This notion presumes that the “mental-perceptual apparatus” correctly decodes simple sensations to arrive at a correct mental construct of the object sensed. Thus, classical materialism preserved its mere appearance of integrity by a sly metaphysical ruse: of attributing a **priori** knowledge to the human “mental-perceptual apparatus.” Or, the same thing, to substitute the vulgar word, “instinct,” for precise a **priori**.

The bankruptcy of classical materialism on this count coheres with a general fallacy of all mechanistic constructions. The assumption that the universe is composed of elementary “particles” or “existences” invariably depends upon explicit or implicit postulational

assumptions which are absolutely mutually-irreconcilable. The attempt to construct a logical system of **any kind** along these lines depends upon at least two fundamental postulational assumptions. First, it is necessary to assume that certain "particles" or "existences" have a **kind of self-evident existence**. That is, that their existence does not depend on their relationship to existences external to themselves. If such a construction is to fulfill the requirements of a logic, it must also assume **relationship** among such existences. Now, the introduction of the notion of **effective relationship** nullifies the elementarity of the entities participating in the relationship. This applies even if the only assumption of relationship is **comparison**.(14)

Kant's attempt to solve the problem of both religion and classical materialism failed precisely because he did not free himself from the notion of elementarity lodged in his **Ding an sich**. Nonetheless, he accomplished several things which are of historic importance to the advancement of the human race. First, he exposed the fatal particular fallacies of British and French materialism to the extent that only an ignoramus can be an empiricist today. Second, he demonstrated by the rigorous procedures employed in his own failure the impossibility of any logical positivism, the implicit goal of the old metaphysical materialism. Thirdly, and most important, he put the **dialectical method** on a more rigorous basis.

It is necessary to clear away the rubbish which many readers have been led to associate with the term "dialectical method." The dialectical method has nothing to do with the sophistry of "thesis-antithesis-synthesis" as those terms are ordinarily presented in either academic courses taught by charlatans or the "blab"-school indoctrination courses of certain sects. **Thesis, antithesis, synthesis** are terms with definite connotations in the Kantian dialectic, but in no wise the connotations put into more popular currency by the cited blabbers.

The problem which gives rise to a dialectical method is this.(15) Human knowledge develops as collections of specialized knowledge respecting narrow domains of practice, specialists discovering working-principles which are more or less irrefutable from the standpoint of that narrowly-defined practice. Yet, the concepts arising in this way from collective human practice seem usually mutually contradictory, irreconcilable.

If the universe is coherent, the only axiomatic assumption of the dialectical method as such, then we have these realities to resolve. First, provided that each concept is empirically-validated, then the concepts are real and the apparent contradiction in concepts is also real. Second, since it is proper to regard all these immediate realities as if they were products of some coherent common basis, then there exists another,

more profound reality in which the contradictory concepts are put on a coherent footing and the contradiction itself is put on that same coherent footing.

To illustrate this on a broad scale. The concept of living processes is contradictory to a prevailing, empirically validated conception of non-living mechanical processes. E.g. **neg-entropy** versus **entropy**. Both are true and the contradiction between them is also true. Then, there must exist a more profound set of concepts in which neg-entropy and entropy are reduced to a common concept and from which standpoint the contradiction between living neg-entropic and mechanical entropic phenomena is also necessary.

This general method can be applied in two obvious ways. One may attempt to maintain the postulates of elementarity, such as Kant's **thing-in-itself**, and attempt to attain a definition of the relations among such existences by a dialectical process. Or, one may regard the **thing-in-itself** as simply a derived concept. In the latter case one ends up with fundamental conceptions at least paralleling those of Hegel.

Admittedly, we have enormously simplified the matter of Kant versus Hegel, out of respect for the specific focus of our inquiry here, and the positive solution to this problem we have yet to present. What is essential to our purpose from the Kant-Hegel development is the following. Hegel carried the dialectical method, first put on a rigorous footing by Kant, to its ultimate formal implications. That is, instead of imagining that the real universe is an aggregation of elementary "particles" or "existences," and attempting, from that viewpoint, to build up a picture of the universe as a whole, we start with the universe as a whole, and work downward, so to speak, treating the apparently-elementary particular things as events created by a universal process.

The devastating fallacy in Hegel's dialectic was his attempt to define a **formal** solution to the problem of human knowledge. As Marx acknowledges, Ludwig Feuerbach was the first to discover the major flaw in Hegel's system: "the negation of the negation." We shall not explore here the formal errors incurred in employing Hegel's mistaken "negation of the negation," but merely illustrate the problems to which this fallacy leads in practice.(16)

A formal logical determinism leads to such fatalistic conceptions, actually adopted and illustrated by Lenin's philosophy teacher, Plekhanov, as that if Napoleon had not existed, French history would have created a Napoleon like him to fill the historical need. In politics, this obviously leads to such fatalistic conceptions as revolutions inevitably occurring when they are ripe.

To save his system, Hegel resorted to the fantastic device of declaring the Roman (Hellenistic) slavery-

based economic system an historic advance over previous stages of social development. In fact, this is not the case; the introduction of slavery into the basic means of production was accompanied by a decline in the productivity of society in those means of production. Moreover, real history is filled with blind-alley societies — such as Chinese society — which have stagnated or regressed instead of inevitably superceding themselves with higher forms. The objective pre-conditions for social advances have never been generally demonstrated to suffice to cause such advances. There is a distinct element, which might be loosely termed “choice” in history, empirically defying and refuting any purely-formal account of history. This is not, of course, “choice” in the Protestant religious sense — putting to one side radical Calvinism. What is involved is Hegel’s failure to encompass the actual notion of **development**, of **metastability**.(17)

Feuerbach took the first steps, in work completed by Marx, to solve all the accumulated problems of philosophy up to his time. First, Feuerbach set out to attack the common bankruptcy of religious belief and classical materialism by rejecting formalism in favor of a more direct approach. Feuerbach attempted to provide a secular basis for religious truths directly, by assuming and setting-out to demonstrate the real, practical basis in everyday life, so to speak, for the conceptions of Self and moral practice. Second, Feuerbach junked Hegel’s “Negation of the negation” in favor of a notion cohering with today’s concept of metastability, “the self-subsisting positive,” an abstraction whose manifest reality Feuerbach located in human practice.

### Nature of Consciousness

Because of the socialist production (in the broadest sense of “production”) on which individual man’s existence depends on society, he has a systematic predicament akin to that of the recently-born human infant. That is the first key to the real problem of human knowledge.

The infant does not act deliberately, individually on nature to meet his needs. His society intervenes in his behalf. To act deliberately in his own interests, the infant must learn to act upon adults’ attitudes toward himself. Adults have particular conceptions of their obligations to the infant, conceptions of their obligation to respond in a certain way under definite conditions. This corresponds to the formal notion of the **rights** and **privileges** which the individual can command from his society. To master nature in his own interests, the infant must learn to recognize adults’ states of consciousness of him and must learn to act in definite effective ways upon those apparent states of consciousness. He does not know a bottle of milk as a bottle of milk, but as a bottle of milk provided to him under certain conditions by adults. He must internalize his

society’s consciousness of him as his self-consciousness. In the same way he learns of the existence of objects and his relationship to those objects as he is actually related to such objects through the prohibitions and other intercessions of adult society.

The adult human individual does not actually produce for himself. He is himself produced by his society, and depends on social relations (the division of the society’s productive labor) for the satisfaction of his existence-needs. It is society’s compulsions, prohibitions and assistance with which he must principally reckon for his own existence. Even his notion of his needs is determined for him as society determines his conceptions of need, right, and privilege.

In contemporary society it can be shown that the material standard of living of individuals in the U.S. actually depends upon a worldwide, fabulously-reticulated network of interdependent kinds of productive labor which could not be replicated, without doubt, in a population of less than two billion persons. In passing dollar-bills over the store counter — which the deluded individual may imagine he has earned by his own unaided labor, he is demanding of a society encompassing at least two billion individuals certain rights and privileges. The content of a dollar bill, the practical content of the object he buys with the aid of that dollar bill, is the world division of labor among two billion persons, his relationship to that division of labor.

It is upon his social identity that a man depends for existence. It is that identity, not his physical individual self, which he must preserve — even by an act of suicide. **That is the secret of religious belief.**

In sum, individual consciousness is not a product of the biological individual’s direct experience of nature. It is a social product.

Is self-consciousness then a metaphysical principle superimposed upon the physical self? Of course there are biological processes engaged in the process of thought, but biological processes developed to function in a manner not determined by mere individual biology. (E.g. **Freud’s psycho-physical parallelism.**)

What is human about the newborn infant? only his potential to be turned into a human being during the first months of his life by a definite society. Obviously, a housecat or newborn dog, subjected to the same social relations, lacks this potential. Human biology enters as an uniquely-appropriate biological form to produce human consciousness, human identity, in infants subjected to social relations. Not accidentally. The emergence of man as a biological type is associated with the “selective” actions accompanying the evolution of pre-societal and societal forms among predecessor species and varieties.

It is on this basis, the first approximation of Marx's advances based on Feuerbach, that we encounter the development of Freudian psychology and Durkheim's sociology. That is the basis for the legitimacy of the connection sought by Erich Fromm, for example, between Freud and Marx.

### Development

Another decisive set of questions has to be answered. Assuming deliberation, even of an unconscious kind, in man's relationship to nature, the only premise for real human knowledge is human existence (**The German Ideology**). The test of the reality of human knowledge is the effect of his deliberate productive activities in providing the material basis for continued human existence.

The first test of the reality of human knowledge is the ability of certain labor, embodying the consumption of certain material means of existence, to produce sufficient new material means of existence for an expanded population.(18) That is the first approximation of reality, establishing Marx's conception of **social surplus**.

However, human productive activity must reckon with the reality that man-improved and man-depleted nature is always relatively-finite in its capacity to sustain society's expansion in any definite mode of production. Continued human development, advancing human existence, thus depends upon man's improvement of his modes of production, to yield greater results with relatively poorer resources, etc.

We have therefore to qualify our initial premise concerning the reality of human knowledge. It is man's successful line of development, to societies of higher actual and potential rates of social surplus (equivalent of **free energy rates** in physical systems) which uniquely demonstrates the reality of human knowledge.

Without exploring here all the necessary intervening stages of exposition, we can report in the form of a statement of results: Successful human production of human existence is expressed as the result of an inhering developmental tendency in human society which can be expressed empirically as **a positive value for the second derivative of the rate of social surplus**. That is, a **tendency** for the rate of social surplus not only to rise but to rise at an accelerating rate. (This is the same as the Marxian Law of Value expressed in **use-value** terms.)

This is the Marxist explicit form of the **self-subsisting positive** which Feuerbach proposes to substitute for Hegel's mistaken conception, "the negation of the negation."

What this expression means in practical terms is the following. The notion of the rate of social surplus means that, above those expenditures of productive social effort needed to simply maintain the productive population and maintain the equi-potential of nature for that production (constant capital, for example), man has a certain portion of his total productive forces free to be applied to expanding and qualitatively improving his society, his power over nature. That is, heuristically, the ratio of a society's "free energy" in its productive relations. Or, man's growing power over the material universe.

If man is deliberately mastering his universe in such a way, then the process which describes his progress in this manner effectively subsumes implicitly all the fundamental laws of the material universe. Or, man's real analysis of the process by which he actually increases his rate of social surplus (rising positive values for the second derivative of the rate of social surplus) is the unique basis for man's knowledge of the fundamental laws of the material universe.

### Reality of Religious Beliefs

Obviously, primitive and other societies, capitalism included, do not provide man with real knowledge of himself. Man functions according to fantastic conceptions of himself and nature.

However, if such ideological states involved no more than fantasy, man would soon cease to occupy his own ideology-ridden contemplation. This implies that all dominant, hegemonic ideologies subsume, at least at some stage of their hegemony, an appropriate guide to social practice, at least appropriate for the perpetuation of the society. Under such conditions, man's knowledge, however fantastically guised is real knowledge. Real in the sense that we define empirically-valid contradictory concepts as real in the dialectical method.

The problem of ideologically-based knowledge is that it ceases to be real as the basic conditions of social practice are significantly altered. It is beyond the scope of our present work to show here the formal considerations involved. Despite that, the point made is sufficiently clear for purposes at hand.

It is in this sense that religious beliefs tend to contain necessary truths. It is in a similar sense that we can begin to understand the organic relationships among the constituent layers and other groupings of society. Different layers and groupings may differ in ideology in the same society. Conceptions of self-interest, conceptions of moral practice, etc. To fulfill the condition of ideological appropriateness it is only essential that the particular ideology be appropriate to the group's particular appropriate function within the whole.

The leading issue here is the dominant belief today in a necessary equation between **real knowledge** and **rationality** of individual belief and action. Popular capitalist mythology portrays bourgeois democracy as a collection of more or less rational individuals, who elect parties and individuals, press for and against particular policies, on the basis of a simultaneously real and rational assessment of individual self-interest.

In actuality, we know that virtually no one in capitalist society has a rational conception of proper policy for that society. There is not, as some pseudo-Marxists (for example) contend, a rational capitalist policy of self-interest to which agencies of the ruling class more or less automatically respond. Actual policy-making is seldom accomplished by any single body of men acting according to a form of rationality. In actuality, policy evolves despite the explicit proposals of any one of a varied aggregation of factions, interest-groups, etc., as a kind of vector-result of the interaction of many bodies, each of which is mainly guided by rather unlike ideological conceptions in particular.<sup>(19)</sup> There are individuals and groups in influential positions who assume themselves to have a blueprint for rational policy; their initiating action in behalf of that blueprint may result in some new policy ultimately being adopted, but almost never the policy outlined in the blueprint. This is as true in corporations as in government. The president may propose, but the bureaucracy — and other agencies — dispose.

### Mediating Relationships

Short of the emergence of matured socialist society, no individual stands in a primary general relationship to his society as a whole. Rather, he is immediately related to a definite groups or groups. In each group he has distinct rights and privileges which he does not enjoy in the same array and proportions in other groups. Beginning with the bourgeois family of his childhood (in this society) the individual has an identity only in particular groups. It is through these groups (family, trade-union, social clubs, etc.) in which he has his primary social identity that he mediates his relationship to broader institutions of society. If he has rights in the broader society, these mainly depend upon the maintenance of such rights (excepting rights of the stranger) through the mediation of the immediate groupings to which he properly "belongs."

The central concern of Marxian sociology, as a revolutionary practice, is to create actually rational human beings by establishing the new social forms of a society in which each individual has a **direct** relationship to the society as a whole. That is, in which the individual directly participates in formulating the policies governing the allocation of available productive forces and the distribution of the material conditions of existence and

production. Short of that, except to the extent that intellectuals may in rare instances develop such a world-outlook for themselves, rationality in individuals is impossible. Otherwise individual man is denied the possibility of establishing a conscious, responsible connection between the deliberate allocation of his own contribution to society and the resulting conditions of his own life.

Marxism, as revolutionary practice, proposes to approximate rationality in large numbers of human beings by subordinating the allegiance individuals have to local groups (trade-unions, skill-color organizations, community organizations) to a primary new allegiance to organizations simultaneously **directly**-representative of the majority of wage-earners and their social allies. This is an approximation of what Marx defines as the **class-for-itself**.

Short of the institutions peculiar to socialist relations, individual man's self-consciousness, identity, are immediately determined by his position in the fragmentary, mediating group. The general term for the result is **philistinism**, exemplified by white workers' racist hostility to blacks, by blacks' reciprocal hostility to whites, by attitudes of petty disregard by one group of working people for the interest of another, by hostility to "outsiders," such as "outside agitators." The normal ideological state of man under capitalism is man's characteristic swinishness.

This same swinishness, the same lawful social forces pertaining to fragmentary mediating groups, is fundamental to the phenomenon of **centrism**.

What we encounter is this. As the group has an appropriate mediating relationship through which to serve its parochial group-self-interest, the member-individual's sense of identity is determined. He not only struggles, above all, to preserve and enhance his identity within the group, but his conception of morality — in broad terms — is peculiar to the characteristic practice imposed upon him by the mediating relations of his group to other groups.

### The General Problem of Marxian Strategy

The obvious problem of revolutionary socialists seems to be, granted that socialism is a superior form of society, to win a majority of the population to this persuasion for appropriate action. However, recognizing that the members of capitalist society are not rational, workers included, the obvious problem is obviously not the problem involved.

What keeps the masses of people in subjection to the capitalist system today is the fragmented state of organization of those masses — into parochialist groupings. Trade-unionists, for example, do not know a class-



interest as trade-unionists. Rather, they know a definite relationship between their employer, the government agencies and their parochial trade-union-organization. Under these conditions, they **may** regard other working people and even students as allies; they may, more frequently, regard other workers as competitors for shares of the bosses' income and students as representatives of a tax-burden exacted from them. One group of workers may ally itself with its employer against other workers, and usually does ally with one capitalist government in antagonism to the workers subject to another capitalist government. Under normal conditions of capitalist life, working people, like everyone else, tend to be incurable swine. The scientific term for swinishness of the sort described is **capitalist ideology**.

To win working people to socialism it is essential to find some way to destroy their **primary** affiliation to all forms of parochialist organizations. In general, this is impossible as long as they believe that they can realize their urgent expectations through the normal process of parochialist group-action or individual action. It is essential that conditions exist under which workers (and other potential socialist layers) lose confidence in the efficiency of local-group organization and in institutionalized relations associated with such forms of organization.

The classical conditions for this occur in the onset or sequel to a capitalist economic crisis. Not because of the material deprivations simply associated with such conjunctures. Rather, because it is under such conditions that the capitalists themselves undermine confidence in and actual performance of established institutions and institutionalized relationships among groupings.

It is under such conjunctural circumstances that it is possible for socialists, as catalysts, to bring about actually and imminently political alliances among broad selections of previously-fragmented sections of the working class and its allies. The need for broader alliances under conditions of actual or implicit confrontation with the political power of the state compels parochialist formations to subordinate their narrow group-interests to the common-interest of the required alliance. (The dialectic? Absolutely!)

By redefining the mediating relationships affecting the individuals involved in this way, under conditions of grave social stress and confrontation, it is possible to radically change the world-outlook of the individual participants. The immediacy of his relationship to the most diverse sectors of his class and his class's social allies tends to become the determining influence in **remolding** his self-consciousness and morality. To the extent that such alliances approximate the class-for-itself, and to the extent that the **program** of the alliances consciously expresses a socialist relationship

within the class-for-itself form, an approximation of **true rationality**, or **socialist consciousness**, emerges.

The leading Bolsheviks, who, unfortunately, never assimilated a positive understanding of Marxian sociology involved, nonetheless developed an approximate understanding of the phenomena — partly through empirical knowledge gained in the experience of defections of certain layers from the movement, of alternating advances and withdrawals of working-class masses from political struggles, and from the problems faced by revolutionary intellectuals in the movement in dealing with non-intellectual revolutionary working-class layers.

Trotsky, for example, distinguishes(20) between the "Marxian philosophical world-outlook" assimilated by only a tiny minority of the Bolsheviks, as leading intellectuals, and the substitute for the Marxian world-outlook attained by rank-and-file worker-bolsheviks, **class instinct**. The history of the growth of the Bolshevik organization after its virtual liquidation (to about twenty active Russian members in 1911) through waves of pre-war mass strikes and the mass strikes of February-October, 1917, accounts for those hardened worker-cadres. They were the individuals won to revolutionary socialism through (mainly) their experience in mass strikes uniting broad layers of the working class and its allies in common struggle.

The same principle applies to the Wobbly activists and the left-wing of the pre-1919 Socialist Party in this country. A glance at the prevailing publications of the pre-1919 period, DeLeon's centrist pedantry included, a reading of the writings of the leading left-wing figures reveals little if any theoretical comprehension of the simplest ABC's of Marxism. Their theory consisted mainly of the distinct way they looked at the world because of the **class instinct** they had acquired as the leading layer in a series of **mass** struggles; they were the distillation of the mass they represented, who, despite no semblance of serious revolutionary program **in the positive sense**, had attained, in the crucible of mass struggles, a certain transformation in the world-outlook, away from the swinishness of the workers' normal capitalist **ideology** (e.g. craft-union mentality).

The main difficulty with class instinct as a substitute for the theoretical Marxism is that it tends to "evaporate," as Trotsky observes in the prolonged absence of the social conditions which give rise to it and sustain it.(21) The former revolutionary worker's outlook begins to degenerate to approximate that of the ordinary philistine man-in-the-street. It is in just such "psychological" shifts that a movement toward reactionary tendencies among a party's working-class layer can first be detected.

Among many worker-Communists, SWP'ers, PLP'ers today one encounters a quite contrary conception of strategy. This rejection of Marxism can be re-

duced to the general equation: that **socialist consciousness** is nothing more than an intensification of parochialist militant rank-and-file trade-union or black consciousness to such a point of frenzy that it assumes political anti-capitalist forms. This nonsense is not-accidentally associated commonly-enough with an equally anti-Marxist conceit that the class-struggle problem is the rate of exploitation of individual workers at the point of production: e.g., that workers do not receive the full value, in wages, or their production.

This rejection of the sociological and economic ABC's of Marxism, together with its usual correlatives, is the almost unfailing theoretical symptom of the social phenomenon of centrism.

Another significant correlative among "Bolshevik" sects is the substitution of a certain so-called "dialectical materialism," a form of mechanistic materialism, for Marx's actual dialectical method. This obviously identifies the problem to which Engels referred in the cited 1890-93 correspondence. (It was not long before that problem proved to have far deeper and more important implications than the annoyance of Paul Barth.)

This pseudo-dialectic cited is actually a strange form of radical positivism established by superimposing the formal logic of Hegel, stripped of its actual dialectical content, onto the basis of the elementary-particle ontology of classical materialism.

What this ideology represents in practice is the following. An organization, "vanguard party" or faction, which simultaneously pursues an anti-socialist, parochialist policy in mass practice while attempting to preserve the organization as a temple of "orthodox revolutionary Marxism." Prototypes of this include the Bebel faction of the German Social-Democracy in the 1907-13 period, the Comintern under Stalin from 1923 to its dissolution, most of the mass Communist parties of the thirties and forties, the Hillquit faction of the SP, DeLeon's Socialist Labor Party, and the Socialist Workers Party of today. Each attempts to advance revolutionary socialism — according to its own conception of revolutionary socialism — by maintaining the "orthodoxy" of its official ideology, by recruiting new members to its "orthodoxy," and so forth. But, it seeks to accomplish this by following outside the centrist party or faction a tailist policy in mass work, functioning as militant advocates of parochialist demands otherwise **adapting to the bourgeois ideological tendencies** among militant layers of working people and their potential allies.

### The Case of August Bebel

The prototype for centrism is the August Bebel faction of the German Social-Democracy, which was overtly centrist from the 1907 congresses up to Bebel's death in 1913.

This is not an "orthodox Leninist" characterization. We have already alluded to the failure of the leading Bolsheviks to **systematically** master the ABC's of Marxian dialectics in this respect. As a result, the Bolsheviks and other have concealed the real nature of the SPD's degeneration under a purely-mythical explanation which attributes the source of infections to such petit-bourgeois intellectuals as Eduard Bernstein and Karl Kautsky. Mythical since, as Rosa Luxemburg and Wilhelm Liebknecht reported their experience of the 1899 revisionism fight, Bernstein was merely the attorney for the dominant political tendencies in the SPD's organized trade-union fractions.(22) Similarly, Kautsky, on whom Lenin wasted absolutely unwarranted and clinically-unjustified attention(23), was never more than the attorney for August Bebel's politics, the same "beloved Bebel" to whom Lenin could so ingenuously allude as late as 1916.(24) As a result of major theoretical blunders of this general form, Lenin and Trotsky, among others, characterized centrism as a **petit-bourgeois** social tendency, thus entirely misestimating the significance of little bands of **unemployed** former hirelings of the working-class centrist tendencies of the Second International. (The parties of the old Second International had gone over entirely to reformism; they no longer required the services of literary specialists in centrist apologetics.)

Bebel's political character began to emerge clearly in 1899-1900. Not only did he decline to enter the fight against revisionism until the greatest pressures had been exerted upon him. Specifically, Bebel had declined to regard revisionism as a danger until it became clear that the logical outcome of unchecked revisionism was liquidation of the SPD. So, Bebel reluctantly allied himself with Luxemburg and Liebknecht (Wilhelm) for as long as it took to curb the influence of the most-liquidationist currents in the right wing, after which he immediately negotiated a secret alliance with the revisionist wing (the German General Trade Union Commission) against the menace of the left wing (Luxemburg). Under the impact of the most serious threat from the left-wing faction (Luxemburg's mass-strike program) Bebel began to organize his "proletarian kernel apparatus" (Ebert et al.) at the most rapid rate, a bureaucratic dictatorship constituted for the main purpose of disenfranchising and suppressing the left-wing of the SPD.

Bebel's faction has two dominant features during the period, 1900-13. To hold the trade-union fractions to the SPD organization by measures including the concession of secret vote-power to the General Trade Union Commission **over resolutions passed by the SPD Party Congress!** At the same time that he pursued reformist policies in practice, he was at great pains to maintain the image of "Marxist orthodoxy." Bebel would, at suitable turns, take the platform in behalf of resolutions brimming with the most revolutionary, "orthodox" rhetoric, which resolutions he would blithely violate

and ignore while following a day-to-day reformist practice in his capacity of head of the party apparatus. Karl Kautsky's function, as the prototype of the modern CP or SWP party-office literary hack, was to complement Bebel's holiday oratory with profound literary pieces which maintained the image of the party's vigilant orthodoxy. Bebel's real heir was not his literary mouthpiece, Kautsky, but the apparatus hatchet-man, proletarian ex-tavern-keeper, Ebert, the man who watched over not the party's theory but such practical matters as gate-receipts, expulsions of left-wing dissidents, suppression of offending left-wing party newspapers, etc.(25)

It is necessary to understand that the grave problem facing the revolutionary is his customary isolation from the overwhelming majority of his society. He becomes a pariah, losing his rights in his normal institutions in proportion to his abandonment of "right-sounding" rhetorical postures, etc. He is under grave social pressure to find a new organization to sustain his sense of social identity in place of the withdrawn or threatened sustenance he would normally seek in **other parochialist institutions**. He easily finds this urgently-desired support for his ego in his identity as a "party member." As his vision of a more direct connection with a mass revolutionary movement dims under conditions of reaction, capitalist stability or successive tactical defeats for his organization, his sense of connection, as a social identity, to the goal tends to evaporate, to be replaced by a heightened sense of his identity as a "party member." He can find sustenance in the centrist war-cry, "The Party is everything!" implying that the goal is very distant and not of much practical use to his present needs.

He still believes in socialist revolution. He attributes to his "party" the **metaphysical** qualities necessary to make any socialist revolution that might be on the order of the day in some distant future. But reality in that matter ends for him beyond the well-defined limits of his party as an institution. It is the party which gives him his identity. He needs, above all, social standing in the eyes of the party. If the party needs more newspaper subscriptions, more members, more financial aid, more turns of the mimeograph machine, it is by attending to such tasks that he will maintain his standing as a party member. Theory? The party has theoreticians. When the party assigns him to theoretical work, then he will become a theoretician. This is a workers' party? Then he will get a trade-union job, learn to discuss baseball instead of Marxism with the comrades after the branch or fraction meeting, wear a leather jacket.

The preservation of the party as an institution becomes the beginning and end of his real politics. Theory. Yes, to the extent that the appearances involved are interwoven with the party's image as an institution. But, his practical politics are mainly limited to dangers of liquidation posed by the "right" or

"left," or simply by unsubmitive internal political minorities. "To be a member of a minority! Horrors!" To thus tarnish his social identity in the eyes of the party's social-opinion-setters? "Which side is the majority? That's the way to vote this question."

To the right, an excess of opportunism threatens to weaken the grip on the party's peripheries and even members until the pull of an excessive involvement in outside organized social formations occurs. To the left, "These nuts will get us into trouble with the party's reformist camp-followers and allies, perhaps even get the party into trouble with the bourgeoisie." **Liquidationism**, in whatever form it seems to present itself, is the one issue on which the leadership and ranks will really muster a nasty factional effort.

There one has August Bebel from the period, 1899-1913. An old revolutionary, who never had nor cared much for Marxist theory (cf. Marx's **Critique of the Gotha Programme**), who had spent most of his life building the organization, under prison sentences, conditions of party illegality, all over decades. "Now, a good solid organization, with millions of members, mainly from a large, growing organized trade-union movement, a growing representation in Land and Reich parliaments, dozens of newspapers and periodicals, a vast party apparatus. . . . Fight revisionist currents emanating from the working-class to the extent that that is the immediate danger to the material interests of the party as an organization, but on no account alienate the right-wingers (German General Trade Union Commission) which make up the majority of our dues-paying base, and don't let that evil-tongued woman (Luxemburg) upset the carefully-balanced accommodation on which the present organization rests. . . . Keep up appearances, get Karl (Kautsky) to put a good, "orthodox revolutionary" face on things in **Neue Zeit**. . . . Perhaps a good, old rip-roaring speech at the next party mass meeting from me — I better forewarn the Trade Union Commission beforehand, so they don't misinterpret my rhetoric and take offense. . . ."

### Lenin's German Blunders

Had Lenin understood these actual causes for the infamous Social-Democratic vote for war credits in August, 1914, he would have proceeded rather differently to the formation of the Communist International, leaning toward, if not entirely adopting, Luxemburg's alternative proposals. Because Lenin failed to account for Bernsteinism and Kautskyism in terms of two working-class tendencies actually represented (Lenin was a supporter of the German centrist bloc against Luxemburg just before the war!) he initially overestimated the **subjective preparation** of the German working class for the objective revolutionary situation of 1918-20. Lenin proceeded, instead as if a removal of the SPD's petit-bourgeois "lid" of Bernstein, Kautsky, and the petit-bourgeoisified proletarian-kernel apparatus, would unleash the developed revolutionary-socialist

tradition of the SPD's rank-and-file working-class layers. He did not recognize that reformism and centrism were organically rooted in the working-class rank-and-file of the SPD, that this had to be overcome through a process **first**.(26)

Luxemburg correctly foresaw a period of mass strikes from 1918 on as the necessary process of preparation of the German vanguard for the seizure of power.(27) It was necessary, considering the conjunctural circumstances imposed by the end of the war, to engage the masses of organized in joint struggles with the unorganized and superexploited workers and farmers of Germany, thus raising their class instinct while exposing the character of their Social-Democratic leaders. Despite the many blunders of the new German Communist Party, especially the two adventures undertaken, first over Luxemburg's objections, then over Levi's objections, the conditions for such a seizure of power were matured by early 1923.

Meanwhile, Comintern bungling under Radek's and Zinoviev's immediate intervening hand, systematically undermined the leading theoretical achievements of the SPD left-wing, of which the most criminal was the Comintern pogrom against Luxemburg's theoretical works, which utterly destroyed the morality of a KPD leading layer originally trained and organized under Luxemburg's hegemony. It was not until Trotsky's exile to Prinkipio and his German booklets(28), that a Russian revolutionary leader began to grapple successfully with the special problems of a revolutionary program for an advance capitalist country — where the class-in-itself tendency in the working class and its allies offers a grave, special obstacle to socialist work.

### **Soviet Communist Party & Comintern**

Today, there are few persons so wretched that they will attempt to defend August Bebel's center faction or its ally, the German General Trade Union Commission. There are certain "official Marxist" groups which will attack **our analysis of the faults** of the SPD, as that analysis threatens their self-consoling delusions, but only the strangest sort of quirked mentality could muster itself to retort against **the analytical charges themselves**. Perhaps, partly for that reason, the nineteen-fifties and sixties have seen a lively output of objective, scholarly studies-in-depth of the SPD itself. So, if we step on corns in mentioning Lenin's and Trotsky's blunders on the German situation, it has been sufficient to limit ourselves to a summary analysis of facts that are not in dispute among even moderately-well-informed persons.

As we now turn to consider related processed and phenomena pertaining to the Soviet Communist Party and the Comintern, the practical circumstances of discussion and analysis become violently different than those we have encountered in treating the SPD. We

have to take cognizance of the disputes surrounding even the most-thoroughly documented facts of the case.

The significance of the Comintern itself first assumes the heading of "What might have been?" Had the Comintern had a different development, there would have been no rise of Nazism, no World War II, no thermonuclear horror, no continued oppression today of either colonial peoples or minority groups in the U.S. itself. The impossibility of gaining hegemony for a different strain of revolutionary Marxism, while the Communist parties dominated the left throughout the world, certifies that only a different Comintern than developed could have altered the past half-century's history in a beneficial way. That alternative possibility is not idle speculation: there were repeated revolutionary opportunities for victory, provided that the revolutionary vanguard organization with the dominant qualifications in tunities for victory, provided that the revolutionary vanguard organization with the dominant following on the scene had fulfilled certain minimal qualifications in policy, temper and program.

This question is not to be approached in the fashion of classical idealism or classical materialism. The answer is not contemplated by persons squatting on their abstract moral presciences outside the real world or the equally vulgar and ineffable **detached observers** of the classical materialist persuasion.

Real politics is not concerned to judge history in terms of abstractly-correct policies. To regard real knowledge as a matter of human practice means to regard a correct policy as that course which is inherent in the world-outlook and strategic resources of social institutions whose creation is actually an objective possibility. The question of correct knowledge of correct policy is limited to the domain of inquiry in which we examine the evolution of the kinds of social formations in which particular world-outlooks are developed.

In the conjunctural short-term, the decision of a single individual may have a decisive role in turning the course of development of certain institutions, and thus be decisive in influencing the course of human history. For example, from exhaustive studies of the composition of the Bolshevik leadership prior to and during 1917, it is indisputable that had neither Lenin nor Trotsky been on the scene from April-May, 1917, especially Lenin, the October 1917 Russian Revolution could not possible have occurred. What was decisive in that was not only Lenin's (especially) personal qualifications of intellect and character, but his hegemonic position respecting a definite institution, the Bolshevik faction of the Russian Social-Democratic Labor movement, which had a certain potential hegemonic relationship to the masses of Russian workers and peasants under conjunctural circumstances. This relationship existed largely because of Lenin's almost single-handed shaping of the development of the Bolshevik faction, from

its nadir of 1911 (when Lenin had twenty active correspondents in all Russia!). The individual, providing he cultivates certain extraordinary potentials he may muster within himself, can play a decisive role in history, but only through shaping definite institutions which, in turn, systematically develop certain equally-definite potentially-hegemonic relationships to the broad masses.

What definite individuals must do is to discover the necessary qualifications of potentially-hegemonic institutions, qualifications to ultimately attain hegemony (under conjunctural circumstances) and to develop a world-outlook appropriate to their historic tasks.

The history of the Comintern is mainly determined, after the initial period of Civil War and Imperialist interventions, by social forces and developments objectively impelling the Bolshevik faction itself toward political and moral degeneration. It is perhaps not possible to indicate how well certain leading individual Bolsheviks, especially Lenin and Trotsky, might have been able to counter those influences, to minimize the degeneration had those individuals had qualifications which they manifestly lacked in fact. However, lacking ourselves the means of hindsight to answer such questions exactly, there is sufficient evidence, of factual and analytical varieties, to precisely identify the qualifications lacking in Lenin and Trotsky and to also indicate, on that basis, the correct policy which ought to have been followed to at least minimize the degeneration of the Comintern, if not the CPSU itself.

The purpose of such an undertaking is not to rewrite that history as it ought to have been. Rather, to account for the failure of the Comintern in terms of the included institutions whose malformation more or less inevitably produced wrong world-outlooks, wrong policies, wrong programs. Our concern for the qualifications of leading individuals is to identify the policy of individual revolutionary self-development and strategy of individual commitment through which to take a hand, even as an individual, in shaping the development of revolutionary institutions into effective forms.

The general form of the problem of the Comintern is this. It was dominated by a Russian party, the CPSU, which was undergoing a precipitous political and moral degeneration. The Comintern endured such misleadership partly because of lawful social forces of organizational-conservatism — of the sort already identified — but, more fundamentally, because the policies put forth by a politically-degenerated Comintern coincided with the actually anti-socialist, anti-Marxian world-outlook endemic to those mass Communist parties themselves. (A point stated in rather different but empirically-correct terms by CPUSA founding member, James P. Cannon.)(29)

In sorting-out the actual processes involved in the phenomena of Cominternism, we must separate official national member-parties of that organization into two

broadly-defined categories: mass parties and sects. That is, between mass parties with tens of thousands of members or more, organically representative of vanguard social layers of broad sections of the struggling class forces, and isolated small organizations, modeling their existence after the U.S. DeLeonist Socialist Labor Party. In the former case, the mass party, the reactionary currents are directly a reflection of ideological backwardness among the organization's mass-oriented activist fractions or cells, approximating the conditions of the mass-based old SPD. The sect, abstracted from meaningful organic relations to the mass struggle, satisfied with token semblances of mass working-class orientations, is characterized most emphatically by the organizational-conservative forces we have identified in connection with the Bebel faction.

In the first set of conditions, the mass Communist party, the political degeneration occurs as **parallel** to the degeneration of the CPSU and Comintern leadership. The role of the Comintern here must emphasize the failure of the Russians, after 1923, to infuse into foreign parties any positive alternative to centrism and reformism, the failure of the Russians to use their hegemonic position — in the fashion of Lenin — to shape the development of mass CP's into positive social forms and world-outlooks. In the latter type of national section, the sect, the organization functioned more or less exactly as a local import office for the latest political exports of the Kremlin hierarchy. In the case of the mass national sections of the Comintern, the charge, the "virus of Stalinism," is largely a metaphysical fantasy popularized by certain light-minded Trotskyists. In the second type of party, the sect, the "virus of Stalinism" charge correlates with the facts while concealing the social processes actually responsible for that correlation.

This is hardly an academic distinction. The Chinese Communist Party of the thirties, by taking power in China in the forties demonstrates the simplistic error of the mechanistic "virus of Stalinism" hypothesis. Not only was the leadership of the CPC, under Mao Tse Tung et al., a centrist tendency, but actually one of the most right-wing mass national sections of the Comintern during the internal disputes of the Popular Front period. Mao Tse Tung's lately-popular **On Contradiction**, circulated as a text on "dialectical materialism" by Western Maoists, is actually a right-centrist's polemic against critics of the Popular Front policy. The correlation between Mao's anti-Marxist and anti-Hegelian "dialectics" and his right-wing tendencies is pretty naked. In illustrating the pseudo-dialectical, more-exactly Confucian "principal" of "internal contradiction," Mao justifies his adaptation to Chiang Kai Chek's Kuomintang. Using a crude, literary version of the very "negation of the negation" which Marx denounced, Mao argues that Chiang Kai Chek was a revolutionary up to 1927 (which is an absolute lie!), when he was suddenly transformed into his opposite, a reactionary, and, then — here is the ultimate travesty on both dialectics and revolutionary politics — Chiang, under

the circumstances of Japanese invasion, became a "good guy" again, was transformed from a "reactionary" as suddenly as he had been transformed from a revolutionary into a reactionary before. Yet, despite this, the Chinese Communist Party took state power in the late forties.

Had Mao Tse Tung and the CPC leadership changed its character, from right-wing centrist to "revolutionary"? Not at all. It is by no means excluded that under the most exacerbated conjunctural circumstances that a centrist mass-based party can seize power, at least in a very backward country. No transformation of Mao from a right-centrist had occurred. Witness Mao Tse Tung's personal endorsement, as on the front pages of *Peking Review*, on the eve of the butchery of the Indonesian Communist Party, of the bankrupt Popular Front ("Nasakom") policy under which the CPI ranks were blindly led into that slaughter. As is Mao himself had not witnessed a previous outcome of exactly that same policy, in the Kuomintang slaughter of Chinese Communists as a result of the "Bloc of Four Classes" policy followed by the PCP in the 1924-27 period!

This judgment of Mao's continuing commitment to right-centrist methods of thinking is sustained by an unimpressionistic view of the recent "Cultural Revolution" episode. Behind all the left noises lately emanating from Peking, the recent episode is circumstantially and formally a Chinese centrist replication of the "Third Period" episode under Stalin. It has, like Stalin's first industrialization drive, a certain positive content framed within the over-larding of centrist ultra-left idiocies and extravagancies. Confronted, after the defeat of the CPI, with a reversal of the "falling dominoes" pattern, a perspective of prolonged isolation of the Chinese economy, the liquidationist tendencies inhering in the 1958-65 "Bukharinist" policies of slow industrialization became a major threat to the existence of the CPC. The organizational-conservative tendencies in the CPC like Stalin's center faction before this, reacted with a frenzy against this organizational threat, chopping-off left and right opponents with a bloody indifference, while leaning toward a caricature of left economic and social policies.

The centrist ideological content of the "Cultural Revolution" is in no wise better demonstrated than by the emphasis put upon the "Little Red Book" catechism and the daily devotional reading of the "four articles." The preoccupation with mindless sloganeering religious fervor for caricature-orthodoxy! A precise symptom of the organizational-conservative social forces rampant.

The Chinese variety of "leftism" in this episode can be instructively contrasted with the methods employed by Fidel Castro et al. Although the Cuban leadership has never outlined any meaningful proposals for the constitution of a viable socialist social formation, and tends toward metaphysical extrapolations from the

practical urgency of super-activist economic-social politics, the Castro leadership has nonetheless been conspicuously at great pains to approximate class-for-itself relations in other ways. It is in precisely that for which the bourgeois press has the greatest contempt, Castro's long-winded, painfully detailed addresses to mass audiences, and coherent measures that a socialist world-outlook is approximated among the Cuban masses. It is the elaboration of a programmatic understanding of the practical connections among circumstances, policies and results of policies-in-terms-of-circumstances that a class-for-itself programmatic outlook is at least approximated among the masses of Cuban young people, despite plain evidence of errors in certain aspects of this and other political policies. There is evidence of centrist tendencies in the Cuban leadership, inevitably most readily articulated and pandered to by the retreats from the old Stalinist party, but there remains a rather fundamental sociological contract between the Cuban and Chinese leaderships. There is a vast difference between masses mindlessly committed to hysterical recitation of Mao Tse Tung's "thought," mere cant, and the attempt to shape the consciousness of masses through raising their consciousness of the actual connections between practice and results in terms of the whole society.

Centrism manifested itself openly in Bolshevik ranks with the right-wing "Workers' Opposition." Tomsky, Kollontai, et al., spoke for the expression of philistine class-in-itself interests, in opposition to socialist, class-for-itself interests. Trotsky, in *My Life*, is relevant here, as cited above. The liquidation of the working class under the objective conditions of Civil War and imperialist interventions, the regression to "get mine" attitudes, evoked first psychological manifestations of philistinism and then open centrist-reformist political factions and tendencies.

The immediate, practical effects of that degeneration were this. The maintenance of an effective revolutionary strategy depends upon premises for defining that strategy which cohere only with the class-for-itself political world-outlook. The function of the Comintern, if the Russians were to fulfill their pre-empted position of leadership, was to define a class-for-itself road to the correlated seizure of political power among a variety of countries in which the general strategic conditions for revolution persisted. While the actual seizure of power in any country depended upon episodic tactical conjunctural circumstances, the hegemony of Communist vanguards, and the subjective qualifications of Communist leaderships, the moment for seizure of power in any particular national sector correlated with the general conjunctural situation in contiguous countries. In each sector a class-for-itself program was essential to produce actual class instinct among workers and to win over other wage-earning layers to the support of the Communists. More broadly, the general tasks of all sectors required programmatic, class-for-itself content for the general slogan of "A United Socialist States of

Europe." In order for the Bolsheviks to exert an influence of that sort, it was necessary that the Bolshevik leadership itself proceed from a class-for-itself world-outlook. If the Bolsheviks lacked such an outlook themselves, what possible positive role could the Comintern play under their domination?

This was not an hypothetical question. Lenin's **Left-Wing Communism**, his only coherent statement on the method of building a party for the seizure of power, was, at the worst, an excellent approximation of the necessary outlook and policy required. The formative policies adopted by the first four World Congresses of the Comintern evolved at least the rudiments of the correct class-for-itself policy for an advanced capitalist country, stated in a more mature form by Trotsky between 1929-33.

Unfortunately, Lenin recognized the urgency of this problem only during his last illness, when he instructed Trotsky to launch an immediate factional struggle to **destroy the Stalin faction**, with or without Lenin's active participation. Trotsky, it is now clear, proceeded according to the groundrules of organization dictated by the centrist tendency — disciplined subservience to the interests of organizational conservatism, and failed to grasp especially the urgency of breaking out an immediate open fight **within the Comintern**.

It is also unfortunate that this urgent aspect of the issue has been mainly overlooked even by such critics of Trotsky's 1923 course as Isaac Deutcher. The centrist CPSU, hopelessly ruined beyond possibility of internal factional struggle by Stalin's "draft" of hordes of Mensheviks and bureaucrats into that organization, without a real Russian working class as a political force actively on the scene, became an organization substituting itself for the working class in the maintenance of the special circumstances (nationalized property) and correlated social relations on which the continued existence of that party depended. In internal (domestic) and world policy, the CPSU under Stalinization became an intensification of everything previously peculiar to the Bebel faction of the SPD, under conditions in which the force of organizational-conservatism was multiplied many times beyond that experienced by the centrists of the SPD. Only socialist revolutions abroad could alter this; without the creation of a revolutionary leadership in the Comintern, free of the hegemony of the Stalinized CPSU, the phenomenon known as Stalinism was the inevitable condition of the world Communist movement for a protracted period.

### **Socialist Workers Party**

In taking up now the clinical case (in summary) of the Socialist Workers Party we do not wish to put the history of the part forty years out of proportion. We choose to offer a more detailed sketch of the SWP's decline (rather than the CP's) mainly because the SWP

is a far simpler clinical case in the effort to unravel the decay of the U.S. socialist movement after the mid-thirties. For every main development in the CPUSA during the period 1938-54, there was a corresponding development in the SWP, the latter offering the historian one important advantage. The absolute lack of any real political democracy in the CPUSA during this period prevented the open confrontation within the leadership and ranks of those conflicting social tendencies within the party created by shifting circumstances of the labor and other movements of the period.

For example, the emergence of Browderism in the CPUSA. The zigs and zags within the CPUSA from 1936 on are considerably complicated by a factional situation in the Comintern at that time, in which Browder, the French CP leadership and Mao Tse Tung took a right-wing position (on the "Popular Front" policy) and the left-wing was led principally by Tito and other Balkan leaders. This corresponded with distinctive, differing social-tendency conflicts within the CPUSA, but conflicts under wraps. The same indigenous social tendencies erupted in the most open fashion within the SWP after 1938, leading to the Schachtmanite split of the immediately ensuing period. Despite the differences between war-time Browderism and Schachtmanism, both represented, at bottom the same social tendencies in different disguises. Each reflected a turn away from the actually or imminently-political mass-strike outlook of the pre-1938 period toward parochialist trade-union opportunism. In this case, it is study of Schachtmanism that enables us to understand parallel but different tendencies in the SWP opponents of Schachtman and, from this combined vantage-point, to examine the less-overtly-fought-out but identical processes reflected in the much larger and left-hegemonic CPUSA.

Despite the clinical importance of the SWP in this way, we especially wish to caution the reader on one point. Not only was the SWP, at its most influential, merely an isolated periphery of the socialist movement of the thirties and early forties in this country, but today it is the heritage of the CP's former influence that represents the weightiest ideological factor in New Left and Old Left alike. The most active individuals and groupings in the left today are variously old CP'ers, children of CP'ers or youth acculturated in the traditions of the CP periphery. It is to the CP and its peripheries that most young radicals (even those with no family connections to the past left) relate in attempting to gauge their present activities and perspectives against an American-left past. Thus, despite the cited clinical advantages of the present attention to the SWP's degeneration, the immediately following pages mainly provide the general guidelines for a parallel analytical treatment of the CPUSA during the same period.

In relating what we have to say immediately ahead to such matters, the reader must bear in mind the scope of this present article: not to present a full analytical account of left-radical history, but to define and illus-

trate an essential conception in terms of material most appropriate to that specific task.

That said, the significance of the SWP case here is otherwise as follows.

First, of all the existing varieties of the "old left" organizations presently existing in the U.S., only the CPUSA and the SWP-YSA fulfill the qualifications of membership composition, technical competence of leadership, etc., to become a serious factor, a potential hegemonic factor, an obstacle to the building of a mass revolutionary vanguard movement in this country. The CPUSA itself is too easily written off in this respect by most left-radical observers today. Despite the shattering effects of McCarthyism, the Twentieth Congress, Hungary and Czechoslovakia, the CPUSA has the largest political capital of any left-radical organization on the scene at this stage. Furthermore, it has certain technical qualifications which will manifest themselves only as the masses of organized and unorganized working people in this country begin to move as a radicalized force. The CP is, in that sense, a "sleeper" at this instant. PLP, which only appears to vie with the CP and SWP-YSA for hegemonic position, is vastly inferior to either the CP or SWP-YSA. Milt Rosen et al. evidence their backgrounds as second-generation trade-union "colonists," who have certain of the technical qualifications of a second-string trade-union activist hack. By contrast, the leaders of the CP and SWP, however aging, have demonstrated in the past their ability to run circles around the most talented trade-union bureaucrats, while giving those bureaucrats enormous odds in material resources, etc. To some extent, these technical aptitudes have been transmitted from the surviving CP and SWP leaders of the thirties to a younger layer in their thirties, forties and fifties. They know how to organize an organizational steam-roller with a certain dispassionate ruthlessness and patience which all their "old left" competitors lack. Most, like YAWF or sundry "Trotskyist" sectlets, are simply ineffable curiosities without the qualifications to even contend in the preliminary struggles for hegemonic position. The CP and SWP leaderships know how to run a profitable political shop, in the tradition of August Bebel.\*

Second, the SWP came into being as the only serious contender in this country for the hegemonic position enjoyed by the CPUSA. On account of the SWP's formal critique of Stalinist degeneration, the parallel, centrist, decay of the SWP itself is an almost mandatory study for anyone applying the dialectical method — as we have defined the actual dialectical method above. Despite all the ideological inoculations which the SWP assimilated in order to distinguish itself from Stalinist centrism, it too succumbed.

In general, the self-styled revolutionary who has not confronted and accounted for the process by which mass-oriented, dedicated-revolutionary founders of the

CP and SWP lapsed into centrism, has not completed the elementary requirements for advancing himself as representative of anything significantly better.

During the middle thirties both the original Trotskyist faction (the Communist League) and its assimilated Musteite layers demonstrated the essential qualifications of mass, revolutionary leadership to the extent that their limited forces allowed in face of the repressions they faced at the hands of the hegemonic CP left-radical forces. The Twin Cities mass strikes under the leadership of Ray Dunne and Karl Skoglund — in which Farrell Dobbs played a part, the role of the Trotskyists in the mass struggles which founded the United Auto Workers, are only exemplary of their ability — despite a continued American primitivism in theoretical matters — to lead mass strikes, distill a layer of revolutionaries won to class instinct by such struggles. The failure of the SWP to exceed 3,000 members in even its immediate-post-war heyday is not essentially the fault of Trotskyism or of the qualifications of the cadres of the middle thirties. It simply lacked the resources to contend against the hegemonic position of the Communist Party among left-radicals. There were, as we shall immediately see, other "factors" involved in the levelling-off of the SWP's growth and development in the later thirties, but the hegemonic position of the CP is preeminent in the matter cited.

The political degeneration of the SWP is another matter.

For a variety of reasons, which represent a special subject of inquiry, the mass-strike dynamic of the thirties noticeably ebbed from 1938 on. The explosive spread of class instinct in the middle thirties attenuated and in many instances began to evaporate. The Popular Front policy of the Communist Party requires a special mention. The recession of 1938, which was the proper context for a shift from economic to more politicalized forms of struggle, was met by the treacherous "Roosevelt friend-of-labor" policy advanced by the hegemonic left-radical influence in the labor movement.

This shift had its reflection within the SWP itself. Organizational conservatism set in, a development better demonstrated than disproven by the energetic efforts of Cannon et al. to deny the problem in the following years. The SWP was at pains to maintain the purity of its "Trotskyist orthodoxy" under the pressure of considerable defections by intellectual peripheries and a growing de-politicalization of its worker-peripheries. This internal preoccupation with "orthodoxy" was accompanied in outside practice by a de-emphasis on political work, symptomized by the refusal of the editors of the *Northwest Organizer* to inject political content into that newspaper, despite Trotsky's repeated insistence. There was a growing adaptation to mere rank-and-file trade-union militancy (30) at the expense of political and other class-for-itself orientations in mass work.

\* This is obviously no longer the case. — Ed.



The immediate outcome of this internal shift within the SWP was the so-called Schachtmanite split.

The purely mythical official SWP version of that factional struggle is that Schachtman et al. represented a petit-bourgeois social tendency thrown into a frenzy of Stalinophobia by the Hitler-Stalin pact. There was some evidence for this charge, provided one is satisfied to entirely discard the Marxist method and mistake the mere ideology for the real substance of the matter.

The specious basis for Cannon's characterization of the Schachtmanites, "petit-bourgeois oppositionists," is a phenomenon which can be encountered in almost every split in socialist organizations, especially under the first impact of a general ebb in political consciousness. The factional struggles which occur among the two main tendencies in each such case occur simultaneously with the accumulation of a kaleidoscopic array of loose individuals and tiny cliques which, for one reason or another, "want out." These loose individuals and cliques usually find their way out by boarding the handiest sizeable factional formation which appears headed for a split. The unconscious sense of an impending split among such individuals is sometimes absolutely astonishing!

Simultaneously, because all such factional fights become a power-struggle in form, no faction engaged in such encounters has been, on the record, overly scrupulous in lining up votes from any loose individuals in the organization. Since such loose individuals are likely to be as noisily-articulate as any other member of the coalition, each side has ample opportunity to accuse the other — on the basis of selected statements submitted to discussion — of virtually any possible political tendency one might imagine. In fact, the demagogic aspect of the faction-fight dictates that the opposition be attacked most frequently on the basis of the statements made by the collateral individuals who do not actually represent the central position involved. "Such and such a person, who you accept as a member of your faction, said. . . Therefore, that must be the real position your more cautious leaders are trying to conceal from the debate." When it comes to power plays and associated demagoguery, no faction fight is set up along strictly-principled lines; both sides attempt to pack the vote with any allies who momentarily serve that purpose.

James Burnham is the outstanding representative of the uncritical power-bloc alliances made by the Schachtman bloc. A Burnham who promptly demonstrated his purpose in boarding the Schachtmanite conveyance — as the most efficient means of reaching the exit.

The real meaning of that faction-fight cannot be distilled from glosses on the "Russian Question," as Cannon mainly attempts to do, nor from Cannon's metaphysical exercises on the relationship to the "Russian Question" of the organization's "proletarian composition." (31) Real men, as distinct from the shadowy

fictions of the SWP's self-consoling historiography, do not react to issues involving matters abroad **as such**. Real men relate to matters in foreign places from the vantage-point of the issues of life where they live. To understand the Schachtman Fight split, which is the origin of the modern SWP, it is necessary to proceed from the SWP's daily practice in the American labor movement; this can be better understood by examining the activity of the separate factions in the labor movement following the split: what was the immediate social content, in terms of practice, of the "Russian Question"?

The key to this, in theoretical terms, is not Schachtman's position on the "Russian Question" itself, but the method — by the terms of a class-for-itself yardstick — by which he elaborated his position on the "Russian Question." This shift in analytical procedure provides the immediate practical answer. Schachtman's theoretical standpoint was the class-in-itself, a standpoint embodied in his conception of "democratic socialism." Schachtman's theoretical position is a class-in-itself conception of "socialism" which may range, in various applications, from worship of the "Yugoslav model" of local (versus centralized) economic control and planning to the more extreme anarcho-syndicalism of Raya Dunayevskaya's **News and Letters** cult.

The social basis for this theoretical outlook is the correlative of anti-centralism (anti-class-for-itself) in a political activist's approach to trade-union work. Where the Marxist attempts to subordinate the parochialist organization, world-outlook and demands of local trade-union and similar groups to the common-interest organizational alliances, outlooks and programmatic approaches of joint struggle action across narrow organizational lines, the Schachtmanite method conceived of political work as the federated expression of parochialist forms of rank-and-file organization, struggle and demands.

This is pure centrism. The Schachtmanite attempted to preserve "orthodoxy" by maintaining a political organization oriented to the working-class struggle while adapting that orthodoxy to class-in-itself reformist practice in the working-class struggle itself. He did this subtly at first, in order to conceal from himself the discrepancy between the movements of his mouth and hands.

The Stalinophobia of the Schachtman faction was the necessary correlative of this. Schachtmanism used the bogey of Stalinism as a convenient ad hominem cover for its rejection of "collectivism" — i.e. revolutionary-socialist class-for-itself social outlooks. This represented a general adaptation to the non-political, parochialist rank-and-file struggle.

However, the same criteria impel us to conclude that the Cannonite majority of the SWP was also deeply in-

fectured with Stalinophobia, as Trotsky's extended debate with the Cannonite leaders on the SWP's CP policy demonstrates beyond doubt. In that same debate, we see a correlation made between this Stalinophobia and the failure to include political content in the **Northwest Organizer**.

This same conclusion must be reached by examining SWP trade-union policy in the period of Roosevelt's "equality of sacrifice" period. The revolutionaries in the SWP responded to this Roosevelt ploy by moving that if employers' bureaucrats incomes should be set at a maximum level of \$25,000.00, workers should accept this same ceiling. The SWP leadership, led by Dobbs and Cochran, immediately launched a factional campaign against this left-danger in the SWP trade-union factions, also suppressing publication of documents on the trade-union question which Trotsky had insisted be published.

That is, the irony of the Cannon-Schachtman Fight is that both main factions involved were acting under the impulsion of the same anti-class-for-itself tendencies. However, in each case, the rate of movement was in slightly different directions and accelerating at slightly-different rates. The energy for this factional struggle would, however, seem unexplained in empirical terms unless we examine such subsequent factional struggles as the Cannon-Cochran split of 1953. Again, the differences separating the two factions were seemingly minute. Cannon thundered about "conjunctural perspectives," but not a single member of the majority leadership had a single, concrete fact to submit in rebuttal to the minority's position on this question. Here, in 1953, both factions were an amalgam, which began to respectively fissure, at different rates, immediately following the split. The only real issue for the Cannonite faction as a whole in 1953 was **the danger of liquidationism**. This fight, against the rather plain liquidationist implications of the Cochran-Clarke amalgam, took the form of Cannon's defense of "Trotskyist orthodoxy," but that defense never went beyond defense of the "divine inspiration" embodied in traditional literary sources. In 1939-40, the issue was also liquidationism, the liquidation of Trotskyism's established position as **institutionalized** Trotskyism to the dissident left-wing ranks and peripheries of the Comintern parties, a part of the "orthodox baggage" which Schachtman was more readily disposed to toss overboard for faster travelling.

After 1953, the "dog days" of prolonged isolation from virtually all possibility of "outside" political ferment, up to 1957, completed the process of turning the SWP into an ingrown centrist sect. A few adventurist, hair-brained efforts to multiply the membership by sheer might and main of will and "proletarian super-activism," and the SWP was transformed, from the standpoint of serious politics, into an inert old revolutionaries' society.

The SWP's character was given its present form by the developments of the 1957-61 period.

The Twentieth Congress and Hungary represented for Trotskyism, "the crack in the Stalinist monolith," the breakup of the Stalinist hegemony which had stood in the way of any significant Trotskyist influence in the left-radical movement generally. No one could now delude even himself to accept the Stalinist version of Trotskyism or the Moscow Trials. No one could seriously dispute the Trotskyist charges that Stalin had systematically betrayed revolutions in the twenties (China), the thirties, or in the immediate post-war period of Europe and Asia, had unsuccessfully attempted to prevent the Chinese Revolution. Excepting the fact that habituated attitudes do not succumb easily to such unimportant influences as the light of truth, the SWP was in a position to recruit whole layers of viable dissident groupings from the CP and to struggle for hegemonic position in the new left-radicalism which emerged in the course of the 1957-58 recession: **provided that the SWP had the actual revolutionary qualifications for this work.**

The SWP did approach the CP layers; it recruited the entire left-wing of the Schachtmanite youth and did proceed to build the rudiments of a new youth movement, the YSA. Even so, it was unable to offer anyone more than a literary-eschatological perspective for socialism in the U.S. "If we do the right things, day by day, recite the correct orthodox formulations, maintain strict party organizational discipline, we shall make the revolution bye-and-bye." Hardly new recipes for old CP'ers. The SWP offered them nothing better than a somewhat more intellectual climate, freer discussion atmosphere, and slightly less sense of pariahdom than they had enjoyed in the old CP — in an infinitely smaller organization, further removed from the possibility of power than the old CP itself.

These ventures, pressed initially by Cannon and certain layers within the CP, produced small gains, with effect of embittering the suppressed social-grouping differences within the SWP. The collapse of the Independent Socialist Party tactic ("Regroupment") and the ebb of the Cuban upsurge among youth ("Fair Play for Cuba"), raised the old fears of liquidationism: "these endless outside tactical maneuvers!" "It is necessary to stop all this freewheeling organizing and get down to essentials, such as selling the newspaper, tightening up the organizational discipline, and tossing out the 'unassimilable types' and 'bad apples' who tend to rock the well-ordered party-ship."

So, beginning with the 1961 SWP convention, a general purge, completed in 1965, was launched and conducted under the old centrist war-cry, "The party is everything!"

What happened is this. The SWP, largely due to the efforts of the very layers who have been systematically

purged since 1961, had made a shift from the sectarian habits of the "dog days" of isolation, 1954-57, into a new outward orientation. After the "wild men" had established the new, institutionalized forms and habits for an outward orientation to "new radicalism," the centrist "proletarian kernel" had leaped in rage from the background, with Cannon's support, against the "liquidationist" danger, cleaned out the "wild men," put the new institutions and habits of outside work on an "orderly basis" of the type otherwise agreeable to trade-union bureaucrats. In sum, between 1957 and 1961, the SWP had undergone an extensive reorganization in institutional forms, through which it adapted itself from previous isolation to the new conditions of youth and minority radicalization: a sweeping re-organization in structured practice from top to bottom, **without changing the fundamentally centrist character of the institution.**

The centrism of the SWP today takes the following essential forms. Two kinds of literary activity, which we shall immediately analyze, an energetic devotion to "party-building" routine, including the habit of election campaigns **by the SWP itself**, an outward "mass practice" which is substantially indistinguishable from rampant opportunist reformism except in one feature — a violently sectarian hostility toward competition from other revolutionary and centrist groupings in that same milieu. It is mainly through the sale and lip-service to traditional "Trotskyist" writings that the organization maintains the essential religious side of its centrist character. It is also compelled to save the appearance by the activity of writing new publications which seem to adhere to a strict literary interpretation of "orthodox traditions" while providing a rationalization for the "orthodoxy" of opportunist-sectarian outside "mass" practices.

This does not mean that the SWP does everything wrong. On particular questions, its practice coincides in a **limited** way with the policies appropriate to actual revolutionaries. The electoral campaigns are an apt clinical case. It is an urgently correct act to mount electoral struggles in behalf of the forms of mass-oriented political struggle coming into being. Omitted are such essential steps of serious revolutionary electoral campaigns as seeking to mount a joint campaign with other organizations, provided the program meets certain essential requirements. What is omitted is the consistent approach to particular tasks from a general revolutionary programmatic outlook.

### **Centrist Behavior Today**

In the SWP, CP, PLP, as in most SDS chapters today, virtually no one votes for or against a position on "rational grounds." Majorities vote on **organizational** grounds. They vote against and denounce propositions submitted by organizations and factions toward which their organization is hostile, and would often vote for

the same proposition if it were submitted in the very same words by a leader of their own organization or faction.

Close up, and in merely descriptive terms, one might report that most individuals in these organizations do not favor or oppose propositions on their rational merits, but according to the way in which a vote on the matter serves their individual egos. In the narrow way of stating the matter, a vote is an irrational moral act, an act by which their identity as a member of that particular group is enhanced — in their estimation.

One could speciously argue for a mechanistic interpretation of this phenomenon. In selected instances, one could show that ostracism or other objective pressures are present to induce conformity. That is, one could deny the **positive** force of identity-seeking in play and attempt to account for behavior according to some mechanistic conception of countervailing outside factors. In fact, for theoretical reasons already specified, it is the positive impulsion to gain "moral status" within the "peer group" that is actually operative. The mediating role of the membership organization is the principal immediate locus of their judgments.

The spectrum of vacillating positions of the CP, SWP and PLP on the "black nationalist struggles" is exemplary of the fashion in which such capitalist ideological norms regulate the development of political "positions" and group practice among these centrist groupings.

The centrist is presently confronted with the following situation. As a result of two interpenetrating developments, there is presently an approximately parallel emergence of militancy and radicalism among youth of all classes and among mature layers of organized labor and oppressed minorities. That is, the material decay of advanced capitalist society generally coupled with a spreading loss of confidence in the moral authority of the established public and private institutions of capitalist society. (To limit ourselves for the moment to phenomena in the advanced capitalist sector.)

Radicalism does not mean socialism in any sense. Radicalism is, at root, simply a loss of confidence in the moral hegemony of established institutions, which impels various constituencies of the ruled to treat those institutions with increasing contempt, to demand that those institutions adopt immediately certain alterations as dictated by that constituency. This is not socialist, by definition. Since the dominant conception of social relations among the ruled is that of individual and local-constituency self-interest, the radicalization of these individuals and local constituencies inevitably produces militant, even radical demands which, in effect, engender the sharpest conflicts over matters of harrow self-interest among various layers of the ruled. Spontaneous radicalism impels the ruled into an "every-man-for-himself," "every-group-for-itself" swinishness which is the direct opposite of the socialist world-outlook and program.

Actual revolutionary socialists intervene in such ferment to offer the potentially or actually contending parochialist groups a practicable, socialist programmatic solution, a common-interest program.

For example, black un- and mis-employment, which has lately engendered explosions in Pittsburgh and elsewhere, already a long-standing endemic conflict of the sixties concerning the construction trades.

It seems very moral to take the simplistic position that whites ought to give up some of their jobs in construction to make way for more black employment in this field. Such a contention is easily supported by a demonstration that the craft-union bureaucracies in this field have pursued racist policies openly or in effect since at least the beginning of the century. What happens when this **very moral** approach is taken is that both black militants and certain layers of white organized workers begin seeking alliances with various sections of the ruling class against the other part of their own class.

Does this mean that under no circumstances should the actually or implicitly racist job-trust practices of certain unions be left intact? Hardly. It means that black and white rank-and-file working people should have a joint program of struggle through which the actual needs of both are met: a program, in this case, of full and guaranteed expanded employment in construction on the basis of the ruling financiers and their pork-barrel cronies to ante up the funds necessary to meet this demand. The revolutionary socialist approaches every issue in the same principled fashion, to express the immediate interests of each section of the class and its allies in the form of its common class-interest. Not just a "gimmick" for winning over large numbers of white construction trades people to support of black job demands, but to define the black man's problem in such terms that white construction trades people can see that they are actually suffering from the same, basic underlying problem — of underproduction of urgently-needed housing, schools, etc., and that more militant black members in their organizations are an invaluable ally in an urgent struggle against the business-unionist bureaucrats running these craft unions.

Such a socialist approach not only does not appeal to the CP, SWP; they denounce such approaches.

The CP, SWP instead approach the struggle in this way. They analyze the situation in terms of the relationship of their political organization to the parochialist black militant organizations. It is a reasonable description of this process to say that the CP and SWP are oriented politically toward the short-term organizational gate-receipts, just as August Bebel allied with the German trade-union bureaucrats against the revolutionaries in his own party. But that is merely an accurate description. The individual centrist in the CP or SWP — is this his behavior actually?

Not quite. The individual member sees the "party" as the mediation of his political identity and thinks, therefore, in terms of relationships between his organization-in-itself and other social-formations-in-themselves, thus arriving through this expression of capitalist ideology (couched in revolutionary-socialist phrases) at (not-accidentally) an approach to the black struggle which is precisely in the strategic interests of the capitalist class!

What he does not do is to proceed from a "negation" of existing institutions, his "Party" included, to the vantage-point of the institution to be brought into being, the approximation of the class-for-itself. Program for him is therefore a list of agitational or propagandistic **demands**, in opposition to the actually revolutionary-socialist view, which conceives of program as a proposed qualitative realignment of appropriation and allocation of social surplus on the scale of society as a whole.

What an actual revolutionary-socialist does, and what the centrist does not do, is this. The revolutionary socialist begins from a program of socialist reindustrialization and applies this starting-point to each concrete struggle situation. For example, in Harlem in New York, we urgently need meaningful productive employment, housing, educational facilities, etc. So, the socialist approach to the black struggle in New York centers upon the programmatic appropriation of specific financier funds now being socially-misused to provide employment in the production of precisely those needed facilities. Such programs, bringing diverse sections of the potential class-for-itself forces together in the manifest common interest such a program represents, are simultaneously advancing consciousness toward an understanding of socialist reindustrialization and creating the imminent or actual alliances out of which the furtherance of class-for-itself associations of diverse layers of the ruled emerges.

A variation on the centrism of the CP and SWP is provided by PLP, which its vacillation on the "black nationalism" question. Although there are rumblings within the CP and SWP from working-class-oriented layers, whose organizations have not yet outwardly reflected the devastating contradictions inhering in the effort to simultaneously tail after both black militant and militant trade-union rank-and-file ferment in a period when these working-class forces are being set against one another by ignorant leaders and government agents. In PLP, a smaller, more volatile more precariously-situated organization, this deadly contradiction has been reflected in a series of shifts and adjustments in line on the black struggle.

Variouly naive and lying critics of PLP have charged that organization with "racism" on this account. PLP is a wretchedly centrist organization; it is not called racist by any sane or responsible person. Is PL turning against black interests, the black struggle? Hardly.

Recently, in Harlem, a group of black militants was evicted from a central Harlem building-site by police, with considerable support for the police action manifest from an assortment of black leaders and ordinary black citizens. The evicted protesters were demanding that a high school and housing be built on the site. Black leaders supporting Governor Rockefeller urged "full steam ahead" on construction of the (unneeded) planned State Office Building on the site. The argument of the latter group was that this course would provide black construction jobs — as if black construction workers could not equally-well build a much-needed central high school and housing on the same site. There is, as this and many more such divisions (along class-interest-issue lines) within the "black community" will show, no actual black interest as such in the U.S.A., no possible homogeneous "black people's political line." One black group demands a program that is actually contrary to the interests of the oppressed; another demands something actually in the interests of the oppressed. And those supporting the very worst demands are inevitably the best-financed, with the best press-coverage.

In summary, we can describe the manifestations of centrism today in the following principal terms:

A preoccupation with the "labor metaphysic," "peasant metaphysic," "black metaphysic" or "Third World metaphysic." That the spontaneous, parochialist militant narrow-interest group formations coming into existence today represent in themselves a primitive manifestation of revolutionary socialism. That the political "vanguard organization" which wishes to become an effective factor must purify itself by bringing its propaganda, rationalizations, and daily jargon into conformity with the idiosyncrasies of such parochial militant groupings. "Talk and think like a worker," "One must bow to the voice of the black man," etc.

A rejection of theory **in practice**. That is generally reflected in a refusal to guide one's practice according to an analysis of the social and political interconnections pertaining to a socialist appropriation, in terms of a specific programs of socialist economic reconstruction, of the actually-existing sited and potential productive forces of capitalist society. The intellectual correlative of the class-for-itself outlook is the mental habit of looking at every program from the standpoint of what the class-for-itself can properly do to solve individual and group problems in the manner agreeable to the interests of the working class and its potential allies as a whole.

Correlated with this, an orientation of propaganda, so-called "theory" and active organizational practice toward narrow-group interest rather than attempting to fight against reactionary tendencies among **militant** trade-unionist, black militant, etc. layers. The centrist subordinates the question of united front alliances to parochialist interests, where the revolutionary subor-

ordinates the parochialist issues to the common interests of the working class and its potential allies.

Or, a more comprehensive definition: the revolutionary proceeds in practice according to Karl Marx's analysis of the determination of consciousness, and seeks to introduce those new forms of social relations among the fragmented class and its allies which are the precondition for socialist consciousness. The centrist proceeds as if local-issue militancy, at the local point of production or point of black oppression as such, is the basis for establishing "socialist consciousness" **prior to** any ventures in the direction of class-for-itself alliances.

This problem dictates the unique way in which a revolutionary-socialist vanguard organization can be evolved.

One must start with the recruitment and education of a revolutionary intelligentsia. By necessity rather than choice, the source for such cadres is mainly a minority of the young intellectuals, such a student radicals, rather than the working class, black militant layers, etc., themselves. Why? Because there is nothing in the day-to-day circumstances of life of the working-class and oppressed which can lead them spontaneously to an intellectual grasp of the nature of their problems. It is only the intellectual inclined to comprehend the capitalist economic and related processes on a world scale, that can produce the rudiments of a socialist analysis and program. The selection from the ranks of (mainly) radical-student intellectuals (as distinct from merely "educated" radical students in general) is necessary on the basis of those persons who are willing to commit themselves to a total re-education and life of the most intensive study as well as activism.

The revolutionary intelligentsia becomes the forerunner of a revolutionary-socialist party by intervening in the pre-conjunctural and conjunctural social structures of working people and oppressed minorities. This intervention involves not only active propaganda and education, but the effort to organize fragmented forces into large common-interest, common-struggle social formations behind a program of common material interest — in a period in which pure-and-simple trade unionism is failing to meet the urgent issues, and in which all-black-militancy leads black militants chiefly (after bloody adventures in riots) into the arms and control of the Foundations and Office of Economic Opportunity.

It is as leading layers of working people thus begin to be weaned away from ineffective parochialist programs and tactics, to common interest programs and mass-struggle orientation, that a significant if small portion of these class forces come to simultaneously develop class-instinct and to assimilate the socialist program as their own. It is that process of winning over leading layers of working-class and black militants to a class-for-itself program, method and outlook that constitutes the beginning of a real revolutionary-socialist organization today.

## Footnotes

1. James Weinstein, *The Decline of Socialism in America 1912-25*, New York, 1967.
2. Andre Gorz, *Strategy for Labor*, Boston, 1968, which provided the starting-point for a reified application of Gorz's views by the self-styled "Praxis" group and others within and peripheral to SDS.
3. The factional struggles loosed by the break of the Rudd-led "action-faction" away from the left-wing leadership bloc of April through mid-May, which laid the basis for a future proto-fascist (Weatherman) grouping in alliance with the Praxis-axis, *News & Letters*, and certain shards of the old PL-sponsored (and PL-disbanded) May Second Movement.
4. The Soviet precedent for the Chinese cultural revolution occurred in the late twenties, when, in the face of precisely the "scissors" crisis against which the Left Opposition had warned since 1923, the Stalin group abruptly broke with "socialism at a snail's pace" and the right-wing (Bukharin et al.) to adopt all-out industrialization in the U.S.S.R., collectivization, and a super-revolutionary posture in world perspectives. This was, the Stalinist leadership declared, an immediate revolutionary situation. The communists must immediately prepare to seize power everywhere; all other left factions are opponents of the CP's and therefore allies of the fascists. That, in its most conspicuous features, was the "Third Period" of "red unions" and many other insanities which today's CP historians would prefer to forget.
5. Cf. L. Marcus and Carol LaRouche, "The New Left, Local Control, and Fascism," *Campaigner*, Sept. 1968 (reprinted in this issue]. Also, National Caucus of SDS Labor Committees, *Convention Report*, July, 1969.
6. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, Moscow 1966, "An Essential Condition of the Bolsheviki's Success," pp. 23-26.
7. Cf. Carl E. Schorske, *German Social Democracy 1905-1917*, for the best available factually-grounded summary of the history of that party; also Nettle's *Rosa Luxemburg*.
8. *Marx-Engels Selected Works*, Moscow, 1962, Vol. II, pp. 486-501.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 489.
10. Moscow, 1964, pp. 29-95.
11. Cf. Jones, *Freud*, on the "project" and "psycho-physical parallelism."
12. *Essence of Christianity, Theses...*, and *Principles of a Philosophy of the Future*.
13. *The German Ideology*, edition cited, p. 645.
14. Cf. "Goedel's Paradox": the impossibility of constructing so-called "mathematical proof" as positive knowledge.
15. Cf. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, First Edition, "Preface." Compare with the preface to the Second Edition.
16. Karl Marx, *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts*, Moscow, pp. 142-171.
17. Metastability = Feuerbach's "self-subsisting positive."
18. *The German Ideology*; Marx and Engels on Malthus.
19. Cf. L. Marcus, *The Third Stage of Imperialism*, New York, 1967, pp. 12-18.
20. *My Life*, New York, 1930, pp. 498-506.
21. *Ibid.*
22. Wilhelm Liebknecht, *Crisis of Social-Democracy*, 1899.
23. "Renegade Kautsky."
24. Alluding to E.V. Debs.
25. Cf. Schorske, *op. cit.*; also Nettle, *op. cit.*
26. Cf. Nettle, *op. cit.*, Lenin-Luxemburg disputes.
27. *Ibid.*
28. Especially, *Germany — What Next?*, trans. by Joseph Vanzler, New York, 1932.
29. *First Ten Years of American Communism*, New York, 1932.
30. "Left"-trade-union politics.
31. *The Struggle for a Proletarian Party*, New York, 1943.

## Rip CIA Cover in Newark Council; Cops Battle LC



Moments before the fighting broke out in Newark's City Hall, Labor Party candidate for Mayor of New York, Tony Chaitkin browbeats cops that surround him as he demands the release of Newark Labor Party candidate Dennis Speed.

NEWARK, Sept. 5 — The Central Intelligence Agency flipped its wig today over the Labor Party's exposure and imminent destruction of Operation Newark agents Imamu Baraka and Anthony Imperiale.

Fifty clubswinging members of the city's elite tactical squad were called in to prevent U.S. Labor Party candidates Jim Rotonda and Dennis Speed from presenting evidence in a public City Council meeting that the Newark city government has been illegally taken over by the CIA.

The clubswinging cops arrested four U.S. Labor Party candidates — Rotonda, Speed, Tony Chaitkin, Labor Party candidate for mayor of New York City, and Larry Sherman, Labor Party candidate for Boston school committee — and six other NCLC members, as they cleared the council chambers. Seven NCLC and Revolutionary Youth Movement members were hospitalized with injuries caused by police clubs, blackjacks, kicks in the stomach, and pushes down the marble stairs. 5 police were injured with broken bones, bloody heads and bruises.

In taking such desperate and bloody action, Newark's CIA overlords merely proved what they had once hoped to suppress: that it is the CIA, acting through such operatives as LeRoi Jones (Imamu Baraka) and Anthony Imperiale, which is the real master of Newark, not the puppet regime of Kenneth Gibson and the Newark City Council.

The CIA's decision to rely on the cops has been made after it became clear that Baraka's own fascist political apparatus is powerless to prevent the Labor Party's mass organizing campaign.

The Labor Party is now preparing for an injunction against the CIA and its operatives such as Baraka, charging that they are conspiring to prevent the Labor Party from conducting its electoral campaigns in nine cities.

### Rallies and Marches

The events in the City Council chambers were the culmination of a day's mass organizing activities by NCLC, National Unemployed and Welfare Rights Organization, and Revolutionary Youth Movement

(Continued on Page 7)

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# THE CAMPAIGNER

Publication of the SDS Labor Committee  
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## The New Left, Local Control, and Fascism

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SEPTEMBER

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# The New Left, Local Control, and Fascism

by L. Marcus  
and Carol LaRouche

Originally published in *The Campaigner*, Vol. 1, No. 4, 1968.



Socialism is "harsh, bitter, composed of contrasts and violences; a war, and in a war, woe to the pitying. Only at this price can it be realized and not become a land of delight to politicians and the weak. It is not a business affair, not a game of politics, not a game of romantics, and much less is it a sport; it is an effort of moral and material elevation, individual and collective.

— Benito Mussolini, 1910

Our program is simple; we wish to govern Italy. They ask us for programmes, but there are already too many. It is not programmes that are wanting for the salvation of Italy, but men and will power.

— Benito Mussolini, 1922

It is an irony of history that certain New Lefters today would be quite at home with Mussolini's radical polemics. This is not to suggest that these New Lefters are fascists, but to emphasize that fascism at its inception always appears as a movement which poses a revolutionary challenge to capitalism. Only in this way can it win popular support.

In this period it is customary to equate the state apparatus of oppression with fascism, to call Lyndon Johnson a fascist. But this is dangerous oversimplification. Both Mussolini and Hitler had mass popular appeal. It was their ability to mobilize mass support that made these fascist leaders the chosen tool of the capitalist class.

Fascism in Italy originated as a syndicalist tendency in the socialist party. It was co-opted by the Italian ruling class and used as an instrument to suppress the working class. It was not invented by capitalists and imposed by violence from the top down.

German Nazism too emerged from a middle-class "socialist" movement, though it was anti-Communist from the first.

This is not to deny that Mussolini and Hitler came to power only because they were chosen by an increasingly large stratum of the ruling class. As they proved their demagogic ability money rolled in, cooperation was extended (though reluctantly) by the local police, army, and courts. And finally government power was handed to them through legal means by bourgeois politicians.

Nor is it to deny the sophistication of such current bourgeois agencies as the CIA, which are quite capable of promoting local insurgency groups, seeded with agents from the start. Just as the German militarist ruling class of the twenties and thirties watched the Italian experiment, political forces of the right within the ruling class today have had the lessons of longer and more explicit history to guide them. And they control greater productive and suppressive forces.

However, as we shall show, in order to popularize their movement, the ultra-right must depend upon left demagoguery. Therefore, it is from certain left tendencies that the fascist movement borrows its rhetoric. Broadly speaking, these may be categorized as anarcho-syndi-

calist tendencies. That is, those movements which see in demands for "local control" the focal point for political struggle against capitalism.

Every attempt of the Left proper to compromise with syndicalist tendencies leaves the socialist movement intellectually impotent. To guard against this, it is necessary to expose the actual content of previous fascist movements for a younger generation which yet remains vastly uninformed of the direct causal relationship between certain anti-Marxist syndicalist left tendencies and the ultimate horror of the concentration camps. We must look to historical precedent in order to reveal the dangers inherent in certain New Left radical rhetoric today.

### A Few Leading Facts About Mussolini

Mussolini began his political life as a left-wing member of the Italian Socialist Party. At that stage of its history the Party included a self-styled "Marxist" parliamentary tendency and an anarcho-syndicalist "left wing." The leading group within the latter tendency were the followers of Sorel: the social base within the Socialist Party for Mussolini's developing action.

Mussolini first attained prominence through his attacks against parliamentary reformism. He fought for the idea that the revolution would be decided in the streets. The left wing gained sufficient strength within the Party that Mussolini was made editor of the party newspaper.

Unlike most other social democratic parties of that period, the Italian Socialist Party remained officially neutral in World War I. Mussolini, however, representing a section within the syndicalist tendency, supported Italian intervention in the First World War and was expelled from the party. Rejecting Marxism (and therefore the German Social Democracy) as the death of ultimate proletarian emergence, as over-organization and rigid sociological principle, he defended his position as the defense of the French revolutionary tradition against Prussian reaction. "Whoever thinks too much of his own skin not to go out and fight in the trenches will certainly not be found in the streets on the day of battle....We must act, move, fight, and if necessary die. Neutrals have never dominated events. They have always been overwhelmed by them. It is blood which gives movement to the resounding wheel of history."

He left the party affirming his commitment to socialism. "Twelve years of my party life are, or ought to be, a sufficient guarantee of my faith in socialism. Socialism is something which takes root in the heart....You must not think that the middle classes are enthusiastic about our intervention. They snarl and accuse us of temerity and fear that the proletariat, once armed with bayonets, will use them for their own ends. Do not think

that by taking away my membership card you will be taking away my faith in the cause, or that you will prevent my still working for socialism and revolution.

He started his own paper and his grouping because one of the many "Fasci di azione rivoluzionaria," or Groups for Revolutionary Action, which sprang up around the country to agitate for entry into the war.

His paper sought to be the voice of the returning soldier: "Put yourself in the position of a soldier who has been in the trenches for two years. first, think of all that it means to have been in the trenches, the real trenches...We cannot have a difference of treatment and system for those who fight and those who stay at home. Two kinds of liberty, two disciplines, cannot exist, nor two ways of living and dying." — 1917

"The battalions of those who return will have the cadenced and earnest step of those who have lived and suffered much and have seen innumerable others suffer and die. They will say, and we will say, 'Here in the furrow which leads to the harvest, here in the workshop which fashions the instruments of peace, here in the resounding city, here in the silent country, now that the work is accomplished and our end achieved, we will plant the signs of our new rights....We the survivors, we who have returned, demand the right of governing Italy!...' — 1918.

His program was for revolutionary **national** syndicalism. "It is necessary that victory should also realize the domestic aims of the war: the redemption of labor. From now onwards the Italian people must be arbiters of their destinies, and labor must be redeemed from speculation and misery."

He conducted a violent polemic against the Socialist Party, condemning its adherence to the Third International, and attacking both from the classical syndicalist standpoint as being "autocratic" in structure and having "elitist presumptions." He called the Bolshevik revolution a failure.

While the Socialist Party now saw justification, in Italy's postwar chaos, for its neutralist position, Mussolini on the other hand demanded the realization of Italy's war aims. His 1919 program called for "the institution of a national militia...foreign national policy intended to give worth in the world to the Italian nation in the pacific competition of civilization." Thus while his appeal was directed to the Italian workers, he appealed to them not on a class basis, but rather as workers who were also soldiers, and who had a vested interest in Italy's bourgeois national aims. It is worthwhile to note that in 1921 the composition of 152,000 out of an alleged membership of 310,000 was given as follows: 23,418 industrial workers, 36,847 agricultural

workers, 1,680 teachers, 7,209 soldiers and civil servants, 1,506 merchant marines.

The setting for the rise of Italian fascism was the severe economic crisis in that country immediately following the war. During this period the official rhetoric of the Socialist Party called for revolution on the Russian model. However the leadership of the party was still in the hands of the prewar parliamentarians to a large extent, and it was with horrified surprise that they saw the Italian workers heed their call for revolution. On August 20, 1920, the Italian workers, taking the words of their Socialist leaders seriously, occupied factories throughout Italy.

While the right-wing Socialist leaders sought to negotiate their way out of the revolution by making deals with bourgeois politicians, the left wing offered no alternative to the working class. Imbued with anti-political biases from their syndicalist past, the left-wing leaders and their worker followers did not establish political organs of dual power such as the Russian Soviets. While they controlled the factories at the point of production they made no effort to seize the government. Prompted by the ideology of syndicalism, these workers exhausted their efforts and revolutionary energies in attempts to establish effective forms of "local control" at the point of production, seeking unsuccessfully to coerce management into allowing workers to run their factories for them.

Under these conditions the reformist leadership — reminding us, perhaps, of the modern French Communist Party leadership — bargained away the temporary gains of the workers for a promise of a workers' voice in the management of local plants. (Even this tame concession was eventually repudiated by the Italian Parliament.)

While the left wing split from the Socialist Party to form the Italian Communist Party, they never gave effective leadership to the Italian working class, which remained fragmented in local shop committees. The betrayal of their revolution demoralized and disoriented the Italian workers so that they failed to mount effective resistance to Mussolini's fascist movement.

The Italian fascist movement was a direct outgrowth of a section of Italian syndicalism. Nazism based itself in part on the Italian model. The question is thus posed: is fascism an accidental outgrowth of classical syndicalism or a necessary one? This question impels us to review the organic development involved, to explore the romantic worship of violence in the Bakuninist and Sorelian versions; the fascist cult of the hero; and most importantly, the internal consistency of the historic development from syndicalism, with its localism, to autocratic centralist fascism.

In the nineteenth century syndicalism began as the concept of organization for local control around the

workbench. Workers should take over **their** factory from **their** capitalist. Exploitation was defined solely as a relationship between an employer and his employees. What was projected was in fact a series of cooperatively owned enterprises which, should they have come to power, would have maintained capitalist forms of distribution, credit, etc.

Despising parliamentary reformism, syndicalists turned their back on revolutionary **political** action as well. Yet despite its antagonism to all forms of centralized democratic control, syndicalist theory had to consider the struggle for, and exercise of, power. It was compelled to advance the strategic conception of a general strike. Since the power arrayed against the local workers' councils was the repressive power of the state, it was plain enough that some means of defeating the state apparatus was a precondition for any successful assumption of power. But because of the syndicalists' bias in favor of decentralization, because of their rejection of political action, the general strike was seen statically as a one-shot affair. Workers would join together at an appointed time, call a general strike which would bring the capitalist class to its knees, and then, having won power, proceed to organize around their local constituencies.

By rejecting the notion of a revolutionary movement built upon the principle of mass strike, that is, a revolutionary movement based not upon local issues but upon demands which link ever-larger sections of the masses in joint struggle, the syndicalist notion of the general strike remained an abstraction. The chimerical character of this apolitical conception of the general strike could not fail to demonstrate itself in a number of ways. Thus, except among the more backward regions of Europe, the old syndicalism virtually died out around the turn of the century.

In order to preserve its own existence, to preserve the surface appearance of rationality, syndicalist theory had to be radically changed. Such a necessary change in ideology was accomplished by Sorel, the spiritual leader of those Italian syndicalists who produced the fascist movement. "Purgative violence," so recently repopularized by the writings of Frantz Fanon, played a central role in the revised syndicalist theory.

The corollary contradiction of syndicalism is the obvious flaw of every notion of "local control." Not only can no local grouping by itself hope to win power against the bourgeois state, but the organization of local control groupings by its parochialism tends to set the atomized fragments of the population, including atomized local groupings of workers, against one another as contending interests. Thus white workers organize against blacks, workers with seniority organize to protect their jobs against the unemployed, workers everywhere accept the principle that their wage gains should be recovered as a tax on consumers, teachers

fight parents, and so on. For a syndicalist movement to consider taking power, it must project some unifying principle. If any form of syndicalist movement is to come to power, it must — despite its ideology against centralized authority — find a solution to its inhering contradictions in the form of a dictatorial arbiter of the issues which pit one local grouping against the other. Thus the elevation of Mussolini in the fascist party or the Fuehrer principle of Nazism. The very impotence of local workers' groupings as a form of working-class power means that syndicalism could never be a serious force, a potential form of government, unless it developed into a fascist movement.

### **The Class-for-Itself**

It is the connection between syndicalism and fascism which we have to examine, relying mainly on Marx's contrast of the **class-for-itself** and the **class-in-itself** forms of social organization.

It ought to be evident, in a time when interconnections of all production (and all individual material existence, therefore) have become worldwide, that there is no social form capable of affording individuals actual control over their own lives except a unified, centralized worldwide organization of the producers. Or, as an approximation and portent of that ultimate form of true humanity, mass-reproductive organizations which simultaneously exercise direct, centralized control over all production and distribution on at least a national scale. Such approximations must, of course, also provide the individual with democratic direct participation, not only in the adoption, but in the very process of formulating national production-distribution policies.

At the other extreme, we have capitalist social forms. The typical form of working-class life under capitalism, for example, is the trade union or an equivalently parochial association. In these forms the individual member comes to see control over his own life in the most alienated terms. That is, the individual trade unionist, e.g., falsely sees his employer's income as the product of the labor of workers in that particular shop. He regards his struggle with his employer as an essentially private affair over distribution of local income and over simple exploitation falsely represented, at the local point of production. He desires only a bigger share of local income for the workers in that particular place of employment.

This, as we ought to know, is the basis for white racism among today's trade-union militants. The problems of life of the unemployed and superexploited can only be solved by the extension of productive employment in the economy, which is not possible except by expropriating massive portions of employers' present after-tax income. This remedy is in direct conflict with the syndicalist ideology of the local workers' organiza-

tion, in which local capitalist income is regarded as the private resource of local organized workers' groupings. Thus, the goal of the syndicalist ideology, political control over the local point of production by local groups of workers, is an extension of the normal capitalist form of working-class organization, a form which inevitably leads to white racism among workers as long as black and Spanish-speaking people are the visible cutting edge of the unemployed and superexploited.

Where pure and simple trade unionism does not seek to replace the existing capitalist class, syndicalism proposes to do so by substituting local cooperative bodies of workers for their former capitalists. Because distribution and realization are still controlled by the market, and the surplus privately appropriated by these cooperative bodies, the economy remains capitalist and the old inequities gradually assert themselves. (Yugoslavia, for example.)

### **Syndicalism to Fascism**

For syndicalism to become fascism, it must first develop a new constituency and a corresponding "new class theory." It is financed by the capitalist class as a tool against the working class. At the same time, it is only useful to its masters so long as it can gain a mass following. Thus both in Italy and more particularly in Germany fascism's major constituency was not the traditional working class.

Returning veterans dissatisfied with the conditions of civilian life, accustomed to the camaraderie and drama of army life, became ready recruits. While many of these ex-soldiers were workers, the Party addressed them as a particular constituency, veterans.

Similarly, fascism celebrated youth as a class. "Giovenezza" was the official Italian hymn to youth; similar examples are found in Nazi propaganda. The image of youth was extended to attacks on the "older" capitalist nations, the "old," effete parliamentary bureaucrats.

White collar workers and members of craft unions were recruited on the basis of their special status as professionals, or craftsmen concerned with the quality of their goods. Unemployed, members of the "under class," and criminals also found their place in the movement, especially among the paramilitary organizations.

Obviously the very contradictions within the fascist movement between the ultra-rightists and the misguided "lefts" demanded a network of groups that operated on an independent basis. White collar groups in particular found the violence of the street gangs distasteful. Capitalist supporters balked at working-class demands.

Thus syndicalism at the workbench was replaced by

fascism organized around local-constituency issues. At the same time, fascism of necessity developed a "new working class" theory. Faced with the dilemma of appearing anti-capitalist without seriously attacking its capitalist masters, it developed the theory that everyone who "worked" — capitalist as well as wage-earner — was in truth a worker. Thus only speculators became the bad guys, or in Germany the "rich Jew," a convenient scapegoat for the capitalist class. At the same time Italy and Germany were pictured as "proletarian" national oppressed by the imperialist nations, Great Britain, France, and the United States.

In this way class-struggle ideology was obscured. Class consciousness is by no means the same as socialist consciousness; but the consciousness of the industrial working class that the production of all goods in society depends upon it is basic to the development of revolutionary understanding. It is the task of the socialist movement to unite producers with consumers, construction workers with ghetto dwellers. In this manner socialist consciousness is formed, and the parasitic role of the capitalist class is exposed. The fascists sought to divert the working class from struggle around material demands, to blunt its class consciousness, and also to turn its attention to other "exploiting nations."

In order for a fascist movement to come to power, it must become the chosen instrument of at least one sector of the capitalist class, who finance it; and other sections of the class must be neutralized in their opposition to it. Lastly, it must gain significant popular support. Obviously, not every "anti-capitalist" movement which organizes around the class-in-itself or local control forms of parochial struggle is the forerunner of a fascist movement.

However, in one sense, any reformist ideology tends to lead (under conditions of crisis and mass social unrest) to fascism, because it does not prepare the working class for mounting a successful struggle. Because reformist ideology, including syndicalism, impels workers to cling to pro-capitalist forms of their own struggle, it prepares the way for fascism to exploit severe social and economic deterioration. In that very limited sense, the German Communist Party was not entirely wrong to describe the Social Democratic leadership as "social fascist." It was the role of right-wing, trade-unionist and reformist socialists, as well as Sorelian syndicalist ideologies, that prepared the way for Mussolini's victory in that same restricted sense.

Mussolini began to propagandize against the red menace. Claiming to see an imminent threat of a totalitarian Bolshevik revolution, he gradually replaced polemic with violence in his dealings with the Communist and Socialist parties. At the same time he supported the workers' councils: "No social transformation which is necessary is repugnant to me. Hence, I accept the famous work supervision of the

factories and also their cooperative social management." Writing on the same subject, he calls for government support of the aims of trade unions and government attacks on the Socialist Party. He threatens that if the government cannot act, "...we invite the citizens and especially fascists to prepare with all means to destroy the Bolshevik plans of the Socialist Party."

By this time Mussolini had received the favorable attention of a section of the capitalist class and also the military. Ultra-right nationalist groups collaborated with his followers. Fascist street gangs attacked not only socialists and communists but trade unionists as well.

The 1920 abortive revolution frightened the Italian ruling class. Faced with a sharpening economic crisis which compelled it to stabilize the value of stocks, debts, and other property titles by increasing the share of dividends at the expense of Italian workers, they feared that workers might be impelled to new upsurges. It was at this point, having successfully co-opted Mussolini's revolutionary following into an instrument for the repression of the working class and its parties, that they considered the transfer of political power to him. The answer to revolution from the left was to be a revolution from the right.

So Mussolini began to receive massive financial support from his various erstwhile enemies, the capitalists themselves, the army, the ultra-right nationalist groups — and other forms of support. Even so, he did not give up his radical rhetoric, nor did he lose the sizeable working-class membership of his organization. When he sought at times to restrain the violence of his followers and hesitated to make a direct bid for power, he was pushed forward by the logic of his movement. Either he would assume power in the name of the fascist movement or he would be pushed aside as a leader. In October 1922, after a demonstrative march by his followers, he was offered the government by the Italian king.

Mussolini's first task was to discipline his motley followers. Until the point of its accession to power, the loosely federated fascist organizations had resisted forming themselves into a party, styling themselves instead a "movement." The federated localist character of the fascist party gave way to an autocratic structure, with the consent of local leaders. Engaged in the vicious power struggles over the spoils of victory, they were forced to turn to Mussolini as arbiter of their conflicts or face the dissipation of their gains in local squabbling. In the same way, on a national scale, Mussolini built his image as the arbiter of conflicting national interests, even encouraging certain strikes in order to discipline recalcitrant capitalists.

After Mussolini came to power, a section of the trade union leadership went over to him; the rest were

imprisoned (6,000), deported (2,000), or exiled (10,000). Others were simply killed. Laws were passed suppressing all opposition and trade union groups. However, it should be noted that workers' councils were not abolished until 1925. Mussolini in power still claimed to base himself upon syndicalist principles. In 1925, "corporate" worker-management formations were substituted for the council. But while the forms of workers' power persisted, as time went by they had less and less actual say with respect to wages and working conditions. Strikes persisted despite their illegality, but with diminished frequency.

The fascist regime gave political stability to capitalism, both by subduing the working class and later by disciplining the capitalist class in its own interest. Workers' wages fell while profits rose. Interestingly, however, in 1935 Herman Finer, author of *Mussolini's Italy*, felt that it was still possible that Italy would evolve toward socialism under Mussolini's guidance. Needless to say, this did not occur.

### Germany and Nazism

Nazism and other radical right movements in Germany during the twenties and thirties did not originate in the socialist movement. They mainly expressed the populist sentiment of large sectors of the middle and white collar class. National Socialism was a middle-class "socialism" which was antagonistic to trade unions at the same time as it attacked big business and big money. Attention was displaced from the real nature of capitalism by the virulent anti-Semitic propaganda, which in effect substituted the "rich Jew" for the capitalist in the popular mind.

The roots of German populism, like the movement in our own country, stem from the worldwide depression of agricultural prices in the latter part of the nineteenth century. As Hofstadter has shown, the American populist movement gave expression to nationalist and anti-Semitic rhetoric, as well as a conspiratorial view of the role of financiers. While in this country the general growth of the economy dissipated the movement, in Germany the tendency persisted as a strong ideological reactionary current among student youth and bourgeois intellectuals.

Harkening back to the so-called German past of the medieval self-sufficient community, an idealized view of peasant village life and guild craftsmanship was exalted. At the same time, on a more practical level, various programs were advanced for suppressing the power of trusts and cartels and protecting the interests of small businesses. Following World War I, these views received wider popular currency and more extreme formulation. The miserable economic conditions in the country were attributed to the huge reparations exacted from Germany, and to the Social Democratic Party (signer of the Versailles peace treaty) went the onus of defeat and national betrayal.

The real betrayal by the Social Democratic Party, which the German working class thrust into power, was its use of that power in collaboration with the German General Staff to behead the revolution. This, coupled with the ineptitude of the Communist Party (which led abortive revolutions in 1920 and 1923) served to demoralize and confuse the working class.

The nation suffered a catastrophic inflation in the early twenties and was plunged into depression in 1929. Middle sectors of the economy suffered most severely, lacking the protection of the trade union movement and suffering competition from big business. Small concerns caught in the squeeze were especially burdened by high labor costs. Professional and white collar workers resented their increasing proletarianization. As their savings were wiped out, frequently their standard of living fell below that of skilled workers.

It was in this atmosphere that National Socialism came into being, as did hundreds of other competing ultra-right sects, which also put forth anti-Semitic, nationalist programs. The Nazi party (which took the name National Socialist in 1920) was formed in Munich by the merger of two small groups, the Committee of Independent Workmen (an organization established in 1918 to combat the Marxism of the free trade unions and to agitate for a "just peace" for Germany) and a similar group, the Political Workers' Circle. The founder of the party, a locksmith named Drexler, sought to build a party based upon the masses of the working class, but unlike the Social Democrats strongly nationalistic. Drexler had been a member of the patriotic Fatherland Front but had soon become disillusioned with its middle-class spirit, which seemed to have no contact at all with the masses. Hitler originally came to the new party to observe it as an undercover agent of the Army Political Department.

Hitler was the son of a minor civil servant. He had spent the pre-war years living the bohemian life of an unsuccessful artist in Vienna. Attracted to nationalist politics, he found his vocation in the trenches, and after the war continued to serve the army as an informer and political agitator. However, he found in the Workers Party a vehicle for his political ambitions, and thenceforth devoted himself to building it into a national organization. While he severed his direct connections with the army, he maintained contact with right-wing army leaders.

Bavaria was then a hotbed of nationalist intrigue. After gathering the support of certain key nationalists and army leaders, Hitler planned an abortive coup which took place in Munich on November 1, 1923. His plan was to capture power in Bavaria and use this as a basis for the conquest of Germany. His coup, however, was premature and he was discredited and imprisoned.

As a result of this experience, he reoriented his strategy and thereafter the Nazi Party sought power

through parliamentary struggle. The movement endeavored to develop mass support.

As the movement grew it developed two antagonistic wings. Hitler himself, while personally uninterested in domestic issues, wanted to limit "socialist" demagoguery to vague attacks on big business. He was anxious lest he lose sizeable financial support from capitalist contributors. At the same time the "socialist" wing of the movement, led by the Strasser brothers and initially supported by Goebbels, was seeking a base in the trade union movement. While they were by and large unsuccessful with industrial workers, they did receive support from a section of construction workers and from white-collar workers, organized in nationalist trade unions.

The Strasser program called for "corporate" socialism on the Italian model and included demands that workers have a 49 percent share in the profits of production in each factory. After a sharp contest for power in the party the Strassers were defeated. However, as late as January 1933, right before Hitler came to power, German political and military leaders were considering dumping Hitler and bargaining instead with Strasser, who still maintained a mass following in North Germany and still was, in rhetoric and more or less in belief, a "socialist."

Like Mussolini, Hitler came to power legally with the connivance and financial support of German capitalists, after winning 13 million votes and a Reichstag plurality. Once in power, he was forced to purge his plebeian ranks, who took Nazi rhetoric seriously and in many places were seizing control of factories and businesses.

After suppressing the trade union movement, Hitler instituted the Labor Front in its place. While the Labor Front never formed workers' councils, it did represent workers in grievances. With the development of the war economy labor grew scarce. While maximum wages were regulated by the government, employers were encouraged to recruit workers through profit sharing in the form of improved working conditions, hot lunch programs, and factory-centered recreation. Throughout Germany workers were forced to join educational and recreational organizations.

As in Italy, Nazism regulated capitalism but did not supercede it. While the standard of living of the working class as a whole fell, the virtual elimination of unemployment through war industry helped to neutralize working-class discontent.

The counterrevolutionary character of all local-control ideology — as distinct from supporters of local control who in many cases are genuinely revolutionary in their aspirations — is sufficiently located in the fact that exponents of such ideology oppose the creation of powerful new institutions of mass struggle, without which socialist victory is impossible. They attempt to

sabotage the kinds of organic alliances in which working people find a new social basis for their world outlook, and on which unique basis working people and their allies begin to develop at least rudimentary socialist consciousness. As long as the various proponents of local control ideology have leadership hegemony in the socialist movement, that movement will inevitably tend to be defeated.

### Praxis

The Calvert-Neiman statement in the June 29 issue of the **Guardian** is in this way objectively anti-revolutionary despite the best intentions of its authors. We quote: "A crucial concept...is not...how students can link up to the struggles of industrial workers, public school teachers, technical workers and others, but how these groups can struggle in a way which embodies the most advanced and vital principles of the student movement." Or, from an earlier section of the same article attacking socialist methods of organizing: "Students are 'reached' on narrow self-interest issues so that they may be channelled into fighting for someone else's narrow self-interest...The result is that the civil rights movement is reduced to a small political club of people willing to always fight someone else's battles, and the real concerns of the majority of students go unanswered."

In a similar fashion it can be legitimately contended that the following statement from the same article, insofar as it gains credence in the radical movement, is so disorienting as to disarm the movement: "To argue, as the basis of organizing industrial workers in an old left reformist fashion around wage demands, that workers want to buy more things, for example, is to ignore the nature of domestic imperialism. The problem is posed as 'How can I, an affluent student, tell a worker he doesn't need more money?'"

It is hard to understand how such words can be written in a radical newspaper published in New York City's Lower East Side, when one has only to leave the **Guardian** offices to see their refutation. Blacks and Puerto Ricans in this city pushing racks in the garment center or bedpans in the city hospitals are vitally concerned with their material standard of living. So, too, are the so-called affluent workers on assembly lines. Even to meet a marginal standard of comfort, the average industrial worker has had to work extended overtime or moonlight on another job, and in many working-class families wives are also employed at least part time.

These workers are burdened with installment payments, not to buy luxuries, but to afford a car which is necessary transportation to work, a house, a freezer or a washing machine. As real wages are falling, taxes rising, prices skyrocketing, how indeed can a student tell a worker that he doesn't need more money?!

It is no coincidence that Calvert and Neiman should ponder; Mussolini too rejected what he termed "crass material demands" for workers, and when in power he drastically lowered workers' standards of living. It is revealing that the Kennedy-Rockefeller wing of the capitalist class is proposing a program of tightening the belt of the white working class in order to subsidize what are represented as token material concessions to the blacks, and so forth — which incidentally constitute schemes to provide huge tax-exempt bonanzas for the financiers out of new "poverty industries."

This is by no means to imply that Calvert and Neiman are themselves the ideologues of a future fascist movement. But the ideology they offer, if it gains currency in the present movement, may act as a screen for future fascist demagogues. In a period of rising inflation, rising taxes, and a corresponding rapid rate of decline in real wages, an analysis which contends that the workers never had it so good and in fact would have it better if they tightened their belts and concentrated on "spiritual values" has dangerous, actually counter-revolutionary implications.

Socialists must propose, as a leading expression of our approach to the social and economic crisis, to provide four million new productive jobs annually through expropriating about \$100 billion from employers' present after-tax income (corporations, banks, real estate interests). Our demands must of course be much more specific; but the need for these jobs delimits our alternatives, as it will define the major tasks of a successful socialist revolution once in power. By these means, we offer the only possible remedy for the problems of the impoverished in this country and the miserable conditions of those 1.5 billions suffering an annual \$25 trillion shortage of basic means of existence and production below the Tropic of Cancer. The local trade unionist tends (while he remains ideologically a trade unionist) to regard such prescriptions with horror. The political equivalent of the trade unionist, the syndicalist, also rejects such proposals as crass material demands or "elitism." That is, as demands which of necessity go beyond the spontaneous aims of groups organized as local constituencies.

### **Fascism and Economic Crisis**

Were this a period of relative capitalist stability, the importance of such tendencies as Praxis or others of the anarchist Up Against the Wall variety would be minimal. It is only in periods of a developing capitalist crisis that the danger of fascism arises. Therefore the question is whether crisis looms in the coming period.

It is already clear that in order to avert a serious depression and regulate the inflationary spiral, the capitalist class plans to reduce sharply the real wages of workers. For now the 3.2 percent wage-guidelines

policy has been dropped, but a program of increased taxes with the 10 percent surcharge for a start will be equally effective. This attack on the workers' standard of living is already reflected in the increased frequency and militancy of strikes and the development of left-wing caucuses in unions. An awakened labor movement which engages in sharp wage struggles in itself exacerbates the capitalists' economic situation. Moreover, it is by no means assured that even with a quiescent work-force the capitalist class could restabilize itself. The capitalist system is in fundamental crisis because of its inability to further extend itself. Investment has turned inward with speculation replacing real reproduction. It is under these conditions that tendencies like Praxis or the anarchists can become a real danger.

### **What the Future Holds**

Fascism emerges out of capitalist crisis of the sort now confronting our U.S. imperialist ruling class throughout its domain. As the working-class standard of living is reduced, workers are forced to fight back, first defensively, then by new political or otherwise aggressive means. Strikes of new militancy occur with greater frequency at the precise time when the capitalist class can least afford the demanded concessions. Ferment exists throughout society. The old tried-and-true methods of class collaboration no longer work for either side in these struggles, and the labor representatives of previous periods of class peace are increasingly discredited.

The radical right is now emerging at an accelerating rate. In previous periods, when fascism has appeared in other countries, it has rapidly gone over from a state like American proto-fascism to become openly right-revolutionary movement, promising to throw out the old impotent parliamentary leaders, to stabilize the nation, and so forth. As the crisis sharpens — if there is no effective socialist alternative — increasing sectors of the population look to the fascists for the solution that the Johnsons and Humphreys fail to provide.

In periods of class peace the trade-union bureaucracy can control the working class through concessions won in reformist struggle — won, at least, by significant portions of the organized sector of the class. The repressive arm of the state is used only in those instances where sections of the class threaten to break from the trade-union bureaucracy's reins, or where rank-and-file militant pressures compel the bureaucrats to go much further than they wish. Thus the labor-Democratic Party alliance here, the British Labour Party, etc., which have been the leading (and effective) forms of political treachery during the past period.

But in periods of rising severe social-economic conjunctural crisis, as at present, the capitalist class can no longer deliver the kinds of concessions needed to maintain such forms of political corruption of the work-



ers. At that point the rulers must begin to look for alternative methods of political and social control. They must dispense with the trade-union bureaucracy, not because they mistrust the willingness of the Meanys to continue selling out workers, but because the ruling class recognizes that the masses of workers might force the bureaucracy to permit the sort of mass labor struggles out of which the CIO, for example, was born.

There is an inevitable tendency in such periods for workers to coalesce around new leaders, and for sections of the labor bureaucracy (John L. Lewis in the thirties) to save their seats by placing themselves at the head of a new mass militant workers' movement.

In general, the old trade-union bureaucracy is either pushed into anti-capitalist postures by the workers or is so discredited as to be useless to the capitalists. The ruling class is compelled to abandon the trade-union method of corruption for new instruments of social control.

No regime can solve this problem by mere terror — as the struggles of the NLF demonstrate in Vietnam. As long as a people maintains its capacity and determination to throw up mass institutions of class struggle, no people can be politically conquered. It is here that the Mussolinis and Hitlers and other fascist syndicalists provide the ruling class with a distinct service. The fascist, coming onto the scene as an anti-capitalist revolutionary, fills radicalized masses with the ideological disease of "revolutionary local control" and uses them to attack the working class as a whole. By committing large layers of otherwise potentially revolutionary forces to the idea of local organization, by violently attacking all political tendencies advancing the conception of organic mass organization — as Mussolini did and today's New Left syndicalists are beginning to do — the fascist syndicalist co-opts the masses into the atomized social institutions of just the form an effective totalitarian tyranny requires.

Even though Hitler & Company did not deliver on the left demagogic promises they made to German workers before 1934, even though Hitler blood-purged his left-wing competitors' factory cells, he did not abandon the idea of proliferating local organizations. On the contrary, Nazi Germany was a spider web of new competing social and bureaucratic formations. It was this form of social organization, entirely atomizing the German people socially and politically, and the Nazi "new working class" theory of the German nation-class, which formed the basis for Nazi tyranny and made the selective terror of the Gestapo so effective in cutting off potential seeds of mass organization.

Any attempts to explain Nazism or Italian fascism fail unless they account for the **popularity** of fascism. If simple military/police terror is offered as explanation,

then one must ask why the capitalists did not simply use the army and police instead of sharing power and so much of their own wealth with the legion of anti-capitalist parasites whom Herman Goering typified. The significance of fascism lies in its origins as a popular movement, its pseudo-revolutionary appeal to a new community spirit, and its use of such appeal to dis-organize masses into the local-control forms so absolutely indispensable to fascist tyranny by the ruling class.

While fascist movements gained ascendancy in Europe, Roosevelt, with the loyal help of the reformist-corrupted Communist Party of the thirties, was able to discipline the militant mass labor movement without recourse to fascism. While many of the New Deal programs bear a resemblance to statist forms introduced under Nazism, the American ruling class could offer a (very slightly) increased standard of living to the American workers as the country recovered from the depression (mainly, as in Germany, because of war spending). The financial situation of American capitalism was, despite the depression, not nearly so desperate as that of its counterparts in Germany and Italy, though as the war approached even New Deal regimentation had failed to end or significantly attack the country's economic stagnation.

But today the signs are that the crisis which U.S. imperialism now faces is more severe than that of the twenties; and it is coming at a time when the American bourgeoisie has exhausted many of the kinds of resources which Roosevelt fell back upon.

It is just at this juncture that the capitalist class is turning to the support of institutions of local control. Legions of black and white radical judas goats are being bankrolled by the Ford Foundation, the OEO, and other ruling class agencies to spread the gospel of "community control" in the black ghetto and elsewhere. In particular, the Ford Foundation's backing for the anti-labor, delusion-ridden Ocean Hill-Brownsville school decentralization "pilot project" is an informative example. McCoy, head of the local school board, focuses the heat of his attacks on the inferior education which black children receive, against "racist" white teachers. Thus he lines up with the Board of Education, the provider (or withholder) of funds and curricula and therefore the real, though intermediate, agency of capitalist oppression. Recently McCoy went so far as to call for use of the union-busting Taylor Law against recalcitrant teachers. Meanwhile the conservative United Federation of Teachers does nothing to improve its standing with black parents. Thus a section of the working class, black parents, is effectively turned against another section, teachers.

The struggle for community control of education is at best chimerical; but it represents the legitimate aspirations of parents to have the best for their children. On

the other hand, the movement for black corporations in Harlem, now supported by Manhattan CORE, has no such thrust. White capitalists are capitalists, black capitalists are brothers. Clearly the support of black capitalists is a move by some black people to buy into the system, by no stretch of the imagination a revolutionary move.

Thus by funding local groups within the ghetto the establishment seeks to reduce the potential black revolutionary fist into individual, easily broken fingers of illusion-ridden, atomized groups.

At the same time, the openly right-wing demagoguery of George Wallace is attracting increasing support among sections of the Northern white working and middle classes. Wallace explicitly equates Southern states-rightism with local control ideology, even to the point of suggesting half-heartedly that he welcomes Negro support. But his real appeal is to the kind of parent who organized locally in Brooklyn, Queens, New York City, and in the suburbs of other metropolitan areas, to prevent the busing of black children to white schools. Wallace's demagoguery in his attacks on "big government" welfarism is explicitly aimed at those white workers who want to keep blacks out of their schools, communities, and factories. But then, Malcolm X's exposure of the ties between the Black Muslims and white racists should not be overlooked.

While white workers in Chicago are joining rifle clubs to "defend their homes," Jim Garrison's ominous revelations point to the use of terror by at least a section of the CIA-FBI apparatus. The list of victims of political assassinations is growing.

It is likely that, while nationalism was the dominant ideology of the Nazi and Italian fascist movements, race war may be a more significant feature in this country. Nor should we seek exact historical parallels. In Italy it was not until the immediate period before his accession to power that Mussolini's left fascists and right-wing nationalists were joined in one party. In Germany, the Nazi party included both a right wing and a left wing which bitterly contested for hegemony. The opposition between Black Power community groups and white power right-wing community groups hardly precludes either one becoming the conscious or unconscious instrument of an American fascist movement.

So far, no fascist revolutionary ideology has emerged. What we see in the organization of the Wallace movement or the co-optation of layers of the Black Power movement is the essential precondition for such an emergence. Syndicalism's most important feature in this respect is not any particular feature which lays the basis for a fascist movement, but rather its radical political character as the champion of parochialism, of mindless "community activism," of limit-

ing struggles to "local constituencies," and so forth. It is the syndicalist's role as a conscious saboteur of every effort to bridge the natural capitalist separation of black and white workers, of workers and students, etc., etc., which is syndicalism's fundamental and most poisonous feature, a feature leading directly to fascism. Syndicalism's weakness lies in the fact that it is a prepared political enemy of socialism in just those periods when crisis has discredited the ordinary co-optative forms of working class organization.

### Our Task

Our role is determined by the fact that conscious political leadership — or misleadership — will be decisive in the coming period, a period in which the objective conditions for revolutionary struggles are virtually matured. A period in which increasing numbers of people despair of remedies to economic and social crises through traditional "legitimate" channels. Under these circumstances, the public exposure of syndicalism, as it is expressed by various syndicalist tendencies in the New Left movement, becomes an urgent task, without which there cannot be a revolutionary movement in this country. This means the uncompromising public exposure of syndicalism as it is rationalized by the Praxis-axis, or by those anarchist variants which substitute running in the streets and violence for socialist program and organization. The self-styled revolutionary who is too polite to expose and extirpate such syndicalist influence is absolutely unqualified to lead anyone.

This is not an abstract or otherwise academic issue. It is not a matter of denouncing bad ideas as such. The alliance of Praxisites and street-syndicalists which has directed and weakened the Columbia strike organization this summer defends its actions with phrases which might almost be a plagiarism from Mussolini's left anti-Marxist demagoguery and recall those of the red-hunt at the East Lansing SDS convention. It is necessary to expose both these syndicalist ideas and the influence of the counterrevolutionary practice for which they stand.

At stake in this struggle is the organization of revolutionary cadres within the student movement, as within SDS. That means a process of (1) directing such cadres both in the essential theoretical tasks (without which there cannot be a socialist movement) and (2) simultaneously working as an organized propaganda and agitational force to produce new vanguard mass organizations along the lines portended in the original Columbia Strike Steering Committee — representative organizations of students, black militants, and other mass forces allied in a common struggle for a common purpose. It is that work for which the existing movement must arm itself, and for which the present syndicalists of the New Left are disarming it.