

RADICAL AMERICA

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The New Left 1960-65

STAUGHTON LYND ON RADICALS' USE OF HISTORY

ANDRE SCHIFFRIN ON THE '50s STUDENT LEFT

Gorz: A New Strategy?

An SDS Journal of American Radicalism

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With this issue, RADICAL AMERICA takes on certain new dimensions, particularly in neo-Marxist theory and the arts. Without relinquishing our function of studying American radicalism (past and present) in its immediately political forms, we intend to pursue these directions further, and encourage especially radical artists to play a larger role in the magazine.

We look forward to a press run of 3,000 or more for the coming (July-August) Black Liberation number. The contributions, by C.L.R. James, Eissen-Udom, George Rqwick, James Hooker, Mark D. Naison and others will, we believe, add a great deal to the interpretation of this phenomenon at a critical time for the Movement.

The New Left's Early Years

James P. O'Brien

As originally conceived, this article was to be strictly a bibliographical essay, in which I would point out some books and articles helpful in explaining what the New Left is and how it developed. It became clear, however, that in order to make it useful to anyone but scholars (with the time and the library facilities to chase down the sometimes esoteric materials listed here) I would have to write it as a narration, with bibliographical notes. Thus the article is longer, while covering a shorter time span, than I had envisaged. I hope to write an article for the next issue dealing with developments in the New Left since 1965.

Every generation likes to feel it is doing something different, and the perspective of this article--I believe that the New Left is qualitatively different from radical movements in the past --may very well be distorted by the experience of its author. I lived through the entire decade of the 1950s without once hearing the words "socialism" or "communism" spoken in any but a pejorative sense; my first political act was as a college freshman in the spring of 1960, when I joined a picket of Woolworth's in support of the southern sit-in movement. Because I have • experienced the New Left directly, and have only read about the Old Left, I may have tended to exaggerate the difference between them.

There are four books which attempt to give an overall picture of the new radicalism of the 1960s. All of them were published in 1966 (and therefore presumably conceived in 1965, when the mass public first became aware of the New Left); none of them is really satisfactory. One, Phillip A. Luce's The

New Left (D. McKay), can be dismissed at the outset. It consists of bitter recollections of the author's days as a leader of the sectarian Progressive Labor Party, information on the DuBois Clubs furnished him by a researcher for the House Un-American Activities Committee, and virtually nothing at all on the two most important New Left groups: Students for a Democratic Society and the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee. A far better book is Jack Newfield's A Prophetic Minority (New American Library), which is devoted almost entirely to the latter two groups (Newfield was once an active member SDS). The problem with this book is Newfield's tendency to romanticize, to telescope the complex events of 1960-65 and to write glowingly about the "spirit" of the movement without trying to take seriously its changing ideas. Newfield is attracted, above all, to style: that is why it has been possible for him to write enthusiastically about both the New Left and Robert Kennedy. Mitchell Cohen and Dennis Hale edited a useful book of readings, The New Student Left (New American Library), which consists mainly of SDS working papers and articles from The Activist, a quarterly magazine of which both Cohen and Hale had been editors. Like the magazine, this anthology may err on the side of dullness. There is no real sense of the dynamics of the New Left, and thus the book was somewhat dated even at the time it appeared. Further, the selections are far less anti-liberal and more anti-communist than the movement had become by 1966. Finally, The New Radicals, edited by Paul Jacobs and Saul Landau, in Vintage paperback, offers a collection of readings that supplements those in the Cohen-Hale book. Unlike the other, The New Radicals has many of its documents in abridged form, which is unfortunate. The 83-page introduction, which is written from outside the struggle, somehow does not ring true.

THE 1950's

The annals of the American Left in the 1950s are short. The Communist party and all organizations tainted as "socialistic" had been isolated and discredited by the end of the previous decade; the Korean

War and McCarthyism finished the job, making political unorthodoxy of any sort dangerous. By the middle of the decade the Communist, Socialist, and Socialist Workers parties stood as hollow caricatures of left-wing parties--and they were the Left. Clancy Sigal's personal novel Going Away, written in 1956, vividly portrays an ex-Communist traveling across the country, encountering his past at every turn and finding nothing but futility. It is probably the best single work to read on radicalism in the 1950s (perhaps in conjunction with Gabriel Kolko's "Decline of American Radicalism," Studies on the Left Sept.-Oct. 1966). Toward the end of the decade there were signs of polite dissent on the issue of nuclear weapons policy, symbolized by the formation of the National Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy (SANE) in late 1957. Two congressmen elected in the Democratic landslide of 1958, William Meyer of Vermont and Byron Johnson of Colorado, raised the "peace" issue in Congress before being defeated for re-election in 1960. A few pacifists grouped around Liberation Magazine engaged in small-scale acts of civil disobedience which were endlessly reported and analyzed in the magazine. In the area of civil rights, since the successful Montgomery, Alabama, bus boycott of 1956 (which saw the rise of prominence of Martin Luther King, Jr.), there had been no large-scale movement anywhere in the nation. Twice during the school year of 1958-59 southern black high school students (plus assorted students from the North) took part in Washington, D.C., marches for integrated schools organized by Bayard Rustin. They drew 10,000 and 30,000 respectively, but caused little splash and have since been all but forgotten.

The academic world in the 1950's was in a state that is difficult for present-day undergraduates to conceive. There was a virtual absence of radical social theory, the most important exceptions being the much-persecuted Marxist economist Paul Baran, who was lucky enough to have tenure at Stanford, and the independent radical C. Wright Mills, who during the course of the decade turned from social theory

(White Collar, 1951; The Power Elite, 1956) to a polemical attack on American foreign policy, The Causes of World War Three. Mills was certainly the intellectual with the greatest influence on the emergence of the New Left, but during the fifties he had few followers. The state of student uninvolvedness on the nation's campuses is pictured very well in three annual symposia published in The Nation: "The Careful Young Men," March 9, 1957 "The Class of '58 Speaks Up," May 18, 1958 and "Tension Beneath Apathy," May 16, 1959. The campus mood is also depicted in a book of frank, anonymous essays written by a Princeton senior and published in The Unsilent Generation, edited by Otto Butz (Rinehart, 1958). The book, which cost Butz his job as a Princeton faculty member, showed some of the writers to be cynical, even desperate, about the lives that lay ahead of them--but none of them willing to put his malaise in political terms. Similarly, the popularity of J. D. Salinger's novel of innocent youth in a crass society, Catcher in the Rye (the novel for young people in the late 1950s) was another indication of a vague discontent without any political outlet. The only real signs of change on the campuses were cultural rather than political: the beginnings of a folk music revival (spread mainly by students from New York City), and the popularity of "beat" writers such as Jack Kerouac and Allen Ginsberg.

THE BEGINNINGS

The importance of the southern sit-in movement in bringing political awareness to the campuses would be difficult to overestimate. In the South, the sit-ins transferred the initiative in the civil rights struggle to a new generation which has retained it ever since. For thousands of students, in the North as well as the South, they were the first hint that there was a world beyond the campus that demanded some kind of personal response.

The sit-ins were touched off by four freshman students at an all-black college in Greensboro, North Carolina. On February 1, 1960, they sat at a whites-only lunch counter in a local Woolworth's store,

politely requesting coffee and refusing to leave until the store closed at the end of the day. Students at other North Carolina colleges quickly picked up the idea, and within two weeks there had been sit-ins in fifteen cities in five southern states. (Within a year the number of participants in sit-ins and other demonstrations touched off by them had grown to more than 50,000 in a hundred cities.) The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee was set up in April 1961, with help from the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, as a loose liaison of sit-in leaders from across the South.

The best account of the birth of the southern student movement is Howard Zinn's SNCC: The New Abolitionists, which covers SNCC up to the time of its writing in early 1964. Zinn taught at Spelman College in Atlanta during this period, and he had a first-hand acquaintance with the sit-ins and with the SNCC leaders. There were good contemporary reports on the sit-ins by Michael Walzer in Dissent ("A Cup of Coffee and a Seat," Spring 1960; "The Politics of the New Negro," Summer 1960) and by Helen Fuller in the New Republic ("We Are All So Very Happy," April 25, 1960; "Southern Students Take Over," May 2, 1960). A special report by the Southern Regional Council, The Student Protest Movement: A Recapitulation (Sept. 29, 1961), has some useful factual information. I have not come across anything (except scattered allusions, all reporting essentially the same experience) about the impact which the sit-ins had on northern campuses. Yet it appears that more than a hundred northern colleges had some kind of demonstration in support of the sit-ins. It seems safe to say that for most campuses, these were the first political demonstrations in years.

Something else happened in the spring of 1960 that was to have a profound influence on the stirring of campus political interest, although in this case the effect was a delayed one. In May of that year hundreds of Berkeley students joined in a demonstration at the San Francisco City Hall against

the House Un-American Activities Committee, which was conducting catch-all hearings on communism in the San Francisco area. One of the subpoenaed witnesses was a Berkeley sophomore. San Francisco police turned fire hoses on seated demonstrators, dragged many of them down the full length of the City Hall steps, and arrested sixty-eight. (Charges were later dropped against all but one, who was acquitted.) Within months, the Committee had impounded enough TV film to produce a lurid, gerrymandered movie entitled "Operation Abolition" in which J. Edgar Hoover and HUAC members claimed to offer documentary proof that (a) the Communists had planned the demonstration in order to subvert students and get rid of their enemy the Committee and (b) the violence had been started by the student demonstrators. The background music was reminiscent of World War Two patriotic movies.

For the next year and a half "Operation Abolition" was a staple item on the right-wing banquet and camp meeting circuit. More importantly, however, it served to discredit the Committee and J. Edgar Hoover among students on scores of campuses. The Bay Area Student Committee for the Abolition of the House Committee on Un-American Activities, formed in September 1960, sent speakers and literature around the country pointing out distortions and inaccuracies in the film. The American Civil Liberties Union made a film of its own, supporting the student version and calling for the Committee's abolition. On campuses where both sides of the story were heard, the Berkeley students emerged a clear winner. David Horowitz' Student, written while the author was a graduate student in English at Berkeley, tells the story of the growth of student protest there through 1961, highlighting the central role of the HUAC episode. It is an impassioned but well-written account. Also good, though much shorter, is a report by Jessica Mitford in The Nation, May 27, 1961, called, "The Indignant Generation."

PEACE ISSUES

For a number of reasons, one of them undoubtedly

being the distraction of the Kennedy-Nixon presidential campaign in the fall, there was less campus protest activity in the 1960-61 school year than the previous spring. Sit-ins continued in many areas of the South, but the idea of sit-ins had lost much of its early excitement. The sit-ins had, however, helped to open the campuses to new ideas, and during this period the thinking of many students was being changed by these ideas. "Operation Abolition" and its critics made their way eastward from Berkeley; chapters of the Fair Play for Cuba Committee were started on a few campuses; the number of "controversial" speakers on campuses multiplied; and student governments began considering resolutions on national affairs. President Kennedy's proposal of the Peace Corps may have been one factor in the injection of off-campus concerns, and his attempt to overthrow the Cuban government at the Bay of Pigs may have been another.

It was after the Berlin crisis in the summer of 1961 (when the East Germans erected "the wall") that the groundwork was laid for a fair-sized campus peace movement. In the tense atmosphere created at that time, the Soviet Union broke its moratorium on nuclear testing; a few days later the U.S. announced that it would resume underground--but not yet atmospheric--testing. In addition, the administration decided to push for a massive civil defense program, stressing fallout shelters even in private homes.

The two organizations which were most active in agitating on the peace issue among students were the Student Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy (Student SANE) and the Student Peace Union (SPU). Student SANE was an appendage of national SANE, an affiliation which proved fatal to the student group. Following a threatened expose of alleged communists in SANE by Senator Thomas Dodd in 1960, the national board had adopted a policy of excluding persons with "totalitarian" sympathies. The leaders of Student SANE refused to apply this policy to their own organization, and after much futile sparring, voted to disaffiliate and disband in February 1962. (See

Barbara Deming, "The Ordeal of SANE," The Nation, March 11, 1961, and Donald M. Bluestone, "Unity in the Peace Movement," Sanity, Spring 1962.) The Student Peace Union had been formed by students at a number of mid-western colleges, at which time campus peace activity was at a very low level. In the early spurt of student political interest following the sit-ins, SPU had collected 10,000 student signatures for a petition to the world leaders gathered at the 1960 summit conference. By the summer of 1961, SPU's national office had come under the control of members of the Young People's Socialist League (YPSL), the youth affiliate of the Socialist Party. Under this leadership, SPU adopted a "third-camp" position, to the left of SANE but still attempting to assess equal blame for the cold war to the U.S. and the Soviet Union.

During the 1961-62 school year, SPU chapters organized demonstrations and educational campaigns against nuclear testing and against fallout shelters (which it said made nuclear war more likely by fostering the illusion that casualties could be significantly cut). In the fall of 1961 students from Grinnell, Carleton, and a few other colleges fasted and picketed at the White House against the resumption of above-ground nuclear testing, and in February 1962 more than 5,000 students went to Washington to picket the White House (and Soviet embassy) and to attempt to persuade government officials to their point of view. They were met by condescension and skepticism, as when Chet Hollifield, a leader of the liberal congressional bloc, called their position paper a "bunch of baloney." Atmospheric testing was resumed within a few weeks. This march, though supported by SPU, was initiated by the Harvard-Radcliffe peace group, TOCSIN. It is described in Steven V. Roberts, "'Something Had to be Done,'" The Nation, March 3, 1962.

By the end of the 1961-62 school year, SPU's membership had tripled to more than 3,000, which meant a far larger number of students involved in local chapter activities. Still, it would be easy to overestimate the extent to which the peace movement actually permeated the campuses. More often than not, the peace activists were regarded with indifference or distaste by the majority of students. Moreover, while

the people who engaged in peace activities were also the ones most interested in civil rights, these concerns were rarely linked together. And, there were only scattered instances of students taking action on issues that directly involved the university. (Exceptions were a sit-in at the University of Chicago demanding an end to discrimination in University-owned tenements and a successful student strike at Queens College protesting a ban on communist speakers.) At many colleges, the closest thing to a synthesis of on-campus and off-campus concerns was the formation of liberal political parties stressing both types of issues. These included SLATE at Berkeley (the first), POLIT at Chicago (whose slogan was "A Free University in a Free Society"), SCOPE at Oberlin, VOICE at Michigan, ACTION at Columbia, and a score of others. For the most part, however, these parties included people ranging from liberal Republicans to Trotskyists, and they hashed out stands on individual issues rather than developing a general critique of society.

ENTER SDS

It was in early 1962 that Students for a Democratic Society began to emerge as an important source of strategic thinking for campus activists. SDS grew out of the Student League for Industrial Democracy (SLID), the insignificant youth affiliate of the social democratic League for Industrial Democracy. Although James Farmer and Gabriel Kolko had each held the office of executive secretary of SLID during the 1950s, it had never made any appreciable headway against the prevailing deadness of campus life. (See Andre Schiffrin's article below.) Despite a change in title in 1960, and despite the growth of student political interest that spring, SDS was still more dead than alive in 1961. What brought it to life was the work of two leaders of VOICE at the University of Michigan, Al Haber and Tom Hayden. They felt that single-issue organizations working for peace or civil rights were not enough. They developed contacts with student

activists elsewhere in the country, arguing that major political issues were interconnected (e.g. Southern Democrats in Congress were supporters of the Cold War as well as being segregationists) and that a movement had to be created to work for social change on a broad front. A preliminary meeting in Ann Arbor in December 1961 resulted in a call for a founding convention in June; Hayden was commissioned to draft an SDS manifesto, which has become known as the "Port Huron Statement" because the convention was held at a United Auto Workers center in Port Huron, Michigan.

NOT SO LONG AGO . . .

"Without doubt, the high point of my tour was at Ann Arbor where I attended the Conference on Human Rights in the North sponsored by the Students for Democratic Society. . . . On the opening night, the key-note address was given by Bayard Rustin. . . . The SDS . . . is the student section of the League for Industrial Democracy. . . its approach is not specifically socialist. It might be best described as a student educational society composed by a broad coalition of liberals and Democratic socialists. . . .

J.T. Burnett, National Sect'y
Y.P.S.L., May, 1960

Along with two other early documents, a Hayden speech at Yale in March (reprinted in the Cohen-Hale anthology as "Student Social Action") and Al Haber's pamphlet "Students and Labor," the Port Huron manifesto stands as a remarkable statement of the social analysis which SDS brought to the new student movement. It ran to 54 single-spaced mimeographed pages. Its main thrust was our generation's discovery of the hollowness of the American dream. It called for massive public pressure to make the American government an economy responsive to popular control, and declared the bankruptcy of America's Cold War policies. It argued that "not even the liberal and socialist preachings of the past seem adequate to the forms of

the present," and pledged SDS to work for the creation of a "new left." While speaking hopefully of the growth of the civil rights and peace movements, and cautiously of organized labor, the Port Huron Statement put special emphasis on the potential of the university as a radical center. "Social relevance, the accessibility of knowledge, and internal openness--these together make the university a potential base and agency in a movement for social change."

SNCC AND THE SOUTH

At the same time that SDS and the new campus political parties were stressing the potential of the university, SNCC was moving away from its original university base and toward grass roots organizing in the worst areas of the South. The period of direct action which had started with the sit-ins came to a climax in the late spring and summer of 1961 with the freedom rides, integrated bus trips into the South during which many of the riders were beaten brutally while local police stood by. SNCC people helped lead and sustain the freedom rides, but in a series of discussions over the summer they weighed the advantages of undertaking voter registration work as well as direct action, this step was indirectly encouraged by the Kennedy administration. In the fall the decision was made to take this step. Robert Moses had gone into Mississippi in the summer and was already conducting a voter registration school in McComb. He was joined by others, while another group of SNCC workers moved to Albany, Georgia, to begin a city-wide mass movement among the Negroes there. In all, sixteen decided to drop out of school and do full time work for SNCC, living at a subsistence level among the people they were trying to organize. They were joined by an increasing number of others, until the fall of 1963 there were more than 150 full time workers, most of whom had come from college campuses. Meeting with violence and police brutality in McComb and Albany, SNCC only persisted and even spread out

further into the Mississippi delta and southwestern Georgia.

Although the Kennedy administration had encouraged SNCC to emphasize voter registration, it was not willing to provide protection for those who went out and engaged in it. The pattern which was to become so common in the South--local authorities permitting, or taking part in, beatings while FBI men looked on and took notes--became established during this period. Each of these episodes, and each futile telegram sent to Attorney General Robert Kennedy, increased the cynicism of the SNCC workers about the administration's sincerity. The limited coverage which the beatings got in the northern press also fed the bitterness.

The story of this early period of SNCC is related very well in Howard Zinn's book, SNCC: The New Abolitionists, mentioned above. Tom Hayden wrote a pamphlet on the McComb activity in the fall of 1961, called "Revolution in Mississippi." Zinn's special report for the Southern Regional Council, Albany: A Study in National Responsibility (1962) is a telling critique of the federal government's role. The weekly Mississippi Free Press, started in the winter of 1961-62, is an excellent source, as is SNCC's own monthly publication The Student Voice.

As SNCC's organizing drives caught hold in 1962 and early '63, it took on a new importance in the North as well as the South. The peace movement, which had seemed so promising on the northern campuses during the 1961-62 school year, lost much of its steam. SPU membership climbed slightly, and most of its chapters engaged in some kind of protest activity at the time of the Cuban missile crisis in October, but the excitement of the previous year was soon dissipated. Many students had worked hard on behalf of "peace candidates" in the November elections; the results were almost uniformly disappointing. Some of the SPU chapters became embroiled in factional disputes between members of YPSL and of the Trotskyist Young Socialist Alliance, climaxed at the national convention in June when the leadership won a pyrrhic victory. The signing of a limited test ban treaty by the U.S. and Russia in June only ratified the decline of the peace

movement as an important factor on American campuses.

At the same time, SDS was making steady but unspectacular progress in recruiting new members. By the end of the school year there were still fewer than a thousand members. Particularly after the missile crisis and the November election, campus political activity in the North came to be centered almost exclusively in civil rights. There was a great increase in fund-raising in support of SNCC, undertaken partly by SDS and the fledgling Northern Student Movement and partly by student governments belonging to the National Student Association. SNCC made effective use of the annual NSA congresses to inform northern student leaders of its work and to lay the groundwork for fund-raising. The Northern Student Movement undertook tutorial programs in northern ghettos and also aided in efforts to force companies to hire more Negro employees. In the early spring, students on northern campuses collected food and clothing for poor Negroes in Leflore County, Mississippi, after the county supervisors cut off all welfare payments. Civil rights songs, often popularized by the SNCC Freedom singers, became popular at many colleges. These songs, typically, were adaptations of songs used in the labor union drives of the 1930s (which had in turn been based on Negro spirituals). However, Josh Dunson's Freedom In the Air: Song Movements of the Sixties (International paperback, 1965) shows the impetus which the civil rights movement gave to the popularity of topical folk songs in the middle of the decade.

There are very few sources on student political activity in the North in this period. SDS had a mimeographed discussion bulletin by this time, and SPU continued to publish its own monthly bulletin. The Northern Student Movement is discussed in an Article by R. W. Apple in The Reporter, February 14, 1963, entitled "Ivy-League Integrationists." Philip Altbach, former SPU head, discussed the status of the campus peace movement in "The Quiet Campus," New Leader, August 5, 1963. The title was apt.

CRISIS IN CIVIL RIGHTS

In the late spring and summer of 1963 the civil rights movement thrust itself upon the nation's consciousness with a new intensity. There were hundreds of demonstrations, triggered by a protest led by Martin Luther King in Birmingham. Civil unrest became so widespread by the early summer that President Kennedy, who had been extremely cautious in taking any action on civil rights, was forced to make a special address to Congress in which he proposed a comprehensive bill including a ban on segregation in public facilities, under the commerce clause of the Constitution. This bill was finally passed, after being strengthened on its way through Congress. In the course of 1963 more than 20,000 civil-rights demonstrators were arrested, and the pressure of the mass protests forced some degree of integration in scores of southern communities in advance of passage of the federal law. Civil rights became the primary topic for newspapers, mass magazines, and radio shows, and foundation money was suddenly made available to the leading civil-rights groups. SNCC moved into Alabama for the first time with a voter registration project in Selma, pushed further into southwest Georgia, and continued its work in Mississippi. In the winter of 1962-63 the pioneer SNCC workers in that state had helped to form the Council of Federated Organizations (COFO), in which SNCC, the NAACP, CORE, and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference joined together to support the voter registration effort. The main force within COFO was, from the beginning, SNCC, since it was SNCC which provided the shock troops to organize in the most hostile areas. (This was the general pattern during the early '60s: young people from SNCC, and to a lesser extent CORE, did the most dangerous and least-publicized work.) In the fall of 1963 COFO, aided by Yale and Stanford students, sponsored a "freedom ballot" in which over 80,000 black Mississippians "voted" for state NAACP leader Aaron Henry for governor. It was out of this experiment that the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party was to grow the following year.

At this stage in SNCC's existence it tended to be lumped together in the public mind with the older, established civil rights groups; the familiar spectrum, right to left, was the Urban League, the NAACP, King's Southern Christian Leadership Conference, CORE, and SNCC. At the end of August, however, at the gigantic March on Washington organized by Bayard Rustin and supported by all the civil rights groups, chairman John Lewis of SNCC briefly disturbed the image of harmony. In his speech he denounced the Kennedy administration for failing to enforce existing civil rights laws, and in particular for not protecting southern Negroes against violence. Aside from Zinn's book, two good sources on SNCC in 1963 are Charles Jones, "SNCC: Nonviolence and Revolution," New University Thought, Sept.-Oct. 1963, and Anne Braden, "The Students: A New Look," The Southern Patriot, May, 1963.

ERAP

The burgeoning of civil rights activity in 1963 helped lay the groundwork, within SDS, for the emergence of a new political strategy. In a sense, SDS prepared to follow SNCC away from the campus. America and the New Era, a 30-page position paper adopted by the June 1963 SDS convention, was in effect an attack on the New Frontier and a call for grass-roots insurgency focusing particularly on economic issues. The New Era document charged that "70 million Americans are living below officially-defined minimum standards of decency--with incomes of less than \$100 a week for families of four." Of organized liberalism the document said: "A style of politics which emphasizes cocktail parties and seminars rather than protest marches, local reform movements, and independent bases of power, cannot achieve leverage with respect to an establishment-oriented administration and a fundamentally reactionary Congressional oligarchy."

Still, America and the New Era was eclectic in its proposals for action. The most important catalytic agent in shifting SDS's attention to the

organizing of poor people came later in 1963 as the result of the experiences of its Swarthmore affiliate. In the late spring and summer members of the group worked in the SNCC-initiated civil rights movement in Cambridge, a tightly segregated Eastern Shore town in Maryland. At the start of the following school year, a number of them decided that their Cambridge experience could be applied closer to home. They started an organizing project in the economically depressed Negro section of nearby Chester, Pennsylvania. The demonstrated ability of the Swarthmore students to work closely with urban poor Negroes in Chester exerted a powerful influence within SDS. Two papers by Carl Wittman, head of the Swarthmore group, illustrate the optimism which the Chester project engendered. (Both are reprinted in the Cohen-Hale anthology: "Students and Economic Action" and "An Interracial Movement of the Poor?" written with Tom Hayden.)

The Economic Research and Action Project (ERAP) set up by SDS largely as a study group, became converted during the course of the year into a major organizing program. By the summer of the following year SDS had decided to make ERAP the main focus of its activity and to initiate projects in six to ten northern cities. Most of these were in poor white areas, but the one which Hayden himself went to work in was in the all-black Clinton Hill section of Newark. There are two recent articles dealing with the purposes which the ERAP organizers had in mind, and both articles are quite good: Todd Gitlin, "The Radical Potential of the Poor," International Socialist Journal, No. 24, 1967, and Richard Rothstein, "ERAP: Evolution of the Organizers," Radical America, March-April 1968.

MISSISSIPPI SUMMER

Of the Mississippi Summer project of 1964, little needs to be said here. Early that year, SNCC workers in COFO decided, after much hesitation, to issue a call for a thousand northern college students to spend the summer in Mississippi--helping with voter registration, teaching in improvised "freedom schools," and sharing the physical danger that is a part of every black person's life in Mississippi. Approximately

800 students responded to the call, representing a wide variety of backgrounds and political attitudes (though most of them saw these attitudes swing to the left over the course of the summer). Two of them were killed, along with a black Mississippian working on the same project. Of the many books written about the summer's experience, the best may be Sally Belfrage's Freedom Summer. A "Letter from Jackson" by Calvin Trillin, New Yorker, August 29, 1964 tells a great deal about the thinking of Bob Moses, the original SNCC worker in Mississippi and head of the Freedom Summer project. Staughton Lynd, who was in general charge of the freedom schools, wrote about them in "The Freedom Schools: Concept and Organization," Freedomways, Spring 1965.

During the summer the COFO workers built up a movement known as the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (MFDP) in which all Mississippians were eligible to participate (though of course in actual practice scarcely any whites chose to). Delegates were elected in grass-roots caucuses, and a full delegation was chosen to demand seats at the Democratic party convention in Atlantic City. Lawyer for the MFDP was Joseph Rauh, Jr., of Washington, a long-time leader of the Americans for Democratic Action. When it appeared that a bitter floor fight might ensue, with northern delegations having to vote for or against the MFDP, liberals within the party arranged a compromise by which the regular delegation would retain its seat and the MFDP would get two of its leaders seated as delegates at large. Rauh advised the MFDP to accept, making it clear that northern liberals in the convention would not support them if they refused the offer. Martin Luther King and Bayard Rustin also appeared before the delegation and advised accepting the compromise; Moses and James Forman of SNCC spoke briefly, urging a stand on principle, and they were overwhelmingly supported. More than any other single event, this dramatized the readiness of militants in the civil rights movement to break away from the liberal coalition of the Johnson administration. Pleas that unity was needed in order to keep Barry Goldwater

from being elected president meant less than their just claim to the seats. Jack Minnis, a white SNCC worker, recounted the episode in "The Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party: A New Declaration of Independence," Freedomways, Spring 1965: see also Murray Kempton, "Conscience of the Convention," New Republic, September 5, 1964.

RETURN TO CAMPUS

For a variety of causes, not the least of which was the experience of hundreds of northern students with racial oppression in the Deep South, the 1964-65 school year was one of unprecedented ferment on the campus. The symbol, above all, was Berkeley. Nothing else that happened in the 1960s did so much to focus public attention on college students than did the Free Speech Movement at Berkeley. Touched off when the Berkeley administration clamped down on campus recruiting for off-campus civil rights activities, the movement developed into a major challenge to the University's status quo. Mario Savio, leader of the FSM, hit a responsive chord among the demonstrators when he said, just prior to the Sproul Hall sit-in in which nearly 800 were arrested:

There's a time when the operation of the machine becomes so odious, makes you so sick at heart, that you can't take part, you can't even tacitly take part. And you've got to put your bodies upon the gears and upon the wheels, upon the levers, upon all the apparatus, and you've got to make it stop. And you've got to indicate to the people who run it, to the people who own it, that unless you're free, the machine will be prevented from working at all.

It is significant that the Free Speech Movement grew out of a struggle for civil rights, the one issue which had proved capable of arousing the moral fervor of students in the early sixties. Militant demonstrations against large discriminatory hiring practices by Bay Area employers had brought arrests and had also brought pressure on the University to clamp down on

its students. Within the FSM it was believed that the ban on on-campus recruiting came as a result of picketing against ex-Senator William Knowland's Oakland Tribune. In the course of their confrontation with the U. C. administration, however, many of the Berkeley students had to confront for the first time their own place in society. Savio, a veteran of Mississippi Summer, made the connection this way:

In Mississippi an autocratic and powerful minority rules, through organized violence, to suppress the vast, virtually powerless majority. In California, the privileged minority manipulates the University bureaucracy to suppress the students' political expression. That "respectable" bureaucracy masks the financial plutocrats; that impersonal bureaucracy is the efficient enemy in a "Brave New World."

The FSM, of course, was not simply based upon an intellectual critique of the University, or the "California power structure." There was a flair to the protest--and a sense of humor--that showed something more. The FSM rebels showed a creative and innovative ability that was typified both by their satirical songs and their establishment of a "Free University of California" during the Sproul Hall sit-in. In the aftermath of Berkeley, the mass media cast worried looks at the American campus; they discovered, for the first time, that a new subculture had emerged, one that was both freewheeling in its life style and serious in its political beliefs. Berkeley symbolized a union, however frail, between bohemianism and political activism.

Partly because the FSM had a number of articulate spokesmen and partly because the Berkeley campus was full of faculty pundits, there is a vast literature on the episode. An excellent account by a non-student participant is Hal Draper's Berkeley: The New Student Revolt (Evergreen paperback, 1965). There are two paperback anthologies, one edited by Michael V. Miller and Susan Gilmore (Revolution at

Berkeley, Dell, 1965) and the other by Seymour M. Lipset and Sheldon S. Woldin (The Berkeley Student Revolt, Doubleday Anchor, 1965). Both are good, but the Lipset-Wolin collection is more comprehensive. The Trouble at Berkeley (text by Steven Warshaw, Diablo Press, 1965) is a fine book of photographs with some commentary. Finally, there are two magazine articles, not included in either anthology, which deserve reading: Gerald Rosenfeld's "Generational Revolt and the Free Speech Movement," Liberation, December 1964 and January 1965, and Michael Rossmann's "Barefoot in a Marshmallow World," Ramparts, January 1966. Both are excerpted in Jacobs and Landau, The New Radicals.

PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY

The FSM was not duplicated elsewhere during that school year, though there were widely reported incidents of student protest on other campuses later in the school year--as at normally placid Yale when students picketed against the dismissal of a popular philosophy professor. During this period of late 1964 and early 1965, however, there were four other developments that were to play a highly important role in giving shape to the New Left which may be said to have finally emerged as a distinct entity. These developments had to do with changes in SNCC; parallel changes in the ERAP projects: the sudden growth of protest against the Vietnam War following the initiation of regular bombing raids over North Vietnam in February 1965; and the growth of a small but active tendency centered in the May 2nd Movement which might be called the "new ultra-left."

SNCC did not accept as final its rebuff at the Atlantic City convention. Although it knew that its northern liberal "allies" were eager to bury the issue, the MFDP collected evidence of voting discrimination in Mississippi, and mounted a challenge to the seating of that state's Congressional delegation when Congress convened in January. It took an intensive publicity campaign by SNCC even to get the issue before the House, and the 140-odd northerners who voted against seating the Mississippians did so, for the most part,

reluctantly. Members of Congress depend on each other for favors and thanks to the seniority southerners tend to occupy the most powerful positions when the Democrats are in power. Thus, despite the fact that this was easily the most liberal Congress since the days of the New Deal, the MFDP could obtain nothing more than a perfunctory referral of their protest to a special House committee. The MFDP persisted, even after this rebuff, and did everything it could to keep the issue alive during the spring and summer; SNCC attached far greater importance to this than to President Johnson's voting rights bill, passed that summer. In September the Mississippi challenge was definitely rejected by the House, as it accepted the special committee's conclusion that it was powerless to bar the Missisippians. This time the MFDP got 149 votes for its position, a miniscule gain over the January vote.

Largely as a result of its bad experiences with liberal Democrats, as well as its success in organizing the grass-roots MFDP, there was an increasing tendency in SNCC to elaborate a strategy of participatory democracy, in which people would organize to make decisions for themselves without manipulation. The model was the MFDP, in which SNCC workers had tried to avoid imposing their own ideas of which direction the movement should go. Gradually it became clear to white liberals and radicals that SNCC was not simply the "most militant" of the civil rights groups, but had a set of distinctive ideas about how change would come about in society. A number of analyses appeared which are worth reading in order to get a picture of the civil rights movement in 1965 and SNCC's relationship to it. The longest and best was Anne Braden's "The Southern Freedom Movement in Perspective," Monthly Review, July-August 1965. The Movement had a good article on the MFDP in its May issue. Tom Hayden and Norman Fruchter wrote sympathetic reports in Studies on the Left, Winter 1965, and Jack Newfield a somewhat hesitant one in The Nation, July 19, 1965. The most extended analysis by a worried liberal was Pat Watters' "Encounter with the Future" in New

South, May 1965. Two other articles that are worth reading are Andrew Kopkind, "The New Radicals in Dixie," New Republic, April 10, 1965, and Bruce Payne, "SNCC: An Overview Two Years Later," (reprinted in the Cohen-Hale anthology.)

The trend in SNCC away from liberal compromise and toward participatory democracy was paralleled by a similar change in the ERAP projects initiated the previous year by SDS in the North. In 1963, when ERAP was originally conceived, its founders had believed that the American economy was in a state of deepening crisis and that the threat of mass unemployment--especially among the young--was real. The ten original ERAP projects in 1964 had gotten much of their impetus from this analysis: the name of the Chicago project, J.O.I.N. (Jobs or Income Now) was symbolic. The early experience of organizing around this issue proved, however, to be discouraging. In 1964-65 the emphasis shifted toward building "community unions," in which people in the poor neighborhoods would be mobilized on issues like garbage removal, better schools, traffic lights, etc., and through these struggles would gain an understanding of the ways in which power is wielded in society. These community unions, run democratically (and without parliamentary procedure) were also viewed as forming the basis for an alternative center of power: people would look to them rather than to the city authorities for programs to meet their immediate and long-range needs.

Andrew Kopkind's "Of, By, and For the Poor: The New Generation of Student Organizers," New Republic, June 19, 1965, describes the ERAP projects. Studies on the Left, which concluded after the Johnson-Goldwater election that the future of the Left lay with "the movements," had a number of excellent reportorial pieces during 1965, including coverage of the Newark, Chicago, and Cleveland ERAP projects. Toward the end of 1965, the New Republic performed a valuable service by inviting a group of New Left activists (Charlie Cobb, Stokely Carmichael, Jean Smith, and Casey Hayden of SNCC and Todd Gitlin, Tom Hayden, and Richard Flacks of SDS) to write out their thoughts on contemporary society. These essays, subsequently published as Thoughts of the Young Radicals (New Republic

paperback, 1966), are perhaps the best expression of the New Left philosophy as it had developed at that point. As Carmichael summarized, "I place my own hope for the United States in the growth of belief among the unqualified that they are in fact qualified: they can articulate and be responsible and hold power." This book also contains a series of critical commentaries on the New Left, but Irving Howe's arrogant "New Styles in 'Leftism,'" Dissent, Summer 1965, is a more important critique. The same issue of Dissent contains a short article by Staughton Lynd, "The New Radicals and 'Participatory Democracy,'" probably the best exposition of this key New Left concept.

VIETNAM

It is hard to say why there was so little public protest over U.S. policy in Vietnam before February 1965. It is true that few American troops were in Vietnam (16,000 in mid-summer 1964) and that they were euphemistically known as "advisers," but the broad outlines of the conflict were not at all unknown: an unpopular conservative government in South Vietnam, an indigenous guerilla movement getting most of its arms by capturing American weapons from government troops, and systematic terror campaigns against the guerillas. In the fall of 1963, before President Diem was assassinated and replaced by the next in a series of American-based regimes, the Student Peace Union held small demonstrations at places where Diem's sister-in-law, Madame Nhu, was speaking; and the following spring the May 2nd Committee (later the May 2nd Movement) was formed as the result of a student conference at Yale. M-2-M viewed the Vietnam war as a natural outgrowth of an imperialistic foreign policy (a view shared by the Young Socialist Alliance but not--at that time--by other young radical groups). At its meeting in December 1964, the National Council of SDS decided to call for an anti-war demonstration in Washington, D.C., in April, but there was no expectation that this protest would attract more than a few thousand

students. It was in early February 1965, when the U.S. began daily bombing raids in North Vietnam--and made it clear that American troops would be sent in whatever number necessary to win the war--that protests became widespread. The SDS march in Washington drew over 15,000, most of them students, the response being far greater than any of the SDS leaders had thought possible. (See Jack Smith, "The Demand is 'Peace,'" National Guardian, April 24, 1965, and "Report from the Editors: The SDS March on Washington," Studies on the Left, Spring 1965.) Starting at the University of Michigan, teach-ins were held at a number of colleges and universities in which speakers, most of them faculty members, dealt with various aspects of the Vietnam war. At their best, the teach-ins went beyond the immediate issue of the war and confronted questions about the nature of American society. At the teach-ins there was a rapport and an eagerness for learning that is rare on university campuses. The largest, Vietnam Day at Berkeley, drew up to 15,000 students at a time during the 36 hours it lasted. The teach-ins are discussed in "Teach-in: New Forum for Reason," The Nation, May 31, 1965; Mitchell Levitas, "Vietnam Comes to Oregon University," New York Times Magazine, May 9, 1965; and in two excellent articles by James Gilbert and Joan Wallach Scott in Studies on the Left, Summer 1965.

The most militant wing of the Vietnam protest was represented by the May 2nd Movement. Although M-2-M was still small, and was under strong influence from the Progressive Labor Party, it was quite active on eastern campuses and was ahead of its time in stressing two themes that were later to become extremely important to the New Left. Its anti-imperialist critique of American foreign policy denied that Vietnam was an "aberration" and insisted that Vietnam had to be understood in the light of American economic expansion. M-2-M identified with the Vietnamese (and Cuban) revolutionaries, and viewed them as fighters for national liberation from foreign capitalist control. And, M-2-M circulated a statement indicating that its members would refuse military service in Vietnam because of their opposition to the war.

This was a precursor to the present draft resistance movement, although M-2-M was so small that its statement received little attention at the time.

SUMMARY

Roughly since 1960 there has been a social movement, composed mainly of students, which has threatened the equilibrium of American society. This threat was not, at first, unambiguously radical: it was liberal in the nature of its surface demands (such as racial integration, an end to nuclear testing, and free speech) but radical in its distrust of compromise and in its proclivity for direct action. Over a period of years form and content merged, and the result was something that could legitimately be called a New Left. The concept of participatory democracy, as evolved by SDS and SNCC, offered both a mode of operation and a critique of welfare-state liberalism. Moreover, it furnished the basis for a revolt against the university environment in which most New Leftists found themselves. The idea that the "normal channels" are instruments of manipulation, and that people must be motivated to make decisions for themselves, was clearly applicable to the university as well as to other areas of society; this is what made student radicals realize that they no longer had simply to fight other people's battles.

Since 1965, the New Left had undergone a number of changes, both in its conception of society and in its strategic thinking. Draft resistance, underground newspapers, guerilla theatre, and above all black power, are terms that would have evoked few signs of recognition three short years ago. But none of them should be surprising in the light of what the New Left had become by 1965. For they are all variations on a theme: the recognition that American liberalism was not enough, that the good society was one in which people shaped their own institutions to meet their own needs.

The Student Movement in the 1950's: A Reminiscence

André Schiffrin

I've been asked to write about the organization that immediately preceded SDS, the Student League for Industrial Democracy, and to attempt to describe some aspects of student politics in the 'fifties. I discover that to do so really entails writing history, certainly a difficult task. It is one thing to reminisce orally or to look through the old files of organizational correspondence and publications; it is quite another matter to guess at the reasons people acted as they did and discover what may be learned from their experiences.¹

SLID in my time was always fascinated by its own history (reaching back, ultimately, to the Intercollegiate Socialist Society in 1905), and some decent research was done. But a great deal was happening

1. The more I've considered this article, the more persuaded I've become of the value of serious historical research in this field. The existence of a journal such as Radical America is already an encouraging indication. I think it might make sense, however, for student groups to consider the thought of going beyond individual research and considering the possibility of attempting some serious oral history projects in this field. It might prove interesting and fruitful to try interview projects on given campuses in which people are asked about their political activities in the 'thirties, 'forties and 'fifties, to discover who was active and passive, what motivated and threatened people, why the idealism of the 1930's vanished so suddenly after the war, etc.

about us which we were never able to investigate-- and, of course, we lacked the historical perspective which might make a great deal more understanding possible now. Without any such research, and in fact lacking much good work of any kind on the McCarthy Years, much that I say will be simple guesswork based on the miniscule sample that was represented by the student left in my time.

In fact, I doubt that it would be an exaggeration to say that in the early 'fifties all of the activists in every student group to the left of center numbered under one hundred. When I first joined SLID, in 1954, its total active membership was in the dozens. Of course, figures were inflated by leaving people on membership lists, allowing older, parttime students to stay on "at large", etc., but the Yale chapter that we started that year was the first real SLID campus group at the time. This undoubtedly represents a low point and a few years later, one could point to several hundred members and an aggregate student left of perhaps a thousand or more. The only national group of any size other than SLID was Students for Democratic Action, but much of its time during those years was spent in the throes of combating Shactmanite² (a brand of Trotskyism) infiltration, which finally succeeded in killing off SDA and having it replaced by college ADA chapters under much tighter organizational control. The Shactmanites too were miniscule and were effective only because they spent so much of their energy in search and destroy operations (though they had some very able leaders, a few of whom have become major figures in today's "Establishment" Left).

The rest of the left consisted in a barely existent YPSL, a largely paper Labor Youth League, that had a chapter in Wisconsin and various groups

2. The Independent Socialist League (and its youth affiliate, the Socialist Youth League), formerly the Workers' Party, emanated from a split with the Socialist Workers' Party in 1940 over the question of support for the Soviet Union in World War II. The group's identified leader was Max Shachtman. (editor's note)

that one heard of as existing in California but whose existence was never tangibly manifested. Finally, there were scattered Marxist discussion groups on individual campuses and the occasional gathering of students around a popular radical teacher, such as Mulford Q. Sibley or Hans Gerth.

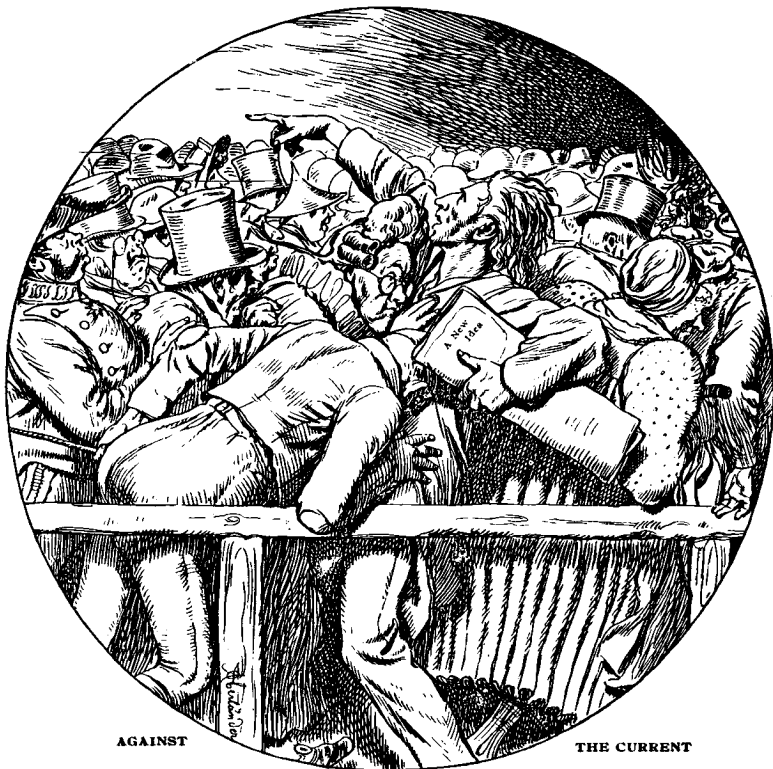
Under these circumstances, it took several basic characteristics to have existed at all, one of which was a sense of humor and of proportion. No one would have dreamt of using an expression like "the movement" and phrases connoting mass action were usually voiced in a heavy Yiddish accent, suggesting Union Square revolutionary rhetoric of the thirties.

The size of the student left is a major factor in what I am going to describe. People felt very differently from the way students (and others) do now their world was far more limited and much, much less was done, attempted or even contemplated. My intention is neither to apologize for this nor to suggest that in our way, we did all that could have been done. But I think that it is important to examine the very different context and to see what if anything this may suggest for today or for the future.

Why were there so few of us? The first answer is simply that, as is still the case, we were a microcosm of the society as a whole. There was no left to speak of anywhere in the 'fifties. No groups, no magazines, practically no individuals spoke up for values that would have been considered on the "left" at that time, much less now. (Only a few of us in SLID thought of ourselves as socialists of any kind. Most of our members were liberals, though, interestingly enough, they were willing to belong to a group that was meant to be a coalition of the left and were willing to consider and discuss the socialist ideas and solutions that we put forward. I suspect that most of us, liberals or socialists, have moved considerably to the left in our thinking since the fifties, as have most people.) At the time, however, SLID came close to representing the far left in the universities partly because of what we stood for and partly because there simply weren't any groups to the left of us, sizeable as that ideological area may now seem to have been.

I suspect that we can accurately think of an immediate postwar wave of reform in which every country seriously considered the possibility of a more equitable social reconstruction. In their different ways, the 1945-47 governments of both halves of Europe manifested this, and the Truman administration had the germs of a genuine program of this kind. SLID and other groups in the late 'forties seemed to represent this and they were part of a national reformist mood. It may seem difficult to believe at this date, but one of the national debate topics in my high school years was whether the railroads should be nationalized. Truman, after all, had proposed a genuine, national health plan, civil rights, housing, etc., which were still subjects of debate; and this is what the Left had concentrated on.

By the time the Korean War and Senator McCarthy had had their influence, not only ideology but almost any other issue had died. The extent of



the national fear (and consequent silence) was extraordinary and, as in any period of crisis, one could see how profoundly homogeneous our society really is. There was practically no one left, by the early 'fifties, to contradict the national mood. True, a few left-wing papers managed to survive but were rather pathetic. Not only were they financially poor and abandoned, but they had relatively little to say (and it must be obvious that one is linked to the other). I can still remember the May Day issues of the Socialist Party's Socialist Call, by that time reduced to a monthly magazine, with its meagre inches of "greetings" from a few unions (the Oil and Chemical Workers, and several I.L.G.W.U. and Amalgamated Clothing Workers' locals), and the Berks County (Pennsylvania) party branch. The back pages of all the leftwing papers boasted their skeletal constituency in all, a poverty of supporters that should have moved even the FBI and the few others who bothered to keep up with the radical press.

THE STUDENT GROUPS

How did this affect the students? In the predictable ways. Kids often join political groups according to their family loyalties (thus a good percentage of SLID members had socialist backgrounds), and those who need to rebel must have a place to turn. A paper, a magazine, or even a pamphlet is a sign of life, an indication that one is not utterly alone, that the crazy ideas which you have nurtured in your adolescent head and elaborated over long discussions in the schoolroom cafeteria actually exist in reality, are demonstrable, appeal to others, can move kingdoms and powers. I suspect that there are many who share the appetite for printed material that has always been with me; judging from the crowded literature tables that still abound, this is still the case. To draw from my personal experience for a moment, I still vividly recall the difficulty with which, in high school, I found any radical or socialist material at all. Communist bookstores still existed, but other types were rare indeed. I lived largely off imported

goods, Fabian pamphlets on the problems of nationalised industries, and British Labor Party manifestos. I remember the excitement in SLID with which we received the utterly staid mimeographed bulletins of the (social democratic) socialist international. When the Korean war started, I spent several days at the UN library trying to read the reports from all sides to discover what had happened. New York, in that respect, was still a haven and I suspect it was partly because of this that various radical groups could still maintain tiny "New York Regional groups". Together, all the resources of the left, domestic and international, could encourage a handful of youngsters who then joined the fraction of their choice and headed off throughout the country to create at Yale or Wisconsin, Antioch or Reed, the "National" organization that would give hope to those who stayed behind.

I mention all this partly because the foreign aspects of SLID in those days were an important factor. For a while, all our national officers, myself included, were "foreign born" (to use that thirties expression). Not that we were children of socialist politicians in exile. We were all pretty average Americans by the time we reached college age. But for whatever reason, whether our own alienation, our refusal to accept America as it was, or a feeling that it was our moral duty to help our new country back to sanity, we opted out. Coming from New York, as much of the left then did, I suspect we were closer to Europe in our search for solutions and in our outlook if not our ideology. SLID's foreign policy, for instance, for many years centered on the Gaitskill plan, which called for the neutralization of a united Germany and Eastern Europe as a start of great power detente (a plan which I suspect still makes excellent sense but never seems somehow to have entered the mainstream of American politics). SLID also greatly valued its associate membership in the International Union of Socialist Youth-- "associate" because as part of the tax exempt LID we participated only in educational activity, a tax exemption which in turn got the LID the meagre trade

union funds which kept the whole house of cards from collapsing then and there.

Membership in IUSY was valuable for all sorts of reasons, the major one being the maintenance of morale. I came to think of an International as a group consisting of people able to say, "Ah, but elsewhere we represent a mass movement". An awful lot of our fellow IUSY members, we were to discover, were not much better off than we but the contacts were valid and we found a wide choice of comrades, many of whom were our genuine counterparts, just as some of them proved to be harrassed party bureaucrats trying, as in England, to keep the Trotskyists from taking over their youth movement for the nth time.

Our nearest comrades were the Canadians and though in the early 'fifties the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation was no great force it did represent a real socialist achievement, one of which I still feel vicariously proud. (See the recently reissued paperback Agrarian Socialism, written by Seymour Lipset before he changed his mind about life.) The Canadians suggested that politics as we then thought of it could still succeed in North America, that people could still redirect as the CCF had done in the Province of Saskatchewan the economy to serve their needs, that American exploitation, as in oil, could be kept out, that social services could be improved and even (we were, after all, the student league for industrial democracy), that factories could be turned over to the workers who manned them.³

The economic issues that I have just mentioned are rarely discussed nowadays. Nationalization and public ownership seem to have totally disappeared from the scene and though I think I understand the reasons why this has happened, I am sorry about it. One of SLID's major preoccupations, abstract as it must now seem, was the debate of this question and it is a debate that should, I think, still be with us. The

3. The terribly dated sound of "industrial democracy" may conceal the fact that it is the same thing as participatory democracy and that one of the reasons we kept the name (until we decided that it would be better press to choose the jazzier name of sds) was that we believed in this and felt it still to be a central issue.

ownership of America is still central to all else that follows as, in a curious way, is beginning to be recognized in discussions of ghetto economics. Of course, we are not likely at this point to nationalize anything and in the kind of corporate state that we have developed, a nationalized industry is likely to be like any other. Yet I still feel that it is only by developing entities that work for other than profit, whether local poor people's corporations, parallel institutions in the public or quasipublic sector or even national bodies that we can use our resources as they should be. This is really not the place to elaborate on this kind of discussion: my insistence on it probably suffices to give a feel of the old fashioned economic issues that concerned us and that we felt were central to altering the power structure of our country.

PARALLELS

For it should also be added that in many ways, our analysis of the society in which we lived resembles that which has been developed since and though one can point to a great many differences, there are also many continuities. The question of participatory or industrial democracy is one. The role of the professions and of professionals is another--this was among the last projects that we initiated and it is obviously a problem still very much with us. Concern with the university and its social role was another; the opposition to colonialism yet another. Though the passage of time is obvious when one realizes that we were still talking about freeing colonies and though somewhat embarrassed by its dated slogans, we nonetheless joined with the movement for colonial freedom in having meetings on Dependent Peoples Freedom (sic) Day--a festival which I've always imagined had been baptized by an Indian or Burmese comrade.

Well, then, what did we do? If we had all these interesting ideas, how effective were we?

To answer this, we have to return to the

national mood which I described at the beginning of this article and to another related factor: people were scared. I think that this, more than anything else mattered and it must not be underestimated. McCarthy's major achievement had been to scare everyone, down the line. People were afraid to join anything, to sign anything, to lend their names to anything. You had to assume that the University would turn over membership lists to the FBI and that, at some point, your turn might come before some committee or other. Of course, compared to much that has been done since, this was small pickings. We were never in danger the way SNCC workers are everyday, we always stayed meticulously on the side of the law, and civil disobedience was not even discussed. Times were different and that is all that one can say. Yet, ours was practically the only form of dissent available on campus and no matter how respectable it all was, it drew few takers. People would come to meetings. at Yale we were, for instance, the first sign of public debate that had been around for a very long time. A speech by Norman Thomas or a debate on the need for national health insurance (our first two meetings) were hardly revolutionary actions, yet they drew counterpickets from the followers of William Buckley, countless expressions of consternation and disbelief and finally enough sympathizers so that a viable group could survive from year to year.

Public meetings were about all we did do, along with discussion groups, debates, leaflets, newspapers, research and the usual paperparaphernalia that surrounds any organization. In these days, one of our major difficulties was to prove that there was a poverty problem, that not all Americans were rich, one of our first pamphlets (by Gabriel Kolko) was on the subject. Of course, we tried to work with local groups, such as they were, and we did a decent job of informing and educating our membership. We did a certain amount with other campus groups and eagerly joined that national co-ordinating committee of youth organizations that only much later we discovered had been set up with CIA help to "represent" American youth abroad.

Looking back on my experiences with the Yale group, rather than as officer of the national group (which was a mere ephemeral business in many ways), what strikes me is the degree to which our effectiveness was conditioned by the limits of the larger society. We were able to raise questions and provoke debate on a number of issues but in the end I suppose our real import was in reasserting the existence of dissent, in simply breaking the silence and suggesting to others that, at some point, on some issue, they might follow suit. In our values, we were opposed by the large majority I can still remember the real hostility and vehemence we met when we proposed that James Farmer, then our field secretary and later head of CORE, debate the then attorney general of Georgia who'd been invited to Yale. The college newspaper twisted our action into suggesting, rather ludicrously, that we were trying to keep the Southerner from speaking on campus. The support given this charge served to remind us how opposed people still were to what we were trying to do; how much they had disliked our rocking their boat ever so little.

On the other hand, the only time that we can claim to have helped lead a mass action was when we found ourselves in agreement with a majority sentiment, in the case of the Hungarian refugees. In this instance, our anti-communism was not that different from anyone else's, and people were willing to join with us in a common cause, though they probably would have refused to go along with the much less effective anti-colonialist gestures that we proposed.

ANTI-COMMUNISM

I have no doubt that our intense anti-communism helped SLID survive in those years; but several amendments must be made to this suggestion. First, anti-communism undoubtedly reflected the personal convictions of the SLID members--the few students actively sympathetic to the Communist Party usually joined the Labor Youth League, not SLID, and

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potential Trotskyists had several groups to choose from. The question at the time was primarily one of civil liberties and though the problem was hotly debated within SLID, the official position was similar to that held by all those taking the "liberal" line on civil liberties: opposition to all aspects of McCarthyism and the persecution of communists allied with a refusal to actually collaborate with communist organizations. This question, needless to say, was largely theoretical. There were no communist groups with which to collaborate (though had there been, we would have undoubtedly refused). Individual communist students may have joined SLID; there were certainly a number of Marxists or Trotskyists who did join but, in all cases that I can remember, they kept to the same agreement that was felt by those to the right in SLID, namely that issues were debated within a generally accepted framework. The only area where working with communists was seriously debated was in the international field. There as I've mentioned before, SLID tended to agree with the position taken at various times by Aneurin Bevin and Hugh Gaitskell, i.e., detente and disengagement and the restoration of neutral national entities rather than the advocacy of international united fronts.

I think it important to realize first how much Russia has changed since that time and how much we identified with those on the left who had been persecuted by the Communists. We felt we would be betraying those who had opposed Stalin's dictatorship from the left if we collaborated here, or abroad, with those who defended it. Obviously, the overwhelming propaganda of the time twisted all of this to completely underplay the degree to which the West was also at fault and the ways in which our own attitudes would be

used by the CIA or others.⁴

Where would SLID members of the 1950's stand were they students today? It's a question that it would be fascinating to answer but I doubt an answer is possible. Many have changed with the years, becoming more radical rather than less, with age and experience. But that has been true of people who belonged to no student groups as well. Volunteering as a lawyer, going South or in a ghetto; acting as an intern in a big city hospital; losing tenure for one's opposition to the war--this kind of experience has radicalized many a member of my generation who had never heard of SLID or any other of that small rainbow of the left. Yet those who belonged were, I think, a representative cross section of a potential constituency, as SLID growth from the early to late 'fifties shows. On the whole, were we ever able to have the kind of face to face discussion that happens so rarely across generational lines, I think we would see a gradual shift from the fifties into the sixties, carrying similar beliefs and commitments from the postwar Korean years into the present.

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4. The one factor which above all was missing from this was our ignorance of the role of the CIA from this arena. I think it's fair to say that nearly all of us believed in the major SLID plans on international affairs which opposed colonialism as well as soviet domination of its satellites. It would be interesting to see (and perhaps someone will follow this up in some oral history interviews) how everyone reacted to the CIA disclosures. The NSA people, the religious youth groups and all the others were, I have no reason to doubt, equally sincere in the foreign policy positions that they took. The gradual discovery of CIA manipulation taught us all a great deal more about America. Perhaps the saddest irony of all was the very genuine pride we all used to feel--from whatever group--when, in discussing American youth groups with foreigners, we pointed to the genuine independence which we enjoyed as opposed to the official ties and over subsidies which so many of our European counterparts received.

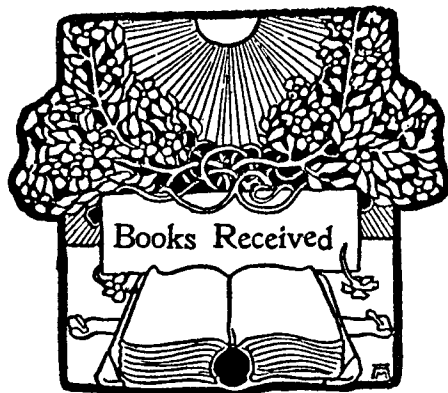
THE (OTHER) GENERATIONAL GAP

After many years of work with SLID, we too became persuaded that a generational gap did exist and that it was an insuperable one. Much as we hoped and tried, it seemed impossible to make common cause with the left that had been active in the 'thirties and had fallen into the rationalizations and evasions of the forties and fifties. That gap still exists and it carries us from Jay Lovestone all the way over (I'm guessing now) to Irving Howe. The differences that have alienated this generation of former leftists from the current generation do seem to be basic and perhaps immutable. I do not, of course, know enough about the way students think today to be able to say how much there is still in common with my own generation; I suspect there is much.

Students in the 'fifties used to be known as the silent generation. It would be foolish to suggest that SLID ever gave voice to this generation, at best, it suggested that one could speak up and that opposition still had to be voiced. In many ways, we showed the signs of having followed what one might call the silenced generation; it was difficult then, it still is difficult now for me to think of anyone aged, let us say, 40 to 55, who represents something on the American Left one would respect. The same lack seemed to exist among those representing our generation, those 30 to 40. What is fascinating to watch at this point is the emergence of an intellectual group on the left that had never formed in the fifties but that now represents a coherent generational outlook. The list is long and respectable, whatever your preference, from Chomsky to Coffin, Lynd to Kopkind, McDermott to Lemisch, Kampf to Ferber: there are people speaking out who are relevant and even right.

Perhaps it is this that matters the most. The betrayal of the intellectuals or of the left, that we witnessed around the cold war years seemed to mark a new stage in our history. American society showed the degree to which it could be cowed and persuaded into accepting a new ideology and into abandoning dissent. We would never have guessed that the generation in which

we found ourselves had such hidden reserves and would be followed by so different an outlook. It is a lesson which, hopefully, will never be needed.



James P. Cannon, Letters from Prison. New York: Merit Books, 1968. \$5.95.

James Gilbert, Writers and Partisans. New York: Wiley & Sons, 1968. \$5.95.

Staughton Lynd, The Intellectual Origins of American Radicalism. N.Y.: Pantheon Books, \$7.95.

Theodore Roszak, ed. The Dissenting Academy. New York: Pantheon Books, 1967. \$6.95.

Tim Wohlforth, The Struggle for Marxism in the United States. New York: Bulletin Publications, 1968. 75¢.

Poetry & Revolution

Dave Wagner

Z: An Anthology of Revolutionary Poetry, ed. by Dan Georgakas. Smrna Press, Box 418, NYC 10009. \$1.25.

If I saw a large Z on the cover of almost any other book of political poetry, I'd think it stood for the rapt snore-job that most poetry of this sort produces. But this Z means 'the scrawl of ZOE!' (life), and it epitomizes pretty well what Dan Georgakas thinks revolutionary poetry should be, as well as be about. Now there are few poets or editors who are in a better position to put together an anthology of this kind, since Georgakas is one of the best writers in the 'mimeo revolution' that's reviving up right now, and since he's also a Greek of the most violently democratic persuasions. In the book's dedication to Yannis Ritsos (a Greek poet imprisoned since April '67 by the junta), Georgakas writes, "Fascism and poetry cannot co-exist," and the book returns to this contradictory condition of Greece several times, to the specifics of repression and the spirit of the struggle against it.

And it's all poetry. There are none of the jelloid and generalized emotions which a lot of self-consciously "political" poets demand except out of sheer moral and ideological pressure; the usual crackling of abstractions--like bubble-gum & eggshells--is not to be heard in the Greek voices of this anthology. "Their hands have become part of the rifle. The rifle extends their hands. Their hands extend their souls."

It's ALL poetry. Georgakas' work in the mimeo revolution has put him in contact with the best of the new, serious poets who crank out their sounds on ancient Gestetners in bedrooms and kitchens and who are fighting to democratize the art of taking poetry into the street and the street into the poem. T. L. Kryss, Will Inman, Wm. Wantling, Doug Blazek of OLE! magazine, Kirby Congdon, Marcus J. Grapes all have something in

here, alongside the work of other excellent poets like Harold Norse, George Dowden, LeRoi Jones. Morgan Gibson of Milwaukee is in here; even Charles Bukowski!

Some people might wonder, though, what this is doing in a political context:

Last time I saw Louise
 she took a book.
 Told me I'd have
 to come get it
 if I wanted to
 have it again.
 Don't know why
 she'd say that.
 Use a book
 like that.

(Phil Weidman, "Louise")

or this haiku by Etheridge Knight:

Late sun searches cells.
 Drunks stagger like dewinged flies
 on jailhouse floor

but they are well within Georgakas'

vision of what a revolutionary poem is. As I understand it (from the variety of work included under this title), he assumes that political subjects are those of relationships between people, whether they are power relationships (the haiku just quoted), or the intimate freedom of a man and woman running up a hill. And then to be revolutionary, a poem must lay open a part of this range of human relationships; the emotion and experience become historically accessible through the poem, and the revolutionary impulse is kept alive.

on seeing pharoah sanders blowing
 (set 2)
 split.

A Revolutionary Strategy?

Stuart Ewen

Andre Gorz, A Strategy for Labor. Boston: Beacon Press, 1967. \$1.45 in pbk.

Andre Gorz's Strategy for Labor deals with the crucial question of radical organizing tactics for a highly industrialized working class in western Europe and the United States. His tactical suggestions are derived from an insightful critique of modern industrial society, a critique which finds roots and historical expression in the theoretical writings of Marx. As such, it may be advisable to discuss the Marxian conception of the history of social production, in order to give Gorz's analysis a broader historical base, as well as to appraise the strategic conclusions drawn from his analysis.

I. A MARXIAN BACKGROUND

In the 1840's, Karl Marx along with Frederick Engels began to delineate a historical theory of revolution. The perspective grew out of a polemical treatment of the "Young" or "Left" Hegelians who were injecting the German public with "horror and awe" of their self-proclaimed revolutionary "cataclysmic dangerousness and criminal ruthlessness."¹ These "revolutionary" Hegelians, concerned with change and a progression toward Freedom and Reason, conceived of this change on the level of a separate and self-existent "Spirit" or "Mind." To

1. Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, The German Ideology, p. 1.

them, the process of history lay in the framework of an evolving "Mind" which, through the process of self-conscious reflection, elevated generic man, and (we might presume) his material environment, from pre-history to history, the time when man would live, think and breathe in tune with his full potentialities. To these idealistic thinkers, the mind lived a separate existence from what we commonly call the "real" world, and yet as both dialectical energy and the playing field of history, became the "real" world.

Marx, concerned with the fragmented world view of this idealism, began to formulate a revolutionary methodology which synthesized many of the processes and perceptions of idealistic philosophy with the phenomena of the concrete, material world. In "Feuerbach: Opposition of the Materialistic and Idealistic Outlook," Marx presented a conception of history, of alienation and ultimately of Freedom, rooted in the human condition of production and those social relationships that grow out of production. It is this supposition, when viewed ahistorically, which has tended to lead much of Western Marxism into its sterile mechanistic materialism, an economic determinism which "explained" men's motives (good and evil) through the narrow pursuit of their immediate material self-interest. And yet, it is this same supposition which, when understood incisively, brings Marxism to its full fruition. When Marx spoke of "production" or of "economics," the terms were not divested of historical content; rather, they gained meaning only in terms of their respective histories. Viewed in their context, the contemporary definitions of "economics" "production" become a part of the ideology of the moment. The economics and production of which Marx spoke, on the other hand, gain meaning through the totality of history.² And as Marx's history totalizes vertically, his economics broadens horizontally.

2. This notion finds roots in Hegel's invective against schematizing formalism in his Phenomenology of the Mind.

"In the social production which men carry on they enter into definite relations that are indispensable and independent of their will; these relations of production correspond to a definite stage of development of their material powers of production. The sum total of these relations or production constitutes the economic structure of society. . . . (my emphasis, S.E.) on which rise legal and political superstructures and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness."³

The way that men express their lives, produce their means of subsistence, conceive of themselves and raise their children, "so they are."⁴ As the production of a certain piece of machinery may be historically significant by heightening man's dexterity in the manipulation of resources,⁵ so too are governments and legal structures, language and concepts of sexuality products of a certain social level of production. In the revolutionary conception of history, nearly all human relationships are thus economic, their intercourses productive. As Marx has stated,

"Our conception of history depends on our ability to expound the real process of production . . . and to comprehend the form of intercourse connected with this and created by this (i.e., civil society in its various stages), as the basis of all history."⁶

As Marxism conceives of itself not merely as a revolutionary movement in the sense commonly

3. Marx, Preface to Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy.

4. The German Ideology, p. 7.

5. And the manipulation of man by his resources under capitalism.

6. The German Ideology, p. 28.

understood, but as a profoundly historical movement, this perception takes on significance in the delineation of revolutionary activity,⁷ and regarding the pitfalls of reformist ideology. In being concerned with man and his freedom, Marx was ultimately concerned with man's social production or conception of himself. He saw the necessity of extricating this "conception of himself" from the contemporary definitions of "human nature," and placing it within the process of history. Marx's concept of change was a qualitative one. He was not concerned with making alienated man's lot a "happier" one through the satisfaction of alienated desires. His incision is more fundamental, into the quality of that "happiness"⁸ and of those desires.

II. GORZ'S VISION OF CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY

Gorz's Strategy for Labor is a significant book for Marxists of the non-Communist world; and yet it does not, as the title may imply, offer a convincing strategy by which we as American radicals may plug ourselves and the masses of working people into the process of revolution. Importantly, the problems in Gorz's book do not arise solely out of tactical-political differences with other radicals but also out of the analysis of contemporary society that serves as a conceptual groundwork within the book itself. More explicitly, Strategy for Labor betrays a tension between the critical historical method of Marx described above, and a serious allegiance to old left suppositions concerning the where and how of revolution, which tend to disregard and obfuscate that historical method. Consequently Gorz's work emerges as somewhat fragmented, and strategically unenlightened. His "important contribution to the analysis of contemporary society"⁹ seems to have little impression upon his own

7. . . .and, of course, analysis.

8. Herbert Marcuse has clarified this. "You tell me that you are happy. I tell you that you are unhappy." Connections, I. #2, p. 5.

9. Herbert Marcuse, back cover of Strategy for Labor.

prescriptive formula as he begins to concretize his notion of a proper labor strategy. This tension ambiguously offers both a challenge and a concession to the ideological children of Leninist thought. Without doubt the challenge is most important, for it makes the book worthwhile as radical literature, for both its radical critique of contemporary society and of Leninist and reformist thinking to date.

THE ROOTS OF MARXISM

Gorz's vision is firmly rooted in the philosophy of Marx as presented in the Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844, and The German Ideology (1846). It is a perspective which springs from the Marxian conception of history and more recent social and cultural critiques which utilize Marx's methodology in dealing with highly technologized societies.¹⁰ Gorz conceives of an unalienated, free man as one whose existence is self-determined. (This is not to say that he argues for the deceptive notion of "human nature," which is used to justify the exigencies of historical rather than fundamental needs.) Rather, he has a conception of man as a historical being whose definition of himself and relationships with others are a part of the history of social production, and correlative to the nature and "ideology" of that production at any point in history. When social production (through human agents) objectifies man, commoditizes him, then so man is. When it subjectifies him, and produces to serve his individual human needs, his freedom in the Marxian sense is realized.

Gorz perceives in his analysis of technological society the breadth and profundity of alienation far beyond the definitions set forth by orthodox Leninist theory. Like Marx in the Manuscripts, Gorz describes man's most deep alienation as that alienation from himself in the social

10. Among these are Marcuse (to whom Gorz refers), T. W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer.

process of production. As man is defined within the terminology of a consumer or "money" philosophy, he begins to judge his successes and failures, the quality of his life in terms of the values of that philosophy.¹¹ Gorz's conception of revolutionary socialism, then, is fundamental. He must reject traditional reformist demands, i.e. higher wages, as not in themselves transcending the "givens" of modern industrial society. The demand for wages per se becomes the demand of the working class for the right to become better consumers--to become more viable commodities on the social marketplace. As Gorz notes, "Such demands express less and less the interest of the working class as such, and more and more the interest of a group of underprivileged consumers."¹² And yet it is this consumer economy, the historical needs produced by modern society, which is the foundation of the workers' alienation. Alienation is not merely a quantitative condition, not a product of scarcity; rather, it is a condition of human beings, all human beings, (even the bourgeoisie) who participate in anti-human relations of social production. If it is a capitalist system which makes man (labor) an object of its process, then it is capitalism which alienates and not one man's inability to succeed in the implicit terms of that capitalism.

In a society where the satisfaction of fundamental needs (food, air, sexuality, etc.) is or can be achieved, man is and must be radicalized in terms of how these needs are satisfied. The "how" of satisfaction is the process of history in modern industrial society. Gorz points out, insightfully, that as western society begins to feed, water, breathe and ejaculate its inhabitants, the old Marxian distinction between fundamental needs and historical needs¹³

11. See George Simmel for an interesting account: "The Metropolis and Mental Life," in Josephson, Man Alone. Also see Philosophy of Money.

12. Gorz, p. 25.

13. Those needs created by the historical level of social production. See citation to footnote 14.

becomes clouded:

"After the destruction of the natural environment, and its replacement by a social environment, fundamental needs can only be satisfied in a social manner . . . for example, . . . the need for air . . . is immediately apprehended as the need for vacations (an historical industry) . . . the need to eat (means) . . . the need for cafeterias, restaurants, canned foods. . .¹⁴

Likewise, as an alienated labor force demands higher wages (which the corporations are, within limits, willing and able to grant) their bargaining successes are "rapidly . . . made into a paying proposition by those who granted them . . . a source of additional profits for the consumer goods industry."¹⁵ Ironically, the workers' attempt to escape alienation (without a transcendent and qualitative understanding of that alienation) only further involves them within the very process from which they seek release. Thus the contradictions to which Gorz addresses himself are found both in contemporary society and in the traditional reform movements which in the end aid and abet that society. By aid, we do not necessarily mean conscious ideological comfort (although such may be the case). Rather, as with the American Communist Party's accommodation to Franklin D. Roosevelt in the late 1930's, we designate movements which, by accepting the layman's understanding of monopoly capitalist economics, hardly created lasting class fissures in the society and usually held up goals which were absorbed profitably (both economically and politically) by the ruling class. And while the benefits of a reformed labor movement are thus transvaluated into the gained profits of the bourgeoisie and furthered alienation of the worker, increasingly the latter's definitions of self, life,

¹⁴. Gorz, p. 89.

¹⁵. Ibid., p. 57.

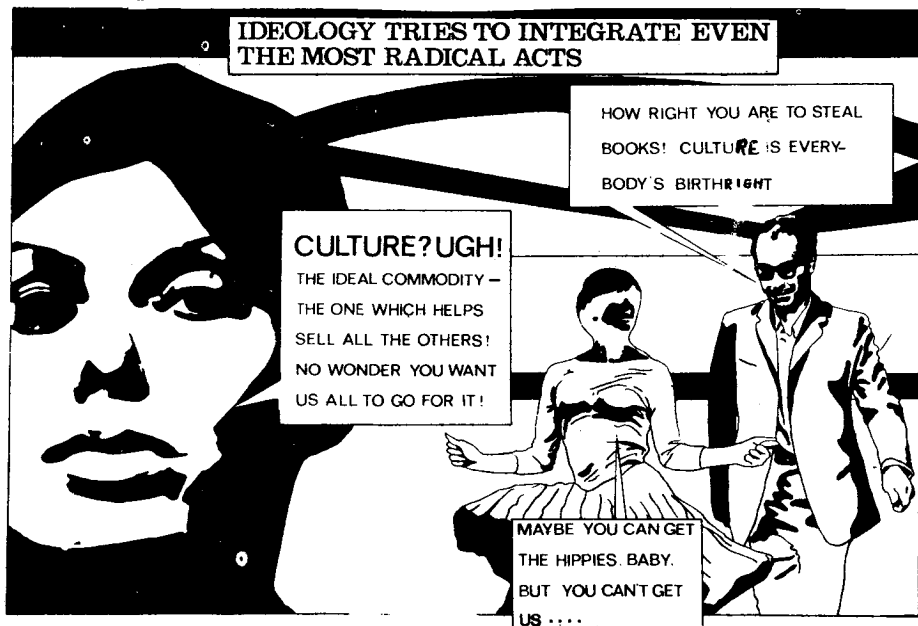
happiness and success are created in terms of commodities, the very subjects of his alienation.

It is at this point, then, that Marx's conception of social production becomes a meaningful approach to the totality of life. "Alienation" as a sociological concept is no longer limited to an on-the-job analysis; leisure time can no longer be viewed merely as a respite which revolutionaries fight to increase. Alienation is, to Gorz, a total non-life in the garb of life. Thus capitalist social production, ultimately the way man produces his non-self, is inescapable within the facilities (work and play, public and private) of capitalism.

Gorz's vision is a significant one whose implications should inform the meaning of radical strategy. Primarily, to organize around the basis of alienation, an articulated goal of most left-wing organizations, should mean to organize men around and about their lives as a whole, and the contradictions and unhappiness created by the whole of their lives. Further--and here we find links to the Marxian conception of political parties and education--both radical theory and practice (for the two are inseparable) must be transcendent. A radical consciousness may be the ability to objectify a society which is "trying" to objectify you. One must comprehend the ability of a society to coopt seeming criticisms and reform actions into a higher social-psychological repression and not merely nullify the meaning of these reforms but also turn them against the reformers. A significant radical action, Gorz argues, is one which cannot be absorbed and neutralized, one which carries capitalism irreversibly nearer to its destruction, and man to himself and his freedom.

III. GORZ'S STRATEGY: A REFORM BY ANY OTHER NAME. . .

Yet Gorz's book is not, as may have been implied, solely a "transcendent" critique of contemporary industrial society. The critique is impressively



situationist internationale

there,¹⁶ but it merely serves Gorz's purpose as a point of embarkation for more strategic considerations. What the reader tends to feel, as he tries to correlate these strategic suggestions with Gorz's critique of contemporary society, is the critical disparity between the two.

In a contemporary society, where the satiation of fundamental needs is possible and great "poverty (continues) without misery",¹⁷ the radicals' dependence upon an inevitable "growing discontent of the masses" may be futile.¹⁸ Historical needs no longer have a revolutionary imperative. To argue, to petition, to demand, even to fight for "more" within the defined "more's" of contemporary history is not an escape from the poverty of life.

16. Although not as impressive as in One Dimensional Man, which does not present a strategy.

17. In Strategy for Labor, Gorz is dealing with the majority of the working class in the highly industrialized (imperialist) nations. His analysis does not imply that some segments of the population in the developed countries and the masses of people in the "underdeveloped," imperialist-ridden nations do not experience "misery."

18. Gorz, pp. 22-23.

Gorz carries this analysis to the point of rejecting quantitative reform politics, and at the same time realizes the relative weakness of the contemporary working class to wrest power from where it now lies. His strategy, then, emerges as an argument for structural reforms, or as he tries to convincingly put it, it, "non-reformist reforms." Gorz feels that the only meaningful strategies are those which help bring capitalism to crisis, and strengthen the working class.¹⁹ Traditional reforms, i.e., quantitative demands for wages, longer vacations, shorter hours, etc., are easily absorbed, and tend to further consumerize rather than radicalize an already alienated working class. As to Marx economics was a world historical phenomenon, to Gorz a working class seeking an "economic" (qualitative) alteration in its conditions must, too, view itself in world historic terms. When "economic" demands represent a qualitative acceptance of the historic needs of capitalism, they become meaningless.

In dealing with non-reformist reforms as an effective means of "shifting the struggle away from the purely economic (in ahistorical sense) towards the level of class struggle,"²⁰ Gorz points to three levels of consciousness which lead to a non-cooptable struggle. The levels are analyses of (1) "the work situation," (2) "the purpose of work," and (3) "the reproduction of labor power: i.e., the life style and milieu of the worker." These are clearly qualitative aspects of life under capitalism which must be dealt with in the process of building a working class movement. And yet the implications which one might draw from a call for such analyses go far beyond the traditional work situation to which Gorz adheres.

Gorz sees the unions as the medium for a structural reform strategy. Yet the efficacy of this medium, in terms of the consciousness of modern

19. Ibid., p. 20. Here "strength" means autonomy as a conscious working class.

20. Ibid., p. 32.

unions, is not analyzed. If, as Gorz seems to assume, the problem with modern industrial unions is strategic, then his proposed alteration of strategy could be argued within these unions. But often, as in the case of the American AFL-CIO, the difference between Gorz and the union movement is far more than strategic. (Gorz himself must recognize this, for in his attempt to present a grounds for such strategic approaches, he (a Frenchman) is forced to offer examples from the working class organizations of Northern Italy.) Surely Gorz's assertion that structural reforms are significant only if each step is taken in constant cognition of ultimate goals (Socialism) would be zealously resisted by the American union leadership and much of the membership. But even among certain segments of the Communist left of Europe, the qualitative aspect of Gorz's analysis and its revolutionary implications would not be practically acceptable. The Marxian conception of self-determination means far more than it is commonly taken for; it means autonomy within a context which accepts human individual values as the priority and purpose of social production.

Gorz fails to deal with the "how" of worker's power in terms of diverting the unions from their current strategies, and as in the case of the United States, from their current, and self-declared ideology. Gorz has all the ingredients for a strategy of true counter-structure; by the creation of "structures" which not only verbally oppose, but formally and philosophically (actively) oppose the givens of contemporary society; structures which bring men at irreversable odds with their alienation. Yet perhaps in concession to old left tendencies, he chooses to redirect what may not be redirectable. When Gorz says, "Never lose sight of ultimate goals," he is not speaking of revolution in romantic, colloquial terms, and yet his adherence to certain 'fields of play' is (or appears to be) a romantic and colloquial attachment to the Stalinist (and other reformist) agencies of Western Europe and the United States.

Gorz views social production as a life

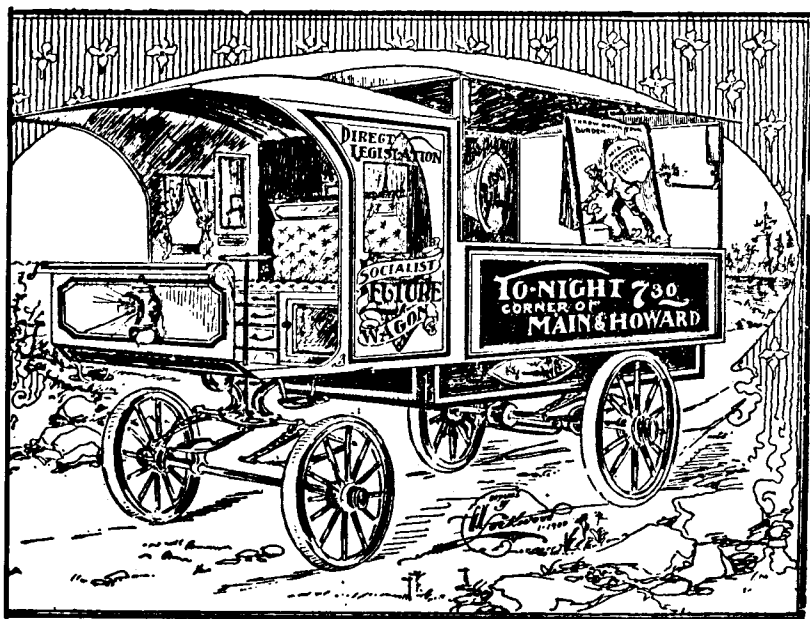
totality, yet his organization or strategy is an attempt to concretize it in traditional areas of organization. If one is never to lose sight of the revolutionary goals, then one must never lose sight of revolutionary dimensions; when one does, then there is no saying how the structural reforms "on the job" might be compensated for, or coopted "off the job". As Gorz implies, one is on the job whether he is "on" or "off".

Ultimately, Gorz tries to make it easy for traditional leftists to accept the idiom of Marxism (or what is commonly known as "Neo-Marxism"). Yet one feels he is making it too easy. For in the translation of Marx's conception of social production into terms acceptable to Gorz's political associates, the former seems subsumed by the latter. The message of his critique of contemporary society is a call for a total reevaluation of the limitations, strategies and ideology of reformism and of unionism itself; yet his own reevaluation is far from total as he delineates his strategy for labor. Particularly notable by its absence is an attempt to extend or rework the definition of the "working class" within technological society. Surely, as historical needs turn man's values toward commoditization, a poverty without misery, and further away from himself, these needs do not leave a nineteenth-century class analysis wholly intact.

This criticism of Gorz is a friendly one, a recognition of a tension within his thinking. There are certain aspects of the tension which are indeed impressive and crucial to the understanding of radicals in America and elsewhere. But as a vehicle of that tension, the book as a whole leaves much to be desired. Strategy for Labor betrays little understanding of the consciousness or even the immediate desires of the modern corporate unions or their membership, at a time when a break from the priorities of traditional left-wing organizations and a further exploration of the broad implications of Gorz's societal critique is in order.

Gorz's strategy, then, is not comprehensive. In understanding the simultaneity of "on the job" and "off the job" the radical theorist must develop

a total strategy--a strategy of where people's lives are not merely within the processes of their traditional "economic" existence but within the process of their whole lives. Gorz, limited by his traditional medium, still views organizing within a factory context; yet the far-reaching meaning of his critique implies that to organize in a truly revolutionary sense means to develop a program on an autonomous level, with a total vision and understanding of alienated existence.



THE COMRADE

The Radicals' Use of History, II

Staughton Lynd

After searching criticism of James Weinstein, Paul Buhle and myself,* John Strawn comes to his own conclusions in so cryptic and condensed a manner as to conclude very little at all. He says: "The central task for radical history is to determine the relationship between conscious activity and actual event, between the conjunctures of social forces and the consciousness of the men they affect." To which I find myself responding: Yes, of course; that was what we were all talking about; but are you under the impression that by using those words anything has been clarified? Again, Mr. Strawn states in his conclusion: "The history we now know is largely false, not because it has no permanence, but because it serves as a wedge between us as active men and our own humanity." Yet he writes a few sentences earlier that the historian "does not test decisions, nor is he acting via the abstractions of his craft when he makes them himself." The meaning of these words would appear to be that when a historian makes personal and political decisions, he leaves his history behind. That conception seems to me a very substantial "wedge between us as active men and our own humanity." My intent, however, is not to nail John Strawn to these final sentences which I believe to represent an effort at premature, and essentially rhetorical, intellectual closure. If I can recall him to an experimental mood, and establish a conversational tone between us, I shall be well satisfied.

*"The Radicals' Use of History." Radical America, March-April, 1968.

Now as to the particular substantive matters to which his essay calls attention. I have two basic disagreements with what I understand to be Mr. Strawn's argument. First, I think he is wrong in believing that a history which emphasized decision-making would necessarily be elitist history. Second, I cannot agree that the history of one's own time ("chronicling in depth" as I put it in my original essay) is no history at all. But I recognize that my essay, too, touched on these matters somewhat cryptically. I can understand that John Strawn understood me to say things which I did not intend. And in any case, it is a year since I wrote the essay he criticizes and I should like to add a few things.

First, then, about decision-making. Mr. Strawn almost appears to believe that only elites make decisions, a very elitist conception indeed. I am at fault in having illustrated my argument by reference only to elite decision-makers: policy-makers in the American government, Marxist revolutionaries. But surely John Strawn and I can concur that the question of elitism and the question of the role in history of free will (or consciousness, the "subjective factor," etc.) are not synonymous. He quotes me as writing: ". . .any revolution . . . requires a decision by individual human beings to begin to determine their own destinies at whatever cost." Isn't this, as a matter of fact, true? Is there anything in the sentence which states or implies that revolutions are made by a few individual human beings?

The problem I meant to pose concerning the role of consciousness in history can be put this way: If men (not just a few men, but masses of men, all men) have a very considerable freedom to determine how they act, how can the historian write about their action after the event as if it were inevitable or predetermined? My point is well illustrated by another article in the same issue of Radical America which contains Mr. Strawn's essay. Charles Leinenweber ends his discussion of Socialist opposition to World War I by invoking

"the dimension of human agency" rather than a series of causal factors traditionally emphasized. Mr. Leinenweber asserts:

Whatever the size of the Socialist party, whatever its political strongholds and ties to the trade unions, whatever the conflicts between various political tendencies, the following conclusion should be kept uppermost in our minds: The political position of American Socialists during the war, their forthright opposition to it, was a product most of all of a truly heroic effort of the will, of self-enlightenment against overwhelming odds. It serves as a profound example of the elevation of consciousness through human effort.

Is this elitist historiography?

The problem of decision-making leads directly to the problem of writing the history of one's own time as over against writing the history of the distant past. The connection between the two questions is as follows: So long as radicals assume that history is determined, that the role of conscious will is (in the sense that Marx and Engels used the term) "accidental," then study of the past is justified because it more and more clearly reveals the large pattern of determined events on the basis of which future history can be predicted.

But suppose that history is determined only in the macrosense that one can speak, for example, of a long-run tendency toward centralized public economic planning. Suppose that the pattern of determined events has so large a mesh that, given all possible data concerning American history, it would still be impossible to predict whether the United States will become fascist or socialist (or neither during our lifetimes. What then would be the relevance of history?

One possible response is that prediction is not the only purpose of history. History can also minister to the subjective man: it can provide lessons,

heroes, a collective past. But what happens if Tom Watson's motivation in protecting Reverend Doyle turns out to have been opportunistic? If it becomes evident that slaves in the United States did not, on the whole, rebel? If, in general, the radicalism of white workingmen reveals itself to have been transient and shallow-rooted in every period of American history? The difficulty is not only in interpreting evidence but also in finding it. Written sources for the history of the inarticulate are, by definition, sparse. The temptation is strong for the radical historian who has invested much time and emotion in the fortunes of some particular group of indentured servants, tenant farmers, mill girls, or Populists, to presume a virtue where the evidence is merely silent, or to extrapolate into a consistently radical pattern what are, in fact, only fragmentary indications.

These are among the considerations which interest me in contemporary history. A good example is another article in the March-April Radical America, Richie Rothstein's "ERAP: Evolution Of the Organizers." John Strawn argues in his conclusion that radical history is "certainly not . . . a chronicle of the mechanism of decision." But Rothstein's article is precisely a chronicle of the collective decision-making of ERAP organizers. Mr. Strawn states that the historian "does not test decisions." But Rothstein says that the purpose of ERAP was "to test particular hypotheses about American society," and his valuable essay represents an evaluation of that testing by one of those who decided to undertake it.

Mr. Strawn also insists that radical history must not be "therapy." As indicated above, I am inclined to agree with him when that therapy is sought in an elusive distant past. But contemporary history written by radicals is likely to verge on therapy in that it does draw lessons, it does seek to define models for future use, it unblushingly hopes to learn from our own experience. Thus Rothstein ends with a call for new organizational forms responsive to the problems which

ERAP failed to solve; in a footnote, he specifically advocates the therapeutic goal of "an appropriate technique of criticism and self-criticism" in hope of resolving the problem 'bf dealing with personality differences on organizing staffs in a humane, firm, and political manner." Does this conclusion make him less a historian in Mr. Strawn's eyes? Is this merely playing radical Herman Kahn? Has Rothstein sacrificed "even the hope for radical history on the chopping block of relevance?"

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Again, the Radicals' Methodology

DENNIS WOOD

I understand the essence of a bottom-up approach to the study of society to mean that we study society in such a way that we show how the bottom-layers of society have effected changes in that society, and such that our study enables us to implement change in that society ourselves as radical intellectuals who take their radicalism as seriously as their intellectualism. That the study of society affects the conditions under which what is said of it is true, is for many less a methodological problem to be noted and anticipated with the appropriate methodological equipment, than it is a moral problem calling the investigator to ponder his scientific and moral identity and the ethical warrant and value of his work. Certainly I would say that a bottom-up analysis requires honesty on the part of its author, but its justification must be based on its methodological superiority. As Lemisch states,* writing history from the bottom up is a rationally justifiable method, and I would add that for certain types of problems it is the only justifiable method. The essence of the method is that the historian must meet people on their own terms. To explain a particular human action is to place it in relation to the circumstances out of which it arose and the goal which the agent sought. The insight that human activity is intelligible and explicable only in a social and only in an historical context requires at the very least some conception of how people perceive the world and what they do

*"History from the Bottom Up," Radical America Sept.-Oct., 1967.

or do not want to do about the problems they see or do not see.

The very concept of "problems" reflects political judgments as to how man, society and history work, and is biased to the extent that it is not an occasion for us to criticize specific empirical studies and to point out how their conclusions or findings might have been different had different categories and concepts been used. Only by such an approach can we save ourselves from undercutting the whole sociological-historical enterprise and from rendering it either too cruel or too irrelevant to pursue.

Disobedience, in the eyes of anyone who has read history, is man's original virtue. The same is true for the intellectual. But where are our intellectual Nat Turners? That Talcott Parsons from the political right and C. Wright Mills from the political Left should both be submerged by the determinist image of man is ample testimony to its continuing strength; for Mills offers us no picture of the resistances men have taken and can take, no conception of contradictions and oppositions, no conception of the Hegelian "negative" with all of what Hegel called its "patience, labour, and suffering." The concepts of intention, deliberation, desire, indignation, honesty - those concepts are essential to understanding men as agents and not mere passive reflexes of non-human factors.

Psychologists, sociologists and the rest offer two possibilities so far as large-scale human change is concerned. Either men can discern the laws which govern social development or they cannot. If they can, then they must say that their own behavior is subject to those laws and they must admit that they have discovered themselves to be not agents or sources, but victims, part of a social process which occurs independently of human mind and will and feeling. If they cannot discern such laws, then they are necessarily helpless, for they have no instruments of change in their hands. So that in any case the "human agency" is bound to be ineffective. Of course, so far as small-scale adaptive changes are concerned,

it is otherwise. In these cases tolerance of rational dissent becomes an insidious form of repression as modern corporate-bureaucratic language and concepts prevent good men from the very ability to conceive a new society. This is why Norman Mailer's speech at Berkeley's Vietnam Day in 1965 remains much the best evocation of protest thus far. Mailer fought his way out of the moiling, suffocating arena of those who strain to rationalize the irrationality of sick games - the experts and analysts, the propagandists, the political scientists and historians - sunk so deep in their state-papers and documents and official correspondence that they cannot see over the edge.

A TOTAL ANALYSIS

Our concern for "bottom-up" analysis is much more than a reaction against the yearly Gross Sociological Product and its token reformers. What has happened is that American sociology and academia in general is in the process of capturing key positions within the post-industrial society. Is it not precisely this development which helps explain the fact that the modern meritocratic state shows an apparently benign capacity for refashioning society through a planned "revolution from above?" Such undemocratic revolutions from above are, in part, mere logical extensions of the traditional "top-down" analysis of American academics. The Radical Education Project's counter-text series is in the process of showing how the cold-war assumptions of American academics such as Hartz, Boorstin and Lipset underlie and support the actions of American foreign policy. My forthcoming text on Theodore Draper shows how the assumption that one man, Fidel Castro, had duped the Cuban middle class underlied the whole Bay of Pigs fiasco. If the Third World moves, if black ghettos erupt, if workers wildcat, if students rebel, the problems are seen in terms of a communications breakdown. Substantive demands are ignored and disruption of the hypostatized "democratic process" is denounced as illegitimate.

The whole concern of the politicians is precisely that of the academic intellectuals - with the health of a reified "system," not the individuals living within it.

The problem we face is not one of finding compromises in the established society, but of creating the society in which man is no longer enslaved by institutions which vitiate self-determination from the beginning. It would be a grave error for anyone to think that only the inadequate execution of an adequate design has been to blame for the arid desert called sociology; more than honesty is required, for the design and methods themselves have lacked the substance of life and the milk of human kindness. When the study of man in nature gives way to the study of "delinquents" in a Chicago suburb we have a design which is faulty.

The Liberation of the Wretched of the Earth presupposes the suppression not only of their old but also of their potential new masters - and this includes the John Kenneth Galbraiths as well as the Walt W. Rostows. It is the task of the revolutionary intellectual to wage Gramsci's "war for position on the cultural front," to stimulate critical conflicts in every area of life. If we are to be the executioners of a new order and not the victims of the old order we will write our history democratically. We will learn to think in the opposite direction so we don't place the "facts" we learn into the predominant framework of values.

A TOTAL REBELLION

The framework of values, the inertia, the consensus, the cultural and social continuity which the academic intellectual takes for granted and makes his living from validates Nietzsche's appraisal of intellectuals as men who live off the blood other people have shed, who become elitist apologists for the victors and the justifiers of the development of oppression. That continuity has been recreated anew in each generation, often with great pain and suffering. As Barrington Moore says, "to maintain and

transmit a value system, human beings are punched, bullied, sent to jail, thrown into concentration camps, cajoled, bribed, made into heroes, encouraged to read newspapers, stood up against a wall and shot, and sometimes even taught sociology." It is the story of these men we must tell and explain, and it is their fate we must share - of Ralph Ellison's invisible men, those "birds of passage who were too obscure for learned classification, too silent for the most sensitive recorders of sound; of natures too ambiguous for the most ambiguous words, and too distant from the centers of historical decision to sign or even to applaud the signers of historical documents."

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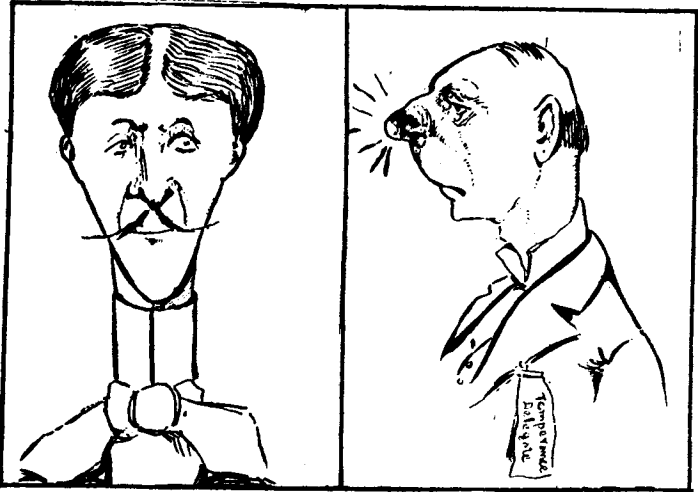
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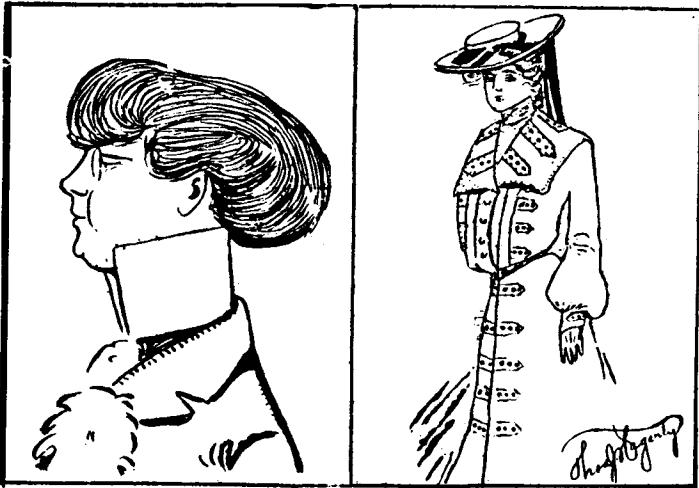
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