

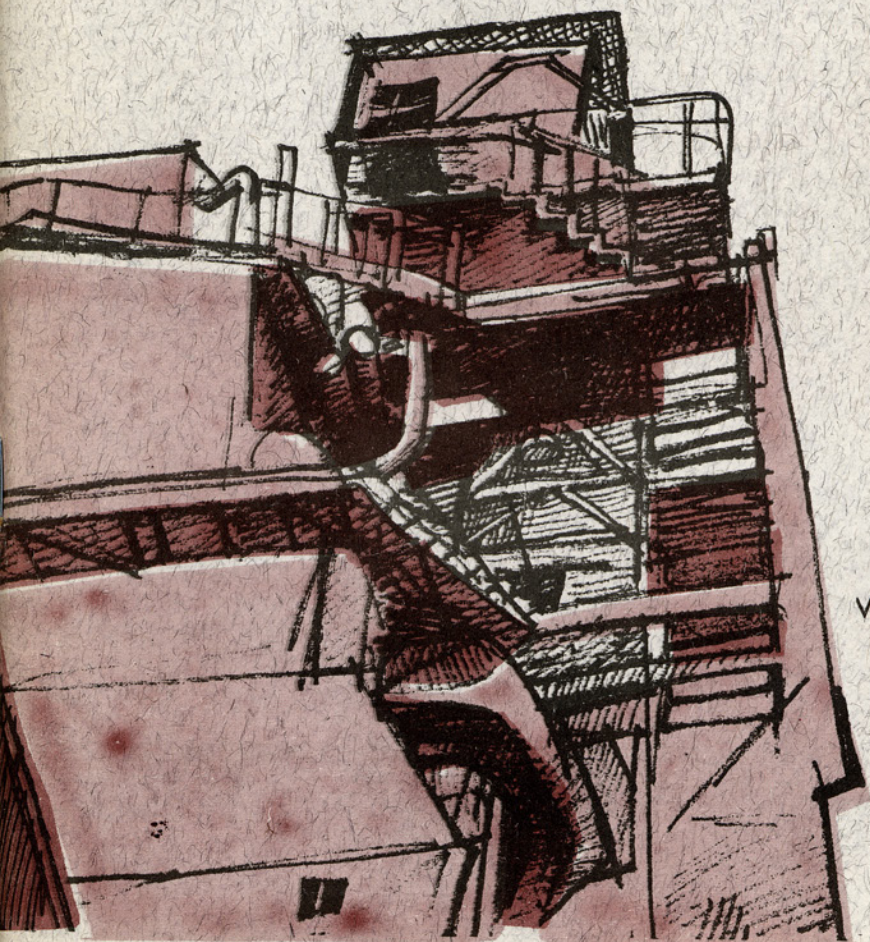
RADICAL AMERICA

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Dick Howard, FRENCH NEW WORKING CLASS THEORIES	1
Stephen Torgoff, A DREAM OF BEARS	19
ANARCHIST	20
Joel Sloman, CHE GUEVARA	22
George Rawick, WORKING CLASS SELF-ACTIVITY	23
Will Brumbach, John Evansohn, Laura Foner, Ruth Meyerowitz, and Mark Naison, LITERATURE ON WORKING CLASS CULTURE	32
Michael Lesy, "AUTOMOBILES"	34-35
Paul Faler, WORKING CLASS HISTORIOGRAPHY	56
Cover by Nick Torkelson	

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French New Working Class Theories

Dick Howard

It is fashionable to talk about a "New Left"; some even speak of a "New Left analysis". In Europe there was talk, after the Springer actions in Germany, the May action in France, and the many occupations of the universities in Italy and in England, of a "New Left International". Yet it is difficult to know exactly what is so new about these movements. Many descriptive analyses have been made, focusing on this or that aspect of our activities which differs from the "old" forms. But there is still no explanation of the historical necessity of a New Left and no adequate understanding of the social conditions which have brought the new forms into being.

The notion of a New Working Class has been bandied about freely within SDS recently. The term's very introduction seems to have been the result of the Movement's search for a new "category" within which could be inserted the growing student movement. The alternative analyses focusing on "Old" and "New" working classes have been made to seem simple political choices, involving an either/or decision about the Movement's intended "agent" of revolution. Consequently the socio-economic roots of the category have been neglected, as have its historical origins. I propose to deal with the analysis by Serge Mallet of a phenomenon which he was first to call "The New Working Class". The discussion, after a brief theoretical interlude, will lead quite naturally to a discussion of another French theoretician, Andre Gorz, whose work deals more specifically with the problems of a revolutionary movement in advanced capitalist society. The overall critique should provide us with some insights as to what a Marxist analysis of our own society could tell us about the origins and directions of the American Movement.

Serge Mallet stresses that his sociological studies of the "New Working Class" are the work of a political activist. He disagrees with the usual interpretations which tend to base themselves in various polemical works of Marx (such as the Manifesto, the Eighteenth Brumaire, Critique of the Gotha Program) rather than in Capital. Mallet is one of the new generation of French Marxists who, perceiving that "orthodox" communism was getting nowhere fast, have returned to Capital, re-reading and re-thinking Marx's completed system, attempting to find therein the tools which will enable the working class to overthrow the bourgeois state. In the introduction to *La Nouvelle classe ouvriere* (Paris, 1963) Mallet says:

One could—as certain persons have done—consider the homogenization (of the present society) as being sufficient to put into question the notion of the "working class". One could too—and

I myself adhere to this position—observe simply that during the evolution of the working class certain inessential elements, more closely related to the consumer status of the worker than to his status as producer, have been mistakenly taken as specific traits of “class behavior”, and that it is necessary to return to a purified notion of the concept. (Page 10)

A few pages later Mallet defines his “purified notion of the concept”:

Having eliminated the sociological, technological, and administrative criteria which define the working class, there remains only one situation common to numerous salaried classes: that of exercising a productive role, and of being excluded from the ownership or the gestion of the instruments of production which they serve. (Page 14)

For Mallet there is no such monolithic entity as the “working class” (see the discussion below of Marx’s meaning of “Capital”, which exists in the same sense as the “working class”); to talk of it as a homogeneous body is at best metaphysical and at worst a hangover from the Stalinist subjectivism which identified the party with the class. The working class exists in a dialectical relation within the society as a whole; it is one structure, interweaving itself with others, and is itself composed of several structures. One can always discover a “model” of the working class, found within the forms of organization and struggle in a given period. But not every worker belongs to, or is represented by, the model—on the contrary, there are always remnants of past forms of work situations and of organizations, as well as forms indicative of the future, which co-exist with the current dominant mode. It is important for the militant as well as the theoretician to distinguish between models obviously held over from a past epoch (whose reason for existence was a specific form of production now archaic) from those models which are signs of the objective tendencies toward which capitalism is being pushed by its own internal dynamic. The former models tend to endure intellectually mainly due to the staying-power of party and union bureaucrats—and too, as Gorz argues, because of the inability of militants to propose alternative models more suited to the time.

(To argue for or against a new model of the working class’s reality it is not sufficient to point to figures concerning, say, the number of workers employed in certain sectors, or the total output of those sectors. One must argue, for example, that because of the increasing investment in constant capital (plant, equipment, and the like) and the decreasing percentage of investment in variable capital (labor power), capitalism will necessarily have to cut its circulation costs to increase its profit while at the same time and for the same reasons it will have to produce more and more goods in order to pay for its continual expansion and will hence need a larger and larger force of non-productive laborers whose task is concerned only with distribution. In other words, statistical evidence proves nothing. As Marx puts it in Volume III of Capital: “All science would be superfluous if the appearance and the essence of things were but one.”)

Capitalism is a historic product. While its essence, the production of surplus value, remains the same, its appearance does change. In his essay “Syndicalism

and Industrial Society", Mallet tried to show the relationship between the forms taken by capital and those of the working-class struggle.

It is the custom in French sociology to speak of three phases or moments (1) of industrial development which are labeled "A", "B", and "C". Moment A is familial or group capitalism, in which there are many small enterprises, each of which is limited geographically to a fixed area and each of which produces the entire product. The division of labor in this moment (or period) is minimal; each worker knows the entirety of his trade, his "calling". The worker is "polyvalent", so to speak. He is his own master in the work process, and is paid a piece-wage. Even if he produces only a part of the final product, the worker still produces something entirely; and he can identify with his product. That is, the worker in Moment A is different from his artisan predecessor only in that he no longer owns the means of production, nor the final product. This is the first stage of the accumulation of capital. Marx argues that it is only at this point, when the worker is dispossessed of his land and his tools and must come to work for the capitalist, that capitalism is born.

The reaction of the worker in this first moment is that of an owner. He defends that which he still possesses—in fact his only remaining possession—his art. The type of union that he forms follows from his situation. The capitalist is implanted in one geographical region, and is dependent on his location for his raw materials, his market, et cetera. The worker, on the other hand, is a nomad. He is free to leave one job for another, depending on the economic conjuncture; there are no big cities at this time, no housing problems, and the worker carries easily his only property, his professional qualification. International solidarity grows easily in such a situation; one has only to read Marx's enthusiastic descriptions of his early years in Paris to gather this. Solidarity is a solidarity of professionals, and their "socialism", with all its internal bickerings, is essentially the demand for the re-appropriation of the means of production stolen from the artisan. Proudhon spoke for these socialists, saying, "La propriete. c'est le vol!" ("Property is theft!")

The homogeneous objectives unite the workers. There is no need for a centralized bureaucracy, for toilers in each industrial branch know best their own problems. The level of syndicalization is high, as is political consciousness, and an autonomous workers' culture grows in this hothouse. (It is for this reason, incidentally, that the strike-breaker is the victim of physical violence: he has broken the boundaries of a closed community, selling out his own.) Syndical action is favored during this period by the conditions of capitalism: the worker is in demand; the capitalist, working on limited margins, cannot afford to let his raw materials go to waste; and the worker's polyvalent talents are, effectively, an art which can be learned only through long apprenticeship. Under these circumstances, the ideology of anarcho-syndicalism dominates. One dreamed of "le Grand Soir", the "Great Evening" when all the workers, arms folded across their chests, beside their machines, would refuse to work, and the capitalists would hand over (hand back!) the means of production. It seemed clear to the workers that they needed no help from non-producers, and certainly none from the state: Eugene Pottier wrote in the INTERNATIONALE: "Producteurs sauvons-nous nous-memes!" ("Producers, we shall be our own liberators!")

Though the ideology of anarcho-syndicalism which typifies Moment A was still alive at the beginning of the Twentieth Century, the movement of capital

had made that political program obsolete. Moment B of industrial development, essentially what Marx had in view in *Capital*, wipes out all but isolated remnants of the independent entrepreneur and his polyvalent workman. We needn't go into too much detail concerning the salient characteristics of this moment in capital's life, for the first volume of *Capital* is rich in detail.

The dreams of the General Strike were based on conditions peculiar to Moment A of industrial development. The working class of that time had become a relatively well-paid minority element. But the "new" working class of Moment B is, in effect, the direct opposite of its predecessor. The cohesion of the artisan-specialist is replaced by the atomized group of ex-peasants trained "on the job" to do an infinitely fragmented task whose limits are exactly prescribed by the motions of the machine; the worker finds himself to be only grist for a machine whose functions he neither understands nor controls. The prophets of this age of industrialization are Ford and Taylor. The production line forms the "pure proletarian", he who has literally nothing, whose bare existence is assured only so that he can return to the factory on the morrow to produce new surplus value for the capitalist. "Specialization" now means specialization to work one machine which does one part of one job in one specific branch of one given industry. The mobility which characterized the worker of Moment A is lost, not only in that the worker cannot easily move from job to job (his "specialization" being too rigid), but also in that new "worker's quarters" grow up, ghettos to house the "reserve army of labor" which awaits in squalor the bidding of its capitalist master. This is the age of the concentration of capital, of the cartels, of Hilferding's *Finanzkapital*.

The helpless victim of the economic situation, isolated from his fellows in his work and alienated from himself as a producer, the worker cannot but feel himself to be part of a specific class, isolated from and opposed to all others. This "class consciousness", however, is not that of the artisan-worker who knew himself to be a producer of wealth being stolen from him. Here, the consciousness of exploitation stretches out to the worker in his very being. Not only he, but his family as well, feel themselves to be "proletarians", a term symbolic of misery and of social exploitation which replaces that of "working class" or "producer". With this change comes alteration in the conditions of revolutionary activity: from the place of work, activity shifts to the workers' quarter; from the anarcho-syndicalist demand for the return of stolen property, the emphasis changes to political and electoral struggle aimed at remedying what is now perceived as a social exploitation.

At the same time, the immediate power of the unions tends to diminish. The percentage of unionized workers, which was high during Moment A, decreases. The unions themselves become "representative" organs, Bureaucracy begins to form, and the individual worker has less and less to say about the demands which the union will pose to the patrons. The unions tend to place their hopes with a political movement. This change is, of course, favored by the changing nature of the state, which, with the increased cartellization of capitalism, finds itself more and more involved with the mechanisms of the economy. The unions seem to find it to their advantage to insert themselves into the state as one of the many conflicting power groups. Though the European movements still retain a certain nostalgia for their revolutionary past, they have, in effect, accepted the rationality of the capitalist system and chosen to "make the best of it". The unions, in sum, become one of the "countervailing forces"; their goal is defined as "conflictual participation". (2)

It is noteworthy—and we shall return to this problem when we come to consider Gorz's "strategy"—that some unions accept the notion of "conflictual participation" while at the same time refusing to take any responsibility for the gestion of the capitalist economy. Such a position places the unions in a contradictory stance: they accept the compromises which are tossed their way while refusing to operate within the system, arguing that their goal is the exposure of contradictions in the capitalist economy. This problem, and the increasing bureaucratization of the movement, leads to a steadily-decreasing percentage of unionized workers. Worse, even those workers who belong to the union participate little in the decisions taken. A contradiction within the movement becomes obvious: while the summit of the movement may sign this or that agreement, the base speaks through the wildcat! The "political" and "economic" struggles of the workers are separated here by the intervention of the workers' own organization.

The third moment of the development of capitalist industry comes with the increasingly frequent introduction of automation. Automation is, in a large measure, the child-become-master of such new industries as petroleum and petrochemicals, electrical energy and tele-communications. It rapidly forces itself into new sectors of the economy. With its letters of recommendation from the highly-successful pioneers, automation penetrates into and dominates the staid establishment, playing the surplus-value game better than the old masters. The difference between productive and non-productive labor, heretofore easily distinguishable, becomes blurred; what had been evident to any observer must now be analyzed in terms of theoretical economic categories. Fatiguing manual labor is not necessarily productive labor. The former production-line worker may now become the overseer of a production process to which he adds nothing. His presence is demanded only if something goes wrong with the machine. (Even this function is of limited importance as feedback mechanisms are applied.) In the Feedback Era the role of Man becomes limited to that of either inventor or controller.

The transition from Moment A to Moment B was conditioned economically by the completion of the stage of primitive accumulation and by the concentration of the means of production in the hands of a relatively small number of capitalists; with this came the end of what had been, in Moment A, laissez-faire capitalism. Moment C is conditioned by the concentration of financial capital, and by the need for a more-rationally-organized market. The cost of automated machines is such that only the huge monopolies—or the state—can afford them. The amortization of this huge investment can be accomplished only if it is certain that production will continue on a continually-growing scale, that is, if the market is controlled.

The relationship of the three moments of industrialization can best be defined in terms of the change in the organic composition of capital. Marx defines the organic composition of capital as the relation between constant capital (buildings, machines, raw materials, et cetera) and variable capital (labor power). During Moment A, the investment in buildings and machines is relatively small; the majority of the capitalist's investment goes to pay for the raw materials and for the labor power (wages). In this situation, the capitalist is not the slave of the market conditions: if the market price sinks, the capitalist simply reduces his investment in labor power and raw materials. He makes no profit by so doing, but he loses nothing. With the appearance of

heavy industry, the situation changes anonymously: already in Marx's time the average investment in variable capital was only about sixty per cent of the total investment. Today, in those industries which are still in Moment B of development, the percentage is probably between fifteen and twenty-five. With the steadily-increasing investment in constant fixed capital, the capitalist cannot trust in the "free market"; he has to be able to control the market, to insure his investment. As we enter the third moment of development, this situation is aggravated. The investment in variable capital is not more than five per cent, and the trusts must grow ever larger simply in order to be able to finance continued extended reproduction which, Marx shows and history proves, is necessary if capitalism is to survive. Financial statements show that anywhere from twenty per cent upward of the trust's income is already committed to repayment of loans. Even this is not sufficient. The state has to come to the aid of the great trusts, building (for example) the infra-structures of roads and electric-energy stations, giving research grants and cost-plus contracts. The needed "rationalization" of the market is provided through the now-famous "one-dimensional" consumer.

Turning to the situation of the worker during each of these three moments, we see that it is defined by (a) the kind of worker needed and the conditions of his supply and demand; and (b) the capitalist's market possibilities. During the first moment the demand for workers is greater than their supply, while the market remains anarchic. Moment B sees the offer of workers exceeding the demand, while the market fluctuates with somewhat more regularity (this is the period of Marx's decennial crises). The employers thus hire and fire in accordance with the market's fluctuations. During Moment C, one is struck by the fact that the cost of labor power has ceased to be an important component of the capitalist's investment. What counts here is the continual sale of an increasing number of goods so that the high initial investment can be amortized. On the other hand, in order to run the complex technological machinery, the capitalist class must train a new kind of proletariat, one which not only knows how to work the machines in operation at the time when it enters the work force, but one which is trained to learn. Without this "new" kind of worker the capitalist would lose much or all of the investment in automated equipment.

We saw that during Moment B a tendency developed at the summit of the unions to integrate the working class into the capitalist system. During Moment C integration becomes a necessity for the capitalist, a necessity which is inscribed on the relations of production themselves. Profit is no longer the result of surplus labor squeezed out of the workers; nor is it the result of speed-ups, stretch-outs, and the like. Rather, what is necessary is a qualitative increase of productivity which comes from an efficient organization of work. Hence the growth of the "social sciences" begins with the entry of capitalism into Moment C, and is a sign of that beginning. (3) The profit which the firm realizes is no longer the sum total of the surplus value which it extorts from the individual worker; today, surplus value is the profit reaped from the work of the entire unity of workers. This is the origin of the notion that the workers should be paid an equal share of the profits of the firm—a fine idea, save for the fact that the profits which the workers are supposed to share with the firm are in fact the objectification of the surplus value which they have given the capitalist.

Mallet distinguishes two types of "New Working Class". First, there are the workers who work in an "industrial situation", properly so-called, but who are

different from their Moment B brothers in that, to cite Mallet: "Through the jobs which it creates, automation—even if it totally eliminates the relation of man to object—destroys the parcellization of work and, at the level of the working-group, reconstitutes the synthetic viewpoint of polyvalent work." Second, there are the more-numerous workers in what the French call "Bureaux d'études". These are white-collar-type workers, though not in the sense of a low-level bureaucrat. The Bureau d'études is roughly the equivalent of the research and development unit in a large corporation: the "workers" are likely to be engineers whose job it is to produce the conditions of production.

On the basis of empirical data gathered from strikes which have taken place in Moment C industries, Mallet tries to sketch some of the aspects of a new form of unionism he sees in the offing (4), which he calls "Company Unionism" (syndicalisme d'entreprise). The first characteristic is the relatively-high percentage of organized workers; the figures are anywhere from fifty to ninety per cent. The workers are usually young, they have secure jobs, and their tasks are such that they work in relatively small teams on potentially-creative jobs. The Company Union is generally organized in the whole firm, no matter how large and dispersed its branches. This means an end to the antiquated union structure which was based on anachronistic craft distinctions. Since the basic unity is the firm, the syndicated members are led to take an active interest in the financial affairs of the whole firm. Grievances concern not only the work situation, but also the situation of the entire firm; for if the firm loses money and is forced to cut back production, it is the workers who suffer directly. The result is that the traditional refusal of the unions to associate themselves with the management in the direction of the firm's business becomes a thing of the past. At the same time there occurs a separation of the Company Union from the (generally bureaucratic) national organization. The local level asserts its competence to handle its own problems.

In this situation, the high percentage of organized workers and their technological competence and knowledge of the affairs of the whole firm lead to new forms of action. Strikes need not be total work stoppages which harm the worker and his family more than they harm the firm (for the firm's investment in the workers is quite small). An example is the so-called "greve perlee" in which short, well-co-ordinated work stoppages foul up the synchronization of the machines, costing the worker perhaps an hour's pay while the capitalist production loses three or more hours. Another example is the action of the workers at Peugeot who threatened a work stoppage which would have halted the scheduled appearance of a new model; faced with the risk of losing a large investment in advertising, et cetera, the firm quickly gave in. During the strikes last May, at least one highly-technological firm, the TSF at Brest, began producing under new conditions of work, without the management's having anything to do with the new organization.

Two central aspects of Moment A re-emerge here:

"On an organizational basis, Company Unionism returns to certain traits of the old craft unions: high participation in union activity, de-bureaucratization by the re-valuing of the union branches in each enterprise, gestional organization.

"There is another common trait to both forms: distrust as concerns the traditional forms of political struggle and the belief

in the validity of organized syndical action. It has been possible to speak of a Renaissance of a 'modern anarcho-syndicalism'."

Mallet's book contains three case studies in which he tries to illustrate and document the behavior of the "New Working Class". Because the examples are specific to the French industrial system, we shan't spend time on them here. However it should be stressed that these "sociological" studies are models of the type of research that a Marxist should be doing. Mallet's technique is dependent on his use of Marxist tools. He develops a technique of analysis which he calls a combination of a structural and a genetic approach. This technique enables Mallet to break out of the bounds of a functional analysis which, bound to synchronicity, does no more than describe the phenomenon under investigation, and this in such a way as to, in effect, justify or rationalize its continued existence. The introduction of the genetic (historical) aspect enables Mallet to see the contradictions latent in the uni-dimensional, synchronic picture. He sums up his method thusly:

We have...to study the personnel of an enterprise as a concrete agent of the relations of production. In effect, the structure of the financial market (that is, the stock market, the economic conjuncture in general; the significance of this cannot be overestimated, for without adequate funds, the productive apparatus cannot expand even though it "objectively" should do so) is the key to the evolution of the productive forces which, in their turn, determine the evolution of the professional categories, of the wages, of the entirety of the technical and social relations, and finally of the social psychology of the group under consideration. (My emphasis. D. H.)

In other words, a sociological study of the workers in one plant or one industry cannot be done in isolation from the concrete economic situation of the entire economy. Within that economy, the situation of the individual economic unit, and of the workers in it, is dependent on factors external to its own evolution. Capitalism, and the working class which it exploits, must be studied as a whole; it is the whole which determines the evolution of the parts.

It is, of course, possible that the Company Unionism which Mallet describes will turn out to be nothing but another reformist movement of a certain "elite" working class within the imperialist West, and will work to ameliorate capitalism from within instead of contesting in its fundamental features the rationality of the capitalist system. Co-option is a risk which must be run. Whether this new unionism is a positive sign for the future will depend largely upon the strategy which it adopts. Mallet is convinced that the phenomena which he has studied are significant and must be considered in the planning of a revolutionary movement. In the conclusion to *La nouvelle classe ouvriere*, Mallet notes that:

The absenteeism of the citizen which today is deplored by all those is compensated by the development of a spirit of responsibility in socio-economic organizations. This is probably the most

interesting aspect, and the aspect having the most important consequences, in the evolution of Company Unionism. It leads us, in effect, to revise fundamentally the entirety of our political habits and our conception of the exercise of democracy.

Before turning to the "strategy for labor" which Andre Gorz proposes, a brief theoretical interlude is in order.

Mallett's analysis, as well as that of Gorz, is predicated on the notion of "structure". Mallet speaks of his analysis as a structural and a genetic analysis; and we have already mentioned that the usual forms of sociological analysis remain bound in the synchronic (horizontal) plane and can do no more than describe. No matter how critical the social scientist, if he does not introduce the historical "becoming" of the phenomena under consideration he is doomed to a sterile reformism.. That is, if the capitalist system is taken as a given, as an eternal system whose logic of exchange value is the logic of all times and all places, then the critic may spot all sorts of "rough edges" in the system, but he will be able to propose any more radical change than that the power be "given" to the Scientific and Technological Estate, which will, we are assured, smooth over those "rough edges". If the critic does not understand the historical development of capitalism, if he does not realize that the very phenomena which he reifies on his pages are still in evolution, then he will surely never understand the present, much less the future. And he will never be a revolutionary.

Space prohibits a lengthy discussion here of the notion of structuralism. The term has its origins in the linguistic studies of Ferdinand deSaussure who, at the beginning of this century, put linguistics on the road to becoming a true science. The use of structural methodology has enabled linguistics to become the first of the "human" sciences to establish itself on a scientific basis. It can be argued, as do Louis Althusser (in his *Pour Marx* and in *Lire Le Capital*) and Maurice Godeller (in *Rationalite et irrationalite en economie*), that Marx's *Capital* is based on a structural interpretation of society.

Society considered as a whole is the result of the interweaving of a number of structures, more or less important, which are, at any given moment, in a stable relation one to the other. Within this whole, according to these theoreticians, the dominant structure is that of the productive apparatus. Other structures of course exist: the structure of distribution, the legal structure, the structure of communications, the structure of language, et cetera. Each of these structures can be shown to be composed of other structures; and again, at a given time, the whole is in a stable relation. It is well known that Marx hypothesizes a correspondence between the infrastructure and the superstructure.

As it was originally planned, the projected six volumes of *Capital* were to treat all society; in fact, the version of *Capital* which we possess treats mainly production and distribution, and the latter is clearly shown to depend upon the former. What is striking in Marx's analysis is that the "capital" of which he speaks and whose structures he defines does not exist in the everyday sense of the term existence. The mistake of the so-called "vulgar economists", says Marx, was that they tended to identify the individual capital (and its owner's psychology) with "capital in general". On the other hand, the mistake that most "orthodox" Marxists made was to think that the "capital" with which Marx dealt is some sort of inductively-abstracted "model" of capital. Marx's

letter to Meyer (April 30th, 1867) contains the following interesting passages:

Volume I (of Capital) comprises the "Process of Capitalist Production". Besides the general theoretical exposition, I describe, from hitherto unused official sources, the condition of the English agricultural and industrial proletariat during the last twenty years, ditto Irish conditions. You will, of course, understand that all this only serves me as an "argumentum ad hominem".

In other words, Marx considered the theoretical arguments which he offers in Capital to be self-sufficient. The factual material serves a "polemical" purpose and aids the reader in understanding the theoretical development.

Marx was not, in other words, a descriptive sociologist: Most of his important "sociological" insights come in polemical passages. What Marx was trying to do was to give an account of the reality which underlies the appearance of capitalism. Science, for Marx, is the search for the essence of things; Capital is a scientific study not because it describes any existent state of affairs, but rather because it describes what capital must do if it is to remain capital and reproduce itself on an ever-increasing scale. It must continue to produce exchange values and surplus values by whatever means possible (Marx gives a long account of these means in the chapters on absolute and relative surplus value); it must create and maintain a working class and a reserve labor army absolutely dependent upon the whims of capital; it must maintain certain legal relations and a certain form of the state, et cetera.

However, a structural analysis, as de Saussure originally conceived of it, cannot deal with historical change. Saussure argued that it is possible to treat either the synchrony (that is, movement in a horizontal or ahistorical plane) or the diachrony (that is, movement in a vertical or historical plane) of a system, but not both at once. Yet we know that the importance of Marx's work is the historical materialism which he developed with the aid of Engels. If we argue that Marx is a structuralist, we have to try to explain how it is that change, history, enters into the system.

In abstraction, the answer is relatively simple. The interwoven structures which constitute the whole (of society, or simply of another structure) are in a stable relation one to another. Yet, "men make their own history...." That is, a change in one of the structures will necessarily change the balance of the entire system. There is, of course, a more-or-less-wide latitude within which changes can occur without bringing down the whole structure. Historical change is nothing other than an alteration in the inter-relation of structures. The dialectic, in this view, becomes the study of the contradictions which exist among the structures of society (or any other structure, for that matter). With the progress which is being made today in attempting to mathematicize the notion of structure, it may soon be possible to analyze the entire social structure with mathematical precision. Such an endeavor would deal with entities of the same nature as the "capital" which Marx treats. (It would not be a simple enumeration of the manifold existing phenomena, run through a computer in a search for seeming regularities, et cetera.)

While it would be well worthwhile to elaborate in detail the notion of structure as Marx uses it in Capital, that would not be germane to the topic of this essay. The reader is referred to the above-mentioned works by Althusser and Godeller, as well as to Godeller's important article "Systeme,

structure et contradiction dans "Le Capital", translated in the Socialist Register, 1967.

For our purposes, this discussion should make it clear that, once society is understood as an interplay of structures whose inter-relation is changed through human action, there is no conflict between reform and revolution. That is, even so-called "quantitative demands" for salary increases become revolutionary demands under certain conditions. In a country like France or Belgium in which industrial modernization has not taken place rapidly and where, therefore, the role of labor power is still preponderant, demands for higher wages can, effectively, cause the capitalist enterprises to fail, or to merge. Such was one of the effects of the May Revolution in France; such is the cause, in part, of the tremendous number of mergers during the past few years. Failure, or merger, implies a change in the structure of society. How long can the society continue to adapt itself? Marx's Capital is an attempt to show that this process cannot go on forever. But, on the other hand, Capital was written as a sort of handbook for revolutionary action; Capital was intended as the theoretical arm of a revolutionary movement which would continue to upset structures one after the other until it became possible to seize the power from a decaying and effectively powerless bourgeoisie. The dialectical interplay of structures must be correctly understood. Reformism is possible in two distinct brands: that of those who refuse to change the system, who refuse to question the exchange-value logic of capitalism; and that of those unconscious revolutionaries who do not know how "reformist tactics" can be used by a revolutionary strategy.

This leads us to discuss the attempt by Andre Gorz to define the conditions of a revolutionary strategy of reforms.

It was clear in the discussion of Moments A and B that the life of the worker was in no way separated from his life as consumer; if there existed a "consumer class" it could only have been the capitalist class, plus its higher-paid lackies. In the third moment of development the worker's life as worker and his life as consumer seem to be in some way distinct. This appearance, aided by mass production of what had been once luxury goods and by mass culture. The consumer status of the worker is economically dependent on his work situation, and his psychology as a consumer is determined by his work situation as well.

It is nothing particularly new to argue that the irrationality of capitalism is proven by the fact that today, at last, man produces enough basic goods and services to supply the basic needs of all men, but that still two-thirds of the world's people are living in want, and that even in the USA one-third of the people live on less than \$3,000 per year, et cetera. This argument, and its variants, are all predicated on the assumption that the evil of capitalism lies in its system of distribution, and that it is this which must be changed in order to achieve the Good Life. The reformists who use this argument deduce from it the need for increased foreign aid, social security, non-intervention, and all sorts of things; the self-knighted revolutionaries who use it argue that a fair distribution system cannot be achieved without nationalizations, revolutions in the Third World, and so forth. The problem is that the argument itself is falsely stated: in its usual form it presupposes the external existence of capitalist economic rationality and its ethic of production for the sake of production. Even when the "revolutionaries" argue that "Marx said" that

distribution is only a function of the relations of production and that the latter must be changed before the former can be changed, all that they can offer in the way of a strategy for change is some sort of top-down alteration in the inter-relationship of the "things" whose combination is the production mix. What Marx does in fact argue is that incantations about production and distribution, infrastructure and superstructure, are nonsensical unless they take into account historical changes in each of these structures. In *Capital*, and more specifically from the *Grundrisse*, he deduces from the historical tendencies which govern the evolution of capital that, in the period of automated labor—which must come into being because it is impossible for capital to continue to increase the production of surplus value by mere labor-extensive methods and because of the need to rely on productivity increases which augment relative surplus value—the economic rationality of capitalism and the superstructure which it builds to ensure its survival (that is, the legal system, the educational system, the state, et cetera) must enter into contradiction with the productive base of that system. Put in another way, we might say that the inertia of societal forms prevents them from adjusting to the rapidly-evolving productive base.

Since it is that base which is moving, it is at the base that the search for a revolutionary strategy must begin. Why "strategy"? Gorz is explicit in distinguishing "strategy" from "tactics". Tactics are syncretic, that is, they represent the attempt to unite disparate activities around a goal which is determined in advance and which need not relate to each of the activities united. (Examples might be the Popular Front or recent anti-war movement.) Strategy, in Gorz's usage, is synthetic, that is, the attempt to unite disparate activities around a goal which is found to be implicit in all of them and of which each is a particular incarnation. In a recent article on the "Limits and Possibilities of the May Movement" (in *Les Temps Modernes*, August-September 1968), translated in the *New Left Review*, November-December 1968), Gorz says:

The specific aspirations (of different sectors of society) can be articulated among themselves only in function of a common horizon which contains all of them while at the same time going beyond them: the horizon of a socialist society, itself pluralist and "articulated". (Page 253)

But again, why a strategy? Gorz is direct here: in the advanced capitalist West, conditions are no longer such that they demand immediate revolt, radical negation; nor are conditions such that one can adopt the "ontological" view of revolution, typified by the Stalinist argument that capitalism must collapse under the burden of its own contradictions and that therefore the role of the socialist is simply to be ready to pick up the pieces. Men still do make their own history, and communist man makes his own history since in recognizing necessity he acts and liberates himself from external forces. The revolution must be made because it will not make itself.

Gorz's argument will offend the "orthodox". Those whose ideological bifocals are still of pre-World War II vintage will find it easy to cite a bushel of facts which purport to prove that revolution is still a felt need by a very large, even a majority, percentage of the workers in the USA, let alone the people of the world dominated by our imperialism. To this, Gorz's answer, I think, would be similar to the answer Mallet Gives to those who accuse him of heresy for

speaking of a "new" working class and neglecting the "old": it is a question of analyzing the direction in which capitalist society is moving (and no one can doubt that it is moving) and of planning one's strategy from a historical perspective. (5)

Turning to the question "What strategy?", we must first realize that the mere fact of the acceptance of the need for a strategy implies the rejection of the notion of a General Strike; it implies the replacement of a rigid metaphysical determinism by the acceptance of the need for a series of "reforms", each of which is planned and understood as only a stage in a progression which leads to the revolutionary seizure of power. Such a strategy by no means necessitates total reliance upon parliamentary reform. Parliamentary forms can be used, but their use must be calculated as part of a continually-mediated interaction between demands from the unions, demands from the localities, and national political demands. Parliament is to be used in the way that pre-World War I German Social Democrats understood this use (at least in theory): in Parliament one speaks "durch das Fenster" (through the window) to the people outside. One should have no illusions: representative democracy, says Gorz, is always a "mystification". True democracy is exercised at the base, the grass roots.

In his article on the May Revolution in France, Gorz argues that the Left should have formed a transitional government whose function would have been to institute a mechanism by means of which the demands from the base could articulate themselves into a national program. The reformist Social Democrats in such a program would, he argues, find themselves isolated because they would be unable to accept the revolutionary demands which would not fail to come from the base. In speaking of Marcuse's analyses in *Le Socialisme difficile* (6), Gorz argues that "The task... is to make perceivable that which is not perceived." Later, he notes that the job of the revolutionary party is "to create aspirations", to "pose problems". He means that, while Marcuse's analysis shows many of the new forms of alienation in modern capitalist society, these forms are perceived and articulated by only a few persons. The task of a political strategy is to engage the mass in discussion and struggle so that the alienation which they live but do not perceive will become perceptible to them.

To this end, however, a political party is needed. A major weakness of Gorz's analyses has been that he never talks about the practical problem: what do the French do with the existent and tremendously strong CP apparatus? In his article on the May Revolution, he goes further than he has before and explicitly says that it is not possible to reform that party from within. In the same article he speaks of "at least" four functions which a party must fulfill: 1) analysis and theoretical elaboration (there must be a political program, continually revised in order to integrate all phases of the struggle, and not simply an opportunistic or improvised program); 2) an "ideological synthesis" which will relate the demands of the various sectors of society (this must not be a tactical "alliance", but must be the formation of a "bloc"); 3) political education and direction (the party must represent a "positive negation" of capitalist society, a living contradiction within it; its program must do more than reflect the present stage of the struggle, it must catalyze new struggle; such a program makes coherent various demands by situating them within a transitional whole); 4) primarily, the taking of power and the transformation

of the state. Gorz is opposed to the Leninist model of the Party. He argues that this model is adapted to an historical period very different from that in which we find ourselves in the West today. Now it is important that the party be democratically organized on a large scale. Demands must originate from the base, at the work situation. The demand for "worker power" in capitalist enterprises is more revolutionary, in Gorz's view, than the nationalization of some industries while still maintaining in them the old, rigid hierarchical organization of the work situation. As he puts it in *Le Socialisme difficile*:

The working hypothesis upon which the revolutionary party must base its activity is no longer a sudden seizure of power, made possible by the breakdown of capitalist mechanisms or a military defeat of the bourgeois state, but that of a patient and conscious strategy aimed at provoking a crisis in the system by the masses' refusal to bend to its logic, and then resolving this crisis in the direction of their demands. (Page 107; this essay is translated in the 1968 Socialist Register)

I mentioned above that Gorz's work has its "philosophical roots" in Sartre's *Critique de la raison dialectique*. Gorz's demand for a strategy, his attempt to formulate the conditions which such a strategy would have to fulfill, as well as his view of what socialism must be (the notion of a "rich" socialism), have their motivation in the Marxist notion of history as Sartre reformulates it. History is viewed as a series of "totalizations" occurring on different levels, each of which surpasses the preceding one which made it possible. This series of totalizations is a mediated series which is conditioned in large part by the external environment in which man lives. The primary characteristic of that environment is scarcity. As long as scarcity dominates man, Engels's "qualitative leap" to socialism. Progress can be made only through the mediation of a more-and-more-precisely-molded environment. To those who argue that capitalism has vanquished scarcity, Gorz replies that capitalism reproduces scarcity on a new level: scarcity of time, of raw materials, of energy, et cetera. A socialist program, under these conditions, must understand the movement of history's totalizations; it must consider that it is not sufficient for the party simply to pose itself as the negation of capitalism, as the traditional Marxist view would have it. Rather, it must pose a "positive negation": it must have an alternative ready to hand. In *Strategy for Labor*, Gorz comments: "The alternate model presents itself as the sense of the already-existing struggles, as the positive image of the autonomy which the working class affirms, in its immediacy, in a negative and partial way by contesting the power of capital." In *Le Socialisme difficile*, he argues:

The politicisation of the masses doesn't start from politics, nor action or struggle alone. Political commitment and choices are, in fact, the final position of a prise de conscience which never starts with politics, i.e., with the problem of the organization of society and social relations, but from the direct and fragmentary experience of a change which is necessary because it is possible. The demand for change, in other words, does not arise from the impossibility of accepting what is, but from the possibility of no longer accepting what is. (Emphasis in original.)

One does not try to "prove" socialism's superiority to capitalism, as Mr. Khrushchev thought, by demonstrating that it could do the same things as capitalism quantitatively better. Rather, one must show that a qualitative alternative is possible now. Such an alternative is not a "minimal program" of the type which the French Communists and Left-wing reformists are debating. It must rather be a strategy aimed at conquering enclaves within capitalist society and using them as the basis for new conquests with increasing speed until one has created the conditions for the seizure of power.

Such a strategy is fundamentally de-centralist. It must be. The conquests made must be a product of mass action, for only then will the masses be willing to fight to defend what they have won. These conquests are structural reforms; they must be "applied or controlled by those who demand (them).... structural reform always includes a decentralization and a gearing down of the power of decision, a restriction of the power of the State or of Capital, an extension of popular power." As the number of conquests grows, and as the reaction of the bourgeoisie becomes stronger, the rhythm increases. At the same time, the consciousness of the workers increases: "It is impossible to separate a reform from the action of which it is a result." (Gorz's strategy at this point differs from that of Lelio Basso and other Italian theorists whose ideas are generally similar to those of Gorz. The revolutionary process, he argues, will consummate itself rapidly once begun; while Basso speaks about a ten-year to twenty-year process.)

I suspect that the American reader will be struck at first reading of Gorz by the stress on the ways in which alienation manifests itself in the consumer society. There is, however, no need to elaborate these here. What is significant is that, despite his Marcusean critique of capitalist society, Gorz argues that a revolutionary strategy must begin with the work situation. (7) In *Strategy for Labor*, he cites V. Foa: "To act politically is to link the alienation of the producer in the process of production to the alienation of the producer in society." In *Le Socialisme difficile*, he is more explicit:

It is from the place of production that the struggle must necessarily begin. For: 1) It is at the place of production that the workers undergo most directly the despotism of capital and have the direct experience of their social subordination; 2) it is there that capital, by means of the division of labor which, often without technical necessity, constitute methods of domination, puts itself to work producing decomposed, molecularized, humiliated men which it can then dominate in society; 3) finally, and above all, it is there only that the workers exist in a group, as a real collective force capable of a collective action which is direct and daily, and which can just as well modify their condition in its most immediately intolerable aspects as it can force the class enemy to confront them as he really is.

The contradictions which Gorz sees in the productive relation rejoin those described by Mallet. Gorz's entire analysis is firmly anchored in Moment C, as Mallet calls it. There is no reason to repeat what has already been said concerning that analysis. One subject, however, which should be briefly mentioned here is the problem of the relations between students and workers, to which Gorz devotes an essay in *Le Socialisme difficile*.

Just as capitalism cannot be content with simple reproduction but must continue to expand in order to remain in existence, so too the formation of the working class, from the point of view of capital, must take place on a continually-increasing scale. Gorz sees three contradictions at work here. The cost of the production of socially necessary labor (that is, that it be highly educated, et cetera) is increasing; however society still does not want to take over the task, preferring to leave it to the individual. A second contradiction is caused by the nature and level of formation demanded by the new productive forces of society, which clashes with the level of formation which would keep the worker docile. And, finally, the work itself has an increasingly-autonomous character and an increasingly-social character while the worker is subordinated by the hierarchy of the firm and maintained in an increasingly-atomized relation to his fellows.

In this situation, the reaction of the workers takes the form of Mallet's "Company Unionism" (remembering this term to be wholly different from its traditional American meaning). Gorz argues: "In effect, once a certain degree of culture is attained, the need for intellectual, professional and existential autonomy is felt with the same intensity by highly-qualified workers as are the unsatiated needs of workers in old industries." He cites the president of Kodak-Pathé, who admits that the existence of too many educated workers is a risk for the established order. The solution to this problem which the capitalists choose is specialization: workers are trained in technical schools where they learn one discipline, "departments" are formed at the Universities; the traditional humanistic unity of knowledge disappears, and education becomes apprenticeship. However this policy will prove to be self-defeating. What is demanded in this age of rapidly-evolving techniques is polyvalence, and thus the function of an education must be to teach the students to learn.

Gorz speaks approvingly of the counter-attack waged by the French student union, the UNEF. The UNEF argues that since the university is merely an apprentice training school, the student should be paid as if he were an apprentice. This is not a demand for a few more scholarships, nor that more sons and daughters of the working class be admitted. The demand is that all students be paid. If it were a question of more scholarships, then, in effect, what would happen is that those students selected for scholarships would be hampered in their political action by the threatened loss of support. The demand is not limited to paying workers' children, for—at least in France—a large percentage of those students who support themselves by means of part-time work are the children of wealthy parents. Also, if the children of bourgeois parents are treated like everyone else, as apprentices, then they too will develop a class-consciousness—and not that "class-consciousness" of their parents. Further, if these children were not included, then their political activity would easily be hampered by their parents' threats.

The founding document of the UNEF, the Charter of Grenoble, declares in its preamble: "The student is a young intellectual worker." If the student were treated as such by the society, then the problem of worker-student relations would, of course, vanish. Students would be only one other kind of worker; their specific demands would be integrated into the whole program which constitutes the socialist strategy.

We have already spoken of Gorz's view of the role of the political party in the making of the revolution. Gorz continually argues that the party must be separate from the unions, as well as from the governmental responsibility. In the period during which capitalism is still in power, the separation must exist; union demands and political demands must interweave in a carefully

articulated, mediated whole. Gorz sees five functions as specific to the union's role: 1) control over apprentice training, whether on-the-job or in schools; 2) organization of work, and determination of the criteria by which jobs are given; 3) control over the division of labor, especially in terms of probable technological advance; 4) control over the rhythm of work, piece wages, hours, and qualifications; 5) reception of a productivity bonus taken out of the firm's profits. These five demands, says Gorz, are the first steps on the way to workers' control of the factory, and of life conditions.

The analysis which has been presented here of the "New Working Class", of the structural interpretation, and of Gorz's notion of strategy return us to the questions posed in the introductory remarks to this paper. The "New Left" seems to be a response to the early stages of the third moment of industrial development. It is a result of the contradictions that the new productive forces engender. That the locus of its development should be the campus—spreading now to the high schools, the community colleges, et cetera—is no surprise. That it should sense that the old ideologies, the old language, are not its own, also is no surprise. The tactics of the "New Left" are a response to the new social conditions. The success of "confrontation" tactics is predicated on their ability to show others the true nature of those who hold and exercise power.

One criticism often made of Gorz's proposed strategy is expressed as follows:

The author has overstated the case for structural reforms by offering them as a superformula for achieving power in all advanced capitalist countries, much as some syndicalists used to offer the general strike. (M. E. Sharpe in *Science and Society*, Fall 1968)

What is striking about this objection is the phrase "much as some syndicalists used to offer the general strike". We have seen how Mallet tries to show that the necessary response of labor to capital's oppression in Moment C is a "new form of anarcho-syndicalism". Perhaps, for their time, those early anarcho-syndicalists were right; and perhaps Gorz is correct in his argument for a strategy of "revolutionary reforms". A Marxist analysis of the movement of capitalism certainly seems to point in that direction.

When Mallet talked about his "Company Unionism", he spoke significantly about the "democratic bleeding hearts" who are so worried about the decline in public participation in political affairs. Granted that those "democratic bleeding hearts" were not talking about the "New Left" but about the increasing percentage of non-voters in local and national elections, there still must be something which the "New Left" and these absentees have in common, something against which they are reacting. The task of a strategy is to find out what this common denominator is, and to organize action in terms of it.

A "New Left Analysis" would have to take into account the features of our capitalist world described in this paper. It would face the difficult task of integrating into its strategy those anti-capitalist forces which already exist today. It would have to find the means to turn the reformist labor unions into anti-capitalist tools. None of this is easy. But there is no reason to be pessimistic; on the contrary, the contradictions of capitalism are sharpening. It is now our task to make our own history.

FOOTNOTES

(1) I have chosen the Hegelian term "Moment" to stress the fact that the periods can, and in fact do, exist.

(2) Mallet observes that the distinction between those unions which have accepted the role of "conflictual participation" and those which still claim to believe in the class struggle is spurious. The position of the workers in relation to the means of production is such that, whatever their subjective position, their actions are objectively an attack on the structure of capitalist society.

(3) The March 22nd Movement in France was quite aware of the implications of social science. In a tract which they distributed before March 22nd called "Pourquoi les sociologues?" they point to the capitalist origins of sociology as well as its role in today's society. The tract was translated into English for the Rag (Austin, Texas) in October 1968.

(4) The term "Company Unionism" should not be confused with the company unions which have often been established by capitalists to abort or destroy autonomous workers' unions. Clearly, Mallet has no such use of the term in mind.

(5) Though we cannot deal at length here with Gorz's analysis of the "socialist countries", we should note that he applies the same Marxist tools to their study as to the capitalist societies. He supports the reforms in Czechoslovakia made by Ota Sik, and he speaks favorably of the attempts made in Yugoslavia to give the workers a voice in the running of the firms. He does so not because he sees them as the final form of socialism but because these too are attempts to deal with the fact that the productive base here too is moving.

(6) This book is still not translated into English. When I once asked Gorz why, he replied that the publisher of Strategy for Labor was only willing to publish it without the last fifty pages, which contain two essays on Jean-Paul Sartre's Critique de la raison dialectique. Despite the publisher's belief that these essays are too difficult for an American audience, Gorz maintains quite correctly that they are integral to his thought. (Incidentally, only the first hundred or so pages of the Critique are translated—as Search for a Method—an absurdity very costly for those of us trying to re-think and re-do the work of Marx, that is, to make a revolution.)

(7) In an earlier number of Radical America (May/June 1968) Stuart Ewen reviewed Gorz's Strategy for Labor. Ewen's review, written from a consciously Marcusean standpoint, argues that there is a "tension" in Gorz's analysis "between the critical historical method of Marx...and a serious allegiance to Old Left suppositions concerning the where and how of revolution...." I think that my article has shown that no such tension exists in Gorz's works.

Two more comments about Ewen's analysis are relevant here. He makes the mistake of assuming that Marx's "critical historical method" can be understood as the method Marx elaborated in the 1844 Manuscripts and the German Ideology. Of course, it was these two books in which Marx worked out his initial notions of historical materialism; but the final elaboration comes only in Capital. It was only in the 1850s, for example, that Marx developed the critical notion of "surplus value". By using the fully-developed Marxist analysis Gorz is able to avoid the pitfalls which come when one neglects the rooting of the basic forms of alienation in the work situation.

The Marcusean analysis which Ewen uses stresses the cultural critique in

Gorz's work, an aspect of which has been neglected in this article. Gorz speaks often and quite highly of Marcuse's work. Ewen argues that "the (cultural) critique is impressively there, but it merely serves Gorz's purpose as a point of embarkation for more strategic implications." Ewen is quite correct to argue thusly; but he has not seen the reason that Marcuse can only give a critique whereas Gorz offers a strategy for revolution. The reason is, of course, that Gorz is dealing with the fundamental forms of alienation, those experienced in the work culture, and using them to explain the derived alienation of the culture.

A DREAM OF BEARS

At night, lying on my back in the heat
 I reach out beyond discomfort for solid memories
 and dream of bears almost every night
 though I have never seen one, except in a zoo
 the ragged Russian bear in Central Park
 whose cage shares a shadow with the men's room.

But sometimes, towards morning, I pass through barriers
 breaking the deepest layers of sleep
 sweating like an alligator rising up through the swamp
 I wake to a dream of waking.
 A bear, as tall and wide as an open door
 gesturing, pleading, his huge form bending
 over the foot of the bed where I am lying
 Graceful and benign, he wants me to go with him
 -ah berries in the forest-
 but I scream please please don't wake me up
 I must sleep and go to work, don't wake me up
 he stands up gently, not insisting
 he is hurt and leaves.

Now I do wake up, sweating and shuddering
already the pale light is staining the sidewalk
I sleep a little more but there is no comfort
all day I am tired, haunted by bears.

ANARCHIST

In this street of high walled adobe
I walk with my two hearts in my hands
and below a chained hurricane lamp
pause, for a moment only
listen to the ticking
one in each hand.
By the light of the last window
the sign reads, Calle Piedras.
A night closed as tightly
as any of the windows.
Quiet please, ladies
for a little piece of sky.

Stephen Torgoff

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WATCH FOR FURTHER ANNOUNCEMENTS

CHE GUEVARA

JOEL SLOMAN

In 1890 Paul, his wife, their sons Ivan, Alexander, Misht and Anton and daughter Masha posed for a photograph in front of their home on Sandovo-Kudrinskaya Street in Moscow. These were the Chekhovs. Anton was a doctor like Che Guevara whom he also resembled. Chekhov was gentle, his passion aborted by humor and pathos; Che led a strange bourgeois life in mountains, forests and palace chambers in the interests of a continent's liberation. It's unjust to call his life bourgeois, though Chekhov's was. Two bourgeois doctors each killed by a bacillus, coughing blood over two continents.

In

Italy Keats made an awkward bow; Pechorin, in the Caucasus, was political in his scepticism, and a fatalist like Che and all revolutionaries; Mignon, the romantic nationalist; Mozart the freemason: a tradition of sensual and moral chaos. Is the revolution going to be great? Will it be as deliberate and dignified as a mask? Ask Che at Vallegrande. They only possess his body.

An attitude is something each of us can assume. This is all the past. There were revolutions in the past. Che is part of the past. The sense in which this past exists is experience. Experience is the future. All that's left is the present.

Working Class Self-Activity

George Rawick

The history of the American working class is a subject obscure to the Old and New Left alike. For the most part, academic labor scholarship has been institutional history focusing on the trade union, and like all institutional orientations has been quite conservative. "Radical" labor history has similarly been little concerned with the working class because of its concentration on another institution, the radical political party. Marxists have occasionally talked about working-class self-activity, as well they might, given that it was Marx's main political focus; but as E. P. Thompson points out in the preface to his monumental *Making of the English Working Class*, they have almost always engaged in substituting the party, the sect, and the radical intellectual for class self-activity in their studies. (1) As a result of this institutional focus, labor history from whatever source generally ignores also social structure, technological innovation, and the relation between the structure and innovation. In the present article I shall attempt some notes toward a study of the American working class since 1919 which strives to avoid the main errors of the old historiography. It must be clear from the outset that this article can be no more than suggestive, that it will be sparse and at times abstract. Hopefully, however, it will engender serious consideration and further probing into its basic themes.

The great steel strike of 1919 marks one beginning of the struggle for industrial unionism. Building upon the tradition of the IWW, a gigantic strike of almost all American steel workers broke out that year, the workers divided into dozens of small craft unions, but under the leadership of two former IWW leaders, William Z. Foster and Elizabeth Gurley Flynn (both soon to become leaders of the Communist Party), attempting to overcome the organizational limits of the craft structure. During World War I the introduction in the steel industry of significant technological rationalization was followed by the appearance of the entire apparatus of Taylorism, which included a whole range of procedures including time-and-motion studies and the development of new equipment to significantly increase the rate of exploitation. Despite the militancy of the workers, the craft-union form of organization was not powerful enough to withstand the implications of highly-rationalized industry, and the strike was broken. Taylorism had meant that workers could not gain anything significant by organization on a shop-by-shop basis. Monopoly capitalism, then at its most sophisticated in US Steel, demanded industry-wide organization if the workers' struggles were to succeed.

Before World War I, many skilled workers had significant control over their own time. They had the right to fairly-long breaks from work at their own discretion; they organized their work to suit their own needs and whims. Workers could regularly take off an extra day or two each month to handle personal affairs, which often included a small garden farm or other additional

sources of income. Workers controlled much of the hiring process, directly handled the relationship with their workmates in such matters as sickness and death benefits, and successfully bargained informally with plant managers and foremen.

Taylorism and its greatest innovation, the assembly line, was introduced to try to expropriate from workers their previous freedoms. Factory life of the 1920s was characterized by significant rationalization in steel, automobiles, electrical equipment, and petroleum and chemical products. Although wages increased to \$5 per day in the automobile industry, the amount of surplus value extracted from workers increased at a more rapid rate. Thus, while American workers received a wage level certainly higher than that known by workers in other industrially-advanced countries, they also worked harder and faster than any similar group of workers in other countries. Detroit and the assembly line became synonymous on a world-wide basis in the 1920s with high wages—and a degree of alienation hitherto even unanticipated. It would take a full-length study to substantiate this; here it must be simply asserted with the hope of encouraging documentation.

The relative increase in the standard of living in the 1920s was most significant for American workers, most of whom were foreign-born or in contact with relatives in Europe, or were from poor American rural backgrounds. Under such conditions most workers who experienced an increase in the standard of living were unwilling, under conditions in which they could not see their way clear to the creation of new forms of organization, to engage in militant action. Thus in heavily capitalized and rationalized industry, the decade was one of relative peace. There should be nothing surprising about this calm, however. The problems posed by mass production and the assembly line required some time and pressure before workers could fight back again.

The changes in American capitalism during the 1920s did not alter the low-capitalized industries, most of which were in the South. There were serious workers' struggles in sectors such as textiles, clothing, and low-priced consumer goods, where only limited technological rationalizations were economically feasible, and the labor of low-paid male and female workers was substituted for new technology. Under such conditions, the margin of profit came from attempting to make workers labor harder and accept wage cuts and deteriorating conditions. Most unions ignored these industries and made the workers look to their own resources and to whatever aid they could receive from radical organizations. In strike areas like Loray, Tennessee; Danville and Gastonia, North Carolina; and Passaic, New Jersey, the Communist Party was able to play an important role precisely because the American Federation of Labor was unwilling to attempt to organize the unskilled workers. Historians often present these strikes in such a way as to suggest their impossibility without Communist Party leadership; in my opinion this is a false impression. Indeed, long conversations I had many years ago with Fred Beal, a leading organizer of strike activity in Gastonia, suggest to me that these strikes might have been more successful if the Communist Party had been willing to follow the lead of workers.

In the soft-coal mines of Southern Illinois and in the bituminous coal mines of Kentucky and West Virginia in the late 1920s and early 1930s, there were constant struggles of a similar nature. Preliminary investigations of these suggest that the self-activity of the workers was often sabotaged by the conflict among radical organizations over the mythic question: "Who should lead the

workers?" This kind of strike activity continued into the early 1930s in bloody pitched battle in the bituminous coal mines of Kentucky and West Virginia. Here too we have a decaying industry unable to modernize; here too the official Left was able to play a meaningful role; and here too it subordinated the struggles of the workers to its own needs. In any case, the importance of strikes in low-capitalized industries during this period should not be exaggerated.

In 1958 an article in *The New International* (an American Marxist periodical, now defunct) on the New Deal had the following conclusion about why workers supported Roosevelt:

The problem is really simple if one is willing to lay aside romantic notions based upon the experience of other countries and their working-class movements. The American working class had not yet reached a level of consciousness that enabled it to do anything but accept the concessions it was able to force out of the pro-capitalist parties. The task in the New Deal period for the labor movement was the mass organization of the industrial workers.... One could not reasonably expect the American working class to leap so far ahead as to reject a New Deal, with its undeniable benefits, in the interests of a more class-conscious and politically-mature radical objective.

I was the author of this article. In writing it I demonstrated the backwardness not of the working class, but of the intellectuals who fail to understand the working class. Nor was I the only one convinced of the backwardness of the American workers. Some ten years ago I spent some time with Francis Perkins, then a professor of labor economics at Cornell, but previously Secretary of Labor under FDR and the person most responsible for the New Deal labor policy. Madame Perkins spoke to me along the following lines: Why didn't the working class in America ever attempt to change American society? We all expected that it would in 1933. At the first meeting of the Cabinet after the President took office in 1933, the financier and adviser to Roosevelt, Bernard Baruch, and Baruch's friend General Hugh Johnson, who was to become the head of the National Recovery Administration, came in with a copy of a book by Gentile, the Italian Fascist theoretician, for each member of the Cabinet, and we all read it with great care.

Madame Perkins was quite wrong. The American working class did change American society, despite the fact that American capitalism was very powerful and had often indicated clearly in the 1930s that it would resort to any means, if allowed to do so, to prevent a radical transformation of society.

We can estimate most sharply the power of the American working class if we look at its accomplishments comparatively. In Italy the crisis of capitalism of the decade of the Bolshevik Revolution and the World War produced Fascism as an answer to the bid of the Italian working class for power. In Germany, the crisis of capitalism produced first the Weimar Republic, which did nothing to alter the situation, and then Nazism; the consequence was the worst defeat any working class has ever known. The German working class was pulverized—unlike the Italian working class, which was never smashed to bits under fascism and in fact survived to destroy fascism itself. In France essentially the same

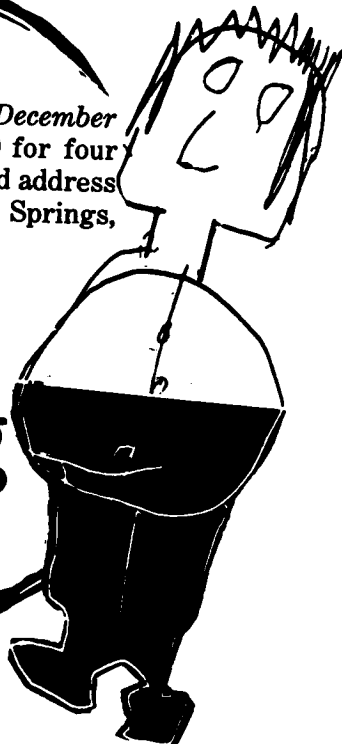
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pattern as in Italy was repeated, with the difference that full-fledged Fascism came only as a result of the German military advance, since the French working class had managed to defend democracy throughout the 1930s, often over the heads of the radical parties.

In the United States the situation was different. Throughout the 1920s the working class found its organizations weakened; but in the 1930s the working class struggled and created powerful mass industrial unions of a kind never known anywhere in the world, unions that organized all the workers in most major industries throughout the nation. The working class of America won victories of a scale and quality monumental in the history of the international working class. Only the capture of state power by a relatively-small working class of Russia—a state power it did not retain—has surpassed the magnitude of its victory in the Thirties.

The full organization of the major American industries, however, was a mark of the victories, not the cause of the victories, of the American working class. The unions did not organize the strikes; the working class in the strikes and through the strikes organized the unions. The growth of successful organizations always followed strike activity when some workers engaged in militant activities and others joined them. The formal organization—how many workers organized into unions and parties, how many subscriptions to the newspapers, how many political candidates nominated and elected, how much money collected for dues and so forth—is not the heart of the question of the organization of the working class. The statistics we need to understand the labor history of the time are not these. Rather, we need the figures on how many man-hours were lost to production because of strikes, the amount of equipment and material destroyed by industrial sabotage and deliberate negligence, the amount of time lost by absenteeism, the hours gained by workers through the slowdown, the limiting of the speed-up of the productive apparatus through the working class's own initiative.

In virtually every year since 1919, American workers have either led, or were second or third, in both the absolute and relative numbers of hours lost through strikes. In 1932 there were only 840 strikes; in 1933 there were 1700; by 1936, 2200; by 1937, 4740; in 1938, only 2500; in 1941, 4000; in both 1944 and 1945, 5000. In 1946, the year of the greatest militancy up to that point, there were just under 5000 strikes involving nearly five million workers, fourteen and a half per cent of the work force. And as the strike wave developed the unions grew. All of this occurred in the midst of a great depression and after more than a decade of inactivity in the area of industrial union organization. But most important, it all occurred not because the older unions attempted to organize industrial workers, but in spite of these unions and even against their opposition. When the crisis came, the response of the AF of L unions was to protect their own members' jobs and wages from the onslaught of millions of unorganized workers placed in the pool of the proletarians.

Only John L. Lewis and the oldest industrial union, the United Mine Workers, along with a few other older semi-industrial unions such as those in clothing and printing, responded at all. For the most part, what occurred was simple and direct. The workers in a given plant organized themselves into a strike committee, went out on strike, won some limited demands or lost, but maintained their organization. Eventually they joined with workers in other parts of the industry to form a national union.

There were three obstacles to the efforts of workers to organize unions. First there was the resistance from the employers who hired spies, blacklisted workers, fired activists, and finally created company unions. Second was the set of obstacles created by the top-ranking union leaders. Fearing that a strong industrial union would threaten the entrenched interests of craft-union leaders, the American Federation of Labor decreed that auto workers were to be organized in local federal unions, and that later these federal unions were to be broken up and their members divided among the craft unions. In the early years of the 1930s these tactics of the unions confused, demoralized, and slowed down the organization of workers. Only after a few years did the workers gain renewed confidence to organize, if need be against the unions. Third was the set of obstacles created by the Government under the National Recovery Administration. With the co-operation of the established unions, the NRA saw to it that demands for more money or a check on the growth of speed-up were ignored.

One recent case study of the organization of a particular union is illustrative of this process of the self-activity of the working class and the obstacles it encountered. (2)

When workers in the Budd Manufacturing Company, in September 1933, voted to apply for an AF of L federal charter, Budd management hastily installed a company union. When a committee of the new federal union asked management for recognition, they were flatly told that the company had already recognized an association for bargaining purposes. Hearing this, the membership voted to strike the plant. The company responded by hiring strike-breakers and continuing to operate the plant, although production was crippled. The Regional Labor Board stepped in and ordered the strike ended and an election conducted to determine whether the workers wanted the federal union or the company union to represent them.

But the company had other ideas: It had no intention of laying off non-strikers. The National Labor Board answered this by referring the case to the National Compliance Board of the NRA; the Board handed down recommendations calling for an election under rules favorable to the company union, and discriminating against the strikers. Finally, in March 1934, the Budd case was included in the general settlement forced through by the Government to head off widespread strikes in the auto industry scheduled for March. The company agreed to re-employ one striker for every two men hired.

The role of the AF of L was characteristic. A full month elapsed after the strike began before AF of L president William Green gave it official recognition (but no financial help). By the time the strike had ended, the union affiliated with the AF of L in the plant was dead. The workers at Budd turned to new organization and were among the first to create the United Automobile Workers.

Such were the experiences of auto workers throughout the industry. And after two and a half years of such defeats, inflicted by a combination of employers and government and union officials, a new movement began which would wage the sit-down strikes and from which would grow the UAW. A look at the history of the sit-downs will indicate that in this most-advanced example of working-class struggle, the genuine advances of the working class were made by the struggle from below, by the natural organization of the working class, rather than by the bureaucratic elaboration of the administration of the working class from above. Symbolically, the first sit-downs came spontaneously in Atlanta, Georgia, not in Detroit under the direction of the Left.

During the early years of the Depression (before 1937), the struggles remained fairly small while workers sought a new form. In 1934 the organization of industrial unions began in earnest. With the further downswing of wages and employment in 1937, the workers in autos, then in rubber, and then in other industries occupied the plants, slept there, ate there, refused to leave or produce, protected themselves inside the plants, and organized massive demonstrations outside. Thousands of troops surrounded the factories with tanks and artillery, not firing because of the certainty that it would further radicalize the situation. Out of the strikes came the right of workers to join unions, with virtual closed-shop conditions won in many industries.

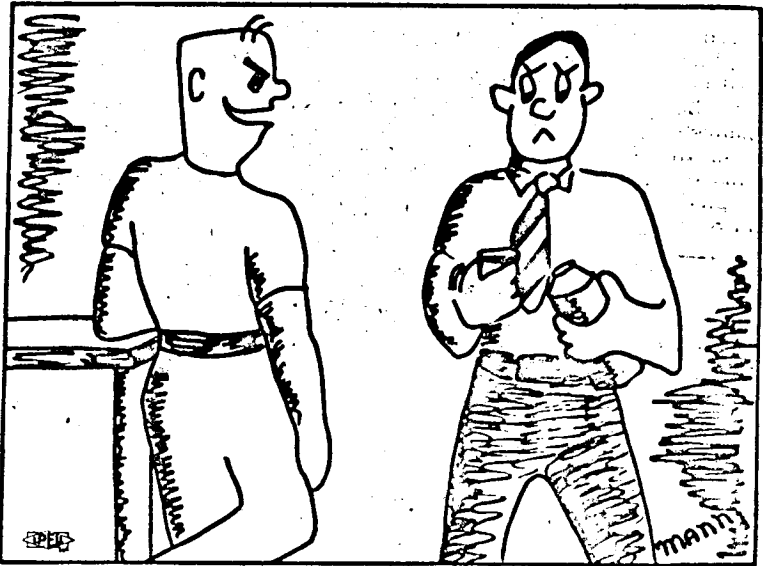
Throughout the War, workers were faced with a general wage freeze and a commodity-scarce economy. Workers made good money by working overtime and continually demonstrating that they would never accept lower wages again. However, the most basic struggles the workers engaged in were attempts to improve working conditions, slow down the speed of work, and resist the attempts of management to turn the factories into smaller military camps by disciplining the workers. Workers in coal production engaged in very militant strikes to increase wages directly, because during the 1930s coal miners had not even been able to raise their pay.

At the end of the War, there was an attempt to roll back wage increases made during the war, to force the working class to accept a smaller share of the product. Only after the greatest outpouring of strikes and militancy since 1919 did American capitalism agree to a new wage policy.

The price of the new wage policy was the further linking of the union leadership with government and management decision-making processes. Since the end of

The Needle

by Mann



"Now, Boss, why should I want to put cutting oil in your thermos?"
from - Correspondence

World War II the unions have been able to gain monetary wage increases, generally speaking, to keep up with increases of productivity: Unions can guarantee that the size of the unionized worker's slice of the national product does not diminish, although inflation continues to wipe out many gains. In return unions have had to insure industrial peace by disciplining the workers and curtailing their demands on all issues save money and fringe benefits. In particular unions resist demands of workers for greater shares of production and lessened exploitation.

Unions have generally given up the demand for a shorter work week. Indeed, in many industries the de facto situation now is that workers work fifty hours or more per week. Workers' pay does keep up with productivity, but only if overtime pay is included. The grievance procedure which has been the main protection of the worker in the past has all but totally broken down. With thousands of unresolved grievances common in every major plant, the speed-up has increased very rapidly without much union opposition, automation proceeds without limitation by the union, and attempts of workers to gain control over working conditions and procedures are systematically fought by the unions.

All of this must be understood as part of the necessary device whereby the State has directly transformed capitalism since the 1930s. The State regulates the flow of capital, owns outright or indirectly large bodies of capital, (for example, the aerospace program in both its public and private sectors), and through the contract—enforced by the shop committeemen and union stewards, who in effect become agents of the State—disciplines the workers. On the one hand, the New Deal acts—from the NRA (declared unconstitutional) to the Federal Reserve Act, Securities and Exchange Act, Agricultural Adjustment Act et cetera—provided the legal context in which workers raised their wages through massive strikes at the end of World War II. On the other hand, the CIO unions became through the process the political weapons of the State against the working class. Carefully-legalized mass industrial unions were a necessary part of this development; industry-wide bargaining agents able to impose wage rates high enough to drive out all marginal producers who cut prices by super-exploitation of workers were in effect incorporated into the State apparatus.

The full incorporation of the unions within the structure of American State capitalism has led to very widespread disaffection of the workers from the unions. Workers are faced squarely with the problem of finding means of struggle autonomous of the unions, a problem which, while always present under capitalism than anywhere else. As a consequence workers struggle in the factories through wildcat strikes and sporadic independent organizations. Outside the factory only young workers and black workers find any consistent radical social-political expression, and even the struggles of blacks and youths are at best weakly linked to the struggles in the factory.

There is often a very-sectarian and remarkably-undialectical reaction to these developments. Some historians and New Leftists argue that it demonstrates that the CIO was a failure which resulted only in the workers' disciplining. This argument ignores the gains of the CIO in terms of higher living standards, more security for workers, and increased education and enlightenment. Clearly, the victories are embedded in capitalism and the agency of victory, the union, has become an agency of capitalism as well. This is a concrete example of what contradiction means in a dialectical sense; and it is part of a process which

leads to the next stage of the workers' struggle, the wildcat strike.

There are two characteristics of the wildcat strike which represent a new stage of development: first, through this device workers struggle simultaneously against the bosses, the State, and the union; second, they achieve a much more direct form of class activity, by refusing to delegate aspects of their activity to an agency external to themselves. (3)

When the wave of wildcat strikes first began to appear as the new form of working-class self-activity and organization, it was hard to see (except very abstractly) where they would lead. But after glimpses of the future afforded by the workers' councils during the Hungarian Revolution in 1956 and the French uprising of May and June 1968, the new society which can only be fully realized and protected by revolutionary struggle is clearly revealed: workers' councils in every department of national activity, and a government of workers' councils.

FOOTNOTES

(1) The last work approaching a full-scale Marxist history of the US working class was in the early additions to Anthony Bimba's *History of the American Working Class*, which while theoretically above average was factually far below. A mark of the backwardness of American Marxism, its failure to concern itself with its own working class, is the fact that *History of the American Working Class* by Frederich Sorge, who lived in the US in the latter Nineteenth Century while remaining one of Marx's closest co-workers, has never been translated into English from its initial publication in *Neue Zeit*.

(2) See Frank Marquart's study of the creation of a union at the Budd Manufacturing Company in Philadelphia which appeared in *Speak Out* (Number 9). Unquestionably, hundreds of similar stories can be collected; doubters should listen to the sit-down stories of auto workers from Flint, Michigan, and compare them to the official UAW history which emphasized the strikes' leadership (none other than the present national officers and executive board of the UAW). Radical scholars should begin to collect materials while there is still time.

(3) Marxists who are familiar with the basis of the Hegelian dialect, in the master-slave discussion in which Hegel indicates that the slaves must struggle against elements of their own class as well as against the masters, will not be surprised by this historical analysis. In *Facing Reality* (Facing Reality Publishing Committee, Detroit, 1956), CLR James offers the following useful summary of dialectics:

(a) All development takes place as a result of self-movement, not organization or direction by external forces.

(b) Self-movement springs from and is the overcoming of antagonisms within an organism, not the struggle against external foes.

(c) It is not the world of nature that confronts man as an alien power to be overcome. It is the alien power that he has himself created.

(d) The end toward which mankind is inexorably developing by the constant overcoming of internal antagonisms is not the enjoyment, ownership, or use of goods, but self-realization, creativity based upon the incorporation into the individual personality of the whole previous development of humanity. Freedom is creative universality, not utility.

Literature On the American Working Class

John Evansohn, Laura Foner, Mark Naison
Ruth Meyerowitz, Will Brumbach

INTRODUCTION

Let's drink to the hard-working people
Let's drink to the lowly of birth
Raise your glass to the good and the evil
Let's drink to the salt of the earth.

The Rolling Stones

For most of its short history, the "New Left" has tended to ignore the American working class. Working primarily in the universities, and making forays into the ghettos and Southern cotton towns, the "New Left" has generally thought of the white working class with ignorance, suspicion, and fear. It was almost taken for granted that workers in this country had been too fully "bought off" and shared too strongly in the dominant anti-communist and racist ideology to ever become a force in a movement for socialism.

Times have changed. The last few years have seen increasing debate in the Movement about the political tendencies and potential of the American workers —both blue-collar and white-collar— as a force for revolutionary social change. The rebellion in France last spring, the potential and threat represented by Wallace's campaign and his appeal to the workers' sense of powerlessness, the discontent among working-class draftees in the army, and the recent debates in SDS have heightened this renewed interest in the working class.

Out of this have come some of the murkiest and also some of the best debates in SDS and the Movement as a whole on the problem of class consciousness and how we can reach and relate to American workers. In addition to the debates efforts are now being made to go into white-collar jobs and into the factories, as well as into high schools, technical and community colleges, the army, and working-class communities to try out different strategies for working-class organizing.

In the course of these debates and organizing attempts it became clear that the American working class was not "dormant": a growing militancy showed itself in the rising number of wildcats every year since 1960 and the various rank-and-file movements and radical caucuses of black and white workers which have been challenging both management and entrenched union leadership. Nor were workers as affluent or secure as had been assumed. Rather, rising costs and taxes have steadily eaten away at wage increases, and only the most skilled workers are able to earn anything near the minimum wage considered adequate for a family of four by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. This "high"

income can only be achieved with substantial overtime, making the average work week for many workers forty-eight to seventy-two hours long, with some workers holding two full-time jobs. Further, many workers face constant job insecurity (There is an enormous turnover of employees in American industry.) with consequent fear and insecurity about being able to support families, or set aside money for medical expenses, education, retirement, and old age. In addition to grievances on the job, workers are faced with exploitation as consumers, tax-payers, and community residents—inadequate schools which process working-class youth for unskilled jobs and the army, poor transportation, absence of day-care centers, et cetera.

The following bibliography on the American working class was put together with several aims in mind:

1) to continue the process of destroying the myths held by the Movement about the working class;

2) to provide material which we hope will be helpful to Movement people who are currently organizing in working-class communities, or on the job (or are planning to start such projects);

3) to encourage much-needed study on areas of working-class life and experience which have been either totally ignored or distorted and confused.

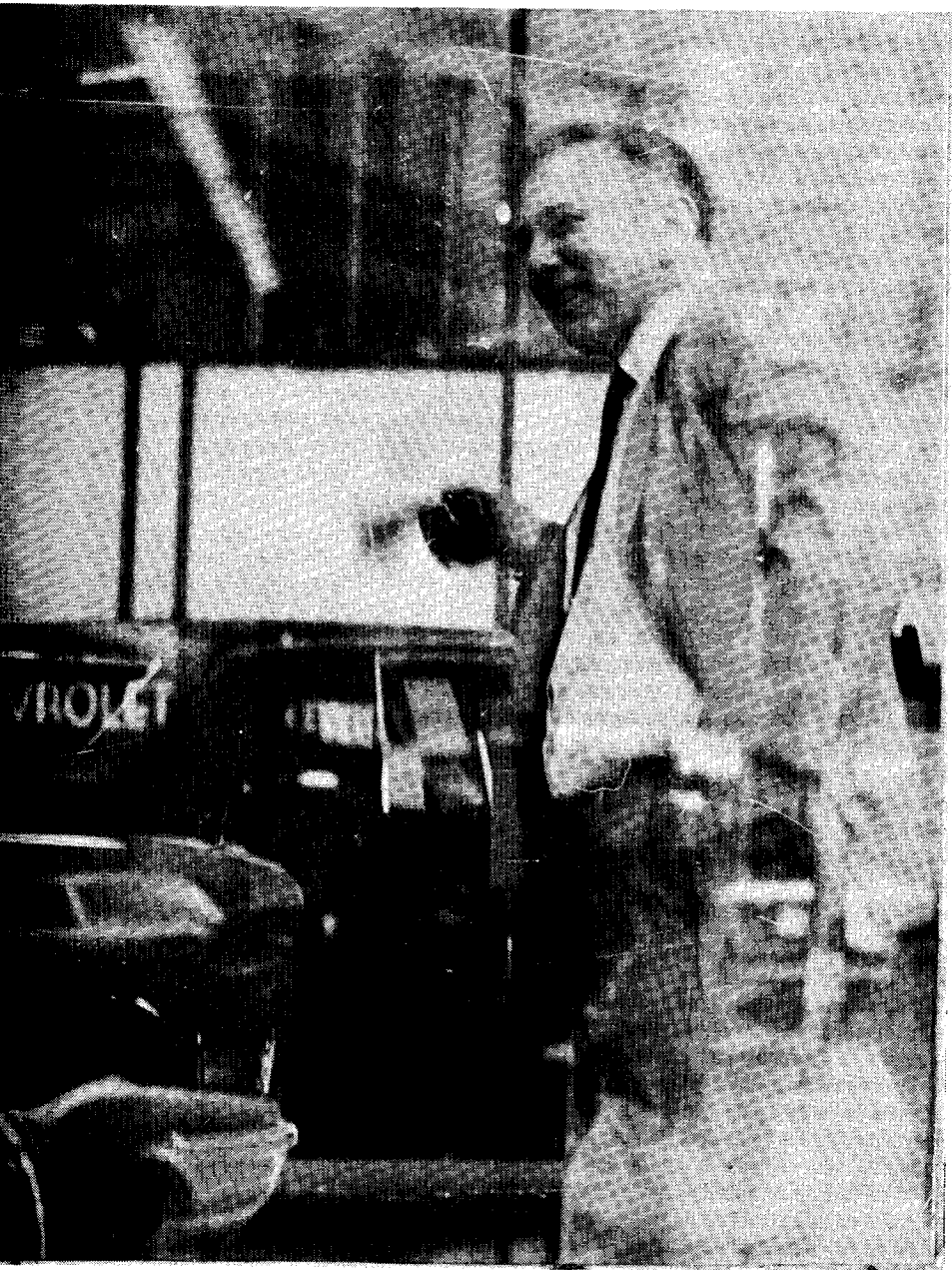
It focuses on the white working class (although not exclusively) rather than on both black and white workers, largely because there has been much written recently about black communities, education, and culture as well as the role of black people in the economy. Although much of this literature does not deal specifically with black workers, sources dealing with white workers—especially contemporary materials—are much less well-known. This is, of course, partly due to the fact that little or nothing has been written in many areas of working-class history and life. But the dearth of material is only one of the problems in putting together such a bibliography.

Another problem involves a methodological critique of the existing material. Of all the subjects of study by American writers, the white industrial worker may be the most stereotyped and the least understood. Post-war sociologists have maligned him as the "mass man", an authoritarian personality who is prone to lynchings, witchhunts, and patriotic sprees—the patron of racism, McCarthyism, and anti-Semitism. Liberal cultural critics have painted him as the great consumer, seduced into political passivity by his insatiable hunger for goods. And Marxist historians have presented him as the American student hero, struggling to implement his historic mission against enormous odds,

CONTRIBUTORS

DICK HOWARD is completing his dissertation at the University of Texas on the relationship of the Grundrisse to Capital; GEORGE RAWICK is presently teaching at Oakland University in Michigan; JOEL SLOMAN is an editor of CAW!, and his poem is reprinted from El Corno Emplumado; WILL BRUMBACH has been an organizer for the West Side Resistance Project; JOHN EVANSOHN is now teaching sociology at Essex County Community College; LAURA FONER is now a graduate student at Columbia; RUTH MEYEROWITZ is a graduate student at Columbia and spends much of her time with rank-and-file caucuses in New Haven; MARK NAISON is a Radical America associate; STEPHEN TORGOFF'S poem was reprinted from his book False Consciousness; PAUL FALER is a graduate student at the University of Wisconsin, finishing his dissertation on Nineteenth Century Massachusetts working-class history





bringing us closer to victory with each union struggle. These images have combined to produce an enormous fog of misconceptions which insulate the worker from other social classes and isolate him from his own culture.

To remove some of the layers of myth obscuring the experience of the American worker is crucial if we are ever to have an effective and class-conscious radicalism in America. This will involve cutting through the pluralistic notions of America as one big middle-class society, with workers fully-integrated into middle-class life and values, while at the same time avoiding a dangerously-persistent tendency of many writers on the Left to glorify the working class and see class struggle in every street-corner brawl.

Another weakness in much of the work of our predecessors on the Left—and in the historical literature in general—is that it has dealt with the working class almost exclusively in terms of trade-union struggles. Although this aspect of the working-class experience is crucial and the work has been carried out with great skill, passion, and intelligence, we believe that working-class life has to be viewed in a general cultural setting, and that politics, the educational system, the consumer market, and the media are arenas in which class oppression is as real and important as the factory. Thus we have tried to concentrate on sources which treat working-class life in a general cultural setting, and have omitted many well-known works which have been traditionally considered the sourcebooks of American labor history.

The bibliography is divided into five sections. First, there is a selection of some of the best books on American working-class history. In this section we have tried to select works which do not identify the history of the working class with the history of the labor movement. They deal with such questions as the nature and extent of social mobility, the persistence and importance of agrarian values and pre-industrial cultural patterns, the influence of ethnic and racial sub-cultures, sources and patterns of labor militancy, and the methods by which the working class has been integrated into capitalist society. In addition to citing several works, we have suggested a tentative framework for interpreting the worker's changing conditions and responses in relation to a developing capitalist economy from 1820 to the present. Following this is a short section with books and articles on working classes in other countries. These have been included either because of their exciting methodological approaches or because of the value of the comparisons they suggest.

The third section is a large body of sociological studies on the American worker. These include studies of working-class communities and education, and attitudes toward work, politics, and the family. Some of these studies are excellent; others reek of sociological jargon. But through the bullshit, there emerges a portrait of autonomous modes of working-class life and thought. They reveal important information about attitudes toward unions, consumption patterns and the role played by credit, the sources and nature of working-class aspirations, the general balance between workplace and community in the worker's search for a satisfying life. One other point should be mentioned. Most of the community studies deal with middle-size industrial cities where the bulk of manufacturing in America takes place. We think it is important for all of us to become conscious that the main tasks in working-class organizing lie outside the great metropolitan centers.

The fourth section deals with the issue of racism and the general question of ethnic conflict. In underestimating the complexity of the working-class

experience, radicals have played down the divisions within the working class which have made radical development in America so difficult. The growth of ethnic sub-cultures, the power of white-supremacist feeling, the emergence of an internal class struggle between skilled and unskilled workers, the differences between workers born into industrialism and those recently arrived, are themes which have been underplayed in both radical strategy and radical historiography. It is time such problems were given their proper attention.

And finally, there is a short section dealing with working-class culture. We begin with novels—an important source of material on the American working class. "Proletarian culture", crudely defined, was one of the more unfortunate pre-occupations of Depression-era writers, but the vulgarity of its application should not blind us to the fact that there were and are distinctly working-class subcultures in American society with which the Left must come to terms. Thus we are presenting the best of the proletarian novels of the Thirties with the fairly-limited collection of books dealing with working-class themes that we were able to collect from the post-war period. This will be followed by a short discussion of modern working-class youth culture. The literature dealing with such matters is practically non-existent and is not very good. But its importance is such that we feel compelled to mention the theme—and raise what we believe are the necessary questions.

The bibliography is by no means complete. We hope it will help people gain a better understanding of a class whose history and present mode of life remain a mystery to much of the New Left, and whose participation is essential to any revolutionary movement.

HISTORY

American historians have not as yet provided us with a full picture of working-class life during the growth of industrial capitalism in America. The analysis of the development of an industrial infrastructure has been carried out with far greater precision than the examination of its social effects. The very excellent work done on the development and consolidation of the corporate economy by Thomas Cochran, Alfred Chandler, James Weinstein, Gabriel Kolko, and Robert Wiebe has few parallels in the field of social history. Even radical historians have fallen prey to the elitist bias of seeing working-class history primarily in terms of the growth of formal institutions. We know much more about the history of trade unions and radical parties than we do about the working conditions, community life, and leisure pursuits of the workers whom they tried to represent.

However, work done in the past five years suggests that these gaps in the history of American industrialism may soon be filled. A new generation of radical historians, less sanguine about the potential of the trade-union movement than its predecessors, has begun to investigate the conditions of life of unorganized as well as organized workers, and has significantly expanded the analytical range of American labor history. The methodology of European Marxist historians has been applied to raise important questions about the manner in which an industrial working class was created and stabilized during different stages of American capitalism, to explore the nature of its resistance to industrialism, and to provide a more persuasive explanation of both the failures and the accomplishments of the American Left.

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The works of Jesse Lemisch, Herbert Gutman, and Stephen Thernstrom are among the most important recent attempts to raise, and begin to answer, these questions. Lemisch's work on merchant seamen in the American Revolution in both the *William and Mary Quarterly* (Volume 25, Number 3, July 1968) and *Toward a New Past*, edited by Barton Bernstein (New York, 1968) demonstrates the importance of studying both the elite—to see how their beliefs and practices affected the rest of society, and those on the bottom—to see how they responded to, resisted, or challenged the demands of the upper orders. Paul Faler's essay, below, covers Gutman's and Thernstrom's work adequately.

Early Industrial Capitalism: 1830-1860

The best work to consult here is still Norman Ware's *The Industrial Worker: 1840-1860* (Boston, 1924). The book details the anguished and largely unsuccessful efforts of American working men (and women) to resist the advance of industrial capitalism, a system which they viewed as a "radical force, ruthlessly destroying the little liberties and amenities of another day". The book is still unsurpassed for its ability to make real the experience of early industrialism. Its description of the early experiments in craft unionism, co-operation, and political reform depicts the full range of value conflicts which capitalism brought with it and is completely free of the paternalism which often ruins the history of "backward-looking" social movements.

The literature for this period describes most thoroughly the development of the textile industries and the early "Irish immigration". Hannah Josephson's "*The Golden Threads*" (New York, 1949) is an excellent study of New England mill girls and factory owners in Lowell, Massachusetts. Vera Shlakman's *Economic History of a Factory Town: Chicopee* (Northampton, Massachusetts, 1935) is a study of a New England mill town in the process of industrialization. Its most interesting sections deal with the class structure of the community and the social effects of a shift from native-born female to immigrant, largely male Irish, labor. With the coming of the Irish, a permanent factory population developed with whole families dependent on mill earnings. Also useful is Carolyn F. Ware's *Early New England Cotton Manufacture* (New York, 1966). Concerned principally with the development of the industry, it also has rich material on working and living conditions.

Robert Ernst's *Immigrant Life in New York: 1825-1863* (New York, 1949) gives an accurate picture of the labor market in the nation's largest commercial center and a sensitive description of the dislocations produced by the Irish immigration of the late 1840s. Oscar Handlin's *Commonwealth, A History of Massachusetts* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1947) contains a good description of the political controversies provoked by the beginning of the factory system, but gives little attention to the perspective of the worker and is marred by a tendency to squeeze consensus from every event. Handlin's *Boston's Immigrants: A Study in Acculturation* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1941) is one of the best of the traditional descriptions of the experiences of an ethnic group in America. Handlin describes the importance of the Irish to industrialization in Massachusetts as well as the development of a group consciousness. He ignores, however, the extent to which their behavior was molded by the pressures of their working-class position, and explains virtually everything in terms of their rural Irish-Catholic origins.

The Gilded Age: 1860-1890

Under entrepreneurial capitalism, the American working class first attained importance as a self-conscious political force, and one can look to a solid body of literature on both the labor movement and working-class political reform. Two works in particular stand out. David Montgomery's *Beyond Equality: Labor and the Radical Republicans: 1863-1872* (New York, 1967) is a brilliant examination of the effect of working-class agitation on the "Radical" political coalition which emerged triumphant after the Civil War. Montgomery shows how the nature of American industrialism focused working-class energies into political-reform movements after the Civil War, and how those movements raised issues for the middle-class sponsors of Reconstruction which hastened the collapse of the radical experiment. He also seeks to explain how the experience of class conflict did not immediately generate a radical socialist ideology among trade-union leaders, and how the vision of harmonious society continued to hold sway in workmen's minds. The demands for currency reform and the movements for an eight-hour day were not, as some historians have alleged, "utopian diversions", but were serious efforts to find room for democratic values within the emerging industrial system. Norman Ware's *The Labor Movement in the United States, 1860-1895: A Study in Democracy* (New York, 1929) deals with similar issues. The almost-religious idealism of post-war movements such as the Knights of Labor, Ware claims, reflected the fact that industrial capitalism operated counter to widely-held social and religious values. By destroying the meaning of craft skills and creating enormous concentration of economic and political power, capitalism threatened the dignity and independence which were deemed every man's birthright. It was to the credit of groups such as the Knights, Ware concluded, that they challenged capitalism as a system and put forth values of co-operation and social solidarity in a religious spirit. The rise of the craft-minded AFL, far from being the "triumph of rationality", represented a strategic retreat from the more-ambitious reform efforts.

Ware's picture of the Gilded Age as one in which the triumph of industrial capitalism was bitterly contested on the basis of traditional social values has been confirmed by the work of Herbert Gutman. The history of the great industrial conflicts of the Gilded Age has been well covered by narrative historians who have not been as sensitive to the importance of community structure as Gutman. Wayne Broehl's *The Molly Maguires* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1964) is a study of the famed Irish terrorist group in the Pennsylvania mines which sheds light both upon Protestant-Catholic animosities in the labor movement and upon the development of techniques of repression—labor spies, the legal doctrine of conspiracy, the use of the state militia—to control working-class violence. Robert V. Bruce's *1877, Year of Violence* (Indianapolis, 1959) is an impressionistic history of the great railway strikes of 1877 which ended with over a hundred workmen killed. At one point in the strikes, a mob of outraged workers seized control of the city of Pittsburgh and destroyed over ten million dollars of railway property. Henry David's *The Haymarket Affair* (New York, 1936) is a brilliant study of a pivotal event in the history of the American labor movement. David shows how the involvement of anarchists and social revolutionaries in the eight-hour movement of the 1880s, dramatized by a bomb-throwing at a Chicago labor rally, was used to discredit the Knights of Labor, which had attained over one million members, and paved the way for the dominance of craft unionism in the American labor movement.

The literature on class violence in the Gilded Age has recently been supplemented by studies of working-class life and attitudes. In a chapter on "The Workingman" in *The New Commonwealth* (New York, 1968) John Garraty pulls together information on trade-union activity, standards of living, working conditions, and mobility to document growing dissatisfaction and industrial unrest, which he attributes to the fact that large numbers of skilled and unskilled workmen remained desperately poor. Only an unmeasurable minority attained the dramatic rags-to-riches rise made famous in American mythology. An even more perceptive study, Stephen Thernstrom's *Poverty and Progress*, concludes on the basis of a community study in a New England industrial city that workmen rarely moved out of their class, but had the opportunity to make minor advances in skill levels and to accumulate some property.

Emerging Corporate Economy: 1890-1929

The history of the American worker in this period involves the description of many contradictory trends. This was the time when the corporate economy developed and the modern techniques for integrating the working class into capitalist society evolved. Advertising, the mass production of consumer goods, the centralization of urban school systems, the attack on immigrant-dominated political machines, the cultivation of a "white-supremacist" ideology through Jim Crow laws and imperial adventures, all emerged as conscious strategies for social integration by the time of the First World War. Yet the task was not carried out without important resistance. The 1890s were marked by violent labor uprisings in North and South and the rise of the Populists, a radical, anti-capitalist party that came very near success. The "Progressive period" marked the high point of American Socialist politics. And the two years after World War I contained the greatest concentration of class and racial violence since the end of Reconstruction. The ten years of social peace that ended with the Depression were achieved only after violent and systematic repression had undercut the major forms of working-class resistance.

The experience of the American workers in the 1890s has been dealt with only partially by historians, but a number of works analyze the class and racial violence of the period in a manner which raises broader issues. C. Van Woodward's *Tom Watson, Agrarian Rebel* (New York, 1938) and *The Origins of the New South* (Austin, Texas, 1951) remind us that class unity between the black and white Southern poor was greater in this period than at any other time in American history. Racially-mixed unions in longshore, mining, and steel fought bitter and sometimes successful strikes, and the Populists (in some states) sought to unite blacks and whites against the politics of white supremacy. Only the failure of these movements permitted the disfranchisement of the Negro and the ascendancy of Jim Crow. Herbert Gutman's brilliant article "The Negro and the United Mine Workers of America" in *The Negro and the American Labor Movement* confirms Woodward's view that enormous possibilities for inter-racial organization were available in the Nineties. Gutman shows how black organizers played a significant and by no means passive role in the development of the miners' union, and how racial conflicts significantly shaped the organization's history. Other works cataloguing class and labor violence in the period are also worth examining. Louis Adamic's

Dynamite, *The Story of Class Violence in America* (New York, 1934) and Samuel Yellin's *American Labor Struggles* (New York, 1936) treat the Pullman Strike and the Homestead Lockout, two of American labor's most-dramatic failures, in an interesting if romanticized manner. Ray Ginger's *Eugene V. Debs, A Biography* (New Brunswick, 1949) gives an excellent picture of the lives of American railway workers, and a careful examination of the forces which led to the failure of the American Railway Union in the Pullman strike. It also offers telling documentation of the strength of racial feeling among white Northern workmen. Robert Weibe's fine book *The Search for Order* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1962) provides some excellent information on the response of the middle class to industrial unrest. He describes the establishment of employers' associations, the hiring of detective agencies and labor spies to minimize agitation, and the development of techniques of government intervention to protect corporate property and to control labor violence. The years between 1890 and 1900 were an important turning point in the history of the American working classes. More needs to be known not only about the way workers lived and thought, but also about the way the forces of order in American society organized to prevent change.

Better material is available on the experience of American workers in succeeding years. David Brody's *Steelworkers in America: The Non-Union Era* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1962) is a remarkable case study of how the work force in the steel industry was kept unorganized by a combination of repression, welfare programs, and exploitation of ethnic differences. Brody finds conclusive evidence that the structure of the communities in which the workers lived and the expectations which they brought to their work were as important as industrial conditions in determining the forms and outcomes of labor activity. The astute manipulation of social antagonisms between native-born immigrants and black workers seems to have been the steel corporations' major technique of defeating efforts to organize its workers. Another excellent study, by Robert Ozanne, *A Century of Labor Relations at McCormick and International Harvester* (Madison, Wisconsin, 1967) finds similar techniques used there. The growth of self-contained communities among immigrant workmen is brilliantly documented in Florian Znanieck's monumental *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America* (Boston, 1920, five volumes). This work, which every serious student of the American working class should read, shows how the activities of immigrant workmen in America were dominated by their experiences in their homeland, and how the forms of social organization which they developed insulated them from other social groups in a manner which undercut efforts to organize a unified working-class movement. Moses Rischin's *The Promised City* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1962) and Melech Epstein's *The History of Jewish Labor in the United States* (New York, 1950-1953, two volumes) make the same kind of analysis, in a less-ambitious manner, for American Jews. The centrality of ethnic differences in the radical movements of the period is also well analyzed in two general works dealing with the labor movement and the Left—Marc Karson's *American Labor Unions and Politics: 1900-1918* (Carbondale, 1958) and James Weinstein's *The Decline of Socialism in America: 1912-1925* (New York, 1967)—and in an article by Charles Leinenweber in *Science and Society* (Winter 1968) entitled "The Socialist Party and the New Immigrants". These articles demonstrate that immigrant sub-cultures in American cities were both a major source of

socialist sentiment and a serious obstacle to the unification of the labor movement in the first two decades of the Twentieth Century.

The strike wave that followed World War I represented the last major offensive of radical unionism before the Depression, and its interpretation remains one of the great unfinished tasks of radical scholarship. However, several excellent works which examine conflicts in specific sections or industries—such as David Brody's *Labor in Crisis: The Steel Strike of 1919* (Philadelphia, 1965), Harvey O'Connor's *Revolution in Seattle: A Memoir* (New York, 1964), and Robert Freidheim's *The Seattle General Strike* (Seattle, 1964)—deal with two of the period's most-dramatic movements, whose failure spelled a dim future for industrial unionism. The inability of the established labor organizations to fully commit their energies to organizing drives in transportation, extraction, and the mass-production industries, these authors argue, enabled the post-war open-shop drive to win critical victories. The same point of view, somewhat more-harshly stated, can be found in William Z. Foster's *American Trade Unionism* (New York, 1947) and *Pages from a Worker's Life* (New York, 1939). Foster shows convincingly how the AF of L bureaucracy stood in the way of the "hurricane" strategy needed to successfully organize in steel, and ended up by undercutting its own power as well as that of more-radical leaders. An excellent account of the persecution of labor leaders during the War and after is found in William Preston Junior's *Aliens and Dissenters: Federal Suppression of Radicals: 1903-1933* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1963). Preston shows how the repressive apparatus of the state—the army, the courts, the FBI, the immigration bureau—were placed wholly at the disposal of the corporations between 1917 and 1921, and were used to crush the great organizing drives in the mass-production industries and destroy the morale and the leadership of radical unions. Yet only short impressionistic chapters in William Leuchtenberg's *The Perils of Prosperity* (Chicago, 1958) and Sidney Lens's *Left Right and Center* (Hinsdale, Illinois 1949) seek to make the connection between the repression of the post-war strike-wave and the "success" of welfare capitalism in the years that followed.

The conditions of American workers during the "open-shop" years of the Twenties has been given sensitive if somewhat ahistorical treatment in Irving Bernstein's *The Lean Years: The History of the American Worker: 1920-1933* (Boston, 1960). Writing about a period when the labor movement had lost all pretensions of militancy and was "trying to sell itself as a necessary auxiliary of business", Bernstein discusses the conditions which made the working classes unable to organize successfully in the shop or to resist business domination of education, politics, and culture. He points to the following as the sources of the unprecedented class harmony of the Twenties: the end of immigration and the accompanying campaign to Americanize ethnic sub-groups, the development of welfare capitalism in the mass-production industries, the influx of women into the employment market, the expansion of white-collar employment, the dissemination of cheap consumer goods through installment credit, and the development of new devices for mass entertainment (the automobile, the radio, and the movies).

One of Bernstein's major sources was Robert and Helen Lynd's study of Muncie, Indiana, *Middletown* (New York, 1929). The Lynds found that a lack of autonomy and opportunities for individual mobility at the workplace did not keep Muncie's workers from accepting corporate paternalism. Aspirations were easily deflected to the next generation, faith was placed in the school system

as the major arena for upward movement, and personal gratifications were sought in home-life and leisure (made possible by the availability of consumer goods). Mass culture and mass education had thus emerged as a substitute for controls over the work process and the political system. Along with the suppression of the post-war strike-wave and of the Left, these were major forces behind the political passivity of the American worker during the Twenties.

The Worker in the Great Depression: 1929-1940

The Depression brought an abrupt end to the conditions which made for class harmony in the Twenties. Corporate paternalism ceased, consumer goods stopped flowing, and millions were thrown out of work. Many workers turned to unions and radical parties to restore security and a sense of meaning to their lives. But the degree to which fundamental life patterns and cultural attitudes were changed by the experience is open to question. We have yet to discover whether new forms of community and new types of consciousness emerged among the working classes, or whether loyalties forged in previous years still held sway. Before we do, it will be difficult to say to what degree the failure of Depression-era radicalism was due to overwhelming social conditions, to the strategic failures of radical parties and radical labor leadership, or to the rapid submergence of discontent in the onslaught of the Second World War.

Existing community studies of workers during the Depression seem to suggest that fundamental changes in consciousness did not occur. E. Wright Bakke's studies of New Haven, *The Unemployed Worker* (New York, 1934) and *The Unemployed Worker and His Family* (New York, 1940), and the Lynds' *Middletown in Transition* (New York, 1937) found that working people during the Depression tended to view their distress as temporary, reject far-reaching solutions to the crisis, and sink into a generally-lower energy level in their private lives. Workers responded favorably to the appeals of unions and the unemployed leagues, but did not see them as the basis upon which to construct a new social and political life. They met the appeals of radical parties with a mixture of apathy and suspicion.

But the conclusions of the above-mentioned works cannot be applied to the whole of the Depression-era working class. The towns in which the studies were done—Muncie and New Haven—were centers of relative labor peace in a time of widespread unrest. A more general view of the period suggests that potential for a radical consciousness existed in many segments of the society but was not developed by proper organization.

The profundity of working-class discontent during the Depression has been demonstrated by a number of excellent works. The latter chapters of Bernstein's *The Lean Years* document the violent textile strikes and unemployed demonstrations that marked the three years before the New Deal. Anna Rochester's *Labor and Coal* (New York, 1931) deals with the dislocations caused by the Depression in coal-mining districts. Lens's *Left, Right, and Center*, Art Preis's *Labor's Giant Step* (New York, 1964), and Edward Levinson's *Labor on the March* (New York, 1936) discuss the conditions in the mass-production industries which led to the formation and the meteoric rise of the CIO. Sit-down strikes in Flint and Toledo and general strikes in San Francisco and Minneapolis indicated social and political commitments which went well beyond the range of bread-and-butter concerns. But perhaps the most

persuasive evidence of fundamental cultural breakdown comes from the South. In both rural and industrial areas, union leaders found Southern workers uniquely willing to organize if supplied with proper leadership. Racial differences proved to be less of a barrier than at any time since the Nineties; inter-racial unions were organized in coal, steel, tobacco, cotton, and food processing. For a discussion of the Southern organizing experience, see especially Stuart Jamison's *Labor Unionism in American Agriculture* (Washington, DC, 1945). This book is one of the best works of social history ever written in the US. It exhibits an incredible range of social discontent in rural America during the course of the Depression which was never able to coalesce under any single banner.

The question of when and how the American worker was re-integrated into the corporate system after the shock of the Depression has just begun to receive serious attention. Ronald Radosh's "The Corporate Ideology of American Labor", *Studies on the Left* (VI, 1966) and Mark Naison's "The Southern Tenant Farmers' Union and the CIO", *Radical America* (September-October 1968) argue that the leadership of the CIO, unwittingly aided by many segments of the Left, contributed consciously and directly to the rationalization of the corporate economy. The biographies of the two foremost CIO leaders, Matthew Josephson's *Sidney Hillman, Statesman of Labor* (New York, 1952) and Saul Alinsky's *John L. Lewis: An Unauthorized Biography* (New York, 1949) support this conclusion. The two "statesmen of labor" clearly saw industrial unionism as a means of bringing greater democracy and efficiency to a basically-sound economic system. Nevertheless, there are still matters here that need to be discussed. No matter what the CIO leaders intended, the enthusiasm released by the CIO organization drive between 1935 and 1939 made many radicals feel that the future belonged to the Left. The New Deal had manifestly failed (unemployment jumped from eight to eleven million in 1938); radicals had important positions of leadership in a powerful labor movement; and there was much talk of forming a national labor party. But with the coming of the War, the Depression-era conditions abruptly ended and a new tone was imparted to national life which profoundly affected the psychology of the American worker and his radical spokesmen.

The Worker from the Second World War to the Present

World War II seems to have had an effect on labor militancy and radical politics similar to that of the First World War. The urgency of the war effort, coming after the sit-down strikes, focused public suspicions on labor's potential to disrupt the economy, and encouraged the viewpoint that labor had to be carefully disciplined to protect the national interest. For the worker, the War engendered a curious ambivalence. On one hand, he felt more willing to sacrifice immediate economic gains and better working conditions for the society he was defending. On the other, he was afraid that the crisis would be used by business to halt the trade-union advance and reduce standards of living.

The armistice brought with it crisis and repression in rapid order. A post-war wave of strikes increased union membership and won some wage increases, but intensified the anti-labor response in Congress. The Taft-Hartley Act was a major result. The revival of anti-communist hysteria coincident with the implementation of the Taft-Hartley Act drove the radicals out of the labor

movement and placed both militant unions and the Left on the defensive. Almost every major union, as described in Max Kampelman's *The Communist Party Versus the CIO* (New York, 1957) and in James Prickett's "Communism and Factionalism in the United Automobile Workers", *Science and Society* (Summer 1968), went through the painful ritual of purge and self-purification. It is in this context, as well as that of the continued escalation of the Cold War, that the ascendancy of business unionism in the CIO must be viewed.

The Fifties were also a period of business prosperity, super-patriotism, and experimentation with various techniques of manipulating public opinion and directing attention to consumption. Like the Twenties, the Fifties created the illusion among some intellectuals that business prosperity was on the way to creating a classless—albeit middle-class—society. Concerned, in the aftermath of McCarthyism, with finding stability and consensus in a strife-torn society, they attempted to prove that workers had become middle-class and desired nothing beyond the satisfaction of consumer needs.

The facts, however, blatantly contradicted the model. Not only did the working class maintain a distinct culture and life style, as the advertisers were among the first to recognize, but the insecurity of their position within the economy kept them marginal. While working-class and political consciousness remained largely unarticulated, militant and bitterly-fought strikes among the rank and file and surprising hostility to management contrasted sharply with the conservative business unionism and "harmony of interests" ideology peddled by labor leaders.

Concern with disciplining labor, a dominant theme of the post-war period, grew out of war-time events. As Joel Seidman's *American Labor from Defense to Reconversion* (Chicago, 1953) shows, government restrictions developed early in the War. One of the most important regulatory instruments was the War Labor Board. Although the Board threatened both recalcitrant unions and employers with the seizure of plants—a forty-time occurrence during the War—business leaders were sufficiently impressed with the Government's ability to restrict labor's gains to turn to it for aid in the post-war period. The NAM's successful campaign to blame labor for the post-war shortages and inflation was, along with the Taft-Hartley Act, part of the attempt to make working people accept responsibility for stabilizing the economy.

In the 1950s, particularly after the Teamster exposes, attention focused on the corruption and political passivity of labor. Bert Cochran's *Labor in Midpassage* (New York, 1959) brings together essays which survey the state of the unions and working-class life, as well as the potential for radical political activity. Sidney Lens's *Crisis in American Labor* (New York, 1961), Paul Jacob's *The State of the Unions* (New York, 1963), and George Morris's *American Labor: Which Way?* attempt to explain why the CIO relinquished its efforts to organize the unorganized and decreased its political activity. While part of the answer lay in the weakening of the unions as a result of the anti-labor campaigns and the purge of the communists, the insecurity created by recurrent recessions was another factor. Other answers can be found in the rise of the professional labor leader, as described by C. Wright Mills' *New Men of Power* (New York, 1948), and in the suppression of internal union democracy, the conditions for which are surveyed by S. M. Lipset, Martin Trow, and James Coleman in *Union Democracy: The Internal Politics of the International Typographer's Union* (New York, 1956). The lack of an organized opposition

made it easier for the labor elite to peddle the ideology of labor-management co-operation despite the fact of conflict in the period.

The analyses dealing with the facts of working-class life, as opposed to those generalizing from levels of income, were not very sanguine about the successful integration of the working class into the corporate system. In "The Subversion of Collective Bargaining", Commentary (March 1960—reprinted as a REP pamphlet), Daniel Bell describes how consumers and blue-collar workers subsidize the expansion of plant and production as well as the growth of the white-collar work force. Interested in further rationalizing the economy, Bell suggests that unions win a greater comparative share of the nation's wealth by using their political power to win tax reductions for lower-income classes; that they pressure corporations to reduce prices; and that they demand a guaranteed annual wage. The latter demand would end the practice of treating blue-collar workers as commodities and cease forcing them to absorb the shocks of the production process. It would also begin to break down the distinction between manual and white-collar workers.

Also important were the numerous and bitter strikes of the period, and the spread of wildcats, particularly in the Sixties. These strikes, directed as much against the unwillingness of the union bureaucrats to settle grievances as against the company, are mostly described in European socialist journals. A bibliography badly needs to be compiled. Among the literature available, however, Stan Weir's "USA: The Labor Revolt", reprinted from the International Socialist Journal as a REP pamphlet, is one of the best analyses of the significance and potential of wildcat strikes and rank-and-file movements. Martin Glaberman's *Be His Payment High or Low* (Detroit, 1963) is also quite excellent. The viewpoint of American sociologists, on the other hand, is succinctly summarized in an article by Clark Kerr and Abraham Siegel, "The Inter-Industry Propensity to Strike", in *Industrial Conflict*, edited by Arthur Kornhauser (New York, 1954). Troubled by intense and recurrent strife, the authors outline the conditions leading to militant strikes, and suggest minimizing conflict by better integrating workers into heterogeneous communities.

The experience of the industrial worker on the job and in the community also received attention in the Fifties and Sixties. Eli Ginzberg and Herbert Hyman edited *The American Worker in the Twentieth Century: A History Through Autobiography*. Theodore V. Purcell wrote *The Worker Speaks His Mind on Company and Union* (Chicago, 1953), a study of packinghouse workers in Chicago. In 1960 he compared working-class life-styles and attitudes among packinghouse workers in Swift and Company plants in three cities—Kansas City, East Saint Louis, and Chicago—and noted differences based on the nature of community life, race, and seniority. Robert Blauner's *Alienation and Freedom: The Factory Worker and His Industry* (Chicago, 1964) studied workers in printing, textiles, chemicals, and autos to understand the nature of their work and the factors leading to job satisfaction.

Articles by Richard Hamilton, S. M. Miller, Patricia Sexton, John Leggett, David Street, Frank Riesman, Lee Rainwater, and Hyman Rodman in *Blue Collar World: Studies of the American Worker*, edited by Arthur Shostak and William Gomburg (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1967), illuminate many aspects of working-class life. Finally, Studs Terkel's *Division Street USA* (Chicago, 1966) and Sidney Peck's *The Rank and File Leader* (New Haven, 1963) provide insight into why and how working-class people arrive at their opinions.

The International Scene

The following materials discuss the history and current situation of working classes in other countries. We have only included a few works which we felt were of particular importance.

E. P. Thompson's *The Making of the English Working Class* (Vintage paperback, New York, 1963) is an amazing book. It should be read by everyone interested in working-class history and the problem of the development of working-class consciousness. Eric Hobsbawm's collection of essays, *Laboring Men* (Anchor paperback, New York, 1967), is also a classic. His Marxist historiography offers insights into the labor aristocracy, labor militancy, the effects of imperialism, and the competition between skilled and unskilled laborers. Richard Hoggart's *The Uses of Literacy* (London, 1957), also about England, is one of the few attempts to assess the impact of mass culture on the working class. Goldthorpe and Lockwood have done an excellent study of workers in the most advanced segment of the English economy: "The Affluent Worker and the Thesis of Embourgeoisement", *Sociology* (January 1967). It provides a basis from which to begin evaluating structural changes in the advanced capitalist economies and their impact on the working class. On France, Richard Hamilton's *Affluence and the French Worker* (Princeton, 1968) demonstrates the important political effects of grass-roots political organization. Hamilton shows that where union militants and CP local organizers have continued to be active, workers continue to express radical political views even when they have attained "middle-class" income levels. In an article on West German workers, "Affluence and the Worker: The West German Case", *American Journal of Sociology* (Volume 7, September 1965, Pages 144 through 152), Hamilton studies the effects of affluence on consumption patterns. Like the French worker, the German, even when he earns an income equivalent to that of the middle class, will continue to show consumer behavior more like less-well-off workers. Karl Schorske's *German Social Democracy: 1905-1917* (Wiley paperback, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1955) also should be read. It deals with the growth of bureaucracy and revisionism in the German Social Democratic Party and the suppression of radical rank-and-file insurgencies. For a look at a working class in a country building socialism, see Maurice Zitlin's *Revolutionary Politics and the Cuban Working Class* (Princeton, 1967).

Sociological Studies

In recent years interest in the American class structure has revived. In *Assimilation and American Life* (New York, 1964) Milton Gordon suggests the relationship between class and ethnicity. He describes the strong persistence of ethnic sub-cultures through second and third generations and attempts to identify which forms of behavior can be attributed to working-class and which to ethnic origins. Richard Centers' *Psychology of Social Classes* (New York, 1961) studies the attitudes and consciousness of those who describe themselves as either working-class or middle-class. He finds that individuals who identify with the working class tend, among other things, to be more liberal than those who identify with the middle class.

There are several studies of working-class communities. Some describe the impact of particular events on attitudes and consciousness. Thus Alfred

Winslow Jones, in *Life, Liberty, and Property* (New York, 1941), studies the attitudes toward corporate property in Akron, Ohio after the sitdown strikes in the rubber industry. Others identify the factors making for a life-style different from that of the middle class, as do the Lynds in *Middletown and Middletown in transition*. Some of the best studies relate the social structure of the community and the workplace to the development of political attitudes and the emergence of a distinctive life-style and culture. August Hollingshead's excellent study *Elmtown's Youth* (New York, 1949) describes a small industrial community of six thousand in the heart of the Midwestern corn belt. Hollingshead documents the mechanisms by which middle-class-dominated institutions coerce working-class kids into pre-established patterns, and their resistance to it.

In *Steeltown: An Industrial Case History of the Conflict Between Progress and Security* (New York, 1950), Charles R. Walker describes the company town of Ellwood City, Pennsylvania, at a time when the company was threatening to move to Gary, Indiana. Of the fourteen thousand inhabitants in 1946, sixty per cent were native white; thirty-five per cent were Italian. The overwhelming majority of both groups came from rural or semi-rural areas. Walker describes the elaborate kinship structure, unusual in an industrial town, and the importance of church and social organizations in community life. The union, the largest single organization except for the Catholic Church, was not, however, a major influence in the community. The most valuable parts of the book describe life inside the mill and suggest the importance of the close-knit work situation for the widespread participation in community life. In *Millhands and Preachers: A Study of Gastonia* (New Haven, 1942), Liston Pope describes the social structure of the textile town and the role of the Church in legitimizing employer practices and serving as an agent of social control. Important sections deal with the influx of radical organizers, and the Loray strike of 1929 and its impact on attitudes and class-consciousness.

Two views of Italian working-class life are presented in *William F. Whyte's Street Corner Society: The Social Structure of an Italian Slum* (Chicago, 1943) and *Herbert Gans' The Urban Villagers: Group and Class in the Life of Italian Americans* (New York, 1962). Gans describes the social structure of a community composed largely of skilled and semi-skilled manual employees. He discusses their distinctively working-class style of life, their views of the middle-class outside world, suspicion of politicians, insecurities about work, and resistance to middle-class patterns of consumption and behavior as portrayed in the media. He emphasizes the importance of the peer group for sustaining a working-class way of life, and notes the lack of participation in the few community organizations which exist.

Some of the components of working-class life and attitudes are described in *Blue-Collar Marriage* by Mirra Komarovsky (New York, 1962) and *Workingman's Wife* by Lee Rainwater, Richard Coleman, and Gerald Handel (New York, 1959). These two books present excellent material on the life and attitudes of working-class women. *Workingman's Wife* specifically contrasts the more restricted, routine view of life and sense of inferiority of workers' wives with the variety and self-confidence middle-class women expressed. The constant tensions over job insecurity and the tightness of money in working-class homes and their effect on family relationships emerge clearly in *Blue-Collar Marriage*. One of the more interesting findings notes that the high-school graduates have a more middle-class style of life and that, with few exceptions, the families caught in the conflict between status and economic

drives were those of the high-school as opposed to the grade-school graduates.

Eli Chinoy's excellent study *Automobile Workers and the American Dream* (New York, 1955) describes how workers adjust to the fact that they're not going to move up very far within the plant hierarchy, and that their jobs offer little personal satisfaction. While some cherish the hope of setting up a small business or buying a farm, others devote a great deal of time to family life and off-the-job concerns. Robert Guest's "Work Careers and Aspirations of Automobile Workers", *American Sociological Review* (Volume 19, 1954), explores further the response to limited opportunities for mobility. Lewis Lipsitz's excellent "Work Life and Political Attitudes: A Study of Manual Workers", *American Political Science Review* (Volume 58, 1964), contributes to this discussion. Lipsitz observes distinct divisions between skilled and other workers in regard to political attitudes, job satisfaction, attitudes toward the future, and satisfaction with Reuther and the UAW. He found skilled workers were less fatalistic, less radical, and more satisfied with their jobs and the union.

S. M. Miller and Frank Riesman deal directly with the question "Are the Workers Middle Class?", *Dissent* (Volume 7, 1960). In *Working-Class Suburb: A Study of Auto Workers in Suburbia* (Berkeley, 1960), Bennett Berger shows that suburbanization in and of itself does not lead to a more-middle-class style of life. Although there is a new feeling of well-being, the social relations characteristic of working-class life persist. There is little evidence of profound striving, status anxiety, or orientations to the future. Tastes and preferences seem untouched by the images of suburbia portrayed in the mass media.

Finally, John Leggett's *Class, Race, and Labor: Working-Class Consciousness in Detroit* concludes that for the unionized, class-consciousness derives fundamentally from workers' economic problems, with the contradiction between a heightened pay scale and continuing occupational and job insecurity most important. The book attempts to come to terms with the implications of working-class consciousness for radical political activity.

Education and the Working Class

Education has long been viewed as one of the most important factors influencing one's occupational and class position in American society. Much is now being written about education in the ghetto. Herbert Kohl's *36 Children* and Jonathan Kozol's *Death at an Early Age* provide some of the best examples. There is little of comparable value concerning the education of white working-class kids, since most of the literature deals with children bound for college. Natalie Rogoff's "Local Social Structure and Educational Selection", in *Education, Economy, and Society* (1961), finds that class origin is more important than IQ in determining who goes to college. The dullest rich kid is more likely to go to college than the brightest poor child. Joseph Kahl's "Educational and Occupational Aspirations of Common Man Boys", *Harvard Education Review* (Volume 23, 1953), also reports on this subject. For a summary of more-recent trends see David Riesman and Christopher Jencks, *The Academic Revolution*. The authors find little indication that the "revolutionary" expansion in educational opportunities has reached the working class.

The best information on working-class high schools is in August Hollingshead's *Elmtown's youth*. Hollingshead describes the systematic discrimination against

working-class kids by teachers and administrators in almost every aspect of school life—grades, discipline, tracking, relationships with teachers, and parent-teacher relations. Also interesting is Edgar Litt's "Civil Education, Community Norms, and Political Indoctrination", *American Sociological Review* (Volume 28, February 1963). Analyzing the content of high-school civics texts, Litt finds that working-class kids are taught what roles to play in the system, middle-class kids are taught how the system works, and upper-class kids are taught how to work the system. Finally, Patricia Sexton's *Education and Income: Inequalities in Our Public Schools*, a study of Detroit, documents the class nature of the school system with extensive statistics. With data on IQ scores, reading levels, money allotments, drop-outs, sub-standard facilities, tracking, scholarships, curriculum, college admissions, and class size, the mechanisms of working-class oppression and exploitation are spelled out.

Racism and the Working Class

Contrary to the prevailing mythology, the working class is not more racist than other classes in the society. But from the point of view of the organizer, this is small comfort. Racism has been and remains one of the chief obstacles to the development of a class-conscious working-class movement in this country. The literature cited below deals with both these points. It offers evidence which counters the notion that the working class has a greater psychological and economic stake in racism than any other class in the society.

The force of racism in the American working class is documented by an impressive array of historical works. David Montgomery's *Beyond Equality* documents the ambivalence of the American working-class leadership after the Civil War toward the newly-freed labor pool of ex-slaves in the South. Spero and Harris, in their decisive study *The Black Worker* (Athenaeum paperback, New York, 1968, originally published in 1931), deal among other problems with the question of labor competition between whites and blacks from the 1870s to the 1920s. As they put it: The discrimination which the Negro suffers in industry is a heritage of his previous condition of servitude, kept alive and aggravated within the ranks of organized labor by the structure and politics of American trade unionism. This persistence of the Negro's slave heritage and the exclusive craft structure of the leading labor organizations are two of four basic factors in the Negro's relation to his fellow white workers. The other two are (a) the change in the Negro's fundamental relation to industry resulting from recent migration and the absorption into the mills and factories of a substantial part of the reserve of black labor, and (b) the rise of a Negro middle class and the consequent spread of middle-class ideas throughout the Negro community. Spero and Harris also present some insights into the cases in which inter-racial class solidarity was achieved (Knights of Labor; IWW; Mine, Mill, and Smelter; and United Mine Workers).

Elliot Rudwick's book *Race Riot at East Saint Louis* (Meridian paperback, Cleveland, 1964) is an excellent account of what can happen when union racism and economic conflict between workers are deliberately exploited by employers. Both employers and politicians created and enflamed an explosive situation by using blacks as strikebreakers and spreading racist propaganda in the press. Good summaries of the racial practices of the AF of L can be found in Herbert Hill's essay "The Racial Practices of Organized Labor from the Age of

Gompera and After"; in Ross and Hill's *Employment, Race, and Poverty* (New York, 1967); and in Karson and Radosh's *"The American Federation of Labor and the Negro Worker: 1894-1949"* (in Jacobson, previously cited). Cayton and Mitchell deal with the black worker and the early CIO organizing drives in their *Black Workers and the New Unions* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina, 1939)—one of the few treatments of this important subject. Mark Naison's *"Southern Tenant Farmers' Union and the CIO"*, *Radical America* (Volume 2, Number 5, September-October 1968), shows how a narrow conception of industrial unionism shared by both CIO and CP leaders undercut a growing inter-racial union of sharecroppers and tenant farmers. The demise of the STFU seriously weakened the potential for radical organizing in the South. There is some material on the conflict between Negro and white workers in Detroit during World War II. Although these works—Howe and Widick, *The UAW and Walter Reuther* (New York, 1949); Herbert Northrup, *Organized Labor and the Negro* (New York, 1944), in the chapter on the auto industry; Robert Weaver, "Detroit and the Negro Skill", *Phylon* (Volume 4, 1943); and Lloyd Bailer, "The Negro Automobile Worker", *Journal of Political Economy* (October 1943)—are largely descriptive, the information they present is worth looking at and could be helpful. The racial practices of unions in the 1950s are reviewed by Herbert Hill in "The Racial Policies of Organized Labor—The Contemporary Record" in Jacobson, previously cited) and "Organized Labor and the Negro Wage Earner", *New Politics* (Winter 1962). Also worth studying is Hill's "Racism Within Organized Labor: 1950-1960", *Journal of Negro History* (Volume 30, 1961).

The contemporary record of racism within the working class has not been carefully studied, but there is some material to which organizers can refer. Sidney Peck's study of shop stewards in Milwaukee, *The Rank and File Leader* (New Haven, Connecticut, 1963), shows how white workers exhibit both class consciousness (based on the recognition of the common economic situation of both black and white workers) and racism (based on a desire to maintain social distance between whites and blacks). Peck discusses the strains produced by the co-existence of these two tendencies. John Leggett's book *Class, Race, and Labor* (New York, 1968) provides brief but pertinent remarks on the relationship between class consciousness, ethnic identity, and racism in Detroit. A good impressionistic piece on Wallace's appeal to the working class is Jim Jacobs and Larry Laskowski's "New Rebels in Industrial America", forthcoming in *Leviathan* (Volume 1, Number 1). It is based on the authors' experience in the shops and in a working-class community college in Detroit. Matthew Ward's *Indignant Heart* (Detroit, 1953) is an enlightening treatment of a black production-line worker's condition in the same city. An article in the January 1969 issue of *Fortune* by Peter Swerdlov, "The Hopes and Fears of Blue Collar Youth", has some instructive but brief remarks on racial attitudes of young workers in Akron, Ohio. For a study of a backlash that failed to develop in the 1964 Goldwater campaign, see Jonathan Wiener's Princeton Honors Essay "White Workers and the Negro Revolution" (unpublished). Michael Rogin's "Wallace and the Middle Class: The White Backlash in Wisconsin", *Public Opinion Quarterly* (Volume 30, Spring 1966), is a breakdown of the 1964 Wallace vote for the state of Wisconsin—and especially Milwaukee County, where Wallace got thirty-eight per cent of the vote. Rogin shows that, contrary to all expectations: "The center of racist strength was not in working-class areas but in the wealthy upper-middle-income suburbs of Milwaukee."

Culture and the Working Class

The decline of fiction dealing with working-class life is one of the more striking changes in American Culture which occurred after the Second World War. Much of the great writing of the Depression era was rooted in the folk culture and social life of the American lower classes. William Faulkner's *Light in August*, James Agee's *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*, Robert Penn Warren's *All the King's Men*, and Erskine Caldwell's *Tobacco Road* portrayed the lives of tenant farmers and day laborers in the rural South. James Farrell's *Studs Lonigan*, John Dos Passos' *Manhattan Transfer*, Henry Roth's *Call It Sleep*, Meyer Levin's *The Old Bunch*, Mike Gold's *Jews Without Money*, and Clifford Odets' *Golden Boy* and *Dead End* told of the immigrant workman's struggle for survival in an alien culture. John Steinbeck's *Grapes of Wrath*, *Of Mice and Men*, and *Cannery Row* recounted the trials of migrant laborers in the Dust Bowl and the West. All these were works which drew a remarkable force and dignity from the working-class experience. No less significant is the large body of relatively-obscure writing from the period dealing with strikes and industrial conflict. Ben Field's *Piper Tompkins* and *The Outer Leaf*, Albert Maltz's *The Underground Stream* and *The Way Things Are*, Ruth McKenney's *Industrial Valley*, Wessell Smith's *FOB Detroit*, and James Steel's *The Conveyor* are novels based on union struggles and factory life which are well worth looking at. The writers of the Thirties have been accused of romanticizing the experience of the working class, and of this some were undoubtedly guilty. But with the best of the Depression-era writers, the portrayal of the working class as a source of strength and sensitivity in a society which had fallen upon hard times rings true, and results in some of the most powerful work ever produced by American novelists.

The Second World War and the tense but prosperous years that followed pushed this writing into a distinctly-subordinate place in the American literary mainstream. Anti-communist America wanted its intellectuals to build the myth of the affluent society, and the more talented and critical writers—the O'Haras, the Updikes, the Cheevers, the Mailers, the Salingers, the Roths, and the Bellows—focused on the emptiness of affluent middle-class and upper-class life. Some novelists continued to deal with working-class life in a serious and unsentimental manner, but their works were both rare and relatively unheralded. Harvey Swados' *On the Line*, Clancy Segal's *Going Away*, Edgar Lewis Wallant's *The Human Season*, James Jones' *From Here to Eternity* and *Some Came Running*, Willard Motley's *Knock On Any Door*, Kenneth Kesey's *Sometimes a Great Notion*, Budd Schulberg's *On the Waterfront*, Alfred Kazin's *A Walker in the City*, Bernard Malamud's *Idlots First*, and Arthur Miller's *A View from the Bridge* are among the few works of the past twenty years which treat working-class life with the same mixture of realism and respect which marked the novels of the Depression. Some concern for working-class themes was also sustained by Southern writers during the Fifties, demonstrating that section's continued alienation from the central impulses in American culture. Flannery O'Connor's *The Violent Bear It Away* and Shepard, Tennessee Williams' *A Streetcar Named Desire*, and Carson McCullers' *The Heart Is a Lonely Hunter* are fine works which develop around the cultural world of the poor Southern white. Walter Rideout's *The Radical Novel in the United States: 1900-1954* (American Century paperback, New York, 1956), although by no means a radical treatment, is fairly comprehensive and contains a very complete bibliography.

in sheer bulk, however, these works were overshadowed by a collection of novels which dealt with working-class life in a manner which can only be described as backhanded. During the late and middle Fifties, the best-seller lists bulged with novels and plays which exploited (and to some degree created) popular hysteria over "juvenile delinquency". These books, the literary arm of the liberal assault on the "mass man", presented lower-class sub-cultures as breeding grounds of crime and violence, communities which had to be disciplined en masse to accept the norms of middle-class life. In Evan Hunter's *Blackboard Jungle*, David Wilkerson's *The Cross and the Switchblade*, Harold Robbins' *A Stone for Danny Fisher*, and others, the heroes are teachers, ministers, and social workers. They are the evangelists of the suburban ethic, and their success must have made every righteous liberal feel titillated with vicarious potency. Yet there is something more to be drawn from these books than a morality play. In their own distorted way, they remind us that there was a thread of resistance running through some working-class youth in the Fifties which negated the myth of cohesive liberal society. It was not a political resistance—it was too unstable and self-conflicting to present a real challenge to the institutional order—but in its blunt rejection of middle-class values, it sent more than a flutter of anxiety into those who saw cultural uniformity and respect for authority as the prerequisites of the stable society. In a way which we have only begun to take seriously, these novels give us a clue to the possibilities for reaching and organizing working-class youth.

Youth Culture and the Working Class

As suggested, certain aspects of the "lower-class youth culture" referred to in these novels—gang life, rock music, motorcycles, hot rods—represent a definite rejection and resistance to basic controls and channeling mechanisms in the society. They express an alienation from a society which has sought to make violence efficient and antiseptic. In an exaggerated and often self-destructive way, they assert their resistance to the boredom and sense of impotence felt by much of the American working class.

But this rebellious and anti-authoritarian thrust among lower-class youth often takes root in sectional pride and racial and ethnic solidarity. It often (but not always) carries with it strong prejudices against blacks. And, as Bill Drew and Mike Rosen point out, that same thrust can become its opposite when, out of frustration and hopelessness, there is a reversion to a "desperate identification with the cops, the army, and the mythology of capitalism. Yet it does represent an alienation from American society which is shared by a growing number of middle-class youth.

Now, certain manifestations of what was once a uniquely-lower-class sub-culture and, in certain ways, represented a (marginal) white working-class rebellion against a standardized American life-style, has been generalized throughout the society and incorporated into the "radical youth culture". This diffusion is in part the product of Madison Avenue's exploiting the potential for profit in the "rebellious" youth market; and it has resulted in a dilution of the rebelliousness this market contained. But at the same time, this spreading has made it possible for larger numbers of youth to adopt similar styles of protest, and has opened up new opportunities for communication between the New Left and working-class youth based on shared language, music, et cetera. We have also seen that behind the appeals of these forms of protest (dress,

music, et cetera) lie a new recognition that young people are rejecting some of the same controls—the draft, police, high schools—and this opens up new possibilities for organizing.

But we should also be very careful. First, we must pay attention to ways in which white-working-class youth culture still remains distinct from youth culture in general. Second, we should be aware of the dangers of concentrating on organizing around life style. As Bill Drew and Mike Rosen found from their work in Waukegan, "resentment of authority is strong and shows up in music, dress, drugs, and other aspects of youth culture....The major conclusion is that anti-authoritarian life-style organizing in this constituency (white working-class youth) is only a beginning. Today the Movement continues only in the high school. Most of the young factory workers have returned to their jobs, accepting their roles. The Movement must expand into armed forces organizing, junior and trade colleges, and the insurgent rank-and-file labor movement. The Left must begin to offer solutions to questions more basic than those of style....Unless radicalism can deal with...productive life in the factory or school, it is a lie and offers no real possibility for a working-class youth to live as a radical."

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Working Class Historiography

Paul Faler

I.

In labor history the dead hand of the past has been the labor economists who have tried to interpret the experience of American workingmen. John Commons and his disciples of the "Wisconsin School", notably Selig Perlman and Philip Taft, have exerted a profound influence on the writing and teaching of labor history. Their views can be found repeated in every textbook in American history, in every survey course, and in the primer courses for trade unionists in schools for workers. It is primarily a story of organizations—trade unions and labor parties. The typical learned monograph is a detailed study of the AF of L, the CIO, the Loyal Legion of Loggers and Lumbermen, or the Horseshoers Union. There one can find an account of early beginnings, local unions, first national organizations, jurisdictional disputes, court cases, strikes won and lost, and political action. It is a familiar story, but one not so tiresome as not to be repeated each year by new entrants in the field.

The major tenets of this prevailing orthodoxy are simple enough; they derive, expectedly, from the mechanical economic determinism of the labor economists. Man is an economic animal who, individually or in groups, pursues his selfish interests, often at the expense of other men. History consists of changes in the means by which men produce and distribute goods. The behavior of men can be charted, with mechanical precision, by their relationship to the means of production. When reduced to the level of wage-earners, dependent for their livelihood on the sale of their labor power, men form organizations in their

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respective crafts or industries to defend their material interests against those of the capitalist. The contest for maximization of men's interests leads to struggle and conflict, forming the common bill of fare of labor history. Labor parties or pressure groups are efforts to advance one's material interests by other means. But if deviation from the ordinary framework of interest-seeking reaches an extreme and produces a demand for the transformation of the social system, it is attributed to meddling intellectuals exercising their powers of persuasion over a gullible mass.

There are other corollaries to the interpretation of the labor economists. Capitalism is an economic system governed by the laws of the market place. These laws form a universal economic imperative that demands of men a particular response which is wholly dependent on their role in the system. No allowance is made for the ethnic, racial, or religious background of the role-players; the laws of the market place do not respect extraneous distinctions. For the workmen this means a pre-occupation with the limited, on-the-job benefits of higher wages and shorter hours. He is scarcity-conscious —pre-occupied with protecting his job and enlarging his pay. He is rarely willing to risk the loss of his meager but vital possessions for a distant, utopian promise.

It is regrettable that many components in the interpretation of the labor economists reappear in Marxist writings. There one finds a similarly narrow view of economic man, history as series of economic changes, a pre-occupation with the trade union and the labor party, and the operation of the economic imperative. Again there is the assumption that the common economic experience of wage-earners automatically evokes the same response regardless of cultural background. Workers appear as so much raw material that is shaped, molded, and transformed by capitalism. The trade union emerges, but it is not merely a means for gaining limited ends; it is a weapon against capitalism; if workers do not form unions and are deterred by other forces, this is called "false consciousness". The term apparently means there is some underlying reality, called "objective truth", which they have failed to grasp. If the struggle between the trade unions and the capitalists does not rise above the mundane level of wages and hours, it is because of the manipulation of leaders. The "sell-out" is therefore a prominent feature in this Marxist writing.

In recent years the work of the labor economists and Marxists has come under attack from scholars associated with the political left. They have broken away from the narrow economic framework of their predecessors and have studied the experience of workmen within the larger context of social history. Edward Thompson in England and Herbert Gutman in the United States have vastly enlarged our knowledge of the magnitude of industrialization; its impact on the social structure, values, and traditions of a previous way of life; and the responses it evokes from workmen. The work of Stephan Thernstrom, although in the tradition of the labor economists, deserves mention because of his use of sources that social historians have largely ignored.

Edward Thompson considers himself a Marxist and, as he once put it, a communist with a small "c". His study of *The Making of the English Working Class* is a model of scholarship: rich in detail, compassionate but not condescending, provocative in its imagination, and instructive in its treatment of labor history. Thompson applies to his subject a class view of history: "...the notion of class entails the notion of historical relationship." "Class happens when some men, as a result of common experiences (inherited

or shared), feel and articulate the identity of their interests as between themselves, and as against other men whose interests are different from (and usually opposed to) theirs. The class experience is largely determined by the productive relations into which men are born—or enter involuntarily." He warns that class is not a "structure" or "category"—manual workers, wage earners—that one enters by the employment-office window or factory gate. Nor is class the result of any sudden changes or crises that create, in the face of common danger for a brief moment in time, a common interest among diverse people. Rather, class requires the historical dimension of shared experiences over a long period of time. Classes are discernible only "if we watch these men over an adequate period of social change" and "observe patterns in their relationships, their ideas, and their institutions".

If in his definition of class Thompson remains squarely in the Marxist tradition, he departs somewhat from the orthodoxy of this tradition in his understanding of class consciousness. He states that "class consciousness is the way in which these class experiences are handled in cultural terms: embodied in traditions, value-systems, ideas, and institutional forms." He admits that "we can see a logic in the responses of similar occupational groups undergoing similar experiences, but we cannot predict any law. Consciousness of class arises in the same way in different times and places, but never in just the same way." The crucial factor in the way workingmen respond to industrialization is the culture they carry with them as they undergo a social experience. Culture is here used in the broad sense as a way of life, with its customs, with its customs, values, and traditions that form a design for living, and in the institutions created to perpetuate that way of life. The components of a way of living together originate in the economic organization of society, but once formed they have a life of their own. They are never entirely autonomous or independent of one another, but neither is their existence wholly dependent upon the preservation of the economic situation from which they derive. They change and evolve in response to new demands, yet so too do they control or combat demands or threats that emanate from industrialization.

Because of the importance of culture in determining the nature of the response of Englishmen to industrialization, Thompson devotes considerable attention to their pre-industrial way of life. He is convinced that we can neither estimate the impact of industrialization nor understand the response of working people without a close examination of their experience prior to industrialization. The past gives people the standards by which they judge the social changes that accompany capitalism. His investigation of that past suggests the presence of an autonomous pre-industrial class culture. Although it would be incorrect to use the term working class to describe the group that existed prior to industrialization, his evidence indicates that there was in England prior to 1780 a distinctive "lower-class" or pre-working-class way of life, with its own values, folklore, leisure patterns, sports, celebrations, and folk heroes. He also suggests that although the members of the pre-industrial group had ties to other classes (nationalism and deference, for example), their way of life was different from that of other groups and fairly autonomous. This distinctive pre-working-class culture gave its members the values or standards whereby they judged innovations and responded to changes.

An important part of that pre-industrial culture was a political economy that was hostile to capitalism. In the mercantilism that preceded capitalism it was

not considered desirable, for example, to give free rein to man's acquisitive instincts. The authorities who directed the affairs of the country tried to balance the interests of different groups by setting wages and regulating prices.

In the period from 1780 to 1830, the old mercantilism may have been near extinction; but there remained, implanted in custom, vestigial remnants of that way of life incorporated into the body of lower-class culture. Thompson shows, for example, that during hunger caused by hard times and poor harvests, the capitalist expectedly followed a market formula: heavy demand and short supply meant high prices for bread. In the riots that frequently followed the action of the capitalist, the rioters did not confiscate the bread. They instead took it from the seller at the "just price" which had been a part of the mercantile economy. The same was true for artisans. They resisted the attempt of merchants to pay wages or sell goods according to the principle of extracting "all that the traffic would bear".

The political context was crucial for the formation of an English working class. One finds in Thompson's study the fusion of the political and economic struggle of working people against the combined power of the capitalists and the aristocracy, a ruling class that gained in cohesion in the face of a working-class threat. From the fear of the ideas of republicanism spawned by the French Revolution and the need to insure domestic loyalty during the Napoleonic Wars, the rulers of England attempted to suppress and wipe out the movement for reform that began in the 1790s. Economic exploitation and political suppression occurred simultaneously. In estimating the importance of these two processes acting as one, Thompson observes that "in the end it is the political context as much as the steam engine which has the most influence upon the shaping of consciousness and institutions of the working class." (Page 157) It was not uncommon for workmen to confront the same man as mill-owner and magistrate. As a result there was a fusion, in the experience and consciousness of workmen, of the political and the economic, one reinforcing the other. In working-class institutions it is not unusual to find the trade union serving as a political club or the friendly benefit society serving as both.

Another important contribution of Thompson's study is his estimation of the breadth of industrialization. The Industrial Revolution was not, as the economists suggest by the narrowness of their outlook, merely a series of economic changes. Capitalist industrialization required fundamental alterations in the way of life of an entire people. They had to be taught to be obedient, punctual, thrifty, temperate, and disciplined. The process of disciplining a people who were reared in a culture that had not taught these values took place outside the factory as well as within it. In England, the Methodist Church admirably helped serve this purpose, as did the new poor law and the workhouses, and innumerable restrictions on social behavior: beer taxes, new sexual codes, bans on certain sports and games. The free-born Englishmen resisted these changes that accompanied the Industrial Revolution, and in the facets of their response to innovations one finds there is more to labor history than trade unionism. There was a conscious effort to retain the customs and institutions of an earlier way of life or to modify them to meet the needs imposed on working people by industrialization. But some people, in the face of repression and exploitation, turned in their despair to chiliastic or millennial sects that promised relief from conditions that seemed beyond the temporal power of man to rectify. This too is a part of working-class history, more important in certain times and places than trade unionism.

The emphasis in Thompson on the pre-industrial past as the source of working-class resistance to industrialization raises the question of the extent of anti-capitalist sentiment. One is rarely sure if working people are resisting change or the particular form it takes, in this case capitalism. Thompson suggests that working people did not, for example, oppose the introduction of machinery that promised to ease the task of earning a living. Their resistance was to machinery as an engine of oppression owned by men who did not operate it. Yet in the case of the hand-loom weavers, the most numerous occupational group in England, it seems doubtful that they were prepared to accept the textile factory. And although earlier English writers like Thomas Paine had furnished working people with valuable weapons against political oppression, monarchy, and aristocracy, Thompson admits that their ideas were ill-adapted for the collective economic experience of the working class. Consequently, he offers the view that by the 1830s, English working people were moving toward the socialist principles in the philosophy of Robert Owen. Their affinity for socialism was due less to Owen's personal preaching or the zeal of his disciples than to the similarity between Owen socialism and "long traditions of mutuality—the benefit society, the trades club, the chapel, the reading or social club, the Corresponding Society or Political Union". Here, then, one finds the creation of a new social theory originating in the interplay of inherited customs or traditions and the actual experience of working people in which collectivism was paramount.

II.

Although no American scholar has attempted a study of the magnitude of Thompson's work, Herbert Gutman of the University of Rochester has made a promising beginning. In a dissertation and a series of articles, Gutman has used an approach to labor history that departs from the traditional treatment of the subject by the labor economists. He does not study workingmen organized in trade unions; his focus is the communities in which they lived and worked in relationships with other groups.

Gutman has studied a dozen or so communities best by industrial conflict during the 1870s. The period of the 70s he views as one of transition between two ways of life: the older, represented by the small manufacturing or mining town; and the new, typified by the large commercial center such as New York or Chicago. Gutman sets out to correct the mistaken notion that the small town was a fiefdom of the factory-owner who dominated the political and social structure of the town and was able to use his economic power to force other people to comply with his will. In the depression years of the 1870s, declining wages and unemployment were catalytic forces that sparked struggles between workingmen and factory-owners. But, in a surprising number of instances, the workingmen in small towns, without the benefit of trade unions or outside support, prevailed over the mill-owner. And in the few cases in which workingmen suffered defeat, it was largely because the employer was able to obtain aid—strike-breakers or state militiamen—from outside the town and impose his will on the populace arrayed against him. Gutman found that workingmen gained widespread support from local shopkeepers, lawyers and professional people. Shopkeepers and tavernkeepers extended credit to striking workers. City officials refused to endorse the mill-owner's request for state troops. Police officers arrested strike-breakers on fabricated charges of trespassing or carrying a weapon.

In the large commercial centers of New York and Chicago, the situation was different. In struggles between workers and employers, workingmen gained little or no support from the middle-class elements that extended aid to workingmen in the small towns. The press, pulpit, police, and courts sided with the capitalists. Demands for public works were refused. Strikers and demonstrators were arrested, intimidated, and terrorized. The press portrayed them as dangerous foreigners, radicals, and troublemakers. The pulpit intoned against them, while the middle class in general, from fear or anger, applauded at every turn.

Gutman maintains that in the small town the capitalist was unable to translate his economic power, based on the ownership of the means of production, into social and political power. He was frequently an outsider, a newcomer to the town, drawn to the community by the lure of profit. He confronted an established social structure that resented intrusions that did not pay proper respect to its authority and legitimacy. If the capitalist was aggressive and overbearing, the situation was further aggravated. And if his actions were legal and in perfect accord with the tenets of laissez-faire capitalism, they frequently violated the ethics of small-town life. It may have been proper to cut wages in response to a decline in sales, but the cut-back did not endear the capitalist to townspeople, nor did it gain him the support needed to defeat his striking workers.

Gutman's description of social relationships in small towns during the 1870s corresponds in many respects to Thompson's account of pre-industrial England. An older, less-competitive economic organization had produced a culture that did not collapse with the sudden appearance of the factory and the capitalist. Ethics did not succumb instantly to the dictates of the market place. Neighborhood loyalties between worker and shopkeeper, physician, or lawyer did not dissolve merely because one was a worker and the others were not. Political power did not suddenly fall from the hands of groups whose prestige rested on an economic base grossly inferior to that of the rising capitalist. Institutions, ideas, and attitudes, traditional ways of doing things derived from an economic structure that was gradually losing out to the forces of industrialization represented in the capitalist, but in a period of transition older customs persisted and served to resist or control those new forces.

Although Gutman's work is unfinished and in the process of completion, the deficiencies in his studies as they now stand ought to be discussed. First, he tells us very little about the social relationships between workingmen and middle-class elements in the small town. Their solidarity against the capitalist would indicate an extensive network of relationships that created loyalties among people of diverse occupations, but Gutman gives us only fragmentary evidence of the ties between them. A number of city officials in Braidwood, Illinois, a mining town, were former coal-miners who were beholden as well as sympathetic to the miners who elected them. Many of the policemen in Paterson were former mill-workers, as were tavernkeepers and shopkeepers. Yet what of middle-class elements whose roots were not in the working class? Did co-operation originate in loyalties that derived from social integration in the church, the neighborhood, the volunteer fire company, the militia unit, the political party, the saloon, or the temperance society? Or was there opposition to the capitalist primarily because he was an outsider who had been in the town a short time? If length of stay in the town was a crucial factor in determining the response of middle-class elements to a labor conflict, would that mean the

workers in Paterson would be less likely to gain support if the employer were a long-time resident of the community?

If co-operation between the laboring and middle classes arose from social integration, mobility, or both, it would suggest the absence in America of what Thompson found in pre-industrial England: a distinctive, pre-industrial "working class" with habits, values, and institutions different from those of other groups, particularly the middle class. The similarity in the response of American workingmen and middle classes in small towns to industrial capitalism suggests, on the other hand, a common culture. According to Thompson, middle-class support or co-operation, with a few exceptions, was either lacking or incidental in the resistance of the working class to industrialization. In Gutman's studies, the middle class was crucial; the outcome of labor struggles often depended on the middle class. Yet it would be premature on the basis of co-operation in particular situations, to assume the presence or absence of a shared culture. There may have been temporary agreement, but for entirely-different reasons.

Elsewhere Gutman has suggested that American workingmen in the period from 1860 to 1900 did in fact view industrialization in a manner quite different from middle-class people. He concurs in Eric Hobsbawm's judgment that first-generation industrial workers draw on "the only spiritual resources at their disposal, pre-industrialization custom and religion. American workingmen who had been raised on the teachings of evangelical Protestantism relied on those teachings as a way of understanding and interpreting what was happening to them, and extracting from scripture Biblical justification for their opposition to an economic system that violated the principles of Christianity. In other words, American workers, though a product of a pre-industrial religious tradition which they shared with other Americans, re-interpreted that tradition in light of their present experience and, in so doing, created a distinctive class religion. Jesus is the carpenter's son, Moses and Aaron become union organizers, and Peter, James, and John are three common sailors. Christ drove the money-changers from the temple, and workingmen, like the Israelite serfs, were struggling against the oppression of bondage. Scripture was the source of wisdom and useful metaphors, as well as a series of lessons that connected workingmen with the cause of Christ, and made villains of men like Andrew Carnegie and Henry Clay Frick, who emerge as modern-day Pharaohs. The workingmen's use of scripture was different from the Social Gospel of middle-class reformers like Washington Gladden and Richard Ely, who shied from conflict, preached social transformation through religious conversion alone, and hence could not "associate themselves with working-class organizations and their methods and objectives".

In his emphasis on the contrast between the large city, in which capitalist social supremacy was complete, and the small town, in which pre-industrial values impeded and opposed efforts of capitalists to gain power, Gutman does not explain how capitalist supremacy was achieved. What is the nature of the process by which New York and Chicago came to be what they were in the 1870s? Can one assume that twenty, thirty, or more years earlier capitalists encountered in New York and Chicago the resistance they faced in Paterson and Bradwood in the 1870s? Studies of labor relations in the same small manufacturing towns after 1900 probably indicate a situation vastly different from conditions which Gutman found a generation earlier. Capitalists usually

did gain political and social influence comparable to their economic power, yet we know little about the process by which control of the means of production was translated into social dominance and political power. Did the expansion of industry create numerous positions for middle-class white-collar people who then became tied, socially as well as politically and ideologically, to the interests of the men for whom they worked? Or was the change the result of changes in the workforce, an influx of workingmen of background that gave them little in common with middle-class elements? The creation of working-class ghettos, with segregated housing patterns and distinctive social institutions, may have dissolved the social integration that had previously fostered loyalties that cut across class lines. In the large cities, physical separation and ethnic, racial, and religious differences between workers and middle class probably left the working class as an abstract category to which base and dangerous motives could be affixed by capitalist propagandists addressing a credulous public already immersed in the values and institutions of a new system.

With the rise of the capitalist system and the estrangement of working-class people from both employers and the middle class, what was the nature of the way of life working-class people created to meet their peculiar need? In England, Thompson found that by 1832 there were many indications of a distinctive culture: trade unions and benefit societies, newspapers, even a "working-class structure of feeling". Labor historians in the United States have yet to provide evidence of a working-class culture of the same breadth and completeness. To be sure, there were trade unions and newspapers, but what evidence do we find of unique customs, values, and social institutions? German socialists in New York, for example, in addition to trade unions and newspapers, established Socialist Sunday schools, athletic clubs, paramilitary units, co-operative stores, reading rooms, and drinking clubs. Labor historians have, to our loss, emphasized trade unions and political parties to the exclusion of the attempts of working people to build a way of life around social institutions that rivaled those of the larger society and fostered and perpetuated anti-capitalist ideas. Anyone who views class as a social term, discernible in patterns of relationships and distinctive institutions, must be able to show that workingmen are distinguishable by some feature other than the functional one of their economic role. It is not enough to assume that the economic experience of working people spontaneously generates an array of institutions as peculiar to the needs of workingmen as is the trade union. The union is often merely an instrument for protecting and improving the material condition of working people. It may be a weapon against economic exploitation. But capitalism is more than an economic system. It is an entire cultural apparatus with peculiar ideas about the nature of man, the proper distribution of political power, and a desirable social structure. Its values permeate an entire society and appear in social attitudes toward recreation, child-rearing, education, and sexual codes. Those values are perpetuated through social institutions which are as crucial to the maintenance of capitalism as the factory itself. The working people who are the subject of Thompson's book recognized and felt, deeply and profoundly, the breadth of the emerging capitalist social system, and their response shows that the struggle was fought out all along the line, in their chapels, schools, and places of amusement as well as in the workplace. American labor historians—perhaps because of their economic bias—have not given us an account of the full social dimensions of the industrial revolution.

As Gutman has added considerably to our knowledge of the response of workingmen to industrialization, he has broadened the scope of labor history. Both he and Thompson emphasize the importance of understanding the pre-industrial culture or way of life that working people bring to an industrial experience. A man enters the factory with more than his labor power. It should be noted that Thompson apologizes to the Scots and the Welsh for not attempting to record their experience in the industrial revolution. Such an effort would require what Thompson lacked: as intimate a knowledge of their culture as he brought to his study of Englishmen. And Gutman has, in his piece on the importance of religion among American workingmen in making sense of what was happening to them, confined his study to Americans raised in the tradition of evangelical Protestantism. One could not mechanically extend his conclusions to Irish Catholics reared in an entirely-different religious tradition. For Nineteenth Century labor history, the same search into pre-industrial culture would be required for understanding the response of workingmen from Germany, Italy, or other nations. What was the level of expectations they brought to industrial America, and upon what traditions, ideas, and customs did they build their distinctive response to industrialization? In Thompson's words, we need to know in which cultural terms these groups handled the class experience.

On the broader scale of national history, an approach to labor history that stresses the importance of periods of transition between pre-industrial and industrial ways of life may help explain patterns and stages in working-class development. Gutman suggests:

The United States has continually absorbed and sought to transform pre-industrial peoples at each stage of its development....The United States faced the difficult task of "industrializing" whole cultures and sub-cultures. But it has done so for a more prolonged period of time (than most countries) and through several stages of its development....The changing composition of the working population, the continued entry of non-industrial peoples, and the changing structure of American society caused a recurrence of common modes of thought and patterns of behavior....These common "modes" and "patterns", however, have been discontinuous and have been shared by quite distinct groups of native and immigrant workers in quite distinct periods of the nation's history.

There may be parallels, for example, in the response of native-born artisans in the 1830s and 40s, the Chicago anarchists of the 1880s, Jewish garment workers in the early 1900s, the new immigrants of Lawrence in 1912, the Gastonia hillbillies of 1929, and rural blacks from the South in Newark, Detroit, and Los Angeles in the 1960s. Like Englishmen of the early Nineteenth Century, these people were products of a pre-industrial culture and were undergoing an experience that disrupted old institutions, demanded new ways of thinking and acting, and undermined values and traditions that were incompatible with an industrialized social environment. In the clash of cultures there frequently was, according to Gutman, "sharp conflict and violence". One also discerns a high level of spontaneous zeal and fervor, much emotion, and the dogged persistence and endurance one finds in the almost-unchanging rhythm of peasant life. In many cases resistance is not expressed through the trade union; the labor organization often comes later. Instead, actions are frequently spontaneous, disorganized, and perhaps ill-timed. If there is planning and

organization it may take place in the saloon, the meeting room of the volunteer fire company or militia unit, the ethnic social club, or the neighborhood gang. When immigrant groups are involved, the whole cultural apparatus of the group may be thrown into the struggle, with a revival and re-interpretation of folk tales and ballads and the use of social institutions for purposes for which they were not originally intended. If the particular group is a recent entrant into a society in which capitalism is firmly established, both as an economic system and as a way of life, its struggle is all the more difficult. But if capitalism itself is the upstart challenger to an established pre-industrial culture, resistance may be intense and widespread, evoking considerable opposition to the new order. The character of the early industrialists—tough, often cruel, ascetic, and cunning—may itself be an indication of the prerequisites for overcoming an entrenched opposition. And resistance is most likely to arise when capitalism violates established customs. According to Thompson: "...behind every form of popular direct action, some legitimizing notion of right is to be found." As this happened in England, so too did it occur in the United States at various points in our history, and involving different groups.

There is a remarkable similarity, for instance, between the labor struggles in Braidwood and Paterson during the 1870s and conflicts in Massachusetts towns twenty years earlier. In 1851 the towns of Amesbury-Salisbury experienced a conflict between local textile workers and a new factory manager. For twenty-five years the operatives in the factory had, by custom, enjoyed a morning luncheon break at ten o'clock. The new manager, perhaps pressed by the competition from other mills, decided to abolish the custom. Nearly all the workers left the mill and immediately won to their cause the overwhelming majority of the town's citizens—professional people, shopkeepers, and town officials. The underlying issue was the extent of power and authority that accrued to the capitalist from his ownership of private property. Did ownership give him the right to abolish an established custom? In this case an action that was legal and consistent with the demands of the market place was regarded as outrageous, arrogant, and unjust. Tradition had spawned the belief that the selfish interests of the owner were being placed over the needs of the community. Townspeople were resisting a basic tenet of capitalism: that ownership conferred rights that were superior to the rights of the propertyless. If the strike did not produce demands for expropriation, it was nonetheless radical in that it challenged the fundamental basis of capitalism.

Similar situations apparently developed in the mountain states a half century later. Miners had for a generation operated according to customs that awarded rights to the producer who actually extracted ore from streams and beds. In a stream, for example, a miner was entitled to stake out a claim only as large as he could actually work. Another miner could choose a place a few yards away. A man who left his claim for a journey to the nearest settlement or visit with his family retained his stake. But anyone who abandoned his place surrendered his rights to the property, and no man could take out options or leases on areas he could not work. There were instances in which miners in search of gold and silver found deposits of copper and lead but did not claim the lands because they lacked the equipment to extract and ship the ore. The private firms which moved into the mine fields broke with these traditions and violated established customs: they purchased or leased vast stretches of land reserved for future exploitation and guarded them from intruders. Ownership

and rights in the new system now rested on the possession of a deed rather than the actual mixing of one's labor with natural resources. Beneath much of the intense and widespread hostility to mining companies in Colorado was a feeling of outrage against arrogant interlopers who were little better than claim jumpers.

In using a cultural approach to labor history that requires a careful examination of the pre-industrial way of life of groups of working people, the task of the American historian is made more difficult. Gutman, in comparing the English and American experience, observed that in England "the painful transition from a pre-industrial to an industrial society only occurred once, dominated the ethos of an entire era, and then faded in relative importance." In the United States the process occurred several times and often produced "sharp conflict and violence". The capitalist system in England drew largely upon its own indigenous population for a work force. The United States drew upon the countries of Europe as well as its own native-born population, each of which, with a distinct pre-industrial culture, worked out its own response to industrialism. The United States is one of the few countries of the world to have recruited its industrial work force from other nations. In England, contrary to the arguments of some demographers, the industrial population grew at the expense of the agricultural. In the United States industrial and agricultural expansion occurred simultaneously in the Nineteenth Century, creating an agricultural sector that was proportionately too large for the nation's industrial population. Much of the agrarian discontent of the late Nineteenth Century originated in declining prices caused by the inability of the urban industrial population to absorb the produce of American farms. The imbalance in the American economy may also partly explain the constant demands of agricultural spokesmen for new market's to dispose of the nation's surplus production. Had the native-born agricultural population rather than Europe furnished the bulk of recruits for industrialization, the patterns in the working-class response would, except for regional variations and the heritage of slavery, have evolved from a common culture. Evangelical Protestantism, the liberties of the free-born American, the labor theory of value, and the ideas of the Declaration of Independence may be the common ideas that give coherence and uniformity to the ideological response of Americans to industrialization. But to understand the equally-important responses of immigrant workingmen, the labor historian must locate, in their pre-industrial background, the ideas, traditions, and values that served the same purpose. It is a difficult task, but one which must nonetheless be begun.

Thompson and Gutman have concentrated on the transitional period between pre-industrial and industrial societies. Stephan Thernstrom, using a narrower and entirely-different methodology, focuses on the economic conditions and the behavior of unskilled workers in Newburyport, Massachusetts in the years from 1850 to 1880, a period in which the contours of the new industrial order were fairly-well established. Thernstrom is essentially concerned with one question: If industrialization was a disruptive social force and often oppressive and cruel, why has there been so little opposition to capitalism among workingmen? To answer that question he studied the lowest stratum of the working population: unskilled laborers, most of them Irish immigrants. He explains how they fared and why, on the basis of his evidence, they demonstrated no opposition to capitalism.

Thernstrom found that capitalism was indeed a radical force that disrupted and drastically altered a social system which had served to insure mercantile supremacy and lower-class deference. The chief components of stability were a Federalist social philosophy and religious orthodoxy. With the deterioration of both, the introduction of industry, and the influx of Irish immigrants, the defenders of the new order needed new instruments of social control to keep people in their place. Their solution was the message of Horatio Alger: hard work, thrift, honesty, and self-discipline will insure material success and general happiness. In press, pulpit, and politics, the message went out as a promise to members of society who would henceforth judge capitalism by the extent to which it fulfilled that promise. Using wage data, census manuscripts, bank records, and tax rolls, Thernstrom attempted to ascertain if, for unskilled laborers, the Alger message squared with reality.

He found that upward mobility was insignificant, wages chronically low, seasonal unemployment common, and deprivation and self-sacrifice prevalent. The children of unskilled workers fared better than their parents: many became semi-skilled factory operatives, but few moved into the middle class. One of Thernstrom's most startling discoveries was that geographical mobility, movement into and out of the town, was enormous. More than half of the laborers in Newburyport at the end of each decade were gone ten years later. His evidence, and thus his conclusions, are therefore limited to those laborers who remained in the town long enough to leave the records he studied. The crucial factor which Thernstrom selects as the reason for the acquiescence of the laborers was property mobility. The unskilled were able, usually over a considerable period of time and through disciplined self-sacrifice, to purchase small lots of land, build and own their own homes, and acquire small savings accounts. The laborers therefore emerge as small property owners with a stake in the system, thankful for the beneficence it provided for them. If the property was meager and the self-sacrifice required to gain it severe, it was far better than what they had known amid the famine, suffering, and hopeless hardship of life in Ireland. The laborers had tangible proof that America was a land of promise.

The importance of Thernstrom's study rests partly on his contention that Newburyport may have been typical of cities of its size and that the experience of its unskilled laborers was repeated elsewhere. But in an unpublished paper Thernstrom has revised some of his arguments. The transiency of the large propertyless proletariat that drifted in and out of Newburyport may be attributable to the town's location along the main path from disembarkation points in Canada to Boston. Secondly, Newburyport was, if not a stagnant town, one which lagged considerably behind manufacturing towns in Essex County like Lynn, Haverhill, and Lawrence. The economic decline of a town that had once ranked as the second most prosperous port along the North Shore probably made its residents unusually scarcity-conscious. Third, how important is mobility as a factor in determining human behavior. Thernstrom has re-considered his original claim in light of, for example, a study of France which showed that bourgeois protest against the monarchy and aristocracy on the eve of the Revolution was greatest in those areas where the bourgeoisie most-readily gained admission to the aristocracy. In Lynn, Massachusetts, an examination of tax rolls indicated that some of the most militant shoemakers

in the town were homeowners. The importance of mobility cannot be established without greater attention to the social context in which it occurs; it may either encourage or discourage working-class resistance to capitalism, depending on its relationship to other values by which people judged a social system. Also, Newburyport may be peculiar, exceptional even among the towns of Essex County. During the great shoemakers' strike of 1860, for instance, thousands of cordwainers from many towns turned out in massive demonstrations that frequently involved nearly the entire populations of their small communities. Newburyport was an exception. Spokesmen for the strikers were coldly received and the workers' cause evoked little support from the town's cordwainers. Without a study broader in context than Thernstrom's, one cannot offer explanations for the town's peculiar response. Thernstrom's study also reveals a grave danger in the application of the scientific method to history. There is a bias in favor of "hard evidence", information that can be collected like so many pieces of colored stones, and quantified.

But it is one thing to collect evidence and another to establish its significance amidst other factors such as convictions and beliefs about justice and happiness, which are not measurable in any absolute sense. And there is the temptation on the part of the social scientist to reduce the causal factors, or variables, to manageable proportions; that is, to restrict the variables to a number that is amenable to a mathematical formula. Too often manageability means a single factor; all others become at best dependent variables, or at worst "impressionistic evidence". Yet the use of sources which inform us of the wages and property holdings of working people is, and always will be, valuable as long as their existence depends upon them. For a fuller understanding of the response of the working class, as well as other classes, an approach to history that has the cultural and social breadth one finds in the works of Thompson and Gutman is a necessity.

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