

RADICAL AMERICA

Volume IV

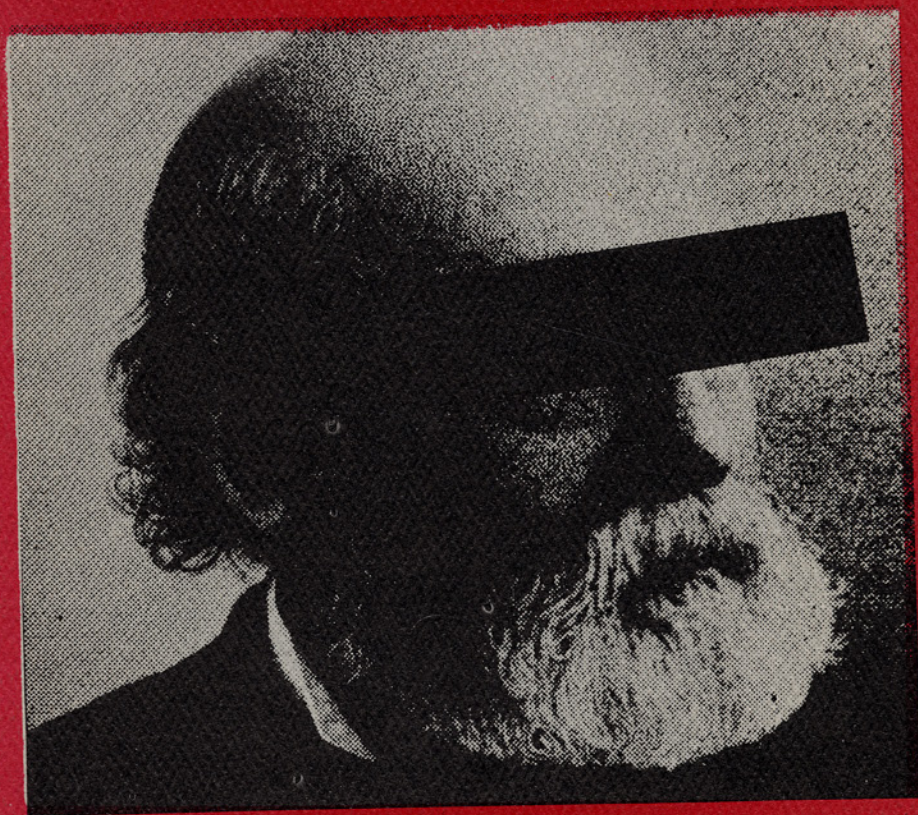
Number 3

75 cents

R. Aronson . . . *Dear Herbert:*

P. Buhle *Intellectuals in the Debsian Socialist Party*

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Industrial Society*



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This issue

of Radical America marks the beginning of a transition of the Socialist Scholars Conference. It is the first step away from an organization exclusively interested in the furtherance of socialist scholarship toward one directly engaged in building a socialist movement. It was necessitated by a variety of factors.

The general if only implied assumption of those who founded the SSC five years ago was that American Capitalism had entered a period of long-run stability, eliminating the possibility of any mass socialist opposition. Thus, socialist scholars should devote themselves to the serious intellectual work necessary for the development of a socialist intellectual tradition, which hopefully could be drawn upon at some propitious time in the future.

The last five years, however, has witnessed a rapid disintegration of Bourgeois hegemony in many aspects of American life. While the state remains strong and relatively unshaken other aspects of civil society have lost much of their force, making for the possibility of a socialist attack.

The movement that has grown in response to these developments is, however, at this time of greatest opportunity facing its own crisis. The major white national organization on the left, SDS, has disintegrated into a number of rival sects. There is little sense of cohesion on the left, and a strong possibility of isolation and wide scale suppression.

Partly in response to these currents, partly as a result of their own internal development, various activists and intellectuals have become involved in theoretical work. This is reflected in the emergence in the past several years of various theoretical magazines all attempting to relate to a broader movement.

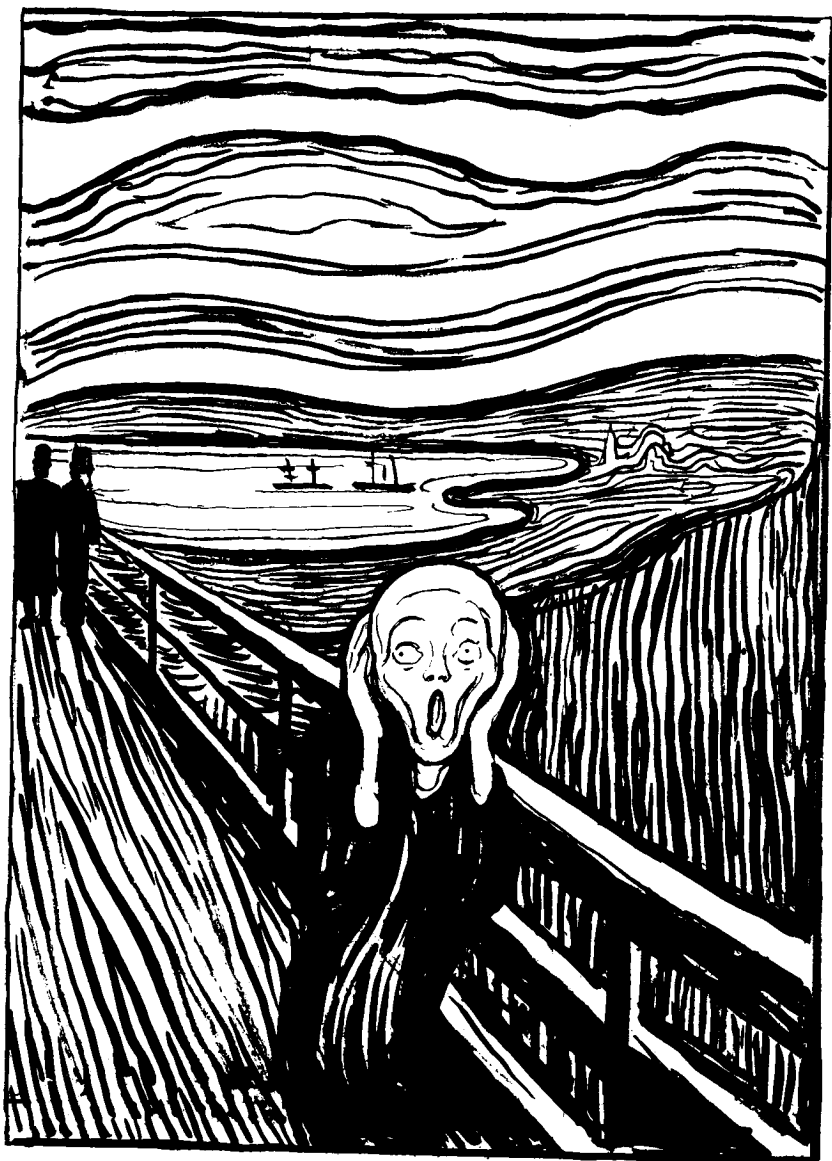
To remain aloof from these developments would for socialist intellectuals be the height of irresponsibility. The possibilities are there; the dangers also. Hopefully, the commitment to serious scholarship—objective socialist scholarship—will not be lost. For without a concern for long-term intellectual work the outlook for American socialism will be limited and bleak.

The main purpose of the SSC will continue to be to provide a forum for socialist intellectuals; a forum that is clearly socialist and yet free from sectarian control and factional demagoguery. We will, however, concentrate on more topics of current political relevance, without we hope lessening attention to historical analysis or restricting the areas for legitimate socialist intellectual work.

Also, we will seek to involve people who are concerned with relating their intellectual work to the revolutionary struggle; who are both political activists and intellectuals. And we hope to develop closer and more useful relationships with various Left political and cultural journals. Beyond this, we look forward to playing a role in the development of a Socialist Education League and the work of expanding mass socialist consciousness.

The papers in this issue of RA were presented at the fifth SSC. The issue was put together by Richie Friedman and Bill Miller. Any errors are ours, not the fault of the Madison staff. Elsewhere in this volume is an announcement of our Sixth Annual Conference which will be held in New York, June 13 and 14.

Socialist Scholars Conference
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Dear Herbert:

by Ronald Aronson

Dear Herbert:

My speaking at the Socialist Scholars Conference is a frightening and exciting chance to come to terms with you—with your effect on me as a teacher, with your writings, with your personality. For myself and a few friends, studying with you was one of the decisive experiences of our lives. Your thought, personality, style of teaching and writings were overpowering. During those years at Brandeis—and in many ways into the present—we were in awe of you. First, your bearing: so self-consciously dignified distant, demanding. It was clear that your approval, even your notice, had to be won, and we father-tormented graduate students became eager scholars and willing disciples.

You brought us into contact with the central figures in Western thought: Kant, Hegel, Marx, Plato, Aristotle. We didn't learn system-building from the outside, but we learned how to trace the impulses animating the thinking of each man we studied. We learned this, we felt, from someone living inside that movement of ideas, not an academic but someone of that tradition. Of that tradition and yet a revolutionary; you helped us to take our stand in Western thought and still be Marxists, to read Plato with warmth and understanding as well as criticizing him on social-historical grounds. You showed that the dilemma was false: Marxism or Western culture. So-called "bourgeois" poetry and painting and psychoanalysis and aesthetics are relevant, even central, to revolutionary thought. Your writings on art point this up: nobody I know is as able to appreciate what is going on in modern art, what it *means*.

I recall those classes on Plato's *Meno* and Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*; we prepared hard and long, read the material two or three times, refused to miss even one class, came expectantly, brought our friends and wives. Something was happening in Marcuse's classes. We all sensed it, we were learning how to read, to think. Above all you emphasized the idea of reason: the capacity of thought to understand the existing social reality, to criticize it, to project alternatives. All this meant mastery, disciplined work, knowledge for the sake of changing the world.

You introduced us to a perspective which was new and revolutionary, which made sense of our lives and helped us to find our way as radicals. In your courses in social and political theory and Marxian theory and in your writings you presented us with a coherent way of seeing history and the role of theory. How to think about history, how to think about thought. Capitalist society became clear as one form of *class* society: the central question became one of domination. And you gave us a way of making the present crisis clear: domination over nature reaches its goal, complete mastery, while domination over man is continued beyond any historical justification, using all of the new capabilities. Perhaps above all, you gave us the message of liberation, in *Eros and Civilization*—a new reality, organized according to different principles, realizing our deepest dreams, breaking with the trend of any past or present society.

You were never humble, and for that I thank you. You insisted that reality *can* be understood, that there is a single decisive issue—liberation—that dialectical thought *is* a valid way to approach the world. And you refused to submit to the authority of doctrine: you have struggled, more than anyone, to understand the present situation in its own terms, without merely reimposing old categories on it, to let thought move with history, freely and imaginatively.

No wonder we felt dominated by you. No wonder we argued after every class about what you meant, read and discussed your books as soon as they came out, quoted you against each other, made "What would Marcuse think?" our major intellectual

principle. I think of those days under your tutelage sadly, warmly, so much less secure now that it is time to locate the limits as well as the value of your impact on me. Insecure because as I write this I am not merely drawing myself up to the level of my teacher, declaring equality; I am reopening the intellectual field for myself and those like me, locating our work by spelling out the limits of yours.

Reopening: breaking into the open again. Yes, for a long time it felt closed, my world of radical thought. Why?

It is the intellectual's task and duty, you have said, "to recall and preserve historical possibilities which seem to have become utopian possibilities— . . . it is his task to break the concreteness of oppression in order to open the mental space in which this society can be recognized as what it is and does ("Repressive Tolerance" p. 81)." Take *One-Dimensional Man*, which describes the closed universes of discourse, politics, philosophy, science, and academic concepts. It conveys a sense of suffocation, of totalitarianism at work everywhere. As such it is a major step in our breaking out of that closing universe. By naming it, by helping us to get conscious of it, by conveying its overwhelming power, it helped us to define ourselves in opposition to it—total opposition. Depressing, verging on despair, the almost wholly negative analysis helped me and the movement to find ourselves in a society which integrates and feeds on conventional forms of opposition.

But your thought and teaching could only lead us so far. Secure in our ability to think, we began to see your limitations for our own lives and the historical problems facing us.

I want to talk about your tone: it is abstract and remote. There remains an enormous gulf between your writings and my experience. *Our* experience: the first generation of the New Left.

But strange to say, this weakness is also your strength. The "good" aspects of your writing cannot be rescued by throwing the "bad" overboard. To spell this out is to locate the historical place and limits of your thought—and experience. And define the new prospects and tasks open to those of us young enough to be born into and shaped by postwar America.

The power of your writings goes hand in hand with their weakness. Let us see. I quote the opening paragraphs of *One-Dimensional Man*:

Does not the threat of an atomic catastrophe which could wipe out the human race also serve to protect the very forces which perpetuate this danger? The efforts to prevent such a catastrophe overshadow the search for its potential causes in contemporary industrial society. These causes remain unidentified, unexposed, unattacked by the public because they recede before the all too obvious threat from without—to the West and from the East, to the East and from the West. Equally obvious is the need for being prepared, for living on the brink, for facing the challenge. We submit to the peaceful production of the means of destruction, to the perfection of waste, to being educated for a defense which deforms the defenders and that which they defend.

If we attempt to relate the causes of the danger to the way in which society is organized and organizes its members, we are immediately confronted with the fact that advanced industrial society becomes richer, bigger, and better as it perpetuates the danger. The defense structure makes life easier for a greater number of people and extends man's mastery of nature. Under these circumstances, our mass media have little difficulty in selling particular interests as those of all sensible men. The political needs of society become individual needs and aspirations, their satisfaction promotes business and the commonweal, and the whole appears to be the very embodiment of Reason.

And yet this society is irrational as a whole. Its productivity is destructive of the free development of human needs and faculties, its peace maintained by the constant threat of war, its growth dependent on the repression of the real possibilities for pacifying the struggle for existence—individual, national, and international. This repression, so different from that which characterized the preceding, less developed stages of our society, operates today not from a position of natural and technical immaturity but rather from a position of strength. The capabilities (intellectual and material) of contemporary society are immeasurably greater than ever before—which means that the scope of society's domination over the individual is immeasurably greater than ever before. Our society distinguishes itself by conquering the centrifugal social forces with Technology rather than Terror, on the dual basis of an overwhelming efficiency and an increasing standard of living.

In so many ways the statement could not be better. The inseparable and fatally ironic connection is sharply drawn between the society's wealth and well-being and its need to mutilate and possibly destroy us all. We are made to see it as a totality, whose good is born of its evil and vice versa. These passages demand that we think dialectically, that we join rather than separate, that we refuse to accept the logic of social science and detach prospects from problems.

The passage is rich with irony, joining terms and concepts kept apart by the mass media; perfection *and* waste, productivity *and* destruction, growth *and* repression, peace *and* war, capabilities *and* domination.

At the same time you force us to think in general terms, we are drawn up from immersion in the immediate and apparently self-justifying particulars of our everyday experience. The general language distances us from that experience, gives us the perspective we need in order to be critical. The charged terms which obstruct and entrap thought, such as communism and capitalism are replaced by East and West, the various ruling classes become "the forces", their class interests become "particular interests". At once we are lifted beyond the self-enclosed ideological debates of the American center and left and forced to think anew. The general terms, breaking wherever possible with conventional loaded formulations, draw back into themselves current usages for ironic effect: "living on the brink", "facing the challenge", "all sensible men" are juxtaposed with phrases which expose how loaded they are: "Business and the commonweal". More, such general formulations as "advanced industrial society" and "contemporary industrial society" place us high above the events—viewing history itself, seeing contemporary society as what it is, the current stage of development. Thus you suggest that we are today living under a *different type* of repression than in earlier stages. You refuse to let the struggle between socialism and capitalism define the limits of history; it is a longer process, going back at least to the beginnings of Western Civilization, whose future lines are still to be constructed.

Your terminology is rightly uncomfortable to read. It is open, elusive, cannot be fixed. And abstraction of abstractions, Western Capitalism and the Soviet Union each become "the whole". You speak of "our society" rather than Western Capitalism. It has "capabilities"—what are they? It "dominates"—specifically what does this mean?—through a never clearly defined "efficiency" and rising standard of living. How? Not "war material" but "the means of destruction". And what are those alluded-to but never articulated "causes" of the—still so general—"atomic catastrophe"? Aggravating to read, these formulations do what you intend: they re-open meaning, they create the space for thought by destroying our sense that all it set and defined. The high level of generality indicts socialism as well as capitalism: polar and self-evident terms give way to a search for meaning, a suspension of our typical and thoroughly indoctrinated responses.

Reason, Technology, and Terror—all in capital letters—appear almost as semi-autonomous. More distance. Look at this formulation: "the whole appears to be the very embodiment of Reason"—the language of philosophy creates the greatest

possible distance. Two separate realms are suggested: the other World of Reason, and our apparently rational but false world. Standards for judging this world thus are implied, standards drawn from that second dimension—whose meaning is kept open as it is itself only suggested, never explained. Opening meaning, provoking us to dialectical thought, defeating usual loaded ways of thinking and speaking, your style thus distances us from the world of our immediate experience so as better to see it, while suggesting standards for evaluating it. Truly you succeed in just what you set out to do, breaking “the concreteness of oppression in order to open up the mental space in which this society can be recognized as what it is and does”. Anyone who reads you and takes you seriously will sooner or later find himself engaged in one of the most liberating of all acts—thinking.

How many of us have had the experience of discovering the world through this book? But the same paragraphs, the same formulations, the same words—suffocate and deaden. The distance and generality which increase our critical ability in one way destroys it in another for they safeguard us from our own experience. Yes our reason is liberated by your method and tone, drawn and forced upward into the mansions of critical theory—an amazing accomplishment. But the rest of us, our hopes and lives and fears—get left behind.

The tone of remoteness which frees also stifles. I feel a bit lost after reading this introductory passage of *One-Dimensional Man* and completing the book hardly improves the condition. I am restless to get back to the world, to put my feet on the ground of hard and clear examples. Yours is a journey I can take with my intellect only—not with my imagination, my feelings, my guts.

That remote quality of so much of your writing is present in the passage I just quoted. Reason, Terror, Technology in capital letters—what are these self-subsistent, self-moving entities? Elsewhere you put Eros, Self, Beauty, Ego, The Great Refusal, Nature in capitals. Are we back with Plato, sketching a better, more real world but denying this one we live in? Frankly I feel inferior to such a world, to the level of culture which seems to be required for admission to it. After reading your justification for intolerance some radicals speak of “Marcuse the elitist.” And this problem isn’t helped by your refusal to translate passages from French and German, your offhand use of terms from Latin and Greek. *Oeuvre* and *technics*, *schein* and *Lebenswelt*—a new vocabulary, taken from and pointing towards the high culture of Western Civilization: remote and intimidating.

High culture truly becomes a realm apart—you speak of “the standard literary vocabulary,” “the classical Marxian theory.” You speak of critical theory as if it *is* and *moves*: “it elaborates concepts,” “it continues to insist that the need for qualitative change” is great, dialectical logic “insists that slaves must be free for their liberation.”

As you move to higher and higher levels of generality the ties with our experience slacken, then loosen. I don’t experience “particular interests” but rather definite forms of oppression. Terms like “domination” and “repression” and “pacification of existence” and “intellectual and material capabilities” are so broad as to be almost emptied of concrete content. How many people read you without understanding, developing only a vague sense of what is wrong! How many well-read, thoughtful intellectuals can present the main arguments of *One-Dimensional Man* or *Reason and Revolution*?

Their own fault, you’ll say. I disagree. Such formulations neither focus on and illuminate our own experience nor point towards the concrete social experience needed to grasp their meaning.

The passage I quoted seems so heavy, so dead-serious. Portraying a locked-in social reality, it itself has a locked-in feel. It wholly lacks humor. Gone is Marx’s ability

to poke fun, to play. The best phrases are grimly ironic: "We submit to the peaceful production of waste, to being educated for a defense which deforms the defenders and that which they defend." Opposites are brought together, but without the satisfaction a Marx shows at having caught the bourgeoisie with its pants down, without the biting edge, the passion to expose one finds so often in Lenin, say, or Trotsky. Feeling, yes, but as the play and pleasure are gone, so is the passionate anger. "The game is up," the passage—and its sad depressed tone—seem to say. Opposites are joined, locked-in together. *They* are everywhere: "Don't wait to be hunted to hide." The dialectic is drawn into a circle, from which there is no way out, as everything turns into its opposite. You promote a certain sad style of thought, which many in and out of the movement have imbibed; "Protest only strengthens the established order by showing protest to be possible." Why do so many who read you say this?

Your writing leaves our experience: here is the source of what is exciting in it *and* what is stifling. I think I can make this clearer by a bit of speculation about the historical function of your writing, the experience from which it springs, and how it differs from ours.

Why leave experience? Appeals to the Germanic spirit, the influence of Hegel, the academic environment, are so much nonsense. Look at the character of that experience—yours, the experience of disaster in the West in the fifty years between the beginning of World War One and the mid-sixties. Everyone knows the facts. The workers supported and sacrificed themselves in wars so evidently against their own real interest. The socialist revolutions failed. As the Soviet Union developed, socialism's promise of liberation withered. And then came fascism, wiping out radical opposition and then all opposition, and so evidently popular—war, barbarism and genocide so popular. It is all depressing enough for me to think about—what must it have been like to live through it as a partisan of a losing cause, as a potential victim?

And for a moment, the enormous cloud drawn over the West seemed to lift: the war was over, fascism dead. But the chance for revolution passed in France and Italy. American democratic capitalism became the most complete and effective form of totalitarianism. Opposition caved in, the Cold War began. Monopoly capitalism extended itself everywhere—around the world, into people's hopes and fears, wants and needs. The complete and systematic triumph of the principle of historical materialism: thought, imagination, feeling, desire became wholly sucked into the society, accepted it and sang its praises. People actually want the aggressive, guilt-ridden, thing-obsessed American way of life! All of this done "the American way"—without agencies of control, while preserving the feeling of freedom, civil liberties, the right to vote.

What then came out of this half-century of catastrophe? The end of opposition, the onset of a new form of totalitarianism. It seems like you saw the world close.

How did you respond to these events—how might any revolutionary intellectual? First, by retreating to thought, where the *ideas* of change, of liberation, of socialism can be preserved intact to await and hope for the reopening of opposition. The socialist movement, the chance for liberation seemed to temporarily collapse in the thirties: the theoretical idea of liberation had to be validated and kept alive. But as western totalitarianism spread—as American capitalism came to exploit and organize every conceivable area and as alternatives and even criticism became linked with the communist Enemy—your refuge, the realm of ideas itself became attacked. Not only the *idea* of socialism or liberation, but the validity of *any idea* which points beyond our immediate experience. Socialism itself was no longer the issue. The issue was the mind's very ability to *think* about socialism. Your response? Meta-theory, the need to validate theory's right to exist, the need to attack a self-enclosed, self-validating ideology on every plane of experience. Thus the strange-sounding formulation I quoted earlier from "Repressive Tolerance": that the intellectual must "recall" and "preserve" possibilities, that he must re-open "the mental space" in which we can recognize this society. A last-ditch defense in the face of overwhelming odds: preserve the force of the Hegelian dialectic, preserve negative thinking, preserve the vigorous depth-character of Freudian

theory, preserve the image of liberation, preserve the second dimension, thought itself, preserve the original impulses of Marxian theory in the face of Soviet distortions.

No wonder your writings seem so heavy; was it possible to still feel confidence, and thus lightness and wit, as opposition to capitalism dried up and seemed impossible? No wonder you convey a sense of *Them* closing in everywhere, of paranoia and futility: all the unbelievably bloody battles of the last 50 years seemed only to strengthen capitalism and deepened its terrifying and apparently unbreakable hold over people. No wonder you seem to take no delight in exposing the system and its Masters: Marx could rightly feel he was making fresh revelations which couldn't help but lead to social change, while today the facts are self-evident but everywhere denied by a mystified people. No wonder you seem obsessed with culture, ideology, consciousness: what is this brave new world all about if not the massive falsification of people's experience, their seeing an oppressive world as free?

And no wonder your writings sound so remote, so abstract: if experience seems just fine, if it thus becomes self-justifying, we must lift thought far above it in order to be able to criticize. If a totalitarian world is depicted in our locked-in and uncritical thought, an authentic language must appear unfamiliar and brittle. If everywhere around us the world is falsely known and falsely comfortable and self-validating, we must be made to feel uncomfortable, to see words as strange and suggestive of undreamed-of possibilities.

Marx hardly needed to be remote. Critical thought could merely follow and present experience—in a clear and comprehended form. This is what Marx does in his histories, this is what he does in *Capital*. 19th-Century capitalism provided its own, its internal and universally agreed-upon standards for criticizing it: equality, freedom, property, self-interest. Marxism could be an immanent critique—a critique of experience in terms of its own claims—because it merely traces the inner development of the facts and shows how capitalism denies every one of its basic claims: Criticism can immerse itself in social experience when that experience contradicts and thus criticizes itself. And this happened most clearly when a movement developed whose own life was the most thorough indictment of the society, a life in which all the bourgeois promises were denied.

But this has changed—one of the key themes of your writings. Experience has ceased to be critical of itself. Which means that by and large the society fulfills its promises, meets its claims. The American way of life: a constantly increasing standard of living for almost everyone without giving up our abstract and formal freedoms. As it “delivers the goods” to a people who want only the goods and more of them advanced capitalism minimizes the distance between peoples' needs and satisfactions. On the political and social scale this means that the working class has come to accept and defend capitalism. Judged by its own standards the society appears to be just fine, although it has some problems left. It is this situation, you argue, which makes an immanent critique impossible. When only colonial outsiders or the black minority stand as the living negation of American capitalism, where can we go to get our standards for judging it? Close description of the facts is no longer root criticism: it is mostly affirmative. What is our basis for criticism if few people really mind waste or a war policy, if productivity is the social goal, if the good life is directly experienced as what the society puts out?

Critical thought must leave experience if experience ceases to be self-critical, self-contradictory. Standards must be found outside the society's own. We must move, as you say, into abstract, speculative thought: “from the critique of political economy to philosophy”. Radical criticism no longer stands with a class inside the system—it takes place from outside. A transcendent critique. Critical theory must divorce itself from experience, become remote from it, provide experience with standards, justify those standards. Thus the other-worldly tone, thus my feeling that your analysis is external. And thus your need to return to the remotest regions of speculative thought in order to reshape the very tools and concepts of criticism. Thought must restore the critical distance lost in daily experience. Remote, yes—but for a life and death reason.

Still, I have criticized your writing! How can I do that and yet pay such warm tribute to it?

When I criticize you for leaving experience I am implying that critical thought can do otherwise today. Not that you were wrong to do it as you did, but that we are wrong to follow you. We are in a different historical situation than you: our writings respond to a different experience, have different demands built into them, must be different in form and content. The simple fact is: it is wholly different to be born into and raised in a totalitarian society than it is to see and struggle against its coming into being. It is a wholly different experience to be raised in a society without opposition than it is to be part of an opposition on the verge of winning the greatest victory of history, to see it lose, and then to watch it collapse entirely.

What is the difference? Just as you start from the most general level, so I would like to reverse that and start from the most specific. Just as you write meta-theory in the language of Hegel and high culture, so I would like to reverse that and speak of my own experience in the language of that experience. I'm fully aware of the theoretical implications of this effort: living in a totalitarian culture, can I grasp my experience from inside? Beginning with my experience can I understand America?

The key fact about growing up in postwar America was my need to reject America. I needed to break, to say and act No, to leave. Why? Somehow I had gotten on this machine in motion, had become the machine, acting on behalf of some enormous power I couldn't even begin to fathom. To follow out its and my momentum led to the "good life" whose every detail I already knew in some gut way: marrying, professional work, the struggling young couple getting set up, vacation trips, a wonderful child, a small house at first, then living better, making more money. My own steps led naturally into the full-fledged American way of life, a life in which I could look good for other people and smile Hello and buy and "live better and better." Phyllis and I called it "the whole bit." Somewhere inside I knew what attitudes and feelings were required for entry into this good life: despair, boredom, the relentless drive to keep moving, being "realistic" by putting society's demands first and my own second, giving up on happiness, lying about pain.

And a layer deeper inside, I know now, was the emotional basis for all this: feeling inferior. Or better, hating myself. What does this psychological fact have to do with the social facts I'm talking about? Everything. Hating myself meant hating all those feelings, needs, reactions which were most truly mine, which were not socially approved in advance: such as weakness, fear, hurt, anger, sexuality, dependency, loving and needing to be loved. But such impulses were *mine*, and being taught to hate them from childhood meant disowning all those dimensions of myself, pretending to myself that they didn't exist, pushing them back. Pushing myself back. And into this vacuum, created ultimately by America I know now, there grew a new self, also created ultimately by America.

I recall how I struck on performance as the way to get falsely what I needed really. Already unhappy, I had learned to get attention by being a bad boy in school and at home—getting into trouble, destroying things, shouting and disrupting. Until an ingenious 5th grade teacher put me in what she called "isolation," separating me from the other boys and girls and depriving me of attention for my misdeeds. She left me without anything to do but get high marks, and so I did. A good student, I stopped being rowdy: the transformation was complete. The unhappy, angry boy turned himself into a pleasant, courteous performer.

Thus escaping from my real needs and feelings I developed a relentless drive to keep in motion—in order to keep my now-hateful self from catching up with me. Denying myself, I ceased to transfer my center of gravity, my locus of self-definition onto the world outside. And this self-denial meant accepting inferiority as my basic state. Hating my own impulses, I became ready to accept the substitute impulses offered

by parents and teachers—all the conscious and unconscious *shoulds*. Frowning at myself and mistrusting my every impulse, I developed a frantic drive to win smiles from other people, the authorities. Since *I* clearly didn't know who *I* was and what *I* wanted, *They* would have to tell me. And of course they had been telling me from earliest childhood, so much so that by the time *I* finished college *I* had already drawn them into me. *I* was already "realistic" in that deepest sense. An all-A student, a nice guy, someone who hated to make scenes: *I* was well-prepared to accept the American way of life, based on striving, others' approval and acquiring outside things. What America offered expressed and compensated for my misery.

But in a moment of revelation, after talking with a salesman who had once wanted to be an actor but "well, you just can't live your dreams," *I* said: "I'll do what *I* want." That was so vague—who knew what *I* wanted? But the "whole bit" was so suffocating, so known in advance.

Could *I* accept part of it, only what *I* had to—job, or living in a dreary neighborhood or buying a new car—and avoid the rest? No, no, no: it *felt* like a "whole bit." *A way of life* was given, not separate materials out of which *I* would build *my* life. Either *I* had to stay on the machine and live that life or jump off altogether.

So we jumped off the machine, stopped the part of ourselves that wanted it. We had to get away and make a life of our own. *Our own*—this is what was suffocated—our own ideas, our own pace, our own love, our own clothes, our own talk, our own sex, our own pain, our own joy.

Could we travel into different parts of America and find the ground where it would grow? But outside of the natural scenery, everywhere in America seemed so much the same—how people look, what they think, what they want and hate, what they do. So we searched out a remote backwater where things were not yet so modern. Teaching in a country schoolhouse, we lived one of our dreams, going off, living our own life, escaping, turning towards the past—old, good ways, humane habits, authentic people. But guess what our students talked about as *I* drove the school bus over the hills and along the river to the two-room schoolhouse. Last night's television programs. Still, there was a real country life. Part of it excluded all transients: the natives rarely befriended the schoolteachers, outsiders from the city. But we too could live among trees and hills, with a sense of nature, time, and space, could take slow walks, could teach in jeans. But how long were we willing to be lonely? It slowly dawned that the America which threatened to suffocate us was also the only real world. It drew us. Even hating it we could hardly live our whole life outside of it and still feel real. And even if we could, the guilt and self-hatred brought tension into the relaxed walks by the river. *I* wanted to perform, to look good, to make a name. *I* couldn't simply sit around enjoying myself. Even here *I* felt driven. How to get free of America inside myself?

First of all stop looking outside me, stop traveling. It slowly dawned that as *I* searched around *I* carried inside me all the proper attitudes for becoming an envied success, a responsible provider, a mindless vacationer. *I* was a living performance principle. *I* was never satisfied, always striving. How could *I* get away from it? Only by changing myself.

My personality and the American way of life fit into each other so easily, as if by design. To get free of America outside me *I* had first to get free of America inside me. How to stop performing? Break the self-hatred, the guilt, the obsession with goals, the need for things, the drive to keep moving, the urge to look good. Psychotherapy, yes. Learning to feel good about myself, to accept and live my desires and reactions and impulses. And in the process *I* discovered that my hated self was not my fault but finally the society's, that this isolated unique individual was really a deeply social and historical being. And that breaking free to live humanely now meant attacking the America which has made me fit only to live inhumanly.

What a leap *I* just took! An account of a life-search which doesn't once mention politics, and suddenly *I* proclaim the necessity for revolution. Why? The strictly personal

revelation has hinted at why: it contains the structure of experience of this peculiar totalitarian society.

One way of life and only one. *The good life*, set out ahead. No other legitimate choices? It seems not: the only other major patterns seemed leftovers from the past. I don't want to spell out the evils of a life turning around television, getting ahead, the suburbs, "fine how are you," and shopping centers—liberals can do that well enough. What suffocated was that there was only *one* life to move into—a single, coherent way of life, defined in virtually all of its actions, attitudes and gestures. Not open-ended but closed, not subject to *my* activity but ready-made, not waiting to be shaped *by* me but given *to* me, not springing from my spontaneity or rational deliberation but imposing itself, inside me and out, not growing from my needs but already there, deciding what they would be. The American way of life: set up, ready and waiting, and we merely need to be realistic to slip into "the whole bit." If we begin by hating ourselves—by feeling guilty, driven, inferior, obsessed with approval—then it is easy to live the system's life as our own. We are already outside ourselves, already eager for a life to be given to us, already respectful of authorities, already relentless towards ourselves, already eager to gain a sense of power by acquiring things.

I came to see that the search for myself was really a struggle to break free from these needs. But recovering the original and hated needs was *per se* a battle with the society. Dropping into myself meant being angry, making scenes, being peculiar, asking Why, saying No, fighting. I could only change myself while identifying those forces outside which had originally distorted my needs and now stood against my satisfying them. Changing myself *and* becoming political. Liberation *and* revolution.

What are those forces? What is behind this strange totalitarian American way of life and our need for it? Why does life seem wholly organized in advance—closed, given, waiting? Why does this life seem to stem naturally from my own sick and distorted needs? And worse, why is a desperate struggle necessary just to break free of those needs and want to be happy? The pattern of my experience is a little clearer, but not its social sources.

What we need is an analysis of American society today whose questions and categories are intimately connected with our experience. A study which starts, as Marx did, with the experience of being oppressed and works slowly back into the social mechanisms which oppress. I have a few questions for this study.

How does the system create the attitudes which keep it going as it expands in new directions? Organized capitalism of the late 1960's requires men and women willing to see every area of life invaded by the economy, willing to live with little initiative outside of selecting ready-made options, willing, in short, to take the whole package that is handed them. It requires people to continue working in spite of the senselessness of it all—knowing that they produce waste, knowing that automation is possible. It requires an insatiable appetite for goods. And it requires that people see this life as happiness, the only possible happiness. Beyond toothbrushes and televisions we must learn to work for and want *electric* toothbrushes and *color* televisions. *Learn* to need them: to find satisfaction through *having* rather than *doing* or *being*, and to be willing to die and destroy the world to prop up this way of life.

How do we learn all this? Buying meat doesn't require any special attitude: *I need* to eat. But to buy an electric toothbrush—and thus to be at home in the 1960's—I must come to want something which I don't really need. I must value it, I must connect having it with happiness. Thus the electric toothbrush is *ideological* in a way that meat is not: buying it involves a whole world-view, just the world-view advanced capitalism needs to survive.

Yes, people have acquired this world-view, but how securely does it grip them? Which means asking not only how do the system's needs get enclosed in our personality structure, but what are the tensions and tendencies within us? After all, the New Left

and the hippie movement have sprung from this soil. It seems that capitalism's survival requires it to get deeper and deeper inside us; it seems that its way of life will become more and more suffocating. In other words, might not the condition which pushed me to become a revolutionary be felt by more and more people as time goes on?

These questions contain a criticism of you, Herbert. I'm asking for a different *One-Dimensional Man*. Not 'Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society,' but studies examining the process whereby the political economy invades our souls and shapes us into one-dimensional men and women. Not only a critique of current philosophy, science, academic thought, but also, or rather primarily, a study which examines the ties between psychology and society. No mistake, your work is decisive for us. But we need to connect organized capitalism with the mental and emotional culture it requires and creates—a *Capital* which broadens out into all the spheres which corporate capitalism has itself invaded.

With this demand for a close internal study of one-dimensional society, I return to my main points. First, that in spite of its power, your attempt to grasp this society remains external and remote; and second, that from where I stand—up to my neck in America—only a critique on intimate terms with my experience will do. We need more than striking but unclarified assertions about "the unification of opposites" and the absence of "centrifugal tendencies" and a "socially engineered arrest of consciousness." We need critical theory which gets inside the 1960's as *Capital* did the 1860's, which traces the tensions and contradictions at the heart of the system's control over us. A life tied to commodities has become "biologically" necessary, you argue in *An Essay on Liberation*, a vital need. Which means that "dysfunction of the organism" would result if that tie was broken. But in not studying the process closely you miss the incredible conflicts at the heart of normal functioning. You see it from the outside, as if the appearances of comfort and stupid fun were the reality, as if anyone is really satisfied in their guts with the American way of life. I was born there, I know it: misery is the reality, always at least half-conscious, hidden by a veil, having to be pushed back daily. Isn't that misery the very basis of the movement you write about so warmly?

Your *Essay on Liberation* is dedicated to "the young militants" and written for them. It is a magnificent philosophical statement for our movement. But oddly missing in a work claiming to be social theory is any attempt to "identify demonstrable tendencies," to explain why and how the movement developed in the one-dimensional society, of all places. Why—in the heartland of corporate capitalism—the New Left and the hippies? What do they tell us about America?

Yes, in many ways we raise the demand you have long hoped would spur revolutionary politics: for liberation, for a reversal of the whole way of life. Why? I am clear on my own reason: because the only adequate response to being raised in one-dimensional society is to demand liberation. I felt totally trapped by America—nothing I could have or be seemed to be free from it, to be mine. To have anything at all of my own, to break free in any one place, meant that I had to break free *everywhere*. Because I was trying to overcome a whole way of life imposed inside and out and not merely a few objectionable demands on me, it seemed like I had to answer by developing a whole way of life of my own, a "new sensibility."

You ask intellectuals to "preserve historical possibilities" which seem to have vanished today, to keep "open the mental space" in which we can see this society for what it is—but these tasks make no sense to me. You were able to begin with a clear and legitimate identity, a sense of being in opposition, a whole set of values, a strong sense of being part of a tradition. That was what it must have meant to be brought up in a two-dimensional society. On the basis of a secure and clear identity you could take refuge in theory when Nazism took power, you could "recall" the image of liberation as the American way of life became total. In a strict sense you were preserving ideas recalling what had once been your own life-possibilities.

In that same strict sense I have nothing to preserve. When times get tough I can

hardly fall back on the secure corner of my identity where opposition and real freedom are still possible. What identity? That has had to be built, by a tremendous act of will, of creativity and resistance.

America imposed its life on me by separating me from myself, by making my thinking dominate my desires, by keeping my values away from my actions, by giving me roles to live, by making me hate myself and accept what satisfactions I could get. This is what being "realistic" is all about—saying goodbye to much of ourselves, squeezing the rest into the channels offered. Refusing all separation was one of the main ways of locating myself—demanding that values be lived, that thinking not oppose feeling, rejecting roles as traps, refusing to accept any less than being myself in a total, complete way. Not *preserve* the wish for liberation, but *live* it, not keep open *mental* space, but *breathing* and *feeling* and *acting* space for opposition. You retreated, and I think necessarily; living and responding today I have to take the offensive merely to survive. To be myself I must demand everything.

Why isn't your path, retreat into radical thought, enough for me? In my life it is not capitalist values or elitist values which are oppressive, but *values* as such: meaning ideals, separated from my actions, which mock my life. Not bourgeois abstract thought is intolerable, but abstract thought as such: a thought which rejects and withdraws from my experience. Why isn't it enough to be politically radical and leave the rest of my life intact? Because then everything remains the same, locked into America, except that my ideas are radical, and I make my part-time political statements and acts at meetings with radicals. Only the sense of a new way of life will do, being radical in working, in loving, in thinking, in feeling, in eating, in joking. Being radical: being myself. Anything which separates me from myself oppresses, whether it comes from America or its left-wing opposition. Not only bourgeois morality oppresses, but any morality which imposes oughts from outside. Not only the bourgeois contempt for ignorance, but the radical reliance on a higher culture. Not only the bourgeois domination of feeling by reason, but the radical insistence on the priority of theory, the correct position. Not only the middle-class role-playing is oppressive, but accepting any kind of role, even the role of radical intellectual. I have become revolutionary because America, while willing to sell me everything, won't let me be myself. Should I give up any part of myself in order to oppose America?

In saying this, I'm only taking seriously your demand, in *Essay on Liberation*, for "a political practice which reaches the roots of containment and contentment in the infrastructure of man, a political practice of methodical disengagement from and refusal of the Establishment, aiming at a radical transvaluation of values." "Such a practice," you go on to say, "involves a break with the familiar, the routine ways of seeing, hearing, feeling, understanding things so that the organism may become receptive to the potential forms of a nonaggressive, nonexploitative world" (p.6). It's not my politics that are at stake, or my ideas. My whole being is at stake. My experience is of being lost in the smiling sick sea and of needing to wrench myself out step by step; my goal is to avoid and destroy all of *Their* categories in my life, to live joyously, to reject bullshit in all its disguises, to let America have none of myself, to get whole, and to become a *guerrilla*.

See, I have been sketching an immanent critique of America. It is possible, to confront the promise with the reality which denies that promise. Theory need not take up a position outside. Trying to spring loose from within I am criticizing America from within. Like Marxism? Yes and no. Marxism was certainly a theoretical description of the experience of capitalism, of the sources of that experience. Yet it rested on visible, universally acknowledged conditions: hunger amidst plenty, business cycles, etc. These were facts whose force was not dependent on the individual worker's willingness to see them. The only questions were whether and how to struggle. But to say I feel choked, I can't be myself because American capitalism has created a totalitarian society and has wedged me into it is sharply different than saying I'm hungry because of wage labor. Anyone can deny the first statement, can say, "I'm not choked, I'm myself, what is all the fuss about?" Proof is impossible, and I can hardly point to visible facts. Can I convince anyone that he's not himself? The point is that millions upon millions of

personal commitments are needed to keep the system going: to accept the American way of life, to give up locating oneself, to accept living in bits and pieces, and to lie about it. If your survival needs are met well and you can keep busy, self-deception is possible in a way that it's not if you're hungry. America keeps going as everyone draws a veil over his own life. If so, to show the truth is no longer merely to locate the structures behind what everyone admits to be a problem, but rather to tear away the veil.

Yet the veils don't hide only the system—they hide each and every one of us from ourselves. And each of us distorts his experience in a different way, according to his own particular situation. Because of this peculiar historical situation a critique of America which tries to get inside the key place where it affects us must first be personal. It must begin as a series of attempts to reveal the different kinds of experience possible in America. The opposite of remoteness: talking about ourselves. And since tearing away the veil is hardly a matter of convincing people's intellects, revolutionary thought must engage the whole person: his feeling, his imagination, his sense of being lost. Not only tracing the structure of capitalism, but also blowing people's minds. Disrupting, shattering, springing people loose: we need to be personal, poetic, disturbing. To make people want liberation.

III

Liberation. Unlike *socialism, freedom, and happiness*, this term still belongs to us. It means something so deep and total that even American capitalism hasn't yet promised it. *Eros and Civilization* shows how deep and total. What I found there—the most profound and stirring message coming from any book during the years of recovering myself—is that a world is possible in which we can be happy. That my deepest, most forlorn needs can become the organizing principle of a free society.

Aesthetics: *the* subversive science. Sensuousness, sensuality, beauty mean first of all freeing the body from being a tool, replacing it—and thus my feelings—in the center of my life. Letting the order of my existence flow from my own internal rhythms, above all the need for pleasure. To subvert reason, to end repression means eroticizing all activities, from working to friendships to cooking. Liberation means, as you put it, "affirmation of the right to build a society in which the abolition of poverty and toil terminates in a universe where the sensuous, the playful, the calm, and the beautiful become forms of existence and thereby the Form of the society itself" (*Essay on Liberation*, p. 25).

Yes, it is theoretically possible, you convinced me. But above all I discovered that my inner misery was connected with everyone else's, that my deepest fantasies were widely shared from the beginning of Western Civilization, that socialist revolution today might make them reality, that revolutionaries had to begin by feeling in their gut the need for liberation. Feeling it in my gut, however, drew me away from your writings. Even mastering all your ideas has not been enough. Two themes which I didn't find there helped me to get clear on what liberation means: being whole and being myself. I've spoken about both of them, but now I want to show that this is what liberation is all about.

Being whole means all of me being there at any given moment, and all of me being one and in the same place. It means *feeling* the truth, *seeing* myself as social and historical being and not merely accepting the abstract idea of society and history, not "making up my mind" but *reacting* directly to situations. It means refusing to let reason be a force over and above and outside of me, and instead making it proceed from within. It means breaking with every external compulsion and locating the center of action and thought in my needs and feelings and reactions. Being whole means giving up being outside of myself, giving up trying to do what is "objectively" right and "good," giving up trying to think what is objectively "true." And so having ideas about life which correspond to my needs, political reactions which flow from my pain and urge for happiness, analyses which are drawn from my experience, actions which come from my sense of what is appropriate. Being whole means above all trusting myself and not forces

outside me, putting myself at the center of everything I do.

Being whole *is* being myself. A real self, underlying the mass of confused and warring impulses? Well, yes. *One-Dimensional Man* hedges this point: true needs are not defined as the individual's own needs, but as socially engendered needs which are consonant with ending misery and toil. You insist on an objective, a social definition of true as well as false needs. *Essay on Liberation* talks about a biological foundation for socialism, but refuses to call this the individual's *real* self or *real* need. It is just better. By what standards? In *Eros and Civilization* you come closest to what I am saying here: **there are repressed needs, revealed in phantasy, dreams and perversions, which are in some sense more basic than the needs which arise from being repressed.**

A real self? Yes. It wouldn't be fixed and prestructured, but fluid and shifting. It **would** be rooted in needs and impulses developed in a climate where I can experience my own feelings, rather than the needs and impulses which arise when I am forced to reject myself and instead experience as my own needs which serve and come from outside forces. Deep needs hidden somewhere inside? Yes, rooted forever in the never-to-be-forgotten childhood experience of love and nourishment and pleasure. Everyone has known the time when survival itself depended on being whole and living our needs, when life itself was integral satisfaction, harmony with the environment, love, being fully alive in every action.

To merely be alive today we must have once known joy. Liberation means returning to this self. It means getting back to these basic impulses, trusting them, letting them flourish, being true to them from moment to moment, not turning them on their head, shackling them under a network of shoulds and objective truths and rational analyses and roles. Revolutionary demands: Let us be ourselves, let us be whole. This America can never permit.

What would a movement for liberation look like? This you know well, Herbert. Its tone would be one of joy. Affirming, celebrating life, imaginative, playful. It would refuse to become serious, to become heavy, to become abstract. Angry yes, and determined to overthrow American capitalism yes, but *equally* determined to develop a new way of life in the process. Spending as much time looking inward as looking out, as much time locating and breaking free of hang-ups as in locating and attacking the enemy. Hang-ups: people would be encouraged to know where they are, to grow, to get strong. To become themselves. Organizational structures would open towards every member's fullest growth. Therapy? Necessarily: attacking America and freeing ourselves from it would be seen as the same goal. Growth and depth would become criteria of political success, not numbers of people involved. Ordinary lines between what is political and what is not would break down. External structures, the need to be led, centralization, ideologies developed from the top would be fought: instead there would develop loose organizations, each determining its own needs, each analyzing its own experience, each refusing outside direction. Any attempt to impose an ideological line or to develop the cult of leaders would be fought: the pain and needs and liberation of each person would be the focal point. It would be made clear that everyone has experienced America all his or her life, that each of us has already developed the most fundamental bed of knowledge, that turning inward to get clear on our experience is the most certain way to know. Such a movement's actions would be free-wheeling and imaginative. It would appeal mainly to peoples' sense of life against their death-impulses, their sense of freedom against their shame, their feeling of pain against their protective intellects, their need to be themselves against their respect for authority. It would understand the total hold America has over its people and formulate actions designed to break people loose, blow their minds. It would give up the desperate attempts to find the "agent" of revolution and encourage people to work wherever they feel best, and to get strong there, and to live their impulse for liberation.

Is this our movement, is this the New Left? What do you think? These demands haven't just sprung out of my head. At its best the American and European New Left has or has had most of these traits. But only at its best, here and there, and—especially in

America—in lesser and lesser degrees. The French students might say “All power to the Imagination,” but the American movement seems to be losing most of the imagination it had. Take S.D.S. I began by quoting from and analyzing the language of the opening paragraphs of *One-Dimensional Man*. I’ll close by doing the same with the S.D.S. 1969 National Convention Statement expelling Progressive Labor members.

SDS NATIONAL CONVENTION 1969

1. We support the struggles of the Black and Latin colonies within the U.S. for national liberation, and we recognize those nations’ rights to self-determination (including the right to political secession, if they desire it).
2. We support the struggle for national liberation of the people of South Vietnam, led by the National Liberation Front and the South Vietnamese Provisional Revolutionary Government. We also support the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, led by President Ho Chi Minh, as well as the Democratic Republic of China, the Peoples’ Republics of Korea and Albania, and the Republic of Cuba, all waging fierce struggles against U.S. imperialism. We support the right of all peoples to pick up the gun to free themselves from the brutal rule of U.S. imperialism.
3. The Progressive Labor Party has attacked every revolutionary nationalist struggle of the Black and Latin peoples in the U.S. as being racist and reactionary. For example, they have attacked open admissions, black studies, community control of police and schools, the Black Panther Party and their “breakfast for children” program, and the League of Revolutionary Black Workers.

Progressive Labor Party has attacked Ho Chi Minh, the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam, the revolutionary government of Cuba—all leaders of the peoples’ struggles for freedom against U.S. imperialism.

Progressive Labor Party; because of its positions and practices, is objectively racist, anti-communist, and reactionary. It has no place in SDS, an organization of revolutionary youth. Progressive Labor Party has also in principle and practice refused to join the struggle against male supremacy. It has no place in SDS, an organization of revolutionary youth.

For all these reasons, which have manifested themselves in practice all over the country, as well as at this convention, and because the groups we look to around the world for leadership in the fight against U.S. imperialism including the Black Panther Party [and] Brown Berets urge us to do so, SDS feels it is now necessary to rid ourselves of the burden of allowing the politics of Progressive Labor Party members and all people who do not accept the above two principles are no longer members of SDS.

Look at the tone of this statement. How dead! It speaks the frozen language of the bureaucratic left: “We support the struggles,” and “waging fierce battles against U.S. imperialism,” and “the brutal rule of U.S. imperialism,” and “the peoples’ struggles for freedom against U.S. imperialism,” and Progressive Labor “is objectively racist, anti-communist, and reactionary.” Does this sound like the New Left, like a movement for liberation, like a new sensibility? The language is heavy, ritualized, dull, abstract. Does this sound like a movement growing from the inside out, based on peoples’ needs, capable of direct and honest statement? The statement is tough-assed, deliberately external, evasive, explains nothing about why the expulsion or how S.D.S. people *feel* about P.L.

P.L. is “objectively racist, anti-communist, and reactionary”—the line has been laid down, and it is a line saying nothing, absolutely nothing about the experience of S.D.S. members, their goals, their needs, their reactions. Truth is found outside

us—"objectively"—and presented in flat and doctrinaire decrees. Objectively!

External, then, in a double sense: what determines the internal politics of S.D.S.? The most ominous note is added almost as an afterthought, that "the groups we look to around the world for leadership in the fight against U.S. imperialism including the Black Panther Party [and] Brown Berets urge us" to expel P.L. This and constant invocation of "U.S. imperialism" indicates what is happening: S.D.S.'s major fight is to free the Third World and internal colonies from America. It is not our fight we are fighting, but *theirs*—and only then, and indirectly, is it ours. *They* determine what we do.

No wonder the prose is so heavy and external—the movement is in the process of becoming joyless and external. And in the process it sets up two ideological tenets which we must accept in order to have a "place in SDS, an organization of revolutionary youth." In the process, what has become of liberation, *our* liberation? Where are the original traits of the movement—the humor, the anarchism, the lightness, the openness, its direct person-to-person quality? Are these men and women who, in your words, "have the good conscience of being human, tender, sensuous, who are no longer ashamed of themselves. . . ." (*Essay on Liberation*, p. 21)?

Instead we see America turned inside out, a would-be revolutionary party reproducing some of the worst features of the society it wants to overthrow. In this statement it is not S.D.S., but those who rule America who have the last laugh. In saying this, I don't want to join the "dump on S.D.S." movement on the Left. Socialist scholars talk this way, most other groups talk this way, non-affiliated radicals talk this way. S.D.S. merely presents the attitudes in their sharpest form.

My attempts to explain why your writings share some of these traits won't do for the New Left, for S.D.S. is part of my world, the generation raised up by totalitarian America. Why should those in whom I would expect to find the "new sensibility" mirror the old sensibility? One of your main themes which is one of the backbones of everything I say in this letter, is that traditional notions of politics no longer hold, that political liberation cannot be separated from personal liberation—developing new needs, new reactions. I have come to speak of those new needs as *my* needs, to say that I locate them by learning to experience myself.

But this is the opposite of the manly toughness the S.D.S. statement asserts: being open to yourself, stopping to feel, rejecting aggression, being willing to feel fear and danger, being sensitive to your weaknesses, being vulnerable. Politics, on the other hand, has always been the very home of the external—politics traditionally defined. It is a trap: politics must be redefined. The French students are doing this. Cohn-Bendit's book and actions breathe the spirit of liberation. The American New Left began to do this but it seems in the process of undoing its original impulses.

Why? I think it's because of fear, fear which leads people to become external. Notice—an explanation which is not at all a part of "political analysis." Are the politicians afraid? Yes, I think, in the strangest way. Not afraid of clubbed heads or jail or losing jobs, or not being respectable. America has taught us to be terrified of all this, and the movement has broken that terror, has won out over it. But America has also taught us to be terrified of ourselves. Being external, not being ourselves, refusing to be whole: this is supposed to be strength. From being outside ourselves in America to being outside ourselves in the movement. If we accept this way of defining ourselves America wins; America wins and liberation is a sad joke. The early New Left had its finger on something more vital. But it failed to follow through its anarchism and rejection of ideology and demand for a new life. Instead of deepening its demands it abandoned them. Instead of completing its break with America it returned. "A liberal wants to free others; a radical wants to free himself." Whatever became of this New Left slogan? To really carry it out would have meant something far more painful, more threatening than all the Chicagos put together.

Which is better, a movement appealing to our by now built-in sense of guilt and

self-sacrifice—and thus easy to become part of—or a movement which threatens our whole identity by asking a commitment to joy? Which is better, a movement which accepts us as is, and then “naturally” develops elitist, hierarchical, manipulative, centralized leadership, or a movement which demands that we grow, search ourselves, make decisions, become responsible? Which is better, a large and centrally organized mass of people committed to the ideas of socialism and democracy or a loose and chaotic movement, small and building slowly, basing itself in our guts, giving us the room to get ourselves together?

To me the answers are obvious. A movement for liberation must be above all, people who are not afraid to drop into themselves, who are learning to be whole. Yes, a total break with America, a total commitment to change.

Your role in this process has been an ambiguous one. You bring the message of liberation, but another, older message as well. One can draw from you a justification for elitism, vanguardism, contempt for those we claim to want to liberate. Radicals reading you have drawn encouragement for their remoteness from real needs and fears, abstract intellectualism, being external, putting theory ahead of reality, and their insistence on the “objective” historical meaning of people’s acts. After all, of all your writings, *One-Dimensional Man* and “Repressive Tolerance” are said to be the most widely read among activists. In helping us to get clear about our situation, they maintain the influence over us of some of our worst patterns of thought and feeling and action. But there is also the message of *Eros and Civilization* and *An Essay on Liberation*. To take the idea of liberation seriously means criticizing the other side of Marcuse and its influence. It means letting go of thought and politics as we know them and turning inward to face what we find there. Yes, you’ve given us tools and ideas for that, for becoming new men and women.

Is it too late in the day to ask this of the New Left? Has America’s resistance to change and resort to repression made my demand foolish? After all, Herbert, if I’ve explained your limitations by the historical situation, mustn’t I do the same with the movement? Does it harden as America hardens?

Nonsense. The historical situation makes demands and sets limits, but it certainly doesn’t decide how people must respond. You, for example, managed to keep alive a sense of opposition and liberation at the worst times, so that you have vital things to say to us today. The New Left too can rise to the full height permitted and demanded by our historical situation. Growing out of totalitarian America it can be a movement for liberation. After all, something new and profound is happening in America. Children seem to be growing up freer, more whole, less cowed than I was. A spontaneous coming together in reaction to all the oppressive forces I’ve discussed. Nourished by new currents, oppressed in new ways, the movement need not merely reinstate doctrinaire and external radical politics. Will it break into the open? The French revolution was tremendously encouraging. The Women’s Liberation movement seems to be growing. And much of the original liberating impulse remains in local SDS chapters. Time will tell. Am I forced to end with a characteristic Marcusean question mark?

Well, Herbert, enough to trying to come to grips with you and your influence. No point in recapitulating—or rather, it would probably be impossible. After all, you’ve been truly a great teacher. You’ve done all that any teacher worth the name can do: I use the tools you have helped me to acquire in order to place myself in history and explain my differences with you; your message has taken hold so deeply that I use it to criticize even you. You’ve helped me, that is, to become myself.

Life,

Ron



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Marcuse's Utopia

by Martin Jay

The rise of Herbert Marcuse from the relative obscurity of his first sixty-five years to a position as one of the media's favorite seducers of the young has not been without its cost. The dissemination of his ideas has brought with it their inevitable dilution. Through what the French, in a delightful phrase, call "la drugstorisation de Marcuse," he has himself become something of a commodity. No article on the New Left is complete without a ritual mention of his name; no discussion of the "counter-culture" dare ignore his message of liberation. What is by and large ignored, however, are the roots of his arguments which are too deeply embedded in a tradition alien to the thinking of most Americans to make painless comprehension likely. It is far easier, after all, to read the unfortunate essay on "Repressive Tolerance" than to wrestle with the conceptual subtleties and stylistic impenetrability of *Reason and Revolution*. As a result, Marcuse is still to a considerable extent *Cet Inconnu*, as the French journal *La Nef*¹ subtitled its recent issue devoted to him. A complete exploration of the foundations of his thought is of course beyond the scope of this essay and must await another time. A beginning, however, can perhaps be made by probing the one aspect of his thinking which has increasingly come to the fore in recent years: its utopian dimension. As has often been observed, Marxist theory has steadfastly refused to offer a blueprint for post-capitalist society. The historicist strain in Marx's own thinking was always in tension with his implicit philosophical anthropology. Occasional attempts to describe "Socialist Man" by his successors have usually been thwarted by the recognition that he will have to define himself in a process of self-creation, of anthropogenesis, which cannot be predicted in advance. Few Marxists or neo-Marxist thinkers have been as sensitive to this historicist ban on positing a normative human nature as those of the so-called "Frankfurt School" of the *Institut für Sozialforschung*, with which Marcuse was associated during the 1930's. The *Institut's* reluctance to suggest anything which might be taken as a universal view of man's essence even prevented it from accepting without reservation the anthropological implications of Marx's *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts* when they were recovered in the early '30's. It is not insignificant that Theodor W. Adorno, who until his sudden and untimely death last summer was the *Institut's* director, chose music, the most unrepresentational of aesthetic modes, as the medium through which he examined bourgeois culture and sought traces of its transcendent negation. In recent years, Max Horkheimer, more than anyone else responsible for the genesis of the *Institut's* "Critical Theory," has come to believe that this refusal to picture the "other" society beyond capitalism is not unrelated to the Jewish ban on naming or describing God.

Whatever the source of the taboo, only Marcuse of the major figures connected with the Frankfurt School has dared in recent years to break it. Only Marcuse has tried to speak the unspeakable in an increasingly urgent effort to reintroduce a utopian cast to socialist theory. *Eros and Civilization* was his first attempt to outline the contours of the society beyond repressive domination. The *Essay on Liberation* goes even further in explicitly stating the need for a new philosophical anthropology, a frankly "biological foundation" for socialism. The desired transition, he argues, is from Marx to Fourier, from realism to surrealism.^{1a} The failure of socialism, he seems to be saying, has been the failure of imagination.

By consciously donning the utopian mantle, Marcuse has invited the scorn of "realists" in both the socialist and capitalist camps. Nevertheless, by doing so, he has helped give substance and direction to the inchoate yearnings of those dissatisfied with what they see as the present Hobson's Choice of authoritarian socialism or repressive advanced capitalism. While his critiques of both these current societies are well-known, the utopian alternative he has projected has been comparatively ignored. Only its psychoanalytic elements—the goal of a society freed from historically grounded "surplus

repression" and the "performance principle" (a kind of generalized Protestant Ethic)—have been discussed with any rigor. Far less attention has been paid to its philosophical sources. Only by examining these can the political implications of Marcuse's vision be adequately understood.

Those familiar solely with Marcuse's writings in English are often surprised to learn that before joining the *Institut* in Frankfurt in 1932, he spent several years with Martin Heidegger at Freiburg. During this period, he attempted to reconcile Heidegger's existential phenomenology with historical materialism,² anticipating in a sense what Merleau-Ponty and Sartre were to try to do after the war. The details of his attempt need not concern us now.³ What is important to note for our purposes is that, as Alfred Schmidt has suggested, Marxism served him as a "positive philosophy" answering Heidegger's question, "What is authentic existence and how is authentic existence possible?" To Marcuse, man can exist authentically only by performing radical deeds, only by engaging in self-creating *praxis*. Man is only man as autonomous subject, never as contingent predicate. The Marxist "fundamental situation" (*Grundsituation*), he argues, is that in which the historically conscious man performs radical acts in order to live authentically.

Although abandoning much of Heidegger's terminology and moving away from his ontological approach to history, during his tenure with the *Institut*, Marcuse has never fully relinquished his conviction that the free man is the man who can create himself through radical *praxis*. (It might be added parenthetically that Heidegger's influence has persisted in another way as well. Marcuse's much debated attitude towards technology—he has been accused of being everything from a romantic Luddite to a technological determinist—owes much to Heidegger's hostility to the technological logos which he interpreted as a falling away from the basic insights of the pre-Socratics, a process which began centuries before technology itself achieved its domination over nature and man. In *One-dimensional Man*,⁴ Marcuse openly appropriates a passage from Heidegger's *Holzwege* to attack the "technological a priori.")

Still, it would be a grave error to dismiss Marcuse as an existentialist decked out in Marxist trappings, as have some of his critics on the left. Whatever his indebtedness to Heidegger, he has never abandoned his belief in the necessity of rational theory. At no time has he succumbed to an anti-intellectual web of experience. Indeed, among his most devastating critiques is an attack on the pro-Nazi political philosopher Carl Schmitt's anti-normative political existentialism.⁵ (There is, of course, no necessary connection between the philosophical positions collectively known as Existentialist and their political counterpart, although in the sad case of Heidegger, his Nazi sympathies cannot be totally dissociated from his philosophy.) If there is a leftist parallel to Schmitt and his decisionism, it can be found in those who would collapse theory into an unmediated *praxis*. The most recent manifestation of this basically anarchistic position is the so-called "Weatherman" faction of the SDS. Although Marcuse has always warned against the complete separation of theory and *praxis*, at no time has he advocated action as sufficient in itself. The goal may be the unity of thought and action, but at this moment in historical time, their relationship is necessarily problematical. To declare their unity as already existing is to fall prey to ideology. It is only as a utopian hope that the coordination of self-creating action and rational theory should be understood in Marcuse's work.

If one element of his utopian vision is a stress on radical *praxis* as authentic behavior, which can perhaps be derived from his connection with Heidegger, there is another, more important strain. Here his distance from existentialism of all types is plainly evident. This is especially clear when compared with the position taken by Sartre in one of the classic existentialist texts, *Being and Nothingness*. The relevant issue here is the possibility of the reconciliation of opposites which anyone who works within a Hegelian framework must confront. In *Being and Nothingness*, the dialectic of opposing forces remains inevitably truncated; the redeeming power of synthesis is ultimately denied as a possible end to the historical process. The *pour-soi* and *en-soi*, Sartre's variation on the theme of subject and object, cannot be reconciled. "Conflict," he writes, "is the

original meaning of being-for-others."⁶ The familiar aphorism from *No Exit* makes the same point: "L'Enfer, c'est les autres." Here it might be added, Marcuse's former colleagues at the *Institut für Sozialforschung*, Horkheimer and Adorno, reluctantly reach similar conclusions in their later work. *Negative Dialektik*, Adorno's last great work, stresses non-identity and the importance of negation as the last refuge of freedom. "The totality," he wrote elsewhere, "is the untrue." And in the 1960's, Horkheimer has returned to an early interest in Schopenhauer and his pessimistic denial that the world can be made rational.

Marcuse, on the other hand, disagrees both with the gloomy reduction of man to a "useless passion" in *Being and Nothingness* and with the stress on the non-identity of subject and object in the work of the other leading figures of the Frankfurt School. So often taken to task for his "pessimism," he maintains a belief in all his work that true reconciliation, however frustrated in the false harmony of contemporary society, is indeed a possibility. This is not to say, of course, that he believes the synthesis has already been achieved, as Hegelians of the right have always assumed. Firmly grounded in the Marxist tradition as he is, Marcuse is quick to point out that social conditions, behind the facade of one-dimensionality, are still fundamentally contradictory and antagonistic. Class conflict may not be the form in which contradiction now manifests itself, but no universal class has emerged in which all antagonisms have been dialectically resolved. Integration, as he has used it, doesn't mean true harmony. On the other hand, he does believe that for the first time, pre-conditions do exist, created paradoxically by the technology whose other effects he so dislikes, which make the prospects for reconciliation favorable. With the end of scarcity, so runs the familiar argument from *Eros and Civilization*, man's need to repress himself for the sake of productive work is no longer binding. Utopian possibilities are no longer chimerical.

What then does Marcuse mean by reconciliation? What is this true harmony he so fervently seeks? Here more than anywhere else, he reveals his roots in the German Idealist tradition. One might even venture the observation that he has succumbed to the lure of Greece and its alleged cultural serenity which had such an enormous influence on German philosophy during its classical period, as E.M. Butler has shown in her masterful *The Tyranny of Greece over Germany*. The image of the Greeks which was so powerful was not that of a nation of tragedy writers, but rather that of a people in a state of pre-alienated wholeness which Winckelmann introduced to the German mind in the 18th century.

In his essay on "Philosophy and Critical Theory," first appearing in the *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung* in 1937, Marcuse wrote:⁷

"Under the name of reason it (philosophy) conceived the idea of an authentic Being in which all significant antitheses (of subject and object, essence and appearance, thought and being) were reconciled. Connected with this idea was the conviction that what exists is not immediately and already rational but must rather be brought to reason. . . . at its highest level, as authentic reality, the world no longer stands opposed to the rational thought of men as mere material objectivity. Rather, it is now comprehended by thought and defined as a concept (*Begriff*). That is, the external, antithetical character of material objectivity is overcome in a process through which the identity of subject and object is established as the rational, conceptual structure that is common to both."

Here then is the belief that identity between thought and being, and Marcuse clearly means being-in-the-world, social relations, can be established on the basis of a shared rationality. At no time, however, does he imply that the individual should be sacrificed to the whole in the name of an hypostatized objective rationality. In his article *On Hedonism* written for the *Zeitschrift* in 1938, he stresses the function of hedonistic philosophies in preserving the claim of personal human happiness against the demands of over-arching totalities such as the state. Here the stress on sensual gratification which was developed in his post-war work on Freud exists in embryo. Marcuse has, however, always been careful to avoid advocating simple sexual freedom as the answer to social

repression, as Wilhelm Reich on occasion did. "The bogey of the unchained voluptuary," he wrote, "Who would abandon himself only to his sensual wants is rooted in the separation of intellectual from material productive forces and the separation of the labor process from the process of consumption. Overcoming this separation belongs to the pre-conditions of freedom."⁸ The end of the dichotomy between internalized, spiritualized cultural and material, sensual activity in the "real" world is thus part of his utopian vision. The stress here on reconciling production and consumption foreshadows his later use of Schiller's "play drive" in *Eros and Civilization*. Art and technology must ultimately converge; the logos of gratification must be joined with a technology freed from its project of domination.

The driving impetus in Marcuse's thinking towards harmony is further demonstrated in his treatment of time. In *Eros and Civilization*, he stresses the function of memory, of "re-membering" that which is asunder, as a vehicle of liberation. To forget is to forgive the injustices of the past. "From the myth of Orpheus to the novel of Proust," he argues, "happiness and freedom have been linked with the idea of the recapture of time . . . remembrance alone provides the joy without anxiety over its passing and thus gives it an otherwise impossible duration. Time loses its power when remembrance redeems the past."⁹ And in his later essay, "Die Idee des Fortschritts im Licht der Psychoanalyse," he more explicitly outlines a utopian idea of temporality. "Time would no longer appear as linear, as an eternal line or eternally ascending curve, but as a circle, a return, as last thought by Nietzsche as the Eternity of Joy."¹⁰

There is more than a little of the tyranny of Greece, or at least the Greek idea of cyclical time, in all of this, not to mention the influence of one of Marcuse's colleagues at the *Institut für Sozialforschung*, Walter Benjamin. In his "Theses on the Philosophy of History,"¹¹ Benjamin developed the ideal of "Jetztzeit" (Nowtime) as a mystical explosion in the continuum of history, a kind of Messianic time qualitatively different from the empty, linear, unfulfilled temporal experience of ordinary men. Marcuse has always been fond of quoting Benjamin's observation that in 1848, the revolutionaries of Paris shot at public clocks to make time stop. The implications of this way of thinking would seem blatantly eschatological. But Marcuse, when questioned on this point, has denied any eschatological intentions. History will go on, he has said, short of a nuclear disaster.

And yet, it would go on in a way very different from the way in which it has been experienced until now. What will be particularly absent is conflict, strife, striving, in short, all the things which have characterized Western history for millennia. In his own words, Marcuse desires the "pacification of existence." Gratification and sensual receptivity are the traits of his new aestheticism. Unlike Marx, or at least the nature Marx, Marcuse believes labor can be abolished. Because Marx was more pessimistic on this point, he never believed that the complete identity of the production and consumption processes could be achieved. Indeed, Marx did not even fully accept the Hegelian notion of identity of subject and object to which Marcuse seems to have returned.¹²

The only place in his writings where Marcuse displays similar caution is in his critique of Norman O. Brown whose mysticism demands the total negation of the *principium individuationis*. ". . . Eros lives in the division and boundary between subject and object, man and nature," he admonished Brown, ". . . the unity of subject and object is a hallmark of absolute idealism; however, even Hegel retained the tension between the two, the distinction."¹³ Elsewhere, Marcuse supports an identity theory which, although demanding the preservation of the individual, is scarcely less utopian than Brown's. It is not insignificant that Ernst Bloch, whose animistic belief in the resurrection of a new natural subject marks him as a leading identity theorist, embraced Marcuse at a conference in Yugoslavia in 1968 and welcomed him back to the ranks of the utopian optimists of the 1920's. Indeed, it would be tempting to say that Marcuse has surrendered to what Freud called the "Nirvana Principle," the yearning for the end of tension that is life, if Marcuse were not so sure that life without tension is a possibility.^{13a}

These then are the two strains in Marcuse's vision of the liberated society. First, the stress on radical action, on the deed, on self-creation as the only mode of authentic being. And second, the unity of opposites, the true harmony of pacified existence, the end of conflict and contradiction. The one theme is basically active, one might even say Promethean, to use Marx's own favorite metaphor, the other rather more passive. Orphic in the sense Marcuse interprets Orpheus in *Eros and Civilization*: as the singer of joy and fulfillment. And both, he has cogently argued, are denied and frustrated in the contemporary world of repressive capitalism and authoritarian socialism.

Whether or not the two strains are compatible is a problem Marcuse doesn't seem to have worked out in any detail. It might be said that radical *praxis* is merely the means to achieve the revolutionary breakthrough leading to the pacification of existence. This doesn't work, however, because of Marcuse's insistence that self-creating action is the only truly authentic mode of being. Another possible solution would be to divide him into an "early" and a "late" Marcuse, as is sometimes done with Marx, with the result that a Heideggerian Marcuse is somehow supplanted by a Hegelianized one under the influence of Horkheimer and the *Institut*. Besides being too schematic, this solution fails to do justice to the mixture of both strains in his work. It seems perhaps best to leave this problem by saying that Marcuse, like so many other thinkers of stature, has unresolved tensions in his thought. As to be expected, the political implications which can be drawn from these conflicting tendencies are no simpler. It is to these that we now turn.

In his treatment of Heidegger's concept of authentic existence, Marcuse was critical of the abstract, undialectical quality of his teacher's idea of history. Not everyone, he argues, was in the position to perform the radical acts constituting authentic behavior. At this stage in man's development, Marcuse claimed, only the proletariat is the true actor on the historical stage because of its crucial role in the production process. To ignore the importance of class differences would be to retreat into Idealism. Heidegger's indifference to the real course of history was not unrelated to the *Völkisch* ideology of the national *Gemeinschaft* transcending social contradictions.

Since 1928, much of course has happened to emasculate the revolutionary potential of the working class, especially in the America to which Marcuse fled in 1934. To the consternation of those who still romanticize the proletariat, he was among the first to face the implications of its integration. Although he has recently seen evidence of cracks in the one-dimensionality of the system in student protest and the rumblings of what Marx would have dismissed as *Lumpenproletariat*, at no time has he mistaken these forces for a new proletariat or a new historical subject. As a result, he has been the frequent target of other theorists on the left who see the stirring of new "negative" forces in society such as the alienated "New working-class" of white collar workers and technicians. Whoever may be right, it is important to note that Marcuse has always identified the doers of the authentic deed with a specific historical group. To ignore the historical element in his "existentialist" stress on *praxis* is thus to falsify his analysis. Although Marcuse has often been accused of anarchism—such disparate thinkers as Hans Heinz Holz and George Lichtheim have leveled this charge against him¹⁴—and indeed there is an anarchistic element in his work in the healthy sense of distrusting rigid organizations, it would be a grave error to interpret him as an advocate of indiscriminate activism or political decisionism. That wing of the student movement which takes his name as justification for such activity is misapplying his teachings, at least insofar as they neglect his stress on present historical possibilities.

And yet, a persistent understanding of Marcuse on just this level does exist. If the so-called existentialist element in his utopian vision ought not to be interpreted as a justification for the indeterminate negation of the system, what of the other central theme in his work, the yearning for harmony and reconciliation of dialectical contradictions? Here the implications are far more problematical. In his analysis of Marcuse's aesthetics,¹⁵ Herbert Read has argued that the achievement of a rational society would not end the need for art, as Marcuse has implied. If in our own irrational

society art provides *une promesse de bonheur*, a promise of unfulfilled happiness, as Marcuse has argued, there is no necessary reason to suppose that a new society, however rational, would satisfy all of men's needs or end all his fears. Above all, the mystery of death and the arbitrariness of suffering would make human existence a continuing subject for the aesthetic imagination. The eternal return is forever bisected by the linear time of mortal men who are born and must ultimately die.

If Marcuse is too quick to assume art would be *aufgehoben* in a rational society, so too, and this is a vitally important point, is he overly hasty in assuming politics would be overcome in a grand synthesis of differences. The vaunted American system of pluralistic politics may indeed be a mask for manipulation and special interests, as he has always argued, yet pluralism as such is the very essence of politics. The belief that political conflict is an epiphenomenon of economic and social contradictions is a fallacy which ought finally to be laid to rest. What the Czechs were trying in part to say, before they lost the chance to say anything at all a year ago, was that politics in the sense of readjusting priorities and working through the competition for power doesn't end when an economy is socialized. Furthermore, the expectation that internal tension would end when the entire world becomes socialist is a hope which drowned in the waters of the Ussuri River last year.

Thus, in positing a utopia of identity in which all contradictions are overcome, Marcuse displays that basic hostility to politics which has been the curse of too many German thinkers for too many years. Its effects spill over into the only type of political action he sanctions today: the Great Refusal, a complete rejection of the mechanics of political change presented by the system. Although in large measure a response to the sadly true observation that the system all too often fails to do what it promises, it is also a reflection of his more basic rejection of politics as such. The inevitable result of this attitude, if apolitical quietism is to be avoided, is what the French call *une politique du pire* based on the apocalyptic hope that out of total chaos will come total change. Metapolitics rather than true political activity becomes the only authentic mode of revolutionary behavior. In the end, it is perhaps all reducible to that "aestheticization" of politics against which Walter Benjamin so earnestly warned.¹⁶ Paradoxically, the radical optimism of Marcuse's utopian vision is the dialectical counterpart of the resignation about the possibilities for change within or growing out of the system which has earned him so much abuse from liberals and the orthodox left.

It is thus ironic that the existentialist strain in Marcuse's thinking, which is sometimes cited as the source of his anarchistic impulses, is less influential in promoting anti-political politics than is the Idealist strain. It is almost as if Marcuse had forgotten his tempering of the ahistorical element in Heidegger's thinking in his belief that the metapolitical utopia is just around the corner. Reifying the status quo and rejecting any medium of real change except the sudden and total collapse of the system is to jump out of history. It is no accident that Marcuse has taken more and more in his recent works to quoting that other great defector from the mundane course of history, Friedrich Nietzsche.

Perhaps the most unhistorical element in his work is the notion that the abolition of labor and its replacement by play, in Schiller's sense of unrepressed sensuousness reconciled with the "order of freedom," would be the hallmark of the new age. The end of scarcity, a task which is by no means as easily accomplished as he believes, is a thin reed on which to base the end of social, political, and psychological contradictions. Here, curiously, Marcuse shows himself both beyond Marx and beholden to him. He transcends Marx's relatively cautious stance, as mentioned before, by arguing that labor can indeed be abolished. Yet, by giving so much weight to that abolition, he reveals his indebtedness to Marx's conviction that labor is the basic human life activity. Play, it might be argued, is really the same conceptual axis as labor, if at the other end.

Marcuse's interpretation of Hegel is itself colored by his acceptance of the Marxist centrality of labor. In *Reason and Revolution*, he wrote: "The concept of labor is not peripheral in Hegel's system, but is the central notion through which he conceives the

development of society.”¹⁷ What Marcuse was perhaps forgetting in his desire to demonstrate the closeness of Marx and Hegel has recently been shown by the most gifted second-generation student of the Frankfurt School, Jürgen Habermas. Labor, Habermas has argued in his article “Arbeit und Interaktion,”¹⁸ was not the only category of self-creation in Hegel’s thinking. An alternative mode existed in symbolically mediated interaction, i.e. language and expressive gestures, which at least in his early work, Hegel did not see as identical with the dialectic of labor. To Marcuse, however, Hegel was saying that “Language . . . makes it possible for an individual to take a conscious position *against* his fellows and to assert his needs and desires against those of the other individuals. The resulting antagonisms are integrated through the process of labor, which also becomes the decisive force for the development of culture.”¹⁹ Thus, in Marcuse’s thinking, the problems of symbolic interaction are contained within the larger framework of the dialectic of labor and the production process. This permits him to give so much emphasis to the utopian possibilities liberated by the abolition of human toil. What he therefore neglects to note is, as Habermas has put it, “Freedom from hunger and toil doesn’t necessarily converge with freedom from slavery and degradation, because an automatically developmental connection between labor and interaction doesn’t exist.”²⁰

The link between Marcuse’s hostility towards politics and his neglect of the problem of symbolic interaction should not be missed. As Hannah Arendt,²¹ among others, has so often pointed out, speech and political *praxis* are inseparable. The abolition of labor, even if it were as easily attained as Marcuse thinks it is, would therefore not put an end to all contradictions. Symbolic interaction and the politics with which it is so intimately tied would continue to express the sedimented antagonisms of the past. The question of nationalism, for example, is likely to frustrate hopes for a reconciliation of particular and universal interests in the future as it frustrated expectations of an international proletariat in the past. And, of course at the center of the national question is the irreducible fact of linguistic differences. This is a reality which Marcuse’s utopianism fails to acknowledge, thus allowing him to maintain an implicit faith in the possibility of a Benjamin-like “explosion in the continuum of history.” The political imperative which follows from all of this is the cul-de-sac of apocalyptic metapolitics which is really no politics at all.

Footnotes

1. *Marcuse: Cet Inconnu, La Nef* 36 (Jan-March, 1969).
- 1.a. Herbert Marcuse, *An Essay on Liberation* (Boston, 1969), p. 22.
2. See for example, Marcuse. “Beiträge zu einer Phanemologie des Historischen Materialismus,” *Philosophische Hefte*, I, I (1928).
3. For a discussion of his problem see Alfred Schmidt, “Existential-Ontologie und historischer Materialismus bei Herbert Marcuse,” *Antworten auf Herbert Marcuse*, ed. Jürgen Habermas (Frankfurt a.M., 1968).
4. Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man* (Boston, 1964), p. 153-4.
5. Marcuse, “The Struggle Against Liberalism in the Totalitarian View of the State,” *Negations*, trans., Jeremy J. Shapiro, (Boston, 1968), p. 31-42.
6. Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, trans., Hazel Barnes (New York, 1956), p. 364.
7. Marcuse, *Negations*, p. 135-6.
8. Marcuse, *Negations*, p. 198.
9. Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization*, (New York, 1955), p. 213.
10. Marcuse, *Psychoanalyse und Politik* (Frankfurt a.M., 1968), p. 50.
11. Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations*, trans. Harry Zohn (New York, 1968), p. 263.
12. For a discussion of this problem in Marx, see Alfred Schmidt, *Der Begriff der Natur in der Lehre von Marx* (Frankfurt a.M., 1962).
13. Marcuse, *Negations*, p. 238.
- 13.a. In *Eros and Civilization* (p. 214-5), he writes: “The death instinct operates under the Nirvana principle: it tends toward that state of ‘constant gratification’ where no tension is felt. . . . If the instinct’s basic objective is not the termination of life but of pain—the absence of tension—then paradoxically, in terms of the instinct, the

- conflict between life and death is the more reduced, the closer life approximates the state of gratification. . . . As suffering and want recede, the Nirvana principle may become reconciled with the reality principle. The unconscious attraction that draws the instincts back to an 'earlier state' would be effectively counteracted by the desirability of the attained state of life."
14. Hans Heinz Holz, *Utopie und Anarchismus* (Cologne, 1968); George Lichtheim, "From Marx to Hegel: Reflections on Georg Lukacs, T.W. Adorno, and Herbert Marcuse," *Triquarterly*, 12 (Spring, 1968).
 15. Herbert Read, "Rational Society and Irrational Art," *The Critical Spirit*, ed. Kurt Wolff and Barrington Moore, Jr. (Boston, 1967).
 16. Benjamin, *Illuminations*, p. 244.
 17. Marcuse, *Reason and Revolution* (Boston, 1966), p. 78.
 18. Habermas, *Technik und Wissenschaft als "Ideologie"* (Frankfurt a.M., 1968).
 19. Marcuse, *Reason and Revolution* (Boston, 1966), p. 75.
 20. Habermas, p. 46.
 21. Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago, 1958), p. 155-61.

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NOTES ON MARCUSE AND THE MOVEMENT

by Paul Breines

It's ironic that the 1969 Socialist Scholars Conference should be presenting a panel on the importance and impact of Marcuse's work. Ironic because Marcuse's work played a prominent role in the 1966 and 1967 Conferences (and outside as well!) while today large and growing portions of the Left, including the New Left, are in theory and practice proclaiming either the obsolescence or the reactionary character of Marcuse and his ideas. In '66 he was to have appeared along with Isaac Deutscher in the discussion of "socialist man." The confrontation between classicist and modernist Marxism never came off: Marcuse was unable to attend and his absence was only partially filled by Shane Mage's synthesis of the early Marx and the early Leary on the one hand, and Marcuse's letter to the conference on the other. In his two page note he outlined what he considered the new needs of critical theory and action within the historical developments that had outmoded both the traditional reformist and revolutionary Marxist perspectives on socialist revolution. He referred to the explosive character of the linkage of politics and sexuality within the youth revolt in the advanced capitalist countries and to the dialectically connected repressive and liberatory implications of developed technology as two of the new and central objects of theory and practice. Pissed off by the letter and its author's absence, few would then have predicted the subsequent developments: the planetary detonation of student revolt and youth culture as original revolutionary formations, and Marcuse's rapid rise to international Guru status. Symbolic expression of this was presented at the 1967 SSC in the panel on the Hippies and the New Left at which Marcuse made an unannounced appearance; his brief remarks on the prospects for a new union of cultural and political-economic revolution were mirrored in the audience as a fundamental division on those two lines, two still very disunited conceptions of revolution.

Now, in 1969, we gather to examine the importance and limitations of Marcuse's work and it seems necessary to begin by taking account of the very wierd circumstances surrounding and shaping this effort. Regarding the "situation of Marcuse-ism" there are two broad aspects: on the one hand, a neat proof of Marcuse's theses on "one dimensionality" and the total alienation of daily life is the process of one dimensionalization his own work has undergone. As his friend, Walter Benjamin, noted over twenty years ago: the bourgeois production and publication apparatus can assimilate and even propogate an astonishing number of revolutionary themes without thereby endangering its own basis or the basis of the class that controls it. In Marcuse's case the details are well enough known: he is reviewed and interviewed (hardly a European newspaper or periodical made it through 1967-68 without a few grains of Marcusenalia; recently a silly interview in a French paper was translated into German and put out as a silly book), photographed and monographed (in the bunch of books and dissertations soon to appear), translated and red-baited, deified and reified. Quantity becomes quality: here as elsewhere in the modern political-economy, the law of impoverished abundance is operative. A Marcuse carnival has for some time been in full swing and we ought to be conscious that this panel is but one small menagerie in the whole show.

This article is a shorter version of an essay that will appear in a book by Paul Breines called *Critical Interruptions* (Herder and Herder 1970)

Two elements need to be added to this. The "repressive celebration" of Marcuse is not at all peculiar to him. The pseudo-event is a constitutive moment in the impacted structure of organized passivity, de-politicization, and frenetic consumption that dominates contemporary life. And it should be clear that both Marcuse's work and the New Left (not to speak of the Hippies, youth culture, etc.) are at every point subject to the forces of reification and commodification against which they revolt in the first place. Secondly, though I'm not prepared to go into it here, some thought and action ought to be directed at the possible underlying dialectic of this development, this repressive celebration and integration of revolt. The fact that Marcuse, the New Left, Black Power, youth culture, etc. quickly become popular fads, marketable trinkets to be bought and contemplated by an utterly bored populous, may also be part of the dissolution of established patterns and mechanisms. For example, it seems clear now that "bourgeois ideology" can no longer draw on capitalism as an economic system for social values; i.e., capitalism itself no longer generates meaningful values out of itself and "bourgeois ideology" increasingly turns precisely to the anti-capitalist revolt to get what it needs. This is of course a restatement of Walter Benjamin's point cited earlier, but to it is now added the need to see the limits to pure and total assimilation, and the need to practically insure the bursting of those limits.

The second circumstantial, yet determining aspect of the present discussion is more immediately pressing: namely, this panel occurs in the midst of a deep and pervasive freak-out and crisis within the movement for whom Marcuse's work has apparently been so important. A hundred sectarian flowers have suddenly bloomed; despair, confusion, and anxiety are wide-spread; repression is heavier than before. Specifically, these new developments are also defined by Murray Bookchin in his exemplary action entitled "Listen, Marxist!," as a return of all the old shit from the '30s. One symptom, and it is perhaps a small one, is the New Left's recent very clear tendency to reject Marcuse's work. (I should be clear though necessarily crude about my underlying assumptions at this point: I think that any radical who rejects Marcuse's work is a moron and not a radical. I also think that Marcuse's work is not a "line," or a *Weltanschauung*. It is a critique—of advanced capitalism and of the radical movement within advanced capitalism—and its purpose is exactly to be superseded by radical theory and action. But supercession—along lines proposed here by Ron Aronson and Stanley Aronowitz—and rejection refer to completely opposite processes.) Some cases in point: following the French uprising in May, 1968, the media predictably undertook an inane study to prove the Marcusean origins of the *enragés*, whose graffiti and slogans did actually appear to leap from Marcuse's books. The point of this nonsense is the point of all outside agitator theories: to suppress the inside agitator, to hide the common origin of both Marcuse's thought and the real revolt in the society based on programmed alienation at home and programmed destruction abroad. But in the midst of this Guru-mythology and bugaboo folklore (joined, by the way, by Pravda and the PCF as well as the liberal and right-wing press) comments such as the following were forthcoming: Pierre Frank of the 4th International, summarized the results of a mass meeting in Paris in mid-May where a consensus was reached that the student revolt could be no more than part of the struggle for socialism and that the key force in this struggle was the industrial proletariat. He added: "no remarks of a Marcusean or similar type were listened to." (See Frank's essay in *The New Revolutionaries*, T. Ali, ed., New York, 1969). It's irrelevant that this comment may be mere sectarian wish-think, for it accurately summarizes the main thrust of the great bulk of New Left meetings in the U.S. during the past year or more. Another case: it was no surprise that PL came forth with "proof" that Marcuse is a CIA agent and that the function of his books and recent travels has been to aid the international ruling class in suppressing revolt wherever it arises. That this charge is a ludicrous twist to the orthodox Marxist view of the "role of the individual in history," does not make it less despicable. And it might be discounted nevertheless were it not for the fact that many "New Lefties" have been flocking to PL and the fact that with the sole exception of Bookchin's pamphlet not a single Left or New Left publication has to my knowledge attacked both the charges and the mentality that would make them. I don't know if this silence means that the movement *en masse* believes the charges, but I do think that the charges themselves are no more or less than a

psychotic spin-off from an emerging consensus around the idea that the supposedly meta-political, utopian, "personal liberation," "anti-working class" stage in the movement's development—with Marcuse being taken as a key symbol of this stage—must be exorcized.

The New Left—a drastically imperfect experiment, a "great refusal" which has yet to discover and nurture a coherent critical theory and sustaining liberatory forms of organization—is presently alienating itself into its own opposite, expiating but not superseding its past. From an incoherent, yet experimental and open "new left" perspective, the movement has jumped into the theoretical and practical pseudo-coherence of Marxism-Leninism. Iconoclasts have transformed themselves into iconists; "working class," "proletarian internationalism," "seizure of state power," and other totems have reappeared with the same function they possessed decades ago: to abstractly resolve real contradictions. The inadequacies of concepts and organizational strategies like "participatory democracy," and "let the people decide" are myriad but overcoming these moments (moments which in deformed form nevertheless expressed some of the most vital and essential elements of the movement) by a full flip into Leninist or Leninized notions of the vanguard party, not only implies a flip from anti-authoritarian to authoritarian politics but also leaves the original dilemma untouched and untouchable by reducing a problem of social life and social consciousness (or false consciousness) to an administrative-organizational problem. Likewise, the shortcomings of the new left's infamous "politics of the unpolitical" are evident, if not crystal clear. Yet the movement's focus on alienation and reification, commodity fetishism, the triviality and *ennui* of everyday life, the repressive character of everyday language and of the homogenized environment—in short, the new left as a refusal, by men and women desperate for life, to be transformed into things—was neither the gratuitous peccadillo of a bunch of rich, white kids nor a flight from "the real economic and political contradictions of capitalism." The so-called politics of the unpolitical was in fact the correct perception that nothing in advanced capitalism is unpolitical; that the relations between "base" and "superstructure" are not as they were in Marx's time nor as they were thirty years ago; and that a "new politics," which at every point lived and experienced the liberation and dis-alienation it sought as the aim of revolution, had to be invented. This thrust had the great value of pointing toward a *total* critique of modern capitalism, one which grasps the system as a whole, and thus does not lag behind the system itself. Negatively, it had the merit of lifting the New Left well beyond the practical and theoretical economism of the "Old Left."

Apparently the pressure for coherence, combined with the movement's happy anti-intellectualism on the one hand, and a whole series of "objective" dilemmas on the other, was too great to bear. At the moment the New Left is in a state of implosion and self-consumption. Unfortunately, the main expressions of this crisis—the mass of sterile dogmas that pass for revolutionary theory and strategy—are viewed by many in the movement as the appearance of pubic hairs, signs of a new maturity, signs of a departure from the infantile stage. I think this is bullshit. When, for example, SDS recently expelled PL at the National Convention it did so by pointing at two specific political positions upheld by PL which were in basic contradiction to the positions held by SDS—the NLF and the Panthers. Not a word about PL as a repository of reified Marxism-Leninism, and authoritarian organization, a recapitulation of the prevailing repressive morals, but alot of junk about PL as "objectively counter-revolutionary," racist, etc. This opens the way to one of the most dangerous mechanisms there is in radical politics: when the critique of the "quality of life" is dropped or suppressed, and when the critique of the sociological-psychological quality of regressive tendencies within the movement is dropped, so is the possibility of a genuine self-critique of the quality of the movement as a whole. And the point here is not simply that in the process the New Left fails to dialectically overcome its own past but worse, it is wiping out a movement of the future. A final and small irony: these developments coincide with the

publication of Marcuse's *An Essay on Liberation*, a little book which remains true to the movement's polymorphously perverse infancy—i.e., that which must be preserved if it is ever to be overcome—while the young movement embraces a repressive and pseudo-maturity, many of its numbers happily changing themselves, in Aragon's phrase, into "fellators of the useful, masturbators of necessity."

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Intellectuals in the Debsian Socialist Party

by Paul Buhle

"Hereafter we shall have to suffer the lawless manifestations of this *rationalistic craziness* which claims to drive the unforeseen from history and chance from the world, which would dissipate obscurity from everything and reduce everything to intelligible and clear concepts; and which proposes to impose upon the universe, always tormented by desire for the irrational, the laws of formal science." Hubert Lagardelle, *International Socialist Review*, 1905.

"The radicals of today are only a vanguard before the immense multitude which is all-powerful and uncertain and which ignorance may render maleficent. Ignorance is a chasm which lurks treacherously in the path of the beauty of the apostles. Liebknecht was killed by the German people. . . . [I]t is the duty of those who understand . . . to achieve the revolution in *men's minds*." Henri Barbusse, *Socialist Review*, 1920.

"Writing Socialist books has spoiled more promising American Socialists than drink, and each has claimed its share." Frank Bohn, *New York Call*, 1909

"Socialist Intellectuals" in the Debsian movement were at all times a rare commodity, if by "Socialist" is meant a person who has an understanding of Marxism as a philosophical, historical and economic system, and by "Intellectual" is meant a person who makes an original contribution of any kind, probing social contradictions to understand Capitalism and the forces of its potential negation. In fact, Debsian Socialists were rarely so particular about their definitions. For them "Socialist" meant ordinarily no more than one who favored a cooperative order and who could construe some sense in which he saw the necessity of "Class Struggle." And an "Intellectual"—usually a term of approbation—was for them a paid writer of almost any kind. By the latter definition, the "Socialist Intellectual" was a popular writer or theoretician, usually of middle-class background and possessing some formal education. Such "Socialist Intellectuals" joined the Socialist Party in considerable numbers during its times of greatest popularity, and played a role out of proportion to their actual size.

Unfortunately, no fully clear differentiation can be made between the "Socialist Intellectuals" of the two definitions. The limits of this study force me to restrict my intellectual history to the former, the few writers actually involved in weighty intellectual work. But since the Party membership as a whole lumped the two together, and indeed most theoreticians were also practicing popularists, the latter's role in the Party must also be considered.

As theoreticians, American Socialist Intellectuals reflected in their own work the immaturity of their movement and its lack of a firm class basis. What "Marxism" existed in the first decade of the Party's history (coinciding almost exactly with the first decade of the twentieth century) was almost wholly a direct implantation of German Social-Democratic thought with its strong bias toward natural science and evolutionary theories. The most notable theoretical work in these years was, not surprisingly, the translation and publication of various European Socialist classics. But after 1910, a certain kind of maturity was achieved: native, semi-Marxist Socialist writers began to

Revision of Paper originally presented to the Socialist Scholars Conference, September, 1969.

complete their historical and social studies; and numbers of the most perceptive intellectuals, shaken by the Party's internal turbulence and the rise of a militant industrial proletariat, strove anxiously for a new *stage* of theory. The impact of the Russian Revolution and the intensive suppression of Socialist periodicals completed what the American war entry had begun, the decimation of the ranks of potential Socialist intellectuals of stature. Yet however meager the half-developed intellectuals' influences upon their contemporaries or upon later generations, their struggles for an American Marxism retain their significance. And it is to the future of those struggles that this essay is dedicated.



Robert Rives LaMonte, one of the outstanding socialist intellectuals, named two types of intellectuals he had known in the *fin de siecle* radical movement: the "Americanizers," whose interest in Marx was virtually non-existent and who were only a half-step from the ideas of Henry George and Edward Bellamy; and the textualists, who carried *Capital* around like a freethinkers' Bible and who remained hidden in the immigrant ghettos of America's great cities, little concerned about the nation's realities.¹ The first group was most articulately represented by the self-conscious intellectuals who gathered in various sorts of utopian and reformist organizations from the Nationalist Clubs of the late 1880's to the municipal leagues of the 1890's. A tongue-in-cheek account of the New York Social Reform Club's officers in 1898-99 conveys well the peculiar atmosphere:

The former president, Mr. Crosby, used to say emphatically, thinking probably of the "class struggle," and "social revolution" and the tactics and tone of the (Marxist Socialist Labor Party): "No, I am not a socialist;" and then, fixing his eyes with a faraway look upon the ceiling he would reflect upon "the brotherhood of Man," and "Equality before God," and "Love Your Neighbor As Yourself," and "Thy Kingdom Come," and would murmur dreamily: "Why, yes, I *am* a Socialist; really, of course, we all are." Mr. Crosby's successor, Mr. Spahr, was at all intents and purposes a Fabian Socialist, but he was too modest to confess it, and used blushinglly to disclaim the honor when it was thrust upon him.²

Here, and in the reform-minded publications like the *American Fabian*, the *Christian Socialist* and the less explicitly socialist *Arena*, a kind of predecessor of Progressivism was mixed with other radical strains. Other non-Marxist proto-Socialist tendencies were discernable in trade union newspapers, transformed Populist journals, and the sporadic publications of the stumbling utopian colonies.

Among the textualists, Daniel DeLeon was considered the most orthodox Marxist leader. His party's publication, the *People*, was thought to be the most erudite and stolid of American English-language Marxist newspapers. Various non-Marxist strains continued to exist and display themselves within the SLP of the 1890's. But DeLeon and his lieutenants made every effort to purge from Socialism the wage-conscious reformists of the craft unions and the sentimental dilettantes of middle-class reform movements. Ironically, the *People's* explanations of American events, such as the cause of America's entry into the Philippines and Cuba, was more crude than that of the reformists, for "Marxism" was taken by friends and foes alike to be a super-determinism which pictured the Ruling Class as conspiring to construct even the details of social life. Moreover, the "orthodoxy" of DeLeon and the *People* consisted largely in DeLeon's repetition and explanation of the most "scientific" aspects of German Marxism. DeLeon significantly found his favorite classic text in the highly scientized *Anti-Duehring*, and often referred to his system of thought as the "Marx-Morgan" complex, granting equality of significance to the American anthropologist Lewis Henry Morgan who had sought to characterize certain universal stages of human development.³

Thus the quality of English-language Marxist thought in America of the 1890's was very low indeed. Certain prominent intellectual figures of the next decade had begun their public work by editing, or writing for, the variety of local Socialist sheets which had appeared. But in the first historical instance, "Orthodox Marxism" had been commonly taken to mean dogmatic insistence upon rote learning from text, and by implication entirely sectarian practice. On the other side of the ledger, "Socialists" who had no solicitude for Marx and Marxism found a welcome place in the Social Democratic Party, the lineal antecedent of the Socialist Party. The heterogeneity of the evolving mass Socialist movement meant that the American counterparts of the British Fabians, of the German parliamentarians and revisionists, and even of the French syndicalists could find a home within the same organization.

Debsian Socialist Intellectuals

An event of signal importance for would-be Marxist intellectuals of the U.S. was the founding of the *International Socialist Review* in 1900. Its owner, Charles H. Kerr, was the most notable entrepreneur of educational purposes in American radical history, and while his monthly journal served as a gathering point for social theory, his book-publishing firm made available some of the finest European literature including three volumes of *Capital*, Labriola's brilliant *Essays On the Materialist Conception of History*, Dietzgen's *Positive Outcome of Philosophy* LaFargue's whimsical *Right To Be Lazy*, and dozens of minor texts by notable continental authors from Emile Vandervelde to Francisco Ferrer.

The editor of the *International Socialist Review* from 1900 to 1908, the years of its least popularity and greatest theoretical astuteness, was A.M. Simons. More than any other single American Socialist thinker, Simons attempted to discuss in the pages of the *ISR* and in his books the peculiar problems of American history and the enduring significance of rural social institutions. His background in rural Wisconsin, and his college education under Richard T. Ely, led him to enrich Marxism with the theories of Frederick Jackson Turner and his own empirical studies of rural economic conditions. His wife, May Wood Simons, sought in the journal to validate Marxism by favorable comparison to contemporary currents of academic thought, like the economic interpretations of history by Achille Loria and the American E.R.A. Seligman. And Simons himself made every effort to bring off the *ISR* as a relevant and distinguished journal by professional standards, through his careful editing, his voluminous translation of foreign authors, and the editorial and book reviews which he largely wrote himself. Meanwhile, out of his independent work came *The American Farmer* (1903) and *Social Forces in American History* (1911), groundbreaking studies for the American Left which despite their occasional crudeness of interpretation were significant steps toward the economic interpretation of American history by Charles A. Beard and other Progressive historians in later years.⁴

Simons was initially a rabid Leftist in the factional line-up of the Socialist Party. But as he turned toward the American Federation of Labor and hopes for a labor party after 1906, he found a political co-thinker in a primary writer for the *ISR*, Ernest Untermann. In every other way the two seemed opposites: Untermann was a generation older, born in 1869, and as an immigrant from Germany whose abstract thoughts remained in the homeland, was often apparently oblivious to his physical surroundings. But Untermann was a natural contributor to the *ISR*, for he was at all odds the most learned of the American Socialist intellectuals. His reflections on Marx's evolution showed his familiarity with Kant, Hegel, and Marx's untranslated *Heilige Familie*. Moreover, his writings for Simons' *ISR* were marked by the calm confidence of his stature. He redressed the best-known American theorist, Louis B. Boudin, as if the latter were an unschooled and undisciplined intellectual adolescent. And he had the temerity to comment upon his equality with Kautsky, the Marxian theorist at the time whose reputation most nearly approximated Lenin's a generation later. Commenting upon an attack which compared Kautsky's work to his own, Untermann admitted that the two

may well have differed on the particular question since he and Kautsky "had never discussed it"—but Untermann admitted he would not be surprised if Kautsky were simply wrong, since each of the two had his own specialties!⁵

The source of Untermann's purported difference with Kautsky was of central interest to the former: a theory of cognition, elaborated by Joseph Dietzgen twenty years before. Dietzgen, a German tanner, was reputed by Marx and Engels to have discovered dialectical materialistic logic independently. By the turn of the century, however, his work had been relegated to a minor position in Marxism by Kautsky, Plekhanov and other widely-known intellectuals. The primary defenders of Dietzgen and his theories were by then Untermann and Dietzgen's son Eugene, who had emigrated to America for several years and returned to Germany. In the *ISR*, Untermann and an intellectual disciple, Marcus Hitch, related the significance of the Dietzgen volumes that had been translated into English (by Untermann) and published by the Kerr Company. By explaining that one "thinks" with not only the brain but as part of a response by the whole body to given phenomena, Dietzgen had, according to his proponents, resolved the tension between the old materialism which was merely mechanistic, and the idealism that middle- and upper-class people seemed to bring into the Socialist movement. By implication, this theory explained the splits in the labor and Socialist movements as essentially unnecessary, due to differences in perception of political necessities. Untermann's faith in proletarian victory through gradual reform measures caused him to believe that factionalism in the American movement was spurious, while his model, the German Social Democracy, could contain Bernstein and Kautsky in the same party.

Untermann became the only American intellectual to enter seriously the theoretical debates raging in Europe. In 1908 he published a short work on dialectics in German; in 1911, he published a book of more than seven hundred pages, a history of modern philosophy which, appropriately, ended with Joseph Dietzgen's accomplishments. Untermann later explained that neither of these had ever been rendered into English because there was simply no market for such serious study in America. Therefore, he wrote popularized books for Charles H. Kerr, stressing above all the inter-relationship of modern science and socialism.⁶ His emphasis, like that of Kautsky, was upon the mechanical, imperturbable processes in history, and on the scientifically explanatory nature of Marxist theory. As he commented in *The World's Revolutions*:

The Marxian method of historical research enables me to reconstruct the entire life processes of each period. . . . Given the geographical conditions, the available instruments of labor, and the prevailing mode of using them, the stage is set and the leading human actors easily fall into their places and play their economic and political roles according to their class interests.⁷

Ultimately, such a detached pose ill-fitted Untermann for an active role in Socialist politics despite his energetic participation in electoral activities during the early period. His influence after 1910 sharply declined, and he was notable primarily for his elaboration of a municipal governing program for Milwaukee and his theoretical exposition of the exclusionist position towards immigration that the reform Socialists and the AF of L chose. His purely theoretical work had shown the unacceptability of rigorous Marxism for the early Socialist movement, and his influence lay primarily with selected individuals (including Jack London) to whom he was able to explain the fundamentals of Marxist teaching.

The only other Debsian Socialist intellectual to be published and accepted abroad was Louis B. Boudin, the frequent butt of Untermann's remarks. Boudin, like many of the Intellectuals, was trained as a lawyer, and many years after his active career as a Socialist wrote a two-volume history of constitutional law in America. Like Untermann and most of the best known theoreticians, he was an assiduous reader of Kautsky and of the Germany press generally. By the turn of the century his writings had already begun to appear in local Socialist newspapers, directed at explaining to an English-language working class audience Marxian theory generally and economic theory particularly. In

the *ISR* he was more energetic and was apparently allowed more difficult exposition than Untermann, and he wrote frequently with an aim at clarifying the systematic and consistent qualities of the Marxian world view.

The high point of Boudin's elaboration was *The Theoretical System of Karl Marx*, published in 1907 by Charles H. Kerr and later translated in Germany where it received wide praise in the Socialist press. Unquestionably, the book was a breakthrough for American Socialist theory, for it was the first text to expound in English, with the difficulty the subject deserved, the complexities of a crisis-theory about American Capitalism. As Paul Sweezy has noted, *The Theoretical System of Karl Marx* has the distinction of being "the best refutation of Boehm-Bawerk" rendered originally in English, and the best treatment of waste under Capitalism until Baran and Sweezy's own *Monopoly Capital*. Untermann observed at the time of the book's publication that Boudin was most adept at replying to the attacks of the foremost Marx-critics like Boehm-Bawerk, but his work was badly handicapped in actual Marxian exegesis and even more in the elaboration and extension of Marxian economic theory to comprehend the ultimate cause of Capitalist breakdown. Boudin's theory of underconsumption and overproduction, while foreshadowing the later efforts by Lewis Corey (in the 1930's) and Baran-Sweezy (in the 1960's) to explain economic stagnation through Capitalism's failure to realize profits, was both outside orthodox Marxian theory and frequently muddled by Boudin's own confusion.⁸ In any case, the book sank in America almost without a ripple, lending justification to Ernest Untermann's effort in his *Marxian Economics* to offer a far more crude but also more understandable version of basic theory.

The intellectuals who proved to be the most significant after 1910 were those who, unlike Untermann and Boudin, had neither crystalized their ideas through reading the German Socialist publications nor been as disappointed in the lack of reception for their Marxist erudition. Robert Rives LaMonte, for instance, revealed from the beginning of his intellectual career a fondness for French sources, a partiality which finally turned into a deep antipathy for everything German. In 1900 he translated Gabriel Deville's rather simplistic tract on the "capture" of the State machinery, *The State and Socialism*, and Enrico Ferri's *Socialism and Modern Science*, a work which exceeded the crudity of German Marxist thought in its dependence upon scientific theories of evolution as proof of the materialist conception of history.

LaMonte set out his theoretical tasks in a way quite different from Boudin and Untermann. In a typical article, "The Biogenetic Law," he used autobiographical data from his own life to suggest that all Socialists had to lose their bourgeois "tadpole tails" before becoming mature Marxian thinkers. He repeatedly returned to a romanticism which stressed the need for "heart" in the Socialist movement, especially among agitators who needed a "blazing passion" of "love for the proletariat" if they were to make headway. And he even suggested a Christian Millenarism wholly antithetical to the militant naturalism of the German Socialists.⁹ As Simons commented upon LaMonte's best known book *Socialism Positive and Negative*, LaMonte's ideas were less daring and advanced than he himself believed, and wanted others to believe.¹⁰

LaMonte's peculiar character, then, forced him away from the plodding German-American skilled workers' movement; and his romanticism made ethical reformism even more repugnant to his beliefs. He was thrown logically in the direction of the only force which could bring immediate, totally transforming revolution: the industrial proletariat.

Similarly William English Walling, also independently wealthy, found German Socialism less than satisfactory for his intellectual needs. Walling was a relative latecomer to the actual ranks of the Party, and he spent most of his time before 1910 writing for muckraking non-Socialist journals on the corruption of Capitalism and Capitalist politics. Yet as early as 1905, Walling offered a hint as to the shape of his future as a Socialist intellectual in praising without reservation Thorstein Veblen's work as "more revolutionary than . . . Marx's." For Walling, the founder of modern Socialism had only

“Power.” For

centuries

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Now

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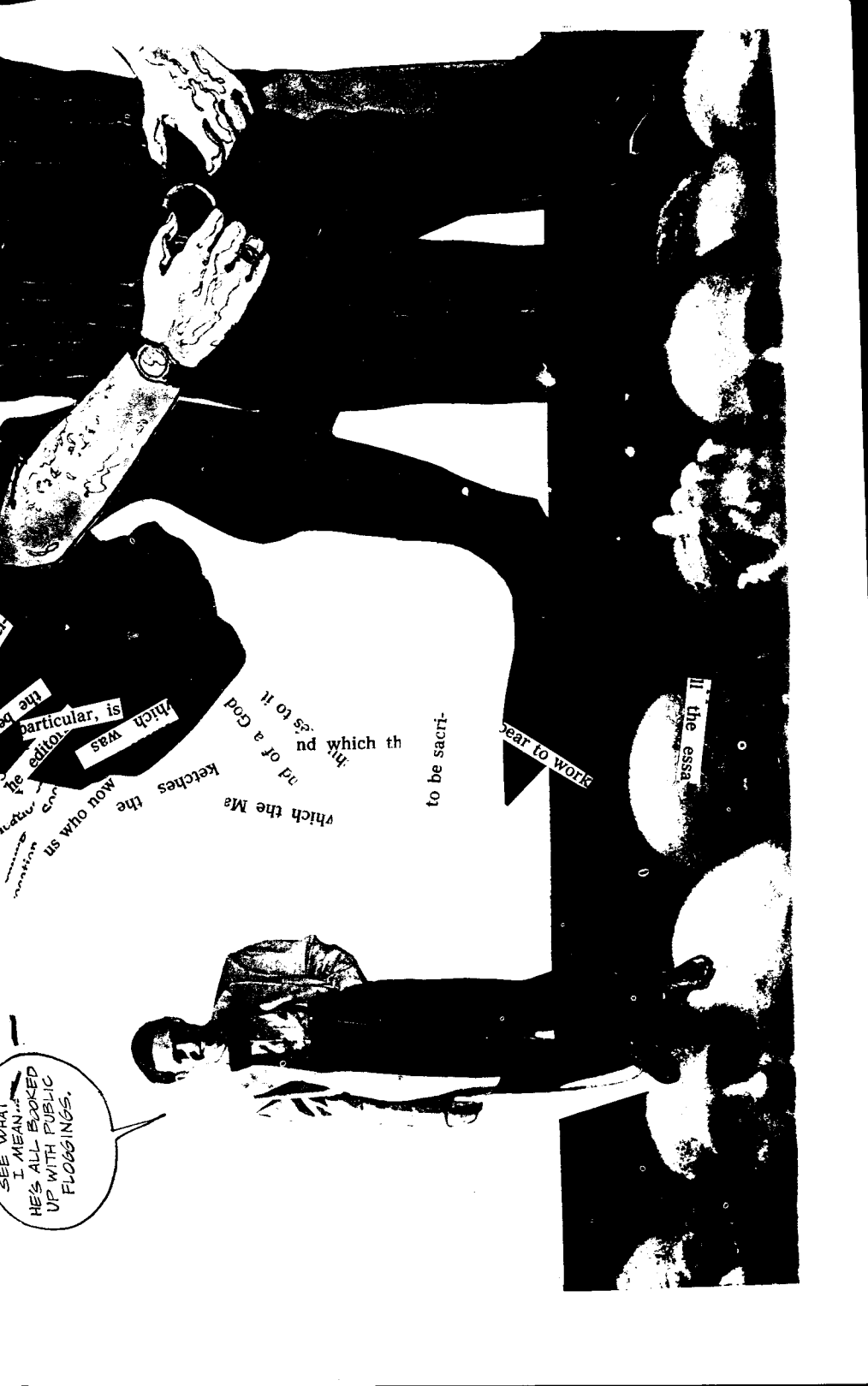
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revealed the economic outline of classes, while Veblen had shown the psychological counterparts to the physical character of the class struggle. Moreover, Veblen had perceived that the objective development of Capitalism's economic structure, rather than the virility of Socialist propaganda (as many Socialists believed), would determine the future potential of a social transformation. And most important for Walling, Veblen had cast off "Hegelian logic," the incubus of "any absolute and therefore unscientific social philosophy." Veblen's work was for Walling

entirely Twentieth century science, viewing society as all the rest of the universe . . . in a perpetual condition of evolution, and forsaking all accepted terms and formulas as unfit for scientific use.

For Walling even more than for Simons, it was the peculiar character of American society which needed emphasis within the Socialist movement. In the United States, dogmas were bound to fail because "practical life dominates America as it never dominated any other nation in the world before."¹¹

The intellectual who could claim the lengthiest attempt to create an American Marxist movement, Austin Lewis, was ironically the critical figure in later years for stressing to younger intellectuals the similarities between American and European social movements. Lewis' memory went all the way back to the 1880's, when educated American Socialists read the British historian Thomas Buckle along with Marx and Engels for their edification in the economic interpretation of history. He had seen the terribly slow emergence of Marxism, the acceptance of material causes in history only by the turn of the century in the leading universities. Therefore, he hailed even a work as prejudiced against Socialism as E.R.A. Seligman's *Economic Interpretation of History*, for it helped to make the acceptance of Marxian methodology possible among the intelligentsia.¹²

Despite his hopes for the spread of Marxism in the colleges, Lewis was far from pleased at the entrance of middle- and upper-class elements into the Socialist movements. From his reading of European events, he gathered that the struggle between "idealistic and poetically minded people" and the proletarians, for the control of the Socialist parties, was increasing everywhere in intensity and bitterness. The first generation of educated proletarians had returned to their class in every nation through the Socialist movement, but had found their parties controlled by petty-bourgeois elements whose concept of Socialism was limited to vacuous visions of the "Cooperative Commonwealth" of the future. The educated proletarians and their less lucky brothers then joined hands to struggle in the only way possible, the practical day-to-day class warfare with the government and the social system, as their parents and grandparents had struggled against the individual capitalist with strikes and boycotts.¹³

Lewis therefore conceived of the coming struggle within the proletariat, and within the Socialist Party, better than any other intellectual in the early period. There was nothing inherently Marxist in his perception, and indeed it was shared in a dim way by many rank-and-file participants in the I.W.W. Similarly, Walling had indicated already that his perception of American society would be predominately non-Marxist, grounded instead in the organizational analysis of Veblen. Characteristically the real perceptions of Lewis and Walling were, however, shared by neither of the experts of Marxian exegesis and apologia, Untermann and Boudin. And the American Socialist writer whose empirical studies were far superior to all others, A.M. Simons, was by 1910 retreating from the implications of the unskilled workers' struggles, the industrial transformation of America, and fundamental Marxian methodology alike.

Such were the contradictions of the leading American Socialist intellectuals in the early Debsian period. Not only were these differences unexplored in the Party as a whole, one might say they were scarcely noticed—tucked away, as they were, in a journal with less circulation than some small-town Socialist daily newspapers. Yet, given the genuinely significant nature of the disagreements, the apathy toward theory was itself significant. In a short run, such disinterest in deeper historical, class and cultural

questions was a certain source of Socialism's vigorous infancy. The price, in the long run, was heavy indeed.

"Intellectuals" versus the Party

The American Socialist movement as a whole, of course, regarded the intellectuals' necessary labors as far more than the construction of a coherent social theory. By the standards of the rank-and-filer, Boudin, Untermann and Walling were minor lights indeed compared to the major muckrakers like Charles Edward Russell, John Spargo (author of *The Bitter Cry of Children*) and Upton Sinclair, and genuinely popular authors like William J. Ghent, (whose *Industrial Feudalism* was a reformist's best-seller). Hundreds of minor writers and editors were recruited, often from the ranks of the middle-class or skilled workers, to produce the local propaganda sheets which James Weinstein has rightly apotheosized in his *Decline of American Socialism*. Yet insofar as the more urban and middle-class minded Socialist writers were successful, the Party itself was bound to be structurally transformed. And the influx of "Parlor Socialists," as the non-proletarians were called, rankled not only Socialist theoreticians and the increasingly self-defined "Left" of the Party, but especially the non-revolutionary skilled workers in Party ranks who felt their ideas were being subverted and their predominance pushed aside.

By 1912, the "Parlor Socialists" and the reformist skilled workers' movements were to recognize in each other a common opposition to the rise of syndicalistic socialism among the unskilled radical workers and their allies, ultimately obviating their other internal differences. But before the gap was bridged, there were two primary obstacles. First, there was an ideological difference of significant proportions: while skilled workers tended to accept what was called "Economic Determinism," the popularists and their middleclass audience constantly strove to reconcile "idealism" with "materialism," publishing specious and seemingly endless articles on the subject. Second, many older Socialists felt that the "Parlor Socialists" arrogated to themselves an undue weight in Party decision-making. In 1909, James F. Carey, the first Socialist in America to have been elected to local public office and a leader of the reformistic Massachusetts Socialist movement, offered an amendment to Party internal mechanisms to the effect that the occupations of all candidates to the National Executive Committee be listed, so that "if the working class are [sic] to emancipate themselves," they be given the opportunity. Carey hoped that a "working man or woman" could be thus added to an NEC dominated by the most articulate and leisured Socialists: "two lawyers, two professional writers, one millionaire (so referred to), one minister [and] one businessman." While Carey's resolution passed, another by him to restrict the NEC to wage-earners was soundly defeated.¹⁴

As political tensions grew within the Party, they were refracted through the complex growth of bitterness around the "Parlor Socialists" and the "Intellectuals." In the Fall of 1909 the editor of the *New York Call* answered a stock question from a reader about post-revolutionary society, noting that intellectuals and manual workers *as such* would disappear. Unexpectedly, some months later, William J. Ghent wrote to the *Call* that the very notion of abolishing Intellectuals as a category brought him "repulsion and disgust" as a reactionary measure in an increasingly complex society. "Possibly," Ghent reflected, "an occasional slum proletarian might look eagerly to this, but no one to whom civilization has any meaning" could possibly favor it. The opposition to Specialization, Ghent later added, indicated within the Party a "savage antipathy" shared with the proletariat at large "to learning and to educated men." John Spargo, the Party's leading popularist and the author of a widely read, sentimental biography of Marx, amplified Ghent's comments into a charge against the Socialist Party program: all this "anti-intellectualism" was a smokescreen to deflect the Party from reaching the workingclass "family-man" and the respectable middle-classes, a ruse to justify the recruitment of the "street rabble."

The reply to these charges, by the Socialist writers Henry Slobodin and Frank Bohn, was an attempt to isolate them into a personal phenomenon, to defuse their

political implications. Slobodin charged that the problem was not with the Party but with the Intellectuals like Spargo and Ghent, whose "superciliousness" and "arrogance" was reflected in their standing among "pink-tea radicals" and their indifference to the "work-a-day activity of the Common Socialists." These Intellectuals, Slobodin charged, were "jiners," always joining reform societies of various types but growingly disinterested in the Socialist Party proper. Bohn, a professor at Columbia but a former full-time agitator in the Socialist movement, amplified Slobodin's charges. The purported "anti-intellectualism" was, for him, only a rejection of literary and intellectual *pretensions*, the retention of snobbery toward workers among middle and upper-class converts to Socialism. The Intellectuals of this sort, Bohn charged plausibly, were outdated: they were taught Natural Rights philosophy in the colleges at a time when modern industry had transformed the class forces of society beyond the stage of nineteenth century ideals. Bohn himself, he intimated, had had to learn from Socialist rank-and-filers, who comprehended *from their lives* "the democracy taught by a hundred machines in a row or a thousand men in a modern mine," and whose reading of Socialist literature often proved vastly superior to the Educated Man's study of dated texts.¹⁵

Yet true as Bohn's charges were, they did not plumb the depths of the controversy. By 1909, the Socialist Party had reached a kind of stasis: its propaganda machine grew increasingly larger, but the Party failed to recruit in numbers just that urban, skilled proletariat (save in certain areas affected by special ethnic conditions) which its theory predicted would be foremost in its ranks. Rather the Party grew from an amalgam of discontented social elements, including "Parlor Socialists" in the cities and farmers or small property-owning elements in the rural areas. The Industrial Workers of the World, initially hoped by some moderate Socialists to *supplement* the labors of the AF of L, failed to gain impetus for a mass movement by 1910 and turned its fury upon the privileged skilled workers' unions.

There were, therefore, certain fundamental choices to be made, choices which could not be brushed aside by Bohn or Slobodin's pleas for unity and more effective propaganda campaigns. The Party could move more clearly towards the middle class and the skilled proletariat by "stamping out" of Party ranks, in the words of Spargo, the demagogic and avowedly incendiary proletarian elements which sympathized with the I.W.W. and decried "slowshulism." In so doing, it could move toward a reconciliation with the American Federation of Labor, as A.M. Simons wished by 1909, or it could become a "purely" political-educational and electoral-body, subtracting its energies from labor's economic struggles. Or it could follow another path, with very different consequences: it could seek out and mobilize itself behind the evolving industrial proletariat, politically through stress upon militant educational campaigns, economically through the support of labor's struggles in the I.W.W. and elsewhere.¹⁶

The years from 1910 to 1915, constantly increased the gravity of the choices to be made. On the one hand, the Socialists made impressive electoral gains in 1910 and 1912, in Wisconsin alone electing a city government and the first Socialist representative to Congress. The Party captured in the 1912 elections six percent of the national vote, over 800,000 ballots in spite of Socialist votes frequently being "counted out" on the local level. On the other hand, the same period brought the greatest moments of expectation for the I.W.W., above all the Lawrence, Massachusetts, textile strike which seemed to pit symbolically all the unskilled industrial laborers against the combined might of the Ruling Class. In Britain and on the Continent, masses of unskilled workers swept to industrial victories, and appeared to move to the edge of social revolution.

The Socialist Intellectuals, popularists and theorists, were no less immune than any other sector of the Party to the internal strife. Indeed, since their primary function was their exposition of political positions, they articulated and interpreted nearly every position for the constituency they hoped to represent. The bulk of the Old Socialism, the skilled workers' movements, moved lethargically to the Right, voicing their uncertainties and frustrations through newspaper editors and a few popularizing intellectuals. The "Parlor Socialists" were not only anxious but frequently articulate

oppositionists to the wave of Industrial Socialism, and nearly all the leading journalists spoke in their interest. A few of the older but many of the newer intellectuals followed a third course, in the field of journalism opened when Charles H. Kerr cashiered A.M. Simons in 1908 and set out to make the *ISR* a popular, pro-IWW, fighting Socialist magazine.

The clash at the 1912 Convention, in which a proscription of the advocacy of sabotage was voted despite heated opposition, has been pictured in traditional historical accounts as a turning point in the Socialist Party's history. As James Weinstein has indicated, the situation is far more complex.¹⁷ While the Socialist Party languished from 1912 to 1915, especially in those areas where the most trimming had been done to accommodate Socialists to potential converts from Progressivism, the reformist wing was denied the fruits of its victory in yet a more important way: the coming of the War, which almost wholly transformed the Socialist Party membership. Further, the Socialist movement had been from its birth too decentralized, too heterogeneous and too little able to exert control over its own fate for any such decisive political turn.

As in the period before 1910, the five critical years to 1915 were not notable for the Intellectuals' decisive influence. Yet they brought, in the pages of the *ISR* but above all in the *New Review*, Socialist intellectualism to its maturity, stretching the ideological potentials of the movement very far, perhaps to its limits. And they bore, already, the seeds of its decline and potential transcendence.



Mature Intellectuals: Walling and the Right

From 1911 onward, the spectre of World War loomed over the Socialists. Despite or perhaps partly because of this threat, journalistic developments within the Party occurred at a feverish rate, deeply affecting the Intellectual's status in a number of ways. The *Progressive Woman*, which had achieved a circulation of over 10,000 as the only American radical magazine at that time or since to devote itself to an autonomous Women's struggle for equality and Socialism, went bankrupt and expired. *The Coming Nation*, edited by Simons in Girard, Kansas and billed as a Socialist *Saturday Evening Post* lasted only three years. *The Daily People*, after thirteen years of political isolation, died shortly after its editor Daniel DeLeon, in 1914; and DeLeon's old enemy from the 1890's, the "One Hoss Editor" of the *Appeal to Reason* J.A. Wayland, committed suicide. The hopes for a nationwide Socialist daily press both grew and flagged as the financially sound *Milwaukee Leader* was founded and the hopelessly indebted *Chicago Daily Socialist* collapsed. The Socialist Left was, of course, enormously boosted by the transformation of the *ISR* into a popular magazine with stories, many pictures, and reports on the exciting strikes that seemed to be breaking out everywhere. *The Masses* was taken over from the moderate Socialists, and cooperationist *Piet Vlag* by a group of Bohemians, and shortly made into the most journalistically exciting magazine in the American Left. And a relatively popular theoretical journal was founded, filling in the gap left when the *ISR* changed editorial hands in 1908: the *New Review*.

Within the *NR* and to a lesser extent the *ISR*, the Left found time and space to debate some of the fundamental issues which were rising vividly to demand solutions. Unlike the *ISR*, the *New Review* had no dominating personality. The obscure Herman Simpson was the principal editor, and his name was further buried by the list of notables on the editorial board: Max Eastman, Floyd Dell, Frank Bohn, LaMonte, W.E.B. DuBois and Mary Ovington White, Boudin, Walter Lippman and the anthropologist Robert Lowie.¹⁸

Within its pages the Socialist Left appeared in its full intellectual diversity. But the most unique current was the contribution of what LaMonte called the "New Intellectuals," those Socialists who were not bound by the interpretations of the 1890's and who seemed destined to make brilliant contributions to radical literature. The main figure was William English Walling, whose major works—*Socialism As It Is*, *Larger*

Aspects of Socialism, and Progressivism and After—were being published in this period. Walling perceived and conceptually developed the notion of “State Socialism” to account for the rise of Progressivism: the next stage in social development would be the control of the means of production through an increasing State for the benefit of the petit bourgeoisie and the new, middle class of salaried employees. Socialists who practiced or theorized as if Statification were Socialism received Walling’s heaviest blows. Charlotte Perkins Gilman was attacked for urging a kind of grand conscription of Negroes in the South; HG Wells and his Fabian counterparts the Webbs, were analyzed and denounced; and more suggestively, the American “Constructive Socialists” were pictured as laboring enormously for goals that would come anyway, as an objective consequence of social developments.¹⁹

Walling received his most bitter opposition not from the Constructive Socialists, who did not deign to disagree in the *NR*’s pages, but from Robert Rives LaMonte and Walling’s prime co-thinker among the “New Intellectuals,” Walter Lippman. The occasion was, first, the publication of a chapter of Walling’s *Larger Aspects of Socialism*, entitled “The Pragmatism of Marx and Engels.” Walling’s primary thrust was his attempt to show that the “spirit” of the founders of Socialism lay above their actual theoretical practice, which had been weighted down with metaphysics. Engels’ conclusions in *Anti-Duehring*, rooted in the great biological discoveries of the time, seemed already to have discredited much of the old Hegelianism. And the advances in psychology and logic since, Walling argued, had completely deprived the old nineteenth century notions of their remaining viability. Thus the practical abolition of philosophy was at hand, and the effect of negation philosophically and practically had been itself negated by the bypassing of old social problems by new conditions and adjustments.²⁰

LaMonte responded by labelling Walling’s book “an ecstatic epic . . . in praise of Pragmatism in general and particularly of the Pragmatism formulated by Professor Dewey.” LaMonte could agree with Walling on the need for hard data, and the refusal to pull conceptions “down from the metaphysical skies.” But LaMonte could not help feeling “a danger and a serious danger in such unqualified glorifications of Pragmatism.” LaMonte was unclear in the specific nature of the danger, but he felt that Pragmatism could be tied to the Constructive Socialist movement, blinding Socialists to the reality that “many tactics that appear to ‘work’ beautifully are not founded on rock-bottom facts, and are therefore not sound in theory, and so in the long run carry us not forward but backward.” He went on to predict, perhaps prophetically for the Liberalism within and without the Socialist and Communist movements for the next half-century, that

... Pragmatism may but too rapidly be converted to the uses of those who prefer to believe in comfortable lies rather than to face disturbing truths. With equal ease it furnishes a doctrinal support to those despisers of doctrine and theory and dogma who urge us to forget a Marx they never knew and to be practical and “scientific.”²¹

At one point in the continuation of the discussion, Walter Lippman answered for Walling. He could make little sense of LaMonte’s comments, and mistakenly boiled them down to the notion that “unpragmatic theories don’t work, which is what every Pragmatist would say.” The only conclusion he drew from LaMonte was that LaMonte feared Socialism would be taken over by people who could depart long enough from Marxism to make the movement come alive. Walling scored his heaviest point, however, by reminding LaMonte that LaMonte himself had defended Pragmatism in the *New York Call*. LaMonte’s weak response was that Pragmatism could be “rightly or wrongly used, just as alcohol may be.” Thus ended the major philosophical debate in Debsian Socialism.

It remained for Lippman, in a late exchange with Walling to measure the fruit of Walling’s philosophical position. In a criticism of Walling’s last important book as a Socialist, *Progressivism and After*, Lippman saw Walling’s flaw as a *non-crisis model* for the coming of the Socialist revolution. The origins of such a static analysis, Lippman reasoned, lay in the “ideals . . . of the Middle Western American democracy, and the

underlying prejudice of the Eighteenth Century, from which the culture of the Middle West derives."²²

Lippman's comments cut Walling's theories to the quick. For despite his entirely different presuppositions about the nature of American society, Walling had come to essentially the same conclusions as the old reform Socialists in his belief that the transition to the higher order would be gradual, and would be influenced decisively by the course of the middle class.

Untermann and most of the older Socialists had retained, even after 1910, a nineteenth-century, essentially European analysis for their social predictions. For them the collapse of the Populist movement had been only one step in the erosion of the middle classes. In the meantime, the proletariat was levelling itself upward, growing in numbers, skills and confidence in its ability to govern American society. Finally, these Socialists had argued, the American political system would "catch up" with the European, with each major party representing a definite social group. Thus the Bryan Democracy, before 1912, seemed to symbolize in its decay the wail of the dying petit bourgeoisie; the Republican Party in Roosevelt and Taft seemed increasingly representative of the avaricious and arrogant American plutocracy; and the Socialist Party appeared destined to represent the working class along with other progressive social elements.

The growing vitality of the middle class, based economically upon the unexpected (from the Socialist viewpoint) upswing of Capitalist economics, came as an intolerable and ungraspable shock to the Older Socialism. While Walling looked to the aggressive Progressives for a hastening of Capitalism's rationalization, the Old Socialists could only guess that Progressivism was a guise, a deception with deeper purposes. The leading Christian Socialist of the 1890's, George Herron, looked to Teddy Roosevelt as a potential Man On Horseback, an "embodiment of man's return to the brute—a living announcement that man will again seek relief from the sickness of society in the bonds of an imposing savagery."²³ And Walling viewed Roosevelt as an authentic Radical, whose verbal indictments of individual capitalists sincerely echoed Socialist statements. While the Older Socialists tended to accept at face value Woodrow Wilson's anti-monopolistic pronouncements, and Left-Socialist Frank Bohn noted the final passing of the trappings of democratic decision-making on a national scale, Walling rejoiced in the convergence of all reform programs toward the creation of State controls and ultimately State Capitalism.²⁴

If the Old Socialists were right, then a recession would clear away the glory of reform and re-establish the conditions for a dissipating middle class. But by all signs Walling was right, and the middle class had gained a sense of reform initiative even more important than their short-term economic position. Why then, Lippman asked Walling, need a Socialist Party exist at all? Walling's answer was singularly weak, fundamentally a rationalization for Socialism as a pressure group to agitate and insist that workers get a larger portion of the ever-increasing economic pie. The conclusion, as Louis Fraina aptly noted, was in either case that Capitalism, and not an active and willful proletariat, would bring Socialism into existence. The reformists had cloaked their naive instrumentalism in Marxian language, and portrayed the creation of a State Socialism where the workers would continue to follow social discipline into the indefinite future; Walling had uncloaked his instrumentalism, and even while he pleaded his friendliness toward the IWW he offered nothing positive the working class could do but accept the discipline of the factory system and await its turn.²⁵

The New Left Wing

During the earliest years of Debsian Socialism a figure completely beyond the pale, mistrusted and despised by nearly every Socialist Party member with whom he had had contact, nearly brought American Socialism into the Twentieth Century. Daniel DeLeon had broken the back of his own Socialist Labor Party in the 1890's by his inability to tolerate those who did not agree wholly with his own views. But with the

founding of the IWW, and in the three years to 1908, he elaborated an almost entirely new set of views aimed at placing the proletariat in the center of Socialism and the political party in its secondary place to the revolutionary union. His ideas were a rather raw synthesis of others current in Europe and in the United States, but his popularization of Industrial Socialist notions made a decisive impact on the Socialist Left.²⁶

However, the tactical and strategical implications of DeLeon's hopes rested entirely upon the rapid growth of the I.W.W. into a massive union. When that promise was not fulfilled, DeLeon was thrown back on his older weaknesses, his inability like the rest of his generation to comprehend the vitality of the middle class and his willingness like the more naive Wobblies to picture the American Federation of Labor's bureaucracy as the only obstacle to the radicalization of skilled workers.

The revival of hopes for the IWW (which had long since expelled DeLeon) after 1910, with the massive strikes at McKees' Rocks, Lawrence and Paterson, fixed the attention of the Left-Socialist intellectuals upon the movement of the unskilled workers. On the other hand, the Party's proscription of the advocacy of sabotage at its 1912 Convention stirred thinkers who were growingly uneasy about Socialism's bourgeoisification into considering non-political alternatives. Among the earliest and most articulate writers on the unskilled proletariat were two foreigners who were able to exert considerable influence upon the Left between the discrediting of Kautsky and the German Socialists (for their adamant opposition to the Syndicalist movements) and the ascension of Russian Bolshevist theoreticians to the status of omnipotence.

The Dutch Left-Socialist and renowned astronomer Anton Pannekoek had written voluminously for the *ISR* since its earliest days upon a range of subjects from economics and religion to Theodore Roosevelt and the middle class. With the coming of the unskilled workers' activities, he began to elaborate the notion of "Mass Action," a term by which he sought to convey the strategically certain but tactically vague *process* that workers would follow in reaction to their fundamental living conditions, and the social perspective that they would gain in the step-by-step process. Pannekoek's ideological disciple S.J. Rutgers was a world-traveling Dutchman who spent about five years in America from 1912 to 1917, frequently writing for the *ISR* but also, and more significantly, personally impressing his ideas upon the younger left-wing intellectuals including L.C. Fraina. Judged by their literary output, neither Pannekoek nor Rutgers was as important as the American Left took them to be. Their writings usually reported rather than interpreting the movements of unskilled workers, and their interpretations frequently swept past the complexities of organization role and the limits of spontaneous struggle. Yet their influence upon these young activists who desperately sought a schema to answer their most pressing questions about current developments, in an optimistic revolutionary fashion, was undeniable—and freely admitted by Austin Lewis and Fraina.

For Fraina, the development of Industrial Socialist views had been a natural and logical course. He was born into a family of impoverished Italian immigrants in Manhattan, was essentially self-educated, and had joined and left the Socialist and Socialist Labor Parties before his twenty-first birthday. He was, despite his extreme youth, DeLeon's last and most important protege, and revealed in his eulogy to the old man in 1914 that he had retained many of his teacher's ideas. He felt that DeLeon had not been wrong in his attempt to construct a purely proletarian party and a revolutionary movement in the 1890's, only too early, and too anxious to see betrayal in those who could not agree with the sternness of his measures. DeLeon had failed to identify the unskilled workers as the sole important repository of revolutionary forces, and had so miscalculated the development of the Socialist movement when only a vital minority within a larger and more heterogeneous movement had been possible.²⁷

Fraina clearly moved beyond the limits of DeLeon's thought in his writings for the *New Review*. He shared with Walling the belief that the middle-class, especially the new middle class, was bound to grow. But he drew very different and more gloomy conclusions. For Fraina, Roosevelt's unification of Ruling Class interests, and the

distribution of stocks and bonds among the new middle class, were measures which objectively led to the galvanization of middle class forces behind the Ruling Class for the crushing of the proletariat. Fraina insisted that the limits of Capitalism had not yet been reached, that a Revolution was not around the corner but would follow only a grim period of Capitalist expansion into Imperialism.

Several years before Lenin was even mentioned in the American Left press, let alone become a Revolutionary Hero, Fraina had begun to discuss the implications of America's growingly parasitic relationships abroad. While Walling and LaMonte failed to consider the expansion of Imperialism in their optimistic perspectives, and Untermann actually initially favored the invasion of Mexico by American troops, Fraina along with Rutgers, Pannekoek and a few other *ISR* writers pointed with increasing alarm to the role of the U.S. in Latin America and the spoils likely to come from a major European war.²⁸

Austin Lewis limited his study to American conditions, but his conclusions were also intended as depictions of objectively developing class relationships, and were in a certain sense no less severe. He had attempted earlier to suggest that in the movement and the potential solidarity of working class segments ethical attitudes played no role. Now, with the experiences from the major I.W.W. strikes and the further bifurcation of skilled and unskilled workers' activities, he attempted a more grand analysis. As he explained cogently in 1913:

The machine industry rules the mass of unskilled proletarians. It drives them to work together in unison. It forces them to keep time with the industrial machine and in so doing teaches them the goose step of industrial organization, for organization by the employer is the first step to the self-organization of the employed. In this fact lies the real significance of the teachings of Marx and Engels, who showed that apart from all philosophical abstractions and ethical considerations and apart altogether from any humanitarian notions, the machine industry itself creates the brain-stuff of the revolution.

Preaching cannot put the idea into the mind of the worker. Facts themselves force him to revolt. Facts also teach him the method of revolt. This method takes more and more the form of spontaneous mass action. This is the reflex upon the mind of workers who have nothing in common and never have had anything in common except for the fact of common environment, a common subjection to the machine industry. This is the reason that the unskilled are goaded into mass action wherever the machine industry has become established.

The unskilled are in the basic industries. They really hold the strategic position, for they can hoist the whole industrial fabric into the air by abstention from work. No sentimental bonds control them.²⁹

By contrast, the skilled workers who had composed much of the Socialist movement were for the constituency of the past. Not only were they rapidly losing any strategically critical position in industry, but more importantly they were gaining access to representation in the evolving Corporate State. Already in 1915, Lewis observed that in Southern California local politicians bragged about their union status, and skilled workers aided in breaking strikes of agricultural laborers and in driving the laborers out of town.

Yet the unskilled had begun, slowly and inevitably, to arise. The abuse hurled at their strikes by orthodox Socialists proved to Lewis that the unskilled workers' struggles were already grudgingly recognized. After the McKees' Rocks struggle, possible solidarity with the skilled workers had occurred to rank-and-filers in the AF of L unions, but much more rarely to their leaders, who appeared increasingly frenzied and confused at the collapse of their positions in the wake of the modernization of industry. Rather dramatically, with a suddenness that surprised Socialists and capitalists alike, the

unskilled workers threw up massive battles across the Continent and in the U.S. over the next several years. However unsuccessful were these efforts in the short run, they would by implication transform the very essence of unionism. The individualistic mentality which affected the skilled worker at his solitary machine, and permeated the Socialist movement already distorted by petty bourgeois elements, would be utterly destroyed and replaced by a new sense of the mass and of collective activity.³⁰

The analyses of Fraina and Lewis settled uneasily with other Intellectuals, most notably LaMonte, who saw in Industrial Socialism a potential apocalypse and gate to the New Order. In 1912, LaMonte wrote an extensive apotheosis of revolutionary unionism in the *ISR*, reprinted by Charles H. Kerr as a pamphlet, entitled "The New Socialism." LaMonte viewed Socialist Industrialism in the United States and Syndicalism in Europe as having surpassed all the old forms of Socialism. While the Old Socialism dwelt on parliamentary forms and occasionally considered barricade actions, the New Socialism looked to the Class War fought daily in the shops and in its advanced form (as in America) used electoral forms purposefully as an important ideological expression and legal defense. More than ever before, LaMonte believed, peaceful revolution had become a likely possibility. Industrial Socialism had for LaMonte even resolved the old tension between Socialism and Anarchism: it was at once rigorously scientific, and at the same time capable of effecting a "moral rebirth of the workers."³¹

While LaMonte's moral imperatives were unacceptable to Fraina, Lewis, Walling and most of the other revolutionary Intellectuals, his hopes for transformation of the Socialist Party were at that time shared by nearly every Left-wing thinker. Lewis expressed most articulately the attitude that such a transformation was, indeed, inevitable. The early Socialist Party had contained not only skilled workers, but a stratum of the so-called "educated proletariat," brain workers from the middle classes who were to Lewis mostly failures at their chosen professions, a "broken minority, generally bankrupt, not only economically but intellectually as well." The Party's program in these years, as LaMonte had repeatedly stressed, was loaded with archaic Natural Rights concepts which were designed to appeal to all sorts of discontented social elements. Thus the Party found itself surfeited with "all that heterogeneous mass of discontented and dissatisfied which finds no other political expression," but which was hardly good stock for a fighting proletarian organization. The Party's decision to proscribe the advocacy of sabotage, in 1912, had been a crowning blow of opportunism, to Lewis a betrayal of the Marxian principle of proletarian self-determination and a decided return towards postures of good will and ethical goals as formulas for Party strength and growth. Yet in the years ahead, the industrial movements of the unskilled and not the machinations of conservative Socialist politicians would be determinant. The expected waves of strikes would force the Party to line up on the side of the proletariat, and unavoidably strip it of the position-seeking politicians and brainless reformers.³²

In the several years before America's entry into the World War, this perspective of "capture" of the Party by the Party was starkly realistic. Despite its leaders' intentions, the Socialist movement was gaining unskilled proletarians, foreign-speaking workers from Eastern and Southern Europe, while it failed to make headway among precisely those semi-Progressive middle-class elements the reform Socialists had hoped to recruit. Perhaps only the unfortuitous combination of the brutal government repression, the misunderstood "example" of factionalism in the Bolshevik Party, and the wild fears of the Old Socialist leaders rendered the hope, at last, impossible.



Avant Garde: Morality and Art

Robert Rives LaMonte's sense of the emerging proletarian drama was obviously related to the romanticism of the nineteenth century revolutionary movements. Yet it served to indicate the effect of the rising currents of hope and expectation among many intellectuals in American society. Other, more modern forms of the belief in a totally

transforming social revolution came within the Socialist Party as a rebellion against the aesthetic and moral attitudes of Old Socialism's majority.

By and large, Debsian Socialism reflected an archaic social vision of recapturing the best of nineteenth century family life and mores through the control of twentieth century machinery. August Bebel's *Women Under Socialism*, translated by DeLeon around the turn of the century, created a scandal for its suggestion of the family as a passing social phenomenon. Socialist speakers from the 1890's onward had avidly denied any connection between Socialism and free-love morality, picturing ruling class decadence and license as a betrayal to "true" moral attitudes.

But especially after 1910, as the Socialist movement underwent its own convulsions and the larger society was obviously in extreme flux, overt and unashamed advocacy of the movement's intervention into social relationships began to appear. One of the most important of these was Feminism. Margaret Sanger carried on a campaign in the *New York Call* in 1913-1914 for equality of sexes in marriage, and availability of birth-control services for all women. The response to her column within the Socialist movement, both positive and negative, was significantly emotion-charged. At last Sanger moved politically to an anarchist position, finding the response of Socialist officials and women Socialists discouraging. In 1914 she founded her own short-lived newspaper, *Woman Rebel*, directed expressly to working class girls.³³

Despite her limited success in the Socialist movement, Margaret Sanger and the militantly Feminist Socialist movement that flourished for a few years pointed up other tendencies within the movement, reaching beyond the narrow cultural limitations of the Old Socialism. Louis Fraina had begun in 1913-14 to write in the *New Review* on advanced poetry and painting, and when the *NR* collapsed he edited two numbers of *Modern Dance* in 1916-17. And the chief symbol of Socialist bohemianism, the *Masses*, grew rapidly after 1912 into one of the most remarkable Left periodicals ever published in this country. Sufficient accounts exist of the *Masses'* brilliant advances in journalism, its publication of painters' works, its humor, and its highly advanced layout. What has rarely been sufficiently stressed is that, unlike the *Partisan Review* attitude of disdain toward mass society and Left politics in its later years, the *Masses* was a joyfully and confidently Socialist magazine throughout its life. There was no sense of detachment from the Socialist Party and there was at all points an admiring acceptance of the lives of ordinary people, as illustrated in the semi-ironic but genuinely loving cartoons about workers' families.

And yet if the dichotomization of advanced art and advanced politics later displayed in the Communist movement had not yet materialized, neither had any clear awareness of the potentialities of art in a political movement appeared. Rather than seeking to create a revolutionary esthetic as the Surrealists were latter to do in France, Floyd Dell, Max Eastman and other *Masses* principals consciously separated the joy of Art from the difficulties of making a revolution. They retained a classical European attitude towards Art as the product of a talented elite, and thereby preserved an aura about their own self-conscious Art which was no less archaic than the utilitarian attitudes of rural Protestant Socialists. Since they were fundamentally hostile to revolutionary art, their naivete may have kept them in the Socialist movement. But the long-run price was the total collapse of the positive ideals that the *Seven Arts* and the *Masses* had seemed temporarily to pose for the synthesis of radical art and politics. The Left would gain a contrived justification in burdening itself for a half-century with self-deceptions about "proletarian art" (and later "democratic art") in the *New Masses* and elsewhere. Contemporaneously, *avant-garde* American artists would increasingly hide from politics in their foreign and native enclaves.³⁴

A similar conclusion must be made about the Socialist involvement in the sexual struggle, except that the immediate results were even more painful to the radical cause. The kind of enforced moral discipline Stalinism provided had not yet arrived, but the potentiality of an advanced Socialist effort to encompass those involved in personal struggles for sexual equality and liberated morality was simply lost. The possible linkage

of Socialism and Feminism, like the possible linkage of Socialism and advanced Art and Socialism with all of the rebellious social elements whose highly personal quests were the other side of mass revolution in advanced Capitalism, passed over the heads of the American Socialists. What was even worse, neither the leading Debsian activists nor their Communist successors comprehended what they had missed.



War Crisis

World War I was in every sense a transforming experience for the American Socialist movement. To this day, radical historians know little about the mass of proletarians swept into the Socialist movement during the War because Russian, Finnish, Yiddish and other "foreign" languages were the primary means of written and spoken communication for these proletarians within the Party. Obversely, little historical work has been done on the pattern of departure of elements from the Party: we know only that those fleeing had not been particularly indentified as the "Right," and those remaining Socialists or becoming Communists were by no means always from the "Left" of the prewar movement. Finally, there is no real way of separating the implications of vicious government repression of Socialists, particularly in the exposed rural regions, from the general disintegration of the Old Socialism, a disintegration which was only brought to its conclusion by the events of War.

Communist historians and others have attempted to indict the Party for its unwillingness to adequately oppose the War. Ironically, that is the one charge which was rarely made by the Left Socialists at the time. Rather, as Fraina explained it, the position taken by the Party was in the first instance pro-German (especially in German strongholds like Milwaukee) and later, non-class oriented. Despite the influx of foreign-language proletarians, the Socialist leaders sought to strike an essentially isolationist pose, leading hopefully to a postwar America where the Socialists would be vindicated and the movement would go forward on a more-or-less *status quo ante* basis. Perhaps for some Socialists this was merely an acceptance of Kautsky's theoretical leadership and the ambiguities of his German politics. But more likely, the primary Socialist policy was based simply on the belief that the postwar world would not be dramatically altered and Socialism could move on as if only temporarily delayed by a distraction.

Such an archaic policy was obviously not acceptable to the intellectuals "left" and "right" who had pinned their hopes on objective developments within American Society. For William English Walling, Robert Hunter, Charles Edward Russell and others, the Wilsonian Crusade for Democracy was in some ways the logical *climax* to what they had sought within the Debsian Movement: a mass movement toward Collectivism and social planning. For Left-Socialists Robert Rives LaMonte and Jack London, and for the rightward-leaning A.M. Simons, the sense of Crusade was linked with their general disappointment in what had seemed to them a mediocre organization governed by pro-German bureaucrats.

LaMonte's case is particularly instructive. In 1914 he wrote on the War after it had engulfed him in his visit to Tours, France. He felt a "pervasive sense of sadness" about the French mobilization, even as he felt that "the German army hung like an awful menace over such civilization as Capitalism had achieved." For years Socialism had been burdened internationally by the overbearing German Socialists. Now, when the latter faced a "glorious opportunity" to stop the Prussian war machine by refusing to grant financial credits, they chose to support the reactionary "Fatherland." For years, LaMonte believed, he had seen this coming. And the only consolation to be taken was in the prospective destruction of the "tyranny of the Prussian doctrinaire disciplinarians" in the Socialist movements everywhere.³⁵ The following year, as it became clear that many American Socialists would not simply disavow their German comrades' actions, LaMonte wrote a long, thoughtful article for the *NR* summing up the counterpart to his

disappointment in Internationalism. The American Socialist movement had failed to keep alive the fire of revolution burning in the hearts of its youth; through its propaganda and election activities, it had turned the eager neophytes into Natural Rights-spouting hacks. At the same time, Socialism had failed to advance in precisely those geographical areas where its theory predicted success, and made gains in some areas (particularly Oklahoma) where the machine process was most definitely not rapidly advancing.

Since Walling had shown that minor reforms would be gained by the bourgeois parties, a Socialist Party *per se* had seemed to LaMonte to have lost its *raison d'être*. What was needed now was the abandonment of the Old Socialism and a search for the seeds of revolt in the "psychology of workers who are most continuously subject to the impact and routine of the machine-process, and whenever we notice the emergence of a new mental habit, a novel point of view, an unconventional thought-process . . . [to] seize upon it, foster it, develop it. . . ."36

Two years later, in 1917, even that hope was gone. In exchange with the optimistic Fraina, LaMonte asserted that the time had come to renounce the romantic fantasies of the last years of hope, to leave at last the vision of "a proletariat made up of supermen." LaMonte had written only six years before, in 1911, "the war against industrial war is almost won . . . The day, yes, the hour of victory is at hand." In 1917, he sought the Allied armies, fully admitting their brutality toward the peoples of backward nations, but reminding Fraina that "our radical trend toward kicking, toward insubordination" had come from the Parliament at Westminster and the Bastille in France."

Now LaMonte believed, it was time to cease attempting to adapt the race to the environment of the machine-age, and begin adapting the environment to the frailties of the race, to "harness and alter the machinery of our lives as to make it possible for our race to survive under conditions so unsuited to its permanent mental habits until we can evolve a system in which we shall be more at home." Until that particular Millennium arrived, all Socialists had to join the Battle to preserve democracy. LaMonte went proudly, as a Socialist, into the Home Guard, a viciously reactionary paramilitary group in Manhattan. "Never," he believed, "was there a worthier and nobler cause for which to battle. I am proud to believe that the majority of those who have in the past voted for the Socialist party will not now be found wanting."³⁷

Some Socialists, like John Apargo and LaMonte, clung to their illusions about Wilson and the evolving Collectivism as a kind of surrogate Socialism. Others, probably most, finally came to the logical conclusion that they had no more place in a Socialist movement they denounced. LaMonte and several others continued after the War their friendliness to the pro-War A.F. of L. bureaucracy, and carried on low-level activities with that sector of the labor movement. Others, certainly most, vanished politically, leading for the most part mediocre careers on the basis of their journalistic talents. Unlike the leading intellectuals of the 1930's Left they had no university positions to fall back upon and no stimulus even to exploit their understanding of the radical movement. The double tragedy was that some, as in the case of LaMonte, had apparently been moving towards the most fruitful stages of their intellectual careers.



Beyond Debsianism: The Left

The Intellectuals swinging to the Left had an only slightly better fate. The financial collapse of the *New Review* in 1916 was one sign of their almost total weakness outside the semi-friendly shell of the Party. The *NR*'s political attitude remained heterogeneous, even on the War question, but in its last year the tone was increasingly

set by Fraina, Pannekoek and Rutgers, who issued a clarion call for a New International and Mass Action against the capitalist regimes. In its dying issues, the *New Review* endeavored to become the spokesman of the ultra-Revolutionary Dutch bulletin *Verbote*. At last, perhaps ironically, it folded into the *Masses*.

The following year the *International Socialist Review* was legally repressed, along with a variety of Socialist papers "right" and "left." A legal battle, and a brutal illegal repression "tolerated" by Justice Department and local authorities, ensued against the I.W.W. and individual radicals across the country. Meanwhile, the Bolshevik Revolution broke out, a shining hope in the worst period of gloom the American Left had to that point ever known.

Louis Fraina moved to edit a new journal, the *Class Struggle*, with Ludwig Lore and Louis B. Boudin. In the first number, the editors posed themselves against the might of Capitalism and Imperialism on the one hand, and the "opportunistic leadership" of the Party on the other. The *Class Struggle* remained throughout its short life definitely pro-Communist in its diverse contributors, including Florence Kelly, and through its openness to Socialist views of all varieties. Yet urged on by world events, it moved decisively beyond the limits of Debsian thought to a faith in the immediate revolutionary events of Europe and an ultimate dependence upon the Russian Revolution.

The leading figure of the Left was surely Fraina. Between 1917 and 1919 he wrote or edited three books, including *Revolutionary Socialism*, a fundamental statement of the left-Socialist position. At the time of its writing he, like most of the other proto-Bolshevik intellectuals, retained heavy residues of interpretation from DeLeonist theory and IWW practice, and from the "spontaneist" analyses of the Dutch Leftists. He had gained from Lenin the notion that Capitalism had entered a new *period* of development, the period of Imperialism. But he retained the theories about the mass psychology of factory workers developed earlier by Austin Lewis. He pointed to a decisive world class struggle, far closer than he had believed previously, with the New Nationalism forging the ranks of reaction among the new and old middle classes and the proletariat the sole progressive force. But he believed with Rutgers and Pannekoek that workers' organized into political forces or even into revolutionary unions was not essential before the revolutionary Moment.³⁸

And yet Fraina was in every essential prepared for entry into the Communist movement at its creation in America. He had pushed beyond the old demands of Left-Socialism around the IWW and the *ISR* by insisting upon

a complete reconstruction of the Socialist movement, of its theory and its practice . . . a new movement—comprehensive, aggressive, revolutionary, a movement adapted to the new conditions of Imperialism.

Against the pro-War LaMonte he complained that he could "understand the psychology of despair . . . because of the collapse of Socialism," but could not grasp LaMonte's failure to appreciate the events in Russia and their "tremendous influence on our hopes and fears, and on our future activity." For Fraina, the proletarian revolution in Russia marked the stage of revolutionary action in the world Socialist movement, forcing the Socialist Left of previous years to become *the* active Socialist movement in the years to come, thrusting the progress of the world proletariat so far forward that—even should the Bolsheviks lose in Russia—the stage had been prepared for the workers of all lands to "annihilate the rapacious regime of Capitalism"³⁹.

The intellectuals who followed Fraina were, for the most part, not those who had had any significance in Debsian Socialism. The best-known Communist intellectuals of the next two decades, such as Alexander Bittelman, Jay Lovestone, Bertram Wolfe and Max Shachtman, had been too young, or too involved in ethnic activities, to make any impact before the Russian Revolution.

Louis Boudin was certainly the outstanding example of the Left-Socialist who found no home in the future Communist movements. He had, indeed, never fully recovered from the lack of acceptance for *The Theoretical System of Karl Marx*, and many of his activities thereafter tended to be factional rather than theoretical in nature. His next book, *Socialism and War*, was wholly expectable, even commonplace in its archaic Internationalism. As S.J. Rutgers noted, Boudin's intellectual points "would have made a clever advocacy of the participation of Germany in a war against Russia fifty years ago," but had little relation to the development of Imperialism and the passing of the period in which Socialists could hope to deftly maneuver to aid the Capitalist underdog nations. Boudin, in short, had a confidence in the rational and scientific capture of power by Socialists which was denied on the one hand by the capitalist bloodbath and on the other by the Russian Revolution.⁴⁰



Beyond Debsianism: The Right

In the same years the Socialist Intellectuals on the Right, too, had moved beyond the perimeters of the Debsian movement. The most articulate organ of the moderates was curiously enough the *Intercollegiate Socialist*, which had been founded in 1913 without factional intent as the organ of the Intercollegiate Socialist Society—a distant but lineal predecessor to SDS. In its first several years the *IS* evolved from a mere propaganda journal aimed at convincing college men and women to join the Party or participate in its affairs, into a more general circulation radical periodical. It was chiefly notable for its heavily ethical Socialism, and its impressive list of contributors—including Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Walter Rauschenbusch, Randolph Bourne, Paul Douglas and Norman Angell—who did not ordinarily write for the Socialist press.

During the War the *IS* stuck to a general semblance of Pacifism, and proudly noted cases of brave non-registers for the draft. More important ultimately was the journal's curious ambiguity of Socialist disdain for bloodshed alongside a *New Republic*-like enthusiasm for State-directed collectivization and mobilization. The editor of the *IS*, Harry Wellington Laidler, looked specifically to the British mobilization to furnish examples of "the practicality and necessity of public ownership and operation" which would "lead one step nearer the Socialist goal." At its extreme point, this view was even ambiguous about conscription, for it seemed to offer despite its intent and its ill effects upon the working class a good argument for "conscripting" capitalist wealth after the war!⁴¹

As the War drew to a close, the British Guild Socialist Movement deeply influenced this ISS milieu which was growingly pessimistic about Socialist electoral success and yet antipathetic toward the class violence preached by the proto-Communists. One of the outstanding Ivy League Socialists, Jesse Wallace Hughs, wrote optimistically that American radicals were finally moving away from orthodox Marxism into a healthful "practical revisionism." Through Guild Socialism, she believed, the power of industrial unionism could be reunited with the Socialist political movement for a non-violent social transformation.⁴²

But such a view had little chance of acceptance in the American Left and little credibility anywhere outside college Socialist circles. By 1920, the *Intercollegiate Socialist* was renamed the *Socialist Review*, to be renamed again in the 1920's *Labor Age*. In its new forms, still edited by Laidler, it became a point of articulation for the reform-labor movement and its remaining friends in the official Socialist Left. In its ideological direction during Wartime, the *IS* had reconciled itself both to the British-American Socialist past in the Fabian activities in the 1890's, and the British-American Socialist future in the nationalization efforts of the British Labor Party and of its feeble American counterparts. As the Left moved its thoughts to Russia, the Right returned its plans and hopes to England.

CONCLUSION

The absence of Marxian theoreticians among the meager ranks of Socialist Intellectuals in America was in the first instance due to their limited value by the Socialist Movement's own assessment. One need only read through the popular *Social Democratic Herald*, for instance, to discover in the Party's propaganda backbone—the weekly newspapers which explained the need for Socialism in local terms—a simple and self-sufficient, frequently repeated group of ideas which precluded theoretical sophistication.⁴³ Even exegesis of the reputed “Bible of Socialism,” Marx's *Capital*, was deemed an unnecessary luxury. The very suggestion of an open-ended analysis which questioned the optimistic Socialist perspective was enough to raise factional hostility.

Antipathy to theory generally cut across factional and regional lines throughout the Debsian Movement. The most socially archaic sector, the subsistence farmers in the South and West, brought with them from Populism a Natural Rights-oriented set of values which were flatly contradictory to Marxism. The most forward-looking sector, the unskilled working class organizers in the I.W.W., had no use whatever for the fine points of Marxism or the theoretical rationales of the French Socialist movement. Only the urban Socialist Left showed any consistent concern for theoretical exegesis and elaboration, and then often only to provide a factional club against opponents within the Movement.

The concern of certain segments of the Left finally bore fruit, but too late and too little for the job at hand—the comprehension of a rapidly changing American social structure. When Louis Fraina was granted an interview with Lenin in 1922 in Moscow, the Bolshevik leader stressed theoretically the need for a study of Marxian philosophical questions. Earlier, Lenin himself had written a monograph on the nature of American agriculture.⁴⁴ Fraina and the young Communist movement had never shown the slightest interest in the formal study of dialectics, however, and had evidently brushed aside Fraina's own earlier concern for an understanding of the American farmer as they had brushed aside the whole of the radical, native American farm movement. Like their predecessors in the Left-Socialist movement and indeed the Socialist movement as a whole, they had not even the patience to learn from Untermann's studies or from Simons' empirical research, let alone the interest to expand and extend them.

Such a disinterest boded particularly ill for the 1920's. The Left theorists had devoted their interest almost single-mindedly to an unskilled proletariat which had not only failed to move forward to immediate revolution but seemed generally quiescent against the combined government-business drive to destroy the labor movement. Some revolutionary thinkers had otherwise occupied themselves with analysis of the new cultural and aesthetic developments of American society. But the Stalinization of cultural-artistic matters, added to the American Communists' naive hostility to everything non-proletarian, meant that not even continuity with earlier advances would be retained. The analyses by Walling and others of the evolving Corporate State were lost in a return to the crude dichotomies of the early Socialist movement between “proletarians” and the rest of society. Indeed, in many respects the theoretical level of the American Left in the early 1930's remained far below that reached by 1917.

Two ironic products of this discontinuity are especially worth mention. Fraina, Walling and the rest of the New Left Wing were most certain on the question of State Socialism. The rationalization of an economy under State control, they insisted, was *not* real Socialism, which could be achieved only through workers' councils under rank-and-file control. Yet a half-century later, both “Socialism” and “Communism” were taken by their proponents as by the general public in America to be essentially *State* propositions with no necessary relationship to a self-governing working class. A similar and closely linked irony was the strenuous effort by Left theoreticians to show an objective basis for the hostile divisions within the working class. Austin Lewis and Louis Fraina pointed to an underclass which—much like black workers today—was in a general sense exploited by the working class as a whole, and performed the worst jobs in

industry for the least money. The later Communist analysis of "sellout leadership" in the American Federation of Labor wholly obviated Lewis' perception and returned the analysis to the level of abstract characterization of the working class offered by the Milwaukee Social-Democrats. Even in today's Left, those who agree on the most seemingly abstract questions of international Communism abuse each other bitterly over theoretical matters whose analogues were perfectly clear three generations before.

Of course it is unlikely that a more virile Intellectual life in the Socialist movement would have decisively changed the course of modern American radicalism. American Socialist Intellectuals like the rest of their radical countrymen have been carried along on the tides of historical development, able to rationalize but rarely to genuinely understand their exact position and prospects. The failure of the Socialist Intellectuals was finally an indication of the failure of the Western Left as a whole to come to grips with the economic and social viability of Capitalism, and to face that viability with the fewest possible illusions.

FOOTNOTES

1. Robert Rives LaMonte, "The New Intellectuals," *New Review*, II (January, 1914), 45-53.
2. [John Preston], "Editorial," *American Fabian*, November, 1898.
3. See Olive M. Johnson, *Daniel DeLeon* (New York: New York Labor News Co., 1923), 16, for a comment on DeLeon's gravitation from Morgan to Marx.
4. An excellent source on A.M. Simons' intellectual career is Robert S. Huston, "A.M. Simons and the American Socialist Movement," unpublished PhD thesis, University of Wisconsin, 1965. Especially as an intellectual history, Huston's work far surpasses the only published biography of Simons, Kent and Getchen Kreuter, *An American Dissenter: The Life of Algie Martin Simons* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1969). One important source for a discussion of Simons' significance as an historical writer is Charles Sellers' "Andrew Jackson versus the Historians," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, XLIV (March, 1958), pp615-34, in which Simons' key role in reinterpreting the Jacksonian period is thrown into relief.
5. Ernest Untermann, "An Endless Task," *International Socialist Review* (hereafter referred to as ISR), VII (November, 1906), 285.
6. See the Untermann Papers, Wisconsin State Historical Society, Madison, Wisconsin, particularly letters to Marius Hansome, January 19, 1935; and to Dan O'Truessdell, July 25, 1950; and two unpublished manuscripts, "The Tragedy of Marxism" (c. 1947) and "Lenin's Maggot" (c. 1939).
7. Untermann, *The World's Revolutions* (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr, 1906), 172.
8. Paul Sweezy, "The Influence of Marxian Economics On American Thought and Practice," in Donald Egbert and Stow Persons, eds., *Socialism and American Life*, I (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1952), 463.
9. "The Biogenetic Law," *ISR*, VII (June, 1907), 731-35; "The Methods of Propaganda," *ibid.*, VIII (February, 1908), 456-65.
10. A.M. Simons, "Book Reviews," *ibid.*, VIII (August, 1907), 122-23.
11. W.E. Walling, "An American Socialism," *ibid.*, V (April, 1905), 577-84.
12. Austin Lewis, "The Economic Interpretation of History and the Practical Socialist Movement," *ibid.*, VII (April, 1907), 609-10; "A Reply to Professor Seligman," *ibid.*, III (May, 1903), 667.
13. "The Economic Interpretation," *op. cit.*, 619-21.
14. James F. Carey, *Official Bulletin of the Socialist Party*, February, 1909; Jesse Wallace Hughan, *American Socialism of the Present Day* (New York: John Lane, 1912), 224-25.
15. See William J. Ghent, in the "Letters" Column, along with the editor's reply, in *New York Call*, December 4, 1909; rank-and-file letters attacking "Intellectuals" by "A.Nobody," in November 12 *Call* and A. Rodman, December 15; also two lengthy discussions by Party intellectuals against a favored position for intellectuals, in "Comment and Discussion" (a regular, Sunday feature), Frank Bohn, December 12 and Henry Slobodin, November 28; also a defense of recruiting professional and middle class elements into the Party, and attacks upon the attackers of intellectuals, by Rose Pastor Stokes, November 17, John Spargo, November 14, and A.M. Simons,

- December 6; and the editor's comments on November 21, 30, December 4 and 5, 1909, *Call*.
16. For the debate on these vital questions, see for instance the exchange of views between Walling, who on December 11, 1909 in the *Call* made public a confidential letter to him from Simons; and the replies in "Comment and Discussion" by Spargo, November 19, 1909; and William J. Ghent, November 18, 1909 *Call*.
 17. James Weinstein, "Socialism's Hidden Heritage: Scholarship Reinforces Political Mythology," *Studies On the Left*, III (Fall, 1963); and his *Decline of Socialism in America, 1912-1925* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1967).
 18. Notable contributors to the *NR* included Charles A. Beard, the famous scientist Charles Proteus Steinmetz, and Anatole France.
 19. See for instance Walling's "A 'Socialist' Advocate of Plutocracy," *NR*, II (August, 1914), or his "State Socialism and the Individual," *ibid.*, I (May and June, 1913).
 20. Walling, "The Pragmatism of Marx and Engels," *ibid.*, I (April 5 and 12, 1913), 434-49 and 464-60.
 21. Robert Rives LaMonte, "The Apotheosis of Pragmatism," *ibid.*, I (July 1913), 664.
 22. Walter Lippman, "LaMonte, Walling and Pragmatism," *ibid.*, I (November, 1913), 907-09; "Walling's 'Progressivism and After'," *ibid.*, II (June, 1914), 348; and LaMonte, "Pragmatism Once More," *ibid.*, I (November, 1913), 909-11.
 23. George D. Herron, "Theodore Roosevelt," *ISR*, X (June, 1910), 1057.
 24. Walling, *Progressivism and After* (New York: MacMillan, 1913), 6.
 25. Louis C. Fraina, *Revolutionary Socialism* (New York: The Communist Press, 1918), 86 and 112, n.6.
 26. See especially the comments by anarcho-syndicalists and replies by DeLeon, reprinted from the *People* into DeLeon, *As To Politics* (New York: New York Labor News, 1956).
 27. Fraina, "Daniel DeLeon," *New Review*, II (July, 1914), 390-99.
 28. See especially Fraina, "The Monroe Doctrine," *ibid.*, I (November, 1913), 903-06; and "Mexico and Foreign Capital," *ibid.*, III (July 15, 1915), 121-22.
 29. Lewis, "The Organization of the Unskilled," *ibid.*, I, (December, 1913), 961.
 30. "Solidarity: Merely a Word?" *ibid.*, III (July 15, 1915), 125-28; and "The Mechanics of Solidarity," *ibid.*, III (December 1 and 15, 1915), 332-35 and 357-59.
 31. LaMonte, "The New Socialism," *ISR*, XIII (Sept., 1912), 205-16.
 32. Lewis, *The Militant Proletariat* (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr, 1911), 35, 183; "A Positive Platform," *ibid.*, XII (April, 1912), 664-65.
 33. For details on the extremely important Feminist movement within the Socialist Party and Margaret Sanger's evolution, see Mari Jo Buhle's "Women and the Socialist Party," *Radical America*, IV (February, 1970).
 34. My interpretation has been heavily influenced by Martha Sonnenberg, "Masses Old and New," *ibid.*, III (November, 1969); James B. Gilbert, *Writers and Partisans* (New York: Wiley & Sons, 1969); and Irene Fokakis, "Alfred Steiglitz, Artist," unpublished Master's thesis, University of Wisconsin, 1968.
 35. Robert Rives LaMonte, "The War: Personal Impressions," *NR*, II (November, 1914), 636-39.
 36. LaMonte "Where and Whither," *ibid.*, III (March, 1915), 121-27.
 38. See Fraina, *Revolutionary Socialism*, 3, 136, 65-66, 191, 197.
 39. Fraina, "Socialists and the War," *Class Struggle*, I (July-August, 1917), 99; "Proletarian Revolution in Russia," *ibid.*, II (January-February, 1918), 67.
 40. Boudin, "The Passing of the Nation," *ibid.*, I (November-December, 1917), 15-34.
 41. Harry Laidler, "The European War and Socialism," *Intercollegiate Socialist*, III (October, 1914), 3-11.
 42. Jesse W. Hughan, "Guildsmen and American Socialism," *ibid.*, VII (December-January, 1918-19), 19-23.
 43. The *Herald*, which had been the official organ of the Social Democratic Party and the first organ of the American Socialist Party, was given over to the Milwaukee Socialist movement in 1901.
 44. Theodore Draper, *The Roots of American Communism* (New York: Viking Press, 1957), 253 and 280-81.

"Comments on Paul Buhle's Paper on Socialist Intellectuals"

by Jim Gilbert

Until now, a great deal of writing about American Socialism has been mechanistic in its conception, speaking primarily to the conferences, splits, disagreements, and failures of the American Socialist Party. Much of it amounts to nostalgic history about the birth and death of a third party movement. I think that Paul Buhle's contribution to our understanding of American Socialism, of its incomplete development, of the unsuccessful efforts to establish a radical intellectual tradition within general Marxist categories, helps to change this orientation. We must finally talk about what American Socialists believed they were doing; how they interpreted their experiences; and what contributions they made toward understanding industrial society. One way to do this, is to take a hard and critical look at Socialist intellectuals. This is not because intellectuals dominated the Socialist Party—although one might get this idea in glancing at a typical list of Party notables—but rather, because they articulated and failed to resolve a dilemma which is directly related to the problems of building a Socialist movement in the United States.

There have been four very general interpretations of the failure of American Socialism. One follows Ira Kipnis and argues that the real Socialist movement was destroyed when the I.W.W. (i.e. working class elements) split with the middle class membership in the party. One interpretation, reflecting the Popular Front in the 1930's, contends that a genuine revolutionary impulse can be traced from the I.W.W. to the Communist Party. A further interpretation, offered by James Weinstein, argues that the Socialist Party was destroyed by factionalism, and that the Party was at least potentially a revolutionary party. A final interpretation, which is interesting in a backhanded sort of way, argues that the Socialist Party was right about issues and wrong about ideology, and that its primary mistake was to call its orientation Marxist.

Buhle's paper approaches this problem from a different angle, for it seeks to explain what Socialist intellectuals believed, not how they reacted to specific issues, and how these beliefs reflected the transient basis for Socialism built by the Socialist Party. Intellectuals, in other words, despite their enormous outpouring of journalism, and endless words, did nothing to deepen and strengthen American Socialism.

Buhle's criticism of Socialist intellectuals in the broadest sense amounts to an accusation that they were not intellectuals at all—if by this we mean, men and women who think independently and profoundly. He criticizes everything about them; their ideas, their lack of methodology, and even the class basis of their work. By extension, this amounts to a criticism of American Socialism itself, for each intellectual failure, represents to Buhle, the failure of the Party to extend beyond its origins as a middle class movement. This is not to deny the great importance of working class membership in the movement, but rather to demonstrate the ultimate subordination of such elements to the non-revolutionary aims of the Party as a whole.

What is missing, and yet suggested by this paper, is a discussion of the reasons that the American Socialist Party remained largely middle class in orientation. Was this more than an intellectual failure? What missing intellectual or material link would have provided the basis for dialectical thinking? What would dialectical thinking have entailed? and, Was the intellectual failing merely symbolic of the broken growth of Socialism, or did it contribute significantly to the demise of the Socialist movement?

Rather than continue to speak about the direct relationship of Socialist intellectuals to the Socialist Party, I wish to examine, very briefly, their relationships to other thinkers. Of these Socialist intellectuals, I want to focus particularly upon William

James Ghent, William English Walling, Charles Edward Russell, J.G. Phelps-Stokes, and Robert Hunter, a list of men of whom Morris Hillquit of the New York SP recalls, set out to create a specifically American Socialist literature.

The most striking thing about these men, besides their large literary production, was that they were all part of a larger, developing community of reformer-intellectuals. They shared most of the assumptions and aims of a large group of liberals, Progressives and muckrakers who before 1920 formulated a complex and extensive positive attitude toward reformed capitalism—which a few called Socialism. What did these ties amount to? What effect did they have on the intellectual's understanding of Socialism?

Most, if not all of these intellectuals, came to Socialism as experts in another field. William English Walling, for example had been a factory inspector among other things. Russell was a journalist, and Robert Hunter was head worker at the University Settlement House in New York. If one looks at their remaining correspondence and papers, it is clear that these intellectuals were strongly committed to Socialism, but as one of several activities. Simultaneously, many of them belonged to other active reform organizations that were clearly non-Socialist, where they rubbed elbows and clashed intellectually with liberal businessmen and other intellectuals.

There was, of course, nothing particularly wrong with these activities, except that they reinforce what these writers say elsewhere about the meaning of Socialism. To them, as well as the larger group of intellectuals, Socialism was a kind of final stage of industrialism, a further evolution of capitalism toward centralism, monopoly and administrative control from the top. At base, these men were evolutionists who chose to celebrate the development and differentiation of corporate capitalism as the basis for a new form of society—and hence Socialism. This vision they shared with a large number of academics in sociology, anthropology, and political science. Thus it seemed that in the larger sense, any reform advanced civilization toward the final goal of a just society. The result was that these intellectuals saw Socialism as something rather different from the Socialist Party or even the working class. It tended to become an abstraction toward which they felt many forces were working (including, of course, the Socialist Party). But such a view of Socialism made it possible in 1917 to split with the Socialist Party over the issue of patriotism, and still call such views radical.

To be an evolutionist in the Socialist camp at this period meant something rather special. It meant that one admired science and organization, progress and process—all undeniable aspects of the intensive industrial reorganization in the United States before World War I. But it also implied an admiration of power and a desire for simple historical explanations in terms of laws of development. And many Socialists and liberals admired nothing quite so much as the development of the corporation. It was not size or power which frightened these men—quite the opposite. For competition, it was felt, tied to laissez-faire individualism was really the enemy of social development. Here was an assumption which inevitably made their reaction to the Roosevelt and Wilson administrations an ambiguous one, and furthermore, suggested to them that warfare (as a kind of ultimate unifying and centralizing force) could accomplish what political struggle could not.

Many Socialist intellectuals shared with their fellow intellectuals a rather special attitude toward themselves and their own function. In anything, they felt that they understood the forces of history and were familiar with the subtleties of power, and yet as individuals they were powerless. To make their knowledge and themselves available for social planning was thus a key concern, and one ultimately resolved in the role of the expert. As experts, intellectuals had a function which was inherently useful to society, and one which had all of the connotations of objectivity and science that were so popular in the first years of the Twentieth Century.

This self-concept, this pose, also had a negative effect. It amounted, in some sense, to a profound anti-intellectualism, bred perhaps of insecurity and powerlessness,

but nonetheless real. There are two senses in which this is true. The first is illustrated in a memorandum sent by the Social Democratic League (a pro-War Socialist group including Walling and Spargo) to Samuel Gompers, head of the A.F. of L. The memorandum discussed the League and went to rather extraordinary lengths to denounce European-style intellectuals. Perhaps this remarkable attack on intellectuals was done more to please Gompers than anything else. But that of course is the point; intellectuals were often quite willing to demean themselves for the sake of impressing the power brokers in American society. There is another, more subtle sense in which the role of expert was anti-intellectual. The expert is not a revolutionary, nor even, ultimately much of a thinker. He solves problems posed by society or perhaps, history, but he does not generally formulate problems. He tinkers and tampers but he does not challenge prevailing institutions at their foundation. But most of all, he does not deal with ideas, or ideology. His function is to make things work. This too amounts to an admiration for power, for impersonal forces in history, and for institutions.

The dilemma which many Socialist intellectuals could not face, then, because of their general (and loose) adherence to the prevailing reformism of the period, was clear. How could they conceive of a new society which was not based upon contemporary institutions, political concepts, hierarchical organizations, and industrial patterns? Because they failed, many of them slid off into other movements, like the American Federation of Labor or Scientific Management, or they rejected Socialism and sometimes reformism, outright. A few persisted but were faced with two fruitless movements of the 1920's, the American Communist Party, and the remnants of American Socialism.



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he is dead
Of a bomb meant for better targets
There will be no processions
and the articles in the
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For those who lost before the battle
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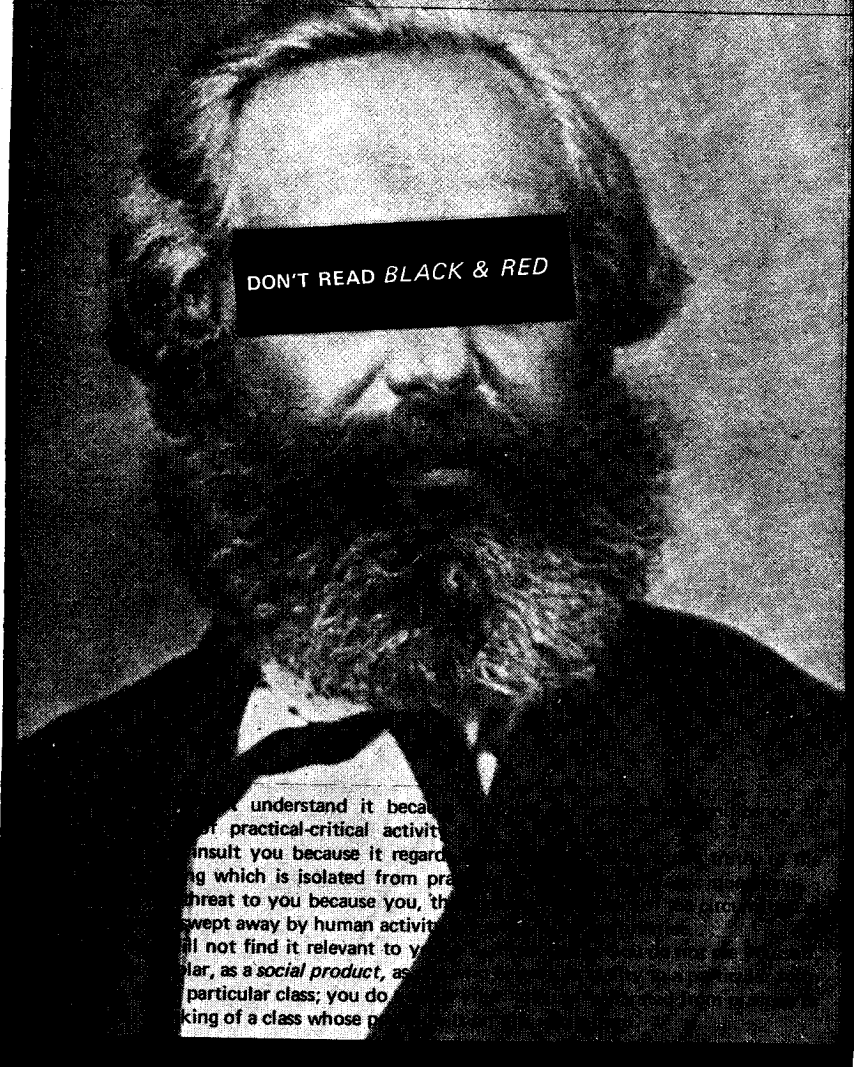
Norman Temple



THESES ON MARXIST SCHOLARS

1. If you regard the theoretical attitude as the only genuinely human attitude, while conceiving and fixing practice only in its dirty-judaical manifestation, as "merely manual," as labor. . .
2. If you think the question of objective truth, of the reality or unreality of thinking, is a question of theory. . .
3. If you think that men are products of circumstances and education and therefore that changed men are products of other circumstances and changed education. . .

... that "revolutionary theory" can detach itself from practical activity, and establish itself in the cloack as an independent realm. . .
 . . . Marxist Scholar. . .



DON'T READ BLACK & RED

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The philosophers have only *interpreted* the world in various ways; the point, however, is to *change* it.

Toward A Critical Theory For Advanced Industrial Society

by Trent Schroyer

I

Contemporary science and technology have become a new form of legitimating power and privilege. Insofar as the practice of the scientific establishment is held to be neutral, while actually justifying the extension of repressive control systems, we can assert that the contemporary self-image of science functions as a *technocratic ideology*.¹ Technocratic legitimation assumes a positivist view of science. This positivist view holds:

- (1) that knowledge is inherently neutral
- (2) that there is a unitary scientific method
- (3) that the standard of certainty and exactness in the physical sciences is the only explanatory model for scientific knowledge.

We refer to this conception of science here as scientism² and we argue that a critical theory of science must reject and refute each one of those fundamental principles in the scientific self-image of science. Scientism is the culmination of the positivist tradition and has become dominant in both established social science of late capitalism and in the scientific materialism of orthodox Marxism. Wherever scientism permeates a scientific establishment, it functions as a societal *a priori*, which uncritically permits the extension of an exploitive instrumental rationalization.³ That is, it contributes to the generation of decision making whose "rationality" is instrumental effectiveness and efficiency. Such mechanisms work against a broader mode of rationalization which would maximize the participation and individuation of affected people.

Scientism has created a crisis in man's knowledge of himself in that it mystifies the practice and societal function of science. In so concealing its contemporary research guiding framework scientism becomes a self-fulfilling and self-reinforcing force of history. The faith that men will be emancipated through the extension of neutral techniques of science and technology obscures the reality of research serving and justifying technical control systems which accept power structures as given.

Scientism as the positivistic self-image of science separates the subject and object of knowledge and takes the statements of science as an observational given. Knowledge is thus conceived as a neutral picturing of fact. This denies that there could be any predefinitions of the object of knowledge by the prior organization of our experience. The positivistic philosophy of science overlooks that the societal framework within which research practice takes place exercises a direct influence in the processing of theory and data. This scientific trend exemplifies what Edmund Husserl has called the fallacy of objectivism.⁴ Thus while more and more able to systematize knowledge, positivistic theory is less and less able to reflect about its own presuppositions and is left without any way of objectifying the structuring framework of this epoch.⁵

Scientism and the positivistic philosophy of history are vestiges of classic ontology in that pure theory and scientific method are held to be historically neutral. The on-going articulation of the scientific method within the establishment, whether by logicians or by practicing scientists, is but a later reconstruction of the results of scientific inquiry, and as such is an idealization of the actual practice of science. Insofar as this reconstructed logic is held to be a guide for inquiry and superimposed upon scientific praxis, it is distortive of both the logic-in-use⁶, i.e. the actual logic of inquiry used by scientists, and the reality investigated.

However, this idealization of science and its method is none the less an active force in history and does transform the human world. Thus the greatest problem that

social theory faces is not whether behaviorism, game theory or systems analysis are theoretically valid, but whether they might not become valid through a self-fulfilling prophecy justified by a technocratic ideology.

II

Science and science-based technology have become more basic to the production processes of advanced industrial societies.⁷ The institutionalization of science and technology as "research and development" has generated a "knowledge industry" which is itself a force of production. Knowledge production units become autonomous structures that are perpetuated beyond their originating goals. They link directly, or indirectly (technology transfer from state financed research, e.g. space program), to corporate profit making capacity.⁸

"Knowledge", however, is produced within the context of an instrumentally rationalizing society. Thus scientism increasingly becomes the prescriptive decision-matrice for ever new spheres of society.⁹ Insofar as more spheres of decision-making are construed as "technical problems" requiring information and instrumental strategies produced by technical experts, they are removed from political debate.¹⁰

The increased importance of the "knowledge industry" has led some social theorists to conceptualize "post-industrial" society as a self-regulating system in which information is the crucial input.¹¹ With this, or related images of contemporary society, we have an infinitely flexible ideology which can be interpreted in ways which legitimate public or private policy adopted by established power and privilege groups (e.g. theories of "modernization" applied to socio-economic development).¹²

We argue that the scientific image of science has become the dominant legitimating system of advanced industrial society. It has gradually replaced the ideology of equivalence exchange which had performed the legitimating function for early industrial society. Whereas Marx was able to show how equivalence of exchange between labor and capital was the major contradiction in capitalist society, we are now unable to express a later stage of this development in the same way. (This will be discussed below.) The advance stage of the contradiction between labor and capital involves the distortion of the market by the growth of state interventions. These emergent functions of the state are necessitated for the sake of avoidance of its final disruption.¹³ In order to reproduce Marx's critical-emancipatory analysis for our time we must reconstruct his analytical framework in a way which makes for a more concrete expression of the source of contemporary alienation. Whereas Marx was able to formulate his critical theory as a critique of the purest ideological expression of equivalence exchange, i.e. classical political economy, we are forced to broaden our critique to the positivistic theory of science itself. It is our thesis that the scientific image of science is the fundamental false consciousness of our epoch. If the technocratic ideology is to loose its hold on our consciousness, a critical theory of science must lay bare the theoretical reifications of this scientific image of science. That is the concern of this paper.

Some social theorists, such as C. Wright Mills, place Marxism in the classic tradition of social science and then proceed in an eclectic manner to combine Marx with Weber, Veblen, G.H. Mead and Freud. These eclectic constructions cannot generate an alternative to established theory. They do little more than illuminate historical structures of power and privilege, and function more or less as strain-measuring scales for these same structures. Not until we have a community of critical scientists who perceive social science in a critical manner will we be able to perform the ongoing tasks of research, critique and political program formulation.

III.

A reinterpretation of the nature of science and its relation to society has already begun in contemporary European Marxism, especially in the Frankfurt school of critical

sociology.¹⁵ This particular attempt to reinterpret Marx consists of searches for the first principles of a critical (or emancipatory) science that can respond in a contemporary manner to the methodology of the established social sciences.

In this reinterpretation, or this reconstruction of Marxism if you will, science is conceived as part of the materialist model of society. But the materialist model of society is now reinterpreted as three societal systems of action:¹⁶

- a. Instead of talking about the substructure, we refer to the systems of purposive rational action;
- b. Instead of talking about the superstructure, we must refer to the systems of symbolic interaction;
- c. Instead of talking about the forms of social consciousness we can speak about the reflexive recognition of legitimate authority which is internal to the system of self-reflection.

By considering scientific inquiry as the formalization of the logics-in-action of societal systems, we can generate a new kind of logic in science. We can achieve an insight into the prior orientations of scientific inquiry. We can express predefinitions of the object-of-knowledge in terms of the relation of cognition and interest. By analysing the transcendental interests of cognition as they are linked to historically determined conceptual schemes and behavioral systems we can arrive at an understanding of the logical rules of the process of inquiry. The procedures of scientific inquiry are rooted in the prescientific processes of everyday life and the finding and inventing of hypotheses, the deduction of conditional predictions and the testing of hypotheses are parallel to the practice of life itself.

Only within this mode of conceptualizing scientific inquiry and its rootedness in everyday life can we see both the validity of science and relate it to changing historical variables. Only by integrating a logic of inquiry within an empirically transforming life world can we achieve a dialectical theory of science and society. In so constructing a unified theory of the logics-in-use of scientific practice and the logics-in-action of societal systems we are able to show that cognition is never a neutral fact-picturing. Since knowledge is never neutral, we can demonstrate that there are distinct scientific methods and that each requires a somewhat different explanatory model. In this way we are able to refute the theory of science inherent in scientism.

Our pay-off is a new classification of the sciences and an analysis of the logical interest (or transcendental principle) presupposed in each practice. We then see three interests as fundamental to three kinds of sciences:

- a. We conceive of the strict sciences as that mode of analysis which yields information that presupposes the interest of certainty and technical control.
- b. We conceive of the hermeneutic sciences (or the historical-interpretive sciences) as that mode of interpretation which yields an understanding of the social cultural life world and which presupposes the interest of extending of intersubjective understanding.
- c. We conceive of a critical science as that kind of inquiry which is capable of analysing the supposed and actual "necessity" of historical modes of authority and which presupposes the interest of the emancipation of men from law-like patterns of "nature" and history.

Established, "official", social science understands itself as having the interest of the strict sciences. In practice, that means that established social sciences, although it conceives itself as neutral, is actually an inquiry which has the theoretical interest and societal consequence of maintaining technical control.

However, within the methodological debates of established social science there has emerged a recognition of a competing interest and a competing logic-in-use of scientific inquiry. To cite a few of these debates in one sphere, sociology, we can see emergent modes of analysis such as phenomenology, ethnomethodology, a priorist sociology deriving from the late Wittgenstein and symbolic interactionism. These debates are recognition of a competing practical interest within social science methodology, that of the hermeneutic sciences. Despite these new methodological reflections, the dominant

trend is to continue to understand social inquiry in a way which identifies it with the strict sciences.

At this point let us go back to Marx himself and reconstruct the beginnings of a critical science. Whereas Marx was grounded in classic philosophy and discovered the key to an emancipatory science of man in Hegel we are often less aware of these foundations. We therefore need to fill in the philosophical dimensions of Marxism as a critical science, seeing it as a product of its time and perhaps being able to reconstruct its main elements more systematically than its founder.

Hegel provided for Marx the foundations of a critical theory of human development in that he formulated a science of the experience of consciousness as a historical self-forming process. Marx extended this analysis to the historical conditions of the self-formation of man by materializing the notion of dialectical synthesis. He thus transformed the critique of knowledge into the critique of society. It is in the reconstruction of this common link between Hegel and Marx that we will find the key to a Marxist theory of science and society, to Marxism as a critical science.¹⁷

Critical philosophy has always pointed to positivism's inability to account for the possibility of objective knowledge, or even give an interpretation of its own historical development and practice. The more recent development of positivism has only increased this inability until reflective analysis is reduced to the marginal status of the analysis of scientific language. Positivists hold that philosophic analysis cannot produce "knowledge". In opposition to this critical science retains philosophic reflection as a mode of the critique of research practice and for the substantive critique of ideologies. Hence a critical science differs from all other sciences in that it employs both logical and empirical analysis in the framework within which it validates knowledge. Since the modes of mediation of the object-of-knowledge will change as the historic subject changes, a critical theory of science holds that an adequate methodology will include a critical theory of knowledge internal to its theory of society.

The recent work of the philosopher-sociologist Jurgen Habermas, the younger leading figure in the Frankfurt school, has focused upon this aspect of the Marxist tradition. In his book *Erkenntnis und Interesse*, 1968, he has reinterpreted Marxist theory of labor in a way which fills in its logical foundations.

Habermas argues that the Marxist notion of work is not only an economic category, but also deals with ways in which the material base of society conditions objectively possible knowledge. In this critical-materialism, the subject of world constitution is not the transcendental consciousness, as in Kant, but the existing human species which reproduces the actual conditions of its life. Thus the Marxian notion of man as *homofaber* fundamentally differs from all previous notions in that work is conceptualized as both the mechanism of human development and as the objective framework through which possible experience is constituted.

When Marx argues that "the history of industry is the open book of the essential human powers" he is speaking of the empirical dynamic *and* the logic by which man objectivates himself. To relate Marx's conception to transcendental logic is not falling into an idealism; the theory remains materialistic. Taken this way we see that Marx's theory of work completes Hegel's critique of Kant. Whereas Kant's analysis of knowing places the synthesis of the material perception under the transcendental rules of the pure concepts of the understanding which are internal and unchanging, Marx stresses that the synthesis of the materials of work are unified under the technical rules of the instruments of production and these belong to the historically changing base of society. It is a subtle argument. Marx has taken the transcendental mode of logic and integrated it into an empirical science. So that when we talk about dialectics, under this reconstruction of Hegelian-Marxist theory, we are talking about a reconceptualization of transcendental logic in a way that brings into that mode of analysis empirical historical conditions.

The logical dimension of this dialectical theory of work is that the knowledge we can generate about nature is bound to the limits of the technically possible control over nature. Therefore, and this is a key point, the objectivity of societal experience and of scientific knowledge is possible as a function of the widening sphere of technical control over nature, and specifically within the framework of instrumental systems which form the basis of society. Hence the mode of mediation of subject and object is historically bound on the empirical level as well as the logical; both the material used in work and the living work process are historical variables. Instrumental action is a form of purposive rational action which proceeds according to technical rules based on empirical knowledge. It includes predictions about observable events and these are true or false, thus providing us with knowledge whose adequacy depends on how efficiently man controls reality. A more recent variation of instrumental behavior are systems of rational choice which proceed from strategies that are based on analytical knowledge that include deductions from preference rules or general maxims and may be correct or not. Strategic behavior depends upon a correct evaluation of alternative possibilities of action by inferring from a given system of values and maxims. Systems of instrumental action are different forms of technical rules which are universal and not context-based and they can be formulated in context-free language. Thus the truly universal languages are the technologies produced by men.

However, in Marx's model of society he distinguishes the social relations from the revolutionizing means of production. Therein lies a distinction between instrumental and symbolic systems of action. Habermas reconceptualizes this distinction by a logical analysis of the difference between a social norm and a technical rule.

We can see a social norm as defining reciprocal behavior expectations that are shared by at least two persons. They are not true or false and determined by technical success but enforced by sanction. The validity of social norms depends upon the mutual understanding of expectations and common recognition of obligations. As such the meaning of social norms can, as a rule, be understood via ordinary language communication (whereas technical rules are formulated in a formalized language). Hence social norms form context-specific systems of action whose logical status differs from technical rules. Symbolic interaction systems are equivalent to the social-cultural life world of society and are to be distinguished from systems of instrumental action. The relation of systems of technics to symbolic systems is a historical variable. For example, Marx showed that capitalism is the point in history where there is a reversal of the order of legitimation. This is the beginning of what in our own time has become known as the technological society. In this phase the extension of the systems of purposive rational behavior begins to legitimate itself. In Marx's analysis this is expressed as the point at which the extension of capitalistic economy produces its own reified culture: the fetishism of the commodity form.

The work of Herbert Marcuse is primarily a documentation of the ongoing fetishes, or reifications, of possessive individualism, consumer orientation, and the like in the advanced stages of industrial society. Marcuse concretely documents a suggestion made by Marx in *Grundrisse* that the production system can begin to integrate social and cultural needs within its own development. ("Production not only furnishes the object of a need, but it also furnishes the need for an object.") Thus there is a potential for the total inversion of the traditional relationship between the system of instrumental behavior and the system of symbolic interaction. The meaning of "one-dimensionality" (Marcuse) or "instrumental rationalization" (Habermas) implies the objective possibility of the total control of social-cultural change. Systems of instrumental action can be extended to the organization of human responses to a stimulus-response pattern, e.g. the shaping of behavior in behavioral psychoanalysis. The possibility of bringing under technical control systems of symbolically mediated interaction suggests that the practice of life could be reduced to instrumental action. Men would resort to an artificial necessity, guided by the standards of technical success and efficiency. 1984 is technologically feasible.

What this would mean is the reducing of cultural traditions of common symbols

to technics of adaptive behavior. Marcuse and Adorno have indeed suggested that human behavior is becoming more and more of a mimetic acting out by an externally conditioned ego.¹⁸ The possibility of this degree of loss of ego-autonomy is, however, an empirical question. But the critical theories of Adorno, Marcuse and Habermas, are, at this point, an interpretation of analytical schemes and must not be taken as a factual claim. What it would mean is that the distinction between social action and adaptive behavior, learned and "instinctive behavior" would become more and more meaningless. This historical configuration of instrumental and symbolic interaction systems means that the third system, self-reflection, is reduced to a minimum. Critical reflection about the legitimacy of authority structures is replaced by an immediate identification with the collective ego-ideal.¹⁹

While Marx kept the instrumental and symbolic action-systems separate in his substantive research, he did not separate them in his theory of society. Thus his later understanding of political economy as a historical natural science suppresses the logical uniqueness of symbolic communication and reconstructs it upon the model of instrumental behavior. This is exactly what most modes of positivist analysis did in the course of their development.

IV.

In our time, with its dominant technocratic ideology, the point of a critical theory of science will be to show that instrumental action is not the only interest that guides research practice in the social sciences. More specifically, the concern of a critical theory is to try to formulate a view of practical scientific interests and relate those to the societal action systems. Toward that end we need a reconceptualization such as the following:

1. *The Logic-in-Use of the Strict Sciences*

In this direction we find that the pragmatic philosophy of science, especially that of C.S. Pierce, has already developed an approach to this problem which is consistent with a dialectical epistemology.²⁰ The pragmatic tradition has focused upon the logical analysis of the procedures and inquiry of science, and has not restricted itself to formal methodology and the analysis of language as have the positivists. Thus pragmatism has conceived of methodological rules as norms guiding the practice of inquiry; the analysis refers to the communication and interaction of the community of investigation. From this analysis we can make a basic distinction between the logics-in-use and the reconstructed logic of science. The former analysis explicates the rules guiding the practice of inquiry; the latter formulates criteria of validity and semantic meaning in relation to the results of science. As we noted at the start, the positivist philosophy of science has worked exclusively with the reconstructed logic of science.

Thus Pierce gives us an analysis of the logical (transcendental) and empirical conditions for the validity of strict science inquiry in the form of a logics-in-use of strict science. Pierce argues that the research interest guiding strict science is that of gaining and expanding control over objects which we have observed. Development of this logical argument cannot be dealt with here. What this means, however, is that in the process of inquiry we ourselves behave *as if* the events of reality were the products of a subject who, under contingent initial conditions, continuously draws conclusions from a definite valid set of rules and then decides to act, permanently conforming to the predictions thereby derived. Thus our research praxis is guided by *instrumental actions* which presuppose that reality is also an actor who has internalized a set of habits we call "laws of nature." Pierce's analysis is unique and is parallel to Marx's analysis of the logic of the work process in that both logical and empirical conditions are seen as determining the possibility of successful instrumental action. Whereas Marx's analysis can be construed as a general critique of Kant's notion of the world-constituting powers of human knowing, Pierce's can be seen as a similar critique of Kant but dealing with the instrumental action procedures of the community of strict scientists.

Pierce has shown that the synthetic modes of reasoning, i.e. induction and abduction, are chains of inference whose validity can be accounted for only by referring

to the norms of procedure that are sedimented into the research practice of a community of investigators. Within this frame of reference we are able to conceive of scientific reasoning as systems of purposive rational behavior which are essentially the "habits" of research practice. Their function is to fixate belief, to operate as guiding principles for the accumulation of new information, and to be revised when there are failures in anticipated results. Belief is secured again when there is a successful acting upon a new recipe which is repeatedly reconfirmed. Hence the systems of purposive rational behavior embedded in the research practice of a community of investigators functions as the transcendental scheme that constitutes possible cognition. But this transcendental framework is within the system of instrumental action of a given historical context, the framework determines the conditions under which we objectify and experience "reality" as a possible object of purposive rational action, or possible technical control.

We can therefore see that the work process and strict science inquiry are related. Both are constituted through an instrumental logics-in-use and linked to the instrumental action system of society. To put it another way we can say that they both presuppose (in the transcendental sense) a model of certainty for the successful control of observed processes. In short the "interest" of instrumental praxis and strict science is one, that of technical control. Thus a social science in this category of science would be interested in recurrent regularities of the social world toward the end of technical control, e.g. behaviorism.

Indeed the most advanced forms of social science inquiry, such as systems analysis and decision theory, are guided by the interest of technical control. But a critical theory of science can show that this is not the only interest that guides research in the established social sciences. In competition with the technical interest of strict science inquiry we can formulate, from the tradition of the Human Sciences (*Geisteswissenschaften*) a practical interest—that of the extension of communicative understanding toward the end of the formation of the consensus.²¹ This interest is presupposed by the historical-interpretive sciences of the social-cultural life world such as cultural sociology, history of art, etc. We will refer to this category of science as the *hermeneutic sciences*.²²

2. *The Logics-in-Use of the Hermeneutic Sciences*

Identification of a unique method for the hermeneutic sciences requires a return to the debate about the differences between the natural and human sciences. At the very least, we must go back to the theory of science which preceded the Neo-Kantian distinction between the empirical and the philosophical, the "is" and the "ought" dimensions.

An important beginning point for the re-discovery of a hermeneutic logics-in-use is the last essays of Wilhelm Dilthey.²³ In these essays, written between 1905 and 1910, Dilthey is putting the distinction between the natural and human sciences in a way which recaptures part of the Hegelian theory while addressing itself to a twentieth-century context. He points to the *logical* differences between perception and explanation in the natural sciences, and interpretation and understanding, in the human sciences. The focus then is upon the different logic-in-use of these scientific processes. This focus suggests that concepts, theories, methods and principles of verification are related to the processes of inquiry for their validity.

Whereas in the strict sciences we are constrained by the range of our technical control over natural processes, in the hermeneutic sciences we are constrained by our socially established conventions which exercise a predefinition of how we understand symbolic communication. In this way the fundamental "communality" we have with others constitutes a transcendental presupposition of hermeneutic understanding. Thus in the systems of common symbols which are sedimented, first in an ordinary language and then in typical action patterns and typical attitudinal orientations are the rules of the logic-in-use of hermeneutic understanding. In formulating rules of interpretation we are trying to consciously recapture the process of interpretation which enables everyday

actors to understand each other. The expression of these logic-in-use rules has been worked out by Dilthey's analysis of the "cycle of interpretation" and by what later writers call the Hermeneutic Circle. Recognition of the logical difference of the interpretation of symbolic systems has led to the programmatic ideals for the social sciences such as phenomenological sociology (e.g. Alfred Schutz)²⁴; Ethno-methodology (e.g. Garfinkel, Cicourel)²⁵; Symbolic Interactionism (Herbert Blumer²⁶ and others). However, the result of hermeneutic inquiry in these paradigms can give us little more than a Verstehen sociology's explanation.

But we are not concerned with a defense of the human sciences but with the existence of a competing interest to technical control in social inquiry. The question for social science is how to develop a mode of analysis which is both explanatory and able to interpret symbolic communication. This form of science would have a still different research guiding interest—that of emancipation.

Established social science is essentially manipulative because it has allowed itself to be conceived as having the same research-guiding interest as the strict sciences. Insofar as technical control is the guiding interest of social science, it is consistent with the technocratic trend and overtly legitimates class or elite exploitation. On the other hand a social science guided only by the practical interest would have very little explanatory power. Thus the need for the synthesis critical science.

It is now possible to briefly summarize the above arguments. The methods of the strict sciences and the hermeneutic sciences are both but formalizations of the praxis of the everyday systems of instrumental and symbolic interaction. These two types of praxis are not neutral in regard to their "objects" but rather presuppose an inherent teleology of inquiry. Just as instrumental systems transform the material base of society, symbolic interaction systems change our everyday consciousness about the world. Changes in these subsystems of society are not passive accumulations; the societal context is transformed in a way which also transforms the subject (men). Thus the extension of these systems are together the processes by which the human species itself is developed historically. This development does not occur by an external necessity in which man is the passive medium through which the "laws" of nature and history are manifested. On the contrary, our conception stresses that men are active in the constitution of their own world and of their own "nature". This process of self-formation cannot be conceived within a theory which assumes that knowledge represents "structures" and is neutral in regard to its "object".

3. *Foundations of a Critical Science*

Reflection about the sub-systems of society, and their function as transcendental frameworks which link system interests and cognition requires a unique mode of analysis. Such methodological reflection tries to illuminate both human history and the practice of science as historical self-forming processes, and thereby restores to men an awareness of their position as the active, yet historically limited, subject of history. To recognize the processes of historical self-formation of human history is to become aware of the mechanisms of historical negativity and therefore to be able to generate a critique of existing structures by objectifying the objective possibilities of a social totality.²⁷ Hence the generation of a critical theory of science and society is at the same time the broadest theoretical framework for a revolutionary theory.²⁸

A critical science differs from the strict or hermeneutic sciences in that it presupposes that all self-conscious agents can become aware of the self-formative processes of society and self and with this knowledge achieve a historically conditioned autonomy. Thus the character of a critical science is unique insofar as it is concerned with the assessment of the socially unnecessary modes of authority, exploitation, alienation, repression.²⁹ The interest of a critical science is the emancipation of all self-conscious agents from the seemingly "natural" forces of nature and history.

How is a critical science related to the history of human society? This linkage is to the capacity of men to be reflective about their own formative process. A critical science

is linked to the dialectic of self-reflection that is present in all socialization processes, specifically in the reflective recognition of legitimate authority.³⁰ From the point of view of the strict or hermeneutic sciences, a critical science is a speculative science in that it tries to reflect about the "necessity" for the conditions of law-like patterns in society and history. It is a science which in reconstructing the dynamic of individual or societal development tries to assess what are necessary norms and which are but remnants of power structures no longer humanly useful. This mode of analysis derives from the historic-genetic mode of conceptualization which is inherent in Hegel's transcendental ontology as developed in his *Phenomenology of Mind*. The mode of analysis is essentially related to the Hegelian concept of reason which is fundamental to a Marxist science. Hegel conceives of reason as inherently historical, as geared to the "explanation" not of invariant laws (the positivistic fallacy of objectivism) but of self-forming (*Bildung*) processes.³¹

I have elsewhere interpreted Hegel's philosophy as generated by his concern to overcome emergent cultural alienation.³² Hence his analysis of the French Revolution, despite its rejection of the terror and the critique of a one-sided individualism, is an affirmation of the revolution as releasing men from cultural systems that distorted and suppressed thought and emotion. Hence his conception of a philosophy which could illuminate historical contradictions by objectifying cultural symbols as alienated forms of free self-conscious life. By comprehending alienated moments of the necessary movement of *Geist*, Hegel thought that men could be reconciled with their actual potential and not constrained by outmoded systems of thought and action. In this way the *Phenomenology* can be seen as a philosophical form of a critical science, one that tries to view over 2500 years of human history as a single development in which pivoted movements are represented as alienated cultural forms, e.g. the medieval world-view as depicted by the Unhappy Consciousness.

The Marxian critique of Hegel's claim to absolute knowledge, or the deduction of all from the principle of *Geist*, is but an extension of this dialectic of reflection; Marx's *Capital* is a realization of Hegel's conception of a science of reason. Marx produced, however, not a dialectical ontology but a dialectical empiricism. That is, a science of society which is rooted in the transcendental concept of reason but realized that this form of science can be conceived only as an empirical science. In so refuting the residue of classical ontology in Hegel, Marx does not thereby banish the praxis of Reason from an empirical science. Instead the Marxist science is different in that it retains this mode of historic-genetic conceptualization. The history of Marxist theory and struggle has too often denied or ignored the fact that a Marxist science is based upon a unique logic-in-use—that of Reason in the Hegelian sense. In so suppressing the foundations of a Marxist science or theory, "Marxism" has repressed its own logical foundations and has therefore fallen into a sterile distinction between science and philosophy which simply assimilates the scientific image of science. The problem with much of contemporary "Marxism" is that it is unable to understand itself as a unique *critical* science. Beginning with Engels, Marxists have fallen into a scientific understanding of the work of Marx.

Marx's unique contribution to critical science was his labor theory of value which was a self-reflexive model for the critical analysis of capitalist society. In the classical form of the labor theory of value Marx discovered the basic ideology of a society based upon economic exchange. By distinguishing between living-labor and labor-power Marx broke the ahistorical equation of labor and value embedded in Ricardo's labor theory. As long as feudal production was organized through status authority it was primarily production for use. However, the emergence of a class society where economic exchange is liberated from status relations results in the gradual deterioration of production for use and its replacement by a universal exchange value. In this epoch the equivalence between labor and value is negated in the exchange between the seller of labor-power and the capitalist who appropriates it. Whereas the seller receives its market price, its exchange value, the capitalist appropriates the value—creating capacity of living labor.³³ Hence Marx demonstrates the non-equivalence of the exchange between labor and capital by working out the developmental laws of capitalism. While being the basic

legitimation of capitalist society, the practice of equivalence exchange was also the source of the alienation of all labor.

“thus all the progress of civilization, or in other words, every increase in production power of labor itself, does not enrich the worker, but capital and thus increases the power that dominates labor.”³⁴

Equivalence exchange was then both the principle of justice and the practice of domination. Reflection upon this fundamental contradiction of capitalist society liberated consciousness from the cultural reifications of the “commodity form.” In the commodity form is found the record of the alienated work process and the immanent contradiction of capitalist society. To Marx, the dialectical analysis of the commodity form is a “Schein”, or showing forth, of the essence of human production. That is, Marx’s analysis in the first chapter of *Capital*, while seemingly couched in visual metaphor, is really attempting to make *transparent* the essential behind the appearance. At every point in *Capital*, Marx tries to keep “the real” (use value) in the foreground while dealing with the exchange system of Capitalism. In identifying the commodity form he has made the real nature of human work ‘show forth’ to all so they can “see through” the appearance of Capitalism. “Seeing” the commodity form is to reflexively understand its real nature.³⁵ The moment of “show” is the moment of negation of the appearance and is the characteristic of a critical science. Marx thus restores the historical dimension to a whole social process, capitalist production, thereby enabling men to recognize the reified character of life practice under the domination of the commodity form.

All critical science attempts to restore missing parts of the self-formation process to men and in this way to force a process of self-reflection which will enable them to reinterpret the legitimacy of existing control systems. Insofar as these reconstructions are able to link repressed dimensions of historical structures to both individual and collective self-forming processes, and can be accepted as fitting all available facts, we can be liberated. That is, insofar as men become aware of the structuring of their self-formation they can distinguish between historically necessary modes of control and those that are but unnecessary patterns connected to distorted communicative systems. In this self-reflective recognition of pseudo-“necessity”, the conditions needed to perpetuate unnecessary behavioral orientations are removed and men can enter into a realm of self-discovery.

V.

The principle that lies behind today’s advanced societies is not free competition but systems maintenance. Growth of industrial society has seen the extension of economic rationality into every sphere of society—until the entire institutional configuration can be conceived as organized for a self-regulating system of production and consumption.

Marx’s critical theory of Capitalism must be reformulated in a way which takes account of the following:

1. extension of the forces of production does not, in itself, bring about the emancipation of men but has in fact become a run-away revolution whose manifold potentials increasingly threaten mankind with the possibility of total control of social change. Marx was unable to imagine the stage of technological development where control systems could begin to effectively contain social movements and reify symbolic communication through new scientific rationales, e.g. personality control through drugs and the institutionalization of an adjusting therapeutic system.
2. The interests that preserve the mode of production can no longer be seen as simple class interests. The complex integration of base and superstructure of society suggests the emergence of a qualitatively new dynamic. The interests that guide the reproduction process of society involve now the subsystems of purposive rational action. That is, contemporary technocratic consciousness

confronts the reproduction process as a question the answers to which derive from technical "necessities". Thus in the new ideological consciousness the system *seems to function* according to structural constraints. Given this new complexity, expression of the basic societal contradiction as class exploitation oversimplifies the reproduction process of advanced industrial societies.

We are not suggesting that the crisis of capitalism has disappeared but that it has changed its character. In the last fifty years Capitalist development has self-consciously generated national and international systems that minimize economic recessions and maximize economic growth possibilities.³⁷ That these "rational" control systems emerge in the context of an ideologically polarized globe suggests that there are political imperatives that are as central to capitalist reproduction as the enduring economic ones.

Ironically the continued viability of Capitalism has been insured by the extent to which the struggle for economic democratization has been successful and the consumer market kept open. Contemporary capitalism has been able to maintain both high consumption and investment. However, this dazzling performance is increasingly dependent upon cultural manipulation of the consumer and state interventions, such as incentive taxation and forced savings. Hence in order to mediate the crisis between capital and labor Capitalism's survival has stimulated the growth of manipulative or instrumental rationalization. Into the self-destructive dynamic of capital realization, as analyzed by Marx, have been introduced systems of purposive rational action which have thus far sustained Capitalism's amazing staying power since World War II. But growth of instrumental rationalization has created a broader and deeper crisis than the crisis of capital realization. We need therefore to modify Marx's critical theory in order to cope with the unique type of crisis which has emerged in late capitalism.

Toward this end we have the work of Herbert Marcuse and Jurgen Habermas. The foundations for a critical theory are inherent in Marcuse's *One Dimensional Man* but have been more clearly formulated and broadened by Habermas. The unique contribution of the latter has been to recognize that it is necessary to complete the immanent critique by showing this: the progressive restructuring of society as a result of a prescriptive scientism results in the distortion and repression of symbolic communication.

A society that is being transformed in the image of a scientific rationality but which increasingly forces a repressive socialization process upon all members is a society that contradicts its own principle of legitimation and justice. In order to achieve the "rationality" of a self-regulating system, the "behavioral units" are forced to relinquish their capacity for non-repressive communication. Such "rationality" culminates in increased cultural manipulation and the depolitization of the public.³⁸ Through the progressive privatization of individual life worlds from "public" institutions, and at the same time growing structuring of all private life through cultural manipulation, the individual is depolitized and yet integrated into the societal system. "Public opinion" is managed by elaborate opinion-making processes, used most often by those with privileged access to resources and communication systems. Classic public opinion is replaced by an atmosphere of acclamation; democratic process is perceived as plebiscitary agreement.³⁹

Habermas has restored to a critical theory the traditional distinction between *techne* and *praxis*; between technics and symbolic communication. This distinction can be elaborated logically and methodologically, as the above sections demonstrate. Anthropologically it points to the self-forming processes that derive from symbolically mediated interaction. Habermas' working out of the *techne-praxis* distinction is the new basis for a critical theory. Marx and Marcuse hold that language systems are linked to the process of work. Habermas, on the other hand, identifies the dialectic of symbolic communication as logically irreducible to the dialectic of purposive rational action. In this view resides both the unique contribution of Habermas to a critical theory for contemporary society and his sublation of Marx and Marcuse. Hence his critique of the

technological utopianism of Marx and Marcuse:

"Freedom from hunger and toil doesn't necessarily converge with freedom from slavery and degradation, because an automatic developmental connection between labor and interaction doesn't exist."⁴⁰

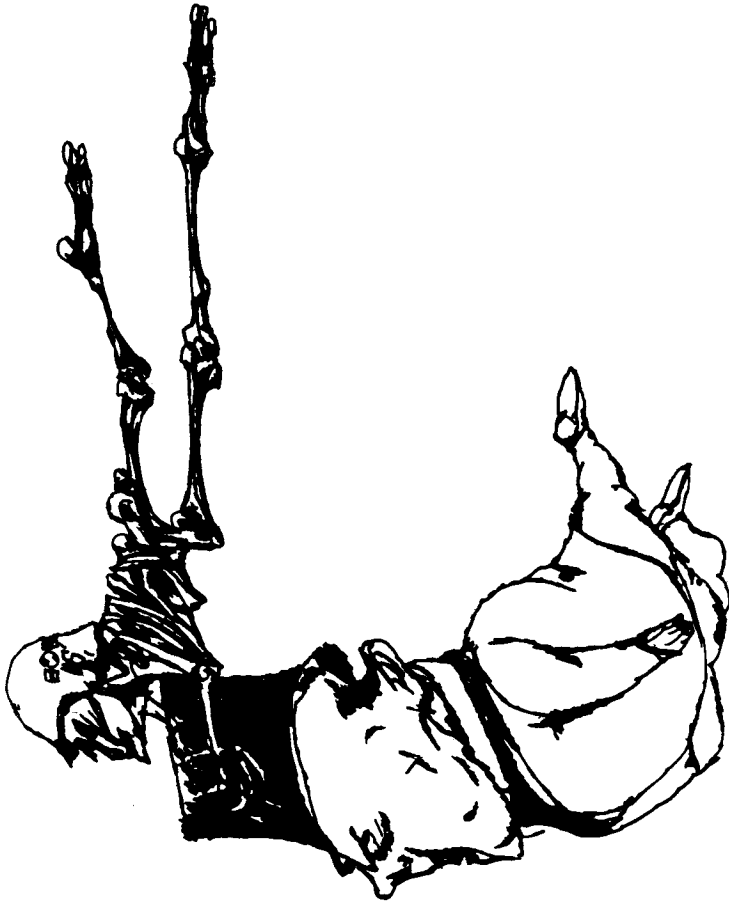
Footnotes

1. Cf. Jürgen Habermas' *Technik und Wissenschaft als 'Ideologie'* (Suhrkamp, 1968). This paper is based partly upon my interpretation of the pioneering work of Habermas. It is part of a work in process that will be published by George Braziller, Inc.
2. The term "scientism" is used to refer to the contemporary self-image of science. Rather than honor modern forms with the term "neopositivism," it seems more fitting to recognize a common cause with other anti-positivist methodologists, e.g. Edmund Husserl, Eric Voegelin, etc.
3. The concept of "instrumental rationalization" is used by Habermas in his critical reconceptualization of Max Weber's unitary concept of rationalization. Habermas is concerned with demonstrating that extension of economic rationality to spheres of symbolically mediated interaction is a suppression of necessary communicative prerequisites for self-reflective consciousness. Habermas therefore reconceptualizes "rationalization" upon a two-fold model of instrumental and symbolic interaction, seeing both modes of rationalization necessary for a rational society.
4. Cf. Husserl, *Phenomenology and the Crisis of Philosophy* (Harper paperback, 1966).
5. This point is developed in numerous ways by Gerald Radnitzky in the second volume of his work on *Contemporary Schools of Metascience* (Akademeforlaget, Goteborg, 1968).
6. The concepts "reconstructed-logic" and "logic-in-use" are used by Abraham Kaplan in the first chapter of *The Conduct of Inquiry* (Chandler Press, 1964).
7. On this point there is a growing consensus despite political position: "With the new, rationalized social organization of technology and the labor process completed, technical knowledge became the main form of labor power and capital." James O'Connor "The Fiscal Crisis of the State; Part I" *Socialist Revolution*, Vol. I No. 1 1970, p. 48 ff; "... knowledge has become a factor of production, in the form of the technological derivatives of scientific enquiry and in the indispensable contribution of other forms of knowledge . . . to the organization and maintenance of the productive process. Indeed, the ineluctable development of a fusion of administrative, political and productive processes in neo-capitalism. . . . has made it difficult to specify where precisely production stops and the administrative begins, and has rendered virtually impossible a distinction between 'political' and 'economic' decisions." Norman Birnbaum, "On the Idea of a Political Avant-Garde in Contemporary Politics: The Intellectuals and the Technical Intelligentsia," *Praxis* Nos. 1&2, 1969, pp. 234-235; also see Amitai Etzioni, *The Active Society*, (Free Press 1968), chapter 9.
8. At the moment the disproportionate allocation of state resources to the military and space R. & D. is legitimated by the concept of "technology transfer". Whatever the significance of such "transfer" (this constitutes an important area for research), there is no doubt that it presently legitimates an undiscussed commitment to a "defense economy". For example: "The exacting demands of the space program, which operates at the outermost limits of knowledge, have stimulated advances in almost every discipline of science and engineering. . . . These advances have spun off into business and industry." Wernher von Braun as quoted in the *Wall Street Journal*, August 9, 1969.
9. Cf. Radnitzky, *op. cit.*, p. 133 ff.; Irene Taviss, "The Technological Society: Some Challenges for Social Science", *Social Research*, Vol. 35, No. 3, Autumn 1968.
10. This broad speculative hypothesis is also shared by: Sheldon Wolin, *Politics and Vision* (Little, Brown and Co. 1960); Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Doubleday, 1958); Herbert Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man* (Beacon, 1964).
11. For example Etzioni's *The Active Society*
12. Cf. Andre Gundar Frank, "The Sociology of Development and the

- Underdevelopment of Sociology", *Catalyst*, Summer 1967.
13. James O'Connor, *op. cit.* pp. 48-49.

15. The Frankfurt school represents the only *school* of critical scientists in the West. They have been self-consciously trying to generate a combination of critical theory and critical social research for several decades. Crucial statements of this collective project are Max Horkheimer's "Traditionelle und Kritische Theorie" in *Kritische Theorie*, edited by A. Schmidt, vol. I and II (Frankfort, S. Fischer); and Jürgen Habermas's *Theorie und Praxis* (Luchternand Verlag, Neuwied, 1963).
16. This is my reconstruction of Habermas's work in its continuity with the Marxist tradition.
17. Cf. Trent Schroyer, *Alienation and the Dialectical Paradigm*. Doctoral Dissertation, New School for Social Research.
18. Cf. Herbert Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man*, (Beacon, 1964.) See especially Chapter 3; Theodore W. Adorno, "Sociology and Psychoanalysis", Part I and II, *New Left Review*, Nos. 45&46.
19. Cf. Adorno, *ibid.* This point is developed most extensively in an essay by Marcuse, which is essentially a theory of social regression. See "The Obsolescence of Psychoanalysis", paper given at the American Political Science Association, 1963.
20. Cf. Jürgen Habermas, *Erkenntnis und Interesse* (Suhrkamp, 1968), pp. 116-178.
21. Jürgen Habermas, *ibid.* pp. 178-234.
22. The modern hermeneutic movement and its foundations is only now becoming known in the Anglo-American world. For a short summary of this development consult: R. Palmer, *Hermeneutics*, (Northwestern University Press, 1968); for its crucial significant for a critical science methodology see: Habermas, "Zur Logik der Sozialwissenschaft," *Philosophische Rundschau*, Feb. 1967.
23. The key essay here is "The Construction of the Historical World of the Human Studies," which appears in a partial translation in *Pattern and Meaning in History* (Harper paper, 1962), or W. Dilthey, *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. VII (Stuttgart, 1958).
24. Cf. Alfred Schutz, *Collected Papers*, vol. I-III.
25. Cf. Harold Garfinkel, *Studies in Ethnomethodology* (Prentice-Hall, 1967). Aaron Cicourel, *Method and Measurement in Sociology* (Free Press, 1964).
26. Cf. Herbert Blumer, "Society as Symbolic Interaction" in A. Rose (editor) *Human Behavior and Social Processes* (Boston, Houghton Mifflin, 1962).
27. The possibility of a critical science depends upon a theoretical totalization which can function as both a framework for the analysis of contemporary society and at the same time serve as a hypothetical philosophy of history that can guide hermeneutic inquiry. Cf. Marlis Kruger, "Sociology of Knowledge and Social Theory" in *Berkeley Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 14 (1969), pp. 152-163.
28. However, to have a theory broad enough for societal critique is not to have and "instrument to guide praxis". A historical theory must be interpreted in regard to specific historical conditions and hence between theory and praxis there is a crucial mediator of judgment. It is illusory to believe that any critical theory can simple be a "tool" in the hands of any class. Between theory and praxis there is a crucial phase of political program formulation which requires not only theoretical clarity but practical judgment about specific life-worlds.
29. Schroyer, *op. cit.*, Chapter 3.
30. This distinction is crucial for a critical science. Marcuse's concept of "surplus repression" (*Eros and Civilization*, Beacon Press, 1955, p. 32) is an attempt to turn it into a category of critical theory. It is also the focus of critical research done by the Frankfurt school, notably *Studien ueber Autoritaet und Familie*, edited by Max Horkheimer, 1936. Critical research now being carried on at Frankfurt focuses on the formation of ego-identity and class-specific socialization patterns.
31. Schroyer, *op. cit.*, Chapter 1.

32. Schroyer, *op. cit.* Chapter 2.
 33. Cf. Martin Nicolaus, "The Unknown Marx", *New Left Review*, No. 48.
 34. Quoted in Nicolaus, *Ibid.*
 35. Insofar as men perceive their work, each other, and themselves through the "phenomenal" commodity form they will be superimposing an abstracted category upon their life activity. Hence the action-reaction character of life activity is broken and skewed by the fixed external standard which reifies the objectification of action. Recognition of the causal source or false consciousness in the capitalist epoch results in a reflexive awareness of the *false necessity* of the reificatory structures.
37. Cf. A. Shonfield, *Modern Capitalism* (Oxford University Press, 1965).
 38. Jürgen Habermas, *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit* (Luchterhand, 1968), p. 157-199.
 39. Habermas, *Ibid.*, pp. 199-257.
 40. Habermas "Arbeit und Interaktion", *Technik und Wissenschaft*, p. 46.



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ANNOUNCEMENT: Due to editorial and financial delays, the CLR James Anthology has been delayed until early Summer. The May issue will be Guy Debord's *Societe du Spectacle*; the June issue will be a heterogeneous, "regular" number; the July issue will be the James Number; and the August-September issue will be mostly devoted to Racism and Revolutionary Black Nationalism.

SIXTH ANNUAL SOCIALIST SCHOLARS CONFERENCE

JUNE 13, 14, 1970

PublicSchool IS 70

New York City

This year, the panels will be directed toward discussion of four major topics: American Institutions and How they are changing; The Marxist Tradition and New Left Theory; The Third World and its effects on the American Empire; and The Movement: Where Do We Go From Here?

Partial List of Panels:

TOWARDS AN AMERICAN SOCIALIST STRATEGY
PARTY AND CLASS-STATE AND REVOLUTION
CAUSES OF THE OPPRESSION OF AMERICAN WOMEN
THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF WOMEN'S LIBERATION
HOW RATIONAL IS CAPITALIST SOCIETY: MARCUSE VRS WEBER?
SOCIALISM AND ECOLOGY
THE CONCEPT OF PRAXIS OF HEGEL AND MARX
THE METHODOLOGY OF WILLIAM A. WILLIAMS
OLD RIGHT/NEW LEFT
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PERSPECTIVES ON WOMEN'S LIBERATION
THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE RADICAL RIGHT IN QUEENS: A CASE STUDY
RADICAL FICTION IN THE 1930'S
CHRISTIAN SOCIALISM
INTELLECTUALS IN POLITICAL MOVEMENTS: A CASE STUDY OF JOHN REED
AND MAX EASTMAN
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IMPERIALISM IN LATIN AMERICA
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Dear Subscriber:

Due to problems with the Post Office, we have reason to believe that a significant number of subscribers did not get copies of the Women's Liberation number--Vol. IV, #2. If you have not yet received yours, please write us at once.

