

**RADICAL  AMERICA**



**Special Issue on  
Radical Historiography**

# **RADICAL AMERICA**

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**The last year has been one of enormous change for RA. On one hand, it has gained adequate printing facilities for the first time, come closer to its goal of ten issues per year, published several numbers of quite extraordinary length, and effectively changed its format for somewhat greater readability and a larger circulation. On the other hand, RA has faced the dilemma of all of the journalistic survivors of the political New Left: it is published in a sort of political vacuum, with no national**

# INTRODUCTION

This special Radical America issue is the product of a post-Studies on the Left generation of graduate history students at the University of Wisconsin. Since Studies moved from Madison to New York in 1963, there has been no vehicle for a radical interpretation of history such as Studies provided for the American historians who constituted the most important segment of its editorial board during its years in Madison. While Radical America has been published here since 1967, its interest has been less historical than that of Studies had been; moreover, RA has never had a stable group of resident editors to take responsibility for developing and extending a coherent viewpoint on the intellectual issues facing the Left.

During the years since 1963, on the other hand, a number of history graduate students have played prominent roles in the Left at Wisconsin. The people who are working on this issue of RA have also been active in organizations such as the Teaching Assistants Association, SDS, the History Students Association, Connections, and the Committee to End the War. The growth of the student movement, both at Wisconsin and nationally, has been a crucial part of our lives and consciousness.

The major intellectual influence on the Studies on the Left editors was William A. Williams, who taught American history at Wisconsin until 1968. Williams has also been important in our own development, although for most of us this influence has come via his writings rather than via sustained personal contact. Otherwise, though as individuals we have had cordial and intellectually-rewarding relationships with various history faculty members at Wisconsin, our main relationship with the faculty has been an antagonistic one. We have taken part in efforts — largely futile thus far — to force the faculty to share with teaching assistants and with other students its power over curricular decisions within the History Department. The history faculty has not been monolithic on these points, but its predominant role has been one of resistance to democratization. Our experience in the Department has, in this sense, been different from that of the Studies editors, who were at the University before the student movement had developed to the point of challenging the University's structure and function. It may

be significant that no two of us have the same faculty adviser: it is primarily through political involvement rather than through our work as graduate students that we have come to know each other. This issue represents an attempt on our part to synthesize our political views and experiences with our historical research.

Our attitude toward the historical profession is one of ambivalence. The most-important positive feature we see is that, through imposition of fairly-rigorous standards of evidence, the profession has helped to produce a great mass of historical writings which, although they may often ask trivial questions, nevertheless provide data that is generally reliable. While it is obvious that even an infinite number of minute monographic studies will not by themselves add up to a meaningful picture of the past, such studies are still valuable in developing such a picture. Similarly, though we tend to regard most claims of "scholarly objectivity" with deep skepticism, it is certainly true that the standards of proof within the historical profession are better than those which normally prevail in political controversy.

On the negative side, the profession seems to us a bad combination of a gentlemen's clubhouse and a bureaucracy. A gentlemen's clubhouse not simply because there are scarcely any women (not a single female history professor at Wisconsin, for example, among sixty members of the faculty), but also because of its upper-class tone that is carried over from the days when history was written principally by wealthy men of leisure. Even today faculty members at the most-prestigious universities, who largely set the tone for the profession as a whole, enjoy an income level and social status that sets them well apart from the lower classes in society, and a work set-up that sets them well apart from their own students. It is, at the same time, a bureaucracy in which younger men progress by producing tangible evidence of their merit (publications). In this constant struggle to advance, the history profession itself becomes the source of all values for those who depend on its approbation for their employment. It is an unhealthy atmosphere.

The profession is also guilty of a certain social irresponsibility. It operates for the most part on two levels: dry monographs, usually accessible only to other historians (although certainly historians have a better record in this regard than do social scientists), on one hand, and patriotic textbooks, written in a manner that is very careful not to disturb anyone's comfortable notions about the status quo, on the other. The political activism of radical historians is frowned on, but at the same time the slanting of history in textbooks is accepted as standard practice, necessary to get the texts accepted.

We regard methodology as the key to radical history, a fact that has too often been blurred in discussions of the subject. Radical historians have been no exception to the general rule that the level of historical theory in the US has been extremely low. It is vitally important that there be serious discussion of methodological questions. The primary purpose of this issue is to contribute to such a discussion, though much of what we say is of a very-preliminary nature.

We find Marxism the most-useful starting point, while recognizing that American Marxist history has not generally been of a high calibre,

and also that (as our own attempts at research and writing have shown) there are no magic methodological formulas that serve to make the job of writing history an easy one. Marxism seems most useful because it seems capable of absorbing the greatest variety of insights without getting hopelessly mired in complexity. There are a number of aspects of Marxism that we find especially helpful in attempting to fit specific historical phenomena into a coherent overview. Among these are the Marxian insistence that work, and the social relations by which it is organized, are the most-important feature of any society; the insight that political and social power typically flow from control over the productive apparatus of a society; the labor theory of value, which serves as a constant reminder of the importance of the lower classes, and of class interaction, in history; and the concept of dialectical self-development in history, by which society is never seen as being static, but is seen as containing the seeds of its own transformation. The key to Marxian methodology is the Marxian concept of social classes, and this is a concept we admit is particularly troublesome. Too often social classes have been treated by Marxian historians as pre-determined categories rather than as the products of historical development. When treated carefully, however, the class concept still seems to us the most-useful touchstone for understanding a society's development.

There is much utility in what has been called the bottom-up approach to history, an approach whose main proponent, Jesse Lemisch, eschews a Marxian methodology. Historical writing has tended to focus almost exclusively on the most articulate and powerful groups in society while the rest of the population is dealt with only in terms of organizations such as trade unions or in terms of leaders and spokesmen. Several of us had the experience of taking part in a reading seminar in American labor history during the spring and summer of 1970, and discovering that almost nothing is known about how most Americans have lived and worked. At the same time, bottom-up history has distinct limitations if it is not linked with an overview of the way the lower classes have related to the rest of society. What is valuable about W. E. B. Du Bois's work, for example, is not so much that he ferreted out valuable data about the lives of American blacks, but that he engaged in a lifelong struggle to assimilate this data into an overall conception of American and world history.

As a final note, we admit to great uncertainty about our own political functioning as radical historians. In many ways it is healthy that there is great confusion within the American Left, since there is no central authority (as the Communist Party was for many people in its heyday) to lay down a "correct line" for Left-wing intellectuals. In a sense we are free to derive our questions from the experience of the radical movement without being pressured to reach particular answers. For example, the experience of radicals who have taken factory jobs or otherwise tried to reach blue-collar workers has led to open-ended questions about the historical roots of racism and of anti-communism. Still, it is unsatisfying to lack an organizational vehicle by which both scholarly and political interests can be linked. The Radical Caucus in

the American Historical Association seems to us to be an important development, but like most of its counterparts in other academic fields it has de-emphasized questions of radical research and scholarship. As the American university environment becomes more tense and (in general) more repressive, the role of Left-wing teachers becomes increasingly uncertain. The only thing that can safely be said is that new definitions of that role are needed.



It may be remarked that there are a number of important topics that are given only cursory treatment in this issue. Mari Jo Buhle, Ann Gordon, and Nancy Schrom are working on a lengthy paper on Women's History which we plan to include, together with revised versions of the present articles, in a full-length book on radical historiography. Such a book would also include essays on black historical literature by Bob Starobin, on working-class history by Paul Faler, and on American Marxist historiography from 1940 to 1960 by Paul Richards. Readers' criticisms and suggestions concerning the beginnings we have made in this issue of RA will be gratefully welcomed.

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# American Marxist Historiography, 1900-1940

Paul Buhle

American Marxism has not provided its historical practitioners with a uniquely-illuminating or even a stable critique of American life and institutions. Rather, Marxist historical thought in this country has, with significant exceptions, suffered from the same faults as the rest of American historiography: ill-developed and overly-formulistic thinking, almost-complete inability to see beyond institutional history to the social history of ordinary Americans, and indifference to the philosophical and cultural insights traditionally part of the European intellectual heritage.

To be sure, there are peculiar problems relating to American Marxism as a whole and distorting its historical theorizing. Although active and militant, the working class was delayed in its formation as a self-conscious body by its demographic heterogeneity. Rather than expressing its tendencies by joining mass Marxist parties, it has shunned formal "Marxist" politics. Therefore American Socialism has always been, especially since the 1930s, a body of individuals speaking in the name of the masses of workers without, however, the intellectual and political security that the European Party infrastructure provided. And rather than being an ongoing movement which attracted and held intellectuals, American Marxism has been an unstable, fly-by-night operation in which intellectuals with talents are attracted for brief periods, move toward methodological Marxism, and with the decline of the Left flee before their full contribution is made. In 1910-1915, and again in 1930-1939, the elaboration of historical and other theoretical views was cut off prematurely, with the loss of several of the most outstanding minds.

Finally, the weakness of American Marxist thought reflected the intellectual background in the United States. Such turn-of-the-century European Marxist thinkers as Plekhanov, Hilferding, Lenin, Sorel, and Luxemburg grew out of, and reacted to, an intellectual and cultural heritage centuries in the making, while their American contemporaries lacked the training and influences to make equal headway. In fact the

acknowledged radical thinkers in this country were not Marxists at all, but Thorstein Veblen, John Dewey, and Charles Beard, whose break from the Nineteenth Century traditions greatly influenced American Socialists and resulted in the frequent but utterly-mistaken belief in the academic world and among the generally-educated public that these three were the outstanding Socialist intellectuals.

Similarly, it is important to note that the most-able Marxist writers in the United States have been, with the extraordinary exception of W. E. B. DuBois, until recently almost all either foreign-born or foreign-educated. Daniel DeLeon, C. L. R. James, Hermann Schleuter, Karl Korsch, and Paul Baran brought to America an international perspective and training derived from European universities and from mass-based Marxist parties which could not be replicated in this country. Native Marxists, sharply aware of their own limitations, reinforced their underdevelopment by concentrating almost entirely on translation, repetition, and partial elaboration of views handed down from Europe, principally Germany in the early period and Russia in the later.

Thus American Marxist historiography had little chance of gaining its own impetus and inertia and developing generations of younger scholars to make creative contributions to the study of American history. The weakness of the organized Left in general has not provided any independence of thought among the Marxist historians. To the contrary, this weakness has caused the frail developments in Marxist historiography just prior to the two world wars to collapse with the political structures. The possibility of Marxist "schools" of history within the University structure has been borne out only rarely, since contributions of high quality by Marxists have been calumniated or ignored within the profession, and the alliances of radical-leaning professors with the Left and its intellectual orthodoxy have been short-lived.

Yet the weaknesses of American Marxist historians are themselves revealing in the problems of understanding American life which their slight successes and greater failures reveal. To their credit, the boldest writers attempted to take on the unique characteristics of American society: its frontier, huge immigrant population, black minority, and movement from leader of the bourgeois revolution to counter-revolutionary bastion of the world. Equally important, the Marxists wrote about the various labor and radical movements which, especially before the 1950s, were generally ignored by the academic historians. In all, their historical works offer a vision of self, of heritage, and of prospects—a vision which may aid in understanding our own dilemmas and their historical roots.

#### Debsian Socialism: Prologue

During most of the latter part of the Nineteenth Century, American Marxism consisted of German cultural and political enclaves. There was very little concern for erudition in doctrine generally, and few of Marx's works were widely read. Moreover, varieties of non-Marxian



European Socialism which were brought to America concurrently with Marxian ideas, the incursion of native "socialistic" radicals completely indifferent to "foreign" ideas, and the isolation of the German skilled workers who made up the movements from the bulk of the unskilled labor force all mitigated against the development of a comprehensive theoretical view of American society.

In the 1890s the Socialist movement swelled and changed. Native reformers moving left, unskilled workers following Debs from the railway movement, intellectuals from the Nationalist (Bellamyite) Clubs, semi-socialistic Populists, newer immigrant radicals (Jews in the garment trades particularly), and others joined the Socialist ranks in considerable numbers and inevitably transformed the parties. The outstanding intellectual figure of the movement was Daniel DeLeon of the Socialist Labor Party, one of the first important leaders to stress the Americanization of the movement. His historical views were casual — developed only in the columns of the SLP organ The People; yet they made a lasting impression on Socialists because, as a supposed "Marxian" interpretation of the American Revolution, they were unique. DeLeon looked to the Founding Fathers (and particularly to James Madison) and their political successors (especially Abraham Lincoln) as having prepared the way for Socialist triumph. (1) For DeLeon, such far-sighted figures were men of vision whose leadership, character, and sense of historical necessity should be followed in what DeLeon called "The New Abolitionism" (that is, of wage slavery). Thereby, although the influence of his own historical interpretation was to be short-lived, DeLeon had raised a critical position to be fought about repeatedly during the course of American Marxist historiography. Were the bourgeois democratic leaders, especially Jefferson, Jackson, and Lincoln, progressive forces in the hastening of capitalism's development and thus the coming of Socialism? Or were they and the documents and institutions they produced, especially the Revolutionary Government, the Constitution, and the Emancipation Proclamation, merely extreme examples of ruling-class efforts to dupe the workers and farmers? The historians would change over the years, but in a certain sense the frame of the debates would not, for at stake was the legitimacy of the American democratic heritage and the credence that a Marxist movement would give to American society's self-conception.

## SOCIALIST HISTORY

By 1900 American Socialism displayed the beginnings of a social movement, with thousands of members and tens of thousands of periodical readers and followers. In the first instance, the needs and strengths of this movement created the history-writers from the intellectual material at hand. Editors, popularizers, and scattered students of European Marxian texts found a place and encouragement to educate working-class socialists, or reach middle-class and rural audiences, through socialist newspapers, magazines, book companies.

Secondarily, however, the initiative among Socialist intellectuals to

write history-as-agitation was brought to fruition by the currents of thought in American society as a whole, and particularly within the academies. The Progressive sensibility, which placed reliance upon an educated public righting the wrongs of the special-privilege groups, permeated middle-class America and the Socialist movement through the "Parlor Socialists". The historical dimension of this sensibility gained its greatest impetus with Beard's Economic Interpretation of the Constitution of the United States (1912), but was developed also in lesser important works by J. Allen Smith, Woodrow Wilson, and a score of others which emphasized the elitist aspects of Federalist politics in the Revolutionary Period. Concurrently, the "scientific", self-confident aspect of the newer social sciences, and even the "psychological" view of mass society as developed by Veblen, further encouraged Socialist historical analysis which drew its inspiration from the intellectual mood of the time.

The most-profound of the Debsian historians was, ironically, a man who appeared to be little touched by the Twentieth Century bourgeois intellectual currents which so influenced other Socialist historians. Hermann Schleiter was a living remnant of the Nineteenth Century European Socialism, an aging editor who had corresponded with Marx and had, since the 1880s, edited the best Marxist paper in America: the New Yorker Volkzeitung, published in Schleiter's native German. During the 1890s Schleiter had written an outstanding history of the American working class, in German; but only after the turn of the century did he begin to write works in English. His Brewing Industry and the Brewery Workers' Movement in America (1910) may be called the first attempt in the English language to compile the social history of a segment of the white American working class. Characteristically, the book was undertaken to show workers and factory owners that the union movement had struck roots and was in the industry to stay; logically, for the time, it was published by the Brewery Workers' Union itself.

As Schleiter noted in the preface, his Brewing Industry was more than a history of the brewery workers. It was an attempt to portray the shaping of the work force by the needs of the industry and by growing initiative from workers in response to their plight. Schleiter began with colonial America, where the introduction of rum (due to what he called "a higher purpose — let us say a Christian purpose... Negro slaves... for which the chief means of payment was Christian rum") destroyed the brewing industry until after the Revolution. Schleiter indicated the change in the relationship between owner and work force in the Nineteenth Century, when the craftsman/apprentice or the small peasant/serf relationship was disrupted by introduction of machinery and a substantial group of workers. The struggle for the ten-hour day and the extended boycotts of national breweries resulted, at last, in one of the first quasi-industrial "unions" in the early 1890s. Schleiter drew up a chart of wage changes which he proudly called "a document in the history of civilization, giving information which demonstrates the value of organization among workingmen and shows more clearly than speeches and writings the civilizing value of the labor movement".

Schleuter believed, indeed, that his chart could be “used by future historians as a proof of the significance of the labor movement in the progress of mankind”. (2)

Schleuter’s admirable book fell short precisely at the point at which his personal experience dictated the nature of his historical research. In the Eighties, Schleuter’s Volkzeitung had served as the official organ of the brewery union, and in discussing the period Schleuter fell back on a cataloguing of leadership actions. From that point in the work on, Schleuter vacillated between organizational history desiccated by its formalism, and material comparable in quality to the earlier part of the work, which had concentrated on the development of the workers in the industry (inside and outside the union) as a whole.

Schleuter’s second and last English-language book was equally



important. Lincoln, Labor, and Slavery (1913) was quite probably written in response to the interest and debate among socialists about Lincoln and the larger implied issues of democratic heritage. Schleuter offered a largely-documentary treatment which, however, provided a more-balanced account than later Socialist and Communist works, which almost invariably failed to treat white workingmen’s racism. Perhaps the most-unique characteristic of the book is the documentary exchanges of letters, with Schleuter’s comments, between various reform leaders such as Horace Greeley and George Henry Evans, and reproductions of their writings from the time.

Schleuter confessed at the onset that his work was Marxist, instilled with the conception that “economic production, and the division of society into classes caused thereby... constitutes the foundation of the

political and intellectual history of any epoch". He hoped to show the role of the international working class, especially the British workers, in bringing about Negro emancipation in America; and to reveal the ambiguity of Lincoln toward the Negro and toward Labor. His treatment of general conditions leading to the Civil War was crudely economic: He analyzed the "expression" of the struggle in tariff legislation and farm prices, barely mentioning the efforts of the South to gain territory and not even touching on the ideological differences which had been created. However he took up the question of Abolitionists and their contradictory relationship with Northern workers in a firm and sympathetic, but unapologetic manner. He held that the conflict between Abolitionist class-hostility and the "awakening class consciousness" of especially organized workers "put a damper" on the potential alliance. Schleuter's treatment of the attitude of Southern workingmen was forthright, but limited and formulistic: He held that their complete subjugation to the upper classes had, in spite of the desires of some Southern workingmen to oppose secession in their union activities, doomed them to exploitation by their rulers and division from their potential brothers, the blacks.

Schleuter's view of Lincoln was forthrightly hostile to his heroization by some Socialists, yet he did not fall into muckraking. He viewed Lincoln as a man of his class and his time, who "did not possess... knowledge of economic evolution", who "had no idea even of the special significance of the labor movement", and who did not favor workers "as a separate class". Rather, Schleuter viewed Lincoln's ideals as lower-middle-class, Jacksonian in the sense that Lincoln saw every worker as a potential small proprietor, like the small farmer and middle-class member whose interests he represented.

Schleuter treated, finally, the state of the labor movement during the Civil War and its emergence from the battles. The riots in New York against blacks were due to frustrations exaggerated by troop placements which especially excited the city's Irish population. While workers' movements in the North suffered repression, the workers themselves were generally loyal and, among the Germans especially, pro-Abolition. Most important of all, the consolidation and extension of Capital in the financing of the Civil War heralded the creation of a larger, more-coherent working class in America. As Schleuter closed: "The time will have to be ripe and the way will have to be cleared by economic development" for Socialism — a ripening and clearing that was essentially furthered by the Civil War. (3)

In Lincoln, Labor, and Slavery, Schleuter had produced a work which eludes certain classification: It was at points a source book, at other points a historical narrative, and at still other points a Socialistic propagandistic work which pointed away from the lionization of Lincoln and toward the inevitability of economically-based change. As in the Brewing Industry, his efforts were for their time outstanding in their serious and undemagogic efforts to place the American working class in a historic and political context, to reflect honestly upon some of its tensions, and to reconcile history written for laboring men with history which dealt rigorously with the class structures of society.

The nearest counterpart to Schleuter in Nineteenth Century Socialist orthodoxy was Morris Hillquit, who authored the first political History of Socialism in America (1908). Despite Hillquit's association with some of the Party's leading intellectuals in New York, where he was the acknowledged Socialist leader, the History reflected no innovations in its study. Rather, Hillquit had pulled together available knowledge on the institutions of Nineteenth Century "scientific" Socialism — parties, unions, and social auxiliaries — and summarized information on Utopian colonies for a journalistic, popular introduction to the subject. Perhaps only in the area of German-American social forms like Gymnasiums and singing societies did Hillquit's narrative escape the chronology of leaders, conventions, and statements to the press; and only in his critical sympathy for Utopians was the book otherwise unique. While Schleuter's chief limitation lay in his inability to see the uniqueness of skilled German-American workers, who were ipso-facto organizable, Hillquit betrayed no sense of class at all. A parliamentary Socialist of the most-extreme kind, he had written a purely-political work. (4)

Most Socialist work, however, and particularly that written after 1910, bore the stamp of the evolving social science and the mood of the more-advanced academic intellectuals toward American history. In the work of several historians, particularly J. Allen Smith, Charles Beard, and James McMasters, the Socialists found authenticated grist for their ideological mill: proof that the Eighteenth Century ruling class and its predecessors had repeatedly duped and exploited the ordinary people of the nation, and had established the Constitution (and perhaps even forced the Revolution) for their own pecuniary purposes.

James Oneal, a popular Socialist journalist, responded to the pleas of the Socialist ranks for a simplification of the academic works which would pinpoint the heritage of the American working class. Oneal's Workers in American History (1910) grew out of an agitational series in the popular St. Louis paper the National Rip-Saw, based, as Oneal noted, on knowledge which could be obtained "at any library". Yet he did not use his sources uncritically, for he believed that despite the historians' own economic contributions they had helped prevent the specific history of American workers from emerging for popular consumption. In differentiating his efforts from theirs, he disdained the "beautiful inanities in Flowing English that charm and soothe jaded idlers or suspend the thinking faculties of workingmen", dissociating himself from the hired professional who was "invariably a man whose associations and environment have formed an aristocratic type of mind which shrinks from revealing anything that reflects discredit on the 'great men' of the past", and who had to "be vindicated in the interests of the class that today possesses resources originally secured by force, fraud, and the servitude of workingmen".

The result was, in substance, a reading-back of contemporary class interests and differences into the past. Oneal reduced poor farmers and all other "dispossessed" in colonial and post-colonial history into "proletarians". Thus he could summarize all of American history into ten points, from the discovery of America, "followed by a horde of adventurers", through the luring of beggared workers and development

of an ever-richer American aristocracy, to the "secret conspiratory body and Counter-revolution" of the Constitution, to the rise of the workers against the new industrial exploiters, to the last (future) point: "the triumph of the workers". Oneal especially attempted to detail white indenture and outright slavery, feeling that these were essential but little-understood aspects of working-class history. He muckraked New England's supposed democracy, mentioned blacks only as a potential peripheral ally, and pictured Revolutionists in 1776 as "more like drunken rioters" than men with high-minded ideals. (5)

Oneal's historical dilemma, like that of other Socialists reading the muckraking Progressive historiography, was that he could not manage a consistent attitude toward the Revolution. As a Marxist, he believed the struggle to be a great step forward; as a reader and propagandist, he could not bring himself to fully grant credit to the bourgeoisie for such progress. And the other possibility, that certain lower-class elements had legally encouraged the rebellion against Britain over the opposition of portions of the colonial ruling class, simply did not occur to Oneal, who personally believed in strictly-legal trade-unionist and political struggles toward Socialism. Thus, while Oneal had summarized a great deal of available information about Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century exploitation of the poor, he had fused the narrow-mindedness of his traditional Socialism with the mechanical interpretations of Progressive historians. The result was a portrait, at best, of what happened to the ordinary people in colonial society, rather than what they did to meet their problems. And at that, Oneal's account was soaked in the racism of indifference toward the blacks' plight: his righteous indignation at the widespread ignorance of white servitude only indicated his ignorance of the difference between servitude and slavery.

Socialist muckrakers with no apparent knowledge of Marxism produced accounts similar to Oneal's. Gustavus Myers's The Great American Fortunes (1910), by far the most-popular socialist historical work, fell into the hands of Charles H. Kerr Company only because it had been refused commercial publication. Like contemporary bourgeois historians, Myers focused his account on the rich and commercially powerful; unlike them, he revealed the most vicious and exploitative ways in which fortunes were made. His philosophy of history was perhaps summed up in a passage about the poor, in which he noted flatly that "History, in the main, thus far, has been an institution for the propagation of lies.... Since the private-property system came into existence, an incessant, uncompromising warfare has been going on between oppressors and oppressed." (6)

In a similar vein, the popularist Allan Benson, whose only distinction lay in his nomination for the presidency by the Socialists in 1916, wrote Our Dishonest Constitution, published in 1914. Wholly derived from Progressive historical sources (including, Benson was quick to note, Woodrow Wilson), the book was a hatchet job on the Founding Fathers, with chapters such as "By the Rich for the Rich". Typically, Our Dishonest Constitution closed with an appeal to restore several of the governmental forms which had prevailed under the Confederation,

such as the unicameral legislature; but added that, after all, only Socialism would be a full solution to the problems of democratic government. (7)

Perhaps only one Socialist historian really understood the meaning of the Progressive historians, and actively sought to reconcile this meaning with modern European Marxist thought. A. M. Simons, who graduated from the University of Wisconsin in the 1890s, had studied with Frederick Jackson Turner and retained a life-long relationship with Richard T. Ely, a leading social-science innovator. Thus more than any other of the Socialist scholars he brought to his Socialist intellectual labors a sophistication of technique and method peculiar to the academic attitudes of the times. From 1900 to 1908 he had edited the most-erudite Socialist journal published, the International Socialist Review, for which he translated a great deal of German Marxist writing, provided the basis for an intellectual forum between the most advanced Socialist thinkers, and with his wife May Wood Simons sought to keep the journal abreast of the developments at the University of Chicago and elsewhere in academia. In part, he had sought to clarify the peculiarities of American history, particularly American agrarian history. The product was an outstanding work, The American Farmer, published in 1902.

In this work, Simons brought together Kautsky's Agarfrage and Turner's frontier theory on the terrains of United States agriculture. He apparently also borrowed from contemporary anthropology and prevailing American mythology to describe a character type for each area. He debunked the Yankee farmer "democracy" of colonial times, pictured the South as generally lethargic (accepting racist stereotypes about black laborers as unfit to win their own freedom), and singled out the pioneer farmer who remained mostly in the Midwest as "the purest American type...the most-unique of all the diversified social forms appearing on this continent". Simons wrote historically about the city in Bryanesque terms as a force reaching out into the frontier areas with a "grip of iron" to grasp the farmer in his newly-won home and recreate "at once all the conditions which the great pioneer army of America had been fleeing since the founding of the first straggling colony along the Atlantic coast". In more-recent decades, the city had acted like "a great vampire sucking away the best blood of the rural communities" all over America. Only a farmer-worker movement for Socialism, Simons warned, could restore a proper balance to village and metropolitan areas. But he did not see any mechanical process for economic unification of laborers and small farmers; indeed, in perhaps the most-impressive parts of the book, Simons amassed empirical evidence to show that the small farmer was not being swallowed up by larger farms or being subdivided into smaller ones. Rather Simons looked to a political development which would unite the insights of Turner and Marx in practice as he believed he had reconciled them in theory. (8)

Like the rest of Simons's historical work, The American Farmer had in his own words been "snatched from a life filled to overflowing" with more-direct forms of Socialist agitation. Logically, therefore, his

most-influential book appeared as a result of enthusiasm generated by a historical series he had written for the popular newspaper Appeal to Reason. Simons later claimed that in 1907 some four thousand Socialist historical clubs had been formed with his pamphlet Class Struggles in American History as primary text. Stimulated, like Oneal, by Socialist rank-and-file desires for a class study, Simons lengthened his work into Social Forces in American History (1911). (9)

In Social Forces, as in his earlier book, Simons strove to fuse Turner with Marx. Here he saw the frontier as the one (temporary) exception to Marx's historical laws on the clear development of certain social classes. In America, small farmers had not been reactionary peasants, but yeomen perennially at odds with Eastern ruling-class politicians. The East for Simons was always a place of intrigue, from the Constitution to the Civil War to the Gilded Age: Always the elite managed to manipulate the poor farmers and workmen to fight wars for them. The planters were no better, precipitating the War of 1812 because of cotton prices and duping the Southern whites into supporting their form of exploitation.

Simons's ambivalence toward the Civil War symbolized in one sense his racism. He had slight regard for blacks historically and revealed a certain sympathy for the white South's plight during Reconstruction. But in another sense his attitude reflected a deep-seated uneasiness about industrial development generally, an uneasiness Simons barely concealed with his supposedly-orthodox Marxism. In The American Farmer, he had openly expressed doubt whether the destruction of pastoral, pre-"civilized" life in Spanish California had been a positive development; and throughout the rest of his writings he remained convinced of what he called the "communistic character" of frontier life which had been corrupted by the cities and their industries. In all Simons remained the small-town Midwestern boy who had become a Marxist — and, at last, ceased to be a Socialist when the movement seemed to him to be "anti-American" during World War I. Despite his insight into the historical processes, for which Beard recommended Social Forces, Simons had never been able to mentally sort out the conflicting patterns of archaic agrarianism, Progressive assumptions, and Socialist thought which went into his writing. (10)

Only one other historical writer so-perceptively absorbed and sought to use the contemporary social-science developments. Austin Lewis, a rare intellectual veteran of America's Nineteenth Century Socialist movement, was a scholarly-minded lawyer. Early in the new century he observed the permeation of materialist doctrine into the colleges via E. R. A. Seligman's Economic Interpretation of History, and, while scoring Seligman's hostility to Marxism, showed gratification at the introduction which students could receive.

Later on, Lewis observed the development of unskilled workers' movements perhaps more closely than any other American intellectual. He was among the first to draw the conclusion that an intra-class struggle had begun and would be waged quite irrespective of the skilled workers' frequent attachment to political Socialism. Over several years of writing for militant Socialist magazines and newspapers,



Lewis elaborated a theory of the evolution of the working class under the impact of mechanization. While the Socialist Party in America, like Socialist Parties abroad, clung to its petty-bourgeois, skilled working-class origins, a new class and its representatives in the political movements were setting about reconstructing Socialism. The new group's greater solidarity with the working class as a whole, its indifference to the "progress" of the skilled unions, its determination to take over production in a social crisis — all these, Lewis believed, flowed from a particular sort of machine "psychology" induced by the newer working conditions of mass production.

Lewis clearly borrowed, as did a few of his Socialist contemporaries, from Veblen. In a thin volume, The Militant Proletariat (1913), he set out his analysis which brought Veblen's suggestions together with the particular American conditions and the political process. Unfortunately Lewis had neither the skill nor apparent interest to develop his ideas in proper historiographic fashion. (11)

Despite his intelligence and interest, Lewis was circumscribed, as were other Socialist historical writers, by the role the intellectual saw for himself, and that which the Socialist movement saw for him. Intellectuals in the Debsian period were basically men of leisure (generally lawyers) with time to write, or editors charged with the responsibility of providing more-substantial treatises when political occasion demanded. These writers produced documents which reflected the conglomerate interests and social bases upon which the Debsian movement thrived: Natural Rights philosophy from the Southern and Southwestern farm movements; archaic European Social Democratic views from skilled German workmen and other skilled working-class Socialists; and the generally non-intellectual and rough-and-tumble ideologies of the Wobblies and their unskilled, non-English-speaking affiliated workers.

At best the Socialist contribution to American Marxist historiography was a fragmented one, stained with recurrent racism. Nearly all the Socialist works reflected the themes which had been central to the Socialist Party before World War I: the faith in the education of the masses, the struggles of the skilled workers and farmers, the historic self-portraiture which linked the destiny of the Socialists to their downtrodden American ancestors and their successors who would live in a Socialist society. Even as Oneal, Simons, Schleuter, and Hillquit elaborated these themes, social pressures upon the Socialist movement were causing its reorganization and the reformulation of its doctrines. Austin Lewis, along with a scattering of other Socialist intellectuals, sought to respond to new developments which brought the great strikes of unskilled workers, the fruition of a Progressive (but anti-Socialist) political movement, the War, the repression of radicals, and the Russian Revolution. But the very pace of events, and lack of scholarly interests among the New Left - Socialist intellectuals, brought nothing substantial of historiographical value; and the effect of the War along with the decisive split in the Socialist movement in 1919, precluded further internal development of Marxist intellectuals for an extended period.

## In - Between: The 1920s

The rise of American Communism after its official founding in 1919 had contradictory effects on the development of Marxist historiography. The weakness of American intellectual forces and the overpowering example of Russian Marxist triumph encouraged the stifling of all intellectual advances which did not correspond exactly to the frequently abstract and universal social analyses laid out by the Comintern. The measure of scholarly autonomy and the lack of an all-powerful central force in the Socialist Party were replaced by a movement insisting on much more for its members and, for a considerable period, showing little interest in the promotion of historical and social studies of the United States. Thus Communist intellectuals of the 1920s were far more occupied with translation and elaboration of doctrine from abroad than Socialist intellectuals had been in the analogous period of the 1890s; and the energies expended on internecine warfare replicated on a far broader scale the most extreme sectarianism of the earlier days. In periods of Left weakness, return to fratricidal attacks recurrently dominated intellectual concerns; but the level of phrase-mongering polemics surpassed similar Socialist tendencies throughout, and was an apparent drain on other intellectual activities.

On the other hand, Communism formally strengthened Marxism, which had been the leading but not all-dominating Socialist intellectual tendency. Moreover, the Communists, after Lenin's model, encouraged the growth of an intelligentsia inside and outside the Communist Party with greater respect (so long as it proved completely within discipline) among radical ranks than Socialist intellectuals had enjoyed. Finally Leninist and Stalinist doctrines regarding national self-determination in general and the black American population in particular ultimately brought the Communists to a political line which at least formally paid a unique respect to black history and black institutions.

During the 1920s next to nothing was written by radicals on American history. Characteristically, the Communist Daily Worker published at various times analyses of the American Revolution which contradicted each other. The first Communist History of the American Working Class was written by Anthony Bimba and published in 1928, an almost direct emanation from the old Socialist tradition of historical writing. Spiced by quotations from Simons, Myers, and Oneal, Bimba's work was taken entirely from secondary accounts. It was a worthwhile treatment only in its imaginative use of the secondary histories, as Bimba portrayed the dehumanizing processes of mechanization in the Nineteenth Century and the first workers' struggles to better their conditions.

Bimba's work was flawed in a number of ways. He showed little of the later Communist sympathy for Indians and blacks, uncritically praising Nathaniel Bacon's revolt and commenting that Negroes were "so backward, so ignorant, so oppressed that they did not even dream of living as free people" (although he admitted that they, like the workers today, had a "Vanguard"! ). Worst of all, his historical work

became progressively more factional as it approached the present. From the study of the 1880s, in which he honestly praised the American anarchists' energies and sincerity, he derogated all opponents of "working from within" unions (the Communist Party strategy at the time of his writing, changed a year later), ignorantly and viciously attacked Socialist opponents of Communist-led fragmentation, and generally brutalized history in favor of a proper "line". (13)

In the 1920s, only one other work of historical value was produced in a "Marxist" vein. Nathan Fine's Farmer and Labor Parties in the US, 1828-1928, was in some ways the factional counterpart of Bimba's work. Although Fine catalogued quite properly the institutional histories of various reform movements of the Nineteenth Century, he turned to anecdotal invective as he defended conservative trade-union Socialists against Left Socialists in the Debsian period and both against the Communists in the 1920s. Although his work closed with a clarion-call for confidence in the proletarians' movement, Fine had elaborated no distinctively radical or Socialist view of radical history. Long on facts, Fine, like Bimba, was short on perspective. (14)

#### Depression Marxism I: Third Period Communists

The early years of the Depression brought a considerable influx of college-educated and middle-class individuals into the Communist movement. Yet it was characteristic of the 1930s in several ways that few became Marxist historians. First, Communism tended far more than Socialism had to direct youth into the factories, where they served as disciplined cadres cut off from non-Communist intellectual contacts. Second, the doctrinaire attitude taken by the Communists until the mid-1930s did very little to encourage the study of peculiarly-American conditions and history: rather, general "exposure" of exploitation and admonition to action served. Finally, the efforts made to elaborate Marxist doctrine were made primarily in literature, with some sharp Communist anti-critiques of bourgeois developments in philosophy and economics.

The Communist histories of the early 1930s varied: while some writers bore the burden of vindicating the Communists' world-view and past actions at all points, a few others sought to move beyond previous bourgeois histories in particular areas. A series of books on different labor movement sectors, such as Grace Hutchins's Labor and Silk, were in part historical. Invariably, though, the historical treatment of the workers in the trade was limited to abstract commentaries on leadership "sellouts" and rank-and-file sincerity throughout the decades of activity, with scant consideration of working-class history proper. The inevitable lesson, drawn wherever Communists and Socialists fought within the union movements in the 1920s and 1930s, was drawn so one-sidedly and intemperately as to cast suspicion upon the honesty of the account.

Anthony Bimba's second book, The Molly Maguires (1932) was the only historically-worthwhile text published by the Communists' International Publishers during the early 1930s. Unlike his earlier

History, The Molly Maguires was drawn from primary research. Bimba condemned the treatment of the Mollies, even by Socialist writers like Oneal, as "criminals", and hailed Debs's judgment of them as "the miners' leaders...in the first major class battle in American labor history". But neither did Bimba simply condemn the anti-Molly miners' union, in usual Communist fashion, as sincere at the bottom and corrupt at the top. He pointed out that the Miners' National Association was

based on a rapidly-developing capitalism which could, so to speak, buy off certain sections of the workers and their leaders with the profits made from its expanding industries. As American imperialism developed the basis of this opportunism shifted. From the super-profits made in the exploitation of new markets and colonial and semi-colonial peoples, American imperialism corrupted whole sections of the skilled workers and the whole strata of its leadership. (15)

Quite rarely, in Socialist or Communist approaches, had such a forthright analysis been made. Rarely until the Sixties was it to be made again.

One Communist writer outside the regular Communist press also made an important effort to reinterpret American history. Herbert Morais's Deism in Eighteenth Century America (1934), published by Columbia, was the first of the works by Communists who made their living in the academic world and wrote scholarly works unashamedly. In this sense, it was a transition to later Communist efforts during and after the Popular Front to gain the deserved respectability of well written Communist historical works. Deism had no polemical asides, no class-struggle conclusions directed toward inspiring workers. However it was written with open partisanship toward the deists and other free-thinkers, based on research into "pamphlets, sermons, diaries, travelers' accounts, library catalogues, and especially periodicals", with the intent of indicating the class support of its rise and decline, and the extent of its influence at its highest moments in the last decades of the century when it spread from the intelligentsia to the masses.

Morais analyzed the upper-class deistic approach, which generally minimized its anti-Christian aspects, as non-virulent compared to French deism. In studying Benjamin Franklin, James Madison, Thomas Jefferson and other Founding Fathers, he found a "prudence" which was aimed at reforming Christianity without making a frontal assault on it, at establishing Reason foremost without damaging the fabric of class ridden society. Thus, because of its conservative and compromising nature, deism could not appeal to the currents of radical atheism, nor could it really appeal to conservative Christians. It eventually fell, for the Eighteenth Century at least, "into the limbo of unfortunate causes attempting to steer a middle course". Not until the Nineteenth Century and its attachment to Owenite Socialism and later to the workers' struggles — which Morais promised to examine in a later volume — did deism stage a comeback. (16)

Altogether, Morais's work typified some of the best aspects of Communist historiography. While it lacked the sweeping view of American civilization that, for instance, W.E.B. DuBois's work has possessed, Deism did not trespass the limits of the research behind the work: it neither claimed a special monopoly upon correct interpretation, nor indulged in clumsy political analogies to drive home a Communist agitational point. Here, the promise of Communist history was that of Socialist history on a higher level: solid research, imaginative conclusions, and a grounding in a sincere if not dialectically comprehended materialism.

A partial counterpart was Granville Hicks's The Great Tradition (1934), by an intellectual who had only recently turned Left and put aside theological beliefs (his first book had been entitled Eight Ways of Looking — at Christianity). While Hicks did force an interpretation on



the history of American literature — insisting on the existence of a great American Nineteenth Century tradition which had been defiled by writers like Branch Cabell and Thornton Wilder — he carried through a close textual examination of various writers and attempted a forthright interpretation of their class biases. The pretension of The Great Tradition to a certain kind of political righteousness, and the occasionally narrow “Socialist Realist” version of interpretation, pointed to the limiting factors in Communist literary thought. Yet the work was one from which scattered insights could be brought and which strove for social re-interpretation rather than doctrinaire propaganda. Fundamentally, its crudeness was tempered by a real enthusiasm for the subject and an eagerness to learn through exploration about the

grand new literature which a vibrant social movement could produce. (17)

## Depression Marxism II: Popular Front Days

The potential of Communist historiography was decisively changed and reshaped by the sharp changes in the Communist movement after 1934. During the next decade, with the exception of several years, the Party sought to fuse its destiny with that of American liberal political tradition. As it formed a central focus within the left wing of New Deal politics, American Communism more than doubled its size to become a social movement with a relative strength only slightly less than that of the Socialists a generation earlier. Moreover, as Communists extended their influence into the widely expanded labor movement, the movement was able to synthesize — partially and temporarily, in any case — its claim to leadership of the class-conscious proletariat with its grasp of broad democratic impulses in the professional classes. Communist historians and historians friendly to Communists were met during the period with generally-contradictory forms of encouragement. On the one hand, to be a Communist or sympathizer did not automatically, as before or since, completely designate pariah status: collections of Marxists at several New York universities openly identified their historical and political tasks. On the other hand, the Party leadership was zealous in its use of historians' talents in explaining the Party's position on the democratic heritage, distorted or not. And finally, the historians themselves were sharply divided between Communists and anti-Communists, reinforcing the doctrinaire and defensive attitudes of those remaining with the Left.

The transformation of official Party historical views was evident by 1936, when an election pamphlet, "Who Are the Americans?", bore on its cover a fife-and-drum corps surrounded by a wreath with the memorable slogan "Communism Is the Americanism of the Twentieth Century". The pamphlet proudly recited the lineage of its chieftain and candidate for President Earl Browder, whose ancestors had fought in the Revolutionary War. (18) Earlier that year, on Lincoln's Birthday, Browder had delivered a speech, reprinted as a pamphlet on "Lincoln and the Communists", in which he exalted Lincoln's initiative and contrasted him with Franklin Roosevelt, noting that while the former "did not hesitate to confiscate the slave-owners' property and to arm the freed slaves", the latter was too afraid to openly challenge the reactionary forces in the nation. The Republican Party might use Lincoln's image in its own name, but, Browder commented, it "trembles with fear" before Lincoln's words applied to the current crisis, which found the Communist Party the rightful successor to Lincoln (and also to Jefferson and Jackson). (19)

In the next several years, Browder led Communist utilization of historical analogy for current political purposes. Particularly Browder was fascinated by the events of the American Revolution and the Critical Years to the end of Jefferson's administration: Here were the major ingredients for any revolutionary political analysis, including incendiary agitation, conspiracy, treason, suppression of civil liberties, and

successful radical statesmanship. In 1938, Browder's pamphlet Traitors in American History: Lessons of the Moscow Trials featured a rattlesnake on the cover which, in fact, symbolized both the treasonous conspirators Arnold, Blount, Burr, and Hamilton — and the Trotskyists. Jefferson, in Browder's analogy, was likened to Stalin, for recognizing the threat of treason; and the judges who acquitted Burr were seen as earlier-day Norman Thomases, hopeless middle-of-the-roaders. (20) A year earlier Browder offered a positive counterpart to this analysis in the "Revolutionary Background of the United States Constitution", which like the "Traitors" pamphlet was directed first at the Communist rank-and-file itself rather than the general public. Here Browder related that he had been digging the "revolutionary gold in the ore of American history" by reading Claude Bowers's works on Jefferson and Burton Hendricks's Bulwark of the Republic. The conclusion he derived was that Communist historiography had always been on the wrong track in regard to the Founding Fathers, the unimpeachable sanction for which was Lenin's "Letter to the American Workers", hailing the events of 1776 — a historical point which had been overlooked for a generation of class-struggle Communist interpretation. For Browder, the Revolutionary War had "unleashed incalculable forces among the masses, which operate to the present day". The forces of progress and reaction, crystallized in Jefferson ("the fitting representative" of "the masses of people...philosopher and statesman of democracy") and Hamilton (who during Adams's administration "rode hard and desperately to realize his dictatorial ambitions"), still continued with the Communists on the far wing of progressive elements. (21)

Browder's exact influence on Marxist historiography is difficult to measure. Granville Hicks was quick to note that despite Browder's own lack of expertise in the subject, his analysis had raised a challenge to Communist historians to refashion the past with "even more significant" results than the Beardian liberal historians. (22) This challenge was taken up directly in only a handful of works published in an International historical series during the late 1930s with no apparent lasting impact. On the other hand, Communist historiography never returned fully to the clear class-struggle orientation of the Third Period: henceforth, in its elaboration, the work would retain a modicum of respect for bourgeois heroes like Jefferson and Lincoln and for "progressive" but non-revolutionary forces generally. The effect on academics friendly to Popular Front Communism is even more problematic. In all likelihood, such professors were embarrassed at the excesses of Browder and the cruder Communist historians, attempted to remain as friendly allies with a decreasing interest in Communist doctrine, and finally were prepared for a rupture from the Left when pressures inside and outside the academies were forced upon them.

The Communists' regular historical series was ill-fated by its short-term calculation of historical analogy. Richard Enmale wrote an introduction to Marx and Engels's The American Civil War (1936) stressing the role of Northern wage-earners in the War to the point at which the Lincoln Government assumed the visage of a Popular Front regime. (23) James S. Allen's Reconstruction — The Battle for

Democracy (1937) was, as Harold Cruse later noted, written in part to establish the Party's analysis in "correction" of the "errors" in W.E.B. DuBois's Black Reconstruction (1935). (24) Unwilling to concede DuBois's sweeping indictment of the failure of the American system and problematic nature of white working-class consciousness, Allen was bound to depict events as leading from Reconstruction toward a culmination of the "struggle for democracy" in the Party's 1930s Left coalition politics. Jack Hardy's The First American Revolution (1937) may not have been, as Louis Hacker called it, "one of the most extraordinary exercises in historical perversion and distortion that have ever been written", but it was a mediocre and artificial work written with all-too-obvious analogies between Revolutionary leaders of 1776 and current Communist luminaries. (25) Hardy stressed the totally instrumental nature of the Revolution, which in his view had "nothing haphazard or accidental about its course", since it was guided at all points by a cadre leadership which "sacrificed everything, fighting with a determination, a consistency, a singleness of purpose, and an iron will". Inevitably, Hardy moved toward a conclusion which quoted heavily from Browder and Lenin and resolved once and for all that the Spirit of '76, while dead in American Capitalism, was inherited by the Popular Front forces which were "both the inheritors and the only defenders of the historic American traditions". (26)

Outside the realm of immediate political agitation, however, efforts were being made by the mid-1930s to establish a more profound Marxist scholarship in history, philosophy, literature, and other areas. Several Communist academic intellectuals had, in 1936, initiated the creation of Science & Society, a learned journal formally devoted chiefly to the non-doctrinaire extension of Marxist thought. In its first several years the journal did indeed show an independence of spirit and intent. Initial contributing editors included historians Broadus Mitchell and Fulmer Mood, while regular contributors included Henry David, Samuel Yellen, Curtis Nettels, Matthew Josephson, Paul Birdsall, Irving Mark, and George Dangerfield. Certainly not since the short-lived socialist New Review of 1913-1916 had any Left journal attracted such a notable group of participants from American universities.

Of course, there was no one-to-one relationship between sympathy for a Left movement demonstrated by publishing in a Left journal and active utilization of Marxian historiographical methods. Josephson, Nettels, Birdsall, and Dangerfield, as well as other historical writers attracted to the Left (such as Almont Lindsay and James Dombrowski), manifested a materialism revealing in varying degrees post-Beardian sophistication, but revealing no clear Marxist strain. Of the book-length contributions by Science & Society historical contributors during the 1930s, only Irving Mark's monograph Agrarian Conflicts in Colonial New York, 1711-1775 (1940) stands out as Marxian-oriented reinterpretation of a historic period. Mark established the despoliation of the Indian population, the oligarchical control of social institutions by a wealthy agricultural elite, and the generally-unsuccessful attempts by the impoverished farmers to gain a redistribution of wealth. The State of New York, Mark closed using Lenin's phrase, had had its "agrarian



question" raised early, and though never resolved with complete democracy included ever-present struggles against privilege. (27) Also, several worthwhile, avowedly Marxist historical articles were published in the first several years of Science & Society: studies by E.S. Mims and Granville Hicks, respectively, on Orestes Brownson and V.L. Parrington, and most notably the first appearance of Herbert Aptheker's research on slave revolts. (28) Thus, although the journal had not brought Marxism fully to the academies' history departments, or vice-versa, it had by 1938 laid some groundwork for a higher level of Marxist historiography.

The curious effects of the Popular Front borne by Mims's and Hicks's articles were, however, a grim indication of the political fate of Science & Society's efforts. In their respective conclusions, both writers assured the reader that, if their subjects were still alive, they would surely throw their energies toward the Popular Front against Fascism. By late 1937, such implications scattered throughout S&S were not enough for the Party ideologues. The chief polemicist in The Communist, V.J. Jerome, blasted Science & Society for not taking on the responsibility of attacking the enemies of the Popular Front, that is, the "agents of Fascism", the "fascist-linked Trotskyites and Bukharinites", some of whom by this time edited the Marxist Quarterly and the Partisan Review. Since sympathy within the United States for Trotsky and the victims of the Moscow Trials was concentrated in the intelligentsia, the need for a disciplined struggle by Science & Society among the universities and independent scholarly groups had become absolutely necessary. Thus Jerome examined the first year's contents of S&S article by article, attacking an economics comment which "failed to mention Lenin", and the appearance of an article by Philip Rahv and William Phillips, who had not yet been "exposed as Trotskyites" at the time of publication, but whose work was "insidiously nihilistic" toward literary theory and could only damage readers. The journal, Jerome openly insisted, could become useful only if it clarified the implications of the Soviet Union's "great Stalinist Constitution of socialist democracy" and its "vanguard role" for "progressive humanity", the absolute correctness of its attitude toward the Spanish Civil War and the Moscow Trials, and the centrality of the American Communist apparatus as the "guardian, guide, and rallying force of all the exploited and oppressed, through increasingly-heightened levels of struggle and class consciousness toward the victorious climax of Socialism". (29)

Against such demands on one hand and the rising repression and firings on campuses after 1939 on the other, the academic Left in Science & Society withered away. By 1940 all of the non-Communist historians had been dropped from the journal's masthead and columns. Hopes of a Marxist historiography from Communist circles received a few concurrent signs of encouragement, such as The Fat Years and the Lean (1940), by Bruce Minton and John Stuart; but these were hardly bright. Minton and Stuart's efforts to reinterpret the New Deal in a Marxist vein was innocent of sophistication, a sort of updated Robber Barons without the latter's literary style and with the burden of

defending at all points the actions of the Communist movement. (30) Unable to gain either popularity in readership or clarity in interpretation, Communist historiography had proven nearly as short lived as Socialist historiography a generation before. Ironically, there had been the contemporary development of the first genuinely-notable group of Communist scholars in Manhattan university graduate schools, including Philip Foner and Herbert Aptheker. But these latter scholars, producing works on labor, blacks, and other subjects in the 1940s and 1950s, were definitely alone in American history, isolated by the Communist political and historical failures of the earlier years.

### Depression Marxism III: The Independents

The Leftward movement of intellectuals during the Depression was not a unitary motion toward the Communist Party and its peripheries. Particularly before the Popular Front, when the Communists expanded enormously and thereby sealed the fate of opposition movements, there was a considerable effort by groups of writers and academicians toward an independent Marxism of some kind. As with the Communists, the intellectuals involved were only rarely historians, and therefore their contributions to the leading independent Marxist magazine, The Modern Quarterly, were generally literary, psychological, sociological, or philosophical rather than historical.

The several independent Marxist historical efforts were, however, tied together first of all by the authors' appearance in the pages of the Modern Quarterly (the Modern Monthly from 1933 to 1936). Secondly, all, with the possible exception of writings by the magazine's editor himself, V.F. Calverton, shared an acceptance of the Beardian heritage of "interest-consciousness" and Civil War interpretation with little critical hesitation. And finally, nearly all became involved in a reinterpretation of American history which consciously sought a circumvention of the Communists' propagandization of historical events.

The eldest of the independent Marxist historical writers was Louis B. Boudin, once Debsian Socialism's most highly-regarded authority on economic subjects. After the fragmentation of the Left, Boudin had drifted away from Party politics and come to study the historical aspects of his own profession, law. The final result, a two-volume work entitled Government By Judiciary (1932), was a hardboiled, polemical account of the Supreme Court's increasing gain of arbitrary power since the Constitution. Despite its recurrent lapse into invectives against "rule...by dead men" in the courts, Boudin's work contained an extraordinarily-detailed examination of the effect of legal decisions, particularly of the Marshall Court, in a materialist manner.

The keystone of Boudin's analysis was his depiction of three periods in the Court's first fifty years of development. First, Boudin perceived the Federalist attempt to graft the English Common Law upon the American system of jurisprudence, an attempt ending in a collision with "the people" (Jefferson's administration and its mass support) and a "tremendous loss of prestige" by the judiciary. Second in Boudin's

analysis came the attempt by Marshall, with the aid and support of a popular Nationalism, to deliver opinions which changed the nature of the Government from one of people's rights to one of property rights. Finally, there was a renewed "assault upon the courts by the democratic forces of the country", that is, Jacksonianism, causing the Court to settle into "obscurity and impotence". The Court re-emerged with the decisions delivered just before the Civil War by Taney, particularly the Dred Scott case, "the first real case in which a real law actually was declared unconstitutional", whose judgment was in Boudin's mind the "very foundation of our constitutional system as it exists today". Once the principle of Court prerogative had been delivered and accepted, the Court was free in the Gilded Age and after to elaborate a property-rights, antisocial doctrine which was set above popular democratic decision. (31)

Boudin's political history, in its crude Beardianism, weakened the historical context of his analysis tremendously. He held Jacksonianism to be "the last political movement unaffected by Slavery", and praised it indiscriminately. Elsewhere he praised Taney, despite the latter's pro-slavery, anti-popular judgments, as the greatest of Chief Justices, a victim of circumstances. (32) And most important, Boudin had nothing to place against the misuse of Judicial prerogative but a Populistic hostility toward elitist decision-making within Capitalism, which Boudin as a Europeanized Marxist did not perceive as an important force in America. Thus Boudin had, in writing an overly lengthy and difficult treatise on the sins of the judiciary, finished a magnum opus which was adequate neither for popular nor for scholarly Marxist purposes. He had poured energies into a text which, as far as the Left was concerned, disappeared from sight altogether despite the furor over the Court later in the decade.

Louis Hacker was, by contrast, enormously popular among readers of Left books. He had ascended into the intellectual periphery of the radical movement from Charles Beard's classes at Columbia, and bore without exception the Beardian stamp in his pre-Twentieth Century interpretation. His most celebrated work was a lengthy article published in the Modern Monthly in 1933, and re-published as a John Day pamphlet, The Farmer Is Doomed. Here, he wrote of Turner's thesis as "the single oblique gleam of light" which produced "a curious introversion... a wholesale and almost-exclusive preoccupation with the nature and effects of the frontier's conquest, which led to the distorted emphasis by reformers on socially or psychologically recapturing the frontier". Rather, Hacker found, the frontier was a fundamentally-business experience, dominated by the needs of unfolding European and ambitious American capitals. The agricultural community was dependent on the distant markets encouraged by a "national debtor economy", and had "no elements of permanence" except through aiding American capital to develop an indigenous capitalist society. By the 1920s, Hacker believed, the Agricultural Mission and all its social implications were gone.

Perhaps the most-attractive feature of Hacker's work in the view of the contemporary Marxists was its international flavor. Essentially

agreeing with the hard-line Marxist interpretation of farmers as being non-revolutionary, petty-bourgeois businessmen, Hacker held that the Populist "revolt" had no incendiary character. The opening up of new territories for agriculture in the Twentieth Century, such as areas of China and Russia, further reduced the "exceptional" character of the American farmer: Henceforth he was to be reduced to a position which was "characteristic...of all peasants for whom, in our present system of society, there is no hope". (33)

A few years earlier, Hacker had joined with Benjamin Kendrick to write a textbook survey of American history entirely predictable in its Beardian interpretation, its identification of "interests" rather than of classes, and its vantage point on the "Second American Revolution" of the Civil War. In 1938, Hacker struggled with another Beardian task, the consideration of American civilization as a whole. In American Problems of Today Hacker perceptively treated the open questions of mechanization and the quality of the ordinary American's life. He saw clearly the destruction of regionalism and localism, the inevitable advent of a new way of life for all and new necessities for extending democracy. But, for a self-avowed Marxist, the answers he hinted at were most curious. He indicated that the State had only ameliorated the conditions of the exploited, moreover without "parting company with capitalist relations". But, he held, the State Leviathan created was "not our master but our servant", which could be guided in the proper direction. Significantly, Hacker singled out prophets John Dewey and Charles Beard ("a historian, a political scientist, and — above all — a humanist") as the only great figures of potential guidance in the "middle generation". (34)

Paradoxically, Hacker was engaged at the same time in a running controversy with the Communist historical writers over the proper mode of Marxist interpretation. With the rightward movement of the Communists into the Popular Front, Earl Browder and several more historical-minded writers began to repaint the canvas of the American past, to re-examine and discover new reasons to praise the Founding Fathers and other traditional American heroes. For Hacker, this honor for "the heroes of yesterday's petty-bourgeoisie" was anathema. In the Nation, Hacker accused Browder of "having left behind his Marxism". History, wrote Hacker, was not achieved by piling one democratic triumph upon another, but "dialectically: we have gone forward... because we have succeeded in transforming decaying social organisms into new ones healthy and fresh with young life". In the Revolutionary War and the Civil War a "suppressed class" had "seized power" and "molded the political and legal institutions to fit its own purposes". Later, Hacker bitterly accused Matthew Josephson of bowing to the Popular Frontist history in his The Politicos, holding together with the Communists that "the Civil War was won by a People's Front Government". (35)

The key to Hacker's apparent ambivalence lay in his Beardianism, through which he insisted on a positive evaluation of the bourgeoisie's leadership in the Revolutionary and Civil Wars. But it also lay in his differences with Beard, which manifested themselves subtly in his

historical work, in which Hacker had fewer doubts than Beard about the virtues of industrial society. Most of all, Hacker's personal and historical views hinged by the late Thirties on his hopes for the New Deal and FDR as the incarnation and director of a State Capitalism which would carry out the first phase of social reconstruction of American democracy. In a History of the New Deal (1937), Hacker offered an ambiguous interpretation and defense, relying generally on description to carry through his message. But in The Triumph of American Capitalism (1940), Hacker added a postscriptive chapter to a historical work which nominally ended in 1900, asking whether American Capitalism had been a success in providing for America's needs, and answering with a decisive affirmation. As reviewer James Burnham noted, Hacker's work was on one hand a rare sort of 1940 history which allowed (in Beardian fashion) Washington to be "a rich merchant, Lincoln a back-tracking conciliator, and where in the entire 460 pages, not a single cherry twig blooms or rail is split by (hand-forged, patriot-wielded) axes". It scarcely went beyond Beard's interpretation of "mercantile capitalist" interests, through non-Marxian categories, and was substantially a rehash of what Hacker and Beard had written in the past; yet it showed, in all but the last chapter, how the forces of democracy had failed to make headway against the overpowering economic interests, how (in rather mechanical fashion) all the significant political differences before 1900 could be reduced to economic class-interest differences. As Burnham noted: "History evidently changed spots" for Hacker "when Roosevelt took it over. The nation, after 150 years of exploitation, fraud, enrichment of the few, and impoverishment of the many...becomes one happy family under Roosevelt's fatherly eye." (36)

Only a few years before, Hacker had combined with his friend Lewis Corey and a group of other non-Communist intellectuals — including James Burnham, Bertram Wolfe, George Novack, and Felix Morrow — to found an independent Marxist journal, The Marxist Quarterly. All had found themselves in a similar dilemma, cut off from the bulk of Left politics and Left intellectuals by the increasing popularity of the Communists in 1936 - 1940; and nearly all resolved the dilemma by an increasing acceptance of some sort of gradual "social reconstruction" within the framework of Rooseveltian democracy. On the way, nearly all made an effort at Marxian interpretation of American history. (37)

The contributions of Burnham, Wolfe, and Morrow were strictly minor, mostly limited to book-review essays or commentaries with slight bearing on American history proper. Novack, as a historical writer for Trotskyist journals, contributed several essays on slavery, Populism, and the early National period. (38) Corey, however, produced the most-popular Marxian-oriented late-1930s history, The Crisis of the Middle Class.

Corey's background provides one of the most-curious stories of the American Left. As Louis C. Fraina, he had been the most outstanding of the young working-class intellectuals in the Debsian revolutionary Left. But as a Communist, he had disappeared during a mission for the Comintern and reappeared only in the late 1920s as a non-activist

writer on economic subjects. His first major historical work was The House of Morgan (1931), a study of the ascension by J. P. Morgan in the Gilded Age to overlordship of burgeoning monopoly capitalism. Corey eschewed the muckraking qualities of earlier Left works on financiers, placing Morgan as the "multiplied, concentrated expression of fundamental changes in industrial and financial institutions", a man whose actions institutionalized the control of finance over a powerful but irresponsible industrial sector. For Corey, Morgan was not an innovator, but rather the figure who developed existing techniques of power centralization and rationalization to their zenith, leaving such a system of monopoly domination that when Morgan died the stock market made no move downward.

In 1934, Corey's magnum opus, The Decline of American Capitalism, was published, and immediately gained recognition as the outstanding economic treatment of America by a Marxist. Here he offered a few chapters on the economic history of the late Nineteenth Century, trying to show the relative nature of the severe economic crises compared to the absolute crisis that capitalism faced in the Depression. In Crisis of the Middle Class (1935) Corey appealed to proletarianized white-collar workers to join with the industrial laborers for a "new Renaissance", rather than contributing to the coming of Fascism. He portrayed the middle class as being a decisive force in American history, from the Revolution when it had thrust the anti-Colonial elite on to war, through the Jacksonian period when it had furnished the base for rejuvenated democracy, to Populism when it had made a last-ditch effort to save the Old Democracy. But now the force of the small property-owning middle class was gone, Corey said, a victim of economic progress; it remained for the clerk and other white-collar workers to join in a unification of all productive forces against the monopolists and the reactionaries. (39)

Like most of the Communist and non-Communist Marxist historians of the 1930s, Corey was in substance a historical non-Beardian whose supposed innovations were really elaborations. Little as most of these historians had realized it, their linear materialism made inevitable a reconciliation between their own ideas and those of interest-oriented rather than class-oriented Progressive historians. Their efforts to deal with the realm of thought (and especially the thought of social groups, such as Corey's Crisis of the Middle Class) was therefore crude, tending toward the vulgar for disliked figures and the idealistic for Left heroes. The self-conscious Marxist historical writer of the period who came closest to closing the gaps and creating a coherent historical approach was perhaps logically, then, a man for whom both Marxism and history were only partial interests, a man who reacted against the massive defeats of the Left by positing a radical utopian idealism: V. F. Calverton.

Until his premature death in 1940, Calverton had for two decades been the outstanding member of the American literary intelligentsia who consistently proclaimed revolutionary sympathies while refusing to accept the discipline of the Communist Party or any of its expelled factions. Founding the Modern Quarterly in 1922, he edited it until the

end of his life, drawing on the leading radical intellectual figures of his day and providing a rallying point in the early 1930s for anti-Stalinist writers such as Max Eastman, Sidney Hook, Lewis Corey, and Louis Hacker, who were at their high points of revolutionary enthusiasm (40). According to Harold Cruse, the Modern Monthly and Modern Quarterly also provided a focus for black thought by writers like E. Franklin Frazier, ruled out of the Communist Party press by indifference and hostility to the development of an independent black intelligentsia. (41) V. F. Calverton himself, meanwhile, consistently strove to identify and absorb the latest developments in social science and literature, turning out hurriedly-written works in the 1920s on psychology, sexuality, American literature, and a number of novels.

In 1932 appeared Calverton's The Liberation of American Literature, the first clearly-Marxist attempt to account for American literature in class terms. Calverton analyzed its weakness as due basically to the petty-bourgeois hostility to Art, rooted in the colonial experience and Puritanism, and spreading with the nation westward into a civilization. In its strength, the petty-bourgeoisie gave some credence to a kind of individualism which had spawned such writers as Thoreau and Whitman — but this was also its weakness, for the inevitable destruction of the small property-owners under the pressure of industrialization brought pessimism. Twentieth Century literature, Calverton held, was still searching for proletarian roots, a democratic sense of collectivism to replace the democratic individualism of the past. (42)

Throughout the next several years, Calverton continued to write straight historical articles on revolutionary progenitors such as Philip Freneau and Tom Paine for the Modern Monthly and other publications. Like the Communists, Calverton frequently made too much of his hero-searching; unlike them, his attitude was never fully uncritical, especially with respect to prose and poetry (for example, he found Freneau's poetry given too much credit by bourgeois writers). By 1939 he had completed the first of what he hoped would become a general, Marxian-oriented history of the United States. The initial volume, The Awakening of America (1939), was to be followed by several others, bringing the story together as had no American Marxist since Simons.

Calverton foreswore any claim to Marxian orthodoxy, but held that for him "Marx did more to illuminate the historical processes than any other thinker of the modern age". He expected that, by utilizing the newer research brought to bear by such writers as Curtis Nettels and Louis Hacker, he could re-evaluate the colonial period "in terms of the ruled instead of the rulers", with the latest insight.

His results were no more than mixed. He viewed Nathaniel Bacon, for instance, as innocent of anti-Indian feeling, as "the spiritual father of Thomas Jefferson". He made numerous factual errors, and also overzealously introduced Nineteenth and Twentieth Century history into his conclusion. But he added certain innovations which deserve notice. First, he extensively treated the mistreatment of slaves, of women, and of Jews in the colonies as an integral part of colonial history rather than as an exception or as due merely to upper-class exploitation. And he paid close attention to early American utopians such as Thomas

Priber, who tried to set up a communal colony within the Cherokee Nation. He honestly discussed such outbreaks as the "Race Riot Mania" in New York State in 1741, and praised Indians' and blacks' resistance to whites where it did exist. (43)

The same year as his death, Calverton completed a manuscript for another historical volume, this one a monograph on a minor subject, the American utopians, called Where Angels Fear to Tread. Here, Calverton revealed indications of his despair at the collapse of the Marxist Left, and his own efforts to recapture the lesser-known and lesser-understood radicals of the American past. His treatment was journalistic, and isolated the colonies as institutions to be studied one by one rather than as a general social phenomenon. With the exception of his excellent treatment of the role of women in the colonies, his account was scarcely an advance over earlier non-Marxist socialist histories of the utopias. His effort was at least idealistic. As he closed his analysis of the colonists: "Though they have died, their dream lives on. It can never die any more than the Christ myth of equality may die. Churches may abuse it, clergymen exploit it, but, in the end, humanity will exalt it." (44)

## Conclusion

The two central influences on American Marxists writing history have been Left political movements (offering varying forms of theory and discipline) and mainstream American historiography. Together, their weaknesses have prevented Marxist historians from developing a coherent world view within which empirical studies could be defined and rationalized. Consequently, Marxists at best pioneered in areas traditionally neglected by the academically-acceptable historians, and occasionally (as with DuBois) attempted an overall interpretation of the American experience from which most historians increasingly shrank away. In general, however, Marxist history was little more than a slight, radical elaboration of historiographical trends or Ideological fixture of self-justification.

The fundamental internal weakness of Socialists' and Communists' historical efforts has been their methodological shallowness. There has been virtually no indication of working knowledge concerning the philosophic underpinning of Marxian historical concepts, and the inter-relatedness at all levels of objective and subjective elements in the concrete experiences of social classes. Consequently, on one hand there has been the historical work of Ideologues, such as James O'Neal or James Allen, who employ class concepts in such a manner that the effect historically is blunted; or vulgar materialists and "interest-conscious" writers such as A. M. Simons and Louis Hacker, whose cloaked or open use of Progressive historiography has helped to prevent the demystification and critical utilization of that school. Significantly, only a figure such as V. F. Calverton, indifferent to the finer points of ideology and academic prestige, could draw on American literature, the newer studies in sexuality, and other fields to enrich his naively - "Marxist" interpretation of America. For other historical



writers, experimentalism and true methodological rigor were equally impossible.

By 1940 American Marxist history had undergone very little true development. Rather, it had arisen in different periods and in different ways, staked its claims among radical activists and some historians, and been washed out with the changing political tides of American society. Like concurrent bourgeois historiography, it had failed to construct a clear overall perspective. While the mainstream historians increasingly retreated from the limited advances of the Progressive school, Marxist historians, except for the Communists, disappeared altogether, and the perspective within Left historiography flattened to the limitations of the Communist political world view.

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## Footnotes

1. The clearest expression of this view was written before DeLeon joined the SLP, but reprinted many times by the Party thereafter: "The Voice of Madison", The Nationalist, I (August 1889). See also several historical articles by DeLeon collected in 1776-1926 (New York, 1926). A commentary on the later Socialists' challenge to DeLeon's historical position can be found in Justus Ebert: "The Americanization of Socialism", New Leader (January 2, 1926).

2. Hermann Schleuter: The Brewing Industry and the Brewery Workers Movement in America (Cincinnati, 1910), Pages 7-8, 39, 41, 89, 140.

3. Hermann Schleuter: Lincoln, Labor, and Slavery, a Chapter from the Social History of America (New York, 1913), Pages 5-6, 14-21, 35, 41, 59, 59ff, 90, 102, 123-124, 169-170, 179-180, 206, 209, 221, 236.

4. Morris Hillquit: The History of Socialism in the United States (New York, 1910), Pages 126-127, 193-195.

5. James Oneal: The Workers in American History (St. Louis, 1912), Pages 7-8, 10, 22, 72-73, 75, 139, 155, 162. Oneal later wrote two books which are not considered here, the polemical treatise American Communism (New York, 1928) and the history of a local Manhattan union, History of Amalgamated Ladies Garment Workers Union Number 10 (New York, 1927).

6. Gustavus Myers: The Great American Fortunes (Modern Library Edition, New York, 1964), Pages 19, 243-244. Originally published in three Kerr volumes, the work was Myers's most-popular "socialist" volume; also, however, his History of the Supreme Court (Chicago, 1912) was popular in Socialist circles. Myers's History of American Idealism (New York, 1925) closed off his socialistic period.

7. Allen Benson: Our Dishonest Constitution (New York, 1914), like many of the other Socialist historical works at the time, drifted off to a political plea at the end of the book.

8. A. M. Simons: The American Farmer (Chicago, 1902), Pages 11,

92, 29, 27, 30, 63, 71, 101.

9. My analysis of Social Forces in American History is largely derived from an excellent unpublished dissertation, Robert S. Huston: "A. M. Simons and the American Socialist Movement" (University of Wisconsin, 1965). For comments on Simons's role in the Debsian intelligentsia and his turn toward the American Federation of Labor, see my article "Intellectuals in the Debsian Socialist Party", Radical America, IV (April 1970), particularly Pages 37 and 44. A recent vicious attack has been delivered against Simons by Bernard K. Johnpoll, via a review of a mediocre work, Kent and Gretchen Kreuter: An American Dissenter: the Life of Algie Martin Simons (Lexington, 1969), in "Books Reviewed", Labor History, XI (Summer 1960), Pages 376-377.

10. Huston, op. cit., Pages 267-268, 169, 276, 282-283, 287-288; and A. M. Simons: "Hillquit's History of American Socialism", International Socialist Review, IV (December 1903), Page 356.

11. See Paul Buhle: "Debsian Socialist Intellectuals", op. cit., Pages 47-50, on Lewis and his role in the "New Left Wing" of the post-1910 Socialist Party.

12. Theodore Draper: American Communism and Soviet Russia (New York, 1960), Pages 272-274.

13. Anthony Bimba: History of the American Working Class (Second Edition, New York, 1937), Pages 10, 10ff, 39, 39ff, 45, 68-69, 115, 122, 232.

14. Nathan Fine: Labor and Farmer Parties in the United States, 1828-1928 (Second Edition, New York, 1961) contains a wealth of anecdotal information on Debsian Socialism, as does another popular work not considered here, Lillian Symes and Travers Clement: Rebel America (New York, 1934), a survey of Utopian and "Scientific" Socialism which conveyed excellently the spirit of the pre-1920 period.

15. Anthony Bimba: The Molly Maguires (New York, 1932), Pages 16-17, 129.

16. Herbert Morais: Deism in Eighteenth Century America (Second Edition, New York, 1960), Pages 7-9, 28, 72, 120. Morais was teaching as a professor at Brooklyn College at the time of the book's publication.

17. Granville Hicks: The Great Tradition (New York, 1933), perhaps the only historical work reprinted by International Publishers from a commercial press (in 1935 from the Macmillan edition). See especially Chapter VII, "Two Roads", which sums up the change in literary pattern which Hicks conceives. Also see E. S. Bates's witty and incisive critique of the book and of Hicks's transformation in "The Literary Caravan", Modern Monthly, VIII (February 1934), Pages 57-58.

18. Who Are the Americans? (New York, 1936).

19. Earl Browder: Lincoln and the Communists (New York, 1936).

20. Earl Browder: Traitors in American History: Lessons of the Moscow Trials (New York, 1938).

21. Earl Browder: "Revolutionary Background of the United States Constitution", in Earl Browder: The People's Front (New York, 1938), Pages 249-255 (reprinted from The Communist, September 1937).

22. Granville Hicks: "Reviews", Science & Society, II (Summer

1938), Pages 429-431.

23. Richard Enmale: "Editor's Introduction" to Marx and Engels: The Civil War in the United States (New York, 1937), Pages xix -xxv.

24. James S. Allen: Reconstruction, The Battle for Democracy, 1865-1876 (New York, 1937), especially the "Editor's Foreword", by Richard Enmale, Pages 7-14, and Chapter VI, "The Labor Movement", whose mechanical and propagandistic interpretation may be usefully compared with parallel sections of Du Bois: Black Reconstruction (New York, 1935) and David Montgomery: Beyond Reconstruction (New York, 1967). Allen had been a philosophy professor at the University of Pennsylvania in the 1920s, had done economic study in the Philippines for the Comintern, and had functioned in the 1930s as a Southern and Negro expert in the Communist Party. His work is attacked in Harold Cruse: Crisis of the Negro Intellectual (New York, 1967), Page 163.

25. "Letters", the Nation, Volume 147 (July 2, 1938), Page 27. He noted further: "As a scholar in American history and an honest reviewer, I find it necessary to expose every effort by Communists or their sympathizers to rewrite American history to serve a political purpose."

26. Jack Hardy: The First American Revolution (New York, 1936), Pages 46, 48, 115, 128. Note also the "Editor's Foreword" by Enmale.

27. Irving Mark: "Agrarian Conflicts in Colonial New York, 1711, 1775", Columbia University Studies in History, Number 469 (New York, 1940), Pages 38, 61, 195. Like Morais, Mark was a professor teaching at Brooklyn College.

28. Granville Hicks: "The Critical Principles of Vernon Louis Parrington", Science & Society (Fall 1939), Pages 443-460, is an extraordinarily-lucid essay, probably the best single treatment of Parrington's ambiguities.

29. V. J. Jerome: "Marxism-Leninism for Society and Science", The Communist, XVI (December 1937), Pages 1146-1163 (particularly Page 1148 ff), in which Jerome branded the Marxist Quarterly (see Footnote 37 below) by claiming that "A clique of...Trotskyite Lovestoneite renegades have banded together to publish the so-called Marxist Quarterly, whose only effect can be to denature Marxism in the interest of impeding progressive action.", and XVI (January 1938), Pages 75, 85, 87, 89.

30. Bruce Minton and John Stuart: The Fat Years and the Lean (New York, 1940) was published by Modern Age Books, a commercial firm with some Communist editors which aimed at high-circulation works and collapsed after several years, no doubt failing to sell many of The Fat Years. Both Minton and Stuart were Left-wing journalists, and had previously collaborated on a popularistic introduction to the labor movement, Men Who Lead Labor (New York, 1937).

31. Boudin: Government by Judiciary (New York, 1932), I, Pages vii, 400-403; II, Pages 1, 26.

32. "Taney, Roger B.", in Encyclopedia of Social Science, XIV (New York, 1934), Pages 509-510. Though several Marxist writers, including Lewis Corey, Granville Hicks, Louis Hacker, and Broadus Mitchell, contributed historical-oriented articles, their discussions were too

limited to merit consideration here.

33. Louis Hacker: "The Farmer Is Doomed", Modern Monthly, VII (March 1933), Pages 71-81.

34. Louis Hacker: American Problems of Today (New York, 1938), Pages vii, 147, 157, 166. At the high tide of his radicalism, in 1934, Hacker had lightly wished that there was "in the audience" of the Nation "some philanthropist who, with an eye toward his future protection, would like to endow an American Institute of Red Professors of History ...". Makers of Modern America, Nation, Volume 138 (March 7, 1934), Page 280.

35. Louis Hacker: "Mr. Browder Studies History", Nation, Volume 142 (April 22, 1936), Pages 526-528; "Letters" from Browder and Hacker, Volume 142 (June 17, 1936), Pages 787-788, in which Browder hinted that the Nation might be under "Trotskyite" influences in printing such material; Hacker, "Books and the Arts", Nation, Volume 146 (May 14, 1938), Page 562; and "Letters" from I. F. Stone (June 11, 1938), Page 682, and Hacker, Volume 147 (July 2, 1938), Page 27. Sharply contrasted to Browder's shrill counter-attacks on Hacker is Herbert Aptheker's latest Communist analysis of Hacker's work, perceptively treating Hacker's non-Marxian treatment of the American Revolution: Herbert Aptheker: The American Revolution (New York, 1960), Page 13.

36. James Burnham: "God Bless America", Partisan Review, VII (November-December 1940), Pages 479-481.

37. The Marxist Quarterly was primarily the vehicle for Hacker and Corey. During the Moscow Trials, there was a brief internal struggle involving the Trotskyists, succeeded by their resignation as well as a simultaneous withdrawal of support by the Quarterly's chief financial "angel", who devoted his money to Science & Society instead because of the Marxist Quarterly's attitude of not supporting the USSR. For further details and analysis, see my Master's essay: "Louis C. Fraina, 1894-1953" (University of Connecticut, 1968). After three numbers, the Quarterly folded; in those it had published several historical essays by Louis Hacker, and two by Henry Frumerman on "The Railroad Strikes of 1885-1886" and "The Railroad Strikes of 1887", both of the latter being detail work with little sign of overt Marxist analysis.

38. Some of Novack's historical essays have been collected into Robert Himmel (editor): Marxist Essays in American History (New York, 1966). Novack's insights reveal a capability which was never brought to fruition in historical analysis. He was a student of John Dewey's, and in recent decades has written mostly on philosophic and economic subjects. Bertram Wolfe's major contribution to American history was an essay, "Marx and America", carried serially in the Modern Monthly in 1933 and analyzed later in David Herreshoff: American Disciples of Marx (Detroit, 1967), Pages 187-192. Of special interest was Wolfe's notation that he had been made into a historian by Stalin's charges of "exceptionalism" against him. Wolfe: "A Historian Looks at Convergence Theory", in S. Kurtz (editor): Sidney Hook and the Contemporary World (New York, 1960). Felix Morrow's contribution consisted almost entirely of short essays on Roger Williams, such as in "Literary Caravan", Modern Monthly, VII (August 1933), Pages

445-447, in which he sought to show that the American dissenter did not represent the Left wing of Puritanism, but rather represented a lower middle class far to the right of the Levellers and Diggers.

39. Buhle: "Louis Fraina", Pages 45-97. For a time, interestingly, the Communists gave away copies of Crisis with new subscriptions to the New Masses.

40. Published accounts of Calverton include Daniel Aaron, Writers on the Left (New York, 1961), Chapter 13; Herman Singer: "Calverton", Pages 13-19, and S. L. Solon: "Calverton — Between Two Worlds", Pages 25-28, both in Modern Quarterly, XI (1940), Memorial Issue; and Sidney Hook: "Introduction" to Greenwood Reprint Series re-edition of the Modern Quarterly/Monthly.

41. Cruse: Crisis of the Negro Intellectual, Pages 152-162.

42. See the evaluation by Hicks: "American Literature: a Marxian Interpretation", New Republic, Volume 72 (September 7, 1932), Pages 104-105. Calverton's own utilization and assessment of Marxism's impact in America is spelled out most clearly in the "Introduction" to his book The Making of Society, an Outline of Sociology (New York, 1935).

43. Calverton: "Philip Freneau", Modern Monthly, VII (October 1933), Pages 533-546; The Awakening of America (New York, 1939), Pages vii, 227, 238-239, 251-254, 270, 283, 306-307, 335, 435, 438.

44. Calverton: Where Angels Fear to Tread (New York, 1941), Pages 344, 348-350.

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*W.E.B. DuBois*

# W.E.B. DuBois and American Social History: *The Evolution of a Marxist*

Paul Richards

DuBois saw the importance of history, economics, sociology, et cetera, and saw that without an understanding of the role of the Negro people it was impossible to get a clear, consistent, and comprehensive view of American civilization as a whole. And that I believe was the cause of his strength and of the remarkable range of his accomplishments. I insist that to call him only a Negro leader is to do him an injustice; it is to do an injustice to the Negro people, to strike a great blow against clear view of Western Civilization as a whole. (C. L. R. James)

Race and class; an American, a Negro; the centrality of race. These ideas have haunted and befuddled both American history and American Marxism. W. E. B. DuBois spent his entire adult life writing about this subject; he wrote as a scholar, as an activist, and as a revolutionary. Over his long life, he changed a great deal: he changed in response to vast developments in world imperialism and to the necessity of black folks to react and to understand the world. And the world did not make that task easy. White civilization has developed the most complete and thorough rationalization of its empires that the world has ever seen. DuBois commented in Darkwater in 1920: "Here is a civilization that has boasted much. Neither Roman nor Arab, Greek nor Egyptian, Persian nor Mongol ever took himself and his own perfectness with such disconcerting seriousness as the modern white man. We whose shame, humiliation, and deep insult his aggrandizement so often involved were never deceived. We looked at him clearly, with world-old eyes, and saw simply a human thing, weak and pitiable and cruel, even as we are and were." (1)

To study DuBois's writings, then, is to attempt to break through these rationalizations. This essay will introduce some of his writings on American social history and attempt to show how he evolved his method of approach. He began as a social scientist trained in the best institutions of learning that bourgeois society had to offer; but by the

1930s he had embraced Marxism in all its essentials. The key in this transformation was his striving to uplift black folks and to achieve a "clear view of Western Civilization as a whole".

## I

DuBois's background and education provided him with the sense of dedication to his people and the training in the social sciences which he would use for the remainder of his life. Raised in a small black New England community, he reacted to his growing awareness of racial oppression by withdrawing personally and by striving to be the best in all he did. He remained all his life an archetypical New Englander: highly moralistic and personally strict with himself and others.

When he entered Fisk University in 1885, he became completely involved in the Tennessee black community, and decided to devote his life's work to the progress of American blacks. Three years later he entered Harvard as a junior, and in 1890 he graduated cum laude in philosophy. While an undergraduate he had studied under William James and the young Santayana, yet chose graduate work in history, which he had studied with Alfred Bushnell Hart. It was during his graduate study that he "conceived the idea of applying philosophy to a historical interpretation of race relations". He took his "first step toward sociology as the science of human action". (2)

In these early years, DuBois was no radical. His graduation address at Fisk in 1888 was on Bismark. "This choice in itself showed the abyss between my education and the truth in the world....I was blithely European and imperialist in outlook; democratic as democracy was conceived in America." (3) At the same time his knowledge of race and racism saved him from complete conformity. His concentration on black people and their problems was the critical edge with which he approached his studies. At Harvard he devoted himself to racial themes, beginning with a bibliography on Nat Turner and continuing through his dissertation on the Suppression of the African Slave Trade.

In 1892 DuBois began two years of study at the University of Berlin. He studied economics, history, and sociology. "I sat under the voice of the fire-eating Pan-German von Treitschke; I heard Sering and Weber; I wrote on American agriculture for Schmoller and discussed social conditions in Europe with teachers and students. I began to see the race problem in America, the problem of the peoples of Africa and Asia, and the political development of Europe as one." (4) It was this world view and the method of Hart that combined themselves in his dissertation. Focusing on the significance of slavery to the Western World and using statutes and laws of the states and the nation for documentation, he wrote The Suppression of the African Slave Trade in 1896. Published as the first volume of Harvard Historical Studies, this book is his most "professional" and traditional work and has held its place as an important beginning on the subject.

DuBois's experiences in Europe had allowed him, for the first time, to break out of what he called his "racial provincialism". He ceased to



hate or suspect people simply because of race or color. He began to see the historical and social basis of white racism, a theme which he constantly developed in his writings. In addition, Du Bois "began to understand the real meaning of scientific research and the dim outline of methods of employing its techniques and its results in the new social sciences for the settlement of the Negro problems in America". (5) He viewed his education as a means to help in the struggle of black people. In this conviction Du Bois broke from the "academic" world and its ability to mystify virtually any subject. As he put it in Dusk of Dawn: "But turning my gaze from fruitless word-twisting and facing the facts of my own social situation and racial world, I determined to put science into sociology through a study of the conditions and problems of my own group." (6)

The limitations of his early outlook should be stressed. He was an idealist and naive; he felt that racism was only a matter of incorrect knowledge and of belief in myths, and that the proper antidote was "scientific research". He did not connect his ideas with the movement and needs of imperialism. He was a democrat determined to gain admission for black people into a democracy he thought already existed for whites. Existing side by side with these limitations were elements of his thought that would grow as his experience broadened: he saw the world-wide scope of Negro problems; he based his intellectual work on the needs of his people; and he had grasped the idea of a changing social structure rather than a fixed one, an idea which corresponded to his knowledge of his own changing racial group.

After two years (1894-1896) teaching Latin and Greek at Wilberforce University in Southern Ohio, Du Bois accepted a job with the University of Pennsylvania in the course of which he was to conduct a study of the black community in Philadelphia. The study which resulted, entitled The Philadelphia Negro, was his first attempt to apply his idea of using science to dispel ignorance about his people. The Philadelphia Negro is a seminal book and of great importance for understanding his later writing. Its main accomplishment was his comprehension of the social reality of black Philadelphia: his ability to comprehend its historical roots and its full reality as an interacting whole.

Du Bois defined the questions which guided his study:

The student of these (race and class) questions must first ask: What is the real condition of this group of human beings? Of whom is it composed? What sub-groups and classes exist? What sort of individuals are being considered? Further, the student must clearly recognize that a complete study must not confine itself to the group, but must specially notice the environment; the physical environment of city, sections, and houses, the far mightier social environment—the surrounding world of custom, wish, whim, and thought which envelops this group and powerfully influences its social development. (7)

Du Bois was concerned with the whole, with physical and ideological influences that defined the group. Moreover, in every aspect of his

study he stressed the historical nature of the problems. Chapters III and IV review the history of Philadelphia from 1638 to 1896. In his chapters on education, occupations, the church, crime, the family, and suffrage he included sub-sections which dealt with the history of each of these subjects. His sociology was primarily historical.

To illustrate his method, consider his treatment of the Negro family, Chapter XI. He first outlines the "real condition" of the family. Based on his exhaustive survey of the Seventh Ward, a ward predominantly black and containing the whole range of conditions found in the city, DuBois compiled tables on the size of the family. He surveyed their budgets, their incomes, and their holdings of property to establish their economic condition. He compared this ward to census figures for the whole city's black population and thus completed his picture of their present condition. In explaining this condition he reverted to history:

Among the masses of Negro people in America the monogamic home is comparatively a new institution, not more than two or three generations old. The Africans were taken from polygamy and transplanted to a plantation where home life was protected only by the caprice of the master, and practically unregulated polygamy and polyandry was the result, on the plantations of the West Indies. In states like Pennsylvania, the marriage institution among slaves was early established and maintained. Consequently one meets among the Philadelphia Negroes the result of both systems — the looseness of plantation life and the strictness of Quaker teaching. (8)

In his discussion of occupations, Chapter IX, DuBois combined present-oriented surveys with historical insight in the same fashion. He points out that job opportunities have varied with the legal status of blacks. When slavery was legal in the state (up to 1820), black artisans, with the legal protection of their masters, came to occupy a large part of the skilled jobs in the city. When the mass influx of free white artisans came into the city after 1820, competition and the advent of new skills unavailable to blacks pushed them out of these jobs. (9)

DuBois saw the relationship between job opportunities for blacks and competition from immigrants: the legal status of the blacks, the previous skills of the freedmen, and the political and social protection available to the freedmen in the city. In the historical chapters and in the chapter on occupations he traces the influence of these various factors up to the time of the writing. In order to broaden his view of this background he spent the summer of 1897 in Farmville, Virginia studying the rural origin of many of the recent arrivals in Philadelphia. The result of the summer was "The Negroes of Farmville, Virginia" (US Department of Labor Bulletin Number 14), which he considered a part of the study of the Philadelphia Negro.

The heart of this book, then, consisted of this investigation of the real conditions of life, their historical character, and their complex interaction with the whole. Years later DuBois concluded from this study: "I did not know so much as I might about my own people . . . .

I became painfully aware that merely being born in a group does not necessarily make one possessed of complete knowledge concerning it. I had learned far more from Philadelphia Negroes than I had taught them concerning the Negro problem." (10)

An aspect of the book which reflected more Du Bois's training than his study of the black community was his treatment of classes within the black community and among whites. Du Bois necessarily discussed social classes throughout the book in order to portray the variety of social, religious, economic, and other conditions in the black community. And in his empirical treatment of this group he cannot be faulted. But in his historical view of the upper classes (in terms of income and social status, which he then used to denote class) and his view of their social role, many weaknesses appear.

The most-striking instance in which his background shows through his empirical work is in his treatment of the role of the black upper classes in helping to solve the problems confronting the entire black community. In this discussion Du Bois leaned heavily on the analogy between the black community in the US and a nascent bourgeois nation. He felt that the study of the black upper class was "necessary to the comprehension of the whole — it forms the realized ideal of the group, and as it is true that a nation must to some extent be measured by its slums, it is also true that it can only be understood and finally judged by its upper classes." (11) He was pointing to the more successful in the black community in order to counter the propaganda against blacks based on the slums and crime among the poorer groups. Yet this view makes sense only if it is interpreted in light of Du Bois's background in Germany under the "fire-eating Pan-German von Treitschke" and his fascination with Bismark.

This connection is even clearer in the rhetorical way Du Bois wrote "On the Duty of Negroes" in his final chapter.

Above all, the better classes of the Negroes should recognize their duty toward the masses. They should not forget that the spirit of the Twentieth Century is to be the turning of the high toward the lowly, the bending of Humanity to all that is human; the recognition that in the slums of modern society lie the answers to most of our puzzling problems of organization and life, and that only as we solve these problems is our culture assured and our progress certain. This the Negro is far from recognizing for himself; his social evolution in cities like Philadelphia is approaching a mediaeval stage (in which) the centrifugal forces of repulsion between social classes are becoming more powerful than those of attraction. (12)

The ideas of "duty toward the masses" and "turning of the high toward the lowly" reflect the idealization of the mission of the bourgeoisie to transform feudal social relations, a point of view long dominant in Germany. Du Bois concluded more directly that upper-class blacks can "hardly fulfill their duty as the leaders of the Negroes until they are captains of industry over their people as well as richer and wiser". (13)

Existing alongside this belief in black capitalism was a contradictory view which held great importance for his later development. While he saw in black capitalism the possibility of growth and independence for the community as a whole, history showed him that any attempt to create a completely-autonomous economy "would...be vastly more successful in another economic age". He saw that small black business simply could not compete with the monopolies that were then gaining a firm hold on the economy. "Thus the economic condition of the day militates largely against the Negro; it requires more skill and more experience to run a small store than formerly, and the large store and factory are virtually closed to him on any terms." (14) Du Bois did not try to reconcile this assessment with his program of black capitalism; as time passed this contradiction grew and Du Bois retreated from his hope for the black bourgeoisie.

Du Bois's advocacy of black capitalism has been criticized as "impractical" and as an "intrusion" of his personal "bias" and his "preconceptions" into his otherwise "objective" study. (15) But while certainly his views were impracticable, it is wrong to separate his program from his historical analysis as an "intrusion". Du Bois was attempting to see the motion of the historical process as a whole — to understand how history reflected itself in the present and the direction it would take in the future. He did this logically and naturally in accordance with his stated purpose of doing research to help black people in their struggle for reform and progress. He had been born in a society that did not envision any other social system, and so he tried to see some historical direction in the efforts of black folks to develop within the present system. Given his education and background it is not surprising that he should have written what he did. The significance of this attempt to relate a historical world view to the basic research in social history that he did in The Philadelphia Negro does not lie in the specific formulations that he wrote in 1898, for it is clear that many of his programmatic ideas were contradicted by the reality he studied. But having derived this method of study, he laid the foundation for continuous change and development of his world view that marked his entire life. His use of social science to confront the problems of his people and his attempt to reason historically from the facts of social life and their world historic context were first worked out in this book. As Du Bois's knowledge of the conditions of his people deepened he was gradually forced to abandon this world view derived from his classical education and the consensus of the late Nineteenth Century.

The central weakness in his world view was his belief that racism was essentially the result of ignorance and misinformation. He did not connect racism to the material needs of capitalism. In fact he felt that capitalism could abolish racism by fulfilling its proclaimed ideals of equality. Consequently he pleaded with the "best" of the white race to treat the attempts of the black middle class to rise within the system with sympathy and politeness. White leaders of industry and opinion "ought to be trying here and there to open up new opportunities and give new chances to bright colored boys". (16) The problems involving unemployment of common laborers he felt resulted from the false

representations of job possibilities that industry carried to rural Virginia. This practice, he hoped, would be prevented by government action. His hope for such reforms reflected his idealistic views and the lack of a class analysis. (17) DuBois's views were soon to face a serious challenge in the reality of rural Georgia in which he would immerse himself for the next 12 years.

## II

When Du Bois went to Atlanta University in 1897 to begin his tenure as professor of sociology, he took with him the world view and method of inquiry he had developed in The Philadelphia Negro. He expanded the scope but retained the substance of this approach in his proposals for studying the social conditions of the black belt. From 1897 to 1913 he edited and mostly wrote the Atlanta University Publications, Numbers 1 through 18, consisting of over 2,000 pages. These studies, covering every aspect of life in the black South, represented the most-complete attempt to uncover the actual conditions of social reality of American black people that had ever been undertaken. Today, these works are still the most complete study available in the context of the turn of the century, and are a substantial primary source for social historians and social scientists. In virtually every study of black history and sociology that has followed them, they have been the starting point of inquiry in fields that they touch. (18)

The Atlanta Publications were an extension of DuBois's historical sociology on a far-greater scale than his Philadelphia study, which he had conducted alone. While funds for the Atlanta studies were always scarce and an important limitation of his plans, he was able to get grants amounting to \$5,000 per year from the John Slater Fund. He had the help of his students and fellow faculty members at Atlanta and elsewhere in the South. (19) The results are impressive. He surveyed the bedrock of social life in a way few historians or social scientists ever have. He covered the real social conditions of common people who seldom if ever left written records. His students went into the country surrounding Atlanta with questionnaires; he sent surveys to every black school in the South and letters and questionnaires to skilled workers and artisans in all of the former slave states and in most metropolitan areas; and he used census reports and statistics extensively to confirm, counter-check, and uncover trends detected by direct investigation. Thus, studies were written on mortality, social and physical conditions, efforts at social betterment, the college-bred Negro, the Negro artisan, the Negro church, Negro common schools, Negro crime, economic co-operation, and manners and morals. While Du Bois's original plan envisioned repeating these studies every 10 years as a regular part of the University curriculum, circumstances permitted only six of them to be repeated under his direction: the studies of health and physique (earlier, mortality), efforts at social betterment, the college-bred Negro, Negro common schools, the Negro artisan, and manners and morals (this time including also religion).

All of these studies contain historical analysis and the awareness of the interrelatedness of every aspect of social life. In their totality, they contain descriptions of the black community and its modes of behavior and interaction. They picture the family in its setting of houses, streets, schools, and community buildings and institutions, and they discuss religion, child and adult patterns of behavior, local politics, and marriage. In addition, they put all of this into perspective by considering the central facts of any living group — its occupations and incomes. He saw the importance of economics in this fundamental sense that so much revolved around it in social life. By the time he left Atlanta in 1910 he had gained deep knowledge of and insight into the reality of black America. In all of his subsequent writings this knowledge was reflected and provided a solid foundation for historical insights and conclusions.

The Atlanta Publications developed many of the themes that would later be developed in Du Bois's Black Reconstruction. In both of his studies of the Negro artisan (1902 and 1912), for instance, he observed the displacement of black artisans by white workers. He saw that white workers and employers had conspired to disfranchise blacks, and then, through the competition in the job market and especially through white unions, they had forced skilled blacks into menial, common-labor jobs. In addition he noted that new industry with its new machinery and skills had pushed black workers even further back. (20)

Some themes were not fully developed, and many of the weaknesses of The Philadelphia Negro reappeared. Politics and interracial contacts were not fully explored due to the political climate in Georgia. Again the full role of the employer was not developed, while there was a great deal of concentration and investigation on white workers' prejudice and their initiating role in excluding blacks. Moreover, from the evidence in his study there was little reason to reverse the emphasis on white racism among workers. Left as an isolated fact, however, the stress on white workers' attitudes could be misleading and one-sided. This subject Du Bois would take up later in its full historical context in Black Reconstruction. These studies were again full of his ideas on how to overcome the problems he wrote about. Some of his projected programs changed as his stress on the role of the black bourgeoisie changed. He came to stress co-operatives and profit-sharing more and the uninhibited rise of a bourgeois class less. (21) These programs were offered in the same spirit as those outlined earlier in Du Bois's Philadelphia study.

The quality of these studies is inconsistent due primarily to the difficulties Atlanta University encountered in funding them. As a result some of the studies had to be completed without the thoroughness that was otherwise possible. Some studies done in years when money was more-readily available used statistical and sampling techniques in analyzing the data collected. In others the data was simply compiled and published as it was. (22) This inconsistency undoubtedly reduced the value of these studies. While the use of statistical techniques to measure mass movements and to test the significance of correlations in these movements is important, however, such techniques do not

constitute the heart and soul of a thorough method.

The real importance of statistical methods lies in the framework within which they are used. Most of the attempts to evaluate Du Bois's framework have been from the point of view of the social sciences, which have become obsessed with purely mathematical and statistical techniques. (23) Thus the essentially -historical nature of Du Bois's sociology has been ignored. This lack of criticism reflects the barrier between history and the social sciences that has become dominant in American thought, and has relegated Marxism to its present status outside virtually every discipline. Since Marxism recognizes no other science than the "science of history", it is essential for radical historiography to appreciate the significance of Du Bois's work from the point of view of his embrace of historical sociology.

Du Bois did not allow statistical techniques to determine his basic framework. Instead, he adopted an approach which could handle the conditions he observed: conditions which were constantly changing and evolving; in which various components were interacting back and forth; and in which sterile, mathematical categories were inappropriate. As Du Bois commented later: "Social scientists were then still thinking in terms of theory and vast and eternal laws, but I had a concrete group of living beings artificially set off by themselves and capable of almost laboratory experiment." (24) Du Bois's views were pragmatic and concrete, and he evaluated theory on the basis of intimate knowledge of history. (25) In refusing to abandon this historical standard, Du Bois opened the way to develop as a Marxist, to see beyond the surface appearances of modern society.

The nature of capitalist society and economy is such that the institutions of capitalism take on the aura of "scientific" definition and timeless, perpetual existence. (26) This seeming "appearance" has led many historians and social scientists to regard categories such as the bourgeois family, relations of production and religion, et cetera as permanent and valid for all times. In other words, they have obscured their historical, transitory nature. The reflection of this view in the social sciences has been the adoption of statistical methods as the complete framework of analysis. Thus, for instance, in bourgeois economics "capital" has been reduced to a homogeneous input of production that can be characterized as a sum or stream of money. Capitalist development has been reduced in essence to the quantitative accumulation (in units of money) of this object, "capital". In sociology the same outlook resulted in the adoption of such areas of study as "deviant behavior" and "delinquency", while in anthropology this outlook has resulted in the term "primitive" to denote societies based on different means and modes of production, social organization, et cetera from capitalism. And whole schools of "structuralists" and "functionalists" have debated which view most adequately "fits", while doing violence to history.

Du Bois broke from these tendencies in his work in Philadelphia and Atlanta by asserting the historical character of the social phenomena he studied. It is not possible to say with certainty why he broke from the methods of established social science in this way. It seems likely,

however, that he came to this new path through his own commitment to struggle to end the oppression of his people at a time of immense social change. This era was marked by the ascendancy of imperialism, with the far-reaching consequences that this had for the Third World. DuBois's commitment to social change resulted in his being confronted with a contradiction between the conditions of his people and the institutions and categories of capitalism. Take for instance the Negro family and the bourgeois "ideal", the monogamous, patrilineal family. DuBois understood that historically the African polygamous family had been destroyed and replaced by polygamy and polyandry under slavery. The slave regime actively prevented the adoption of the "ideal" family through the assertion of absolute property rights over the slave. Thus with emancipation the black family began an arduous transformation from the slave norm to one which would fit life as freedmen. In his studies in Philadelphia and Atlanta the economic and social barriers which prevented the full adoption of monogamy were uncovered. Thus for DuBois history became essential to the understanding of the past, present, and future of family structure. Concepts of "deviant behavior" were not only ludicrous but oppressive.

In other areas as well, DuBois had delved deeply into the social fabric of black America and searched for some basis of change and progress. He met the stubborn resistance of the white world and the system of modern capitalism. That stubborn resistance placed the categories of bourgeois life in doubt, and methodologically opened the door for DuBois to view the evolution of the system's antithesis — the world proletariat which was mainly darker-skinned. He did not come to a full comprehension of the system and its unalterable effects on people of color until shortly before World War I. But the seeds of that later recognition were planted in these early studies. It is in this context, then, that we can evaluate the significance of DuBois's Atlanta studies and their use of statistical methods.

If the technical flaws in these early studies are compared with DuBois's adoption of this historical bias, the failings in technique are significant. It should nevertheless be stressed that it is not possible to comprehend the social history of a people or class without accepting the necessity of using statistical methods in viewing events that affect millions of people. If these methods are subordinated to historical process and dialectical change, they become invaluable.

During the years that DuBois edited the Atlanta Publications (1897 to 1913), he also wrote two important works which are landmarks in his development: The Souls of Black Folk and John Brown. Although The Souls of Black Folk is most-widely known for its essay on the controversy with Booker T. Washington, it also elaborated DuBois's views on a wide spectrum of other issues. It was, in part, his reaction to six years in Georgia as expressed in historical essays, personal laments, and indignant denunciations. His writing reflected not only his extensive research for the Atlanta Publications, but also his new-found comprehension of the strength of racism:

In Philadelphia I was their (black people's) cold and scientific



investigator, with microscope and probe. It took me but a few years of Atlanta to bring me to hot and indignant defense. I saw the race hatred of the whites as I had never dreamed of it before — naked and unashamed! The faint discrimination of my hopes and intangible dislikes paled into nothing before this great red monster of cruel oppression. I held back with more difficulty each day my mounting indignation against injustice and misrepresentation. (27)

Du Bois's research and resultant anger intensified the contradictions between his classical education and its ability to interpret and to comprehend the reality he faced.

The first casualty of his new awareness was his hope for the co-operation of whites in the solution of the problems facing blacks. Reversing the hopes he expressed in The Philadelphia Negro, Du Bois concluded: "We cannot hope, then, in this generation, or for several generations, that the mass of the whites can be brought to assume that close sympathetic and self-sacrificing leadership of the blacks which their present situation so eloquently demands. Such leadership, such social teaching and example, must come from the blacks themselves." (28) He gave up not only on the mass of whites but also specifically on the New South industrial leaders. "Into the hands of these men Southern laborers, white and black, have fallen; and this to their sorrow. For the laborers as such there is in these new captains of industry neither love nor hate, neither sympathy nor romance; it is a cold question of dollars and dividends." (29)

This insight into the common fate of white and black labor was not entirely new; but it took on a new significance. Now it was coupled with a questioning of the material base, the substance, of Du Bois's ideal for future development, namely the bourgeoisie and their system. "Atlanta (the capital of the New South) must not lead the South to dream of material prosperity as the touchstone of all success; already the fatal might of this idea is beginning to spread; it is replacing the finer type of Southerner with vulgar money-getters; it is burying the sweeter beauties of Southern life between pretense and ostentation." Du Bois lamented "the sudden transformation of a fair far-off ideal of Freedom into the hard reality of bread-winning and the consequent deification of Bread". (30) His hopes and visions of a new and meaningful human existence for black folks would not be placated by the almighty Dollar.

Yet his reaction to this new system in the South was not to entirely reject the system of capitalism. Race lines were in conflict with class analyses: he could not hope for anything from white workers whose race hatred was so intense. He concluded that the problem was the corruption of the white race, and that black capitalism could still be different and could lead humanity from the awful creation of the white system. "Here is the path out of the economic situation, and here is the imperative demand for trained Negro leaders of character and intelligence — men of skill, men of light and leading, college-bred men, black captains of industry, and missionaries of culture; men who thoroughly comprehend and know modern civilization, and can take hold

of Negro communities and raise and train them by force of precept and example, deep sympathy, and the inspiration of common blood and ideals." (31)

Even as he clung to this hoped-for role of the black elite, Du Bois reflected new awareness and appreciation of the common folk, talking less of the "best" of society and more of the worth of the lowest and the need to know his conditions.

How little we really know of these millions — of their daily lives and longings, of their homely joys and sorrows, of their real shortcomings and the meaning of their crimes! All this we can learn only by intimate contact with the masses, and not by wholesale arguments covering millions separated in time and space, and differing widely in training and culture....

It is easy for us to lose ourselves in details in endeavoring to grasp and comprehend the real conditions of a mass of human beings. We often forget that each unit in the mass is a throbbing human soul. Ignorant it may be, and poverty stricken, black and curious in limb and ways and thought; and yet it loves and hates, it toils and tires, it laughs and weeps its bitter tears, and looks in vague and awful longing at the grim horizon of its life—all this, even as you and I. (32)

It should be stressed that this keen awareness of the humanness of the masses of people was not confined to black folk. Du Bois understood and sympathized with the plight of the white land-owner who found himself after the Civil War stripped of all he possessed, including his slaves, and who faced the world bitterly. At the same time he understood the rage of the black woman who had been raped and had her children taken from her under slavery. He understood the bitter race hatred as the result of a human historical situation. (33)

Du Bois was looking desperately for solutions and programs, but he knew that these solutions had to emerge from the reality of his people. He therefore studied that reality; took the good with the bad; and allowed himself no easy generalizations — no unfounded, irresponsible programs. He was isolated in his search to the black community in which he had totally submerged himself for years. At one point, he concluded: "Such is the situation of the mass of Negroes in the Black Belt today; and they are thinking about it. Crime and a cheap and dangerous socialism are the inevitable results of this pondering." (34) Cheap and dangerous for whom? Certainly Du Bois was not looking out for the system that oppressed his people. Rather he could not see the basis for socialism as a solution to the problems which he knew so well. He looked to the immediate future and not far beyond. Later, with the coming of World War I and his involvement in the NAACP and the Pan-African Conferences, he would put this basic knowledge of black reality into world perspective and bring the problem of socialism into clear focus.

In writing John Brown in 1909, Du Bois conceived his purpose to be

to counter the all-pervasive racism that encumbered John Brown's legacy. In the final chapter of this book, Du Bois explicitly confronts the racism and social Darwinism that had taken theoretical hold of Western thought. He noted the coincidence of "tremendous scientific and economic advance" and "distinct signs of moral retrogression in social philosophy". The works of Darwin, Weissman, and Galton had been interpreted to prove the inherent inequality of men and races of men. Yet Du Bois did not link the developments in theory with the rise of modern imperialism. He countered racist arguments by appealing to the evidence: there was "not the slightest scientific warrant" for these ideas! (35)

Du Bois felt that Darwin left a different legacy: "What the age of Darwin has done is to add to the Eighteenth Century idea of individual worth the complementary idea of physical immortality. And this, far from annulling or contracting the idea of human freedom, rather emphasizes its necessity of eternal possibility—the boundlessness and endlessness of human achievement. Freedom has come to mean not individual caprice or aberration, but social self-realization in an endless chain of selves; and freedom for such development is not the denial but the central assertion of the evolutionary theory." (36) Du Bois came through the theoretical debate on racism to one of the central posits of dialectical materialism: that history evolves as a social phenomenon and that laws in the natural sciences are inherently transformed when applied to human existence by the centrality of ideas and theory, of consciousness in the evolution of human society. In other words, the material laws of nature which underly historical evolution must be viewed dialectically; to apply natural laws to human history without accounting for its social nature is to distort history.

Surely Du Bois's understanding was far from dialectical materialism in 1909. But it is true, nevertheless, that he was developing a method of historical inquiry and a philosophical view that in substance were approaching those of Marx. He did not come to his view all at once; and he did not come to it by way of the same philosophical path that Marx did. Rather it emerged slowly from his classical training and his immersion in the reality of black people in the United States—a reality that constantly tore at the fiber of Western bourgeois thought. This element, like earlier ones, would not be lost in his later writing.

### III

From 1910 to 1934 Du Bois was the editor of The Crisis, the official journal of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. He devoted his time to political activity and consequently directed the bulk of his writing to day-to-day political questions rather than to historical inquiry. Very early in this period (by 1916) Du Bois's world view underwent a major change in which he abandoned completely any hope for a future leadership role for the black bourgeoisie. Du Bois abandoned this hope as he came to recognize that modern capitalism itself was responsible for the virulent racism he now knew so well.

Signs of this new outlook appeared before he left Atlanta in 1910. From 1906 to 1909 DuBois was the General Secretary of the Niagara Movement which raised the first militant protests of the modern black movement. In 1907, as editor of this movement's paper, The Horizon, DuBois hesitantly embraced socialist goals. While he did "not believe in the complete socialization of the means of production — the entire abolition of private property in capital", he did believe that the economy had lost its "private" character and that much of it should be "run by the public for the public". Moreover he recognized that blacks had been used by capitalists as "tools of oppression against the workingman's cause". Black people had to see that "our natural friends are not the rich but the poor, not the great but the masses, not the employers but the employees". He urged his readers to "Watch the Socialists. We may not follow them and agree with them in all things.... But in trend and ideal they are the salt of this present earth." (37)

In 1910 DuBois joined the Socialist Party Club Number 1 in New York City, but was not very active or enthusiastic. He held strong reservations due to the failure of the Party to oppose racism, and in the case of many members their open belief in the inferiority of blacks. In 1913, while a member of the editorial board of The New Review, he wrote in that journal that "theoretical Socialism of the Twentieth Century meets a critical dilemma in facing up to the problems of racism. He attacked the "fatalistic attitude" by which many Socialists assumed that the Negro problem would be solved automatically once socialism had been won. He felt that the present program of Social Democracy, in ignoring black people, reflected unfavorably upon the ultimate goals of the movement. If the Socialist Party was making "no active effort to secure for (black people)... a voice in the Social Democracy, or an adequate share in the social income", did this mean its version of socialism would continue the exploitation of the blacks? A program which ignored black people "is that of industrial aristocracy which the world has always tried; the only difference being that such Socialists are trying to include in their inner circle a much-larger number than have ever been included before. Socialistic as this program may be called, it is not real Social Democracy. The essence of Social Democracy is that there shall be no excluded or exploited classes...." (38) As DuBois's analysis of capitalism deepened, he moved closer to socialism; at the same time he remained uncomfortable in the Socialist Party. He quit the Party in 1912 to support Wilson for President. When Wilson segregated government employees in 1913 DuBois was outraged and discouraged.

These frustrating experiences within the white world were offset somewhat by his deepening involvement in the international efforts of the Pan-African movement. As early as 1900 DuBois had participated in the first Pan-African conference in London as Secretary. He traveled again to England in 1911 to participate in the First Universal Races Congress. In 1906 he had heard Franz Boas lecture in Atlanta on the rich cultural life of Africa. In these personal and intellectual contacts DuBois began to see that the Western concept of the "Dark Continent" resulted not from ignorance but from the rape of that continent being

conducted by the imperialist powers. (39)

This new departure in his thought finds its first expression in book form in his 1915 volume The Negro. This book surveyed the world history of black culture, and for the first time placed the "distinct signs of moral retrogression in social philosophy" of the Western World in the context of the material development of world imperialism, beginning with the slave trade. Du Bois summarized his views on this topic in Chapter XII of this book, "The Negro Problems". This chapter is a seminal statement of Du Bois's world outlook and deserves to be considered in detail. It became the basis upon which he conceived the writing of Black Reconstruction, as well as several subsequent works. Needless to say, it was the summation of many of the aspects of his thought which have been outlined above.

Du Bois began, as always, historically: "The Negro slave trade was the first step in modern world commerce, followed by the modern theory of colonial expansion." He pointed out that the traffic was profitable and that it provided labor to grow the New World crops which later became the basis of the industrial revolution in Europe and America. The combination of the moral repugnance of the Eighteenth Century and the more-profitable investments in the factory system in Europe and America cut the "bottom out of the commercial slave trade and its suppression became possible." (40)

Simultaneously with the slave trade, and in consequence of its profits and raw materials thus derived, the world experienced the rise of the modern working class. In recognizing this fact, Du Bois was asserting that the white and black proletariat emerged in substantially-different settings and conditions. In the United States these two segments of world labor were closer in proximity, and thus the conditions of the slaves affected more directly the conditions of white workers. But their relations were not different in substance from those between the European proletariat and the workers and peasants of the European colonies. As the Western proletariat grew, it began to demand, through political power, a greater share of the wealth it created. "In the United States their demand bade fair to be halted by the competition of slave labor. The labor vote, therefore, first confined slavery to limits within which it could not live, and when the slave power sought to exceed these territorial limits, it was suddenly and unintentionally abolished." (41) Thus the abolition of slavery in the US and in the rest of the world opened up the question: What path of development would the millions of emancipated colored workers take?

Du Bois outlines in broad generalities the development of modern colonialism from this pivotal period subsequent to the abolition of slavery. At first "it was natural to assume that the uplift of this working class lay along the same paths with that of European and American whites". This is the view which motivated the movement for abolition-democracy and the recognition of Haiti and Liberia.

However, long before they (dark laborers) were strong enough to assert the rights thus granted or to gather intelligence enough for proper group leadership, the new colonialism of

the later Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries began to dawn. The new colonial theory transferred the reign of commercial privilege and extraordinary profit from the exploitation of the European working class to the exploitation of backward races under the political domination of Europe. For the purpose of carrying out this idea, the European and the white American working class were practically invited to share in this new exploitation and particularly were flattered by popular appeals to their inherent superiority to "Dagoes", "Chinks", "Japs", and "Niggers". (42)

While many of his formulations are questionable and vague, the central point of this passage is clear: world imperialism reaffirmed that it would treat darker workers more severely, and that the resulting super-profits would go to enrich the Western country. The rise of racism in the Nineteenth Century was thus placed in the context of this new material fact of colonial oppression.

The scramble for colonies and the partition of Africa had special consequences for the status of black workers. "Why was it necessary, the European investors argued, to push a continent of black workers along the paths of social uplift by education, trade-unionism, property holding, and the electoral franchise when the workers desired no change, and the rate of European profit would suffer?" Thus, said DuBois, arose a second path for the solution of the Negro problem: the systems of forced labor and economic slavery that arose in cocoa raising in Portuguese Angola, diamond mining in South Africa, and rubber and ivory collecting in the Belgian Congo, all of which were justified in openly-racist terms. (43)

A third solution arose in the modern neo-colonial policy of indirect political influence through economic control. "Negroes in Africa, the West Indies, and America were to be forced to work by land monopoly, taxation, and little or no education." In this way black labor could be kept in peonage without legal protection and without unions. Low wages and high profits could be maintained. Partial enfranchisement would not substantially change the status of black labor: "Land and capital... have for the most part been so managed and monopolized that the black peasantry have been reduced to straits to earn a living in one of the richest parts of the world." (44)

DuBois concluded that these economic systems stood behind the solid wall of social Darwinism and racist misconceptions about black people.

The effort is made today (by European colonialists)... to leave so far as possible the outward structure of native life intact; the king or chief reigns, the popular assemblies meet and act, the native courts adjudicate, and the native social and family life and religion prevail. All this, however, is subject to the veto and command of a European magistracy supported by a native army with European officers. The advantage of this

method is that on its face it carries no clue to its real working. Indeed it can always point to certain undoubted advantages: the abolition of the slave trade, the suppression of war and feud, the encouragement of peaceful industry. On the other hand, back of practically all these experiments stands the economic motive — the determination to use the organization, the land, and the people, not for their own benefit, but for the benefit of white Europe. (45)

DuBois perceived in this world-wide system the impossibility of advancement of black people through channels traveled by whites — capitalism had brought stagnation and oppression to black workers and nations and changed for all time the path of development open to them. That hope for black capitalism which appeared in The Philadelphia Negro, in The Souls of Black Folk, in many of the Atlanta studies, and in John Brown was finally abandoned.

As an alternative DuBois surveyed the thoughts of blacks themselves on their problems and found no central unifying opinion yet existing. However, black people were involved in finding solutions and thinking about their problems, and DuBois was confident that a solution would arise.

The Pan-African movement when it comes will not, however, be merely a narrow racial propaganda. Already the more far-seeing Negroes sense the coming unities: a unity of the working classes everywhere, a unity of the colored races, a new unity of men. The proposed economic solution of the Negro problem in Africa and America has turned the thoughts of Negroes toward a realization of the fact that the modern white laborer of Europe and America has the key to the serfdom of black folk in his support of militarism and colonial expansion. He is beginning to say to these workingmen that, so long as black laborers are slaves, white laborers cannot be free. (46)

It should be stressed that the foregoing was written in 1915, before the Pan-African Congresses and in the midst of the collapse of the Second International.

It might be thought that such broad generalizations were inconsistent with DuBois's carefully-detailed historical writings. Yet in all that he wrote he tried to ascertain the direction of historical movement and where black people should look to find solutions to their real problems. In 1903 he had commented on a "cheap and dangerous socialism" that seemed to have little meaning for black folks. But from the vantage point of 1915 and his political involvement he re-examined the question and concluded differently.

Yet in viewing the socialist alternative DuBois was not joining the socialists of Europe and America who seemed to ignore the questions he felt were central. In the United States, the socialist movement had a dismal record: for the most part it had ignored blacks, while there

were significant exceptions in which socialists were openly racist. In Europe, socialists were abandoning internationalism and supporting the imperialist war to re-divide the colonial hinterland. Nevertheless, DuBois concluded that the unity of working classes and especially of colored peoples was a necessity forced on them by the world capitalist system.

A remarkable thing about The Negro was that it anticipated a view of the labor aristocracy and its relationship to world imperialism which Lenin wrote at about the same time. (47) It is true that Du Bois's view was only a hint of the larger analysis that was to come both in Lenin's writing and in his own, especially in Black Reconstruction. The key point in his analysis was his understanding that the world system had evolved a different, more-severe treatment of black workers than of white workers. The profits from this super-exploitation then became a physical barrier to the unity of the world proletariat. Moreover, the future of colored people was unalterably changed by imperialism. Black and white labor now faced the same exploiter, but from vastly-different vantage points.

Many of these points were elaborated in Darkwater, written in 1920 when Du Bois was 52 years old. This volume is similar to The Souls of Black Folk insofar as it is a collection of essays some of which are autobiographical, and contains the same passion as the earlier work as well as the perspective of the added years and the First World War.

By 1920 DuBois's view of Western Civilization had been almost totally transformed. At the turn of the century, in The Philadelphia Negro, he had pointed out that black people had to live up to the standards of civilization if they expected to get ahead. "Men have a right," he wrote, "to demand that members of a civilized community be civilized; that the fabric of human culture, so laboriously woven, be not wantonly or ignorantly destroyed." (48) After World War I and the first Pan-African Congresses, DuBois found little meaning in appeals to "civilization". Commenting on the German occupation of Belgium and the allied horror in response, he said:

Behold little Belgium and her pitiable plight, but has the world forgotten Congo? What Belgium now suffers is not half, not even a tenth, of what she has done to black Congo since Stanley's great dream of 1880....

Yet (then) the fields of Belgium laughed, the cities were gay, art and science flourished; the groans that helped to nourish this civilization fell on deaf ears because the world round about was doing the same sort of thing elsewhere on its own account. (49)

DuBois now spoke from a different vantage point, from the vantage point of the Third World grown more confident and less intimidated by European culture and military might.

As we saw the dead faintly through rifts of battle-smoke and heard faintly the cursings and accusations of blood brothers,



we darker men said: This is not Europe gone mad; this is not aberration nor insanity; this is Europe; this seeming Terrible is the real soul of white culture—back of all culture—stripped and visible today. This where the world has arrived—these dark and awful depths and not the shining ineffable heights of which it boasted. (50)

In this bitter repudiation of European civilization and in his view from below, Du Bois brought a different perspective to the development of working-class movements in Europe and the US. At a time that most socialists looked with great hope at the new revolutionary government in Russia, and some even hoped for revolution to spread to Europe and America, Du Bois looked at the unchallenged colonial hinterland of Europe. By this standard he judged the workers' movements:

Even the broken reed on which we had rested high hopes of eternal peace—the guild of the laborers—the front of that very important movement for human justice on which we had builded most, even this flew like a straw before the breath of king and kaiser. Indeed, the flying had been foreshadowed when in Germany and America “international” Socialists had all but read yellow and black men out of the kingdom of industrial justice. Subtly had they been bribed, but effectively: Were they not lordly whites and should they not share in the spoils of rape? High wages in the United States and England might be the skillfully-manipulated result of slavery in Africa and peonage in Asia. (51)

If the white labor movement had been side-tracked, what vision did Du Bois hold out? Breaking with the last vestiges of elitism, he saw the last hope of civilization in the souls of common men in a system of socialized industry. He viewed man as a social being whose development relied on the society in which he lived.

The vast and wonderful knowledge of this marvelous universe is locked in the bosoms of its individual souls. To tap this reservoir of experience, knowledge, beauty, love, and deed, we must appeal not to the few, not to some souls, but to all. The narrower the appeal, the poorer the culture; the wider the appeal, the more magnificent are the possibilities. Infinite is human nature. We make it finite by choking back the mass of men, by attempting to speak for others, to interpret and act for them, and we end by speaking for ourselves and using the world as our private property. If this were all, it were crime enough—but it is not all: by our ignorance we make the creation of the greater world impossible; we beat back a world built of the playing of dogs and laughter of children, the song of Black Folk and worship of Yellow, the love of women and strength of men, and try to express by a group of doddering ancients the Will of the World. (52)

In this new world, spiritual values would be available to all. The work day reduced to a minimum by the advances in science and technology, individual self-development in its social setting could be unbounded.

By 1920, then, DuBois possessed the basic outline of the world view he would elaborate in his major works in the 1930s and 1940s. His experiences in the 1920s deepened the internationalism of his beliefs and further underlined the importance of economics and materialism in history. In 1919, 1921, and 1923 DuBois headed the Pan-African Congresses in Europe and became acquainted with black leaders from all over the world, and in 1923 he visited Africa for the first time. In 1926 he visited the Soviet Union and, impressed with the socialist experiment, took up Marx's writings again—but this time more seriously than before.

DuBois broke out of the confines of his classical education. His view on social history had been worked out in the detailed studies of black America while he was at Atlanta. Now he viewed this work in a world setting—in view of the whole sweep of modern capitalism. He had come to regard the role of the proletariat, the world proletariat which was in its majority colored, as the force destined to end the oppressive system of capitalism. He saw that without comprehending the central role of black workers in Western Civilization, it was not possible to understand that civilization at all.

## IV

In 1934 DuBois quit the NAACP due to increasing disagreements between himself, as editor of The Crisis, and the Executive Board. His internationalism and Marxism came into conflict with the legalism and reformism into which the NAACP was descending. The Depression made these disagreements intolerable by robbing The Crisis of the financial independence which it had enjoyed since it was founded. Because of this independence DuBois had enjoyed a wide latitude for personal expression independent of the organization's official policy. With this ended, he found it intolerable to remain as editor.

In returning to Atlanta University, DuBois became the Chairman of the Department of Sociology, a post he held until 1944. While teaching and working on various projects such as the Encyclopedia of the Negro, he wrote three important works: Black Reconstruction in America (1935); Black Folk, Then and Now (1939); and Dusk of Dawn (1940). These three books, and most of all Black Reconstruction, are the summation of his entire life's study and work, and the most-complete expressions of his world view.

Between 1933 and 1935 DuBois wrote Black Reconstruction, his most complete and impressive historical work. Starting from the outline he had developed in The Negro of the sequence of events that led up to modern colonialism and racism, he focused his attention on that pivotal moment in world history when slavery was abolished and the West faced a choice of fulfilling the promise of bourgeois democracy among

its darker workers or turning back toward color caste and building its European centers at the expense of the rest. He focused primarily on the role of blacks both to counter the prevailing racist interpretations of Dunning, Bowers, Rhodes, and others, and to show the importance of the self-activity of the freedmen to the unfolding of the myriad of class forces that helped to determine the outcome of this experiment in democracy. Thus his book had a two-fold function: to counter racist history and to comprehend the momentous and fateful decisions and actions which started the world on its modern path to colonial and racial oppression.

Historians have recently recognized the importance of DuBois's efforts to defend the record of blacks during Reconstruction. (53) However, they have continued to ignore the main content of Black Reconstruction, DuBois's analysis of the entire historical process in America and its international implications. As a result the slight controversy generated by the book has remained shallow: though criticisms have been made of DuBois's exclusive use of secondary sources in some chapters, his passionate attitude of defense toward blacks, and his Marxist literary style, they have failed to discuss the larger issues. (54) What follows, therefore, in the present narrative is not a critical essay, but necessarily the groundwork for such an effort, offering the reader a sense of the contours of Black Reconstruction.

DuBois began his analysis of Reconstruction by treating the Civil War in the context of global expansion and domination by Western Capitalism. The growth of the slave trade, and the interrelated rise of industrialization, had brought virtually the entire world under its sway. In America, this growth spawned two different societies within the same national state—the industrial North and the slave South. The basic economic impetus for the great conflict between the two lay in the South's restriction of industrialism's spread and development, and those constrictions were bound to be broken as a result of the Civil War. But the resulting struggle unloosed forces in the South and in the North which the dominant classes were unable to fully control.

Coupled with the anti-slavery movements of Europe and the slave revolts of the rest of the New World, the abolition of slavery in the United States opened up a period of major re-orientation for world capitalism, centering on the problem of emancipated black labor. Whether such labor was to be the equal of white labor or was to be restricted to some new, non-"slave" forms involved, in the US, the entire society, demanding of each class North and South an attitude toward the matter. It was in this specific context that Reconstruction acquired its peculiar importance.

At issue in the social changes was not the existence of capitalism per se, but rather the form it would take in the post-slavery world. The chief restraining impetus on capitalism's quest for maximum profits and re-ordering of social relations toward that goal was of course labor in the North, which by virtue of its numbers and strategic location in the metropolitan areas posed a constant if largely-latent danger to capitalist control. The status of black Southern labor, on the other hand, was initially a matter of indifference to capital as a whole,

as the easy acquiescence to the Black Codes of 1865-1866 showed. Yet black labor could not simply be ignored, since its re-enslavement meant the re-emergence of the slave power.

The goal of the abolition democracy, as Du Bois termed the Radical Republican force, was to enfranchise, educate, and generally uplift black labor to the status of equality with white labor. Their plan gained acceptance at first because it provided the only guarantee of Northern victory gained at the great expense of the blood and money spent on the Civil War. However, inherent in the Radical Republican program was a contradiction which would lead eventually to its undoing: the uplifting of black labor in the South would, finally, place intolerable constraints upon Northern capital. With the utter destruction of the slave-owning class and the absence of any indigenous capitalist class in the South, labor itself would necessarily usurp the powers necessary to enforce the wage contract (free labor) and create the political infrastructure to maintain it.

For Du Bois, the slave South had been a distinct society over which the planter class ruled absolutely by virtue of ideological, economic, and political power. (55) The black masses had played a key role during the Civil War in the destruction of that class: by their self-activity (the "General Strike", as DuBois termed it) of flocking to the Union armies in hundreds of thousands to serve as soldiers or laborers, the blacks had dissolved the social relationship which was the very heart of slavery. Here was the revolutionary character of the Civil War for Du Bois, the self-emancipation of labor as objective conditions allowed. While it was a bourgeois-democratic revolution, its chief actors had been not the capitalists, but the slaves themselves.

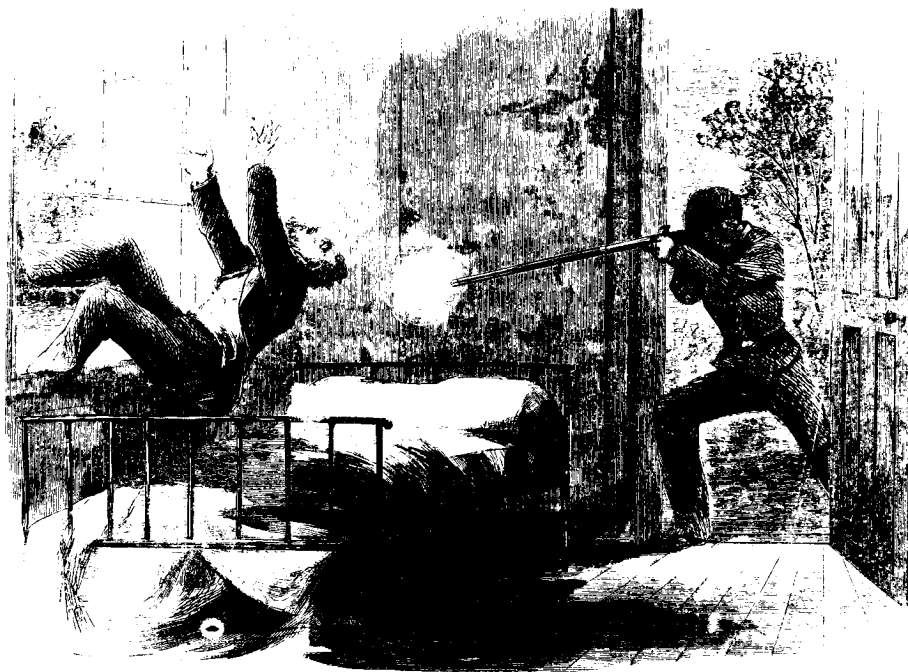
Du Bois called the results of this bourgeois-democratic revolution in the Reconstruction South the "Dictatorships of the Proletariat" (or of labor) to denote that it was Southern labor (propertyless workers rather than modern factory laborers) who came to power in the South in an unprecedented way. With the support of Northern armies, poor blacks and whites established against planter opposition public schools, legal protection for labor contracts, and political structures which gave poor people the vote. Through the participation of ex-slaves and poor white workers, furthermore, the old social relations that had existed on the level of the plantation were liquidated in favor of "free labor", that is, wage labor and capital. Only labor in the South could erect such bourgeois relations at that time, and the role played by Northern troops was primarily enforcement of what the participants in the process did.

At the same time, only the labor character of Southern governments could have created conflict with the nominally-victorious Northern capital. Once Reconstruction governments had completed anti-slavery revolution, the Northern elite sought to regain the full measure of its prerogative and re-submerge Southern labor under a dictatorship of capital. Such a re-submergence could not take place, however, without a fundamental modification of the ideal of free labor envisioned by the Radical Republicans and actively sought by freedmen.

The issue which most-clearly dramatized the contradiction between the democratic ideal and the political thrust of capital was the land

question. "Forty acres and a mule" represented the ideal of the black and white Southern laborers, for they saw this ideal of land ownership as a real solution to their pressing problems much in the same way that Northern labor saw it. This "American Assumption", as Du Bois termed it, was largely an impossible myth by 1870 due to domination of politics and economics by Northern capital. Yet the seeming abundance of land and the popularity of this Assumption made it the unifying platform of the bi-racial Reconstruction governments.

In the South, white labor was won to support Reconstruction with great hesitancy that resulted from its fear of black labor — a fear that arose out of the use to which black labor was put by the planters. Thus, whites who owned no slaves could gain no place in trades, no political power, and no good land. The racism that grew on this foundation was



THE NEGRO SEXTEL SHOOTING THE GEORGIA PERSECUTORS

intense and did not disappear easily. White labor sought desperately to avoid the re-establishment of the domination of white wealth on the basis of controlled black labor, and it was this fear of black labor, combined with racism, that put such importance on the land question.

If Reconstruction governments had distributed land to the landless laborers — black and white — the old problem of Southern white labor would have ended and the material basis for black-white alliance would have been laid. Yet if land had been so distributed, capital would have been placed at a severe disadvantage. First, small peasant proprietors would have become owners of the most-highly-valued cash crops in the nation. Second, through their control of state governments, railroads, and tax policies, they could have kept more of the value of these crops in the South. Third, the most wealthy — the speculators and the major

white landowners — would lose the rest of their power and possessions, a thoroughgoing process which the Lincoln and Johnson governments did not seek.

Since Federal troops were the effective arm of privileged Northern capital, and since any widespread land confiscation and re-distribution would have had to originate in the Federal Government, the land was never in danger of falling into the hands of its workers. Once this fact was clear, white Southern laborers' fears arose again; they scrambled to avoid being excluded from the South's economic and political life by the wealthy few among Northern capitalists and Southern landowners. To seek redress, they could possibly have united with black labor in the hope of winning some land and political power to secure a living in the new economic age. But the strength of Northern capital and the heritage of racism were too strong. Thus another path was chosen: to ally with wealthy white Southerners in a campaign for "home rule" and to carve out a place in the New South on the defeat of black labor.

Northern labor's position toward the outcome pivoted on the question of land and the "American Assumption". To the extent that Northern urban labor had organized, it was given leadership by the skilled upper segments of the working class. For the bulk of such laborers solidarity with Southern black labor was not perceived as a possible solution to their problems; rather, they sought themselves to become small enterprisers (as many did via craftsmanship) or to gain access to farm land. In this perspective the workers' devotion to their "particularistic grievances", which included their real and feared underbidding by black labor and potential monopolization of free land by emancipated blacks, brought them to battle capital on purely-economic grounds while still remaining blind to the larger social issues. The National Labor Union gave organizational expression to these tendencies by forcing blacks to form a separate unit, the Colored National Labor Union, in 1869. As DuBois put it, Northern labor had evidently placed the question of black labor's problems below its own interests. At the same time, the plight of the newer unskilled white workers competing with blacks for jobs made the situation of the working class as a whole virtually prohibitive to trans-racial unity.

The resulting Compromise of 1876 and the final withdrawal of the Federal troops had implications for the whole nation and every class grouping. For Northern capital it meant firm allies in the South in the form of New Southern capitalists and landlords. The slave system was smashed and the former rulers became little more than a comprador class which followed the lead and interests of Northern capital. For the abolition democracy the compromise was the defeat of their belief in an equal, free, and educated work force in the South. Blacks were never given ownership of the land on which they had worked as slaves for centuries. Instead, they were tied by debt peonage to work the crops and land of others for as little as would minimally keep them alive. Their oppression was doubled by political disfranchisement and unequal educational and social opportunities.

The new literacy clauses and property qualifications on voting in the South worked to the detriment of the white laborers. In a larger sense,

they had lost access to the only social experiment in the United States in which their class had acted in political and economic spheres in its own interest. Nevertheless the upper layers of the Southern white working class gained some recognition and greater participation in economic and political life by means of a "coalition" with Northern and Southern upper-class elements at the expense of the disfranchisement and peonage of blacks. In the wake of the smashing defeat and the new coalition along racial lines, hopes for a class-conscious movement in the Southern states collapsed.

The implications of the Compromise of 1876 were just as grave for Northern labor. In turning away from political involvement for labor as a class in the outcome in the South, Northern workers lost their fullest opportunity to develop class-conscious organization rather than thinly-distributed privileged gains through economistic organizations such as the American Federation of Labor. In spite of their own sharp struggles against their immediate exploiters, white labor acquiesced to racial oppression of blacks in the South as necessary for "stability" and "prosperity". In the future, radical movements would pay dearly for this defeat and the compromise it brought, and the recognition of black labor as the center of the problem of American labor would become prerequisite to a fully-developed class-conscious movement.

Black Reconstruction is a social history of the process which began the most-important phase of the American quest for world domination. DuBois placed the race question in the center of his story. While the world-wide ramifications of the failure of labor had been outlined in The Negro in 1915, it was not until 1939 and his book Black Folk, Then and Now that DuBois returned to the world scene in an effort to expand his exposition of the centrality of black people to Western Civilization. While this book covered the same ground as The Negro, it was entirely rewritten to take in the recent findings of anthropology and DuBois's fully-developed world view. In 1939 the West still insisted that Africa had no history, so DuBois wrote Black Folk, Then and Now to counter this misconception. Whereas in his earlier work The Negro he had spent a great deal of effort in simply describing the varied cultural life and history of Africa, DuBois now undertook to accompany this description with an analysis of how Western capitalism had distorted the economy and folkways and monopolized the land of black people the world over. Black Folk, Then and Now included a brief discussion of slavery, emancipation, and Reconstruction in the US in which DuBois capsulized his argument in Black Reconstruction.

Dusk of Dawn, published in 1940, was yet another attempt by DuBois to extend his analysis of Western Civilization. In this book he tried to place his own life into the movement of history as he had come to conceptualize it. He traced the development of his concept of race through the 72 years of his life and the immense changes that had occurred in the world. He felt that the meaning of his own life was not in what he had accomplished, but rather in how his life exemplified the age in which he lived. For instance with his education at Harvard and the University of Berlin, DuBois was not prepared to comprehend the world of the 1890s and 1900s. Yet the consensus of the age, the ideal of

progress and the promise of bourgeois civilization, faded in his mind, as well as in the minds of so many other black thinkers, as the quest of imperialism for colonies became increasingly brutal and obvious, and as racism intensified in an increasingly-educated world. In DuBois's chapter "Science and Empire", he discusses how the world forced him to abandon the pretenses of modern social science to find social counterparts of natural laws that applied to social life. For in the oppressive world of black America the only social law was historical change and the main truth was the imperative struggle to survive. DuBois in his way, and others in so many different ways, moved toward the understanding that racism was no mere accident but a foundation stone of Western Civilization.

Dusk of Dawn stressed a subject that this essay has not given full weight. For one of the central factors in all of DuBois's life was the impact of contemporary events on his thinking and his world view. The controversy with Booker T. Washington was more than a political aside. It was a major influence in impelling DuBois toward militant protest and out of his ivory tower. The immense labor struggles in the years before World War I forced DuBois to consider the importance of class divisions within the white world as no academic exercise could have done. Above all, the lynchings and racist brutality of the South fueled his intellectual motor as much as all the books he ever read. Thus here, as well as in his other autobiographies, it is striking that the first book in which DuBois expressed his global conception of imperialism (The Negro) is barely mentioned. The hallmarks of his life were in the world around him, and his books and other writings reflected these vast changes. (57)

The only justification for this essay's minimal treatment of these very-important biographical influences is the need to stress the importance of DuBois's thought and writing to American social history and American Marxism. Even this limited purpose is not completely achieved in that his books have been the main focus of review and analysis. There remains a large body of articles and non-historical works that need consideration. In addition, this essay has not treated the 1950s, DuBois's political campaigns in the Progressive Party in New York, his later membership in the Communist Party, and his eventual self-exile to Ghana. While these factors are important to any complete assessment of DuBois's life, it is equally true that his ideas and the content of his world view have been ignored and need to be brought to light. It is this essay's purpose to help start such a process.

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## Footnotes

1. W.E.B. DuBois: Darkwater (New York, 1969 edition, circa 1920), Page 35.
2. DuBois: The Autobiography of W. E. B. DuBois (New York, 1968), Page 148.



3. Du Bois : Dusk of Dawn (New York, 1968 edition, circa 1940), Page 32.
4. Ibid., Page 47.
5. Du Bois : Autobiography, Page 160.
6. Du Bois : Dusk of Dawn, Page 51.
7. Du Bois : The Philadelphia Negro : A Social Study (New York, 1967 edition, circa 1899), Page 5.
8. Ibid., Page 192.
9. Ibid., Pages 31-33.
10. Du Bois : Autobiography, Page 198.
11. Du Bois : The Philadelphia Negro, Page 7.
12. Ibid., Page 392.
13. Ibid., Page 318.
14. Ibid., Page 123.
15. See Francis L. Broderick : W. E. B. DuBois (Stanford, California, 1959), Pages 37-39, and Elliot M. Rudwick : W. E. B. DuBois (New York, 1960), Pages 36-37.
16. Du Bois : The Philadelphia Negro, Pages 395-396.
17. Ibid., Pages 133-136.
18. See, for instance, their use in E. Franklin Frazier : The Black Bourgeoisie (New York, 1957) and Sterling D. Spero and Abram L. Harris : The Black Worker (New York, 1931).
19. Financial limitations account for the rough form in which these studies appear. They are a collection of interviews, statistics, and interpretations which often were simply thrown together. Some are better than others. Nevertheless, their value and substance remains important.
20. Du Bois (editor) : The Negro Artisan : A Social Study, Atlanta University Publication 17 (Atlanta, 1912), Pages 37-40.
21. Rudwick : Du Bois, Page 51.
22. Ibid., Pages 43-44.
23. Broderick : Du Bois, Page 43.
24. Du Bois : Dusk of Dawn, Page 64.
25. Du Bois : The Philadelphia Negro, Pages 2-3. Du Bois remarked without elaboration that his research was marred by "the seemingly ineradicable faults of the statistical method".
26. See George Lukacs : "What Is Orthodox Marxism?", The New Internationalist, Summer 1957.
27. Du Bois : Darkwater, Page 21.
28. Du Bois : The Souls of Black Folk (New York, 1953 edition, circa 1903), Pages 171-172.
29. Ibid., Pages 168-169.
30. Ibid., Pages 78-80.
31. Ibid., Page 172.
32. Ibid., Pages 137, 143-144.
33. Ibid., Page 29.
34. Ibid., Pages 150-151.
35. Du Bois : John Brown (New York, 1962 edition, circa 1909), Pages 376-378.
36. Ibid., Page 378.

37. Du Bois: "Socialist of the Path" and "Negro and Socialism", The Horizon, February 1907, Volume 1, Number 2, Pages 7-8.

38. Du Bois: "Socialism and the Negro Problem", The New Review, February 1, 1913, Volume 1, Pages 38-41.

39. Du Bois: Autobiography, Pages 438-439, and Black Folk, Then and Now (New York, 1939), Introduction.

40. Du Bois: The Negro (New York, 1915), Pages 233-234.

41. Ibid., Page 234.

42. Ibid., Page 235.

43. Ibid., Page 237.

44. Ibid., Page 238.

45. Ibid., Page 239.

46. Ibid., Page 242.

47. See Lenin's Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism (1916), especially Chapter VIII, "The Parasitism and Decay of Capitalism". Also his preface to the French and German editions of Imperialism (written in 1920) deals with the labor aristocracy. In addition, Lenin wrote on this subject explicitly in his "Opportunism and the Collapse of the Second International" (1916) and "Imperialism and the Split in the Socialist Movement" (1916).

48. Du Bois: The Philadelphia Negro, Page 389.

49. Du Bois: Darkwater, Pages 38-39.

50. Ibid., Page 39.

51. Ibid., Page 47.

52. Ibid., Pages 104 and 140-141.

53. See Rudwick: Du Bois, Page 287; and Broderick: Du Bois, Page 182. Also, Herbert Aptheker reviews this subject more thoroughly in "Du Bois as Historian", Negro History Bulletin, April 1969.

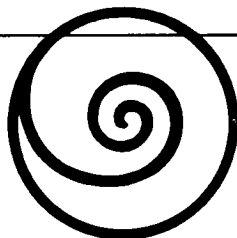
54. Du Bois: Black Reconstruction in America, 1860-1880 (Ohio and New York, 1962 edition, circa 1935). The heart of the book is contained in Chapters I-IV, VII, IX, XIV, and XVIII, in which he presents his key argument in a closely-reasoned, exceedingly-complex form. His main use of secondary sources occurs in other chapters, especially those on the history of the Reconstruction governments of the individual states. Chapter XVIII explains the limitations under which the book was written and why the over-reliance on secondary sources was decided on. In any case these chapters were designed to fill out the detail of the argument and are secondary in importance. It should also be noted that the signal exceptions to the behavior of the history profession toward this book have been C. L. R. James and Herbert Aptheker, together with an ever increasing number of younger scholars and activists.

55. Du Bois: Black Reconstruction, Chapter III. In his treatment of the slave South, Du Bois anticipated Eugene Genovese's interpretation of "hegemony" in most important respects save particularly the use of the term. Genovese's failure to credit (or read) Du Bois must be viewed in light of the widespread practice among professional historians of ignoring the contributions of black writers. See Eugene Genovese, The Political Economy of Slavery (New York, 1961).

56. In Black Reconstruction, Du Bois's argument is presented most succinctly on Pages 182-190 and 345-370, and all of Chapters I-IV and

Chapter XIV. In this latter chapter, on "The Counter - Revolution of Property", see especially Pages 580 - 592, 605 - 613, and 619 - 626.

57. DuBois: Dusk of Dawn, Chapters 4 and 5. DuBois wrote two other historical books in the 1940s which should be mentioned. In 1945, Color and Democracy: Colonies and Peace analyzed the settlement of World War II and assessed the possibilities of a lasting peace in light of the new upsurge in the colonial world. In 1946 DuBois wrote The World and Africa, which extended into the post-war period the analysis which he had made in Black Folk, Then and Now.



## ANARCHIST POSTERS

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productivity is a solvent for social conflict — is in some ways the essence of corporate liberalism. (Stated so broadly, this idea is not very different from the basic tenet of Adam Smith's liberalism, or Mandeville's, that "Private Vices" are "Public Benefits". But there is significant stress on the particular problem of the employer-employee relationship, and corporations are generally assumed to be the active agents in pursuing efficiency for the common good.)

Despite the potential for agreement, the relations between unions and scientific management before World War I were characterized by much conflict. There was some conflict in shops in which various scientific management techniques were introduced before Brandeis first brought "scientific management" to public attention in 1911, but the real battle was over Taylorism in the government arsenals, with unions emerging successful in getting the stopwatch and bonus wage systems banned in the arsenals from 1916 until 1949. The techniques the unions especially opposed were time studies, which they feared would lead to speed-ups; job analysis, which was associated with craft-skill dilution; and the incentive wage systems, not only more difficult to understand and to prevent abuse of, but also explicitly designed to reward individual achievement and ambition, and thus counter to the notion of collective determination of wages for similar groups of workers.

On the engineers' side, Taylor himself, and most of his disciples, tended to share the general hostility of management toward unions.

Unions were viewed as misleading workers for the sake of their own bureaucratic and political ends. It was thought to be inherent in the nature of unions to restrict output, in direct conflict with scientific management's goal of increasing productivity, and collective bargaining with such unions meant compromising "science" with "ignorance". And finally it was believed that scientific management would obviate the need for unions, by allowing the payment of higher wages as a result of increased efficiency, as well as by eliminating some "inefficient" (for example fatiguing) grievances. By the time of the 1912 Congressional investigation of Taylorism in the arsenals, Taylor had developed a line of defense which made a "mental revolution" on the part of management a necessary part of the definition of scientific management, so that any abuse could be attributed to "charlatans" applying technique piecemeal, without the "mental revolution". As part of this revolution, Taylor put a great deal of emphasis on the co-operation of management and labor, but in 1909 he defined workers' "co-operation" as "to do what they are told to do promptly without asking questions or making suggestions". This emphasis on scientific management as a way of winning workers' allegiance away from unions was later developed by such people as Elton Mayo (with less emphasis on Taylor's financial incentives) into a manipulative "human relations" management, a development largely ignored by Nadworny.

The basis for a rapprochement between scientific management and the unions after Taylor's death in 1915 was foreshadowed on both sides

before the War. Labor leaders, before the Commission on Industrial Relations in 1914, went beyond their simple opposition to particular techniques, and broached what Nadworny feels was the key issue, by saying that scientific management techniques might be acceptable if they were made subject to collective bargaining. On the engineers' side some found that resistance to the introduction of systems of scientific management could be reduced by more democratic participation of the workers. Lillian Gilbreth's emphasis on the "human element" in her *Psychology of Management* in 1914, while not necessarily pro-union, at least broke with Taylor's mechanistic "one right way". But the key move was a paper given by Robert Valentine to the Taylor Society in December 1915: "The Progressive Relationship Between Efficiency and Consent". Both the general emphasis on "consent" (instead of Taylor's "natural laws") in Valentine's approach to efficiency, and his specific recommendations for management to deal with groups rather than with individual workers, preferably through unions, marked a new path. This rapprochement, which was stimulated by engineers and labor leaders working together in government agencies during World War I, was formalized by a symposium in the 1920 *Annals on "Labor, Management, and Production"* edited jointly by Gompers, Morris Cooke of the Taylor Society, and Fred J. Miller of the ASME. This ideological alliance was confirmed by friendly exchanges of guest speakers at several points in the '20s, and involved not only engineers' advocacy of independent unions despite the prevailing open-shop climate, but also the AF of L's adoption of a pro-productivity policy. Herbert Hoover was a key figure in another engineers' endeavor, the Federated American Engineers' Society's study of waste in industry in 1920, which was designed to bring home "management's responsibility" for waste, especially labor conflict and unemployment.

The engineers' advocacy of union recognition clearly could not have had much effect during the '20s (including many scientific management shops). The major area of activity, outside of speech-making, was in several "union-management co-operation" schemes, the most notable being those of the B&O Railroad, the Naumkeag Steam Cotton Company, and the ILGWU in New York and Cleveland. These plans involved union participation, through collective bargaining, in instituting changes in production methods to increase efficiency. At one extreme, they were simply production-process-oriented grievance mechanisms or systems for eliciting worker suggestions for improved management. Through gaining worker acceptance of management-initiated changes in process of production, they could sometimes force management to strive for non-labor cost-cutting as well, and provide significant cushioning of the disruption and sharing of the benefits of an inevitable stretchout, as at Naumkeag. This sort of schemes tended to break down during the Depression, though they did better where there was some rank-and-file involvement, as at the B & O, than where it was largely a process of negotiation between management and union leaders, as at Naumkeag.

In the garment industry, union recognition of the need for, and their co-operation in achieving, greater efficiency is one phase of the well known role of the industrial unions in rationalizing fragmented industry — although this role was not satisfactorily institutionalized until the '30s, when both the ACWA and ILGWU set up independent management engineering services.

In the chapter on the '30s, which is largely cut in the book version, Nadworny notes a continuation of the scientific management movement position to the left of most nominally-business groups. With just a few exceptions, they endorsed the various legislative efforts to protect collective bargaining. Taylorites figured in such New Deal agencies as the REA, the FWA, and various labor relations boards, and many were interested in national economic planning. On the union side, the co-operation between unions and management tended to lie dormant until the late '30s. The AF of L used its experience with "co-operation" as an argument against the CIO at times, and in general, once union recognition was secure, many unions showed an interest in the joint administration of scientific management techniques. This interest was aimed in part at immediate issues, such as protecting job security in the face of technological change or being better able to formulate wage demands; but in part it reflected the change in union power since the '20s, with union-management co-operation being an effort to extend the scope of union influence over "management prerogatives" instead of, as in the '20s, being an opening wedge to try to justify collective bargaining in business terms.

Evan Metcalf

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Selig Perlman: A Theory of the Labor Movement, 1928

Perlman concludes his work with a call for intellectuals who will eschew revolutionary visions for the working class, and will instead try to endow the labor philosophy which accepts capitalism "with an attractiveness which only specialists in thinking in general concepts and in inventing 'blessed words' for these concepts are capable of". This is surely the purpose of his book, a paean to economist American unionism and a polemic against Marxist labor theory.

Unfortunately Perlman never counters the Marxist analysis with one of his own, but merely dismisses it as "utopian" and "dogmatic". His main refutation of revolutionary ideas lies in showing that they have not taken hold among workers unless under exceptional circumstances. The first half of the book takes up those exceptions: the Russian Revolution, whose success he attributes to the Bolshevik appeasement of a land-hungry peasantry; the radical turn of the English labor movement with the formation of the Labour Party, which he ascribes

to a unique crisis in the economy; and the original German workers' movement, whose repudiation of socialism and political action he now views as a sign of a new era in the integration of labor.

Most of the book is an explanation and defense of the conservative policies of the AF of L, collaboration with capitalists in established political parties, decentralization, craft organizing around job security. Perlman argues that the development of a radical labor movement in America was precluded by: the identification of labor with producers' movements such as farmers' anti-monopoly politics; the acceptance of an individualistic, competitive ethos; the strength of the ideal of private property; mobility, attained first through land acquisition, then through education; the inability of the "pluralistic" American state, dominated by a middle class, to undertake economic reform; the absence of cohesion due to immigration; the openness of the political system to workers and the absorption of "talent" into management.

These factors are all asserted, not demonstrated. Several of them are entirely-subjective criteria which lend a tautological quality to his argument — there's no radical consciousness in America, so radical ideas are wrong here. (Where there are radical forces Perlman writes off their significance, as with European labor.) The argument is that revolutionaries don't understand workers, but abstract them into a historical force. Perlman replies with his own stereotype based on the "workingman's psychology" of scarcity: obsession with security, lack of initiative. This psychology, rather than objective social position, constitutes the main difference between worker and capitalist. Perlman asserts confidently that workers don't want power and that they eschew the "risks of management".

Thus he denies the basic Marxist assumption, class conflict inherent in economic and social relations, with his own belief in class harmony. "The only solidarity natural in industry is the solidarity which unites all those in the same business establishment, whether employer or employed." (Perlman finds it easy to write off decades of violent labor conflict.) The reason for this harmony, according to Perlman, is that "practical trade unionists" recognize the necessity of the profit motive to good management. The author seems to contradict himself, however, in a later argument that the profit-oriented owners have yielded power to efficiency-minded managers. Anyway, his assumption of harmony is just repeated in his conclusion — the need for a labor movement which will assuage the hostility of business so they can work together for the increase in productivity which is in the interest of both. The sole evidence for this conclusion is that labor in the mid-'20s seems to favor such a policy.

The real conflict is not between labor and capital, but between trade-union members and radical intellectuals who would impose irrelevant and probably foreign ideologies. The correctness of the AF of L approach is proven not by economic or historical analysis but by its "naturalness" to the worker mentality. (Lenin would agree

that workers are spontaneously economist, but assert that this pits them against real conditions.) To establish this naturalness Perlman tries to show that it was present even in the earliest form of labor organization, the medieval guild. The guilds insured work to a closed group of craftsmen by regulating prices, standards, apprenticeship, and volume of production. Then he turns to the oldest American union, the International Typographers, to find the same emphasis on restriction of trade and guaranteed work. "Unionism's deepest concern remains the right to job opportunities." Perlman envisages a partnership in which capitalists monopolize the means of production but the unions monopolize the jobs through participation in decisions regarding the introduction of machinery, et cetera.

The medieval precedent is revealing, for it points to the author's complete evasion of an analysis of advanced capitalism. Thus he can ignore such questions as the needs of unskilled labor, the absence of full employment, international competition and wars, internal economic dislocations. His thesis rests on an explicit assumption of capitalist stabilization and growth. The irony, of course, is that this assertion of "capitalist vitality" was written in 1928!

The lack of analysis and short-sighted empiricism leads to other glaring historical miscalculations. Perlman praises German workers for their nationalism and their increasing abstention from political activity—the very factors which a few years later would pave the way for Hitler. With that in mind, some of Perlman's positions seem more portentous. In his summation he points to the "advanced trade-union philosophy" espoused by a contemporary German sociologist, Karl Zwing. He praises Zwing's call for a new society neither capitalist nor socialist, "but an abandonment of the class struggle and a spiritual surrender to the protagonists of social harmony". Setting his agreement with Zwing's denunciation of democracy alongside the argument that workers don't want and shouldn't have political participation which runs all through the book, one begins to wonder just what kind of permutation of "individualism and collectivism" that might be.

Jackie DiSalvo

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Coal miners coming out of shaft on cage,  
Scranton, Pa.

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## REVIEWS

F. Perlman and R. Gregoire: Worker-Student Action Committees (Black and Red, Box 9546, Detroit, Michigan, 96 pages, \$1, available from Radical America)

The Mass Strike in France: May-June 1968 (Root & Branch Pamphlet Number 3, 59 pages, 75¢, available from Left Mailings, 275 River Street, Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139)

Perlman and Gregoire were both participants in the May events. A few of the essays were written during May and June in France, while the rest were written when Perlman returned to the United States. The pamphlet is an excellent, exciting account of the events and an analysis of (1) why May happened, and (2) why it did not lead to revolution. The rejection of bourgeois society (commodity production and relations) is analyzed by the authors as being the motive force behind the students' actions and then the workers' actions, an analysis similar to American New Left understanding of American radicals and American society.

The second problem is much more difficult. Rejecting Leninism, the authors feel that the reason links between workers and students did not develop was the students' reliance on spontaneity. Perlman writes:

By telling themselves that it was "up to the workers" to take the factories, a "substitution" did take place, but it was the opposite from the one the anarchists preferred. The militants substituted the inaction (or rather the bureaucratic action) of the workers' bureaucracies, which was the only "action" the workers were willing to take, for their own action. The anarchist argument, in fact, turned the situation upside down. The militants went in front of the factories and allowed the bureaucracies to act instead of them.

Perlman feels that this is "a blind application of the anti-bureaucratic tactic to a situation in which the tactic has no application at all". The essay implies that the situation was not pressed to its limit because no "militant minority" of workers existed, and the students were unwilling to take this role.

The second pamphlet was written by Information Correspondance Ouvriere (ICO), a group of workers who met to compare their various experiences in the shops. The pamphlet was written by those who took part in ICO's meetings in Paris during May and June 1968, and was published in America by Root & Branch, followers of Anton Pannekoek and other European council communists. The thrust and analysis of what happened is quite different from that presented by the first work.

The ICO study begins with a commentary on French capitalism's economic problems, the dynamic behind May-June. The writers view this crisis in terms of dollars and cents. As they say:

In this (French economic development and problems over the past twenty years) lies the profound economic reason for the student "malaise" throughout the world. Students question a system which can no longer offer traditional opportunities. They discover on this occasion the existence of unemployment and the idiocy of the system of production.

According to this account students reject capitalism because they can't get a job. There is no analysis of why the movement failed. There is no attempt to understand false consciousness — that is, how the workers allowed the power to slip back into the hands of union bureaucrats.

ICO sees its role as that of educating and pushing the movement in its natural direction — that of forming workers' councils. But they do not see themselves as militant minorities which initiate actions and reject all forms of organization besides that of workers' councils.

Together the two pamphlets make good reading, since Perlman and Gregoire concentrate on the subjective conditions in France, while ICO examines the objective conditions of French capitalism.

Sean Bayer

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James A. Martin: Men Against the State: Expositors of Individualist Anarchism in America (Ralph Myles, Colorado Springs, Colorado, 1970, 315 pages, bibliography, notes, index, \$2.50)

Eunice M. Schuster: Native American Anarchism: A Study of Left Wing American Individualism (Da Capo Press, New York, 1970, 202 pages, bibliography, notes, index)

Recent bombings, kidnappings, and attempted assassinations directed against the more-conspicuous symbols of an oppressive corporate government monolith have renewed interest once again in anarchism. The emotive identification of anarchism with terrorism and violence has been the nemesis of anarchists since the era of "propaganda by the

deed\* in the 1880s and 1890s. One gets a distinct feeling of *deja vu* from the latest repressive crusade launched against those heretical dissidents whose revolutionary aims threaten to overthrow America's undemocratic misgovernment. The present scare is both rhetorical and real — ask any Weatherman or Black Panther. Both liberals and conservatives, maybe not such strange bedfellows after all, have buried their differences and linked their frightened arms in a holy alliance against what they erroneously think is anarchism.

Few in the United States have risen to defend anarchism from this frenzied onslaught. Although historically American Leftists have found comfort and inspiration in writings by Bakunin, Kropotkin, Proudhon, and other European anarchists, they were never able to raise their libertarian impulses to the stature of a viable revolutionary alternative. Both as a system of social thought and as a social movement, American anarchism seems like a dwarfed mutant when it is juxtaposed with its European counterpart. Moreover, lacking such prominent historical apologists as Daniel Guerin, James Joll, and George Woodcock, the anarchist tradition of the United States, until very recently, has been the mistreated and unwanted bastard of American radicalism.

Eunice Schuster and James Martin have made impressive attempts to retrieve American anarchism from its premature grave, and restore some of the richness and brilliance it legitimately deserves. Martin's book, originally published in 1953, makes great strides beyond the wasteland of native anarchist historiography. Bolstered by tedious research and documentation, Martin has made a pioneer effort to rectify gross misunderstandings and deliberate distortions that for so long doomed anarchism to obscurity and abuse. Unfortunately, Martin's obsession with objectivity and accuracy makes for dry, monotonous reading. And, though Men Against the State is remarkably detailed and comprehensive, analysis is superficial and notably scarce.

Native American Anarchism fares a little better in this respect. Written as her master's thesis in 1932 at Smith College, Schuster's work covers a longer period in shorter space without sacrificing scope or depth. Less myopic than most intellectual history, it is a more sensitive and perceptive treatment of the origins and failures of native anarchism than Martin was able to produce more than 20 years later.

Yet, when all is said and done, both books are disappointing — not for what they say, but for what they do not say. Whatever the merits of concentrating on native individualist anarchists like Josiah Warren, Lysander Spooner, and Benjamin Tucker, the picture is incomplete without a discussion of the immigrant anarchist strand. Johann Most, Emma Goldman, Alexander Berkman, and numerous other radical immigrants are portrayed as foreign anomalies in the indigenous mainstream. Yet it was precisely these "foreigners" who attempted to transcend the narrow individualism that immobilized native anarchist potential and made it the impotent ideology of an isolated elite. These

German-American, Italian-American, and Russian-American radicals breathed new life into the deteriorating American anarchist movement with their creative efforts to adjust anarchist thought to the inescapable conditions of a newly-emerging urban-industrial order. In a dialectic response to the changing social-economic realities, they refined and adapted libertarian thought, freeing it from the rigid confines of the pre-industrial agrarian individualism. And while in the long run the immigrant anarchists fared no better than native American individualist anarchists, they, nonetheless, deserve more than footnote attention in any study that purports to deal with American anarchism.

Martin Verhoeven

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Paul M. Sweezy and Harry Magdoff (editors): Lenin Today (New York, Monthly Review Press, 1970, 125 pages, \$5)

The editors tell us in their foreword that they want this book to be a general introduction to Lenin's thought and life, and in many ways it serves this purpose admirably. Lenin's ideas and their place in the US revolution will not be settled in an essay, a small book, or even an encyclopedia of books. This will only be done through political practice and political theory, as Lenin himself would have been the first to say. The authors of the eight essays that compose the book understand this clearly, and have not tried to lay down any line. Instead, they have dealt with Lenin's ideas on the role of the party, Imperialism, "Aristocracy of Labor", the cultural revolution, and the problems of the Socialist State in a way that can serve only to open discussions, not to end them.

The one essay that relates directly to the United States and political movements that are going on is James and Grace Boggs's "The Role of the Vanguard Party". It is an excellent essay that tries to understand what Leninism would mean in terms of a Black Revolutionary Party. The essay points out that this is a transitional period for the Black movement between the end of the Civil Rights movement, which laid the groundwork for the now-emerging Black Liberation struggle, and the problems this presents.

Always stressing the need for "a scientific, that is, historical and dialectical, method" that must make an objective analysis of the social forces in the world and in the United States, the Boggses reject all dogmatic and mechanical formulas. The structure and program must come from the present situation, and not from Russia of 1917 or from China.

Along with arguments against spontaneity and Blacks rejecting Lenin because he was White is an analysis of when a "revolutionary party becomes historically necessary", that is, "when the contradictions and antagonisms of a particular society have created a mass social force whose felt needs cannot be satisfied by reforms but only by revolution

which takes power away from those in power". They feel that the time to begin is now.

Several other essays in the book, such as Martin Nicolaus's "The Theory of the Labor Aristocracy" and Ralph Miliband's "The State and Revolution", are also good. Other articles are on the relationship of US Imperialism to Latin America and Africa, and the way in which Lenin's conception of the party was a dynamic (that is, not a static) view. The only article that shouldn't be included is George Thompson's "From Lenin to Mao Tse-tung", the purpose of which "is to outline the dictatorship of the proletariat, as developed by Lenin, and to show briefly how it has been maintained and deepened by Mao Tse-tung". Not because this point is or is not true, but because it is not shown by twenty-two quotations from Lenin, eight from Mao and Lin Piao, and two from Stalin about the necessity for workers' control and cultural revolution.

The collection was originally published as the April issue of Monthly Review and can probably be obtained as a back issue for about \$1.25.

SB

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Pierre Vidal-Naquet and Alain Schnapp (editors): Journal de la Commune Etudiante, Textes et Documents Novembre 67 - Juin 68 (Editions de Seuil, 1969, 875 pages)

The nature and significance of the May revolt in France has not yet been sufficiently analyzed, despite the plethora of books on the subject, especially in French. This collection of documents concentrates on the student role in what the bourgeois press calls the "May events", and deals with them exhaustively by means of systematic documentation and annotation. For anyone seriously interested in understanding the nature, development, and limits of the most-significant manifestation of New Left action in a developed capitalist society, this book is a must. And, by the same token, it is a "must" for us to understand the successes and failures of May.

H. Sandkuhler (editor): Psychoanalyse und Marxismus, Dokumentation einer Kontroverse (Suhrkamp Verlag, 1970, 315 pages)

After a period of uneasy coexistence with the Freudo-Marxism of Wilhelm Reich, the orthodoxy of the Third International felt Reich's teachings had become a menace to its own position, and excluded him and his followers. At first the psychoanalytical social critique seemed to aid the Communist propaganda, even in Russia, where the work of Vera Schmidt was encouraged for a time; but then what Hans Sandkuhler

calls the "revolutionary reality principle" came into play, and the goal of a non-repressed society appeared utopian. The typical "orthodox" criticism of Freudo-Marxism turns around the following objections, in Sandkuhler's words: "Psychoanalysis is a product of the declining bourgeoisie; it is an idealistic, non-materialistic theory of subjectivity without a class perspective; it carelessly utilizes results of individual investigation for an analysis of mass phenomena, and thus degenerates from science to a Weltanschauung; its biologism is responsible for its lack of historical consciousness, and its notion of a psychic nature which is ambivalent as opposed to libido and aggression is pre-rational and mythological; it absolutizes knowledge derived from the family relations in declining capitalism; and finally, it reflects the seemingly senseless world of dying capitalism as an unconscious world ruled by 'pansexuality'."

Sandkuhler's book contains a series of essays, pro and con, debating the nature of Freudo-Marxism. Due to the confused copyright situation, only one of Wilhelm Reich's essays ("Dialectical Materialism and Psychoanalysis") is included in the book, along with two contributions by Siegfried Bernfeld, and essays by I. Sapir, W. Jurinetz, and A. Stoljarov. These texts are of prime importance today, at a time when, thanks to the work of Herbert Marcuse, questions raised and debated by the Sex-Pol Movement are once again being seriously posed.

C. Riechers: Antonio Gramsci: Marxismus in Italien (Europäische Verlagsanstalt, 1970, 251 pages)

Christian Riechers, who previously translated a large volume of Gramsci's writings into German, explains in his introduction that he had for several years accepted the prevailing view that the Gramsci of the "prison notebooks" was the hidden key to the understanding and the changing of modern capitalist conditions, but that his study of Gramsci convinced him that this was in fact not the case. The book, then, is a thoroughgoing critique of Gramsci, the first half of which is historical and biographical, treating Gramsci's relation to the intellectual and political currents in Italy, and the second half of which contains a critique of Gramsci's Marxism.

The second part of this book is exceedingly rich in ideas, treating Gramsci in relation to Lukacs and Korsch, to the philosophy of Croce, to the idealism of Bogdanov, and to Lenin. Riechers undertakes a sustained critique of the major theoretical innovations of Gramsci by comparing them to the positions of Marx and Lenin, and showing that Gramsci expressed a quite-different position from either, be it on the notion of Hegemony, the materialist nature of Marxism, the relation of philosophy and Marxism, or the notion of political theory as subjective idealism and its relation to praxis.



Space prohibits detailed presentation of Riecher's critiques. Suffice it that, for this reader, Gramsci emerged from this presentation as a far-more-relevant theoretician than either the Marx presented by Riechers or (especially) than Lenin. It is important that we come to grips with the critiques of Riechers; the idea of a philosophy of praxis, the notion that Marxism is not a crude materialist ideology but rather the summation and transcendence of all past bourgeois thought and creation, the theory of Hegemony and the relation of the state to civil society and the implications of this relation for revolutionary praxis — these are questions which we still have to pose in order to understand the actual actions which we are undertaking.

Dick Howard

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Paul Mattick: Marx and Keynes (Boston, Porter-Sargent, 1969, \$6.95)

Paul Mattick is the most-serious Marxist economist writing in the United States today, and any book of his would be an important event. That is not to say that his volume on Marx and Keynes is an unmixed blessing. But whatever its errors or its limitations, it takes Marxism seriously. Mattick's treatment of such phenomena as the law of value (Chapter 3) and the falling rate of profit (Chapter 6) offers a refreshing change from the theoretical superficiality of Paul Sweezy and dogmatic incomprehensibility of Ernest Mandel.

Sweezy can write that he is "particularly conscious of the fact" that his general approach "has resulted in almost-total neglect of a subject which occupies a central place in Marx's study of capitalism: the labor process" (Monopoly Capital, Page 8) and be apparently unaware that the elimination of the labor process and of the working class as a revolutionary force (ibid., Page 9) has transformed his categories into bourgeois categories, devoid of contradiction and of the necessity of development. Unlike Sweezy, Mattick is not situated in the Left wing of bourgeois economics.

Nor does Mattick commit the error of Mandel, who can write two volumes on Marxist economics and neglect to mention once the crucial distinction between value and exchange value which Marx makes in the very first chapter of Capital. Mattick, on the whole, accepts economic categories as workable theoretical tools, not as precious little icons to be worshipped but kept safely away from the hustle and bustle of real life.

Mattick's book, nevertheless, suffers from considerable unevenness. The introduction notes that the book "is not presented as a consecutive narrative, however; various of its parts have been written on different occasions and at different times." (Page viii) But some contradictions go deeper than just a simple reflection of the book's poor organization.

The analysis of Keynes is much needed and goes a long way toward a final accounting of Keynesian theory. Keynesian economic theory is not simply a theoretical innovation which has achieved considerable popularity. It is the reflection in bourgeois economic theory of a new stage of capitalism and the inadequacy of earlier economic theory to deal with it. Mattick establishes without any question that Keynes was bourgeois, that is, concerned with the maintenance of a fundamentally capitalist society, and he also establishes that the kind of "managed" economic system which Keynesianism (including the multitude of Keynes's successors) argued for does not in any really serious way eliminate the crises of capitalism.

Mattick has a very fine formulation that exposes the neo-Marxist (and Keynesian) belief that the roots of crises are in over-production or under-consumption: "The actual glut on the commodity market must be caused by the fact that labor is not productive enough to satisfy the profit needs of capital accumulation. Because not enough has been produced, capital cannot expand at a rate which would allow for the full realization of what has been produced. The relative scarcity of surplus labor in the production process appears as an absolute abundance of commodities in the circulation process and as the overproduction of capital." (Page 79) (See also lengthier passages on Pages 78-79.)

Mattick comes close to settling accounts with Keynes as the founding

## MARX AND KEYNES:

### The Limits of the Mixed Economy

by Paul Mattick

A critical analysis of contemporary capitalism coupled with analyses of both Marxian and Keynesian economic theory provides a clearly reasoned argument for the author's statement that the problems inherent in capitalism are not subject to solution by the application of Keynesian mixed economy theory. As Mr. Mattick states in the Epilogue: "... Keynesianism merely reflects the transition of capitalism from its free-market to a state-aided phase and provides an ideology for those who momentarily profit by this transition. It does not touch upon the problems Marx was concerned with."

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father of the theory of state capitalism, at least in its welfare-state form, in the following passage: "Though carried out in the name of Marx, the state-capitalist, or state-socialist, revolutions would be better described as 'Keynesian revolutions'. What is usually designated as the 'Keynesian revolution' is Keynes's recognition and acceptance of the fact of intensive state intervention in the economy.... Arising at the same time as the mixed economy, the state-capitalist system may be regarded as Keynesian in its most-consistent and most-developed form." (Pages 279-280) The foundation is laid for a critique of Mandel, Sweezy, and company as more Keynesian than Marxist.

But unfortunately Mattick places certain limits on his understanding. Essentially the limits stem from the fact that although he recognizes the importance of the working class and the process of production to Marxian economic theory, his understanding of the working class is very abstract, and he constantly falls into the habit of dealing with property forms instead of with social relations. The crucial point is the use of the term "mixed economy". In one sense every capitalist economy is a mixed economy, since there is always some government ownership or regulation in the most laissez-faire system, and there is some free enterprise in the most completely-nationalized economy. But a term so universal loses its value in distinguishing changes in stages. (Mattick's hostility to Lenin and his refusal to deal at all with Lenin's theory of imperialism as a distinct stage of capitalism doesn't help matters at all.)

In most of the book Mattick makes a completely-formal distinction between mixed economy and state capitalism. What is worse, he insists too often on an absolute dichotomy between the "private sector" and the "public sector". If he had a concrete sense of the working class and its role in production, he could not be so misled. To the worker, there is no social difference in working for a British nationalized coal mine or for an American privately-owned coal mine; there is no distinction between working for nationalized Renault or for private-enterprise Citroen, between working for US Steel or for the Russian steel trust. That it may be of decisive importance to particular capitalists is of entirely-minor importance.

Mattick seems to be unaware that both Marx and Engels were very much aware, at least in theory, of the movement toward complete state capitalism. Marx says in Volume 1 of Capital that "The limit (of centralization) would not be reached in any particular society until the entire social capital would be united, either in the hands of one single capitalist or in those of one single corporation." (Kerr/Modern Library edition, Page 688) Any way you wish to interpret that, it's the economic form of state capitalism.

Engels, who was witness to later developments, spells it out in more detail: "...with trusts or without, the official representative of capitalist society—the state—will ultimately have to undertake the direction of production...."

"If the crises demonstrate the incapacity of the bourgeoisie for managing any longer modern productive forces, the transformation of the great establishments for production and distribution into joint-stock companies, trusts, and state property shows how unnecessary the bourgeoisie are for that purpose. All the social functions of the capitalist are now performed by salaried employees....

"But the transformation, either into joint-stock companies and trusts or into state ownership, does not do away with the capitalistic nature of the productive forces. In the joint-stock companies and trusts this is obvious. And the modern state, again, is only the organization that the bourgeois society takes on in order to support the external conditions of the capitalist mode of production against the encroachments as well of the workers as of individual capitalists. The modern state, no matter what its form, is essentially a capitalist machine, the state of the capitalists, the ideal personification of the total national capital. The more it proceeds to the taking over of productive forces, the more citizens it exploits. The workers remain wage workers — proletarians. The capitalist relation is not done away with. It is rather brought to a head...." (Marx and Engels: Selected Works, Progress Publications, 1968, Pages 427-428)

In light of this, Mattick's distinction between "private" and "public" sectors in the "mixed economy" and the presentation of the private sector as profitable and the public sector as not profitable (Pages 154, 189, 190, et cetera) makes no sense. Or rather it makes bourgeois sense — the abandonment (if only temporarily) of Marx's categories of capital and profit for the very-different bourgeois categories of capital and profit. The book abounds with such "slips" or contradictions or just plain mistakes. But when the reader has almost resigned himself to the conclusion that all is lost, Mattick recovers himself and shows his awareness of the theoretical methodology that is at the heart of Capital in some statement such as the following: "As long as the capitalist mode of production prevails, Marxism will retain its relevance, since it concerns itself neither with one or another technique of capital production, nor with social change within the frame of capitalist production, but only with its (capitalism's) final abolition." (Pages 333-334)

The book does not maintain the level of economic analysis of which Mattick has proven himself capable. It is nevertheless a useful work in its study of the leading theoretician of state capitalism and in its demonstration of the usefulness of Marxism as a theoretical tool.

Martin Glaberman

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Walter Lowenfels and Howard McCord: The Life of Fraenkel's Death (Washington State University Press, 1970, \$3)

"There is no point of view in a world which has but one point of view," says Howard McCord toward the end of this collaboration, and it reminds us of Marcuse in more ways than one. McCord's entire approach creates the kind of atmosphere we discover in Marcuse's works. Only perhaps McCord is more the poet as he allows us to see his own personal suffering and growth while Marcuse only points to his fellow humans.

This book is a dialogue about the meaning of "death" and therefore the relevance of "life" and our attitudes toward both. It is a dialogue between Howard McCord, who fell in love with Fraenkel the way he seems to have fallen for Kierkegaard, and Walter Lowenfels, who knew Fraenkel when Fraenkel lived in Paris in the Thirties and was a close friend of and influence on Lowenfels and Henry Miller.

"Pretense, as Kierkegaard saw more than a hundred years ago, is the malignancy that maims our age. Do not pretend to be a Christian if you are not, he shouted. Do not pretend to be religious if you are not. Do not even pretend to be a man if you are not human. And Fraenkel added the final commandment: Do not pretend to be alive if you are dead." (McCord)

The best part of the book, and the reason the book should be read and will be enjoyed, are the sections containing the correspondence between McCord and Lowenfels as McCord tried to work out his response to an imperfect world, and Lowenfels went ahead and did it. "Reduced to its skeleton, isn't our difference just this: You say you can't change human nature; I say it has to change, otherwise there won't be any human nature." (letter from Lowenfels to McCord)

Two poets, two good poets, one a young man and recent convert to Catholicism, the other an old man and long-time convert to socialism and its goal of a human world: communism. The topic is supposedly the meaning of Fraenkel's life: Michael Fraenkel, born in Kopyl, Lithuania in 1896; brought to New York by his parents in 1903; self-made business man; self-proclaimed philosopher; friend to Anais Nin, Alfred Perles, Henry Miller, Walter Lowenfels, and the Paris of the late Twenties and Thirties.

But Michael Fraenkel wrote about death in order to better understand death, and what he believed was the fate of Western man: "increasing alienation and hurt until he recognized his wound as death, and gave himself up to it, lived in it, and found, after enduring the reality of it, a truly humane life beyond". So Fraenkel wrote about himself and his individual confrontation with the absurdity of life and his compromise with the inevitability of death until he truly understood it.

Lowenfels and McCord write about the Twentieth Century struggle of Western man with the reality he has learned so well to define but not to understand. And their understanding becomes more difficult as they

use Fraenkel to get closer to themselves and each other, but still the reader's understanding should increase with each exchange of letters. It almost seems as though we're eavesdropping on an argument between two contemporaries over which direction they should take to avoid the kind of world we've inherited. It is not surprising that it is Lowenfels, the man of the 1930s, who sees salvation as a social event necessarily carried out by a united mankind, while McCord, the product of the 1950s, finds himself ready to go it alone.

The two men are honest; the discussion is relevant; and even if we come to no positive conclusions about Fraenkel, we still get to know ourselves and those we are arguing with a little better by seeing these men so close, and even get a good dose of some of the best criticism of Henry Miller that has been written.

"With Fraenkel and Miller you are dealing with Nineteenth Century men echoing old tragedies in our age. But that's the way most of us live, so it's hard to recognize it.

"We have to consider writers like O'Casey, Brecht, Eluard, Vallejo to realize how uncontemporary Fraenkel and Miller both are. The new humanity reaches a new kind of integration you can never suspect exists from reading Miller and Fraenkel.

"So, first you have to create Fraenkel's values and then throw away the ladder, as Wittgenstein advises, and move into the Twenty-first Century, where Fraenkel and Miller will be seen, if at all, as curious hang-overs of old deaths in the new life that was cooking." (Lowenfels)

The letters begin in 1964 and end in 1969. And while McCord and Lowenfels discussed it and dissected it there began the movements of the 1960s that attempted to do something about it. The book ended, I don't know about the letters, and we all know about the movements. Very few documents capture as well the dual personality of those who would make history, or "a world where love is more possible" (Carl Oglesby) as does *The Life of Fraenkel's Death*.

Michael Lally

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Douglas Blazek: Battlefield Syrup (published as Meatball #3), 57 Scott Street, San Francisco, California 94117 (50¢)

Reading Blazek lately puts my head back in the early 1960s, before the rise of Youth Culture and the New Left and all that. In the last few months these images have been getting stronger and stronger, not because I want to go back or because the Empire has restabilized itself but because the collapse of New Left politics has thrown a whole lot of us onto our own resources, returned the intensity of the day-to-day and the personal in our lives. At his best Blazek makes you intensely aware of what it's like to go through the day flushing toilets, trying to talk out unresolvable tensions with the people you love, recalling the fragments

of childhood, and all the time feeling lonely and pessimistic.

Some of Blazek's best writing even sounds like the way we talked ten years ago — he has resisted, in some way or other, the two or three cycles of hip talk, without retreating into Nineteenth Century British diction, and for that he deserves much credit. Unfortunately, Battlefield Syrup is not Blazek at his best. As usual, he publishes too much to hit every time, and the occasional result is a spiritualization of soggy melancholia and a forcing of obvious metaphors. Still, you can hear him

hopping down the street  
my arms  
working like cooks in grease joints  
or with Everyman who is pulling  
the wheels off the  
stagecoach to Paradise  
because he thinks  
he sees his face  
behind its window

We hear Blazek die some, and we hear him come back to life some. It's no surprise, after all, but I like it, and it makes sense to me.

Paul Buhle

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## Magazines & Journals

The Abolitionist, c/o LABS, GPO Box 2487, New York, New York 10001 (published monthly by members of the Radical Libertarian Alliance, 6 pages, 8 1/2 x 11, mimeographed, \$2 per year)

The Abolitionist is without doubt the most interesting and valuable publication to come from the Right-Left Libertarian youth movement. The economic perspective of this journal's editors is rooted in classic anarcho-capitalism, pointing toward a future society of self-regulating communities with absolutely no outside interference from the State. Yet they clearly see that they have more in common with the Youth Culture Left than with either the Old Right or the New Right, especially in their hostility toward all forms of authoritarianism, whether from Nixon or from the Communist Party. In fact, the reader might think at first glance that the Abolitionist was some exotic Yippie publication — and in some respects it is.

The most interesting to me have been the articles by Steve Halbrook, which condemn the classic, doctrinaire Anarchism of Goldman and Berkman, and praise the practical attempts by Lenin to smash the bourgeois State. Clearly, this breaks with the whole ideological nature

of Anarchist attitudes toward Bolshevism, and, although Halbrook has not carried his critique to any great depth thus far (most recently he has praised the Tupemaros as modern Bakuninists, and on the other hand has tried to show Right-wing libertarians that the State is not pro-labor, as they have always been told), his insights promise much.

The Abolitionist badly needs a neater format, but they do everything possible within the limits of an electric typewriter and a mimeo. Above all, the paper is lively in a way that much of the tired former New Left is no more, and for that reason alone it deserves a reading.

PB

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Red Sky/Blue Sky, c/o TDG, 22 South 11th, San Jose, California 95112  
(\$1 for 10 issues)

Marxist? Anarchist? Yippie? Marcusesque? Red Sky / Blue Sky evades all such classifications, either out of sheer eclecticism or out of some deeper level of synthesis which will show itself in time. But whatever, the paper is one of the brightest and most-energetic sheets to have come out of the recent Left in America. One issue was a full-scale reprint, from TELOS, of the interview between Sartre and editors of Il Manifesto, translated by TELOS from Le Temps Moderne. In the Red Sky/Blue Sky version, the added graphics made a world of difference in readability.

More recently, they had a "Work Is Death" issue, another hailing Yippies, and now most recently (Number 7) one entitled "Long Live Anarchy!", with a beautiful front-cover illustration taken out of Debsian Socialist literature, an extended treatment of Emma Goldman, a review of Guerin's Anarchism: From Theory to Practice, and an editorial on Angela Davis which managed to mix in Critical Theory — criticizing activists, New Left intellectuals, and old-time Marxists for not pooling their talents.

All in all it's a bit hard to believe sometimes, but plenty interesting to get in the mail; and for only \$1 per year, it's preposterously cheap.

PB

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Vallières was one of the founders of the reorganized Front de Libération du Québec. In 1966, he and Charles Gagnon went to the United States to publicize the Quebec liberation struggle, and were arrested as they demonstrated in front of the U.N. *White Niggers of America* was written in the N.Y. House of Detention between October 1966 and February 1967, and a final chapter was written in Montreal Jail in 1969. After three years in prison, Vallières and Gagnon won their release, only to be seized again in the fall of 1970.

Just past thirty, Vallières is one of the young men of revolution, and his outlook both reflects and has helped to shape the views of the New Left. Suspicious and critical of traditional orthodoxies, he has taken more from Guevara than from Lenin, his internationalism is proudly tinged with French-Canadian nationalism, his approach to revolutionary ideas is personal and immediate. He has provided in this account of his own evolution a wealth of unvarnished reflections which will be of immense help to the revolutionary movement in clarifying its purposes and goals.

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Radical America looks at itself

## We're making some changes . . .

This issue of Radical America marks a new phase of development. The editorial board noted on the inside front cover has reorganized the entire operation and is in the process of establishing and elaborating its technical and editorial functions.

During 1971 Radical America will cut back to a bi-monthly schedule to facilitate greater care for contents and format. Henceforth Radical America will cease to publish monothematic, or "special", issues, and instead will produce a coherent political review including semi-regular features on a variety of subjects. The main focus for study and analysis will be the American working class, particularly its female and black components, its historical development, and its future prospects. Other areas of special concern include Mass Culture, the activity of working classes in other nations, the nature of American radicalism, struggles for revolutionary culture, developments in Marxist philosophy, and the conceptions of party and praxis in Twentieth Century Marxism. Also, each issue of Radical America will contain a substantive review section to which our readers are invited to contribute.

In our next issue, Volume 5, Number 2, we will elaborate a "world view" around which the editors have loosely combined. We have no final, worked-out solutions to the dilemmas that today's radicals face, and we neither propose nor constitute a political grouping ourselves. Nonetheless, we will offer our views, collectively and individually, on political problems and perspectives in a way that Radical America has not encompassed up to this time.

Finally, we appeal to our readers for financial aid in the immediate future. The disintegration of formal New Left remnants has further jeopardized the scale of RA's operation, always circumscribed by lack of funds. To produce the greatest possible number of pages, maintain a regular schedule, and free ourselves from persistent financial worry so that our full energies can be devoted to editorial concerns, we must receive more money than we can gather through subscriptions and bulk sales. Therefore, we ask our readers not for an amount extending into five figures (as with other radical newspapers and journals), but for stabilizing funds, either through contributions or through pamphlet or supporting subscriptions. Since we have no paid staff all funds received by Radical America go directly into production and distribution costs.

## SOLIDARITY FOREVER!

BY RALPH CHAPLIN

(Tune: "John Brown's Body")

When the Union's inspiration through the workers' blood shall  
run,  
There can be no power greater anywhere beneath the sun.  
Yet what force on earth is weaker than the feeble strength  
of one?

But the Union makes us strong.

### CHORUS:

Solidarity forever!  
Solidarity forever!  
Solidarity forever!  
For the Union makes us strong

Is there aught we hold in common with the greedy parasite  
Who would lash us into serfdom and would crush us with his  
might?

Is there anything left for us but to organize and fight?  
For the Union makes us strong.

It is we who plowed the prairies; built the cities where they  
trade;

Dug the mines and built the workshops; endless miles of rail-  
road laid.

Now we stand outcasts and starving, 'mid the wonders we have  
made;

But the Union makes us strong.

All the world that's owned by idle drones, is ours and ours alone.  
We have laid the wide foundations; built it skyward stone  
by stone.

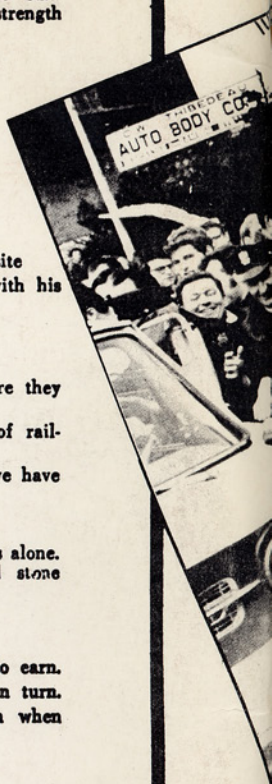
It is ours, not to slave in, but to master and to own,  
While the Union makes us strong.

They have taken untold millions that they never toiled to earn.  
But without our brain and muscle not a single wheel can turn.  
We can break their haughty power; gain our freedom when  
we learn

That the Union makes us strong.

In our hands is placed a power greater than their hoarded gold;  
Greater than the might of armies, magnified a thousand-fold.  
We can bring to birth the new world from the ashes of the old.

For the Union makes us strong.



from Jacksonianism to the Progressive Era (1967). Actually Herreshoff was trying to show not the radicals' "Americanism", but rather their attempts to bring their European Marxism to terms with American conditions and the tactics they thereby devised. Herreshoff stretched the definition of the work to include Orestes Brownson, who like the Marxist Herman Krieger was "anti-abolitionist" in an effort to unite agrarian Southerners with Northern mechanics against the dominant industrialism. Joseph Wedemeyer, Friedrich Sorge, and Daniel DeLeon were well depicted in their efforts to establish a Socialist movement firmly on the American soil, struggling to preserve class-conscious thought and practice while occasionally allying with rural movements for leverage in society. American Disciples is best for the material it dredges up, for Herreshoff's analyses are erratic and not particularly directed toward central issues of the radicals' situation such as the plight of Southern blacks in the labor movement. The best insights occur only at the close of the book, when Herreshoff criticizes several American Leninists for failing to completely understand or even care about the Nineteenth Century radical past; yet Herreshoff's own attempt was eccentric, guided by rather than utilizing the periodical material at hand.

James Gilbert's Writers and Partisans: A History of Literary Radicalism in America (1968) was, like David Herreshoff's work, an examination of intellectuals' writings. But Gilbert's focus was upon the avant-garde intelligentsia which had several moments of solidarity with the political radical movement but frequently pursued its own course. Primarily, Writers and Partisans was concerned with the Partisan Review's course from acceptance of American Communism (in the early 1930s) to apostasy and advocacy of Trotskyism (in the later 1930s) to detachment from the Left and regroupment toward a kind of liberal, New York, perhaps predominantly-Jewish anomie from American culture but not necessarily from Cold War American politics (in the 1940s and 1950s). Gilbert's work was most outstanding in the sense that it moved beyond anti-Communist academic accounts of literary radicalism which had merely indicated the intellectuals' repugnance toward "Socialist Realism" and other heavy-handed Stalinist artistic ploys to an examination of the inner tensions which led the intelligentsia, in rejecting the Left, to re-accept American class society (except, of course, its mass culture). Writers and Partisans was limited by its scope, and in part replicated earlier studies; but in all it was a well-done, probing monograph.

Harold Cruse's Crisis of the Negro Intellectual (1967) was, by way of contrast, a wide-ranging, broadly-implicative work which erratically examined or ignored details according to Cruse's fancy. At best, the work showed the uneasy relationship that black writers and thinkers were bound to have with a predominantly-white American Left. Those sections of the work concerned with American Communism were particularly personal, a sort of revenge for delays and damage that the Communists had perpetrated upon Cruse's career (and the careers of other Blacks) for their own purposes; yet these sections provided insights into the ethnic problems of American radicalism (particularly

between Jews and Blacks during the Popular Front period and after) never before stated so clearly. Unlike the other works discussed here, Crisis was the magnum opus of a man nearly fifty years old, a study which had emerged uniquely from decades of intensive intellectual work within the Old Left, but which had broken with that Left totally. Cruse's work had few final answers, and contained quite an array of flaws as a historical study. But it was also rich in the experience of the Old Left in a way that no other "New Left" study of American radicalism has been. Rather than ignoring the 1930s-1940s, as other New Left scholars have done, Cruse took the period head-on, with distinctive results.

Finally, Ideas of the Women's Suffrage Movement, 1890-1920 (1967) was also the product of an Old Leftist gone New Leftist, but was one of a sort very different from Cruse's. Aileen Kraditor analyzed the ideas of American Suffragism precisely and unpropagandistically as no Old Leftist historian had ever done, studying the ways in which a formerly-radical movement became conservative, anti-labor, racist, and even anti-Feminist as it approached success within American society. Rather than the narrow institutionalism of bourgeois historians or the angels-and-devils approach of traditional Left historians, she had caught within a narrow historical focus the dilemmas of a social movement whose demise was due not to corruption or betrayal, but to an inability to practice far-sightedness enhanced by a middle-class demographic basis. Like the other intellectual studies, Ideas could not encompass a full sense of objective development within society of its objects (in this case, women). But the attempt to come to grips with the general social problems, and the lack of wish-fulfillment in the author's approach, made the essentially-monographic study significant.

### Corporate Liberalism

One of the most-important contributions of the New Left to American historiography of the 60s has been made by six historians of Twentieth Century liberalism. Gabriel Kolko, James Weinstein, Martin Sklar, David Eakins, Stephen Scheinberg, and Ronald Radosh, all contributors to Studies on the Left and all influenced by William Appleman Williams, have shown that liberalism in Twentieth Century America has been "corporate liberalism", a response to the needs of corporate capitalism and a reflection of the interests of the largest industrial and financial corporations. Corporate liberalism has provided a way for the social system to contain the contradictions of capitalism, to insure social peace, and to further economic growth, stability, and efficiency. From the Progressive period to the present, it has led to increased business and government co-operation, increased social-welfare legislation, and increased integration of the labor movement into the corporate order. The New Leftist interpretation of corporate liberalism represents a direct challenge to the assumption common to Progressive, Old Left, and consensus historians alike that the liberal reformism of Theodore Roosevelt, Woodrow Wilson, and Franklin D. Roosevelt represented

a popular movement in opposition to big business. The New Left interpretation turned on its head the conclusion of Arthur Schlesinger Junior that "liberalism in America has been ordinarily the movement on the part of other sections of society to restrain the power of the business community".

The new conclusions of the New Leftists derived from the departures they made from the assumptions and methodologies upon which earlier studies of liberal reformism had rested. However insightful and thorough, the political biographies by Arthur Link and John Blum and the political histories of Richard Hofstadter, George Mowry, Vernon Parrington, and Arthur Schlesinger Junior were based on research which was, for the most part, limited to the ideas, actions, and programs of party leaders and political publicists. Moreover, they generally partook of either Beard's or Hartz's assumptions — that US political history has been dominated either by recurring conflicts between plutocracy and democracy or by the unfolding of a "natural" liberal consensus. The New Left historians agreed with the consensus historians that at least there had been no serious challenge to the liberal consensus from either the Right or the Left since World War I. They insisted, however, that the content as well as the success of the liberal consensus must be understood in relation to the developing political economy. Consequently, the historians of corporate liberalism broadened the focus of research and discussion to (in Sklar's words) "the imperatives of modern capitalism", or at least to what those at the top of the corporate structure thought the imperatives were. Thus, the New Leftists brought to the fore the attitudes and actions of the large corporate leaders, who, in the earlier studies, had been lumped in the general category of businessmen and had been left lurking in the background as a monolithic and reactionary beast opposed to civilizing efforts of reformers.

In an article of remarkable scope and acuity, "Woodrow Wilson and the Political Economy of Modern United States Liberalism", in Studies on the Left, Martin Sklar made a comprehensive re-evaluation of the political thought and policies of Woodrow Wilson with the general theme that there was "a community of views between the corporate community and the Wilson Administration". Sklar's analysis had two thrusts. First Sklar demonstrated the thoroughly-conservative nature of the Wilson political philosophy: conservative in its intellectual origins and also in dictating his own task as a political leader as that of adjusting legal and political institutions to conform with the needs of the developing United States economy. Secondly, Sklar illustrated how in practice the Wilson New Freedom legislation carried out his political theory. In particular Sklar described how the Federal Trade Commission Act, the Underwood Tariff, and the Federal Reserve Act conformed to the wishes of corporate leaders, how they aided the expansion of foreign trade, and how big businessmen greeted them favorably as either "worthwhile experiments" or "sound policy".

In Gabriel Kolko's Railroads and Regulation (Princeton, 1965) and The Triumph of Conservatism (New York, 1963), Sklar's insight into Wilson became a comprehensive theory of Progressivism. These works

were so brilliantly conceived and so boldly executed that even their occasional flaws of logic, their highly-qualified judgments, and their frequent deficiency of hard evidence at crucial points did not seriously mar the immensity of their accomplishment. Of all the historians of Progressivism (including the other New Leftists), Kolko provided the only attempt at an economic interpretation. Beginning with the state of the economy at the turn of the century, Kolko contended that within the various economic sectors — railroads, iron and steel, oil, automobiles, insurance, lumber, meat packing, and banking — the major corporations faced growing competition despite the simultaneous counter-trend of consolidations and mergers. This competition imperiled the long-term profitability of the large corporations. Attempts by many corporations to deal with the problem by voluntary agreements (pools, marketing agreements, et cetera) failed because of the lack of enforceability and because of the very competition they were supposed to combat. Between 1900 and 1917 (and even earlier in the case of the railroads), this situation led corporate leaders to seek relief from the Government. What resulted was (in Kolko's words) "political capitalism" — the functional unity of business and government which developed under the Progressivism of Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson and later triumphed in the business-government co-operation made necessary by World War I.

Like Gabriel Kolko, James Weinstein, in The Corporate Ideal and the Liberal State (Boston, 1968), focused on the corporate leaders in the Progressive Era. But whereas Kolko concentrated on the corporate leaders' political response to their narrow economic needs, Weinstein considered the corporate response to the challenge of political and social unrest in the period. Kolko occasionally mentioned political factors as the causes of business desire for federal intervention in the economy (such factors as need "to short-circuit state progressivism"), but the desire of the railroads for government intervention to end rebating, the desire of the meat-packing industry for federal meat inspection in order to open foreign markets, and other simple economic considerations played a far-greater role in Kolko's explanation of corporate behavior. In Weinstein's book the emphasis shifted to the growing class conflict which confronted corporate leaders. There was on one hand the development of the stubborn conservatism of the National Association of Manufacturers, and on the other hand the mounting strength and fury of "social reformers", "neo-populists", labor radicals, and Socialists. Weinstein contended that this class conflict impelled a comprehensive transformation of the dominant corporate ideology in which the social ideal of laissez-faire and social Darwinism was replaced by the "ideal of a responsible social order in which all classes could look forward to some recognition and sharing in the benefits of an ever-expanding economy". Weinstein also treated the National Civic Federation's role as the ideological vanguard of this change, developing and spreading ideas and attitudes embodied in much Progressive and New Deal legislation.

Supplementing James Weinstein's work, David Eakins's unpublished dissertation "The Development of Corporate Liberal Policy Research



in the United States, 1885-1965 (Wisconsin, 1966) presented the National Civic Federation, along with the American Economics Association, as preludes to a long series of social research organizations which have articulated the major details of corporate liberalism. Founded by big businessmen and often financed by large foundations, such organizations as the Brookings Institute, Twentieth Century Fund, and Committee for Economic Development have devised programs for business and government in such varied areas as labor-management relations, social legislation, industrial efficiency, government modernization, and government counter-cyclical spending. In Eakins's view, the institutions he described represented the convergence of the most far-seeing minds in business, government, and academia, and ultimately served to formulate policies guaranteeing the social peace, economic stability, and foreign expansion of American corporate capitalism.

Nothing better indicated the successful hegemony of the corporate elite and their ideology of corporate liberalism than the complete integration of the labor movement into what C. Wright Mills called "pro-capitalist syndicalism from the top". By 1940, the corporate elite had come to welcome union leaders as junior partners in determination of national policy and to accept unionization of the major industries. For their part, American unions soon gave up their militance of the Thirties, made their peace with corporate capitalism (which was never too-seriously threatened at any rate), and assumed the function of disciplining the work force. In return, union leaders obtained positions of power and prestige, and union members received increasing economic gains. Stephen Scheinberg: "The Development of Corporation Labor Policy, 1900-1940" (unpublished dissertation, Wisconsin, 1966) and Ronald Radosh: American Labor and United States Foreign Policy discussed two separate but related aspects of the process by which American labor became part of the corporate-liberal consensus.

Scheinberg described a group of corporate leaders whose "moderate" policies toward labor paved the way for general employer acceptance of trade unionism, an acceptance that did not really occur until after the Wagner Act and the sharp struggles of the CIO forced the issue in the late Thirties. Like Weinstein and Eakins, Scheinberg assigned a prominent place to the National Civic Federation in the evolution of corporate liberalism. Even though many employers in the NCF would not tolerate unions in their own plants, the organization nevertheless welcomed the membership of union leaders such as Samuel Gompers and John Mitchell, recognized trade unions as a legitimate "functional" group in the society, and advocated improvement of work conditions. For the period between the War and the Depression Scheinberg focused on the activities of the Special Conference Committee and Industrial Relations Counselors (founded by John D. Rockefeller Junior), which urged employers to adopt employee-representation plans. From there it was but a short step for most employers to the recognition of conservative business unions.

If labor's integration into American corporate capitalism has been facilitated by wily capitalists with seductive propositions, it has not been hindered by a shortage of willing labor leaders. According to Radosh, American labor leaders have not only believed in corporate capitalism, but have supported that system's foreign policy and foreign economic expansion, especially when they could anticipate benefits returning to themselves and their followers. Labor leaders were not exactly on the front lines of America's expanding empire, but from their plush seats on government councils they helped as they could. Gompers sat on Wilson's Council of National Defense during World War I, and aided the President's futile effort to persuade the Russian workers to make war, not revolution. During World War II, Sidney Hillman, the leading socialist labor leader at the time, sat on the National Defense Advisory Commission. His unswerving loyalty to FDR policies included backing the use of federal troops to crush a wildcat strike at the North American Aviation Company in 1940. George Meany and Walter Reuther continued American labor's unique tradition of internationalism, using their resources and influence to undermine Left-wing unionism in Europe, Latin America, and Africa, and of course (in Meany's case) backing our bombs in Vietnam. Radosh's main point, however, was not that labor leaders have consistently supported US economic and military ventures and adventures in foreign countries, but that such support has been a modality for the peaceful integration of American labor into the system. In return for this support trade unions have received real benefits: government protection, economic gains, and acceptance as a legitimate part of the corporate system.

For all their accomplishments, these works were not without their limitations. The works of Weinstein, Sklar, and the other students of Williams's all contained the weaknesses of Williams's idealist and elitist methodology. Like his, their studies were limited to the ideas of the corporate, political, and labor elites, and when they related these ideas to the development of the political economy it was only in the most general way, without any attempt at a systematic analysis of the economy. Moreover, they made no attempt to discern how, and how successfully, the corporate ideological hegemony was imposed on the non-elite members of society.

Each of these works, partially excepting Weinstein's, partook of a kind of early-Sixties pessimism which Herbert Marcuse so-eloquently symbolized. Their despair over the possibilities of radical social change reflected their knowledge of how successful the corporate elite had been in establishing hegemony, maintaining a political consensus, and containing the contradictions of capitalism; how conservative and disappointing the trade-union movement had become; how quiescent the great mass of working people were; and how completely-irrelevant were the socialist parties and sects. Each, to one degree or another, suffered from the temptation to read the success of postwar capitalism back into the early Twentieth Century, and thus to flatten out, simplify, and distort reality. Radosh carried this to an extreme: His book was really a selective history of conservative trade-union leadership. Weinstein and Scheinberg tended to overplay the sophistication of

American capitalists. Weinstein, for instance, neglected the steady rightward drift of the National Civic Federation, whose leader eventually expressed the simplistic and illiberal goal of crushing



“Reds, Rads, Pinks, and Punks”, while Scheinberg underplayed the conservative purpose behind the so-called moderate corporate labor policies of the Twenties, which was, after all, to thwart, not to further, trade unionism.

Kolko’s pessimism about the possibilities of social change was so relentless that he virtually read class conflict out of American history for all time. Kolko suggested that the development of “political capitalism” in the Progressive period enabled the system to solve its economic problems by political means and thus to deflect indefinitely the inherent contradictions in capitalism that Marx thought would lead to socialism. Kolko realized that such a conclusion was unMarxist and stated: “American development cannot be understood within the Marxist mold.” The most serious problem with such thinking, however, is that it may simply prove to be anachronistic. In recent years, the empirical and theoretical studies of Ernest Mandel, James O’Conner, Martin Nicolaus, and Paul Mattick have seriously challenged Kolko’s belief

that government intervention can indefinitely postpone an economic crisis of some sort. Moreover, with the American empire faced with revolts at home and abroad which show little sign of subsiding, Kolko's pessimism becomes daily less tenable.

## Conclusion

At this point in the development of the new radical historiography, it is possible to discern two complementary dangers. The first is that the tentative conclusions reached by the historians discussed here will be seized upon by radicals as a new dogma, with slight regard for the degree to which those conclusions have been adequately established. Since there are many methodological (as well as political) differences among these historians (differences which in some cases have been publicly and polemically aired), this danger may not be very great. The other danger is that these historians will be seen as representing an "extreme" in historical interpretation, with the "pendulum" being sure to swing back the other way. This is what happened to Beardian history after World War II: rather than having its insights extended and deepened, it was treated as the left end of a one-dimensional spectrum, and as such was quickly abandoned. The truth is that, as they would surely be quick to admit, even the best of the new radical 1960s historians (say Genovese, Weinstein, Lynd, and Montgomery) have succeeded primarily in opening up new approaches and hypotheses rather than providing answers. What we have witnessed in the American history profession in the 1960s is only the beginning of a long process of applying radical social analysis and the experience of contemporary radical movements to the study of our past.

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# **Radical Teaching:**

## **A SYMPOSIUM**

Edited by Ann D. Gordon

### Introduction

As we discuss the contributions which radicals have made to the professional discussion of historians, it seems appropriate as well to look at the stance and attitude of radicals toward non-historians. Most historians are in the classroom, and it is there that the question "Why study history?" is most immediate. There the value and importance of historical study has to be articulated.

We asked a number of former graduate students at Wisconsin (and one current one) to describe their teaching experiences: the goals they have set themselves and the means they have developed to meet these goals. No consistent approach has emerged from the pieces written; no "answers" are offered. No one as yet has spelled out a synthesis of teaching, research, and social change. But there does seem to be an agreement that American radicals, sitting in the belly of American professionalism, have a special obligation to define alternative means of education.

Unfortunately, the one systematic approach to the teaching of history which has emerged recently, that of Wisconsin's laboratory course in American history, is not represented here. Features of it do appear, however, in the pieces which follow. It is characterized by the use of primary materials around a particular social problem in an institution or a community, with the emphasis on the process of discovery or deduction, rather than on information or coverage. Discussions and short, narrowly-focused papers are the tools. A theoretical laboratory in its methods, it has been most extensively developed in a laboratory environment where special funding was available. Its applicability and flexibility to the real world of crowded universities is not established, although many former teaching assistants are trying to adapt it at such diverse places as the University of Massachusetts, Smith College, and Rutgers University's Newark campus.

Most of the teaching experiments share a recognition that student participation in the process of studying and thinking history is crucial

to teaching history. One assumes that a particular problem needs to be taught and seeks a new way to do it; another, that whatever is wanted by students is what should be taught. The final contribution describes a case in which graduate students, unable to study in any recognized course an area of importance to them, designed their own course and taught themselves. From every vantage point, this symposium is only a beginning in developing a dialogue about learning. While we frequently share our research, we rarely share our teaching. Hence a continued discussion of basic information through which we can define teaching needs is basic to the development of radical education.

Our discussion about radical teaching is only the first stage of our need to define what it means to be a radical who happens to be a historian. We need, for example, to closely examine the implications of continuing to offer up new explanations in the old forms to the old crowd. On one hand, we share in the theoretical development of the radical community about the role of the university in society, and about the limitations and mismanagement of professionals. Simultaneously, we are dependent on an established profession which defines the route to recognition and livelihood. Research remains the measure of our progress, at the expense of teaching; articles in historical journals have more prestige than those in wide-circulation magazines. If we continue to accept these limitations on the distribution of historical ideas and thinking, our contributions will be swallowed into the house dialogue of professionals.

In the classroom we have the locus for working out the historical perspective away from the demands of career justification. Students bring with them to the classroom a very different set of assumptions about importance from those used by historians. There is less and less immunity in the classroom for an irrelevant and authoritarian attitude toward historical work. As we approach the question "Why history?" in our classrooms, we may begin to develop new occupations and new activities for historians who would seek to decentralize the historical perspective and redistribute knowledge out of the chambers of experts.

Ann D. Gordon



Assuming that radicals take a calling which makes the best use of individual talents, one would expect those in college teaching to teach with the goal of radicalizing their students. Instead their classroom frustrations motivate radical activities outside of the classroom. The common complaint that you can't make radicals out of liberal students in only forty hours of lectures reflects their problem. Still, in forty hours some students can take the first steps.

The best way to begin is by analyzing the student's experience in the typical college course. The instructor tries to change student values through forty lectures or discussions, several paperback monographs,

and possibly a textbook. The student's response is a couple of short book reports, participation in a few discussions, perhaps a term paper, and two or more exams. On a one-time basis this is not enough to change any but weak student beliefs, yet repeated over and over throughout the college it does produce a liberal ideology.

The lecturer and the authors of the assigned books fit into the role of infallible givers of knowledge. They are not to be questioned except for clarification of one of their points. Both the books and the lectures rest on unspoken assumptions. For example the fight between Jefferson and Hamilton was important because it marked the beginning of a two-party system. And no student asks: "Well, wasn't the one-party system a good thing in the revolutionary situation?" or "Why not have more than just two parties?". They do not ask because the two-party system is "good" and because it will be the basis of exam questions. The combination of the authority figure of the instructor with rewards for remembering the liberal pattern of history is one way the student's beliefs are molded.

It is an unintellectual process depending on authoritarian technique. For example, when reading the assigned paperback the student does not try to understand its thesis, analyze the argument, and evaluate the evidence, because the only thing he will be graded on is spotting the main applications of liberal dogma. Anyone with several years of teaching experience will testify to the average student's inability to analyze what he reads.

The same teacher might also testify on the term-paper myth. That is if students are told to write a paper from primary sources and develop their own thesis, the first reaction is stubborn resistance. All their lives they have written papers by paraphrasing several secondary sources. They believe their instructors and the authors of books are supremely qualified to think, but they know only too well that they have had only a few ideas in their entire lives. Hence the assignment can be done only by borrowing from secondary sources.

What kind of products do our colleges turn out? Evidently, students with respect for those placed over them, with the belief that liberal dogma describes the world because it has worked for them, and with no desire to question or even analyze the words of those in authority. They are also well trained to carry out instructions. This is not an attractive picture compared to the traditional ideal that the college student is one who thinks for himself, who has been exposed to various philosophies, and who has then chosen his own principles of living. But it is an accurate picture of the characteristics needed in the jobs open to the graduate: typical bureaucratic positions in a corporation or in the Government. His ability to take instructions without questioning their assumptions is the oil which keeps a bureaucracy functioning. His inability to analyze will preserve him from danger when faced with a situation not in his instructions, for he will ask his superiors for some additional instructions. His habit of writing memos paraphrasing those written by superiors can only earn rapid promotions.

The reason the radical instructor makes no progress with radical lectures and assignments of radical books is obvious. He is bucking

the whole system. Furthermore, he is trying to beat it using his own authoritarian processes. His assigned radical paperbacks fail because he gets book reports paraphrased through the students' liberal dogmas. The same process makes his lectures fail. Except for subject matter, the radical teaches the same way the liberal does. If he could change the way students experience material in a meaningful and radical way, he could attack liberalism at another level.

Essentially a radical teacher wants to change the student's ideology. This change is a two-fold experience. The student rejects various liberal dogmas and adopts radical concepts in their place. For the operation to be reasonably-permanent and complete, the student must eventually transform his view of the world. Furthermore, he must do it while living in a world permeated with liberalism. He needs all the training in analysis that he can get and all the self-confidence that he can muster to keep at a process which usually takes years.

Students can learn to analyze and have confidence in their judgment by making analyses of unorganized primary data and being evaluated on their performance. The important aspect of the research is using relatively-unorganized primary sources to force students to choose and to become conscious of the criteria used to make the choices. To encourage judgment, lists of research topics should not be given, although a guide to primary sources in the library is very helpful. (1) The whole experience of writing papers in which students develop their own concepts is so new that almost an entire year may be spent in teaching the necessary skills and developing self-confidence.

One of the most-useful devices for doing this is historiography. Students reading two differing explanations of the same events often experience some shock and lose some of their respect for received knowledge. At first, interpretations have to differ greatly in evaluating the same events for the difference to be noticed. For example, Brown and Jensen on democracy in colonial America (2), Vann Woodward and Ruchames on John Brown (3), and the Handlins and Degler on the origin of slavery (4). Once the students realize that authorities disagree, and hence can be doubted, they are ready for an explanation of presentism such as Jordan gives for Degler's and the Handlins' articles (5), or an analysis of why the textbooks are so slow to incorporate research on controversial topics (6). The assignment of scholarly articles also offers an opportunity to teach the students to spot the thesis and to summarize the argument. To avoid the pitfalls of the usual book report this must be required from the viewpoint of each author. The teacher should try to avoid showing a preference for one interpretation so as to encourage the belief that the student's interpretations in research will be seriously evaluated by the teacher.

Discussion of assigned articles also offers the opportunity to discuss concepts needed in the preparation of the research paper — what is a "thesis", what is an "interpretation", what is the organization of historical knowledge, and what is the function of researching the literature. It may be useful to build up the student's self-confidence in his research through a series of short assignments in which he finds two or three documents on an event and writes an interpretation.



In the day-to-day classroom experience the radical objective is a dialogue between the students and the teacher in which they teach each other. Radical students have been quite-properly demanding their right to determine the course content. However, there is the implication of doing it the first week of the course. If the instructor tries the first week with the average survey class, he usually gets blank faces and some useless suggestions. It is unfair to ask the students to discuss what they want from the course until they have had a chance to evaluate the instructor and to find out his interests and abilities as well as their own. Probably the course outline can be established after three or four weeks, although the course content should always be open to a certain extent. This allows the instructor to make an assignment for the next class meeting in answer to problems which arise, and allows the class to raise questions and research the answers. Similarly, the class has to be relatively frank about what they want from the subject matter and what their hang-ups are for mutual stimulation to occur. What both are looking for are areas of mutual interest in which their abilities can create some order.

The survey concept simply has to go as the dominant objective. It is not possible to cover all aspects of American history and spend enough time on any part for the student to get anything but a simplistic and superficial understanding of the problems involved. Thus, the survey course has become a bulwark of liberal, dogmatic history. (7) One approach is to ignore comprehensiveness and to deal just with those problems in which the student and the teacher are interested. If that is not acceptable, then the survey requirement can be ignored during class, but assignments in a textbook can be tested periodically without class discussion time being wasted.

The requirement of ordering books for a course before the students have assembled can cause problems. A compromise is to specify a basic text and the first assigned paperback before the course begins, then add other readings as the class content develops. Surprisingly, bookstore operators are not necessarily opposed to this, as it helps reduce their workload at the beginning of the semester.

It is difficult to write much about developing a dialogue with the students, since a favorable attitude on the part of the teacher is needed before techniques will work. The teacher has to be willing to admit that he does not know everything about the subject, and has to be willing to bring into class discussion those problems that he cannot answer or answers poorly. If he believes that students are adults, with opinions and analytical contributions which are worth listening to, then he will find ways to develop the dialogue beyond a sharing of the decisions on the housekeeping details.

Abolishment of exams and grades is an important student demand. Yet the individual teacher can seldom abolish them unless he plans to do so as a symbolic act before leaving for another job. The next best thing is to work out the rationale of the exams and the weights of the course grading scheme through careful class discussion. Each type of exam question may have to be justified, and students are not satisfied with vague generalities. The class may want work and exams that will

help them pass Graduate Record Exams or various employment tests. Although the instructor may disapprove of such motivation, it provides grounds for a valuable, informative discussion as long as the instructor remembers that they are talking about the students' education rather than what he thinks would make a better world.

The students have a right to discuss how much weight should be placed on certain types of work, just as the instructor has a right to propose and defend different ones. However discussion of the grading system is also something that continues as the course develops. The general scheme can be indicated at the beginning of the course with the understanding that after the class and the instructor have had a chance to try the various components they may want to change the weights. The same principle can be applied to the examinations with numbers and types of questions changed as experience indicates inappropriate questions, types of questions which the instructor words poorly, and development of new purposes for the examination.

Finally, as a word of warning, the techniques suggested are merely examples of ways to develop the ability of undergraduates, especially freshmen and sophomores, to analyze, question, and develop concepts which may or may not be anti-liberal. Hopefully they will also give the student the conviction that he should participate in the meaningful decisions that affect him. With upper-division students these skills can be used in various ways such as exploring radical criticism of the liberal dogma and contrasting standard with New Left interpretations. There is no logical assurance that the whole process will produce radicals, except that much of what has been described is what is taught in the graduate schools which have been the most-efficient producers of radicals in recent years. These are also the techniques of the elite colleges. So they become radical only when applied to the second-rate and third-rate schools (which the majority of Americans attend) where young radicals get their first teaching jobs.

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#### Footnotes

1. Most libraries contain more printed primary sources than is generally believed. Collections of letters and speeches by national figures, the Congressional Record, Papers Relating to US Foreign Relations, and Messages and Papers of the Presidents are only the most-obvious examples.

2. Robert E. Brown: Middle-Class Democracy and the Revolution in Massachusetts, 1691-1780, and Merrill Jensen: "Democracy and the American Revolution", Huntington Library Quarterly, 20 (August 1957), Pages 321-341. Both are printed in Sidney Fine and Gerald S. Brown: The American Past, Volume 1.

3. C. Vann Woodward: "John Brown's Private War", in Daniel Aaron: American in Crisis, and in Vann Woodward: The Burden of

Southern History; Louis Ruchames: A John Brown Reader.

4. Oscar and Mary Handlin: "Origins of the Southern Labor System", William and Mary Quarterly, Third Series, 7 (1950), Pages 199-222, also in their Race and Nationality in American Life; Carl Degler: "Slavery and the Genesis of American Race Prejudice", Comparative Studies in Society and History, 2 (1959), also in his Out of Our Past.

5. Winthrop D. Jordan: "Modern Tensions and the Origins of American Slavery", Journal of Southern History, 28 (1962), Pages 18-30.

6. M. Krug: "On Rewriting the Stories of Reconstruction in US History Textbooks", Journal of Negro History, 46 (1961), Pages 133-153.

7. The best example of this lies outside American history in that ubiquitous freshman course, Western Civilization. The predominance of this course in the freshman curriculum came about under liberals. And they usually teach it not as history, but as a series of propositions about the origins of individual freedom, high culture, democracy, international diplomacy, and economic development.



The University of Maryland's part in the university uprising of last May was fragmented, spontaneous, and surprisingly large given its location amid the Washington political and cultural lag and its student body composed largely of the sons and daughters of military and civil service bureaucrats. The large-but-temporary generation of anger at policy in Vietnam, Cambodia, and Kent State turned rather quickly into a sprawling, half-believing peace movement. Students jammed Route 1, which runs at the edge of campus, and forced a confrontation with the police. The exhilaration of revolt ended abruptly; the University once again asserted order behind the National Guard; and the students began a concerted, almost-frantic last attack on the grading system, some demanding pass/fail and others wating to abolish grades entirely. For some observers this movement from high ideals to self-interest indicated that students were mere opportunists, playing at revolution. But this political devolution made plain one important lesson: that of how much political activity and traditional learning clash, and how well teachers have instilled the goals, punishments, and rewards of their educational methodology.

This larger crisis intensified a feeling that many teachers have felt. History, among many other humanities, is very obviously in trouble with the university, with falling enrollments, pressure from students to be relevant, and a glut of PhDs which has turned a profession into a teaching labor. In the light of the revolt on campus many standard assumptions about teaching history are necessarily in question. Among the three groups concerned with teaching — students, faculty members,

and the business and political community — there are fewer shared assumptions than ever, and in many cases no alliances between groups. With so little agreement about the purposes of education, and a strong rebellion among students and some faculty members against traditional reasons, our rationale for history is (in Henry Ford's words) bunk. Whatever was once said about preparation for citizenship or preserving Western traditions from European heretics (Germany and the Soviet Union) has ceased to make sense to many students and even to some professors. A second, specialized rationale for teaching history has been to prepare apprentices. This vision of perpetual scholarly motion is now being destroyed by the realities of the market. Most apprentices are trained for non-existent jobs and functions, and are called to the community colleges and working-class schools, and not the scholarly ministries of New England universities. A third rationale for teaching history has been to spread the cultural traditions and reinforce the middle-class positions of the student body. Yet here too is tremendous pressure to change, as blacks, Puerto Ricans, Mexican Americans, and working-class Americans in general press for a different style of social mobility. Among many white middle-class students, precisely the opposite has occurred, as the rewards of position, job security, and suburban living diminish in their eyes. For many faculty members, non-radicals included, a last-resort justification for teaching has been social change of one sort or another. Thus the reconstruction of the present has been linked to a reconstruction of the past.

When the university has been in trouble, for whatever reasons, one of the greatest pressures has been for a new kind of teaching. The very process of teaching has been challenged. What the breakdown of the university (Maryland specifically) indicated to me was how much the traditional teaching and lecturing have depended on the passivity of both students and professors. When tradition and classroom ritual are dissolved for any reason, teaching, especially in a conservative way, becomes almost impossible. The almost-instinctive institutional reply was smaller classes (more or less of the same). On the other hand, teachers and students have often proposed courses in revolutionary history or other subjects that seem relevant.

Although the pressures from the community or administration have been great, they are different from the kinds of problems I would like to examine. Behind these attempts to restructure courses, there are two basic ideas. One is to try to teach new subject matter, such as Marxist history or history from the bottom up. In many ways, this can be an old-fashioned approach, for it does nothing to alter the manner of instruction or participation in education. It may succeed, but it often has the aura of belief-reinforcement and superficiality. A second idea is to force students to think more on their own, to sustain a possibility of truly-creative thought. The basic assumption here is guided by the suspicion that radical and underground culture, for most students, is vicarious and not self-sustaining; by the old belief that creative thought is subversive. Admittedly this is idealistic, and perhaps it is merely traditional.

With both of these ideas and some sense of their limitations in mind,

a fellow history instructor and I taught an experimental course with about fifteen students each, a kind of "history of your own choosing". The ground rules of the course were very simple; we decided to read a certain amount every week, with the group choosing the material and enforcing (if it wished) a degree of participation by everyone. Grades would be self-inflicted. It is difficult and probably beside the point to try an objective measurement of the output of work or participation or enthusiasm, but some important lessons became obvious to us as the class went on.

The students were all volunteers and were generally average, though there was probably some degree of disaffection accounting for their wanting the course in the first place. Our most-striking observation was that giving students complete freedom to choose reading materials and subjects was granting a false freedom. Students refused to choose or could not choose topics to discuss, while some suggested exploring questions like "Why are there wars?" or "Revolution". We quickly saw



that we could not pretend not to help or suggest or lead. In the long run we suggested all of the books and articles read, although students made some modifications and substitutions. The idea of our granting a wide degree of participation, then, was limited by the students' inability to conceptualize what they did not know. We could not allow one person in a class to insist on a certain course — and then pretend that the students themselves had chosen. Given the kind of problematic interest of students — which is really an interest in the present — the role and usefulness of chronology becomes suspect. What students wanted to know was both extremely personal and very general — neither of which can be discussed or dealt with very well in an ordinary classroom.

Still, some of the results which we had were in some sense very satisfying. It was obvious that the group as a group became conscious of listening to itself and anxious to learn. Formal relationships broke down, and there was a feeling that whatever learning occurred was a very-personal sort of thing. The very-obvious barriers to learning,

prejudices, laziness, and previous bad schooling, were frequently discussed. The discussions neither began nor ended in the class; rather the class was simply a more-formalized version, with students talking about subjects well before and after. The group, in other words, jelled into a kind of educational unit which quite-conceivably could have been put to much-different tasks, such as original research.

The most-striking result was the response to the following question: "How many students, in the light of taking this course, now feel that the university education is irrelevant; that it would be just as well to quit school?". Over half the students said yes. The meaning of this, I think, is very clear. Any kind of genuine learning seems to come from the self or from a group, whereas the institution does nothing more than get in the way. Schools are not just irrelevant, they often seem to maliciously miseducate. Thus, learning on one's own is an exhilarating feeling and also a disastrous criticism. I think it also indicated how little the academic humanities profession has gotten general students to swallow the desire to know about Western culture, or the meaning of any pre-electronic culture. Students are perhaps willing to live out what is left of its assumptions, but are uninterested — if any students ever were — in exploring its intricacies. If this has indeed failed, no wonder the humanities are in trouble. Most of all, we discovered a very-strong dislike for all badges of competition: grades, approval, goal orientation, et cetera. Furthermore, we became very concerned about how much teaching, given this style, was reaction to personality, to the particular skills and faults of a given professor.

Although the students universally expressed satisfaction with the course, and almost to a man became deeply involved in campus politics during the May ferment, it is difficult to see what, generally, has been accomplished. Obviously, the university cannot be reorganized as anti-university, nor can all classes be organized as anti-classes. If the sense of degeneracy in our social and cultural life persists, with its constant doubt and confusion about social goals, then it is perhaps unlikely that there can be any institutional answer to the problem of education. This may ultimately be a disaster for historians, whose professional *raison d'être* has been the survey course. But it seems clear at least that effective education cannot begin until students and professors again agree about the role of learning, the institutions that harbor and encourage it, and the stakes for successful passage. If this happens, it is probably inevitable that students and professors will gradually disintegrate the old ideas of periodization in history and will eliminate the standard body of accepted knowledge. Courses will be pragmatic and developmental, and above all willing to break down the study, of history into its most elemental and important parts: the ways in which one learns.

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Intellectual isolation is one of the acute problems faced by radical historians taking their first teaching jobs at state colleges, community colleges, or small private schools around the country. If one is lucky there may be sympathetic colleagues in other departments with whom one can co-operate in general academic affairs and community action. But in the history faculties at most schools there is no interest in radical teaching methods, in the historical problems of concern to the radical Left, or in the career decisions radicals face. Even the most self-reliant and committed find themselves, in such a situation, pulled toward a safer Left liberalism. The natural desire for security, real family pressures, and honest doubts about the wisdom of particular ideas are hardly counteracted by even the most-diligent reading of the radical press or hectic caucuses at the AHA.

In an effort to cope with this problem, several of us invited about twenty-five radicals we had known at Wisconsin to a long conference over the weekend last summer (1969). Six couples were able to make arrangements to come on rather short notice. Though we were initially disappointed at the small response, in practice twelve people were an ideal number. Because a commitment to a radical course affects the whole family, we made a special effort to include both husbands and wives in all discussions. Sitters were hired to keep the children at one house, while we met at another to talk for a day and a half.

The first afternoon was spent reviewing what each of us had done in the past few years and laying out the problems of most concern. Since the group was homogeneous these discussions were remarkably frank, saving us the usual first-day activity of feeling each other out. Getting the community dinner and putting the children to bed inevitably raised questions about women's liberation which kept us talking far into the night. The second day was devoted to exhaustive personal examination of our values and how best to express them in teaching, relations with students, political action, and choice of jobs. Throughout the weekend, at various breaks, people talked informally about their research with those interested in similar problems. The long day's discussion had moved by an internal logic (disregarding an informal agenda) and had covered so much ground that we felt talked out at its end. That night we relaxed, and the next day was spent taking families to the beach and getting ready to leave.

All of us, I think, felt that this was an unusual opportunity to probe ourselves, subject ourselves to communal criticism, and re-evaluate our thinking. At a nominal cost in money and planning effort, we had achieved a good deal. Perhaps the most-striking discovery was the similarity of the problems facing people teaching at different types of schools and in different social situations. But it was also evident that what one could do varied from school to school. Discussions provided important information about limitations and opportunities at different

types of colleges for those who were considering changing jobs. Most of us felt, I think, that this kind of meeting should be encouraged as an alternative to national historical meetings.

At the New University Conference national convention in June I found another way to meet many of the needs of the isolated radical teacher. Here a large number of radicals from different disciplines and regions at various stages in their careers were able to effectively share their experiences and attempt to go beyond self-education to development of organizational goals and programs. Although there was of course some frustration in long meetings which often seemed to accomplish little, there was a serious effort to define the role of the radical professor. There was also deep concern about socialist life styles in a hostile society. Child-care arrangements, full participation of women, and the constant criticism of elitist tendencies are among problems this group struggled with in a way which forced individuals to confront their own relationship to a very real ideal of the mature socialist projected by the group.

This kind of periodic (or where possible ongoing) examination of our commitments, goals, and strategies, as well as of the compromises we make or drift into, seems to me to be crucial for all radical teachers. Subjecting ourselves to severe group criticism and self-criticism is the socialist way to counter the pull of liberal academic life against which we struggle.

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### A Student-Run Course in Labor History

The University of Wisconsin claims pride in its tradition as an early center for the study of labor history; but the school that fostered John R. Commons boasts no labor historians today and offers no courses in labor history, except for an occasional summer offering by a visiting professor.

Last year a few history graduate students, feeling our own ignorance, decided to form a labor-history seminar. We gathered together about fifteen students, mostly graduate students in history and sociology. Several students drew up a reading list based partly on the bibliography in the March-April 1969 issue of Radical America, Volume 2, Number 2, "Literature on Working Class Culture". We decided that we wanted to cover a wide variety of books and articles, more than any one person could cover alone. Each student was responsible for preparing dittoed reviews of five or six books, so that each week we had from five to ten reviews before us as a basis of discussion. Occasionally we read an



article or book in common.

We wanted to study labor history as working-class history; to study "the experience of workmen within the larger context of social history". (1) We knew we needed to know something about trade-union history, but we wanted to concentrate on questions of social history such as: How has the class structure of the US changed since colonial times? What experiences did American working people bring to their industrial positions? What were the conditions of working-class life and work, and what did workers think about their lives and their work? Why did workers choose the institutional forms they did, especially the AFL and CIO unions? What was the role of the organized Left in the trade unions (especially that of the Communist Party)? How did the US working class differ from that of other industrial countries? What was the importance of ethnic, racial, and sexual conditions in the US working class? How did these conditions affect class consciousness? Why has the American working class seemingly been so resistant to revolutionary ideas? Of what relevance is the history of the American working class to present-day revolutionary strategy?

We found the course both rewarding and frustrating. The literature on the American working class is not geared to the kinds of questions we were asking. We sometimes found very little information about the topics that interested us (for example: How did the Communist Party actually operate in the unions?). We found we needed to know more than we did about economic history; we were limited by the failure of historians to write social histories. Things seemed to go best when a session was organized around a topic which focused our reading and discussion (racism, immigration, employer strategies) rather than around a chronological period. It also helped to have a particular person responsible for guiding the discussion each week, suggesting important questions, and seeing to it that we didn't wander too freely. We felt that we could successfully offer the course to undergraduates with a smaller reading list and more reading in common, and we hope to do so in the future.

At the conclusion of the course we had almost 100 reviews of books and articles dealing with the American working class. Mimeographed copies of the combined reviews are available for \$1 from Jim O'Brien, 7 Frances Court, Madison, Wisconsin 53703.

Joyce Peterson  
graduate student  
University of Wisconsin

1. Paul Faler: "Working Class Historiography", Radical America, III (March-April, 1969), Pages 56-68. This extensive review of E. P. Thompson, Herbert G. Gutman, and Stephan Thernstrom was a valuable starting point for defining our interests beyond the history of the labor unions.



## Science & Society

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### AMERICAN RADICAL HISTORY

Historians and American Socialism, 1900-1920  
by Bryan Strong

Socialist Party Decline and World War I  
by Sally M. Miller

Communism in California, 1919-1924  
by Ralph E. Shaffer

Some Reflections on Ideology and American  
Labor History  
by Philip S. Foner

California Communists - Their Years of Power  
by Steve Murdock

### PLUS

A winner in our 1970 Prize Essay Contest:

The Young Marx on the State  
by Arthur F. McGovern

\$6.00 per year (\$6.50 outside of U.S.)

\$1.50 per issue (\$1.65 outside of U.S.)

movement or tendency to identify its work and aspirations.

The result in the short run has been a documentary orientation which offered what the editors felt to be essential information or methodology (such as surrealism, the Women's Liberation number, the CLR James Anthology, Guy Debord's Spectacular Society, and the Hegel and Lenin philosophy issue) rather than a political-review type format with stated editorial views on political perspectives.

Now RA is about to take another step in its evolution. Due to the pressing need for theoretical clarity, we have decided to reorganize the editorial board to help RA meet the political demands which the times make on any responsible radical journal. The result will be three or four issues per year of unusual length for RA (probably about 120 pages) which reflect a political, social, and cultural world view emanating from the collective efforts of the Madison staff and applied to particular problems. There will also be two or three RA monograph numbers.

Some of the points of primary focus in the political review will be: the history and demographic character of the American working class; the role played by the Third World in conditioning American radical perspectives; the praxis of Antonio Gramsci and the resolution of the theory-praxis problem in Marxism; European Marxist theory in the process of development; American history; and popular culture. Among the five monographs planned are: an issue-length study of American Imperialism and the decline of Capitalism, by Paul Mattick, Senior; a number on comic-strip art in America and its social implications; and a long-awaited number on the Old, anti-Statist Right.

At this writing, virtually every former "New Left" journal in the US is undergoing re-evaluation, attempting to discover its bearings in a rapidly-changing society. Nearly every journal also finds itself in financial difficulty, due to the confusion among potential readers, the sharp decline in any nationally-distributed newspaper which carries information on Left magazines around the country, the sharp rise in expenses, and the flow of finances available to fight repression. Radical America is no different: it has survived for the last year, and has been able to publish eight numbers, because of a generous grant from the Rabinowitz Foundation, advances from a book published, and a few gifts from good friends. To expand its work, readers must help expand its financial base. With the slight operating expenses of RA (it has no paid staff, for instance), all donations go straight into production, and even small gifts such as \$25 or \$10 can provide great aid. If you want RA to continue and grow to meet the problems of radicalism, then you must help us.

RA will also continue, over the next year, its policy of pamphlet subscriptions. For \$10, readers get a full year of RA plus well over \$10 worth of pamphlets from a wide variety of publishers on a wide range of subjects. Readers who want to help RA, and to help themselves to a bargain, can aid us greatly by obtaining pamphlet subs: with every hundred new subs we have enough to publish another issue.

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