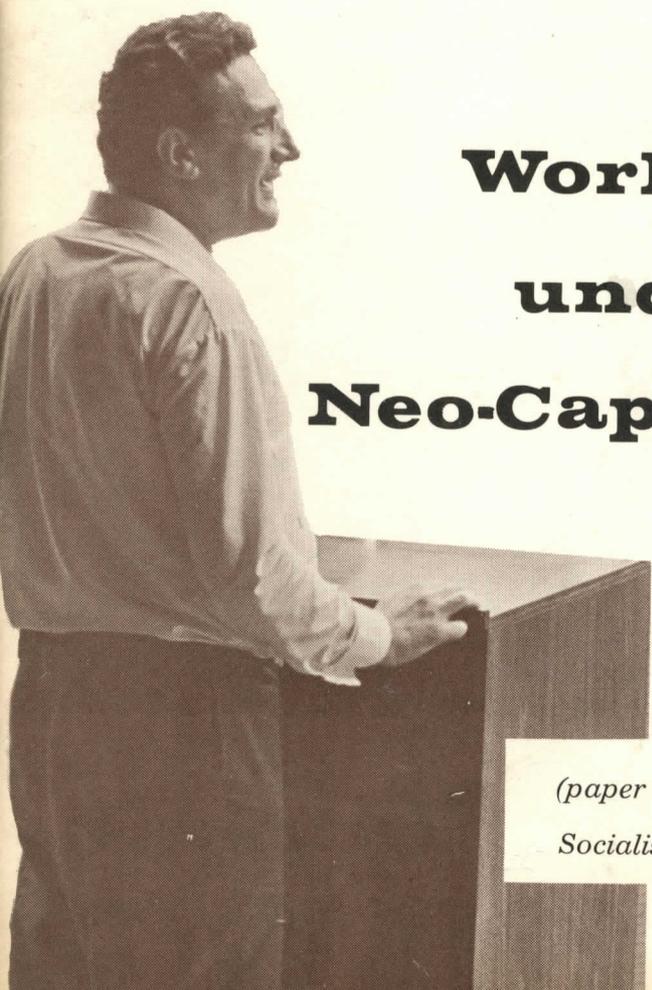


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ERNEST MANDEL



**Workers
under
Neo-Capitalism**

*(paper delivered at the 1968
Socialist Scholars Conference)*

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Ernest Mandel

WORKERS UNDER NEO-CAPITALISM

In the history of class society, the situation of each social class is a unique combination of stability and change. The structure remains the same; conjunctural features are often profoundly modified.

There is a tremendous difference both in standard of living and in social environment between the slave on the patriarchal Greek farms of the sixth century B. C., the slave on Sicilian plantations in the first century B. C., and a clerical or handicraft slave in Rome or the south of France in the fourth century A. D. Nonetheless all three of these were slaves, and the identity of their social status is undeniable. A nobleman living at the court of Louis XV did not have very much in common with a lord of the manor in Normandy or Burgundy seven centuries earlier—except that both lived on surplus labor extracted from the peasantry through feudal or semi-feudal institutions.

When we look at the history of the modern proletariat, whose direct ancestors were the unattached and uprooted wage earners in the medieval towns and the vagabonds of the 16th century—so strikingly described by that great novel from my country *Till Eulenspiegel*—we notice the same combination of structural stability and conjunctural change. The proletarian condition is, in a nutshell, the lack of access to means of production or means of subsistence which, in a society of generalized commodity production, forces the proletarian to sell his labor-power. In exchange for this labor-power he receives a wage which then enables him to acquire the means of consumption necessary for satisfying his own needs and those of his family.

This is the structural definition of the wage earner, the proletarian. From it necessarily flows a certain relationship to his work, to the

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products of his work, and to his overall situation in society, which can be summarized by the catchword "alienation." But there does not follow from this structural definition any necessary conclusions as to the level of his consumption, the price he receives for his labor-power, the extent of his needs or the degree to which he can satisfy them. The only basic interrelationship between structural stability of status and conjunctural fluctuations of income and consumption is a very simple one: Does the wage, whether high or low, whether in miserable Calcutta slums or in the much publicized comfortable suburbs of the American megalopolis, enable the proletarian to free himself from the social and economic obligation to sell his labor-power? Does it enable him to go into business on his own account?

Occupational statistics testify that this is no more open to him today than a hundred years ago. Nay, they confirm that the part of the active population in today's United States which is forced to sell its labor-power is much higher than it was in Britain when Karl Marx wrote *Das Kapital*, not to speak of the United States on the eve of the American Civil War.

Nobody will deny that the picture of the working class under neo-capitalism would be highly oversimplified if it were limited to featuring only this basic structural stability of the proletarian condition. In general, though, Marxists who continue to stress the basic revolutionary role of today's proletariat in Western imperialist society avoid that pitfall. It is rather their critics, who are in error, who commit the opposite error in fact of concentrating exclusively on conjunctural changes in the situation of the working class, thereby forgetting those fundamental structural elements which have not changed.

I do not care very much for the term "neo-capitalism" which is ambiguous, to say the least. When one speaks about the "neo-reformism" of the Communist parties in the West, one means, of course, that they are basically reformist; but when the term "neo-socialists" was used in the thirties and early forties to define such dubious figures as Marcel Deat or Henri de Man, one meant rather that they had stopped being socialists. Some European politicians and sociologists speak about "neo-capitalism" in the sense that society has shed some of the basic characteristics of capitalism. I deny this most categorically, and therefore attach to the term "neo-capitalism" the opposite connotation: a society which has all the basic elements of classical capitalism.

Nevertheless I am quite convinced that starting either with the great depression of 1929-32 or with the second world war, capitalism entered into a third stage in its development, which is as different from monopoly capitalism or imperialism described by Lenin, Hilferding and others as monopoly capitalism was different from classical 19th century laissez-faire capitalism. We have to give this child a name; all other names proposed seem even less acceptable than "neo-capitalism." "State monopoly capitalism," the term used in the Soviet Union and the "official" Communist parties, is very misleading because it

implies a degree of independence of the state which, to my mind, does not at all correspond to present-day reality. On the contrary, I would say that today the state is a much more direct instrument for guaranteeing monopoly surplus profits to the strongest private monopolies than it ever was in the past. The German term, *Spaetkapitalismus* seems interesting, but simply indicates a time sequence and is difficult to translate into several languages. So until somebody comes up with a better name—and this is a challenge to you, friends!—we will stick for the time being to "neo-capitalism."

We shall define neo-capitalism as this latest stage in the development of monopoly capitalism in which a combination of factors—accelerated technological innovation, permanent war economy, expanding colonial revolution—have transferred the main source of monopoly surplus profits from the colonial countries to the imperialist countries themselves and made the giant corporations both more independent and more vulnerable.

More independent, because the enormous accumulation of monopoly surplus profits enables these corporations, through the mechanisms of price investment and self-financing, and with the help of a constant buildup of sales costs, distribution costs and research and development expenses, to free themselves from that strict control by banks and finance capital which characterized the trusts and monopolies of Hilferding's and Lenin's epoch. More vulnerable, because of shortening of the life cycle of fixed capital, the growing phenomenon of surplus capacity, the relative decline of customers in non-capitalist milieus and, last but not least, the growing challenge of the non-capitalist forces in the world (the so-called socialist countries, the colonial revolution and, potentially at least, the working class in the metropolis) has implanted even in minor fluctuations and crises the seeds of dangerous explosions and total collapse.

For these reasons, neo-capitalism is compelled to embark upon all those well-known techniques of economic programming, of deficit financing and pump-priming, of incomes policies and wage freezing, of state subsidizing of big business and state guaranteeing of monopoly surplus profit, which have become permanent features of most Western economies over the last 20 years. What has emerged is a society which appears both as more prosperous and more explosive than the situation of imperialist countries 30 years ago.

It is a society in which the basic contradictions of capitalism have not been overcome, in which some of them reach unheard-of dimensions, in which powerful long-term forces are at work to blow up the system. I will mention here in passing only some of these forces: The growing crisis of the international monetary system, the trend towards a generalized economic recession in the whole capitalist world, the trend to restrict or suppress the basic democratic freedoms of the working class, in the first place, free play of wage bargaining, the trend toward deep and growing dissatisfaction of producers and consumers with a system which forces them to lose more and more

time producing and consuming more and more commodities which give less and less satisfaction and stifle more and more basic human needs, emotions and aspirations, the contradictions between the accumulation of wasteful "wealth" in the West and the hunger and misery of the colonial peoples, the contradictions between the immense creative and productive potentialities of science and automation and the destructive horror of nuclear war in the shadow of which we are forced to live permanently, epitomize the basic contradictions of today's capitalism.

The question has been posed: Hasn't the role of the working class been fundamentally changed in this changed environment? Hasn't the long-term high level of employment and the rising real wage undercut any revolutionary potential of the working class? Isn't it changing in composition, and more and more divorced from the productive process, as a result of growing automation? Doesn't its relations with other social layers, such as white-collar workers, technicians, intellectuals, students, undergo basic modifications?

Affirmative answers to these questions lead to political conclusions of far-reaching consequence. For some, the stability of the capitalist system in the West cannot be shaken any more, a theory which is nicely fitted to nourish a more material interest and psychological urge of adaptation to that system. For others, that stability could be shaken only from outside: first of all, from the non-industrialized regions of the world—the so-called villages, to repeat Lin Piao's formula—which will have to be revolutionized before revolts could again be envisaged in the imperialist countries themselves (Lin Piao's cities). Others, while not questioning the basic instability of neo-capitalism, see no positive outcome at all because they believe that the system is able to drug and paralyze its victims. Finally, there are those who believe that neo-capitalism raises its gravediggers from within its bosom but see these gravediggers coming from the groups of outcasts: national and racial minorities, superexploited sections of the population, revolutionary students, the new youth vanguard. All these conclusions share in common the elimination of the proletariat of metropolitan countries from the central role in the worldwide struggle against imperialism and capitalism.

It would be easy to limit oneself to stating an obvious fact: All these theories spring from a premature rationalization of a given situation, the fact that the Western proletariat has receded into the background of the world revolutionary struggle for the past 20 years, between 1948 and 1968. Now that the French May 1968 revolution has shown this phenomenon and period to be a temporary one, we should rather put at the top of the agenda a discussion of revolutionary perspectives in the West from now on.

Such an answer, valid though it may be, would remain insufficient and incomplete. For some of the theories we have just mentioned, while being obvious rationalizations of the *fait accompli*, have enough sophistication and candor not to limit themselves to description pure

and simple. They try to draw conclusions about the declining revolutionary role of the proletariat in the West from changes introduced into the very fabric of neo-capitalist society by technological, economic, social and cultural transformations of historic proportions and importance. So we have to meet these arguments on their own ground, and critically reexamine the dynamics of working class struggles, consciousness and revolutionary potential against the background of the changes which neo-capitalism has effected in the classical *modus operandi* of the capitalist system.

Our starting point must be the same as that adopted not only by Karl Marx but also by the classical school of political economy: the study of the place human labor occupies in the economic life of contemporary monopoly capitalism. Three basic facts immediately demand our attention in that respect.

First, contemporary production and distribution of material wealth is more than ever based upon modern industry and the factory. Indeed, one could say that the third industrial revolution at one and the same time both reduces industrial labor in the factory as a result of growing automation and increases industrial labor on a vast scale in agriculture, distribution, the service industries and administration. For the automation revolution must be seen as a vast movement of *industrialization* of these different sectors of economic activity, both economically and socially. We shall have to draw important conclusions from this trend. But what stands out is the fact that industrial labor in the broadest sense of the word—men forced to sell their labor-power to the manufacturing, cotton-growing, data-processing or dream-producing factory!—more than ever occupies the central place in the economy's structure.

Second, whatever the increase in consumption of the working class may have been, neo-capitalism hasn't modified in any sense whatsoever the basic nature of work in a capitalist society as alienated labor. One could even say that in the same way as automation extends the industrialization process into every single corner of economic life, it likewise universalizes alienation to an extent Marx and Engels could only have dimly imagined a hundred years ago. Many passages on alienation in the *Economic-Philosophical Manuscripts*, in the *German Ideology* and in the *Grundrisse* have only been truly realized in the last decades. And one could make the point that Marx's economic analysis of "pure capitalism" is much more a presentiment of what was going to happen during the 20th century than a description of what was happening under his eyes in the 19th century.

In any case, labor under neo-capitalism is more than ever alienated labor, forced labor, labor under command of a hierarchy which dictates to the worker what he has to produce and how he has to produce it. And this same hierarchy imposes upon him what to consume and when to consume it, what to think and when to think it, what to dream and when to dream it, giving alienation new and

dreadful dimensions. It tries to alienate the worker even from his consciousness of being alienated, of being exploited.

Third, living labor remains more than ever the sole source of surplus value, the only source of profit, which is what makes the system tick. One can easily reveal the striking contradiction of a productive process heavily pregnant with unlimited potentials of making use-values abundant, but incapable of functioning smoothly and developing steadily because these use-values must first of all slip into the clothes of exchange-values, be sold and meet "effective demand" before they can be consumed. One can note the absurdity of a system in which science, technological progress, humanity's huge accumulated wealth of equipment, are the main basis for material production, but in which the "miserly appropriation of surplus labor" to use Marx's *Grundrisse* phrase, continues to be the only goal of economic growth: "Profit is our business, and business after all only means profit."

But all these contradictions and absurdities are real, living contradictions and absurdities of capitalism. These would attain their absolute limit in universal and total automation which, however, lies completely beyond its reach because living labor is indispensable for the further accumulation of capital. One has only to observe how the billion-dollar corporations haggle and shout like fishwives over a 50-cent wage increase here and two hours off the workweek there to see that, whatever ideologues and sociologists might argue, the hard facts of life confirm what Marx taught us: Capital's unlimited appetite for profit is an unlimited appetite for human surplus labor, for hours and minutes of unpaid labor. The shorter the workweek becomes, the higher the actual productivity of labor, the closer and more strictly do capitalists calculate surplus labor and haggle ever more furiously over seconds and fractions of seconds, as in time and motion studies.

Now precisely these three characteristics of modern labor—its key role in the productive process, its basic alienation, its economic exploitation—are the objective roots of its potential role as the main force to overthrow capitalism, the objective roots of its indicated revolutionary mission. Any attempt to transfer that role to other social layers who are unable to paralyze production at a stroke, who do not play a key role in the productive process, who are not the main source of profit and capital accumulation, takes us a decisive step backwards from scientific to utopian socialism, from socialism which grows out of the inner contradictions of capitalism to that immature view of socialism which was to be born from the moral indignation of men regardless of their place in social production.

Here we have to meet an objection often voiced both by so-called dogmatic Marxists and by avowed revisionists or opponents of Marxist theory. Haven't we given too general a definition of the working class under neo-capitalism? Shouldn't we restrict this category to the same group which came under this definition in the classical period of the socialist labor movement, to wit the manual workers actually engaged in production? Isn't it true that this category tends to decline,

first relatively and then even in absolute figures, in the most advanced industrial countries of the West? Are not the mass of wage and salary earners to which we have constantly referred too vague and heterogeneous a grouping to be considered a social class in the Marxist sense of the word? And isn't the fading of the revolutionary potential of the working class in the Western metropolitan countries causally linked to this diminution of the manual production workers in the gainfully employed population?

The debate which inevitably arises from an answer to these questions could easily degenerate into a semantic squabble if the qualitative, structural nature of the proletariat is forgotten. Authors like Serge Mallet have correctly argued that the very nature of the productive process, under conditions of semi-automation or automation, tends to incorporate whole new layers into the working class. We do not accept Mallet's political conclusions, which have not at all been confirmed by the May revolt in France. In the forefront of that revolt we did not find only the "new" working class of highly skilled workers and technicians in semi-automated factories like those of the C. S. F. [General Electric] factory in Brest. Equally present were the classical conveyor-belt workers of Renault and Sud-Aviation and even the workers of some declining industrial branches like the shipyard workers of Nantes and Saint-Nazaire. The categories of the "old" and "new" working class created by Mallet do not correspond to the realities of the process.

But what is valid is the fact that the distinctions between the "purely" productive manual production worker, the "purely" unproductive clerical white-collar worker, and the "semi-productive" repairman become more and more effaced as a result of technological change and innovation itself, and that the productive process of today tends more and more to *integrate* manual and non-manual workers, conveyor-belt semi-skilled and data-processing semi-skilled, highly skilled repair and maintenance squads and highly skilled electronics experts. Both in the laboratories and research departments, before "actual" production starts, and in the dispatching and inventory departments, when "actual" production is over, productive labor is created if one accepts the definition of such labor given in Marx's *Capital*. For all this labor is indispensable for final consumption and is not simply waste induced by the special social structure of the economy (as for instance sales costs).

We can return to a point made before and state that just as the third industrial revolution, just as automation, tends to industrialize agriculture, distribution, the service industries and administration, just as it tends to universalize industry, so it tends to integrate a constantly growing part of the mass of wage and salary earners into an increasingly homogeneous proletariat.

This conclusion needs further elucidation. What are the indicators of the enhanced proletarian character of these "new" layers of workers which become progressively integrated into the working class?

We could cite offhand a series of striking facts: reduced wage differentials between white-collar and manual workers, which is a universal trend in the West; increased unionization and union militancy of these "new" layers, which is equally universal (in Brussels as in New York, schoolteachers, electricians, telephone and telegraph workers have been among the militant trade unionists in the last five years); rising similarities of consumption, of social status and environment of these layers; growing similarity of working conditions, i.e., growing similarity of monotonous, mechanized, uncreative, nerve-racking and stultifying work in factory, bank, bus, public administration, department stores and airplanes.

If we examine the long-term trend, there is no doubt that the basic process is one of growing homogeneity and not of growing heterogeneity of the proletariat. The difference in income, consumption and status between an unskilled laborer and a bank clerk or high-school teacher is today incommensurably smaller than it was fifty or a hundred years ago.

But there is an additional and striking feature of this process of integration of new layers into the working class under neo-capitalism: That is the equalization of the conditions of reproduction of labor-power, especially of skilled and semi-skilled labor-power. In the days of 19th century capitalism, there was elementary education for the manual worker, lower-middle-school education for the white-collar worker, high-school education for the technician; the reproduction of agricultural labor-power often didn't need any education whatsoever. Universities were strictly institutions for the capitalist class.

The very technological transformation, of which neo-capitalism is both a result and a motive force, has completely modified the levels of education. Today, outside of completely unskilled laborers for whom there are very few jobs anymore in industry, strictly speaking, and for whom tomorrow there might be no jobs available in the whole economy, conditions of reproduction of skill for industrial workers, technicians, white-collar employees, service workers and clerks are completely identical in generalized high-school education. In fact, in several countries, radicals are fighting for compulsory education up to 18 years in a single type of school, with growing success.

Uniform conditions of reproduction of labor-power entail at one and the same time a growing homogeneity of wages and salaries (value and price of labor-power), and a growing homogeneity of labor itself. In other words, the third industrial revolution is repeating in the whole society what the first industrial revolution achieved inside the factory system: a growing indifference towards the particular skill of labor, the emergence of generalized human labor, transferable from one factory to another, as a concrete social category (corresponding historically to the abstract general human labor which classical political economy found as the only source of exchange-value.)

Let it be said in passing that it would be hard to understand the dimensions and importance of the universal student revolt in the

imperialist countries without taking into account the tendencies which we have sketched here: growing integration of intellectual labor into the productive process; growing standardization, uniformity and mechanization of intellectual labor. growing transformation of university graduates from independent professionals and capitalist entrepreneurs into salary earners appearing in a specialized labor market—the market for skilled intellectual labor where supply and demand make salaries fluctuate as they did on the manual labor market before unionization but fluctuate around an axis which is the reproduction cost of skilled intellectual labor: What do these trends mean but the growing proletarianization of intellectual labor, its tendency to become part and parcel of the working class?

Of course students are not yet workers. But it would be as wrong to define them by their social *origin* as it would be to define them by their social *future*. They are a social layer in transition. Contemporary universities are a huge melting pot into which flow youth of different social classes, to become for a certain time a new homogeneous social layer. Out of this interim layer there arises on the one hand an important part of the future capitalist class and its main agents among the higher middle classes, and on the other hand a growing proportion of the future working class.

But since the second category is numerically much more important than the first, since the student milieu, precisely because of its transitional severance of basic bonds with a specific social class and because of its specific access to knowledge not yet excessively specialized, can gain a much sharper and much quicker consciousness than the individual worker of the basic ills of capitalist society and since intellectual labor is increasingly a victim of the same basic alienation which characterizes all labor under capitalism, the student revolt can become a real vanguard revolt of the working class as a whole, triggering a powerful revolutionary upsurge as it did this May in France.

Let us restate the first conclusion we have arrived at. Neo-capitalism in the long run strengthens the working class much as did laissez-faire capitalism or monopoly capitalism in its first stage. Historically, it makes the working class grow both numerically and in respect to its vital role in the economy. It thereby strengthens the latent power of the working class and underlines its potential capacity to overthrow capitalism and to reconstruct society on the basis of its own socialist ideal.

Immediately new questions arise. If this be so, will not the increased stability of the neo-capitalist system, its wide use of neo-Keynesian and macro-economic techniques, its avoidance of catastrophic economic depressions of the 1929-33 type, its capacity to shape the workers' consciousness through manipulation and the use of mass media, permanently repress these revolutionary potentialities? These questions boil down to two basic arguments which we shall deal with successively. One is the system's capacity to reduce economic fluctuations and contradictions sufficiently to assure enough reforms to guarantee a

gradual easing of social tensions between capital and labor. The other is the system's capacity of integrating and engulfing the industrial proletariat as consumers and ideologically conditioned members of the society, to quote Baran and Sweezy's *Monopoly Capital*.

On the economic plane, we can briefly sketch the trends which make long-term "stability in growth" impossible for neo-capitalism. When the growth rate increases, as it did in Western Europe for 15 years from 1950 to 1965, then conditions of near-full employment enable the workers to rapidly increase real wages which, together with the rapidly increasing organic composition of capital, tend to push down the rate of profit. The system must react, and its reactions usually take two forms, or a combination of both. One is rationalization, automation, that is, increased competition between men and machines through reconstitution of the reserve army of labor to keep down the rate of increase of real wages. The other is voluntary or compulsory wage restraints, income policies, anti-strike and anti-union legislation, that is, attempts to prevent labor from utilizing relatively favorable conditions in the labor market in order to increase its share of the new value it creates.

Increased growth rates under neo-capitalist conditions of "administered prices," "investment through prices," state-guaranteed monopoly surplus profits and a permanent arms economy, also mean inflation.

Every attempt to stop inflation strangles the boom and precipitates a recession. Investment fluctuations and monetary disorders combine to increase economic instability, further abetted by stepped-up capital concentration both nationally and internationally, so that the system tends towards a marginal increase in unemployment and a generalized recession in the whole Western world. Both trends push down the rate of growth, as does the system's inability to constantly increase the rate of growth of armaments, that is, their share of the gross national product, without endangering enlarged reproduction, consequently economic growth itself. The accumulation of huge masses of surplus capital and of increasing surplus capacity in the capitalist world industry acts in the same sense of dampening the long-term rate of growth.

What emerges in the end is less the picture of a new type of capitalism successfully reducing overproduction than the picture of a temporary delay in the appearance of overproduction—*"zurueckstauen,"* as one says in German—by means of huge debt stockpiling and monetary inflation, which lead towards the crisis and collapse of the world monetary system.

Are these basic economic trends compatible with a secular decrease in social tensions between capital and labor? There is very little reason to believe this. Granted that the phases of rapid economic growth—more rapid in the last 20 years than in any comparable past period in the history of capitalism—create the material possibilities for increasing real wages and expanding mass consumption. But the attempts to base pessimistic predictions about the revolutionary potential of the working class on this trend of rising real

wages overlooks the dual effect of the economic booms under capitalism on the working class.

On the one hand, a combination of near-full employment and a rapid rise of productive forces, especially under conditions of rapid technological change, likewise leads to an increase in the needs of the working class. That portion of the value of labor-power which Marx calls historically determined and is attributable to the given level of culture tends to increase most rapidly under such conditions, generally much more rapidly than wages. Paradoxically, it is precisely when wages rise that the gap between the value and the price of labor-power tends to grow, that the socially determined needs of the working class grow more rapidly than its purchasing power. The debate of the past decade in the United States and other imperialist countries on the growing gap between individual consumption and unsatisfied needs of social consumption, publicized by Galbraith as the contrast between private affluence and public squalor, illustrates this point.

Furthermore, rising real wages are constantly threatened by erosion. They are threatened by inflation. They are threatened by structural unemployment generated through technological change and automation. They are threatened by wage restraint and wage-freeze policies. They are threatened by recessions. The more the workers are accustomed to relatively high wages, the more they react against even marginal reductions in their accustomed level of consumption, the more all the just-named threats are potential starting points of real social explosion.

It is no accident that the working class youth is quicker to react and move to the forefront of these revolts. The older generations of workers tend to compare their miseries in the depression and during the war with the conditions of the last 15 years and can even view them as a state of bliss. Younger workers don't make these comparisons. They take for granted what the system has established as a social minimum standard of living, without being at all satisfied, either by the quantity or quality of what they get, and react sharply against any deterioration of conditions. That's why they have been in the front ranks of very militant strikes over the last two years in countries as widely different as Italy, West Germany, Britain and France. That's why they played a key role in the May revolution in France.

Even more important than the basic instability and insecurity of the proletarian condition which neo-capitalism hasn't overcome and cannot overcome is the inherent trend under neo-capitalism to push the class struggle to a higher plane. As long as the workers were hungry and their most immediate needs were unattended to, wage increases inevitably stood in the center of working class aspirations. As long as they were threatened by mass unemployment, reductions in the work-week were essentially seen as means of reducing the dangers of redundancy. But when employment is relatively high and wages are

constantly rising, attention becomes gradually transferred to more basic aspects of capitalist exploitation.

The "wage drift" notwithstanding, industry-wide wage bargaining and attempts of neo-capitalist governments to impose incomes policies tend to focus attention more on the division of national income, on the great aggregates of wages, profits and taxes, than on the division of the newly created value at the factory level. Permanent inflation, constant debates around government fiscal and economic policies, sudden disturbances of the labor market through technological innovation and relocation of whole industries, draw the workers' attention in the same direction.

Classical capitalism educated the worker to struggle for higher wages and shorter working hours in his factory. Neo-capitalism educates the worker to challenge the division of national income and orientation of investment at the superior level of the economy as a whole.

Growing dissatisfaction with labor organization in the plant stimulates this very tendency. The higher the level of skill and education of the working class—and the third industrial revolution leaves no room for an uneducated and unskilled working class!—the more do workers suffer under the hierarchical and despotic work organization at the factory. The stronger the contradiction between the potential wealth which productive forces can create today and the immeasurable waste and absurdity which capitalist production and consumption implies, the more do workers tend to question not only the way a capitalist factory is organized but also what a capitalist factory produces. Recently, these trends found striking expression not only during the May revolution in France, but also at the Fiat plant in Italy where the workers succeeded in preventing an increasing number of different types of high-priced cars from being manufactured.

The logic of all these trends puts the problem of workers' control in the center of the class struggle. Capitalists, bourgeois politicians and ideologues, and reformist Social Democrats, understand this in their own way. That is why different schemes for "reform of the enterprises," for "co-management," "co-determination" and "participation" occupy the center of the stage in practically all Western European countries. When de Gaulle launched his "participation" demagoguery, even the bonapartist dictatorship of Franco in Spain proclaimed that it was likewise in favor of working class participation in the management of plants. As for Mr. Wilson, he didn't wait a month to jump on the same bandwagon.

But parallel to these various schemes of mystification and deception is the growing awareness in working class circles that the problem of workers' control is the key "social question" under neo-capitalism. Questions of wages and shorter working hours are important; but what is much more important than problems of the distribution of income is to decide who should command the machines and who

should determine investments, who should decide what to produce and how to produce it. British and Belgian trade unions have started to agitate these questions on a large scale; they have been debated in Italy at the factory level and by many left groupings. In West Germany, Sweden, Norway and Denmark they are increasingly subjects of debates in radical working class circles. And the May revolution in France was a clarion call for these ideas emanating from 10 million workers.

There remains the last objection. Have the monopolists and their agents unlimited powers of manipulating the ideology and consciousness of the working class, and can they not succeed in preventing revolt, especially successful revolt, notwithstanding growing socio-economic contradictions?

Marxists have recognized the possibility of "manipulation" for a long time. Marx wrote about the artificially induced needs and consumption of the workers a hundred and twenty-five years ago. Marxists have many times reiterated that the "ruling ideology of each society is the ideology of the ruling class." One of the key ideas of Lenin's *What is to be Done?* is the recognition of the fact that, through their own individual effort and even through elementary class struggle on a purely economic and trade-union level, workers cannot free themselves from the influence of bourgeois and petty-bourgeois ideology.

The classical socialist labor movement tried to achieve such an ideological emancipation through a constant process of organization, education and self-action. But even during its heyday it didn't rally

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more than a minority fraction of the working class. And if one looks at the extremely modest proportions that Marxist education assumed in mass socialist parties like the German or Austrian Social Democracy before World War I (not to speak of the French CP before World War II), if one looks at the figures of subscribers to the theoretical magazines or students at study camps or workers' universities in those organizations, one can easily understand that even then they merely scratched the surface.

Of course things have become worse since the classical labor movement started to degenerate and stopped inoculating the working class vanguard in any consistent manner against the poison of bourgeois ideas. The dikes collapsed, and aided by modern mass media, bourgeois and petty-bourgeois ideology have penetrated deeply into broad layers of the working class, including those organized in mass Social-Democratic and Communist parties.

But one should guard against losing a sense of proportion in respect to this problem. After all, the working class movement arose in the 19th century under conditions where the mass of workers were far more dominated by the ideas of the ruling class than they are today. One has only to compare the hold of religion on workers in large parts of Europe, or the grip of nationalism on the French working class after the experience of the great French revolution, to understand that what looks like a new problem today is in reality as old as the working class itself.

In the last analysis the question boils down to this: Which force will turn out to be stronger in determining the workers' attitude to the society he lives in, the mystifying ideas he receives, yesterday in the church and today through TV, or the social reality he confronts and assimilates day after day through practical experience? For historical materialists, to pose the question this way is to answer it, although the struggle itself will say the last word.

Finally, one should add that, while "manipulation" of the workers' consciousness and dreams is apparently constant, so after all is the apparent stability of bourgeois society. It goes on living under "business as usual." But a social revolution is not a continuous or gradual process; it is certainly not "business as usual." It is precisely a sudden disruption of social continuity, a break with customs, habits and a traditional way of life.

The problems of the revolutionary potential of the working class cannot be answered by references to what goes on every day or even every year; revolutions do not erupt every day. The revolutionary potential of the working class can be denied only if one argues that the sparks of revolt which have been kindled in the working class mass through the experience of social injustice and social irrationality are smothered forever; if one argues that the patient and obstinate propaganda and education by revolutionary vanguard organizations cannot have a massive effect among the workers anywhere, anytime, whatever may be the turn of objective events. After all, it is enough

that the flame is there to ignite a combustible mass once every 15 or 20 years for the system ultimately to collapse. That's what happened in Russia. That's what the May revolution in France has shown can happen in Western Europe too.

These epoch-making May events allow us to draw a balance sheet of long-term trends which confirm every proposition I have tried to defend here today. After 20 years of neo-capitalism, functioning under classical conditions, with a "planning board" which is cited as a model for all imperialist countries, with a state television system which has perfected a system of mass manipulation to uphold the ruling class and party, with a foreign policy accepted by a large majority of the masses, in May 1968 there were in France twice as many strikers as ever before in the history of the working class of that country; they used much more radical forms of struggle than in 1936, in 1944-46 or in 1955; they not only raised the slogan of workers' control, workers' management and workers' power more sharply than ever before, but started to put it in practice in a dozen big factories and several large towns. In the face of this experience it is hard to question the revolutionary potential of the working class under neo-capitalism any more. In the face of this experience it is hard to question the prediction that France, which is the politically classical country of bourgeois society, in the same way as Britain and the United States are its economically classical countries, is showing the whole Western world and not least the United States a preview of its own future. *De te fabula narratur!*

We have no time here to examine the interconnection between the workers' struggle for socialism in the Western metropolises and the liberation struggle of the colonial and semi-colonial countries as well as the struggle for socialist democracy in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. These interconnections are manifold and obvious. There are also direct causal links between the upsurge of an independent revolutionary leadership in the Cuban and Latin American revolution, the heroic struggle of the Vietnamese people against U.S. imperialist aggression, and the emergence of a new youth vanguard in the West, which, at least in Western Europe, through the transmission belt of working class youth, has started to influence directly the development of the class struggle.

The main striking feature here has a more general and abstract character: the reemergence of active internationalism in the vanguard of the working class. The international concentration and centralization of capital, especially through the creation of the "multi-national corporation," gave capital an initial advantage over a working class movement hopelessly divided between national and sectional unions and parties. But now, in France, at one blow, the advanced workers have cleaned the field of the rot accumulated over decades of confusion and defeat. They have cut through the underbrush of bourgeois nationalism and bourgeois Europeanism and have come out into the wide open space of international brotherhood.

The fraternal unity in strikes and demonstrations of Jewish and Arab, Portuguese and Spanish, Greek and Turkish, French and foreign workers, in a country which has probably been more plagued by xenophobia over the last 20 years than any other in Europe, triumphantly culminated in 60,000 demonstrators shouting before the Gare de Lyon: "We are all German Jews." Already a first echo has come from Jerusalem itself where Jewish students demonstrated with the slogan: "We are all Palestinian Arabs!" Never have we seen anything like this, on such a scale, and these initial manifestations warrant the greatest confidence in the world which will emerge when the working class, rejuvenated after two decades of slumber, will move to take power.

Most of you know that, both through political conviction and as a result of objective analysis of present world reality, I firmly believe that we are living in the age of permanent revolution. This revolution is inevitable because there is such a tremendous gap between what man could make of our world, with the power which science and technology have placed in his hands, and what he is making of it within the framework of a decaying, irrational social system. This revolution is imperative in order to close that gap and make this world a place in which all human beings, without distinction as to race, color or nationality, will receive the same care as the rulers today devote to space rockets and nuclear submarines.

What the socialist revolution is all about, in the last analysis, is faith in the unconquerable spirit of revolt against injustice and oppression and confidence in the ability of mankind to build a future for the human race. Coming from a continent which went through the nightmares of Hitler and Stalin, and emerged hardly a generation later holding high the banner of social revolution, of emancipation of labor, of workers' democracy, of proletarian internationalism, and witnessing in France more youth rallying around that banner than at any time since socialist ideas were born, I believe that faith is fully justified.

George Novack

THE PROBLEM OF TRANSITIONAL FORMATIONS

The problem of transitional formations has immense methodological significance in both the natural and social sciences. It has special theoretical and political importance for contemporary Marxists, because the 20th century is preeminently an age of transition from one socioeconomic formation to another.

Each epoch in the progress of humanity has its dominant form of economy, politics and culture. In the 18th and 19th centuries this was the capitalist system in its stages of expansion. The distinctive general form of the 20th century is its *transitional* character. This is a period of rapid and convulsive motion from the dominion of world capitalism as the ultimate form of class society to the establishment of post-capitalist states oriented toward socialism, which will eradicate all vestiges of class differentiations.

"The Old surviving in the New confronts us in life at every step in nature as well as in society," Lenin observed in *State and Revolution*. He wrote this during the first world war and the Russian Revolution—the two cataclysmic events that ushered in the new epoch of history. Although that epoch is already 50 years old, it is far from maturity, and its progeny suffer from many congenital maladies of infancy.

The fundamentally transitional character of this period and the prevalence of conspicuously contradictory traits necessitate research into the essential nature of this phenomenon. The presence of transitional formations, types, and periods has been empirically noted, and their concrete characteristics analyzed, in the writings of many Marxists, and not by them alone. But the topic has seldom been treated along systematic lines. This theoretical deficiency is regrettable because a

host of perplexing sociological and political problems could be illuminated through a correct understanding of the peculiarities of this widespread aspect of things.

The exceptional duality of transitional states

In the unceasing cosmic process of becoming and being, all things pass from one state to another. This means that transitional states and forms are everywhere to be found in the physical world, in society, in intellectual development.

The antithesis to a transitional formation is a fixed and stable one with clear-cut characteristics which compose a definitive pattern. The distinction between the two is relative, since even the most enduring entity is subject to change and transformation into something else over a long-enough stretch of time.

The dynamic polarity of physical forms is exemplified by a liquid. This is a more or less stable state of matter on earth, intermediate between a solid and a gas, being partly like one and partly like the other, yet essentially different from both. A liquid has more cohesion than a gas and more mobility than a solid. It resembles a solid by having a definite volume but differs from it and resembles a gas by the absence of any definite shape.

The qualitative transformations of H_2O and other chemical compounds result from changes in molecular constitution. A solid consists of rigidly locked molecules. When these are disaggregated by changes of temperature and pressure, they pass over into a more fluid condition in which the molecules maintain a certain proximity to one another while acquiring more mobility than in a solid. Once the molecules move farther away from one another and are fully loosened from their mutual bonds, they become gaseous. Gaseousness is the state of matter most unlike the solid in respect to the interlock of its molecular constituents.

Thus a liquid is *negatively* defined by its relations to the solid state on one of its boundaries and the gaseous state on the other. It is *positively* determined by its special intermixture of cohesiveness and mobility. If the capacity of a liquid to turn into its opposite at either end exhibits its intermediate character, its combination of contrary properties brings out the intrinsic duality of its being.

But when a liquid boils, these polarities of definite volume and variable shape are sharpened to the extreme of contradiction. At one and the same time, within the system as a whole, there is both definite and indefinite volume, as well as indefinite shape. This difference is distributed over parts of the system, over different molecules. Thus, water and steam coexist; some molecules are in gaseous state, others in liquid state. But for the system as a whole, we can say neither that it is exclusively gas nor exclusively liquid; it is in fact both gas and

liquid: it is boiling. This is the transitional stage between liquid and gas.

All things have a dual nature, as an example taken from geography rather than chemistry will illustrate. A beach is defined both by water and by land. Each of these opposing physical entities are essential components of its makeup. Take away one or the other and the beach no longer exists.

But transitional formations are distinguished from ordinary things by the *heightened* character of their dual constitution. They belong to a special kind of processes, events and forms in nature, society, and individual experience which have exceptionally pronounced, almost outrageously, contradictory traits. They carry the coexistence of opposites in a single whole to the most extreme and anomalous lengths.

These phenomena are so self-contradictory that they can embody the passage from one stage or form of existence to another. Since the major features of transitional formations belong to consecutive but qualitatively different stages of development, they must represent a combination of the old and the new.

In the life process, the first products of development are necessarily inadequately realized on their own terms. What is new makes its first appearance in and through underdeveloped forms and asserts its emerging existence within the shell of the old. The new becoming is struggling to go beyond its previous mode of existence. It is passing over from one stage to the next but is not yet mature, powerful or predominant enough to destroy and throw off the afterbirth of its natal state and stand fully and firmly on its own feet. Like a foetus, it is still dependent on the conditions of its birth or, like an infant, dependent on its parents.

In a full and normal development, transitional formations go through three phases. 1) A prenatal or embryonic stage when the functions, structures and features of the nascent entity are growing and stirring within the framework of the already established form. 2) The qualitative breakthrough of its birth period, when the aggregate of the novel powers and features succeeds in shattering the old form and stepping forth on its own account. At this point the fresh creation continues to retain many residues belonging to its preceding state. 3) The period of maturation when the vestigial characteristics unsuited to its proper mode of existence are largely sloughed off and the new entity is unmistakably, firmly, strongly developing on its distinctive foundations.

It takes time for the unique features and functions of something novel to manifest their potential, engender the most appropriate type of expression, and become stabilized in normal or perfected shape. At the beginning of their career they are trammled, often even disfigured, by the heritage of the past.

These borderline phenomena are so significant—and puzzling—because they form the bridge between successive stages of evolution. Their hybrid nature, embodying characteristics belonging to antitheti-

cal phases of growth, casts light upon both the old and the new, the past and the future. Through them it is possible to see how and where the carapace of the old is being broken through by antagonistic forces striving to establish the groundwork, the basic conditions, for higher forms of existence.

Each turning point in the evolution of life has produced species with contradictory features belonging to different sequential forms. These betoken their status as links between two separate and successive species.

Problems of classification

The most momentous turning point in organic evolution was the changeover from the ape to man. Here scientists have found once living fossils with opposite characteristics. Structurally the South African *Australopithecus* is not altogether an ape nor altogether a man; it is something in between. He habitually stood and walked erect as ably as man and his brain volume comes close to that of man. The fact that these beings used tools, and thereby engaged in labor activity to get their means of existence, proves that they had crossed the boundary separating the ape from man and had embarked on a new mode of existence, despite the heavy vestiges of the primate past they bore with them.

Precisely because of their highly self-contradictory and unfinished traits, transitional forms present exceedingly vexing problems of precise definition and classification to scientists and scholars. They are the most enigmatic of phenomena. It is often difficult, and sometimes impossible, to tell on which side of a frontier they definitely belong.

The task is to discriminate the genuinely new from what is rooted in the preceding conditions of existence and then to assay the relative weights of the conflicting traits and tendencies of development incorporated in the specimen. Taxonomists among biologists, botanists and physical anthropologists have engaged in prolonged, bitter and sometimes inconclusive controversies over whether a given specimen properly belongs to one category or another.

What settles the locus of classification? The mere possession of one or another trait of a higher or lower type is not considered conclusive evidence. The question is decided one way or the other by the totality of characteristics in relation to what went before and what came out of it.

For example, the fossil remains of *Archaeopteryx* show many characteristics now found only in reptiles or in bird embryos: reptilian tail, jaws with teeth, and clawed wings. Yet it is a true bird. This superior classification is warranted by the presence of feathers and the structure of the legs and wings which fitted it for flight. *Archaeopteryx* had broken through the confines of the reptile state to become the first incarnation of a higher form of living creature.

The difficulties of classification arising from the contradictory charac-

teristics of transitional phenomena are well illustrated by the current controversy among authorities on early man over the new fossil finds at Olduvai Gorge in Tanganyika. (See *Current Anthropology*, Oct. 1965.) This famous site has yielded evidences of tool-using and tool-making hominoids at levels which are dated as far back as over two million years ago—the oldest yet discovered.

The problem posed by the latest finds concerns a group of fossil remains named *Homo habilis*. The *International Code of Zoological Nomenclature* (1961) insisted on dividing the *Hominidae* into two genera: *Australopithecus* and *Homo*. It did not permit any intergeneric or ambigeric groups.

However, *Homo habilis* did not fit into either one of these counterposed categories. It diverged from *Australopithecus* in its more humanized morphological pattern (biological traits), but even more significantly because it had taken the decisive step of making stone tools according to a regular and evolving pattern. While *Australopithecus* used and modified tools and may even have improvised them for immediate purposes, he did not fabricate implements according to a set pattern. On the other hand, the biological and cultural traits of *Homo habilis* fell short of the status of *Homo*.

The dilemma facing the classifiers was formulated as follows by Phillip V. Tobias, professor of anatomy at the University of Witwatersrand: ". . . the *habilis* group was in so many respects intermediate between *Australopithecus* and *Homo*. Were we to regard it as the most advanced species of *Australopithecus* or the most primitive species of *Homo*?" Neither of these solutions was satisfactory. "We had come face to face with a fundamental weakness in classical taxonomic procedure: Our systems of classification make inadequate allowance for intermediate or transitional forms."

How was the issue resolved? Tobias and L. B. J. Leakey concluded that, on the basis of the evidence regarding these hominid remains, it was necessary to recognize a new species of early man which they designated as *Homo habilis*. This species of hominid was younger and more advanced than *Australopithecus* yet older and less matured than *Homo*.

The great significance of *Homo habilis* as a bridge between *Australopithecus* and *Homo* is that it closes the last remaining gap in the sequence of Pleistocene hominid phylogeny. The lineage of human evolution now comprises three distinct stages: partially humanized (*Australopithecus*); markedly humanized (*Homo habilis*); and fully humanized (*Homo*).

Professor Tobias concludes: "There will always be arguments about the names to be given to transitional forms (like *Homo habilis*); but the recognition of their crucial intermediate status is of more importance than the name given to the taxon. It seems that our nomenclatural procedure is not equal to the naming of 'missing links' when the gaps have narrowed to such fine gradations as now exist in the hominid sequence of the Pleistocene."

As Tobias remarks in answer to objections from his critics, "Inter-

mediate forms ('missing links') always cause taxonomic headaches, although they make good phylogenetic sense." Once it had been established that *Homo habilis* did not properly belong to either group, it had to be accorded a separate status. What that should be was determined by its specific place in the evolutionary ascent of man.

It was not an *Australopithecus* because it had attained the capacity to make tools with the aid of other tools. Yet it had not progressed sufficiently along the road of humanization to justify inclusion with *Homo*. There was no alternative except to recognize it as a new and distinct species of the genus *Homo*.

Tobias suggests that the new group of hominids might have been designated *Australopithecus-Homo habilis*. The compromise of making it a subcategory would have brought out its emergent position but not its distinctive nature or subsequent destiny. It evidently has enough important attributes of its own to deserve independent status.

Like all transitional formations, the qualitative difference of *Homo habilis* consisted in its peculiar combination of features, one set resembling its predecessor, the other anticipating its successor. The relative weight of these contradictory features changed in the course of its development. It moved away from and beyond the antecedent genus as it more closely approached the earliest members of the next higher stage.

Hegel supplied a key to comprehending transitional formations by the concepts of determinate being and limit analyzed in the first section of *The Logic*. Anything is what it is by virtue of the negations which set its qualitative limits. Both what it comes out of and what it passes into are essential elements of its being. This being is a perpetual process of becoming, of continual determination and redetermination through the interaction of the conflicting forces within itself. These drive it forward to becoming something other than it has been or is.

Thus *Homo habilis* is to be designated as a determinate being, that is, a qualitatively distinct grouping bounded on one side by *Australopithecus* and on the other side by *Homo*. This transitional species is delimited through its organic connections with both the anterior and posterior stages of human evolution. Its special standing depends on its qualitative differences from these opposing determinants. To the extent that these differences are effaced it passes over into and merges with one or the other.

The transition from food gathering to food production

The major transitions within the development of society manifest contradictory features in as striking a manner as the transition from ape to man. Further modifications in man's physical equipment recede in importance with the appearance of *Homo sapiens*. From that point on, the laws of social and historical development, which originate in labor activity and are based on the growth of the forces of production, have taken full command of the evolution of our species.

It would be possible to go through the whole course of social history, so far as it is known, and pick out for study a diversity of transitional forms in which the new is mingled with the old and struggling to replace it with more or less success. We can give only a few salient examples to clarify in broad terms the inwardly divided nature of transitional processes.

Let us start with the substructure of the first chapter of human existence, the Stone Age, which lasted for hundreds of thousands of years. Throughout that time no fundamental changes occurred in men's economic activities. They acquired the means of subsistence exclusively through different means of food gathering: hunting, fishing (which is hunting in water), and foraging for roots, nuts, fruits, insects and small game.

This primeval state of savagery ends, and the next higher grade of social existence, barbarism, begins, with the replacement of food gathering by food production. This new stage in the creation of material wealth was brought about from ten to twelve thousand years ago by the domestication of animals and the introduction of cereal crops.

Since the close of the second world war, archaeologists, teamed with other scientific specialists, have been extending their investigations in both the Old World and the New to find out how, why and, more precisely, when and where, this epoch-making changeover took place. They have unearthed many more traces of the origins of agriculture and stock raising than were known before, so that a distinct outline of the steps in the great food-producing revolution is beginning to take shape.

Agriculture may have originated independently in several places on our planet. It emerged almost simultaneously at opposite ends of the earth, in the Middle East and in Mexico, roughly around 7,000 B. C. More is known about the origin and spread of farming from the archaeological sites in the Middle East than as yet in Middle America.

In the former it appears that animal domestication preceded plant cultivation. At the Zarvi Chemi Shanidan, not far north of Jarmo in the hills of Northern Iraq, archaeologists from Columbia University found indications that, in shifting from caveliving to open-air encampments around 9,000 B. C., the inhabitants, who had formerly hunted many wild goats and occasionally wild sheep, had tamed sheep.

The type of tools at similar open sites in northern Palestine and in Iraq and Iran showed that the people who lived in these camps, while hunting and collecting most of their food, possessed sickles and mortars. Taken together with the many bones of animals capable of domestication, this suggested that they may have already become regular food producers.

The oldest site yet excavated of a community on the boundary line between the Old and New Stone Age is at Jericho in Palestine. Nine thousand years ago the inhabitants of this oasis in the desert grew cereals and bred sheep and goats, in addition to hunting and collecting. However, they did not yet make pottery or use ground stone axes.

It is therefore difficult to ascertain whether the villagers of Jericho I,

the most ancient settlement, simply supplemented their diet through food production, or whether they had gone so far as to make food production the foundation of their economy. In that case they would have passed beyond the borders of savagery and entered barbarism.

The situation is clearer, though not yet unmistakable, in the case of the next oldest village, Jarmo in Kurdistan, a settlement of about 30 houses which was rebuilt 15 times after its founding. Its deepest layers date back to about 6,750 B. C. The inhabitants had domesticated goats and sheep. They not only raised grains as cultivated plants, which implies a considerable previous history, but they possessed most of the equipment used by later neolithic farmers to make grain into bread. They had flint sickle blades, mortars or querns to crack the grain, ovens to parch it, and stone bowls out of which to eat their porridge. In the upper levels pottery had begun to replace some of the stone vessels.

All this implies that Jarmo's residents had left food gathering behind and subsisted on what they themselves produced. They had become full-fledged food producers, genuine villagers and farmers.

An interesting sidelight on the botanical aspect of this process of transformation has been provided by the data accumulated by the archaeological botanist Hans Helbaek of the Danish National Museum. The successive changes in the details of carbonized grain and of the imprints of plant parts can tell a sharp-eyed botanist just as much as successive changes in tools and artifacts can tell an archaeologist. Domesticated plants and animals are living artifacts, products of man's modifications and manipulations.

The Danish botanist concluded that the Jarmo wheat and barley were early cultivated varieties which had been grown for a number of generations. Their growers were several steps removed from the first farmers who would have taken the seeds from plants in their wild state. Who, then, were these pioneers? Diggers have recently come across caches of wild cereal grain in villages of hunters and seed collectors. They may possibly have started to reap wild grain before purposely planting the first wheat and barley.

Thus a hunters' village of about 200 small stone houses excavated at Mureybat in northern Syria contained bones of wild animals at all 17 levels. Seeds of wild barley and wheat showed up at the fifth level from the bottom, along with sickle blades, mortars, flat stone slabs, and small raised fire pits filled with big pebbles and ashes. Mauritz Van Loon of the Oriental Institute of Chicago believes the pebbles were heated and used to crack the wild seeds.

It took about 2,500 years to make the changeover from hunting to farming and arrive at the earliest farming villages. According to present indications, the sequence of steps in this food-producing revolution began with animal domestication about 10,000 B. C., proceeded through hamlets of seed collectors, and culminated with the emergence of farming communities by 7,500 B. C.

This record shows that, before they could shake off dependence upon food gathering, the first domesticators of plants and animals had to

pass through intermediate steps in which the primitive mode of procuring the means of subsistence was combined with either food or stock raising, or even both. In the first phase, food production remained subordinate and supplementary to hunting and foraging pursuits until the new techniques and forces of production gained predominance. Just before this crucial turning point, a period must have come when the total activities and output of communal labor were about equally divided between the two, and it would have been difficult to tell whether the group belonged to one category or the other.

This internal contradiction would be resolved by the further development of the more dynamic new productive forces. Thus, when food and stock raising were introduced into the less advanced Old Stone Age culture of Europe some thousands of years later, the Starcevo folk who lived in the Balkan peninsula learned to practice a system of rotating crops and pasture that made hunting and fishing less and less vital to their economy.

The insuperable ambiguities of the boundary separating food gatherers from food producers have been underscored in a recent account of the rise of Mesopotamian civilization. "We cannot with the material at our disposal pinpoint the crucial passage from a food-gathering to a food-producing economy. It can be argued that hoes could be used for uprooting as well as for tilling, sickles for reaping naturally growing or cultivated wheat, querns and mortars for grinding and pounding wild seeds or even mineral pigments; and it is not always easy to decide whether bones of sheep or cattle belonged to wild or to domesticated animals. All considered, our best criterion is perhaps the presence on a site of permanent habitations, for agriculture ties man to the land. But here again, it is sometimes difficult to draw a firm line between the stone huts of hunters, for whom agriculture was an occasional activity, and the farms of fully settled peasants." (*Ancient Iraq*, Georges Roux, 1964. p. 54.)

Village, town and city

Agriculture is the basis for the permanent human settlements which have supplied the main motive forces for progress since savagery. The village, town and city are the three kinds of communities that line the road from barbarism to civilization. The evolution of the village to the city highlights the transitional and contradictory character of the town, the second link in the sequence of human habitations.

Agriculture consolidated and proliferated, if it did not actually create, the village. This type of enduring settlement is the cell, the basic unit, of all social structures rooted in agriculture. These comprise forms of society extending all the way from the birth of barbarism up to industrial capitalism.

The problem of transitional formations is most sharply posed after the emergence of the farming community by the development of the village into the city at the beginnings of civilization. Based on farming

or mixed farming with family handicrafts, the village is common to both barbarism and civilization. It is small in numbers, self-subsistent, with a rudimentary division of social labor.

The town is an enlarged village growing out of the expansion of the forces of production. It is an agglomeration of permanent residents situated between the village and the city and transitional between them. It is difficult to draw a clear-cut line between a village and a town, but there is a definite point at which the town grows over into a city.

The city is not only quantitatively but also qualitatively different from either a village or a town because it has a different economic foundation. It is the outgrowth of a far more advanced division of labor between the rural and urban inhabitants. The kings, priests, officials, soldiers, artisans and merchants in the cities do not produce their own food. They subsist on the surplus food coming from the output of the direct producers, farmers or fishermen, who may in some cases dwell within the city precincts but for the most part reside in village communities outside its walls or borders.

The city is the organized expression, the visible embodiment, of a highly stratified society based on the division between cultivators of the soil who provide the sustenance and those layers of consumers who produce other goods and the administrators of various kinds who serve higher social functions. The city comes to dominate the country and is the force that civilizes the barbarians.

The town is an overgrown village at one end of its growth and an embryonic city at the other. It displays characteristics common to both types of settlement without being either. Unlike the village, it is not completely rural but is larger and more complex. At the same time it is smaller, less diversified, less developed, less centralized and less powerful than the city.

Neither rural nor urban, the town has an indeterminate character and an imprecise and fluctuating connotation. It is not easy to single out the ensemble of positive features which distinguish the town from the village it has come out of or from the city status it may be heading toward. This ambiguity is built into its constitution as an intermediate form of permanent settlement.

Thus the town exemplifies the congenital fluidity of a transitional form. Its structure is amorphous; its boundaries are blurred. This indefiniteness, which is inherent in its very nature, is reflected in the concept "town," which is likewise clouded with an insurmountable fuzziness.

The transition from Roman slavery to feudalism

The transition from food gathering to food production, from the village to the city, and from communal to private property are major instances of fundamental changes in the life of mankind on the way to class society. As class society climbed from slavery to capitalism, many highly anomalous formations arose from the supersession of one basic mode of production by another. One case that has provoked consider-

able controversy both among academic historians and Marxist scholars concerns the nature of the social organization in the West that issued from the downfall of the Roman Empire.

West European society from the fourth to the ninth centuries A. D. was situated between the ruin of the Roman slave state and the birth of feudalism. This intermediate formation resulted from the blending of elements derived from decadent Roman civilization and disintegrating Germanic barbarism—two societies at very different levels of development—into a variegated configuration that did not conform either to the antecedent slave mode of production or the feudal form which came out of it.

The historical movement from slaveholding antiquity to European feudalism followed a more complex and circuitous path than the changeover from feudalism to capitalism. The feudal organization did not emerge directly and immediately from its predecessor in the sequence of class societies.

The Roman Empire contained no forward moving social force that was capable of replacing the obsolescent exploitative order with a more productive economy. The slave population revolted on various occasions but did not have access to the economic and social prerequisites for establishing a new order. The slave system foundered in a blind alley which provided no way out through a progressive social and political revolution.

From the fourth century on, Roman civilization slid downhill. The imperial government went bankrupt; the cities decayed; commerce shrank to petty proportions; the estate owners and agrarian masses vegetated in rural isolation. The general disorder and decline in the productive forces ushered in the Dark Ages.

These conditions of decomposition endured for almost five centuries. During this time, however, a slow revitalization of economic life began to stir beneath the surface stagnation. Agriculture was the center of the regenerative processes. To form the groundwork for a superior form of social production, two classes had to be reconstituted. One was the laboring force of the cultivators of the soil; the other was the class of landed proprietors.

The original nucleus of the subject peasantry came from the small farmers, or *coloni*, though not as they were under Roman rule. The *coloni* passed from their marginal status as semiserfs under Roman rule to the status of free farmers organized in dispersed communities until, fleeing from hunger, distress and danger, they fell in considerable numbers under the protection and therewith the domination of the landed gentry.

Their masters were also of a new breed. They were made up of the newly created nobility, military caste and church hierarchy which grew into a distinct and powerful agrarian aristocracy from 500 to 1,000 A. D.

The main seat of Western feudalism was not in Italy but in France and Germany. The transformation of the Germanic conquerors of Rome from barbarism to feudalism was more determinative of the future than

their concomitant conversion to Christianity because of the indispensable contributions they made to the postimperial social organization.

The dissolution of tribal and clan ties led to pronounced social differentiations among the Franks and other peoples. From more or less equalized members of tribal groupings, the mass of the agricultural population changed first into free peasants and thereafter into serfs as they became impoverished and passed into hereditary submission to their liege lord. Serfdom seems to have become widely established beginning with the ninth century.

Although feudalism depended upon large landholdings as a property form, it was not rooted in large-scale production. Cultivation of the soil was carried on by petty producers. However extensive the landlord's manor or domain, it was tilled by a cluster of serf or peasant households. The economic transition from slavery to feudalism therefore consisted in the replacement of the slave *latifundia* of the Roman proprietors and the individual households of the Germanic communities by a more productive type of small farming.

The invaders provided important ingredients for raising the technical and social level of the nascent feudal regime. They introduced such new crops as rye, oats, spelt and hops, along with soap and butter. The heavy-wheeled plow permitted the development of the three-field system of tillage on which the medieval manor depended. Thanks to the stirrup, the horse collar, the tandem harness and the iron shoe, horses could be used in place of oxen for pulling the plow; they had four times the tractive power of earlier draft animals.

Another key innovation was the water wheel, which was known to antiquity but utilized only in the simplest form. The medieval water mills were large and costly installations which belonged to the feudal lords, but to which their dependents could bring their grain for grinding. The creation of a more efficient agricultural technology during the Dark Ages paved the way for increasing agricultural productivity in Northern Europe from the ninth century on. As Professor Lynn White points out in *Technology and Invention in the Middle Ages*: "In technology, at least, the Dark Ages mark a steady and uninterrupted advance over the Roman Empire."

Certain features carried over from tribal collectivism were equally consequential in preparing the advent of the new order. When the lands conquered by the Germans were allotted to individual households and the hierarchy of subordinates and superiors arose, woods and pastures were reserved for common use, and many other customs of collective activity were retained. These vestiges of common possession incorporated into the agrarian economy strengthened communal solidarity, made the serfs and villeins less dependent upon their masters, and gave the mass of rural toilers some measure of control over their means of livelihood, which mitigated their servitude and enhanced their margin of freedom.

The society that stretched from the Roman to the Carolingian empires was a conglomerate of elements encompassing slavery, barbarism, peasant farming and incipient feudal relations. The feudal struc-

ture eventually crystallized out of this variegated plasma as both the Roman dependents and the Germanic settlers forfeited their positions as free peasants and entered serfdom.

The contradictory course of development which marked the prolonged period of transition from Roman slavery to the feudal age invalidates any rigid scheme of historical evolution predicated on an undeviating line of succession from one form of production to the next. The native population of the Romano-Germanic world sank to a lower level of production and culture before it went on to assemble the conditions for a higher mode of existence. This discontinuity in economic growth illustrates the dialectical nature of the concrete processes of social evolution. Far from following prescribed paths in a mechanical manner, the peoples of the past have often fallen backward before taking the next step in historical progress.

Manufacture: the stepping stone from the craft guild to machine industry

Capitalism did directly supplant feudalism in Western Europe and, in the course of doing so, brought forth an assortment of transitional economic phenomena. Among these was manufacture which, as the bridge between medieval and modern industry, was one of the pivotal developments in the emergence of bourgeois society.

In the urban craft guilds the master handicraftsman possessed all the means of production, from the raw materials to the shop which usually housed both his family and work force of apprentices and journeymen. He sold the finished product in a local and regulated market and pocketed the proceeds. This simple small-scale commodity production was extremely restricted, dispersed, routinized, static and monopolistic.

The manufacturing system bypassed, broke up and replaced the guild associations, going beyond this kind of industry in important respects. Unlike the guild master, who was a petty personal producer, the manufacturer brought together under one roof many propertyless workers, purchased their labor-power for wages and subjected them to the control of capital. Labor thus became social instead of individual. Every element of the entrepreneur's operations was on a larger scale: He needed more money, greater amounts of raw materials, extensive workshops, better tools, a detailed subdivision of labor, intense supervision, more careful calculation and longer-range planning.

This quantitative growth generated many qualitative improvements in industry. Capitalist manufacture was far more productive, innovative and progressive than the guild system. Yet its artisans, craftsmen and foremen used essentially the same technical methods as their medieval predecessors. They had little or no mechanical power at their disposal and relied exclusively on hand labor using simple tools. In this rudimentary form of a capitalist economy, advanced relations of production were yoked to an ancient technology dating back to the dawn of civilization.

The inner contradiction of this transitional type of capitalist activity

was broken through and overcome with the introduction of steam-driven machinery into industry and transportation. Mechanical industry fashioned the modern proletariat; it enabled the capitalists to exploit wage labor to maximum advantage by reducing the value of commodities and thereby increasing the surplus value which the workers produced and the capitalists appropriated. On this technical basis the capitalist mode of production stood squarely on its own feet for the first time and went forward to conquer the globe. But it could not have embarked on that career unless manufacture had left the guild system behind and prepared the advent of that technology best adapted to the needs of capital accumulation.

Transitional regimes and societies in the 20th century

Let us skip from the beginnings of capitalism to its concluding stage and focus upon the principal problems presented by the transformation of society in the 20th century, which is witnessing both the death agony of capitalism and the birth pangs of socialism.

The contemporary revolutionary process aims at undermining and abolishing the power and property of the capitalist owners and whatever archaic privileged classes cling like parasites to their domination. The political mechanism of this social revolution consists in the transfer of state power from these possessing classes to the primary producers of wealth, the proletariat and its allies.

Twentieth-century revolutionists must operate in three main types of transitional situations. Let us consider these in the order of progression toward the ultimate objectives of the socialist revolution.

The first extends over the period of preparation for the overturn of the old regime. The working masses are moving from a nonrevolutionary condition, where the social and political foundations of the established order are stable and strong, into a prerevolutionary period or, beyond that, toward a direct showdown with the possessors of power. At this stage, although the ruling class is losing its grip, the forces destined to dislodge and replace it are not yet ready or able to challenge its supremacy.

The advance from a less to a more revolutionary situation calls for a special strategy employing a set of demands which, on the one hand, are adapted to the conditions and consciousness of the masses and, on the other, will lead them forward to the goal of the conquest of power. The recognition of the special characteristics of this interim period in the development of the class struggle—which is neither wholly nonrevolutionary nor fully revolutionary but heading in that direction—is the objective basis for the transitional demands incorporated in the program of the Fourth International adopted at its foundation in 1938.

The avowed purpose of that program is to promote and facilitate the shift of the proletariat from concern with its immediate needs to a grasp of the necessity for directing its struggle ever more consciously and energetically against the bases of the bourgeois regime. In this way a prerevolutionary state can be transformed into a revolutionary

one, as the masses pass over from defensive positions to offensive action. Such a leap was taken, for example, during the French general strike of May-June 1968.

The revolutionary process of our time has a permanent character. And so, once engaged in direct revolutionary action on a large scale, the masses enter upon a second and higher kind of transitional period. The ascending class that is destined to exercise sovereignty in place of the old rulers cannot concentrate all power in its hands overnight. Even less can it effect a thorough reconstruction of social relations in its own country in a few decades. Thus, after the preceding alignment of class forces has been radically upset, there usually ensues a more or less protracted interval when the capitalist or colonialist regime has been shattered but a stable new governmental power, squarely resting on the revolutionary class forces, has yet to be securely established.

During this transitional period, when the supreme power is being transferred from the old rulers to the working masses, forms of government may arise which are extremely contradictory, inwardly divided, unstable and short-lived. The first example of such an interregnum had a classical character. It was the Provisional Government which tried vainly to rule Russia from the February to the October revolutions in 1917.

The partisans of this crippled regime sought to impose upon a nation in the flood tide of revolution a political setup which would be intermediate between Czarism and Bolshevism, between the obsolete domination of the monarchy and the landlords and the rule of the workers and peasants, between feudalized capitalism and socialism. It was a hopeless, ill-fated experiment because, under the given circumstances of the world war and the severity of the class conflicts, no such hybrid government could solve the urgent problems of peace, bread and land. The real choice lay between a counterrevolutionary military dictatorship or the dictatorship of the workers supported by the peasantry.

The Provisional Government and the soviets constituted a dual power in which the contending class camps offset each other. In order to break the deadlock, one or the other of these opponents had to be smashed and eliminated. In the ensuing test of strength, the soviets emerged victorious, thanks to the kind of leadership provided by the Bolsheviks.

Since 1917 analogous situations of dual power have appeared in numerous revolutions with varying results. Cuba and Algeria have provided the most recent and dramatic instances in the colonial countries. In Cuba, by virtue of the exceptional qualifications of Castro and the July 26th leaders, the transitional period of dual power from 1959 to 1961 eventuated in the ousting of the procapitalist conciliators, the consolidation of the revolutionary regime, and the expropriation of the native and foreign property owners.

In Algeria, on the other hand, the revolutionary process has yet to culminate in so happy a conclusion. After the winning of national independence, the drive toward socialism was interrupted by the coup d'etat against Ben Bella and has been sliding backward under Bou-

medienne. Algeria is the prime example of an uncompleted revolution halted midway in its progress from colonialism and capitalism to a workers state.

This brings us to the third and highest category of the transitional periods in our epoch. Once the question of class power has been decisively settled with the victory of the workers and peasants, and the socioeconomic bases of the new order have been laid down by the dispossession of the capitalists and landlords, a new social formation begins to take shape. The workers state necessarily has a transitional character. While it has cut loose from the exploiters of labor and taken the road to socialism, it has still to develop the productive forces and create the human relations proper to the new system.

The historical task of the proletarian power is to bring the preconditions for socialism into existence on the basis of the new relations of production. This would be an arduous and prolonged job under the best conditions. Unfortunately, the world-historical setting during the first 50 years of the present transitional period from capitalism toward socialism has turned out to be far more unfavorable than the founders of Marxism anticipated, because the first victorious anticapitalist revolutions took place in countries least prepared for the new methods of production and politics.

All the peoples from Russia to Cuba that drove out the possessing classes and established a revolutionary state power of a socialist type had not previously experienced any renovation of their social and political structures along bourgeois-democratic lines. They were therefore obliged to undertake such presocialist tasks as the abolition of feudalism, agrarian reform, national independence and unification, and the democratization of their political life along with the overthrow of imperialist domination and capitalist relations. They were overloaded with the colossal combination of presocialist and socialist tasks at one and the same time. Their construction of a new social order has been rendered still more complicated and difficult by the encircling pressures and interference of imperialism and by their inherited economic and cultural backwardness.

As a result, these transitional regimes have been subjected to varying degrees of degeneration or deformation. They exhibit bizarre blends of progressive and regressive features, the first belonging to the new society in the making, the second stemming from past conditions and imperialist pressures.

For example, the Soviet Union abounds in contradictions on all levels of its life. In this workers state the workers have no political power, and freedom of expression is severely restricted. In transportation huge jet passenger planes speed over the trackless wilderness and the dirt roads where peasant carts creak along in well-worn ruts as they have for centuries. A country in the front rank of technology, science and industry is weak in the very social sciences—political economy, sociology, history and philosophy—where its Marxist heritage should make it the strongest. The Soviet public had no access to any reliable history of its revolutionary origins on the 50th anniver-

sary of October. Such anomalies are the hallmarks of the Soviet social structure shaped and misshaped during the first phase of the epoch of transition from capitalism to socialism. However, contradictions are not only stigmas and stumbling blocks but motive forces of contention and progress. The workers states are not stagnant but highly mobile. In the last analysis, they must either go backward to capitalism or forward to socialism. So far, none of the peoples that have abolished capitalism have restored it. In this respect 20th-century history to date has been a one-way street. This fact testifies to the immense power and vitality of the new institutions as well as to the debility and disintegration of world capitalism.

The governments of the workers states are equally in flux. They can either relapse into bureaucratic despotism or move ahead to greater democracy. The three stages in the political history of the Soviet Union since 1917 demonstrate this dialectic. After the seething democracy of the early revolutionary years, the country was plunged into the dreadful darkness of Stalin's tyranny for three decades. Since then, too slowly but surely, there is developing a turn toward democratization which must culminate in a showdown between the bureaucrats and the workers.

In Cuba, from the first, despite resistance and brief detours along the way, the main trend has been toward increased decision-making by the masses. Czechoslovakia's break from authoritarianism and its drive toward democratization in 1968 was halted and reversed by Moscow's military intervention.

The program of the Fourth International likewise contains a series of transitional proposals for the struggle against bureaucratism within the degenerated and deformed workers states. These demands are designed to accelerate and consummate the movement toward workers democracy in the postcapitalist countries and the adoption of revolutionary socialist policies and perspectives which can lessen the birth pangs of the new society and shorten the interval between the abolition of capitalist power and private property and the creation of harmonious and equal relations for all mankind.

Although postcapitalist economic relations and their superstructures have existed for half a century, they are only in the elementary stage of their historical process of formation and remain subject to all the infirmities of infancy. Furthermore, they have yet to be installed in the habitat most propitious for their growth.

When bourgeois society came forth from feudal Western Europe, capitalist relations did not all at once take possession of the whole of social life. They first preempted the field of commerce where monetary wealth was accumulated. Meanwhile, the production of material wealth either continued in the old ways or else, as with industry, passed over into manufacture which retained the old handicraft techniques. The new laws of capitalist development did not break through all limitations, take full command of economic and social life, and unfold their immense potency until the industrial revolution of the early 19th century,

based on the steam engine, large-scale industry and the factory system, thoroughly transformed the methods of production.

A comparable incompleteness has characterized, and even disfigured, the first period of the transition from capitalism to socialism. Since 1917 the laws of socioeconomic development bound up with the new system of production have had to function under the least favorable and most restrictive conditions. Whereas they required the most advanced productive forces for effective operation, they were confined to the poorest and most backward countries, where they had to contend with incompetent and bureaucratized regimes at home and imperialist encirclement and hostility on a world scale.

Even under such adverse historical circumstances the new mode of production based on nationalized property and the planning principle disclosed its effectiveness and registered colossal achievements.

Despite these successes, the methods of socialist development have not yet been given the chance to manifest their real potential. Implanted in poor soil, they have not had the right nutriment or atmosphere for their flowering. As Marx long ago pointed out, socialism needs a preponderant and highly cultivated working class, a powerful industry, a well-rounded economy and an international basis. None of these prerequisites for socialism prevailed in the first half-century of the international anticapitalist revolution. They have had to be created largely from scratch under forced draft and with intolerably heavy sacrifices by the working masses.

Consequently, the laws of the transition from capitalism to socialism have thus far received a mutilated and inadequate expression. Fortunately, the configuration of historical conditions responsible for this deviation does not have a permanent but a temporary character. The distortions of the workers states are the malign product of the confinement of proletarian power to the less developed countries and the grip of capitalism upon the most industrialized economies. These handicaps can — and will — be weakened and removed once the workers overthrow capitalist rule in one or more of the imperialist powers. This breakthrough will enable the new laws of social development to find a far more appropriate arena and broader scope for their expansion and fulfillment.

The present historical conjuncture has this paradoxical character. The transitional period from capitalism to socialism has itself been obliged, because of the uneven progress of the world revolution, to pass through an agonizing transitional situation in which the forces of the nascent social system have been penned up in an area least suited to their capacities. These abnormal and episodic restraints upon their growth can be eliminated provided the socialist revolution is extended to Western Europe, Japan, and, above all, to North America. Once the new tendencies of socialist development can operate freely and fully in a favorable environment, emancipated mankind will be astonished by the results.

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Robert Langston

HERBERT MARCUSE AND MARXISM

The 70-year-old philosopher Herbert Marcuse has passed through three more or less distinct stages in his intellectual development. His earliest works, such as his 1932 essay on the then recently discovered *Economic-Philosophical Manuscripts* of the young Marx, show the overpowering influence of his teacher, the German existentialist philosopher Martin Heidegger. During the years of exile from Nazi Germany—the 1930s—Marcuse gradually liberated himself from Heidegger's sway and moved closer to orthodox Marxism, albeit a Marxism with a strong Hegelian bent. This phase culminated in *Reason and Revolution* (1941), Marcuse's finest work and possibly the best book on Hegel yet written in English. Here Marcuse sees in the industrial working class the world-transforming "force of negativity."

His current phase—when Marcuse wrote the works which are most influential among young radicals today—is marked by two principal features. There is a growing concern with the possibilities of man as they might be realized in a genuinely human society. This is the central theme of *Eros and Civilization* (1955), in which Marcuse, developing some concepts of Freud, projects the image of a "non-repressive civilization." At the same time he exhibits growing doubt that the working class remains capable of playing the role assigned to it by Marxist theory, of fundamentally transforming basic social institutions so that these as yet unfulfilled possibilities of man could begin to be realized. In *Soviet Marxism* (1958), Marcuse misleadingly interprets Stalinist ideology as a Marxist response to a fundamentally changed world historical situation. He implicitly justifies the line of "building socialism in one country" as a necessity imposed upon the Soviet Union owing to the inability of the working classes of the advanced capitalist countries to carry through socialist revolutions.

This stage of Marcuse's thought has found its most systematic formulation in *One Dimensional Man* (1964). There Marcuse develops the concept of a contemporary industrial society exempt from basic change, and seeks to explain how it has happened that the once revolutionary working class has become a prop of the existing order.

His proposition that the working class has become such a conservative element—not just temporarily and under specific conjunctural conditions but permanently and as a consequence of structural changes in capitalist society—is not the result of any new theoretical discovery. Nor is it a further consequence of applying the Marxist method which earlier enabled Marcuse to recognize the working class as a revolutionary agent. His change of view comes from the *fact* that by and large for the past 20 years the working class in the most advanced capitalist countries has shown few signs of any revolutionary activity. By accepting this fact as the overriding reality to guide his analysis of social phenomena, Marcuse departs from the method of historical materialism.

Marcuse himself apparently does not recognize his shift in method. He asserts in good faith that he remains a Marxist; that it is objective social reality and not his method of thought that has changed. In fact he does cling to the Marxist tradition in two important methodological respects as well as in one important theoretical conclusion. First of all his method is dialectical, in the sense that it is aimed at the discovery and exposure of contradiction. However—and this point is of decisive importance for the difference between Marcuse's present method and that of Marxism—the sphere within which he now seeks to lay bare contradiction is much narrower and even of another order than the sphere in which the Marxian dialectician pursues the moving forces of things.

Secondly, Marcuse shares with Marxism the mandate to unite theory with action. For him, the function of theory is to produce true consciousness where hitherto false consciousness prevailed, so that men can act against their enslaving social conditions. Marcuse frequently defends himself against charges of "quietism," of cultivating a purely contemplative attitude. But his activist intention is continually frustrated by the image of the social world that is presented in his theory. That rests on the conception that the social world has become, in principle, unchangeable.

Finally, Marcuse shares with Marxists the conviction that the only *potentially*, ultimately world-transforming agency in the modern world is the working class. Only, contrary to Marxism, he holds that this force can no longer realize that potential. This is the source of his almost unrelieved pessimism: If the working class will not change the world, the world will not be changed.

This difference in method between Marcuse and Marxists is detectable in a passage from *One Dimensional Man* where Marcuse states his view on the difference in the "position" of social theory, that is, its relation to reality, today and at the time when Marx was first developing his doctrine: "At its origins in the first half of the

19th century, when it elaborated the first concepts of the alternatives [to the prevailing social order], the critique of industrial society attained concreteness in a historical mediation between theory and practice, values and facts, needs and goals. This historical mediation occurred in the consciousness and in the political action of the two great classes which faced each other in the society: the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. In the capitalist world, they are still the basic classes. However, the capitalist development has altered the structure and function of these two classes in such a way that they no longer appear to be agents of historical transformation . . . In the absence of demonstrable agents and agencies of social change, the critique is thus thrown back to a high level of abstraction. There is no ground on which theory and practice, thought and action meet."

The working class, we are here told, no longer "appears" to be an agent of historical transformation. The question immediately arises, when and to whom did it ever "appear" to be an agent of historical transformation? Certainly to the ruling classes of the first half of the 19th century it did not appear so; they viewed the "lower orders" rather as dangerous and possibly pitiable potential agents of the total destruction of society who had to be held in check by all means possible or be "improved" by a condescending philanthropy. At this same time the working class was only beginning to appear to itself, in a still very sporadic and fragmentary fashion, as an agent of fundamental social change, as a distinct social grouping that bore within itself the seed of a wholly new social order, communism, and possessed the power to overthrow the existing order of the world and permit that seed to sprout.

Despite the rising of the Lyons weavers in France in 1831 and the Chartist movement of the English workers in the 1830s and 1840s, it was hardly so obvious that the working class was an agent of social change during the first half of the 19th century as it has frequently been during the first half of our century. This revolutionary potential had to be demonstrated. One of the central tasks of Marx's theory was precisely to demonstrate it.

If he had permitted his method to be determined by the immediate appearance of class relations during that period when the ascending bourgeoisie was celebrating one mighty achievement after another in all spheres of life, he could not have demonstrated the existence of the working-class as a revolutionary force. The working class could have been perceived as a "demonstrable" agent of radical change only through a theory that was not halted by the superficial aspect of society.

This scientific demonstration in turn contributed significantly to the later appearance, both to itself and to other social classes, of the working class as a revolutionary force. The theories of Marxism and the dissemination of these ideas among workers contributed in no small measure to the working class becoming what Marx had discovered it to be. The theory of Marxism, carried to the working class, helped to create the ground on which "theory and practice met"—the

first momentous consummation of their fusion occurring in the October revolution of 1917.

What Marcuse sees as a difference in the "position" of theory vis-a-vis social reality is actually a difference between two methods of analyzing social reality. On the one hand, Marxism refuses to be misled by the deceptive face of social reality and penetrates below the surface to find and demonstrate the existence of the decisive forces of "historical transformation." On the other hand, Marcuse's "critical social theory" begins by treating the superficial appearance as the fundamental reality and then finds itself "thrown back to a high level of abstraction" where "there is no ground on which theory and practice, thought and action meet."

For Marx, the demonstration of the existence of the proletariat as a revolutionary force began with an examination of the basic productive relations of bourgeois society. He investigated these structures as they had been disclosed and interpreted in false or inadequate form by bourgeois theory, above all, in the works of the classical political economists. He proceeded from ideology, that is, from the reflection of social phenomena in the abstracting, classifying, analyzing, theorizing bourgeois mind, towards a thoroughly scientific comprehension of the contradictory nature of capitalism.

Anticipating, through his training in the dialectical mode of thought, contradictions everywhere, Marx found them implicit in the categories of bourgeois political economy and made them explicit. By clarifying and systematically refining and developing these categories, he discovered that they referred to an antagonistic society. Behind such abstract polarities as use-value and exchange-value, the commodity and money, labor and labor-power and, above all, wage-labor and capital, Marx was able to discern whole areas of social conflict. These arose from the way the social relations of men were organized. The bourgeois thinkers had seen only natural laws behind their categories, which men in their folly or greed might try to evade, but to which they finally had to conform and could not alter.

Through the discovery of the contradictions in the basic features of bourgeois society, as these had been both disclosed and concealed in classical political economy, Marx was able to return to the immediate empirical social phenomena and interpret them in the light of these dialectical concepts. In the pain and misery experienced by the workers, he could see traces of a contradictory social order becoming aware of its contradictoriness in that pain and misery. In the struggles and rebellions of workers, he could see evidence of an emerging conscious social force that would ultimately overthrow the society which produced it. In the agitation and organization of workers around specific issues of living and working conditions and political rights, he could perceive the emergence of the consciousness and organization of a social group that was the bearer of a totally new principle of social organization, communism.

The demonstration of the actuality of this specific agent of social transformation in Marx's theory depended on a method that was

prepared to expose rather than to hide contradiction, conflict and antagonism in the real social world. Marx was able to demonstrate the existence of the working class as a revolutionary force because he was looking for the traces of its existence in the empirical reality.

Marcuse, on the other hand, starts from the methodological presupposition that the working class is no longer a revolutionary force; the "position" of social theory today is for him defined by this purported reality. Such a method is not likely to be able to discern the traces in empirical reality which testify to the contrary. He does not pose as fundamental questions: What are the inherently antagonistic features of capitalism whose mutually conditioned development in conflict are driving that society beyond its established limits? What sort of action is possible to encourage the maturation and heightened consciousness of the progressive forces in these conflicts? Rather he poses as fundamental questions: What are the mechanisms whereby the once revolutionary working class has been integrated as a conservative force into the society? Just how bad is the existing social world? Or, how great is the difference between what it is and what it might have been if the working class had not lost its world-transforming capacity?

Such a sedative method will consistently regard the elements tending toward stability as essential and those tending toward disruption and the creation of something qualitatively new as inessential and incidental. As he encounters a grave conflict in social reality, rather than examining the possibility that the contradiction may contribute to exploding the existing social order, Marcuse tends to assume that the contradiction will be resolved within the existing order.

What happens to Marcuse's dialectic when he assumes that there are no real forces to fulfill it? He relapses from scientific sociology to pre-Marxist utopianism. Instead of unifying theory with reality, he constructs a second sphere, absolutely opposed to the world as it is, where all the unrealized possibilities and hopes of man find a habitation. This unearthly sanctuary then provides the standards against which the miserable world around us is judged. Instead of disclosing the contradictions within reality, Marcuse's dialectic establishes an insurmountable contradiction between the real and the ideal, the actual and the possible. The only mediation between these unconnected extremes is Marcuse's own moralizing on the theme that men might be happy if only things were otherwise. Such utopian moralizing is a persistent feature of Marcuse's thought. It even seems to reinforce the initial estrangement between theory and action, as though to discover any possibility that the existing society could be changed would be to discover something good in it and thus to absolve it of its absolute evil.

Marcuse's central theme is that the two-dimensional society of the past has been converted into a one-dimensional apparatus. The basic dimension of previous society was the material domain of production and reproduction; its second dimension was a mental sphere where men could dream, think and imagine a better world and thereby recognize the misery of the existing circumstances. This dimension

was potentially profoundly critical of the existing social world, because within it men could confront reality in the light of their unactualized possibilities. In this historical situation, the conditions of the revolutionary socialist movement were created. Philosophy found its material weapons in the proletariat, and the proletariat found its mental weapons in philosophy.

But today, in the emerging advanced industrial society, all this has changed. The two sources of two-dimensional life have been destroyed. Through compulsive consumption and the implanting and satisfaction of "false needs," through an erotic engineering, through the media which manipulate the mind, the instinctual drives which once tended to throw the individual into opposition to his society have been transformed into the very means of binding him to it. At the same time, the rising standard of living and the improved working conditions progressively diminish the misery suffered by the workers.

In such a one-dimensional society, the sense of alienation, hostility and aggression do not disappear. But they lose their potentially oppositional character and themselves become elements of manipulation, whether by the ruling social groups or by the autonomous functioning of the totalitarian administrative apparatus itself. Aggression is channeled against international communism—the permanent "Enemy"—as well as against racial and cultural minorities: blacks, hippies and radicals. Through such diversion hostility becomes a strong cement rather than a threat to the existing order.

Such a society tends to become an apparatus in which all men, things and processes are objects of total, rational administration, and all social relations tend to become technical relations. Men are increasingly related to one another as parts of a coordinated and well-functioning mechanism rather than as conscious creators, cooperators and contestants. Spontaneity is liquidated, in consciousness as well as in personal and social behavior.

The theory of capitalist society as developed by Marxism and Marcuse's theory of industrial society are in contradiction at a basic point. Capitalism itself *sets a limit* to the trend toward total administration. In capitalist economy, one can only immediately administer what falls within the circle of one's private property, either as a thing one owns or as a man whose labor-power has been purchased. Capitalist economy remains private and anarchic, not subject to an overreaching administration, however much the scope of state intervention may have expanded. Yet Marcuse, while proclaiming that advanced industrial society is a specific and necessary stage of capitalist development, systematically ignores the regions of contradiction that arise from its very structure.

The sometimes extensive, but always limited, degree of control that monopolies have over their markets presupposes the basically uncoordinated, anarchic character of the economy. The administrative efforts on the part of the state to regulate and control the crises caused by the anarchy of production presuppose this anarchy of production.

And the conflict between capitalist nations, which is perennially reproduced, sometimes in the form of open military conflict, sometimes in more subdued and subtle forms, testifies to the contradictions that arise between antagonistic national capitalist interests.

But in Marcuse's theory, all these areas of conflict which are beyond any central administrative control, national or international, appear as incidental "frictions" slightly disturbing the smooth functioning of the mechanism, or as archaic residues of a past society, which are only temporarily beyond the administrative reach of advanced industrial society.

In his discussion of the "prospects of containment" of potentially oppositional forces, for example, Marcuse "projects contemporary developments" in order to arrive at the estimate that these prospects are virtually endless. The contemporary developments he projects are:

- 1) a continued rise in the standard of living, and
- 2) permanent mobilization against the "external enemy," that is, "communism," both made possible through:
 - "a) the growing productivity of labor (technical progress);
 - "b) the rise in the birth rate of the underlying population;
 - "c) the permanent defense economy;
 - "d) the economic-political integration of the capitalist countries, and the building up of their relations with the underdeveloped areas."

One would expect a theory committed to dialectic to explore the relationships between these trends and to ask how far they are compatible with and reinforce each other and how far they may conflict with each other. Had Marcuse done so he might have discerned an oppositional dimension in the making again.

For the past three years, real wages in manufacturing industries in the United States have been declining because of an accelerated "permanent mobilization" and expanded "permanent defense economy" resulting from the war in Vietnam. The Southeast Asian intervention itself is characteristic of the capitalist countries' "building up their relations with the underdeveloped areas." To hold otherwise is to fall into the liberal trap of believing that the invasion was some sort of "blunder." The systematic diversion of resources to the permanent war economy—which has accelerated the inflationary spiral—casts doubt on the long-term possibility of maintaining and raising the living standards of the masses.

In the face of these counterdevelopments, it doesn't require much dialectic to recognize that a theory which abstracts from possible conflicts between trends and simply projects them endlessly as they appear at one moment of historical time is not likely to lead to very secure conclusions.

Furthermore, it is striking that a work devoted to a study of ideology and which subjects philosophy and sociology to searching criticism, does not contain any critique of economic doctrine, especially since Marcuse makes the continued *containment* of oppositional tendencies, which for him is the defining characteristic of the advanced industrial

society, contingent on the persistence of certain economic trends. Economics has been one of the most "ideological" of the social sciences, in the sense that false consciousness and true insight are more intricately intertwined in this field than elsewhere. But Marcuse simply accepts the prevailing economic orthodoxy; at least he assumes that it can endlessly deliver techniques capable of holding the economic contradictions of capitalism in suspense. This assumption accords well with his conception of the "totally administered society" and with his presupposition that there is no force capable of fundamentally transforming existing society. But it is hardly consistent with a dialectical theory of society that is obliged to disclose contradiction and expose false consciousness wherever they may occur.

This easy acceptance of bourgeois economic orthodoxy reveals the close kinship between Marcuse and such neoconservatives of the early 1950s as Daniel Bell and Kenneth Galbraith, who were participating in the "Great American Celebration." They thought that American society is approaching a point of ultimate stability and equilibrium; that is the point of agreement between Marcuse and those neoconservatives. Only the latter approved and affirmed it while Marcuse disapproves and rejects it. That is the difference between them.

What are the links between Marcuse's theory and method and his political practice? In theory he takes the stance that since no forces of fundamental social change exist within "one-dimensional" society, decent human beings can only express their rejection as indignantly and vigorously as possible. Hoping against hope, they make the great refusal and indulge in "defiant gestures." However, there still exists the realm of actual power where the destiny of man is presently being decided, and which sometimes compels the individual, however reluctantly, to take a stand. Marcuse is a public personality whose disciples insist that he state his views on matters of great concern. How has he responded?

Ironically, this mentor of the new student radicals expressed apprehension about their disruption of the universities as a sanctuary of objective scholarship and free thought. He advised the partisans of student power to limit the scope of their intervention.

In the 1968 presidential campaign, Marcuse spoke out in favor of Eugene McCarthy's bid (*New York Review of Books*, Aug. 22). He did so as a member of the Democratic Party, one of the central institutions of the established order. Thus the very "radicalism" of his theory, the absoluteness of its rejection of the existing world and everything within it, served to "free" the critical theorist for the most opportunistic kind of practical politics.

The French events this spring were a harsh test for competing social theories. There occurred the greatest general strike in the history of an industrially advanced capitalist country. This genuine revolutionary upsurge involved ten million workers. But Marcuse's theoretical approach excluded such an event and was inadequate to explain it.

Speaking at the University of California in San Diego on May 23, 1968, thus certainly before he had an opportunity to analyze all

the events of the French upheaval, Marcuse had this to say: "First, France is not yet an affluent society. The living conditions of the majority of the population are still far below the level of the American standard of living, which of course makes for a much looser identification with the Establishment than prevails in this country. Secondly, the political tradition of the French working class movement is still alive to a considerable degree. I might add a rather metaphysical explanation; namely, the difference between the prospects of a radical movement in France and in this country may also be summed up by remembering that France, after all, went through four revolutions within 100 years. This apparently establishes such a revolutionary tradition which can be sparked and brought to life and renewed when the occasion arises." (*Liberation News Service*, June 11.)

Marcuse's first consideration is scarcely convincing. While it is true that the standard of living in France is lower than in the United States, it is incomparably closer to the standard of living that prevails here—even ignoring the widespread, grinding poverty of superexploited groups which lowers the U. S. average—than it is to the abysmal poverty that prevailed in capitalist countries during the 19th century, to which Marcuse attributes the revolutionary potential of the working class at that time. If the qualitative change in the level of working class consumption destroys the revolutionary potential of the working class, then France surely stands today on the same side of the great divide as the United States.

The second explanation Marcuse adduces is scarcely more plausible. It is true that a traditional class consciousness is more widespread in France than in the United States and that France has a highly developed working class political party, the Communist Party. But that party did everything it could to destroy the revolutionary movement and must be assigned major credit for derailing it. The revolutionary working class tradition, so far as it was carried by the Communist Party and the trade-union federations, was a zombie,

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not a living reality. The French working class *rediscovered* its revolutionary tradition under the impact of the student uprising and its own entry into the struggle. That it plunged into the struggle with such force and fervor can hardly be attributed to tradition alone.

On the other hand, the French events are fully consistent with the Marxist theory of capitalist society and without the necessity of any improvised hypotheses. These events testify to the revolutionary potential of the working class. That potential is there, not far below the surface, evident, if one knows how to look, in all the struggles conducted by the workers in their own interest. It is ever ready—given even slightly destabilizing conditions, which are inevitable in the anarchic world of capitalist production and which require concrete analysis in each specific case—to break through the conservative crust of the "affluent society" with an intensity unsurpassed in earlier revolutionary struggles.

Theoretical impotence in the face of massive historical fact is shown in Marcuse's inadequate attempt to interpret the French upsurge. Absolute contradiction in practice, between his show of intransigence toward the capitalist regime and his opportunistic political adaptation to it, is manifested in Marcuse's support of McCarthy. These are the products of Marcusean method.

Power to comprehend great historical events; consistent, principled struggle against all reactionary ideological and institutional forces; and encouragement of the development to full independence and consciousness of all progressive forces, above all, the materially mighty working class—these are the concrete theoretical and practical products of Marxist method.

Marcusean offers no reliable guide either to understanding or making history, above all, the history of our own time. Marxism does.

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review article

Dick Roberts

THE NEED FOR A LENINIST PARTY

"Socialist Consciousness and the New Left" by Greg Calvert and Carol Neiman. *Guardian*, Aug. 24, Sept. 7, Sept. 14, 1968.

"Reflections on the French Upheaval" by Paul Sweezy and Leo Huberman. *Monthly Review*, September, 1968.

The Decline of Socialism in America, 1912-1925 by James Weinstein. Monthly Review Press, 1967.

There are two opposing schools of thought in this country on the question of a revolutionary party. One says, 'You don't need a party.' It rejects program, organization, leadership and, above all, centralism. Commenting on the demonstrations in Chicago during the Democratic Party National Convention, some participants wrote: "The concept of centralized, personal leadership has begun to be transcended by the organic and spontaneous needs of the street . . . In this next stage of struggle . . . functional leaders will prove to be the only effective means of maintaining tactical and political coherence . . . emphasis must clearly be placed on the street rather than the pamphlet."*

But this school is shrinking. Further reflection and experience in struggles are exposing the futility of the anarchist conception. There were far fewer demonstrators in the poorly planned and leaderless fights with local, state and federal police on Chicago's streets last August than there were a month later in the organized protest against police brutality and the war in Vietnam. Thought is turning to the need for a party; and the question is immediately posed, what kind of party?

*"Respect for Lawlessness" by Up Against the Wall. . . , *SDS New Left Notes*, Sept. 16, 1968.

Greg Calvert and Carol Neiman's articles on "Socialist Consciousness and the New Left" are a serious effort to begin to cope with this question. The authors recognize the crucial importance of a socialist leadership in the struggle against capitalism. At the same time they point to the errors of socialist leaderships in the past as a key to understanding imperialism's survival to the present day. The central "failure of the left in the last 100 years" was the pre-first-world-war adaptation of the mass Social Democratic parties to trade union and parliamentary work, the subsequent evolution of the Communist International in the same direction, and their common abandoning of revolutionary programs. Calvert and Neiman reject the prevalent academic viewpoint that this failure is 'rooted in Marx himself.' For the most part, they correctly view it as rooted in revisions of Marxian concepts. Their starting point is particularly noteworthy, since the authors speak for the 'New Left' which up to now has largely disdained to study the lessons of the past.

Nonetheless there remain big gaps in the Calvert-Neiman analysis; they prematurely reject the most important theoretical and organizational conclusions of the Marxist viewpoint they set out to appraise. The authors are admittedly skeptical about the revolutionary potential of the industrial working class, yet they are unable to define a social force that has the power to take its place. Since this is the subject of Ernest Mandel's article elsewhere in this magazine, it is not necessary to repeat the arguments he presents.

At the same time Calvert and Neiman reject the idea of a Leninist party, and here there is much room for discussion. They partially misunderstand the Leninist conception itself, and do not at all consider the essential lessons in party building and organization gained in the half-century since the victory of the October revolution.

Monthly Review editors Leo Huberman and Paul Sweezy turn their attention to the need for a vanguard party in an editorial, "Reflections on the French Upheaval," in the September issue of their magazine. Their reasoning closely parallels Calvert and Neiman's. Huberman and Sweezy single out for devastating rebuttal the apology of the French Communist Party for its failure to lead the French workers toward the seizing of state power in May-June. The argument "that no revolutionary situation existed . . . reminds us of the story of the boy who shot his father and mother and then pleaded with the judge for mercy on the ground that he was an orphan." The *MR* editors compare the reformist evolution of the Moscow-oriented Communist parties to the degeneration of the German Social Democratic Party before World War I. "Lenin's *State and Revolution* which used to be the hard core of communist theory has been replaced by the utterly un-Marxist and un-Leninist theory of peaceful coexistence, peaceful competition of systems, and peaceful transition from capitalism to socialism."

But they draw unwarranted pessimistic conclusions from this. Although they would like "a real Leninist party," they almost rule it out: "No mass party which is organized to work within the framework

of bourgeois institutions can also be revolutionary" (emphasis in original). At a panel discussion on Mandel's paper, "Workers under Neo-Capitalism," at the Socialist Scholars Conference in Rutgers University, Sept. 7, Paul Sweezy asked in so many words, "How do you account for the fact that whenever there has been a revolutionary situation in advanced capitalist countries, the leadership of the working class turned out to be counterrevolutionary? Doesn't this need explanation and isn't there a certain lawfulness in this uniformity?"

Another Socialist Scholars Conference panelist, James Weinstein, offers an organizational 'model' for a socialist party in his recently published book on the American Socialist Party, 1912-25. Weinstein asks for a return to this "broadly based," "all-inclusive" party: "seemingly diverse" but "much more viable than the highly centralized and disciplined communist parties of the 1920s and 1930s." This, as we shall see, is not a new idea. Like many of his elders who drifted away from the radical movement in the forties, Weinstein sees as the cardinal sin of the American socialist movement its "international connections," the most malignant form of which was the "interference" of the Communist International in the 1919 split of the Socialist Party and the subsequent formation of the American Communist Party.

Weinstein conveniently overlooks the fact that, before the influence and intervention of the Bolshevik Third International, the equally strong influence of the European Social Democratic Second International was instrumental in the formation of Debs' party. One was inconceivable without the other. Perhaps Weinstein views the reformist practice of the Social Democrats more favorably than the revolutionary doctrine of the Leninists.

In any case his method is inadequate. A consideration of present perspectives for an American vanguard party must be based both on the history of American *and world* socialist organization. The weakness of Weinstein's procedure is shown by his failure to explain why all those radical political organizations which did emerge on a purely national basis in America, as against the parties of the Second and Third internationals, never amounted to much. They either merged with the parties of the internationals or disappeared.

The need for a vanguard party of a specific type is the main lesson of over 100 years of working class struggle against capitalist oppression. Lenin's theory of party organization did not spring full-blown from his head in 1902 when he undertook to form the Bolshevik faction in the Russian Social Democracy; it had its origins in the five-decade-long experiences and ideas of the movement founded by Marx and Engels; and it was not based on Russian conditions alone. Rosa Luxemburg, a *Pole* who was active in both the *German and Russian* movements, drew attention to the reformism of the *French* Socialist Party when Millerand entered the capitalist cabinet in 1899—before Lenin *and other* Social Democrats opened their polemics against the reformism of the Second International in general. And the Marxist conception of a party has been modified and enriched since the collapse of the Second International, particularly in the fight to prevent

the degeneration of the Third International and the subsequent struggle to reconstitute a revolutionary world movement to take the place of the Stalinized Comintern.

The necessity of a vanguard party is demonstrated over this 120-year-long experience by "the *actuality* of the workers' struggle for the conquest of power and the *necessity* of creating a leadership capable of carrying it through to the end."* Its specific character is dictated by this task. It must be an *international party* with a *revolutionary* program and *democratic-centralist* organization.

The French events once again remind us that the question Lenin set out to solve, how to build a party capable of leading the working class in an actual struggle to take power, is by no means outmoded. Lenin and other Bolsheviks believed that with proper leadership the French Communards could have toppled capitalist rule as early as 1871. In the 20th century, the insurgency of workers has posed the question of state power time and again, in all the major bastions of European capitalism—Germany, 1918, 1921, 1923, 1930-33; Britain, 1926; France, 1936, 1944-47, 1968; Italy, 1944-45—and in a number of other countries—Spain, 1936-37; Greece, 1944, 1946-47, to name a few. Such social and political crises do not occur every day or every year in the development of capitalism; they last relatively brief periods of time, sometimes only for a few days; but neither are they fantasies. They emerge from the real and irresolvable contradictions of the capitalist mode of production.

Calvert and Neiman correctly understand that the "objective conditions" for a socialist order exist but the "subjective conditions" are lacking. Recognition of this fact has been the cornerstone of the Marxist movement since its inception. *The Communist Manifesto* of 1848 was itself the programmatic declaration of the Communist League, the nucleus of an international revolutionary party of which Engels was general secretary. To build an anticapitalist working class party with a revolutionary program has always been the fundamental aim and everyday concern of revolutionary socialists. That three internationals in the course of a century have failed to carry through this task does not make the fourth attempt easier, of course; neither does it make it unnecessary.

Marxism has nothing in common with what is really a fatalist conviction that capitalist contradictions will "automatically" create revolutionary consciousness and leadership. On the contrary, it places the greatest emphasis upon the importance, and, at critical points, the decisive weight of organized intervention, and even the individual initiative of prominent leaders. According to Cannon, a contributing factor in the disintegration of the American Socialist Party, bemoaned by Weinstein, was Debs' failure to intervene in internal controversies over crucial questions, which permitted the centrists and reformists

*James P. Cannon in "The Vanguard Party and the World Revolution," in the international symposium, *Fifty Years of World Revolution*, shortly to be published by Merit Publishers.

to gain control of the party against him, while he concentrated on mass work.

Calvert and Neiman are in error when they assert that "Marx and Engels weren't particularly preoccupied with the question of class consciousness—they seemed to assume it would develop with a larger and larger body of wage earners . . . At no time did Marx and Engels foresee the problems of mass false consciousness which confronts us today." In fact Marx was among the first to emphasize that without mass false consciousness bourgeois society could not function for a moment: "The ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas" (*The German Ideology*). The underlying economic source of this false consciousness in commodity fetishism plays a pivotal role in Marx's analysis of capitalism.

Marx and Engels saw that one of the paramount functions of a revolutionary party was to impart a correct consciousness to the working class of its conditions of emancipation: "To accomplish this act of universal emancipation is the historical mission of the modern proletariat. To thoroughly comprehend the historical conditions and thus the very nature of this act, to impart to the now oppressed proletarian class a full knowledge of the conditions and of the meaning of the momentous act it is called upon to accomplish, this is the task of the theoretic expression of the proletarian movement, scientific socialism" (*Socialism, Utopian and Scientific*).

While recognizing the importance of developing class consciousness, Calvert and Neiman do not grasp the significance of the heterogeneity of this consciousness and its varying expressions among different layers of the masses at any given juncture. This lends decisive importance to the intervention of the most conscious elements of the class, organized as its vanguard. Even in periods of the most intense activity, the working class has its rearguard, which lags far behind the needs of the moment. Thus there are wide fluctuations of mass consciousness. For example, within less than a month of occupying the factories under their red banners, a substantial number of French workers voted for de Gaulle! This was one result of the default of the Communist and Socialist parties and the absence of an alternative mass leadership.

In the critical post-first-world-war period following the defeats of revolutionary upsurges in Europe, Trotsky once again drew the attention of revolutionary militants to the lessons of the Paris Commune: "The Commune shows us the heroism of the working masses, their capacity to unite in a single bloc, their talent to sacrifice themselves in the names of the future, but at the same time it shows us the incapacity of the masses to choose their path, their indecision in the leadership of the movement, their fatal penchant to come to a halt after the first successes, thus permitting the enemy to regain its breath, to re-establish its position . . . The workers' party—the real one—is not a machine for parliamentary maneuvers, it is the accumulated and organized experience of the proletariat. It is only with the aid of the party, which rests upon the whole history of its past, which foresees

theoretically the paths of development, all its stages, and which extracts from it the necessary formulas of action, that the proletariat frees itself from the need of always recommencing its history: its hesitations, its lack of decisions, its mistakes" ("Lessons of the Paris Commune," 1921, reprinted in the *New International*, March 1935).

Clearly such a party does not arise "spontaneously." It cannot be built overnight "on the streets." There may not be time enough to form it in the heat of events and the time lost may enable the reaction to stage a comeback. Prior preparation of a party is the sole insurance against such a disaster. Cadres who know the lessons of the past history of socialist struggle must be carefully and consciously trained beforehand. It is naive and reckless to approach the problem of building a vanguard in this country or anywhere else by turning one's head away from the role of the proletarian party in the worldwide struggle for socialism. Socialist ideas have flourished and been strong and victorious, as organic expressions of an international movement, since socialism is essentially internationalist. Whenever these ideas have become distorted or enclosed by national bureaucratic interests, as was the case with the Social Democracy and Stalinism, they have become mutilated and debased.

In seeking to explain the degeneration of the Second International and the Moscow-line parties of the Third International, Calvert and Neiman and the editors of *Monthly Review* avoid the essence of the issue. They repeat what is well-known to Marxists: that either "pure and simple" trade unionism or total adaptation to bourgeois parliamentarism, or both, inevitably lead to reformism, the abandoning of revolutionary goals for immediate demands and the "peaceful road from capitalism to socialism." This mistakes the effect for the cause.

The American Socialist Party and Communist Party have today no pretensions whatsoever to being in the leadership of the trade unions or in congressional, let alone cabinet, positions of government. Yet they are 100 percent reformist. Despite their avowed aims of transforming society, their day-to-day work and their support of the candidates of capitalist parties is nonrevolutionary.

Calvert and Neiman miss Marx's point when they quote his declaration: "Instead of the reformist slogan 'a fair day's wage for a fair day's work!', [workers] ought to emblazon on their banner the revolutionary watchword 'abolition of the wages system'" (*Wage Labor and Capital*). He was not advising against engaging in trade union work; Marxists have always done so. Marx was emphasizing the decisive importance of class politics and a revolutionary party to implement them. Such a party, independent of the trade unions, could deal with everyday problems and tasks in strict connection with the ultimate aim of conquering power. The mass socialist movements in the first half of the century went wrong, not because of what kind of work they did, but how and why they did it. A prime example is provided by Weinstein's cherished Socialist Party of Debs, Hillquit and Berger.

This was a mass party appealing to the working class. Its greatest spokesman, Debs, was an honest and principled revolutionary and thoroughly anticapitalist, but, as Cannon points out, he was limited in his overall conception of revolutionary tasks on a global scale. "The Socialist Party of Debs' time has to be judged, not for its failure to lead a revolution, but for its failure to work with that end in view and to select its membership accordingly."* The SP failed to accomplish its central prewar goal of preventing U. S. entry into the imperialist war, and it disintegrated following the war because it lacked centralized organization around a revolutionary program. Its "diversity" amounted to a number of autonomous vote-getting machines in different states. Far from representing the working class base, middle class professionals, fearful of initiating or organizing mass action, were in the leadership. The ranks could not exercise control over them. Each contending faction had its own policies and newspapers, with the right wing exercising veto power over the whole party.

Such an organization was shaped by the expansion of capitalism around the turn of the century, the extension of bourgeois democracy, the slow rise in the mass standard of living. Debs' faults were not simply personal failings, but those of the entire pre-Bolshevik generation of his time, both in America and Europe. Their movements were entirely unsuited to the imperialist epoch of capitalist decline, stormy class struggles, imperialist wars, proletarian uprisings and colonial revolutions, and this was demonstrated by their decline from the moment this period set in.

All the defects of the American Socialist Party came to the surface and were exposed after the victory of the Russian Revolution. These were the underlying reasons for the irrepressible and irremediable split in the socialist movement between the reformist-center coalition and the revolutionary left wing. Weinstein views this as an unmitigated disaster which has crippled American socialism ever since. Actually it constituted a rebirth, an ascension to a higher stage, of the ideological, political and organizational development of socialism in this country. It aligned the American movement with the triumphant leadership of the October revolution. It facilitated an assimilation of the ideas and methods which brought them to victory. It introduced superior methods of organization. *It destroyed the whole conception of a common party of revolutionaries and opportunists as the instrument for revolutionary leadership!*

Contrary to Weinstein's view, the connection between the newborn communist parties and the Communist International brought many benefits which have remained permanent acquisitions of the American socialist movement, despite the subsequent distortions of the Communist Party under Stalinist leadership. One of the most important of these contributions was Lenin's polemic against ultraleftism, "*Left-Wing Communism, An Infantile Disorder*". The chief rival to the newborn

*"Eugene V. Debs and the Socialist Movement of His Time," in *The First Ten Years of American Communism*, available from Merit Publishers, \$4.00, or as a separate pamphlet, 35 cents.

Communist Party in this country besides the SP, the Industrial Workers of the World, suffered all the maladies of this disease. It had little use for any but the most rudimentary syndicalist concept of organization and no use for a comprehensive political theory. The Wobblies made a cult of rank-and-file spontaneity and improvisation; they rejected the concept of the party as leader of the class. Lenin's pamphlet explained in theory, as the October revolution had proved in practice, the necessity of a revolutionary program and party to lead workers to the conquest of power.

Failure to recognize the central lessons of the October revolution doomed the Wobblies to extinction. Some of their members went over to the American Communist Party; the organization soon disintegrated.

Lenin's Bolshevik Party was forged precisely as an organizational means of overcoming the shortcomings of the Social Democratic and syndicalist movements. He recognized that the kind of party required to get rid of capitalism must be a disciplined and centralized combat party of workers, democratically controlled by its members. To bureaucratic control, Lenin counterposed the necessity of democratic selection of program and leadership. To dissipated and powerless activism, he counterposed the necessity of centralized action on a common revolutionary program.

Ernest Mandel defined democratic centralism in a recent speech to the International Assembly of Revolutionary Student Movements sponsored by the Columbia University SDS: "It means that all those who are convinced of the ideas of revolutionary Marxism, of revolutionary socialism, instead of acting in a dispersed, disorganized, discontinuous way, should act in an organized and coherent way with the fullest possible democracy and the necessary coherence and centralization which makes their action efficient." Democratic centralism is the only organizational form consonant with the revolutionary program of mobilizing the masses for the conquest and holding of state power. Conversely, a party lacking this revolutionary program inevitably develops its own narrow bureaucratic interests, opposed to those of the masses.

This is one main lesson of the evolution of the Moscow-line Communist parties following Stalin's consolidation of power. Their policies did not initially flow from adaptation to bourgeois parliamentarism, as Huberman and Sweezy argue, but from adaptation to Moscow's peaceful coexistence line, based upon the narrow national interests of the Soviet uppercrust: the "theory" that international strategy and tactics should be tailored to facilitate the construction of "socialism" in the Soviet Union. The adaptation of the pro-Moscow Communist Party leaderships to Kremlin domination, and their participation in popular front governments and coalition cabinets with the capitalist parties, was the logical consequence of subordinating the independent movements of the working class outside the Soviet Union to the shifting diplomatic requirements of Moscow.

In the name of "democratic centralism," the Kremlin bureaucrats

and party leaderships subservient to them silenced and expelled any tendencies that opposed their anti-Leninist and antirevolutionary line, beginning with the Trotskyist Left Opposition and its adherents around the world. That comes under the category of *bureaucratic centralism*. It is the opposite of democratic centralism. In order to ram their policies down the throat of the rank and file, the leadership had to be "liberated" from rank-and-file control; it had to substitute Stalinist monolithism for Leninist democratic centralism.

Huberman and Sweezy criticize Trotskyists because "They imagine that if they could build a mass party like the CP, they would be able to steer it in a revolutionary rather than a reformist direction. The cause of past failures is seen as rooted in bad leadership rather than in an inappropriate conception of the party's tasks and the means to achieve them." What is this supposed to mean? When Marxists condemn a "bad leadership," they have in mind one that has "an inappropriate conception of the party's tasks and the means to achieve them"—in other words, a leadership without a revolutionary program and without revolutionary methods.

The *Monthly Review* editors appear to share with Calvert and Neiman the misconception that a revolutionary party is needed only in revolutionary situations. This notion flows from an inadequate appreciation of the distinctions in the variegated consciousness of the mass, and the consequent underestimation of the value of revolutionary intervention at all stages of the development of mass consciousness. For example, Calvert and Neiman attack Trotskyists for believing that "the task of the vanguard party is to prepare the correct propaganda, especially the correct slogans, which will suddenly capture the allegiance of the masses in the moment of capitalist crisis . . . Just to make sure this distinction holds true, Trotskyists work to prevent the development of broad-based socialist consciousness in mass movements. The mechanism involves enforcing the 'single-issue' nature of mass movements and fighting to destroy or nip in the bud any leadership which develops outside their ranks."

There is not yet a development of mass socialist consciousness in America. But there is a crucial struggle against U. S. imperialism, the struggle to end the invasion of Vietnam. The necessity and worth of revolutionary participation in this struggle has been clearly demonstrated, precisely in the carrying out of the tactic Calvert and Neiman reject: the organization of mass demonstrations in opposition to the war.

The majority of the American people oppose the war. Opposition is making its appearance here and there in the ranks of the Army, which in its further development could bring the war to a halt. This overwhelming discontent with the war does not mean masses of Americans have "broad" or any kind of socialist consciousness. But it is *objectively* anti-imperialist because it threatens to frustrate what the imperialists consider to be their most urgent foreign-policy objective, the crushing of colonial revolutions. Many of their recent political moves testify to their awareness of this danger: Johnson's resignation

from the presidency; the opening of "peace" talks in Paris; McCarthy's "keep the kids off the streets campaign," etc.

Hundreds of thousands of Americans, especially the parents, wives, sisters of soldiers, and, most crucially, more and more soldiers themselves, can be organized to demonstrate against the war. The larger these demonstrations, obviously, the more are soldiers encouraged that their feelings are supported by masses of Americans. Far, far fewer people — and this is one lesson of the demonstrations in Chicago last August — can be mobilized for actions melding together a number of diverse issues, ranging from opposition to the war, to supporting or opposing various Democratic candidates, than around the single issue of ending the war by "bringing the GIs home now."

Are we supposed to abandon the fight to expand mass opposition to the war, the fight to encourage and aid GIs in their democratic right to express their own opposition to the war, in favor of vague, smaller and fragmented demonstrations around a number of often contradictory issues? That is a poor alternative. The fact that such an ineffective approach is advocated by sections of the radical movement is proof enough of the necessity of a revolutionary vanguard. This vanguard recognizes big problems for the ruling class when they arise (and there can be big problems without there yet being a final crisis of capitalist rule!), and it intervenes in a correct manner, as the Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialist Alliance are doing, to turn these difficulties against their capitalist creators.

* * *

There are two serious gaps in James Weinstein's analysis, both of them pertinent to the question of building a vanguard today. In focusing exclusively on the parties of the Second and Third internationals in the period 1912-25, he neglects to deal with the rival political groupings which sprang up as a challenge to the parties representing world tendencies during their existence. He neither assays their significance nor explains why they proved incapable of gaining any foothold in competition with the international parties. And he disregards the organizational lessons of the 1930s, the decade of radicalism which preceded the resurgence of the 1960s.

Pertinent to Weinstein's thesis is what happened to Norman Thomas' SP, the successor to Debs' party. After the departure of the old guard in 1935, the SP leadership, through Thomas, deliberately set out to create an "all-inclusive" party in opposition to the sectarian exclusiveness and opportunism of the Stalinist party. The Trotskyist Workers Party accepted the invitation, along with numerous unaffiliated radicals and young militants. But the prolonged cohabitation of divergent tendencies within an "all-inclusive" organization proved impossible.

When the left wing threatened to become predominant, the SP leadership suddenly discovered the virtues of "democratic centralism" and attempted to gag the revolutionary tendencies. But to superimpose upon a centrist, reformist, "all-inclusive" party the principle of demo-

cratic centralism is to make a caricature of Lenin's concept. When the revolutionary tendencies in the SP refused to submit to the leadership's attempt to impose bureaucratic control, they were expelled. This left the SP weaker than it had ever been: The left wing of the SP joined with the expelled Trotskyists to form the Socialist Workers Party; and the others began a shift to the right which hasn't stopped even after their "all-inclusive" party fell into oblivion.

This is what happened in past decades. There is no reason to believe it will be any different with a "new" attempt to form an "all-inclusive" party on the Debs or Thomas model. The SP today supports Hubert Humphrey's campaign for the presidency, it favors "negotiations" in Vietnam, it is for subordinating the black liberation struggle to a coalition with union bureaucrats, it is rabidly anti-Communist and on that ground rejects participating in the mass antiwar movement, etc., etc. Is it conceivable that this "all-inclusive" reformist swamp could possibly provide a congenial habitat for revolutionary Marxists? The lessons of both history and experience speak against it.

Suppose we disregard these lessons of the past and forget about Lenin's conception of the vanguard party and meet the 'New Left' pragmatists on the grounds of practicality alone. What kind of party do they think can overthrow capitalism and carry through the socialist revolution? The character of such a party is determined by the power of the adversary.

It is hard to see how one can possibly conceive of combating and destroying U. S. imperialism, with the mightiest military force in world history, its international police agencies, its gigantic domestic federal, state and local government apparatus, courts and police forces, its subservient trade union bureaucracies and its control of the educational process from kindergarten to postgraduate education, except through a mass movement with combat discipline and a revolutionary program.

This is the Leninist conception. On the face of it, it seems obvious that any party which fails either to prevent bureaucratic control, or fails to forge a mighty, unified fighting arm, or especially one which fails to do both—and that is the history of the Second and Third internationals—can do the job.

Actually, there was a little more realism to Weinstein's party model before U. S. imperialism embarked on its 20th century course of world domination. But today the United States is totally involved in the economics, politics, military affairs and even the culture of every other country.

What are the major political events of the day? Where are the big battlefronts? They are not confined to this country by any means. There is the revolution in Vietnam, the revolution in Cuba and the fight to extend these revolutions throughout the oppressed colonial world, against U. S. imperialism, and this very minute there is the fight of the Mexican students to expose the phony democratic mask of the Diaz regime on the eve of its cherished Olympic Games. There is the struggle to build workers' democracy in the Soviet-bloc states,

centered now on protecting the gains of Czech democratization against the invasion of Moscow — which involves the very "Russian questions" Weinstein wants to forget. A revolutionary socialist party in America which is not internationalist in its program, its outlook and its associations is antiquated before it even gets started!

* * *

Trotsky summarized the whole essence of the working class struggle for socialism in the opening sentence of the *Transitional Program*, adopted by the founding congress of the Fourth International in 1938: "The world political situation as a whole is chiefly characterized by a historical crisis of the leadership of the proletariat."* This was the true spirit of Marx, Engels and Lenin.

When the mass parties of the Second International capitulated on the eve of the first world war, each supporting the imperialist interests of its own nation, Lenin declared that the Social Democracy was dead as an instrument of revolutionary working class struggle. He immediately proclaimed the necessity of building a new, third, international, based on the socialist principles of Marx and Engels and incorporating the lessons of the October revolution.

"The fact is," Lenin declared in April 1917, "that it is by no means easy to be an internationalist in deeds during a frightful imperialist war. Such people are few; but it is on such people *alone* that the future of socialism depends; they *alone* are the *leaders of the masses*, and not the corrupters of the masses."

Founded in 1919, the Comintern provided leadership for those who wanted to work for world revolution; its Bolshevik leaders taught that without international leadership there could be no successful culmination of this struggle.

In the same spirit less than 15 years later, when the Stalinized German Communist Party capitulated to Hitler without a struggle, Trotsky pronounced the Third International dead and set out to build a Fourth International. He was not overawed by this task. The need for a revolutionary leadership of the working class and the necessity of building one was not new to Marxists in 1933; it was not new to them in 1914. It was the historical task posed by Marx and Engels in the *Communist Manifesto* of 1848.

Today the Fourth International carries forward the lessons of Marxism as delineated and practiced by the greatest of revolutionary leaders, beginning with Marx himself. The task of building a combat party to lead the workers against capitalist rule is the decisive task that faces the youth of today. They would do well to study and absorb the lessons of 120 years of struggle to forge a revolutionary leadership capable of ushering in the new order of world socialism.

October 8, 1968

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The Black Power Revolt: A Collection of Essays edited by Floyd B. Barbour. Extending Horizons Books. 287 pp. \$5.95.

The Right of Revolution by Truman Nelson. Beacon Press. 148 pp. \$4.95.

Dusk of Dawn: An Essay Toward An Autobiography of a Race Concept by W. E. Burghardt DuBois. Schocken Books. 344 pp. \$2.45 paper.

William Styron's Nat Turner: Ten Black Writers Respond edited by John Henrik Clarke. Beacon Press. 120 pp. \$4.95.

Growing up Black edited by Jay David. Morrow. 256 pp. \$6.50.

ASIA

Korea and the Politics of Imperialism, 1876-1910 by C. I. Eugene Kim and Han-Kyo Kim. University of California Press. 260 pp. \$7.00.

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The Autobiography of Bertrand Russell, 1872-1914. Bantam. 308 pp. \$1.25 paper.

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Marx and Modern Economics edited by David Horowitz. Monthly Review Press. 380 pp. \$7.95.

Theory of Economic Dynamics: An Essay on Cyclical and Long-Run Changes in Capitalist Economy by M. Kalecki. Monthly Review Press. 176 pp. \$6.00.

LABOR MOVEMENT

Most Uncommon Jacksonians: The Radical Leaders of the Early Labor Movement by Edward Pessen. State University of New York Press. 208 pp. \$7.00.

Rebel Voices: An I. W. W. Anthology edited by Joyce L. Kornbluth. University of Michigan Press. 419 pp. \$4.95 paper.

The Man Who Ran the Subways: The Story of Mike Quill by L. H. Whittemore. Holt, Rinehart and Winston. 308 pp. \$6.95.

LATIN AMERICA

Latin America: Reform or Revolution? edited by James Petras and Maurice Zeitlin. Fawcett. 511 pp. \$.95 paper.

Politics and the Labor Movement in Latin America by Victor Alba. Stanford University Press. 404 pp. \$12.50.

In the Fist of the Revolution: Life in a Cuban Country Town by Jose Yglesias. Pantheon Books. 307 pp. \$5.95.

The Twelve by Carlos Franqui. Lyle Stuart Inc. 190 pp. \$4.50.

Marxism in Latin America edited by Luis E. Aguilar. Knopf. 271 pp. \$2.75 paper.

POLITICAL THEORY

Modern Arms and Free Men: A Discussion of the Role of Science in Preserving Democracy by Vannevar Bush. M. I. T. Press. 273 pp. \$2.95 paper.

Ombudsmen for American Government? edited by Stanley V. Anderson. Prentice-Hall. 181 pp. \$4.95.

The Corporate Ideal in the Liberal State: 1900-1918 by James Weinstein. Beacon Press. 263 pp. \$7.50.

Marxism and Christianity: A Symposium edited by Herbert Aptheker. Humanities Press. 240 pp. \$6.00.

The Discipline of Power: Essentials of a Modern World Structure by George W. Ball. Atlantic Monthly Press. 363 pp. \$7.50.

Toward a Marxist Humanism: Essays on the Left Today by Leszek Kolakowski. Grove Press. 220 pp. \$5.50.

Negotiations by Herbert Marcuse. Beacon Press. 290 pp. \$7.50.

Marxism and Christianity by Alasdair MacIntyre. Schocken Books. 143 pp. \$4.50.

RADICAL MOVEMENT

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- History of Socialism: A Comparative Survey of Socialism, Communism, Trade Unionism, Cooperation, Utopianism, and Other Systems of Reform and Reconstruction* by Harry W. Laidler. Crowell. 970 pp. \$12.50.

SINO-SOVIET BLOC

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- The Chinese Labor Movement, 1919-1927* by Jean Chesneaux. Stanford University Press. 574 pp. \$15.00.
- The Chinese Communist Movement: A Report of the United States War Department, July 1945* edited by Lyman P. Van Slyke. Stanford University Press. \$2.95 paper.
- Constitutions of the Communist Party-States* edited by Jan F. Triska. Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace. 541 pp. \$12.50.

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