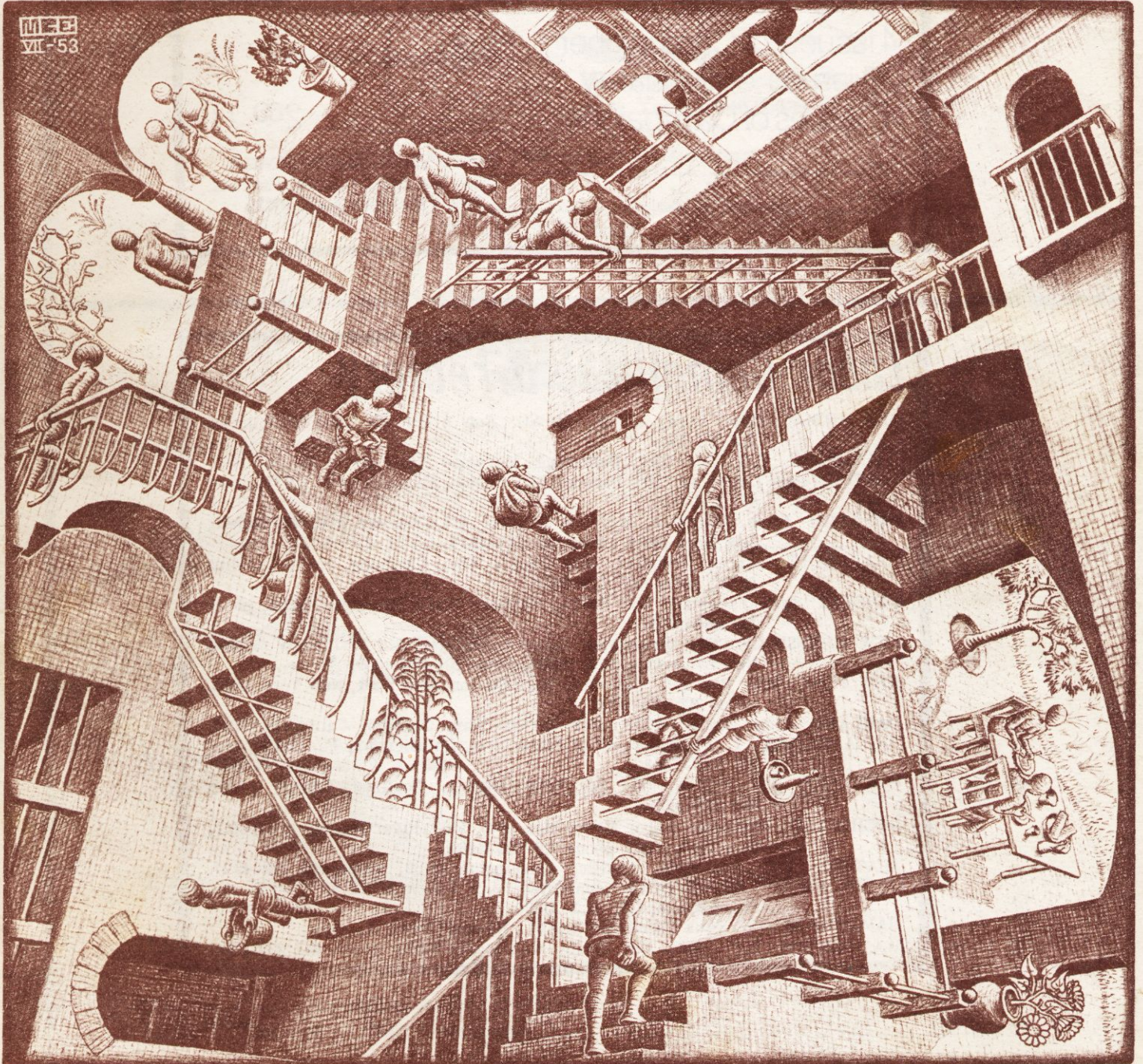


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The Electoral Issue for 1972

Leaders of the two dominant left wing organizations in the USA, the Communist Party and the Socialist Workers Party, are readying their membership and peripheries for their peculiar kind of "intervention" into the 1972 elections. **If they are left undisturbed in their project**, they will be feeding a process which discredits the entire left, a process which erases the left from the political map, a process which wraps up and delivers a helpless, hysterical population to victorious fascism in the United States within the next few years.

Each of these parties is running its own set of presidential candidates. Both intend to mobilize their respective youth groups, the Young Workers Liberation League and the Young Socialist Alliance, into ultra-busy electoral activity behind their own and "other progressive candidates." The Socialist Workers Party will repeatedly claim that it is independent of the capitalist parties. It will advocate universal suspicion of the capitalist parties. But the SWP's real politics will manifest itself just as it did in last June's NPAC conference, when the SWP violently opposed a motion censuring Vance Hartke's red-baiting attack on the Progressive Labor Party, arguing that such a resolution would be "divisive" of the "all-inclusive" peace movement. Meanwhile, the **Militant**, like the less devious **Daily World**, will carry a constant stream of barbs against the right wing, the Republicans, against Nixon and what it calls his anti-labor policies.

Regardless of actual political developments these parties will refer to "a growing movement of the people for peace" and "against Nixon," for jobs

and against reaction, and they will tirelessly feature the words, the campaigns and the smallest comings and goings of the leading liberal Democratic politicians, who are leaders of the "movement of the people." . . . and the leadership of this great electoral movement will narrow itself down to one man and one ticket late in the year, probably in the Democratic Party, but perhaps in a liberal fourth party.

The CP's and SWP's own candidates may well stay in the race to the end, attacking "Nixon's depression," Wallace's racism, and perhaps also the regular Democratic machine's pro-war stance. But if the CP and the SWP are allowed to follow out their own script unchallenged, the leading liberal politicians will go unscathed. No "irresponsible uproar" will be caused in the election by left intervention. Such campaigns have been the stock-and-trade of the CP where they have not even more blatantly supported capitalist campaigns on the premises of the lesser-evil hypothesis. The 1972 CP will reenact its 1936 "campaign" of Foster against Roosevelt — as farce.

What will such a campaign mean to the American working people? Nothing can be learned from such a platform, nothing **understood**, no sense be made from such a campaign, except the one thing which is advocated in every possible **indirect** manner: "The working class must vote for liberal capitalist candidates; Nixon must be defeated at all cost." The working class would be taught the lesson that the SWP preached when Harry Ring put his foot under Vance Hartke's shoe: The private interests of the working class

must be subordinated to the higher exigencies of a bloc with the liberal bourgeoisie.

As the economy spirals downward, as the government moves into increasingly strong police measures against wages, employment, welfare and organizing rights — in its attempt to stave off the great crash, as signs of hysteria go up among middle-class layers, the CP and SWP begin smoothing the sheets, fluffing the pillows, spraying the air, getting ready for a big-time affair with the capitalists.

The Danger

Without our interference, the CP and SWP election campaigns will seriously disorient the majority of American radicals. A significant section, sickened by the spectacle, will simply abstain from the election. They will descend to the syndicalist follies castigated by Lenin in *What Is to Be Done?* Thus, they will fail to enter the critical debate before the working class at just that time when, in the face of developing depression, the class is beginning to think politically.

Another group of “independents” on the left, understanding the folly of leaving electoral politics the uncontested plaything of the bourgeois candidates, will, for lack of any alternative, follow more or less unhappily in the footsteps of the so-called revolutionary parties, handing out leaflets, getting petitions signed, and smirking with embarrassment should they happen to view their candidates on television. The present fundamental issues of class struggle, the character of the economic crisis and its solution, the need for and the means of unifying the now fragmented working class, the looming decision on which class will be dispossessed, these issues will be ignored. And when they are not ignored they will be confused and clouded over. And when they are dealt with consciously they will be horribly distorted. The left-leaning population will hear miserable lies about the revolutionary left from the centrist left, self-justifying exaggeration about an **imminent** threat from the Nixon right, and ridiculous boasting about the strength of the left-liberal coalition.

If such a campaign takes place unimpeded, the population will learn nothing, and **gain** nothing from the socialist movement to help it defend itself against a ruling class that is **compelled** to

move more and more aggressively against it. As great layers of the working class and middle class are engaged in or directly affected by strikes, as we get economic and political disruptions, and clear indications of the collapse of the Republican and Democratic Parties, the breakdown of confidence in the present organs of capitalist rule here, as confidence is lost as well in the trade unions, the present form through which the working class defends itself — as these layers are beginning to look to the left for answers and for leadership, the left-liberal coalition would hammer **this** into the minds of the population: “Socialism is impossible. It will be unavailable in the foreseeable future.

“Yes, the working class is divided from itself and its parts are isolated, blacks from whites, employed from unemployed, workers from students, but the left wing **hails** the heroic struggles of all these isolated groups and wishes them well. Nonetheless, they must understand that certain further measures of so-called sacrifice and discipline will be required to save us all, to save us from reaction and to save us from the unexplainable economic disaster, that we really should all now unite under the leadership of that group so beloved by the population: liberal Democratic politicians.”

This is the message so familiar to students of Communist Party history. This is the message that Jacques Duclos brought to the French workers in 1936 when they seized factories throughout the country, prepared to make the victory of the Popular Front coalition at the polls a revolutionary victory. This is the message which William Z. Foster brought to the American workers, when his party was instrumental in the formation of the American Labor Party and the CIO-Political Action Committee, as vehicles to channel labor support to the Democratic Party.

This is a clear policy of disarming the working class. The lessons of the past are there to be assimilated. As the crisis grows, the CP and SWP would be throwing the socialist movement down into the cellar and slamming the door, then turning to the hysterical middle class, on whose heads **liberal capitalism** is falling apart, and saying to them, “Look, we leftists don’t have any weapons; you don’t have to be afraid of us.”

The effect would be to allow right wing demagogues to assign to the working class, and in particular its good-guy attorneys on the left, the

role of scape-goat for the collapse of bourgeois society. The effect would be growing middle class frenzy and hatred of the entire left, and bitter demoralization within the working class thus betrayed.

Without the most vehement factional intervention on our part, without revolutionary-socialist intervention to abort this process of surrender, we and the world's population with us are doomed to endure the rule of the most vicious fascism yet. We do not have time to lose being nice guys, sitting back and watching other so-called socialist groups "do their own thing," while we do ours. It is criminal stupidity to suppose that we can afford to wait, getting our "good socialist stuff" together, biding our time until our ideas win out in a popularity poll — presumably when the mass of people turn to socialism in desperation.

As the lesson of the Russian Revolution makes clear, the revolutionary movement wins hegemony over the working class only as it also wins hegemony within the socialist movement. The fatal decision of the historic process against the working class, in favor of fascism, barbarism and enslavement, will be made despite our best intentions, despite our most inspired rhetoric, despite our program — unless we win hegemony within the left. We cannot afford to leave the CP and SWP the political or any other arena unchallenged, no matter how pitiful and insignificant their campaigns may at first sight seem.

Is History Dead?

How many of us, who were in school in the 'fifties, read about the wars and depressions and revolutions, the great heroics, and the big turning points that took place in the past, and wished that we had lived then, when history was still going on? Many of us came to politics in the reawakened mass ferment of the 'sixties. Then we came to see how miserably tricked and cheated we had been by the schools, by the smug anti-communist liberals who waved microscopes at the cowering left and said, "Look through these and see reality." All of us have been mightily encouraged and excited by the furious political and economic developments of the present period, which put to shame and scorn the theoretical pronouncements of bourgeois "realists" about permanent prosperity and class peace.

And those of us who are Marxists have watched with satisfaction as the apologists retreated from one faltering explanation to another. There was the "revolution of rising expectations;" U.S. minorities and colonial peoples were doing so well that they developed unrealistic expectations, and ran riot. Then it was said that blacks were burning down the ghettos so that they could "get a little piece of the action." When the student movement surged forward and strike waves developed here and in Europe, culminating in the largest mass strike in human history three years ago in France, we heard that students and workers were acting crazy because they were so spoiled and pampered. Even the CP and the SWP rejected such arrant bourgeois nonsense.

Marx taught us that developments in society are a lawful process, that capitalist organization of the economy carries the seeds of its own strangulation and destruction, that inevitably profound economic crisis develops, that in that crisis the needs of the masses are not met and to protect us all from the utter ruin of society, the communists must take those seeds of ferment and make them flower, must take the economic crisis and turn it into a revolutionary crisis, must boldly supercede all existing capitalist social conditions.

Here many who call themselves "Marxists" part company with us. They agree that such notions are entirely laudable, and exciting, and are much superior to the ridiculous and petty ideas of the ruling class, but for one thing: history has stopped! Human history has come to a halt!

Yes, in the days of the ancients, when Marx and Engels and Debs and Haywood and Bukharin and Lenin and Trotsky and Stalin struggled and organized and wrote books, they were able to analyse current developments in society from their different standpoints and they played their decisively heroic or criminal roles amidst the giant currents of history, which still existed at that time. (When history stopped is a matter of conjecture, perhaps at the end of World War Two, or with the election of Eisenhower.)

To say to these criminally deluded fools that a decisive crisis is developing, in which revolutionaries must intervene accurately and ruthlessly if the working class is not to be crushed and the left destroyed for the foreseeable future, is

not just to get disagreement from them; they take such a proposition as a **complete nonsequitur**, as not applying at all to a world from which history has departed.

Lesson of 1933

Trotsky, writing for Communists in Germany during Hitler's rise toward power, tried to persuade the party to engage the non-party workers — most of the working class — in united front struggle around their immediate common interest, defense of the class against fascists. He knew this defense would be crucial because the pro-capitalist leaders whom the workers were then following were incapable of posing effective opposition to fascism. The centrist CP leadership was in a left-sectarian zig, following a wide zag to the right, which had come after what a reluctant Stalin had considered the biggest left zig of all, the Bolshevik revolution.

Frozen into ultra-left sectarianism, the German Communist Party committed lunatic acts of treachery against the interests of the working class. Without any plan for taking power themselves, they campaigned alongside the Nazi party to depose the Prussian Social Democratic parliamentary regime. The only possible outcome could have been and was Nazi conquest, but this did not worry the Communists who were calling the Social-Democratic workers "social Fascists." They so misestimated Nazism that they were calmly predicting that they would be elected to power shortly after Hitler was given the government. Such illusions naturally did not last for long.

Even in the face of this criminal stupidity, as the crisis multiplied and the behavior of the revolutionary left leadership did not improve, as the hour became very late, Trotsky did not say to the German Communists, "Only adopt my line instead of your present one and you will defeat fascism." He wrote of the real relation of class forces in society. He warned of the crucial subjective factor. The revolutionary leadership must win the confidence of the people. The workers' demand to be convinced when they ask, "Can you forge a strong and unified movement which can smash the present intolerable regime? Can you take and hold power and rule better than they?"

Trotsky said that even if the German CP completely changed its line, on receipt of a

telegram from Stalin, it would be impotent unless it changed its total social-organizational practice. The workers would demand to be convinced by actions as well as fine words that the Party was capable of taking power.

The telegram never came, and the complete and timely revolution of the party did not take place. The zig-zags, the treachery, and the irrelevance of the CP to the developing crisis of capitalist rule, **destroyed the possibility** of the workers' defending themselves, left them leaderless and apathetic. When the government of Prussia was actually deposed by Von Papen just prior to Hitler's taking power, the CP finally called a general strike. Nobody came. Only the police came. The workers had no confidence whatsoever in Communist Party leadership, didn't believe anything they said, knew that the CP **could not**, did not understand how to unify the population against the ruling class.

In the nightmare of Hitler's unresisted takeover, Trotsky's left opposition was of course destroyed along with the CP leadership, the trade-union leadership, all the workers organizations, all the liberal parties, all the non-Nazi parties. Trotsky could not appeal at the last minute to the masses to follow his left opposition, which had the correct policy, the correct understanding of the situation: hegemony on the left belonged to the Communist Party, and hegemony over German society belonged to the Nazis.

How does this relate to the U.S. election campaign in 1972? As we enter into the current period of breakdown crisis, relative hegemony on the left belongs to the CP and to a lesser extent the SWP. The working class still follows liberal politicians and their lackeys in the trade-union bureaucracy. But as capitalist rule loses its moral authority, becomes hated and an obvious burden to most people, the ranks and influence of radical parties will swell, just as the CP and Nazis both gained during the German crisis.

If the present left leadership goes to bed with the failed and useless liberals, and at the same time retains its hegemonic grip over the bulk of radical forces in this country, if it therefore is effectively the left, the visible left, that is, if there is a giant hole, a nothing where the revolutionary left should have been, then the victory of fascism and barbarism is absolutely assured. No amount of whining or self-consolation about how many votes

were mustered in the last election, or rank-and-file caucuses organized or about some community action project in which a socialist group is involved, will change that fact.

A little child has to learn that there are not two or more whole realities operating side by side, that what he does and what other people do occurs within the same unique whole process of reality. We on the left have to learn this fundamental concept on a much deeper level for political theory and practice.

We Challenge Them

In 1972, the CP and SWP, seeing only the limited perspective of increasing their gate receipts or their influence in "influential circles," are prepared to smother the working class in the swamp of liberal politics, despite the growing social crisis. We intend to prevent this from happening.

We shall continue to confront them in open debate: we demand that they renounce their scabbing, and that they actively support the strike-support committees which up to now they have sought instead to destroy. We know that pro-working class sections of their membership will more and more be attracted to our united front organizing campaigns. But this is not sufficient. It is of vital importance that a nationally significant socialist election campaign be posed as a political alternative for the working class.

We call upon the CP and SWP to withdraw their present farcical campaigns and join with us to pose a serious opposition. We call upon the Independent Socialist Party, the Workers League, Spartacist — all groups who call themselves socialist — to join us in such an election coalition.

We propose a national propaganda campaign around the 1972 elections to begin now. Such a campaign could be the voice of the now isolated groups of workers around the country beginning to form in rank-and-file caucuses and strike-support committees. Such a campaign could represent the unemployed, the growing numbers forced to accept welfare, minority groups, students. Such a campaign would raise an alternative solution to Nixon's Phase One, and Phase Two, and the coming Phase Three austerities against the American population. This campaign would demand that the real chiselers, the Rockefellers, the Lindsays, the bond holders, real estate speculators, and their

likes, be taken off the welfare rolls — the capitalist equivalents thereof. The theme would be the programmatic unity of the working class, the solution of the present developing crisis by ending the historically obsolete capitalist system of property titles, the solution of the crisis by the working class independent of its former capitalist masters.

Factionalism?

The strategy of our campaign from the outset is to give the CP and the SWP no peace whatsoever until they change their policy. Since their actions would tar us with the same smelly brush, we are compelled to concern ourselves in what some madman might consider the "internal affairs" of these parties. We are compelled to be unpleasantly factional. We will constantly and repeatedly and patiently ask that the Communist Party and the Socialist Workers Party, as well as any other group professing to represent the working class, join with us in our socialist propaganda campaign, in our campaign of class polarization.

The answer of the CP and SWP leadership to our request for their cooperation is already turning from silence into a shrill and slanderous and vicious "No," a wild campaign of saying "No." But given the ongoing work of an emerging socialist united front, given the beginnings of an election campaign by that united front, and given the understanding by at least the revolutionary sections of that united front of our urgent task, we will pull growing numbers of organizing forces into pro-working class political work and at the same time prohibit and doom the organizing efforts of those parties that betray the class they pretend to represent.

The scope of this campaign of course depends on the forces available and the success we achieve in preventing a left-liberal alliance. We may or may not be in a situation to run local or national candidates for election. This is not the time for boasting speculation or false pessimism.

A Quarter-Century Has — Passed

Generally, in this society there is no serious debate between a socialist and a non-socialist. The socialist premises his argument on the needs of society as a whole; to the non-socialist, immured in the particularities of his existence, these premises

do not exist. Despite their much-vaunted class consciousness, workers too in ordinary times see problems only in terms of the narrowest parochial trade union issues. Only at special moments in history does the working class for a brief instant dimly understand a new kind of consciousness.

In such mass-strike periods the class draws to it and represents the consciously felt interest of the majority of the people. Nonetheless, even in such periods the class can not take power unless it has been able to reorganize itself so that it has replaced the trade union and the bureaucrat at its head with the "soviet" and a revolutionary leadership. For this to occur, the kind of campaign which we propose must first have taken place.

Workers, students, and unemployed tend to see the solution to their problems in isolation from each other, seeing other sections of the class, of the potential soviet, the political working class, as being in competition with them. Thus they accept alliances with "their" capitalist, who will defend them against "outsiders."

The job of the socialist is of course to supercede these pseudo-defensive alliances with real class defense, to bring about working-class unity in a socialist movement. The first task is to crystallize the class issues before the electorate in such a way that they are situated within the whole process of class struggle, so that **the resolution of the struggle in favor of the working class is understood as both possible and necessary.** We must demonstrate the general in terms of the particular. Each worker, welfare victim, student must be able to see his or her particular problem in terms of the failure of capitalist development, the impossibility of further advancement under the present system and the threat of barbarous decay.

The same kind of program which we now offer on a limited basis, in local and regional strike support and budget coalition work, becomes the basis of a national program. If the Administration is unable to contain the growing depression, so that there is an accelerated rise in unemployment and curtailment of production, then our program will address itself directly to the problem of restarting production unencumbered with the stranglehold of capitalist property titles.

Marxists have long said that it is the proletariat's historic mission to continue the advancement of society as capitalist rule becomes capable only of depleting society. Concretely, in the emerging depression, this means: "We can start production and you can't; we can put the population to work and you can only throw them out; we can dismantle the parasitic military machine and you are constitutionally incapable of it; we understand how the economy works and breaks down, and you have demonstrated your fatal confusion and incompetence.

When capitalist candidates tell voters there are "no resources" left to forestall a drop in living standards, to prevent an attack on employment, wages, welfare, schools, hospitals, on our air and water, we must point to society's resources being held and squandered by their class, and to our ability, the ability of revolutionary socialism, to do otherwise. We point to hundreds of billions of dollars in debt-income going to banks and other capitalist institutions, billions which are being squandered in such sinkholes as maintaining and creating slums as speculative investments.

This kind of campaign is a calculated one. With limited forces its tactics will be carefully chosen to maximize its impact. Those places in which active strike support committees are now in existence will be obvious places for concentrated effort. The social composition of the united front carrying out this election tactic will be crucial. For success it will have to represent a growing cohesion of the now-disunited working class layers. It must mobilize growing numbers of radicalized youth, unemployed as well as employed workers, members of community and minority groups, and welfare recipients around a common program in a common organizational form.

Two or three thousand revolutionary socialists and a few thousand additional recruits from advanced sections of the class would give us the maximum kind of campaign it seems reasonable to hope for in 1972. Yet with so little so much could be accomplished. Such a coalition acting in the most determined manner to polarize the classes, and to introduce a revolutionary socialist alternative to empty populist rhetoric and liberal

demagoguery, would have the most devastating and far-reaching effects, laying the basis for a revolutionary movement in this country, a movement which would be prepared to contend for power within the next several years.

This is the perspective which is before us. It is not yet too late to begin the decisive practical

work which it entails. We urge every group which calls itself socialist, every individual who aspires to be revolutionary, to put aside old prejudices and light-minded denials of reality. Now is the time for the decisions which will commit the future course of history and perhaps the very existence of mankind.

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A Hindsight on Skinner's Beyond

By RICHARD ROSE

A cursory examination reveals that when Skinner tries to play his favorite stage role, "scientist," he merely acts out a disorder endemic to all behaviorists cum unreconstructed Pavlovians: running at the mouth. One could say that this affliction has been dogging the profession from its earliest days. Hopefully, behaviorists will find that the following description of their colleague rings a bell.

"In trying to solve the terrifying problems that face us in the world today, we naturally turn to the things we do best."(1) Thus begins B. F. Skinner's latest offering, calling forth the cozy sentiments of the 1940's musical hit song "Doin' What Comes Natcherly," above whose vapidness no subsequent Skinnerian sentence ever rises. He continues, "We play from strength, and our strength is science and technology,"(2) thereby wrapping himself in the respected mantle of the savant. The question for immediate clarification is whether when Skinner speaks, royally, of "our strength...science and technology," he speaks for science — or "Big Brother."

A Discredited Pseudo-Science

A cursory examination reveals that Skinner's "science" is none other than the godchild of the discredited John V. Watson, who over fifty years ago fathered the American school of behaviorists — practitioners of psychology minus the mind, i.e., mindless psychology. Watson wrote, "Behaviorism claims that consciousness is neither a definite nor a usable concept."(3) Denying the existence of consciousness and its subject, mind, he insisted

that "Psychology follow a single paradigm," namely, that the rule, or measuring rod, which the behaviorist puts in front of him always is: Can I describe this bit of behavior I see in terms of "stimulus and response?"(4)

Accompanying Watson's invertebrate S-R ontology was a corresponding lower order sensibility: "You, as a psychologist, if you are to remain scientific, must describe the behavior of man in no other terms than those you would use in describing the behavior of the ox you slaughter."(5)

Aware of Watson's discrediting, Skinner denies he is a revenant bearing Watson's warmed-over hypotheses. "I do not consider myself an S-R psychologist." The pretext for Skinner's protest that he worshippeth not the S-R divinity, as the cock crows thrice, is that later in his life "the basic notion of an operant emerged."(6) He expatiates: "An operant...is a class of responses, and a response is a single instance of that class." The "operant" is only an "R" after all, and Skinner's newly emergent "operant" is simply "old priest writ large." Accordingly, when Skinner concedes that S-R psychology "is approximately seventy years out of date," hoping thereby to distance himself from it, the senility he concedes is his own.

Inasmuch as Skinner represents not only a virtual plagiarism of Watson, but (hard as that may seem) an impoverishment on that "original," the criticisms that decades ago consigned Watson to the midden heap apply now with all the more force to Skinner's padded pretenses. There is absolutely

nothing new in Skinner's version of Watson's S-R psychology and in fact considerably less. For example: Skinner's rejection of drive theory and of attempts to discover the correlations between neurophysiology and "observable" behavior. Thus a refutation of the Watsonian system strikes with all the more force at the Skinnerian.

Freud

Watson's scientific pretenses were long since dispelled by scientists such as Freud and Koehler. Beginning in the 1890's Freud began a succession of discoveries which revolutionized man's understanding of the determinants of consciousness. These are conveniently summarized in his later work, *The Future of an Illusion*. There he discusses the various aspects of his own discoveries of the psycho-physical parallelisms, discoveries that tended toward major partial solutions of fundamental problems of mind-body interactions such as had been struggled with by the great philosopher-scientists since the time of Descartes. Freud's key contributions concerned the location of mind within the science: psychology, and bear on Kant's fundamental discovery of the necessarily universalizing action of mind on particular experience. For man to transcend the invertebrate "consciousness" of particular experience, man's psychic organization had to evolve a structure appropriate to the comprehension of the physical world and his increasing mastery over it. This parallelism, the implicit dialectic of being and consciousness, underlies Freud's scientific thought-in-general.

Freud devoted a major portion of his life to the investigation of the class of **universals** or **Gestalts** known as **neuroses**, those self-organizations of mental processes which he showed to be **plausibly appropriate universalizations** of individual particular experience. In his later years Freud discovered that the species-correlative of the individual neurosis was religion, i.e., **socialized neurosis**. He outlined the central mediating role the family played in the socialization or internalization process of the social neurosis, most particularly during childhood. In so doing he "discovered" the **unconscious**, that is, more accurately, he founded the science that elaborated its interactions with its "other," **human consciousness**.

Freud demonstrates that the Unconscious/Conscious dialectic is the

internalization of the dialectic between human individual needs and social needs, for him the "ego" versus civilization. But while recognizing the Rousseauian antinomy, Freud also realized, paralleling related discoveries in sociology by Emile Durkheim, that "civilization" (Freud's falsely universal euphemism for bourgeois society) necessarily exerts an external coercion on the individual, forcing him to subordinate his needs to those of society.

Unlike Rousseau, Freud realized that individual man's relation to nature was not a direct one, but mediated through society in the concrete form of the family and related sub-structures. Hence man's personification of the forces of nature in religion, religion being simply science viewed from a historically less advanced viewpoint. Man personified nature because that was his only effective relation to it, that is, through other persons. He thereby was able to make himself at home in a threatening natural universe by peopling it with congenial beings.

Even today sections of mankind in a relatively advanced state of childishness people the universe with paternal gods, as in the religion of patriotism — the secular worship of the fatherland. This tendency is succinctly summarized in Freud's thesis that religion corresponds to man's sense of weakness. The secret of the strength of religious ideas is seen to be that of the strength of human wishes in the face of helplessness.

Unlike empiricists such as Bertrand Russell, who are only able to understand religion, viz. Christianity, as a historical conspiracy against reason, Freud to his great credit understood the significance of religion as a historically necessary positive or integrative force in what would otherwise have been a chaos of antagonistic anarchist egos (in bourgeois society). Freud's discovery that religion was the neurosis of a society had its inverse application in the life history of individuals, namely, that neuroses as a necessary product of "civilization" were the private religions of the individuals. The individual's "own" religion enabled him to preserve his identity amid the chaos of contradictory particular social experiences. To satisfy his material and spiritual needs — socialized needs — man had to elaborate for himself a **persona** which would guarantee his social identity on some level, his fundamental identity because of his dependence on others.

It was within this context that the entire corpus of Freud's breakthroughs with regard to the various aspects of consciousness and unconsciousness — dreams, slips, taboos, neuroses, etc. — are to be located. He showed that, in bourgeois society, what is left of each individual's creativity tends to express itself through "sneak" ludicrous efforts to shove its mangled remains into circulation through degraded but at least concealed, therefore socially acceptable, forms.

It is no coincidence that the counter-cultural revolution, alias the cultural counter-revolution, expresses itself predominantly through music. Advanced victims of capitalism's mind-destruction deludedly suppose music to be the art-form which makes no statement concerning man; that therefore they can locate Early Stone Age passions in it without fear of discovery, hence without necessity for defensive censorious activity by the "super-ego." Such individuals would cringe to see translated into a prose more readily accessible to their formal-verbal consciousnesses the same approximate notions they twitch to with Pavlovian compulsiveness when mediated through rhythmic/melodic forms. They are like those ordinary mortals in the Teutonic myth who, not having eaten of the dragon's heart, cannot fathom the rede of the birds.

Gestalt Psychology

Discoveries of psychophysical parallelisms similar to those of Freud were made by the school of Gestalt psychologists. Like Freud they were concerned with discovering a solution to the problem: how is it that man's mind could be appropriate for comprehending and acting upon the world when based on the most limited of particular experiences of that world. Freud had elaborated how social consciousness, "civilization," was not a mere mechanically summed aggregate of the consciousnesses of its member egos. Rather, it was an opposing "other" of unique structure and force. Particular experience was not interpreted as a pure "in itself," but as determined particular interpreted according to the exigencies of an internalized "universal" or "a priori," the neurosis. So, too, Gestalt psychologists such as Wolfgang Koehler discovered respecting cognition or even perception, what had been thought to be discrete perceptual parts were in fact also determined particulars within a cognitive or perceptual whole. In short, that here, too, empirical coherence could

be obtained only by postulating the non-additivity of parts within a whole, and also the epistemological priority of the whole to its parts, contradicting a fundamental axiom of empiricism.

Koehler emphasizes that behaviorism — and in this it closely resembles its so-called arch-rival, introspectionism — manifests a religious belief in the existence and priority of things-in-themselves the fundamental postulate of empiricism. Both behaviorism as a so-called objective science and introspectionism as a so-called subjective science, reject mental organization as the scientific object for psychology, viz. reject the study of the necessary structuring properties of "O," the human "organism," that mediate, universalize, between particular stimuli and particular responses. The one, introspectionism, is simply biased toward the "pure" stimuli; the other, behaviorism, toward the responses — each within a common radical-empiricist worldview.

Having shown the essential methodological unity of behaviorism and introspectionism, Koehler points out that the behaviorist, obsessed as he is with proving man's objectivity (that is, his complete passivity) within what he conceives as a universe of pure things, "forgets that to prove the existence of the independent physical world is about as difficult as to make sure that other people have experiences."(7)

Koehler notes that the behaviorists are engaging in pure delusion when they suppose that they, posing as scientists, can so efface themselves that the world presents itself (to them? to God?) as a pure datum, as though it would not necessarily be affected in the very process of observation, either through the reordering by the observing scientist's perceptual and higher mental processes or palpable changes brought about in the real world by the very process of observation. Thus, says Koehler, when the behaviorists pay religious homage to the pure objectivity of physics they do not understand the elemental facts of scientific method, insofar as they fail to understand that "the material to be observed and the process of observing belong to the same system."(8)

With regard to scientific method, Koehler demonstrates his discovery, similar to that of Freud after the failure of the 1895 "Project": that each scientific "area" has its own specific methods of investigation. The behaviorists fail to realize

what was understood by both Freud and Koehler from different starting points, which is that "psychology as a young science" (the name of a chapter in Koehler's *Gestalt Psychology*) has need of its own methods which are distinct from those of neurophysiology. If the fundamental laws of human existence are other than the special "laws" of physics and biology, the paradigms par excellence for the behaviorists, the researchers in these latter fields will learn absolutely nothing about human psychological laws by methods appropriate only to those fields. But as Koehler points out, the behaviorists are as incompetent in their understanding of physics as they are of psychology.

For Koehler the fundamental property of mind is its **appropriateness** to interpreting the physical world, just as Freud's fundamental discoveries concerned the self-structuring of mind to make itself **appropriate** to the exigencies of mediating its relation to the "physical" world through that of the "social" world, whose lawful and contradictory relations are internalized in each individual.

In particular, man, as distinguished relatively from the lower animals, evinces his superior understanding of the physical world by his grasp of nature-as-a-whole, as contrasted with the stimulus-boundedness of the lower forms of life. In an overwhelming battery of experiments, Gestalt psychologists demonstrated that the S-R psychology of Watson and other behaviorists — which systematically rejects the organizing properties of the human mind — could in no way coherently explain processes which require Gestalt conceptions subordinating the particular to the holistic, e.g., the various constancies such as perceived constancies of size, shape, and brightness when physical stimuli are changing within certain limits.(9) According to S-R theory, since it is the **particular** physical stimuli which are learned, no recognition should occur if "important" stimuli are changed, all the more so when **all** stimuli are changed, as is indeed the case in a musical key transposition, where recognition nevertheless not only occurs, but the transposition itself may even pass unnoticed. Small wonder Skinner is reluctant to admit the fact that he is an S-R psychologist!

Koehler, even before a similar observation was made by Chomsky, noted that because of such devastating fallacies in the very premises of behaviorism, the behaviorists try to fudge their way out by using the term "stimulus" in as loose a

fashion possible. If pressed, they use a "stimulus" or "stimulus set" — Skinner's "operant" — as a **quasi-Gestalt** in one embarrassing situation while vehemently denying elsewhere they do any such thing.

Even relatively simple perceptual processes break down the pretenses of S-R theory. The Ehrenfels qualities such as "cleverness," "turbidity," "roughness," etc., have been demonstrated to be part/whole, i.e., Gestalt relationships. That is, a liquid which is called "turbid" within one environmental context will be perceived as "clear" in another. Similarly with lower order concepts such as "simple," "regular," "harmonious," "symmetrical," "round," "edge," "beginning," and, of course, "part" itself! Not surprisingly, Skinner also wants to do away with the teaching of perception in psychology departments — it's too embarrassing for him.

So impoverished, in fact, is the behaviorist system that it is not even adequate to describe behavior among the higher orders of animal life. The beasts refute the behaviorists, says Koehler, by rejecting the stimulus-boundedness of their S-R psychology. Koehler cites Lashley as having "been the first to show that animals 'transpose.' Having been trained to choose, say, the darker of two gray objects, they shift their response when two other objects of the same class are presented."(10) The animals Lashley studied thus learned not a particular stimulus but rather a relation between a part "A" and a whole which consisted of both A and not-A. It was not the physical stimuli which the animals learned but the concept "grayer" or "darker."

To the naive observer it must seem rather astonishing that decades after scientists such as Koehler and Freud had made revolutionary breakthroughs in the understanding of consciousness and its determinants, completely discrediting the pretensions of behaviorism and its founder, Watson, should be treated to a re-hash of this unscientific junk; and that furthermore this god-son of a quack, Skinner, should be reputed "dean of American psychology"!

Let us heed what Dr. Skinner has to say for himself...and sigh that science and education should come to this.

“As far as I’m concerned, the organism is irrelevant as the site of physiological processes or as the locus of mentalistic activities.(11) Here Skinner puts forward his one claim to “innovation” with respect to his master, Watson, which at the same time perfectly catches the master’s spirit. Onto the midden heap of his own mindlessness he tosses his own brain.

Ignoring the obvious implications of this heroic ablation Skinner claims that “My interest is in a science of behavior which is part of biology; it deals with observable events, not with the fictitious or metaphorical apparatus which Freudians feel they observe in the organism.”(12) Like the hurdy-gurdy monkey who must bite the preferred coins to see if they are real, Skinner understands “observable events” as “Can I smell it? chew it? bounce it? etc.

Skinner seems to be so totally ignorant of his paradigm, biology, as to suppose that it is concerned with “observable events” in the immediate “sense certainty” sense by which he seems to understand it. The fundamental discoveries of biology have never been “observable events” which were physically “seen” by their discoverers. Darwin never “saw” evolution with his two eyes nor Oparin the spontaneous generation of life. Thus when Skinner says, “as far as I’m concerned both Freudian theory and conditioned reflexology are cumbersome and unnecessary explanatory systems,”(13) his application of Occam’s rason strikes less at Freud than his own cortex, which it will be remembered he earlier obligingly removed from a position of importance for him. In fact, by rejecting conditioned reflexology, which is the camouflaged premise of his behaviorism, he simply gives explicit form to this act of self-mutilation.

Criticisms of Freud & Koehler

Not that Freud is immune to criticism any more than Koehler. But the serious criticisms which have been directed toward their major work have tended only to buttress their case against behaviorism all the more firmly.

Whereas for Skinner “it doesn’t make any difference” as to “whether things are conscious or unconscious,”(14) Fromm has shown not only the significance of the distinction but also the revolutionary praxis in Freud’s formulation of the

distinction — the demand that the unconscious be made known to the conscious. This was Freud’s own formulation of the great Enlightenment program to submit religion-in-general to the critique of reason. But, says Fromm, Freud erred in hypothesizing man as primarily an individual who bears sexual and self-preservative instincts overlain by a secondary social nature. In doing so Freud created “a variant of the classic *homo economicus*, in this case a *homo sexualis*.”(15) In various of his works Fromm discusses the actual social etiology of what had been viewed as instincts by Freud in what amounted on Freud’s part to a half-hearted preservation of *l’homme-machine*.

Where Fromm criticizes Freud for mistakenly locating in the individual-genetic what is actually derivable through the socialization process, a similar criticism is tendered by Piaget against “Gestalt psychology’s static a-priorism.” Just as *homo sexualis* is essentially born with his death and sex instincts as biological givens, despite the secondary social overlay, so Gestalt-Mensch is born with his immutable cognitive categories. Piaget’s critique of Gestalt psychology takes the form of a theory of development specifying the major, relatively stable cognitive paradigms which the child successively evolves in the process of becoming a cognitive adult. Thus Gestalt psychology’s discovery of the priority of the whole to the part is extended by Piaget to developing-individual-mind-as-a-whole so that all cognitive behavior at a relatively stable moment of a given maturation stage tends to subordinate all the derivative schemata to one principal scheme or paradigm, as if it were a Kantian transcendental ego or “universal of universals” but one having a species-lawful individual history. Piaget’s own words are, “The . . . schema is . . . a Gestalt which has a history.”(16) As Piaget’s scientific biographer puts it, both Piaget and Gestalt psychology “agree that cognitive activities . . . are structured totalities from the outset and not, as classical associationism would have it, isolated elements or associative syntheses of such elements. Both theories are holistic to the core.”(17)

Chomsky’s Attack

A recent, important underlining of Skinner’s blundering is set forth in Noam Chomsky’s review of Skinner’s *Verbal Behavior*. To appreciate the devastation wrought on Skinner by Chomsky’s annihilation of the book, one has only to recall

that all breeds of logical positivism, behaviorism included, reduce “the whole of reality to physical phenomena and a language.”(18) Linguist Chomsky takes away Skinner’s “language”!

Chomsky’s critique argues that no S-R psychology can explain even the merely formal capacity of human beings to produce and understand an unlimited number of grammatical sentences and distinguish them from ungrammatical sentences, from sentences which are grammatical but nevertheless meaningless, from mere sentence fragments, etc. — all of which are real capacities of actual human speakers. Nor can S-R psychology explain in a coherent and economical way how an ambiguous sentence is assigned multiple interpretations, or conversely, how several seemingly different sentences have a common underlying syntactical structure or formal semantic interpretation.

The only “language” that could come out of the S-R psychology of Skinner’s **Verbal Behavior** is parrot prattle, the goal of Skinner’s reform in education: programmed instruction.

Chomsky demonstrates that not only are Skinner’s linguistic qualifications nil, but in fact his so-called “theory of language” is nothing more than a hocus-pocus reformulation of already debunked traditional formulations such as used to be taught in country grammar schools. The key Skinnerian “scientific” vocabulary of **stimulus, response, reinforcement, etc.**, is used so imprecisely and changeably as to be virtually meaningless.

Stimuli, Chomsky points out, is often used by Skinner in such a way that “stimuli” are driven back inside the organism with a resulting **reinstatement of mentalistic psychology** in the actually derogatory sense of that term — this merely renews the suspicion already implied by Koehler, that each behaviorist discovers “man’s” — that is, his own — mindlessness in a traumatic moment of **introspection**, thereafter hysterically repressed.

Chomsky demonstrates that when Skinner is sufficiently vague to evade indictment for such embarrassing mentalisms, and yet not so constantly vague as to be utterly vacuous; in these exceptional moments — and they are indeed rare — Skinner becomes **circular**. Unfortunately, Chomsky

diagnoses this phenomenon as a mere quirk in the realm of verbal discourse.

Skinner’s Epistemology

Skinner, apparently in the dark as to his actual existential situation and craving for lux if not for veritas, cries out his fundamental scientific postulate, “We need a complete account at the external level.”

In Hegel’s time it was the phrenologists who sought to give “a complete account” of mind “at the external level.” These knuckleheads, whom Hegel soundly rapped in the **Phenomenology**, seem to have found a new birth in the modern Skinner-heads who feelingly finger the rugosities on each other’s numbskull. Skinner says, “I defined theory as an effort to explain behavior in terms of something going on in another universe, such as the mind or the nervous system. Theories of that sort I do not believe are essential or helpful.”(19) The phrenologists at least tried to explain the inner workings by means of the outer bumps. Skinner, on the other hand, argues that the world itself is nothing but the protuberances.

The most staggering of Skinner’s delusions — that he is a scientist — orbits around the **idee fixe** that psychology should develop itself according to the **paradigm of the natural sciences**. “We can follow the path taken by physics and biology by turning directly to the relation between behavior and the environment and neglecting supposed mediating states of mind.”(20) Since the higher species distinguish themselves from the circling planets and one-celled forms of life precisely by their possession of those “mediating states of mind,” what Skinner is proposing to do by “neglecting” them is to neglect altogether the problem of explaining the special laws characterizing the uniqueness of these higher beings. This is admitted explicitly when Skinner complains that psychology, unlike physics, keeps on “personifying things. . . as if they had wills, impulses, feelings, purposes.” Skinner blankly supposes that the anthropomorphizing tendencies of ancient physics should be equally eschewed in the study of — the **anthropos himself!** Imagine, says Skinner, treating the behavior of human individuals, or even housecats for that matter, as governed by laws other than those contained in Newtonian physics.

But Skinner is lacking even a grasp of high

school physics. Physics too, e.g., atomic physics, was developing elaborate and penetrating theories about internal structures and particles which had never been seen in the physical sense-certainty manner Skinner doggedly demands. If scientists had followed Skinner's logical-positivist advice, they would have confined themselves to mere hare-brained attempts to find statistical correlations between the "observable events" of input and output, eschewing any attempt to formulate creative hypotheses regarding the atom's internal structure to explain those various correlations.

Fortunately for technology, real scientists, as opposed to Skinner know better. Thus, Skinner merely takes up the posture of Descartes of the *Rules for the Regulation of the Mind* when he says, "scientific progress comes about by a progression from the more easily answered questions to the more difficult."(21) The reality behind Skinner's cliché is that Skinner demands, or pretends to demand, the solution to problems which could not possibly be solved now, to put matters charitably. Chomsky scoffs at Skinner on precisely this point in noting that Skinner futilely seeks the causation of specific verbal behavior, e.g., what Joe says when the income tax form arrives, when little is "known about the specific character of this behavior"; similarly, says Chomsky, Skinner speculates "about the process of acquisition" at a time when there is little "understanding of what is acquired."(22)

It will be recalled that in this same review of Skinner's *Verbal Behavior* Chomsky exposed the fraud of Skinner's "scientific objectivity," by exposing Skinner's use of concealed mentalisms of the most imprecise sort. In one of numerous examples to the point, Chomsky notes that "when Skinner uses probability insofar as he means anything at all he is merely substituting the word probability, with its favorable connotations of objectivity, as a cover term to paraphrase such low-status words as interest, intention, belief, and the like."

Skinner's own verbal behavior is thus comparable to the mumbo-jumbo rantings of an advertising executive who scavenges among four centuries of science and civilization culling scrap phrases whose real significance is beyond his ken.

But if Skinner represents the decomposed

leftovers of the incompetent Watson, brought in from the compost pile where they were deposited some decades ago and now reheated in chemically degraded form by Skinner, it remains to cite clinical details as to the organic composition of this pestilential heap and to inquire why anyone in his right mind would be caught consuming this mess, rather than immediately seeking appropriate garbage disposal methods.

Since Skinnerian man is devoid of mind, even the Lockean *tabula rasa*, one must not dwell too long on a phenomenology of Skinner's mindlessness, since there is literally nothing in it for us. Human behavior is entirely determined by what Skinner calls "the environment." "It is the environment which acts upon the perceiving person, not the perceiving person who acts upon the environment."(23)

But Skinner uses the term "environment" not to refer to what is outside the organism. "Awareness is a reaction to a part of the environment — like any other behavior — but it happens to be a part of the environment contained within the organism itself." Skinner's "environment," just as Chomsky noted of his usage of "stimulus control," is an example of the worst sort of disguised mentalism.

Remembering that one of Skinner's fond poses was as a biologist, what biologist would confuse the fundamental organism/environment distinction as Skinner does — and not be run out of the profession in ridicule? Just as Skinner fondly employs the term "organism" to blur the distinctions among human beings, pigeons, and amoebae — precisely where the distinctions define the subject at hand — he follows this up by dismissing as irrelevant the organizing properties of the organism — be they "mediating states of mind" or mere physiological processes — precisely when such distinctions are crucial for distinguishing the organism from the thinghood around it.

Skinner's "organism" is in no way differentiated from the subject matter, say, of crystallography. Not only does Skinner blur environment and organism, not only is his organism unorganized, but his remaining notion of environment is no less of a muddle. Sometimes it consists of the world of things, that is, nature without man, e.g., the world at 10,000,000 B.C. or earlier. "Our school systems could bring people even more under control of the

natural environment and less under the control of what other people say.”(24) The prehistoric date is not an exaggeration; Skinner explains the importance of “building dependence on things.” He says, “One of the advantages in being dependent on things rather than on other people is that the time and energy of other people are saved.”(25)

Skinner is pathetically unaware that man’s dependence on “things” is invariably mediated by his dependence on other men, on human society in general, which alters nature by making it nature-for-man, whether in the form of food, clothing, books, rat-cages, pigeon-ping-pong balls, etc. Man’s dependence “on things” is no saving of the “time and energy of other people” in another form, i.e., as the appropriation of an aliquot portion of the labor power of human society as a whole, including that of other historical human societies now passed away. Man “dependent on things rather than on other people” is a feral being outside the human species, thus no human being at all.

The only individuals who could envisage “building dependence on things” as an alternative to “other people” are believers in fetishism. Real nature is humanized nature, nature-for-man, known and appropriated only through mankind as a whole. Skinner’s fetishism is the degraded religious perception viewed by the advanced victim of capitalism. The closest Skinner comes to recognizing man’s dependence on man is his comment (characteristically contradicting his earlier statement that it is better “being dependent on things. . . than on other people”) that “among the ‘things’ upon which a person should become dependent are other people.”(26)

Not only does Skinner contradict the imperative of his earlier statement, but he has man becoming dependent on man because — “other people” can be brought under the category of “things.” But this particular reduction is no great Skinnerian discovery by any means. It is the quintessential epokhe of every capitalist ego for whom all “goods” have a single “value,” their going prices as commodities. Skinner’s “science” is on this point nothing but naive commodity fetishism.

When Skinner picks up another pose, “Darwin,” he writes like this: “Environment acts in an inconspicuous way; it does not push or pull, it

selects, ” ignorantly blurring the distinctions between the human environment in which man lives and the pre-human environment of the planet several million years ago. He blurs over the distinction between the **purposive** characteristics of human social evolution as contrasted with the **relatively blind** forces operative in the earliest Pleistocene.

Who Controls the Environment?

It is this amorphous environment, which at once contains everything and nothing, by which Skinnerian man’s “behavior is wholly determined.” (27) But just as he muddied his use of “stimulus” and “environment” as much as he could to hide his charlatanry, so too he falls back on phrase-juggling to hedge his statements about “determination” or “control.” Thus, although man’s “behavior is wholly determined” by the environment, Skinner proceeds then to contradict himself by asserting that “man is always changing his environment”(28) so that “the individual controls himself by manipulating the world in which he lives.”

Skinner attempts to preserve the agreeable predicates of autonomy (“the individual controls himself”) while simultaneously vociferously denying their existence. What he attempts to justify, but by the most evasive treatments, is that he would wish most people to be “wholly determined” by “the environment” because “the control of the environment as a whole must be delegated to specialists — to police, priests, owners. . . and so on, with their specialized reinforcers.”(29) Being “on principle” opposed to “aversive” methods, no doubt Skinner will protest he is imagining a new kind of constabulary armed with candy canes when he alludes to the special place he has for the “police. . . with their specialized reinforcers.”

According to Skinner, popular opinion invokes a fetish against his proposal for control “as if the answer were necessarily threatening.”(30) For after all, says Skinner, although in a scientific laboratory where pigeons are being studied, the “apparatus exerts a conspicuous control on the pigeon. . . we must not overlook the control exerted by the pigeon.”(31) The pigeon has after all “determined the design of the apparatus and the procedures in which it is used” just as “in a very real sense, then, the slave controls the slave driver.”

Skinner’s program to reduce the laws of human

nature to those of a de-humanized nature, the de-natured Skinnerian “environment,” is continued in his attempted reduction of human freedom to lowest-order terms. “Man’s struggle for freedom is not due to a will to be free, but to certain behavioral processes characteristic of the human organism, the chief effect of which is the avoidance of or escape from so-called “aversive” features of the environment.”(32)

Skinner “simplifies” the moral question of “freedom” to a form perhaps appropriate for the amoeba. The Skinnerian “freedom” is simply the programmed twitch-reflexes of lower organisms to physical stimuli — a negative tropism. Accompanying the “simplification” of the problem of human freedom is that of its basis, the human individual self, called “autonomous man” by Skinner, which he also tries to simplify out of existence. As Skinner puts it, “Environmental contingencies now take over functions once attributed to autonomous man... It is the autonomous inner man who is abolished, and that is a step forward.”(33)

The most recent practical effort to abolish “autonomous inner man” is the acute “depersonalization” suffered by new arrivals to German concentration camps. The Dutch Jew Elie Cohen accounts how prisoners suffered “an estrangement from one’s ego, an estrangement from one’s own body, and an estrangement from the surrounding world.”(34) He goes on to describe this as a subject/object split in which one becomes a mere object like other objects. Cohen explains this “acute depersonalization” as “a defense mechanism of the ego” under extreme conditions in which reducing oneself to a depersonalized, vegetable-like state was appropriate to the particular reality of the concentration camp “environment.”

In explaining why so few prisoners escaped from the transport trains that carried them from one camp to the next, Cohen notes how successfully the Nazis had abolished the “autonomous inner man”: “For years we had had it hammered into us by the SS that we only had to obey orders, that we must not think, that we must not take any initiative, that others thought for us, that we must not take our fate in our own hands — and consequently I was afraid to make an independent decision. Those who did venture an attempt to escape apparently had sufficient independence of

spirit left to free themselves from this influence at this critical stage.”(35)

The irony of Skinner’s reduction of freedom to “flight from aversive stimuli” is that it is precisely those in whom the “autonomous man” has been “abolished” who, being for effective purposes vegetables, cannot perform that even seemingly elemental flight, let alone higher expressions of freedom.

The only real coherence in Skinner’s thoughts that binds together all the vacuity, triviality, circularity, etc., is his unflagging drive to reduce human attributes to those of things. The abolition of self and freedom necessary to this process is accompanied by an appropriate value-theory which could be characterized as Mindless Manicheanism. His universe is composed of two Grand Classes of unrelated things, the Good Things and the Bad Things. “Good things are positive reinforcers.”(36) Their salient characteristic is that “we ‘go for’ such things.” As for the Bad Things, “they are all negative reinforcers, and we are reinforced when we escape from or avoid them.”

It should be obvious that what is “good” for one individual will be “bad” for the next. This being clearly the value system of a disorganized anarchy, it is therefore necessary to introduce a contrary and contradictory optimizing principle to attempt to create an organized anarchy. “Presumably, there is an optimal state of equilibrium in which everyone is maximally reinforced.” Skinner is reviving systematic contradictions of the English utilitarians Bentham and Mill — omitting the political principles of these authors, their defense of bourgeois-democratic liberty. These latter he indeed attacks, while at the same time employing the value-theory on which Bentham and Mill premised their defense!

Skinner then introduces a third optimizing criterion which contradicts both his first and the second, to the effect that things are Good or Bad “because of the contingencies of survival under which the species evolved.”

These amazing Skinnerian discoveries, each of which contradicts the other, he calls his “science of values” and describes this triumph as the definitive “province of behavioral science,” as contrasted with the other sciences. Then, a few pages later, when it is in the interest of his argument to

de-emphasize the value-biases of his "science," he negates all that he has said about his postulated values by insisting that his "technology is ethically neutral"!

The self's loss of freedom in Skinner's system, its reduction in value to that of a thing, and that in turn to an inchoate "ethical" anarchy, has its corresponding "other" or universal loss in the loss of dignity. The self's loss of freedom, its value, could only come about through the abdication of the social basis, the laws or universal guarantees, which insure the realization of its own particularity. In any case, Skinner makes freedom (for him a negative tropism) and dignity (special positive reinforcement) so pale, no one would possibly want to defend it in the form he posits it.

Having thus attempted to persuade the reader that he and other human beings have no self, freedom, or dignity; and, that there are three different methods of valuing things, each contradictory, Skinner now assumes the reader is prepared to accept a still fourth "value." This will be seen in retrospect as the value toward which all the others and related digressions were tending. "A culture which for any reason induces its members to work for its survival is more likely to survive. It is a matter of the good of the culture, not of the individual" (Skinner's own emphasis).

It is to this "value," that is, the survival of a culture regardless of the values it bases itself on, which is Skinner's real "science of values." When Skinner says his "technology is ethically neutral" he is simply expressing his belief that the "law of the jungle" applied to human affairs is ethical neutrality unleashed.

It has been documented what "value-free" technology of behavior the Third Reich developed to induce "its members to work for its survival." As Himmler put it, "What happens to the Russians, what happens to the Czechs, is a matter of complete indifference to me. . . . Whether other nations live in prosperity or starve to death interests me only in so far as we need them as slaves for our culture."(40)

What the anarchist Himmler shares with Skinner is that both alike hold to the form of pragmatism which sees the particular (the "culture" or "master race") as in irreconcilable contradiction with other particulars. This outlook pervades Skinner:

"Perhaps we cannot now design a successful culture as a whole, but we can design better practices in a piecemeal fashion."(41) Insofar as Skinner has any concrete proposals as to how "to solve the terrifying problems that face us in the world today," they are such "piecemeal" drivelings as one might hear outside the door of a bar at closing time, e.g., "the affluent pursuit of happiness is largely responsible for pollution."(42)

Skinner, like his pigeons, is trapped in the cage of his own world view. As an empiricist, he invariably assumes that what holds for the part is true of the whole. "A child is born into a culture as an organism is placed in an experimental space. Designing a culture is like designing an experiment."(43) No matter what Skinner says, he invariably assumes the universe is his own triviality and street corner wisdom blown large. A pigeon turns a figure-eight; he assumes he can solve the housing shortage; and in no more than one sentence: "Overcrowding can be corrected by inducing people not to crowd"(44) — doubtless, by the "police. . .with their special reinforcers."

Skinner's Religion

To acknowledge Skinner for the fool he is, to trace him in all essential features to the debunked Watsonian paternity, to show that his own novelties merely multiply the disaster — is to leave unexplained a crucial question without which all else is incomprehensible. How is it that such a clown is reputed to be the foremost psychologist in the United States? Why is behaviorism the hegemonic form of psychology when in truth it is not even psychology at all — or any other science for that matter?

The **beginning** of an understanding lies in the secret that the Divinity School at Harvard University has relocated itself in the offices of the psychology department. Skinner revives the Jamesian tradition as Harvard's most distinguished variety of religious experience.

Feuerbach has demonstrated that "heaven" has always been mankind's earthly essence pasted upside down in the stars. The heaven of the behaviorists — their alienated essence — they name The Environment. It is even more nebulous than such places generally are — a plurality of dead objects — sans mind, sans relations, sans everything. The behaviorist Environment is as

empty as what it externalizes — their own dead heads.

It was Antonio Gramsci's insight that common sense is simply debased religion. Skinner demonstrates that the converse is also true. Behaviorism is common sense elevated to theology. The rites of the behaviorist mass are celebrated — the way aspirins are sold on t.v. — with much brouhaha of retorts and alembics.

The Skinnerian Nirvana is union with the realm of the inorganic, where no self-consciousness or even consciousness exists. The Skinnerian Organism is controlled, as mortal men by the Omnipotent, by a Mysterious Outside Force called Environment.

Men themselves are conceived as helpless ignoramuses who must be manipulated behind their backs on a piecemeal basis by this god, The Environment, and — the hidden *deus ex machina* — the technicians "with their specialized reinforcers."

As Marx observed, fetishism is the crudest form of religion. Animism, animal worship, is at least a step higher: man's god becomes the animal.(45) Skinner's god is located in the thing.

Don Burrus Quixote

In one of the medieval Spanish ballads concerning the national hero, El Cid, it is described how upon his death he was embalmed by a servant and lashed to his war horse with a board stuck up his spine for support. In this manner the Cid's mortal remains were able to assist his Christian survivors in routing a Moorish king twelve days after his decease.

If embalmer Skinner does not have such luck in a similar strait, it is perhaps that after so many years of oxidation there is not much left of the 17th century *l'homme-machine* to prop up. Yet this is the corpse he brings into battle still. As he puts it, "I short-circuit Kant by going back to the British empiricists."(46)

In the short-circuiting process irreparable brain damage would seem to have been inflicted, since Skinner fails to note that the classical empiricists such as Locke and Hume, even though they strove to show how the individual's knowledge was determined by particular experience, at least never thought for a moment of ignoring the problem of explaining consciousness. What they shared with

Kant, Hegel, etc., was a commitment to explain precisely the relation of man's consciousness to his being in the world. Though Locke and Hume falsely saw the world of particular sense experience as the sufficient determinant of consciousness, a judgement for which they were severely criticized by Kant and Hegel, as scientists they never tried to "solve" the problem by denying consciousness, i.e., denying the problem even existed. The short-circuited Mr. Skinner simply removes the inner content of these philosophers as part of his undertaking.

At times, Skinner implies that his objections to consciousness and subjectivity are of a principled sort, as when he quotes Popper approvingly, "What we want is to understand how such nonphysical things as purposes, deliberations, plans, decisions, theories, tensions, and values can play a part in bringing about physical changes in the physical world." But as often as not Skinner behaves like any academic duke trying to protect his fief from scholarly squatters. "The important objection to mentalism is of a very different sort. The world of the mind steals the show. Behavior is not recognized as a thing in its own right."(47) Harvard psychologist Skinner is ignorant of the fact that one can as little discuss human behavior after having removed the human mind as human breathing after having removed the lungs.

In the seventeenth century, empiricists performed the useful service of attacking those metaphysicians whose preoccupation with the "beyond" suspiciously side-stepped the real problems of the real world. By the empiricists' insistence that man's feelings and ideas arose from the reality of man's being in this world, not the beyond of the next, they undermined the medieval theological doctrine that man must before all else cultivate his soul for the journey to the hereafter and not trouble himself with the misery of the world of the here-and-now and its monarchs.

Skinner — the same way he tries to pose in the laboratory smock of the physicist or biologist — also tries to play the revolutionary Rationalist critic of theology. But his *sans-culotte* is lumpy from the garment he wears underneath, a cassock. Fighting a revolution three hundred years too late can at best be a quixotic deed, and more likely, a counter-revolution.

When Skinner, in the 20th century, fancies he becomes Instant Scientist by mumbling that in a

“scientific conception” of man “a person does not act upon the world, the world acts upon him,” his mechanistic translation of the Newtonian paradigm, which was quite suitable for solution of limited problems of celestial and earthly mechanics as could be handled in Newton’s time, becomes simply a voodoo-chant when applied not only to human or higher animal life but even physics itself.

As Piaget noted, “Positivism is a certain form of epistemology which neglects or underestimates the activity of the subject. . . All my studies have demonstrated to me the role of the subject’s activities.”(48) Neglecting “the activity of the subject” — that is the real content of Skinner’s illiterate homage to the 17th and 18th century empiricists. It is obvious he has no real knowledge of their significance — he, like any half-literate crank, simply appropriates what gossip he has heard of them, provided these rumors are at the same time agreeable to his own sophistries.

The other aspect of empiricism which Skinner appropriates in his eclectic fashion is that of **being-in-itself**, the notion that the universe is made of an infinity of atomic facts, things, or events, and that the complex is simply a **mechanical** composition of these discrete and unchanging facts. It is an outlook that pervades Skinner’s work, as that of radical empiricists generally. In this sense, as Koehler noted earlier, underlying both the behaviorists and the introspectionists (such as William James) there is an inherent unity which belies the surface appearance of antagonism. Thus James, describing the foundations of his method in his *Essays in Radical Empiricism* says, “My description of things, accordingly, starts with the parts and makes of the whole a being of the second order. It is essentially a mosaic philosophy, a philosophy of plural facts like Hume and his descendants.”(49)

Skinner, of course, is too much the untutored indifferentist to be so explicit about his philosophy; he would prefer not to have one at all. He reveals it despite himself e.g., the earlier phrase about behavior being “recognized as a thing in its own right,” or the manifold passages where he shows his ignorant belief that society is simply the additive property of the individuals in it. “A species has no existence except as a collection of individuals, nor has a family, tribe, race, nation, or class.”(50) This viewpoint was refuted by Durkheim and Freud, who showed that it is precisely the real existence of societies, classes,

families, etc., which determine to a significant extent the individual’s behavior. The **reductio ad absurdum** of Skinner’s notion, that the properties of the whole are identical to those of the individual, is Skinner’s pronouncement that “a citizen” all by himself “may overthrow a government.”(51) Such idiocy is simply part and parcel of his observation that “a culture is not the product of a creative ‘group mind’ or the expression of a ‘general will.’”(52)

The Windmills Win Out

It was precisely the idiot tradition of facts-in-themselves, of the whole as a “secondary” phenomenon, which was undermined by revolutionary developments in the best French 18th century philosophy and thoroughly overturned in the revolution in German critical philosophy from Kant through Marx. When Skinner “short-circuits” this critique in order to more passionately embrace the 17th century mechanical materialist corpse, he performs a ritual shared by all modern-day positivists.

The initial repudiation of the empiricist tradition came from its own progeny, the French epigones of Locke. Thus while Condillac merely managed to translate Locke into a statuesque Gallic, his colleague Diderot demonstrated in the d’Alembert dialogues his superiority, two hundred years before the fact, to Skinner and similar retrograde evolutionary lines.(53) In these dialogues he not only demonstrates, contrary to Skinner’s view, the real existence of a species as something other than the individuals in it, but in fact shows that the individual’s existence is dependent on that of the species rather than the Skinnerian converse. He furthermore postulates, a century before Darwin, the evolution of the higher species out of the lower on a holistic-materialist basis.

Like the related discoveries of the Gestalt psychologists in psychology and Einstein in physics, Diderot refutes the Newtonian notion that motion exists in the thing-in-itself, demonstrating, on the contrary, that it can only be coherently presented as a part/whole relationship, a point Kant reflected in his unknowability of the thing-in-itself.

As against the incoherence of the logical positivist world of pure, independent facts, Diderot affirmed that “everything is connected in nature”

and that these relations are “known to us practically, by experience.” He mocks the reductionist method of the positivists, which attempts to destroy the whole, at which level the problem is located. “Division is incompatible with the essence of forms, since it destroys them.”

Nor did Diderot simply understand these matters formally but evinced an understanding of other aspects of general biology besides evolution, and in fact represented in his best works a more coherent method of understanding nature than that refracted through Darwin’s Malthusian views, the prevailing form of empiricism in Darwin’s day.

Diderot realized on the one hand that the human body was not a pure-and-simple individual but in fact an organized process subsuming innumerable determined beings each with a merely relative independence of its own. Conversely, he noted that the bee-species-individual was not the individual bee but rather the hive as a whole, inasmuch as no specialized individual existed apart from that whole bee-being. A related discovery was made a century and a half later by Eugene Marais in his *The Soul of the White Ant*, but worked out in greater detail, showing that the characteristic functions of living organisms exist only at the level of the termitary in the case of the white ant.(54)

Diderot advanced the view of a unitary material universe consisting of mutually dependent and interacting hierarchies of matter at various levels of organization, each of which had its own laws which could not be reduced to those of the lower orders. This holistic matter-aggregate, negated as a merely static moment and instead conceived as an unending matter-flow-through-time approximated Diderot’s conception of evolutionary materialism. “Who knows what races of animals have preceded us? Who knows what races of animals will come after ours? Everything changes and everything passes away, only the whole endures.”

The major shortcoming of Diderot’s dialectic is that although he arrives at the insight that “the existence of connected phenomena” is “known to us practically, by experience,” he cannot reasonably explain how man could come to comprehend the whole through the moments of his own particular experience. Locke’s *tabula rasa*, the mirror with a memory, was unable to help him. For all the neurophysiological nets Diderot had run to and from the back of the glass, he had no way

to explain how he, Diderot, could understand the whole.

Diderot comes to an understanding of the world which refutes his still essentially Lockean epistemology, but is unconscious of the dilemma. Hume, on the other hand, becomes conscious of the fallacy of Locke’s attempt to explain universality but lacks Diderot’s holistic outlook. Hume therefore remains the skeptical empiricist rather than becoming skeptical of empiricism.

Self and Freedom

The explosion of heightened powers of subjectivity reflected in all the resonant layers of political and cultural life in the period around the French revolution was in fact due to a sudden awakening of the creative powers which resulted from the new inter-dependency of developing bourgeois society.

What Skinner mocks as the “autonomous man,” the concept of self whose reality is diversely described by Rousseau, Kant, and the utilitarians — that was just the other aspect of the new dependency, the developing collectivity of post-mercantile society.

A distinctive aspect of the consciousness-in-general of a socialist society is that the interrelatedness of the self and the collectivizing society is seen with open eyes, whereas in bourgeois society that fact is religiously hidden. The real basis of individuality is the social division of labor realizing itself in expanded reproduction. The more primitive the society from the point of view of productive organization, the more homogeneous, hence dispensable, particular labor in it. The more advanced the society, the more it must value the individual precisely for his individuality, inasmuch as his unique qualities of labor or conceptualization, realized socially, are of value to the whole society in the expanded reproduction process. For this reason, societies actually in such an expansive, relatively self-conscious phase of their development, elaborate laws or rights to protect the individual and thus the “engine” of its own productive growth.

When Skinner attacks the 18th century bourgeois-revolutionary program of freedom, dignity, autonomy, etc., calling for their abolition,

he is calling for nothing less than a return to primitivism. But this fervor for primitive solutions to the problems of capitalism in advanced decay was observed sufficiently in Germany and Italy several decades ago to obviate further desire on the part of any rational persons for a re-run of these experiments. In fascism, the "soul" of "advanced" capitalism expresses itself precisely through the primitive forms of slavery, barbarism, etc., having once disposed of "unscientific" "mentalisms" such as those political liberties which remained prior to its accession. It is hardly surprising that fascism, as the swinging soul of capitalism in its last drag, a Tarzan pelt, will require a Skinner.

Given his atavistic tendencies, it is not surprising that Skinner would represent an at least pre-18th century understanding of the world and attack from that retrograde standpoint the ideals of the bourgeois revolution itself. Indeed, his utterances tend to reflect such abysmal ignorance of civilization as it has been known in its better moments in the last two or three centuries that it is small wonder, perhaps in self-defense for his cultural mongolism, that he regards civilization as an accident. "Accidents have been responsible for almost everything men have achieved to date."(55)

Accidents are the one "degree of freedom" in the Skinnerian system of mechanics — the same pseudo-freedom as in the white-noise "music" of Flushing-John Cage.

Other Critics of Skinner

Of the reviews of Skinner's text by certain of the leading bourgeois newspapers and journals, perhaps the most contemptible is the *New York Times*' Lehmann-Haupt who averred that there was "no gainsaying the profound importance of B. F. Skinner's new book, *Beyond Freedom and Dignity*" and that "if you plan to read only one book this year, this is probably the one you should choose." By way of explanation Lehmann-Haupt notes that "Skinner is not nearly so vulnerable as he once seemed" because "he has confronted his many critics with telling counterarguments" so that "the book remains logically tenable."(56)

Similarly, the reviewer for *Psychology Today*, which also published the book in condensed form in its own pages, and sponsored it as a selection of its book club, demonstrated mental defects similar to those of Lehmann-Haupt, hedged round with, in

the reviewers own words, "pluralism, flexibility, moderation and the capacity to listen" — those enduring qualities of the conceptual mediocrity. According to that reviewer Skinner is to be congratulated for describing things as they really are. "We may still pay lip-service to the folklore of freedom and dignity, but every person who works for a large institution knows that autonomy, individuality and independence really matter little in his world," a point of view which is precisely that of Skinner. The alienation of the capitalist work-place is used as an argument for removing individual rights altogether. The reviewer goes on to argue that "We are victims of our incredible inventiveness and ingenuity. Loss of freedom is the price we have been compelled to pay for the automobile, the computer, the jet plane, the supermarket,"(57) and so forth. Here, again, is Skinner's notion of science as that which makes man more and more pre-determined, when on the contrary it is precisely scientific knowledge which progressively frees him from the chains of a heteronomous necessity.

Although Chomsky is predictably successful in his *NY Review of Books* article in deflating some of the more egregious of Skinner's pretenses, he is unable to make good on his promising opening hint that he would show the significance of Skinner's pseudo-science being promoted at the present time.(58) Instead, Chomsky makes it painfully apparent that he understands the significance of *Beyond Freedom and Dignity* in only a libertarian-anarchist fashion. Thus "modern industrial society," according to Chomsky, has "tendencies toward centralized authoritarian control," all of which is simply Hannah Arendt's "totalitarian" society driven rebottled.

He further advertises the limitations of his formalistic critical competence by supposing that because "Skinner's science of behavior" is "quite vacuous," which is indeed the case, it therefore follows that it "is as congenial to the libertarian as to the fascist." Chomsky identifies vacuity with neutrality, the null-state, just as in his theory of language he mistakenly identifies creativity with the infinite generativity of grammatical sentences as a formal competence. Anyone who has read, say, *Mein Kampf* realizes how specially agreeable vacuity-posing-as-science is to a fascistic outlook. Thus Chomsky catches the gas-oven aromas emerging from Skinner's *Beyond* as a mere abstract formal possibility. Their location in present and

immediately forthcoming history eludes him.

Before investigating further the reality of Skinner's vacuity, it is useful to note here that neither Skinner nor his various reviewer-adherents or half-critical critics arise out of a void themselves. The thesis that man is mindless has pervaded the American intellectual "environment" for several generations as numerous academicians have introspectively assumed the real world was constructed of the same stuff as their own scholastic fantasies.

As immediately available examples one has the entire structural linguist school of Bloomfieldian epigoni such as Hockett and his senile cousins. Like Skinner, the structural linguists try to play Toy Scientist by reducing language to their own atomic-phonemic noises and then working ponderously by sort-and-paste methods toward the sentence, hysterically trying to restore by mechanical addition that whole they destroyed in their original reduction. Denying the notion of concepts underlying the semantic interpretation of phrases and sentences, they attempt to explain meaning in terms of an S-R psychology identical to that of the behaviorists, with equally dismal results.

Similar proclivities for mindless empiricism have reigned for generations in American philosophy. William James boasted that his "description of things... starts with the parts and makes of the whole a being of the second order." He eliminated Mind by merging the subjective and objective into an amorphous flow of Experience. James' most accurate observation was that empiricism is a better ally of religion than other philosophies.

Other leading exponents of the long-standing Anglo-Saxon tradition of mindless empiricism out of which a Skinner could spring forth are the Deweys, Quines, Ayers and all their camp followers.

It begins to become less surprising that such an egregious pseudo-scientist could become "America's leading psychologist" when one sees his moral cousins similarly enthroned in other fields. Logical positivism and its specialized reflections into the various disciplines is presently the hegemonic world view among most Anglo-Saxon individuals.

The major intellectual breakthroughs of the

nineteenth and twentieth centuries, notably in the "social sciences," have been either implicitly or explicitly a refutation of the tenets of empiricism in its various forms, including mechanical materialism. Such have been the discoveries of Durkheim, Freud, the Gestalt psychologists, Piaget, Chomsky, Fromm, etc. — aside from the more obvious extraordinary breakthroughs of Kant, Hegel, Feuerbach, and Marx.

It is no coincidence that the best of bourgeois scholarship and physical science has generally taken at least a Kantian-level critical standpoint toward empiricism. No science of human society could possibly be developed on the basis of an empiricist philosophical viewpoint.

The relative limitations of the discoveries of these important non-Marxist scientists remain to be resolved by creative breakthroughs emerging concretely out of more advanced worldviews. A case in point is Chomsky's merely formal notion of linguistic creativity. Chomsky resolves the problem — unmanageable with an S-R psychology — of language universals and the child's discovering natural language grammar from an undetermined linguistic input. He does so by recourse to what he calls innate ideas, but which might as well be termed a species-hereditary "a priori." As a pre-Hegelian, Chomsky locates these universalizing structures entirely in the individual human child's species heredity, neglecting, as does Piaget also, the social formation of universals in the child. By the criterion of coherence with what is known otherwise of man, with which their discoveries must ultimately be shown to be coherent, their formulations will necessarily be superceded by others which reconcile the various presently existing incoherences.

From Ideology to Fascism

To explain why logical positivism and its various sub-species remain hegemonic in the United States, it is necessary to expatiate further on the question of the relation of Skinner's vacuity to his present popularity and future "utility." Before these "pragmatic" aspects of behaviorism can be discussed concretely, it is helpful to note in general terms how a fascist movement comes into being.

In a period of profound economic collapse, advanced capitalist states are no longer able to mediate between the various classes and layers of

the population through parliamentary and other democratic-juridical forms, but are instead impelled toward police-state and ultimately fascist forms of government in order to impose the necessary — from a bourgeois point of view — “rigorous cost-cutting” solutions to save capitalist property titles in their hour — or decade — of need. For reasons documented elsewhere, this is precisely the character of the present decade throughout the entire capitalist sector unless halted decisively by successful socialist revolutions.

The immediate point for consideration is the sociological process by which fascist movements are built up out of the “intellectual” productions of capitalist house servants such as Skinner, even when such persons rightly claim to have no conscious fascist intentions. In this context it must be remembered that it is precisely the house servant’s proven qualities of social cretinism which helped him earn favor in the first place, but which also insures that he remains operative at a high level of unconsciousness. This caveat applies with all the more force to a Skinner, the very premise of whose pseudo-science is the impossibility for him of thought.

The question of conscious intentions aside, it is crucial to note a point which would not have been as necessary to make an audience of pro-working class individuals several generations ago. Today the general mindlessness of bourgeois intellectual life has become so pervasive that it has tended to discredit altogether the notion of ideas as a force in history.

A fascist movement does not develop just in the streets. It also develops in the realm of ideas, although these ideas, in truth, are the distillation of the gutter, and must return to whence they came to become a material force.

In ordinary times, the gutter has no use for the syllogisms emanating from certain professorial orifices. In a time of capitalist economic collapse, however, the two related forms of filth hunger for each other. Their symbiosis is an essential aspect in the development of a fascist movement.

The particular form of such academic fascist ideology, as Skinner’s, corresponds to the sociological imperative of a fascist movement, to weld together otherwise antagonistic interest groups which are each trying to liberate themselves

in their own alienated terms, as though they were things-in-themselves. This is an imperative for the fascist movement, for which there is no principled, i.e., coherent solution. The fascist movement needs a “philosophy” which, precisely through its eclecticism and vacuity, provides the basis for an irrational unity. The “philosophy” simply picks up whatever scraps of congenial ideas happen to present themselves. The “philosophy” is thus put together on the same opportune basis as is the fascist social movement itself.

This is not simply an instance of fortuitous parallelism. Ideas do not exist as disembodied gases detected by instruments in their invisible peregrinations through the atmosphere. Academic ideas, in particular, have intellectuals (or, semi-intellectuals) attached to them — the publicly certified attorneys for those ideas — and attached to the attorneys and thus to the ideas of the attorneys, through links of varying strengths, are different strata of the masses. The “criticism of religion,” the struggle in the realm of ideas, is only in the delusions of liberals some kind of Socratic dialogue between gods each of whom squats on his own free-floating cloud. Any real struggle in “the realm of ideas” leads to the discrediting of the attorneys who have organized masses of people around those ideas, hence the winning-over of defecting layers of the masses to one’s own ideas, leaders, and associated masses.

It has been supposed that fascist movements have no philosophies — because of the eclectic, vacuous, and pseudo-scientific character of the intellectual output of these movements. It is precisely the opportunist-recruitment imperatives of fascist movements which account for the unstable, eclectic and national or parochial character of their philosophies. Just as demoralized layers of the population are recruited on some basis, any basis, as they become immediately available, so also with the “ideas” of a fascist “program.” However degraded they may be from a scientific point of view is unimportant. What counts for the pragmatically functioning fascist organization is, “Does it work? — will it recruit a few more Brownshirts?”

The salient aspect of any future fascist philosophy, having otherwise acknowledged its seemingly haphazard character, the nation-specific and contemporary accidents by which a Rosenberg comes to be produced out of available German

traditions, a Gentile out of Italian, etc., what all of these philosophies have in common, which is simply another way of expressing their unscientific character, is a degraded concept of man which coincides with then-current self-conceptions of demoralized layers of the population. Indeed, one sees this all the more strikingly when the essential *Untermensch* character of the fascist philosophy attempts to disguise the fact in the wish-fulfillment language of the *Uebersch*.

Thus, while the opportunist-recruiting imperatives determine the essential parochial-national character of various fascist philosophies, what they all have and must have is that underlying degraded self-concept. For the thrust of a fascist philosophy, however vacuous or circular it may seem to the formalistically-inclined critic, is to induce the masses it organizes not merely to associate themselves in some unspecific way with the movement representing those ideas, but to prepare in them with a mentality which will make them fit instruments for what that movement must accomplish. The degraded, anti-scientific concept of man is no accidental feature of the fascist philosophy. It is what a fascist society requires of its cadres, both what they do to themselves and, as cadres, to others. The *Uebersch* who allow the gassing of Communist, Jew, gypsy, etc., *Untermensch* degrade themselves by admitting that the same could be done to themselves, that they too are "cost reducible."

But this mental preparation for a vegetable obedience was hardly something created *de novo* by the Nazis in 1933. The Nazis simply snatched up notions already "in the air" among lumpen layers and their academic soul-brothers, the intellectually degraded professors. The Nazis had simply to organize these ideas into a mass force.

Such conceptions exist in the United States of today no less than the Germany of the 1920's and 1930's — tricked out, however, in native costumes which give them that "homey" quality craved by the philosophically rootless wherever they are.

These religious conceptions in their most sophisticated, therefore dangerous, form are the various branch sects of the Mother Church of logical positivism. For reasons having to do with its evangelical propensities, to be discussed below, the Church of the Behaviorist is the most aggressive of these sects.

All the sects, like the Mother Church itself, grew out of the centuries-old preparation of the English-speaking soil by the decayed compost of British seventeenth and eighteenth century philosophy.

Logical positivism, the fungous skeleton slithering out of the ex-Humed and un-Locked casket of empiricism, appears in its apotheosis as modern mindlessness, its degradation of man to thing, and its assumption that truth is located in the particular. It is this general form of future fascist "Soul" which already exists as a hegemonic intellectual culture in North American universities and among related layers of the population. It needs but to be turned into a mass force by the welding together on the one hand of the petit-bourgeois layers molded by these ideas, and, on the other hand, the various separatist and particularist groups already half in motion and in many cases already influenced by these ideas in their accessible street corner form.

The mindlessness of logical positivism and behaviorism is an immediately available "resource" for shaping fascist or pro-fascist movements among intellectual-oriented layers of the American population, though other familiar American intellectual products will vie also to make their contribution, e.g., pragmatism. Whether logical positivism itself even in vulgarized form could ever become the explicit philosophy of a fascist movement is not so much the point — it is the process of mental preparation of cadres and the general population which makes the hegemony of these ideas presently dangerous to humanity.

In an epoch of relative stability of the capitalist economy, when there exists, at least in the advanced sector, a real basis for parliamentary-democratic processes, the professors drone on with these wretched ideas as they have for centuries and the damage, though real enough, is limited. It is precisely in the context of a collapsing bourgeois order that socialists can only view the present hegemony of pseudo-sciences such as behaviorism as of the utmost consequence.

Skinner's Fascism

The pro-fascist mental preparation induced in layers of the population is not simply confined to the broadcasting of these ideas throughout the universities and the public media. Skinner's

behaviorism is no mere abstract propagation of ideas about this fraud and confined only to the university population. He also calls for a program of implementation, a "technology of behavior," which is to be implemented throughout the population, and which has as its end the creation of precisely the form of human mind and social relations which his theories falsely attribute to actual man.

Skinner's theory of mind, his S-R psychology, is not simply a passive theory about what Skinner thinks might be the case but is precisely what he intends to bring into being, men who in effect act as though they "emit" pure responses to pure stimuli. This Skinnerian conception, if realized, would be the suitable general form of man for only one kind of state. It was precisely such conditioned "organisms" (Skinner's preferred "scientific" term for humans) who were sought out by German industrialists during the latter portion of the last World War to work as slaves in the factories expressly located nearby the concentration camps for that purpose. Skinnerian man is none other than the notorious "Kapo."

How we are to get from "here" to "there" can be pieced together from Skinner's various "practical" efforts or of those associated with him.

Skinner's advocacy of doing away with "freedom and dignity" will have come as no surprise to those who understood his pedagogical theories, e.g., his invention, programmed instruction. Man's freedom, in the cognitive sense, is his ability to generate concepts in a manner undetermined by particular stimuli. **Intelligence**, contrary to the racist professor Jensen, is a **social product**. When Skinner locates learning as an S-R bond rather than in the concept and characterizes knowledge as an individual product, he is at the same time implicitly destroying the related political aspects, e.g., freedom, dignity, the civil rights of "autonomous man," etc. Any creature whose learning consisted wholly of associations between fixed stimuli and fixed responses would be constitutionally incapable of civilization and a lot else besides.

Skinner himself admits there is no place for creativity in his system because, as a "determinist," he is certain that "nothing can be truly creative" and one certainly "cannot teach creative behavior"; "if it's creative, it has not been

taught."(59) The non-existence of creativity in Skinner's system is just another expression of the non-existence of concepts in it.

Creativity is the concept-forming human mind's relative freedom from stimulus-boundedness. Creativity can be taught, indeed is taught, not as a thing-in-itself, but through the socially mediated process of concept formation, whereby the individual creates the concept anew in a unique way, that is for himself or herself. Creativity is not a one-shot affair of some first discoverer. The "discoverer's" ability to discover the concept in the first place was mediated socially. So is his ability thereafter to realize the concept, which requires the productive efforts of others, and **their own creative powers** to create "his" concept for themselves.

Or, if Skinner means when he says, "You cannot teach creative behavior" that one cannot teach consciousness of that creative concept forming process, that too is false. To conceptualize the concept-forming process is quite possible — but not for the S-R psychologist or his programmed-learning victim.

Skinner's pedagogical thinking is as reactionary as the decayed 17th century empiricism through which he mediates it. He openly celebrates the most mindless survivals of traditionalist education with its inculcation of alienated "special skills" which are mysterious ends-unto-themselves: "I certainly believe that something happens when, let us say, you memorize a poem or facts of geography. Techniques of memorizing are common to both and, as special skills, could be taught by themselves, apart from subject matter."(60) By this argument, since "memorizing" is a "special skill" which "could be taught" by itself "apart from subject matter," if Skinner had his way he should have the child learn the "special skill" of memorizing by working on paired nonsense syllables where there are no distracting stimuli. Then the child would learn the only "language" which is coherent with the theory of Skinner's discredited **Verbal Behavior**. This would in turn induce the proper state of mind for appreciating Skinner's other literature, such as his **Beyond**.

The best thing to be said for Skinner's writings on programmed instruction in any case is that they are the most explicit statement of the "drill and grill" pedagogical practice of American higher

education as it is presently known, that is, as an ill-disguised form of S-R conditioning of the paired nonsense-syllable variety.

A more overt form of S-R learning techniques, indicative of the kind of teaching Skinner and his fellow behaviorists would like to implement explicitly in educational institutions at large has been tried out in "laboratory" form at various hospitals for the "severely mentally ill."

The system consists of putting hospital wards on "a 'token' economy. The patients are paid tokens — actually poker chips — for the work they do: for cleaning up corridors, dormitories and rooms; brushing their teeth, keeping clean, combing their hair, avoiding aggression — even for engaging in social conversation... They can redeem their tokens for candy, clothing, tobacco," etc., and in fact they cannot even "get any food without paying for it with tokens. They can earn the minimal number to buy meals if they are neat and clean at mealtimes."(61) Both the behaviorist doctors and the "severely mentally ill" have come to the same conclusion, says the article, the slogan of all pragmaticists, "It works."

"True," Skinner remarks, "it is a simplified world," but then again it is one "in which a psychotic person can lead a decent life."(62) Cures thus are thrown out the window; an artificial laboratory situation is constructed to encourage the patient to reduce what remains of his mind to the dimensions of the mental hospital's token economy. Thus do logical positivists solve the world's problem, by alternately shrinking the world and the humans in it.

Another characteristic application of behaviorism's so-called "value-free" technology of behavior, this time in a wider, more ominous context, casts light on Skinner's supposed "liberal" aversion to aversion. A Skinnerian-type New York State welfare plan, scuttled for the moment because of opposition, called for reducing the state's already starvation-level welfare levels drastically, so that clients could not physically survive unless they made efforts "to be good" in various specified ways. This would earn them "brownie" points to help them earn their way, incrementally, back to the previous starvation level.

Though Skinner would no doubt feign horror at

such nakedly "aversive" techniques, it represents precisely the same method Skinner used to get his rats to do S-R conditioning experiments for him; the "bad" aversive "starving" was a necessary prelude to the "good" reinforcement of "correct" behavior.

If the preceding examples were not sufficiently indicative of the drift of the Skinnerian system, Skinner underlines his points further in his discussion of wage labor as a conditioning technique. Wage labor, Skinner says, is "an unhealthy system." If one nods at this point, expecting Skinner to now extoll the virtues of socialism, one is in for a great surprise. What is wrong with wage labor from the Skinnerian point of view, it turns out, is that it involves "some kind of supervision in order to be effective" because there is not enough reinforcement of the worker, i.e., it only comes once a week or more with the paycheck.

A reinforcement techniques which does not have these disadvantages, Skinner notes, occurs when the "organism" works on a "piece-rate system." This "schedule," Skinner notes, unfortunately "is so powerful that most labor unions oppose it; it can burn a man up — exhaust him." But if one does not have any unions to worry about, and one does not worry whether such a schedule will "burn a man up" or not — the Krupp family in the early 1940's didn't — one can only with Skinner nod appreciatively that "it commanded productive work. There's no doubt about that."(63) In fact, Skinner says, advertising his talents to those who may be interested, "these are just examples" among the many applications "to economics."

Continuing in this vein, "What we do in the laboratory, of course, is extremely technical, and often complex but it points to systems that would generate almost any level of activity on the part of a worker or student — anyone, for that matter, who is being reinforced by what he is doing."(64) And this all with poker chips, no doubt, backed up by pokers.

Lest the worker or student worry about the consequences of being worked at "almost any level of activity," Skinner is ready to reassure him or her that it is not work but leisure that is most threatening because it "is a condition for which the human species has been badly prepared." Well, not the whole species. It turns out there is a minority

who over the generations have been biologically selected for their ability to adapt to leisure. The trouble is, it is precisely this select few who have “contributed very little to the gene pool.” I.e., it is the genetically degraded non-leisured majority section of the population, the working class, which incessantly copulates and populates, thus creating a situation in which most of the species is only “prepared for short periods of leisure.”(65) Thus Skinner echoes the racist views of his mongrel colleagues Jensen and Herrnstein.

In this light, workers, students, and other members of the human race will no doubt understand that Skinner is not raising an empty issue of academic philosophy when he avers, “Perception, needs, purposes, opinions and other attributes of mind have no existence.” For the working class, for all objects of capital, that would indeed be the truth, the realization in practice of the Skinnerian system.

Behaviorism’s leading Rattenfaenger underscores the conclusion himself. “Survival is the only value according to which a culture is eventually to be judged.”(66) Thus concepts of “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness...have only a minor bearing on the survival of a culture.”(67) Then the Red Scare used to justify the suppression of democratic rights: “our culture...continues to take freedom and dignity, rather than its own survival, as its principled value, then it is possible that some other culture will make a greater contribution to the future.”(68)

True we have our little failings, for “cultures seldom generate a pure concern for their survival — a concern completely free from the jingoistic

trappings, the racial features...or the institutionalized practices with which cultures tend to be identified.”(69) Skinner speaks from personal knowledge here, as a racist, some of whose best friends are racists. But, as in Nazi Germany, “Why should we not look forward to a master subspecies or race? If culture has evolved in a similar process, why not a master culture?”(70)

He repeats Hitler’s “International Jewish Conspiracy” Thesis: “the Nazi ‘solution to the Jewish problem’ was a competitive struggle to the death. And in competition of that sort the strong do seem to survive.”(71) Thus anything goes. “A culture which for any reason induces its members to work for its survival is more likely to survive.”(72) The emphasis is Skinner’s own. But “it should be possible to design a world in which behavior likely to be punished seldom or never occurs.”(73)

True, there may be some problem cases. But “if all this fails, punishable behavior may be made less likely by changing physiological conditions.” Then, invoking the spirit of Dr. Kenneth Clark, America’s most learned drug peddler since Dr. Timidly Leering’s forced exile, Skinner explains how. “Hormones may be used to change sexual behavior, surgery (as in lobotomy) to control violence, tranquilizers to control aggression.” Why not, says Skinner, for “we have not yet seen what man can make of man.”(74)

Which brings us full circle to what Skinner, in the beginning of his *Beyond* called “the terrifying problems that face us in the world today,” one of which is obviously Skinner himself.

Footnotes

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12. *Ibid.*, p. 7.
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24. Skinner, p. 74.
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27. Skinner, p. 107
28. *Ibid.*
29. *Beyond*, p. 155.
30. *Ibid.*, p. 168.
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32. *Ibid.*, p. 42.
33. *Ibid.*, p. 215.
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35. *Ibid.*, p. 44.
36. *Beyond*, p. 104.
37. *Ibid.*
38. *Ibid.*
39. Skinner, p. 144.
40. Quoted in Cohen, *Human Behavior in the concentration Camp*, p. 226.
41. *Beyond*, p. 156.
42. *Ibid.*, p. 3.
43. *Ibid.*, p. 153.
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50. *Beyond*, p. 209.
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59. James, *Essays in Radical Empiricism*, p. 24.
60. Skinner, pp. 86, 72.
61. *New York Times*, Oct. 10, 1971, medical section.
62. Skinner, pp. 42-44.
63. *Ibid.*, pp. 37-38.
64. *Ibid.*, p. 39.
65. *Beyond*, p. 178.
66. *Ibid.*, p. 136.
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The Social-Democracy's Roots

By GERRY ROSE

The Twentieth Century history of "democratic socialism" is a record which, in general, no longer shocks us. We have grown too accustomed to the British Labour Party's role of towel boy for Anglo-U.S. imperialism. We have grown too accustomed to those professed "socialists" who seek personal security and celebrity by joining the ranks of the witch-hunters. We are not particularly shocked that the Nazis initiated their repression under the "legitimacy" of Social-Democratic-sponsored "emergency laws," or that, in enough cases, it was Social-Democratic prison guards who often first kept custody of the Nazis' early batches of political prisoners.

Yet the crimes of the old German Social-Democracy (SPD) of 1914-20 still horrify us after a half-century. Witness a few salient facts of the post-World War I record.

In January, 1919, Gustav Noske, Social-Democratic chief of the German Army, organized six corps ("Free Corps") of volunteers, largely recruited from the ranks of notorious units which had just previously been engaged in butchering Baltic supporters of the young Soviet republic. It was those forces under Noske's orders which the Social-Democracy turned against the Berlin workers' movement. It was the Social-Democrats who issued the orders for the assassination of Luxemburg, Liebknecht and others. It was the Social-Democracy which unleashed these paramilitary units against the striking Berlin workers of March 1919.

During the period from March 3 to March 8,

1919, the paramilitary units under the immediate control of Social-Democrat Noske committed the most odious crimes, including the machine-gunning of 1,500 handcuffed strikers in military custody. The same Noske publicly endorsed these crimes after the fact: on March 9, 1919 he proclaimed: "any person encountered fighting with weapons (handcuffs?!!) in his hands against the government is to be shot at once."

A year later, in March, 1920, military units under General von Luttwitz presented the SPD government with an ultimatum on the disarmament issue, starting a process known as the Kapp Putsch, a short-lived right-wing military dictatorship. Who was General von Luttwitz? He was the SPD's General Kornilov — the officer responsible to Gustav Noske for the assassination of Luxemburg and for the shooting of 1,500 handcuffed Berlin strikers.

At this juncture, the SPD government of Friedrich Ebert reluctantly permitted itself to be saved from its own military forces by a general strike. The instant the dictator Kapp had been defeated by the general strike, the grateful Ebert expressed his obligations to the Berlin workers by again unleashing Prussian Social-Democratic military forces against them!

Such criminality we would expect from any "democratic socialist" regime in power today. We are particularly shocked by the 1918-20 crimes of the SPD only because official socialist legend has it that the German Social-Democracy was the leading embodiment of Marxian "orthodoxy." Indeed, the

principal criminals of the 1918-20 SPD, Ebert, Scheidemann and Noske, were the leaders of that "proletarian kernel" SPD stratum which L. Trotsky had so uncritically praised in one of his 1910 Vienna writings, and the same centrist faction which V. I. Lenin had supported against Luxemburg during pre-war struggles within the SPD!

Thus, the horrifying facts of the 1918-20 SPD have traditionally been approached from the standpoint of inquiry: **How is it possible that the party which was virtually the purest embodiment of Marxian "orthodoxy" could degenerate to such an extent?** No competent answer could be given to such an incompetent question.

Extant Historical Study

Except for the flawed thesis advanced by Carl E. Schorske in 1954 and emulated by some other writers, including J. P. Nettl, historians generally offered no competent approach to the problem until the general question of "centrism" was reformulated by L. Marcus's 1970 "Centrism As A Social Phenomenon."

Some indication of what ordinary scholarship has tolerated in this connection is given by the considerable mooting of James Weinstein's 1967 **The Decline of Socialism in America, 1912-25**. In this text, most of the subsequent evils befalling U. S. socialism are attributed to the SP left wing's allegedly ill-advised break from the company of Victor Berger et al. Considering Berger's conspicuous record as a chauvinist, red-baiter and racist, as well as a scab and fink, Weinstein's lack of reference to these matters is itself sufficient evidence of an hysterical tendentiousness in his account. Yet, in face of such appalling distortions, the text was considered of sufficient quality for publication by Monthly Review Press and received as a matter of serious scholarly interest by most New Left and by numerous other critics generally. The text is worth citing here both as a reflection of the state of contemporary academic norms and, in particular, as a travesty upon the relevant Schorske thesis.

Schorske offers his analysis in **The German Social Democracy, 1905-17**. Three features of this are notable for our consideration in this paper. Firstly, Schorske's two most prominent blunders, which have plausibly influenced Weinstein and

others either directly or indirectly. Like Weinstein, Schorske locates the viable stratum of social-democracy in its "middle" or "independent" political layer, and interprets the liquidation of this political tendency as the essential calamity of "democratic socialism." He, like Weinstein, considers that calamity to be the splitting of social-democracy into the two "extremes" of right-wing and Communist, a "calamity" which could have been prevented only by keeping both "extremes" within a single party dominated by the "independent center."

Schorske's and Weinstein's theses have a second wretched similarity respecting the apposed period of study affixed to the titles; "1905-17," "1912-25." Although Schorske is by no means so crude on this point as Weinstein, both are guilty of a blatant fallacy of composition on this account. It is that fallacy in Schorske's approach which provides the vacuum in SPD historiography which we fill in outline in the present paper.

Thirdly, respecting the main features of Schorske's thesis, we have to consider his relatively positive contribution to the account. He proceeds a considerable distance toward the necessary understanding by underlining the social basis for the opportunist wing of the SPD in the party's trade-union leadership. This is by no means original with Schorske — one need only mention Rosa Luxemburg in that connection — but his 1954 treatment does provide a valuable and well-documented antidote to the mythology otherwise previously prevailing among Communist and "Trotskyist" as well as pro-capitalist scholars.

Schorske's analysis on this point not only has precedents but also a proper basis in Marxian sociology itself, as Luxemburg emphasizes in her **The Mass Strike** and related writings. The trade-union organization by no means represents the working class as a class, but only the narrower economic interests of a significant fraction of that class. While the trade-union formation also represents the lowest possible form of a primitive economic united front among otherwise atomized workers, to the extent that that trade-union sets itself, as a social formation, into opposition to the rest of the working class, and regards the unorganized and oppressed strata of the workers as "outsiders," the trade-union formation acts as a conservative force, as an expression of an agent for pro-capitalist ideology among organized workers.

Or, as Marx emphasizes, notably in his *Poverty of Philosophy* polemic against Proudhon (and, thus, implicitly, against the syndicalist outlooks and practices of today's Third-Camp factions), socialist consciousness or class consciousness can develop within the working class only to the extent that the entire class is consciously, representatively organized as a class, or, as a political class for itself. Those socialists who degrade themselves into tailists of "clean union" practices, who encourage trade-unionists to view unorganized and oppressed strata as "outsiders," do not see that trade-union consciousness acts as an obstacle to socialism to the extent it is used to reinforce class in itself, or pro-capitalist ideology within the ranks of the working class.

As far as he goes in this respect, Schorske has performed a service for socialist historians. It was, indeed, Karl Legien and other agents of the SPD's general trade union commission who were the important active repository of everything that was most reactionary within the 1898-1920 SPD, just as racist Victor Berger's alliance with Samuel Gompers and the AFL fraction was key to Berger's crimes as a Congressional red-baiter of the members of his own party. A similarly reactionary tendency is expressed by third-camp syndicalism within various groups of the movement today, a tendency which rejects the revolutionary-socialist "collectivist" outlook and practice in favor of opportunist tailing of parochial movements among "militant trade-union strata."

The central systematic fallacy of Schorske's thesis is located in his effort to explain the developments of 1905-17 in terms of the literary ironies of the Kautsky or Erfurt SPD program.

Schorske argues correctly, as far as he goes in this, that the 1891 Erfurt congress program represented a juxtaposition of two distinct elements. One element, now traditionally termed the "maximum program," Schorske correctly characterizes as an attempt of Kautsky's to emulate the flavor of the 1848 Communist Manifesto. The second element, the so-called "minimum program," offered a perspective of day-to-day demands and so forth, without any connection to the "maximum program" but that of literary contiguity.

Schorske's thesis views the opportunist and communist factions developing within the SPD as

the respective organized embodiments of the "minimum" and "maximum" features of the Erfurt program. He identifies the "independents" within the SPD as a third faction providing a bridge between the two elements, the social "glue" which tied the two "extremes" into a single, effective social-democracy.

Schorske's conspicuous analytical blunder is located in his refusal to consider the actual portent of the 1918-20 SPD within the 1891 draft, that the Erfurt program already embodied the accommodation between purely literary socialist perspectives and opportunist, pro-capitalist practice, which was the obvious character of the 1905-17 Bebel faction and its logical as well as juridical heir, the Ebert "proletarian kernel" leadership of 1918-20. Once that devastating oversight is made, Schorske is consistent in his failure to consider the previous SPD history embodied within the Erfurt draft. That early period of the SPD and its implications are what we have to consider in the present paper.

The Fundamental Contradiction

The German Social-Democracy was the determinate result of developments within the German labor movement and the impact on that movement of the personal hegemony which Karl Marx achieved through his leadership of the first international (The International Workingman's Association.)

It is not extravagant to insist that Marx's leadership of that international and the existence of the SPD after the international's dissolution made possible the subsequent development of Rosa Luxemburg, V. I. Lenin, and L. D. Trotsky. Because of Marx's personal hegemony, the SPD, the largest working-class party in the world, had opportunistically named itself "Marxist." While never assimilating Marx's method or theory into party program or practice generally, the SPD had reprinted *Kapital*, had published extensive selections from Marx's writings in its newspapers and other journals. In this way it generally kept alive a literary corpus of revolutionary theoretical tradition without itself comprehending that tradition. This proved to embody its outstanding positive achievement.

The irony of this is classic. The SPD had accepted the name of "Marxist" for itself in the

course of the factional struggles of its predecessor organization (the Verband) against the followers of Ferdinand Lassalle. The documents of the pre-1875 period leave no margin for doubt; both the Eisenachers (the Bebel-Liebkecht faction) and the Lassalleans had sought to exploit Karl Marx's personal prestige for themselves as added factional advantage in competition with the other.

Did either faction at any time thereby become Marxian in method or theory? The issues of the factional struggles of the pre-1875 period (notably) indicate the contrary to be the case. The factional issue was whether the Prussian monarchy would unify Germany and make it thus a centralized monarchy (the Lassallean position), or whether the German capitalists would unify Germany as a capitalist republic (the Verband and Eisenacher position.) It was in behalf of their service to German capitalist nationalism that Liebkecht and Bebel (the subsequent leading founders of the SPD) betrayed every task of building the first international, and formed alliances with the South German bourgeoisie — the first Popular Front.

In Bebel's Verband, the name of "Marxism" was chosen for its factional mileage respecting the issue of German capitalist nationalism. In the interests of capitalist nationalism, Bebel and Liebkecht betrayed virtually every principle of Marx's, ranging from repeated offenses against the German working class's struggles to sweeping betrayals of internationalism in practice.

This disease of the SPD is not confined to the ranks of the self-styled "democratic socialists." It continues to be the principal feature of most Communist party leaderships' role today, "national Communist" parties demanding protectionism for their own trade-union forces — and for their own national capitalists — at the expense of the working class in other national sectors. It is met in Communist leaderships opportunistically limiting their concerns to the narrow "shop issues" of organized trade-union forces, at the expense of the class interests expressed by the unorganized, unemployed, and oppressed working-class minorities.

The same moral syphilis infests certain other "socialist" tendencies, some of which otherwise have the effrontery to term themselves both "Leninist" and "Trotskyist." We find such groups cheerfully proposing a "labor party based on the

existing unions," but on the basis of this opposing every effort to create programmatic strike-support and other alliances of the organized and oppressed strata of the class — for fear of alienating certain more chauvinistic strata of "trade union militants." In the main, these smaller heirs of Ebert with their occasional cover of ultra-left phrases will turn out to be mainly a minor nuisance. In general, the old Ebert-Scheidemann-Noske SPD "proletarian kernel" apparatus is still very much alive today — principally within the leaderships of the "official Communist" parties.

The Central Problem

If one acknowledges, first, that internationalism is shorthand for Marx's notion of class species-being — from which flow both the program and form of organization of any revolutionary tendency — then one understands that the lack of this outlook must be the systematic flaw of all centrist parties. As for the unhappy case of the SPD, internationalism is not merely a formal question.

The German Social-Democracy was a member of both the first and second socialist internationals, yet, in both cases, the SPD's founders, Wilhelm Liebkecht and August Bebel, saw the international as something entirely divorced from the day-to-day function of a national party. This failure — rather refusal — to function internationally at one's own location is a systematic error which must lead to an inability to relate to revolutionary situations even in one's own country.

This problem was to manifest itself with devastating effect on the SPD's efforts to develop a program for its own organization. Given their own political situation, their failure to look beyond the borders of Germany left them with an implicit "stages theory of revolution." How else could the demand for a "Free People's State" — a capitalist republic — appear in the 1875 Gotha program of the SPD — after the fall of the Paris Commune of 1871? Their development as an opposition party to the German monarchy, and the 1871-90 outlawing of bourgeois-democratic rights for the SPD and the trade unions generally greatly confused them on the question of program. They were so tied to the immediate, narrow national perspective of a capitalist political reformation of Germany — the replacement of the monarchy by a republic — that

the practical question of socialist transformation never really existed for them.

For, if Bebel and Liebknecht had considered the SPD only as a subsector of an international party of an international class, they would have been compelled to recognize that the objective conditions of the international class struggle had advanced, after 1871, beyond the point of demanding a capitalist republic. As Engels emphasized, the inability of the German capitalists to establish a republic was only a reflection of the moral ineptitude of the German bourgeoisie, not of the objective development of capitalism or of the working class forces.

The SPD never seriously considered the lessons of the Paris Commune, that the working-class now had to face the task of superceding the forms of the capitalist state by working-class forms of state power. The German SPD particularists conceded only that France had advanced to that point, but that Germany had to first go through the "stage" of a capitalist republic before reaching such a

French condition. Indeed, this view, otherwise embodied in the Russian Menshevik's "theory of stages," was to express itself logically enough in 1918, as the SPD demanded a constituent assembly (the capitalist republic), and ordered the Germany Army to destroy the workers' soviets and to assassinate Luxemburg in defense of capitalism. For them, they first had to "go through" the stage of the capitalist republic!

By contrast, it was only a consistent continuation of Marx's actual internationalist outlook which Trotsky was able to develop as the conception of "Permanent Revolution," also the conception pervading Luxemburg's doctoral dissertation (*The Industrial Development of Poland*), and later expressed by Lenin's *Imperialism* and "April Theses." Trotsky, together with Luxemburg and Lenin, predicated the ability of the political working class to carry the Russian October Revolution through to socialist victory upon a Europe-wide revolution.

Kautsky was no renegade to his own Erfurt draft, or any other aspect of long-standing SPD "orthodoxy," when he denounced the Bolshevik Revolution from that standpoint of a "stages theory."

This subordination of outlook to the immediate

interests of bourgeois nationalism was prevalent in the SPD from its origins. The social base of the *Verband* was a "workers educational group" in Saxony, a group constituted on the basis of hatred of the Prussian monarchy. This hatred, in turn, was premised on a mixture of bourgeois-democratic aspirations and simple Saxon chauvinism. The

Verband counterposed the pluralist conceptions of confederation to Marx's dialectical conception of centralization, and Bebel and Liebknecht consequently never played any role within the first international.

The adaptation to pluralism was the root of the moral self-destruction of the later SPD's "proletarian kernel" leadership. That is, the notion that society is composed, properly, of a mere aggregation of many discrete, autonomous "wholes," the notion of confederation of many autonomous self-interest groups, as opposed to the Marxian, dialectical conception of a collective class self-interest, of a class collectively self-organized around a single, unified program of inclusive, class self-interest.

It is beyond the scope of this paper to fully explore the methodological implications of pluralism, except to emphasize that the effects are devastating to any socialist party. Since the pluralist sees the class split up geographically, racially, sexually, religiously, etc., how can anybody be so arrogant, the pluralist is compelled to argue, as to say that he has a class common-interest program? How can anything resembling a common, unifying self-interest be adduced from an aggregation of such special cases of autonomous, parochialist interest?

For the SPD, pluralist conviction meant that each locality — regional, national, and international — had a different interest and therefore a different proper program. They were undisturbed in their persuasion on this count to discover that the several such programs simultaneously supported by the SPD absolutely conflicted. For example, in the national parliament, the Reichstag, the SPD's politics was summed up in the slogan, "not a man, not a farthing" for the Prussian monarchy. On the local level, they voted for out-and-out reformist, anti-working-class legislation, authorizing as many farthings as might be wanted to such ends.

This same localism was later to find its logical expression in a parochialist conception of the

working class itself: the trade union as a substitute for the working class. This view asserts that material demands are met on a shop-to-shop or industry-to-industry basis, thus denying the existence of a world-wide division of labor, or of a general class interest. As an inevitable reflection of the contradictions inhering in pluralist conceptions, the SPD separated the political and economic struggles of the working class in more or less absolute terms. For them, the political struggle took place in the Reichstag; the economic struggle in the trade unions. The SPD leadership's conception of the possible connections between these two spheres was limited to the conceit that parliamentary fractions should struggle for the bourgeois-democratic interests of the trade-unions, while the trade-unions, in turn, should deliver votes for the SPD parliamentarians — a reciprocity which inherently precluded a revolutionary perspective.

For related reasons, Bebel never saw it as important to support any strike. In fact, he was downright hostile to the 1889 Ruhr miners' strike. The SPD program had no purview of the developing political antagonism between capital and labor.

The SPD's parochialism was reflected in its organizational forms. Since the SPD was not recruiting on the basis of any unified class world-view, it came to represent factions so divergent in political outlook that one must initially wonder how such groups co-existed in the same party organization for so long a period. These elements included a professedly reformist faction, which was led at first by the Lassalleans, later by the Bavarian section principally representing small farmers and other petit-bourgeois strata, and still later by the trade-union leadership. Opposite the reformists, passing through a hodge-podge between, there emerged the left-wing, led by the most advanced Marxian leader since Marx himself, Rosa Luxemburg. With the post-1899 rise to power of the trade-union bureaucracy within the SPD, the factional situation grew more acute and the politics of the right and center factions far worse. This wretched crew, headed by Karl Legien, collected together and represented the most backward, parochial tendencies within the working class, an organized tendency on collision course toward the revolutionary internationalist tendency headed by Luxemburg.

This history and development simply came to a

head during the 1905 mass-strike wave, which brought the factions to the virtual point of split. At that juncture, the entire "center" of the SPD, including its Bebel leadership faction, opted to bloc with the trade-union bureaucrats politically while offering mere conditions of continued SPD membership to the left. It was in 1905 that we see the counter-revolutionary character of centrism most clearly revealed for the first time; exactly at those points of mass struggle, at which the working class is becoming capable of overcoming its own localism, the centrist formation becomes paralyzed — except against the revolutionary factions.

The SPD'S POSITION IN GERMAN HISTORY

The process of political organization among German workers leading to the founding of the SPD was initially governed by an orientation of workers' organizations to bourgeois political factions of German nationalism. At two most notable points in that process, first in 1848 and again in 1866, the emergence of mass political strike movements among the German workers caused the liberal bourgeoisie to turn against its former ally, the working class movement. It was the mass strikes of 1866 which caused the German bourgeoisie to dump Bebel and Liebknecht and inadvertently push them toward the first international.

A second major point to be recognized here is that the German bourgeoisie repeatedly proved incapable of carrying out a bourgeois political revolution — i.e., the establishment of a German capitalist republic. The German workers' movement was repeatedly confused, even astonished by the Liberals' incapacity to fight in capitalist political interests on this point.

To the leadership of the *Verband* the revolutionary struggle appeared to be a struggle for bourgeois democracy against the autocracy represented by Bismarck. To this end, a *Verband* alliance with the bourgeoisie and petit-bourgeoisie seemed perfectly principled and acceptable. When this alliance was deserted by the liberal bourgeoisie after 1866, the residual alliance of *Verband* and sections of the petit-bourgeoisie therefore appeared all the more "revolutionary" to the mass of credulous participants and observers.

F. Engels began both his *Revolution and*

Counterrevolution and his *The Peasant Wars in Germany* with an analysis of the different classes of Germany, detailing the conflict of interests which prevented class opponents of the autocracy from uniting to overthrow the aristocracy. Engels emphasized: "It is the misfortune of the German bourgeoisie to have arrived too late. . . The period of its florescence occurring at a time when the bourgeoisie of other Western European countries is already politically in decline. . . It begins to notice its proletarian double outgrowing it. . . To be sure the German bourgeoisie was less frightened by the German proletariat than by the French. The June 1848 battles in Paris showed the bourgeoisie what it ought to expect; the German proletariat was restless enough to prove the seed that would yield the same crop had been sown on German soil too."

Although the German bourgeoisie needed the destruction of residual feudal institutions, its 1848 fear of the proletariat, which had led it to make alliances with the Prussian autocracy at the March "barricades of Berlin," increased manifold during the strike wave which began in 1864. Even so, during the early 1860s, these Liberal capitalists elected to make one more attempt to organize the German proletariat. The form they chose for this effort was workmen's educational clubs (the *Verband*). Their intent was to employ these clubs as a wedge against Bismarck; by maintaining a firm grip on the leadership of the clubs, the Liberals thought to insure themselves against independent political mobilization of the German working class.

Bebel relates the tale of how he and other *Verband* working class leaders asked to join the Liberal's clubs, but were refused with the explanation that workmen should not squander their money on dues. An instructive insight into the Liberals — and into Bebel himself.

By 1865, the Liberals showed a renewed ebbing of faith in their ability to harness a working-class following. It plainly occurred to their most astute leaders that the same persons who viciously broke workers' strike, who paid below-living wages and exacted other onerous hardships from the workers, could not expect a very durable allegiance from those same workers. As the *Verband* became more aggressive in pursuing reforms for the working class during this period, the Liberal press responded with an escalation of vicious attacks upon these reforms and upon strikes.

The inevitable open break occurred in 1866. The Austro-Prussian war again posed the question of unification of Germany. Again, the Liberal bourgeoisie responded with the same cowardice they have had displayed in 1848. They knew that if they opened up the struggle against Bismarck, the working class, feeling its strength from mass strikes, would step to the forefront, as in 1848 Berlin. With the kind of independent working-class political leadership which appeared to be emerging (e.g., Bebel, Liebknecht), with a much larger proletariat than existed in 1848, the liberals would be forced to press for the establishment of a German republic. With the support of the 1866 German working-class forces, the struggle for the republic would certainly be victorious. However, by mobilizing and arming the German workers for this undertaking, the capitalists would then celebrate the common victory by receiving the demands of their powerful, armed working-class allies of the moment before. Contemplating this alternative, the Liberals abandoned the cause of the republic and threw their weight behind the Prussian autocracy and Bismarck.

The Liberals expressed this turnabout with their customary moral imbecility, or what Marx had earlier dubbed "parliamentary cretinism." They reaffirmed their "official position" that they were, of course, still for a central power according to the 1849 constitution. However, since no such central power existed — regrettably — power was to be given to the organized force offering to receive it, Prussia. The Liberals of Saxony went so far as to demand the disarmament of the smaller states, which were to be allied with Prussia.

This was the final straw for even Bebel and Liebknecht.

Eisenachers & Lassalleans

Since the founding of Lassalle's political organization (the ADAV — *Algemeiner Deutscher Arbeiterverein*), his group had had a dubious connection to the Prussian monarchy and to Bismarck in particular. This had been rationalized, in part, by Lassalle's uncritical reading of G. W. F. Hegel's *The Philosophy of Right*, from which he had appropriated the glorification of the Prussian state as an integral part of his own political doctrine. In general, as Marx had sardonically observed, Lassalle was a "realpolitiker," who, for example, offered to deliver ADAV support for

Bismarck's war of conquest (of Schleswig-Holstein) in exchange for universal suffrage.

After Lassalle's death in 1863, Wilhelm Liebknecht, a prominent member of the ADAV, seized the opportunity created by an interregnum in the leadership to organize an opposition faction against the long-standing policy of "critical support" for Bismarck. Liebknecht, who had been briefly a student of Marx's during his own London exile, attempted to induce Marx to return to Germany at that juncture, assuring Marx of the position of leader of the ADAV. Liebknecht's offer coincided with the fact that Marx was already the Corresponding Secretary for Germany in the leadership of the first international. Marx, in turn, judged that his gaining a large vote for presidency of the ADAV would be a gesture of German solidarity with the international. Accordingly, he permitted Liebknecht's nomination of him, but would decline actual acceptance of the presidency.

The election was precluded by the reading of Lassalle's will, in which the Presidency of the ADAV was deeded to one Bernhard Becker. That new arrangement lasted through a year of confusion within the organization. During this year, Liebknecht, still maneuvering with Marx's personal prestige, requested that Marx and Engels contribute to the ADAV's publication, *Der Sozialdemokrat*. Marx accepted Liebknecht's invitation, again as a means for propagating the cause of the international and circulation of his theoretical writings.

At this juncture Johann Baptist von Schweitzer was entering his own bid to supplant Becker. His tactic to this end was to advance himself as spokesman for strict Lassallean "orthodoxy." A notable feature of this campaign was an article entitled "Bismarck III," which eulogized Prussian expansion as part of the "glorious moments of its [Germany's] development." As Schweitzer succeeded more and more in imposing Lassalle's doctrines upon the ADAV, and also increased his power in the organization, Marx and Engels reevaluated their situation, concluding that Lassalle's ghost could not be so easily put to rest as Liebknecht had suggested. They ceased their contributions to *Der Sozialdemokrat*.

This latter was immediately prompted by two *Sozialdemokrat* articles attacking the integrity of the French section of the international, but the

deeper motive was Marx's and Engels' growing conviction that the further existence of the ADAV would hinder the development of a revolutionary party in Germany, and that Lassalle's organization was therefore an obstacle which had to be destroyed.

Following the break, they insisted that Liebknecht begin distributing the international's literature to the ones and twos and begin the arduous task of developing a revolutionary party based on the international's program. This was to lead indirectly to the prolonged subsequent factional struggles between the Eisenacher and Lassallean organizations.

Wilhelm Liebknecht

The career of Wilhelm Liebknecht during the period from 1864 to 1869 is an accurate indicator of the successive shifts in the German situation. At each moment Liebknecht shifted abruptly from his former stance to whatever new course appeared as the most popular choice of the milieu about him. At one moment he was a bourgeois democrat, at the next, he would profess his affiliation to Marx and the international. We briefly review the beginning of this pattern.

Liebknecht responded to Schweitzer's accession to the ADAV presidency by leaving the organization, and was rewarded by his expulsion from Prussia, for advertising his anti-Bismarck position. He migrated to Saxony, where he fell in with August Bebel and the then-flourishing group of workmen's educational clubs, the *Verband*. This proved to be an easier alternative for Liebknecht than the sterner effort at contacting ones and twos. Despite Marx's insistence on the latter, Liebknecht simply ignored the demands from London on this account.

Thus, with the approach of the Austro-Prussian war, Liebknecht launched his anti-Bismarck campaign of the 1865-68 period. Against the Lassalleans he counterposed the call for parliamentary capitalist democracy. During this period he dropped his communication with Marx. On Marx's part, references to Liebknecht term the latter an "ass" and a "South German particularist." In a letter to Kugelman: "Liebknecht is not enough of a dialectician to criticize both sides at once."

During this same period, Liebknecht refused to fulfill a single task in behalf of the international, offering the rationalization: "I start from the standpoint that the fall of Prussia equals the victory of the German revolution...the social question must be left aside for the moment so as not to disturb the cooperation of the workers and liberal bourgeoisie" — a passage almost as disgusting as one meets in the pages of the 1971-72 *Daily World*.

Then, after three years of silence, Marx received an 1868 letter from Liebknecht, informing him that the *Verband* was about to affiliate with the international. Marx's skepticism was hardly without warrant.

1868 Germany was swept by an unprecedented strike wave. In Schweitzer's ADAV, composed mainly of Prussian industrial workers, the left wing of the membership was belatedly beginning to doubt the revolutionary character of the organization's president. In an effort to remedy this threat to his credibility, Schweitzer sought to wrap himself in the mantle of the international. He composed a laudatory review of the first volume of *Kapital*, solicited Marx's personal advice on a tariff question to be debated in the parliament, and promised Marx closer ADAV ties to the international.

Meanwhile, in Saxony, through his anti-Bismarck activities Liebknecht retained strong connections to the capitalist Saxon People's Party. However, even if the romantic Liebknecht remained foolishly optimistic on this connection, the more hard-headed opportunist, August Bebel, knew that this alliance was hardly adequate to oppose Bismarck. Bebel, by 1868 president of the *Verband*, elected to break decisively with the Saxon bourgeoisie and pursue an independent program. He had realized during the preceding year that the *Verband's* lack of program had prevented the organization from effective participation in the West German Reichstag and by 1868 he was determined that the organization would adopt a program.

Two crucial circumstances made the international's program attractive to Bebel. The first was embodied in the person of a man named Becker (no relationship to the ADAV's Johann Becker), one of the German revolutionaries exiled in 1848. Becker, from his residence in Switzerland,

had put himself wholeheartedly into organizing for the international. It was he who had begun the propaganda work and recruiting of ones and twos for the international in Germany, and had developed numerous sections in south Germany, where the organizations of the *Verband* were also strongest. These sections organized by Becker partly influenced Bebel to promise closer ties to the international at a Nurnberg conference. The obvious efforts of Schweitzer to affiliate with the international were the second and decisive consideration for Bebel.

In practice, the *Verband's* subsequent nominal affiliation to the international meant little. The *Verband* never paid its dues to the international, nor distributed the international's literature. Indeed, the only conference of the international to which they sent a delegation was the final, Hague, session of 1872.

Their reasons for continued nominal affiliation with the international are clear enough in their repeated pleas to Marx to intervene against Schweitzer in the factional struggles within Germany. Marx was never deceived as to the nature of this arrangement and, properly, never regarded either the *Verband* or Schweitzer's ADAV as actually affiliated.

Shortly after the application for affiliation had been made, Schweitzer moved out of desperation to force a split with the left wing of his own ADAV. This split occurred during 1869, at which time the split-off from the Lassalleans fused with the *Verband* of Liebknecht and Bebel to form the "Eisenachers" (The Social-Democratic Workers Party.) Later, as both the ADAV and Eisenachers were drawn closer together over the Paris Commune, and when Schweitzer was pushed out of the ADAV, the two factions began to move toward their fusion at Gotha in 1875.

"Critique of the Gotha Program"

The modern SPD was founded at the Gotha unity congress convened during May 22-27, 1875, as the merger of the Lassalleans (minus Schweitzer et al.) with the Eisenachers, under a program which Marx denounced as a crude amalgam of the antagonistic doctrines of the two participating organizations.

As noted, the formal preconditions for this

fusion were both the breaking away of Schweitzer from the ADAV and the temporary evaporation of the old factional differences on German nationalist forms separating the groups. Not only had the ADAV defended the Paris Commune, but it had voted against war credits demanded to finance Bismarck's move into Alsace-Lorraine. On this latter account both parties were subjected to Bismarck's persecution, some members of each thrown into prison. All the formal conditions for unity existed — except agreement on principles.

Liebknicht happily proceeded toward unity, cautiously neglecting to forewarn Marx of unity negotiations or of the hodge-podge program he had drafted. Marx and Engels, learning of the conference and its wretched program, were enraged. Engels emphasized this to Bebel: "To Liebknicht I only wrote briefly; I will not forgive him for not telling us a single word about the whole thing. . . . But this is what he has always done."

Why was agreement concluded so easily on principles which Marx had energetically refuted before then, even in defiance of the principles which had been the supposed basis for the Social-Democratic Workers Party? As a Bismarck newspaper, the *Norddeustcher Allgemeine Zeitung*, gloated over the program, "Social-Democratic agitation has in many respects become more prudent. . . repudiating the International." Once Schweitzer was out of the way, and the conveniences of Marx's factional assistance no longer required, internationalism was an incumbrance which Liebknicht et al. were quick to unload.

Nor was this vicious repudiation of Marxian economic theory and internationalism limited to the expediences of 1875. Over twenty-five years later, the SPD leadership reacted in fury to Kautsky's publication of Marx's "Critique of the Gotha Programme" (at Engels' insistence), with Vorwaerts insisting that the party was to be congratulated for adopting the Gotha Program over Marx's violent objections! (We thus get some valuable insight into the SPD that adopted the "Erfurt Program" later that same year.)

Marx's attack on the Gotha Program was two-fold. His most embittered attacks were directed to the Lassallean socio-economic theories (resurrected after 1939 as the kernel of the

so-called "theory of state capitalism"). Secondly, mooting the possibility that it might not have been possible to unify with the ADAV on the basis of any acceptable program, he argued: why set the movement back so far by such a corrupt betrayal of basic principles? As Marx wrote to Bracke: "If therefore it was not possible. . . to go beyond the Eisenacher programme one should simply have concluded an agreement for action against a common enemy."

The Eisenachers' pluralist attitude of indifference toward the international and internationalism was directly transferred to the question of unification. "They have a program; we have a program," they reasoned in effect; "The workers don't care about program and will regard us as sectarians if we don't patch up some inconsequential statement satisfactory to both parties."

Although the difference between Liebknicht's and Marx's approach to the effecting of unity may appear to be slight, merely academic, to some; these apparent shadings of difference represent two irreconcilable world-views.

To the empiricist view, expressed by the framers of the Gotha program, the world is made up of many discrete, autonomous, self-evident particles (things-in-themselves), with no essential interconnection. Therefore, the question of order among these Rousseau-like things-in-themselves is merely a matter of abstract formulas. Since there is no final test for validity in this view, another "reasoner" can view the same set of observable things-in-themselves and put them into another literary order, just as valid as any other. Therefore, why fuss about the lack of principle in the Gotha draft?

For Marx, the test of validity is that dialectical world-view of coherent processes which is, incidentally, expressed by the law of value.

To the empiricist, any statement about man that claims to be universally valid is the height of arrogance, or, translating this prejudice into New Left political jargon, "sectarianism." So, Bebel and Liebknicht oriented toward the backward layers of the "Eisenachers," who thought it would be "sectarian" to permit mere words on paper to prevent the Lassalleans from immediate fusion. That represents the substance of the charge which

the defenders of the Gotha program hurled against Marx, even a quarter century later.

Respecting the investigation at hand in the present paper, we must limit our attention to one feature of Marx's point-by-point critique of the Gotha draft; that is his analysis of the proposal for a "Free Peoples' State" (republic). This, as we have already emphasized, was the real ideological issue of the factional struggle from 1864 onwards, expressing the Eisenacher's central identity as anti-Bismarck nationalist democrats. Indeed, as Engels attacked this point in his letter to Bebel on that subject, he was attacking the very basis for the Eisenacher's political existence. Accordingly, the SPD leadership suppressed both Marx's "Critique of the Gotha Programme," and Engel's letter — for twenty-five years.

After Gotha, the old factional struggle continued within the unified party in the guise of the "parliamentary question." The Lassallean faction, which had a tradition of introducing reform legislation, quickly became the numerically superior portion of the party's Reichstag delegation. The Eisenachers, by contrast, had a parliamentary tradition summed up in the slogan, "Not a man nor farthing for this system." Gotha solved nothing on this question. This particular factional affray continued until Bebel gained undisputed leadership of the SPD in 1887.

Factions in the SPD were in existence from the birth of the organization, and by no means a development of the post-Erfurt period.

Parliamentary Factions To 1905

There is an unbroken theme in SPD development from the rampant opportunism of Gotha through the later parliamentary periods. This manifested itself in the form of the autonomies of agitation and propaganda on a regional level. Each region and even some localities had their own press, over which there was no control by the SPD as a whole.

Propaganda in the notorious Bavarian region amounted to playing down class rhetoric and rationalization of land policy, in deference to the prejudices of a constituency and membership mainly composed of farmers and artisans. By contrast, the newspapers of the big industrial centers took on a most flamboyant tone. These opposites were to surface as bitterly-opposed

factions — the Bavarian tendency supported by the trade-union faction — during the political mass strike upsurge of 1905-06.

Another consistent feature of the post-Gotha SPD was its lack of program by which the German working class could run the economy. Given the SPD's "stages theory," which meant a preoccupation with the question of a German capitalist republic, the issue of workers' power was naturally not considered immediate. How could such questions be considered, how could the issue of socialism be posed, when the Liberals had not yet completed their "stage"? This "stages" outlook led to and reinforced the SPD's notorious formal separation of political from economic struggles. For the SPD leadership, strikes had nothing to do with politics; they were simply a private affair between greedy employers and their employees.

The devastating irony of this posture was that the "economic" struggle, in the form of the mass strikes of 1886-1890, were to have the most far-reaching political consequences. Indeed, we shall consider how the 1886-1890 mass-strike wave led directly to Bebel's ascendancy at the St. Gall SPD congress, to the repeal of the anti-socialist laws, and to the threat of socialist seizure of power in 1890. All of this economic determination of politics occurred behind the backs, beyond the wits of and generally despite the leadership of the SPD.

It was not until Luxemburg's Mass Strike theses were developed in 1906 and presented from 1907 onwards, that the analysis of economic and political struggles as interconnected was discovered by any section of the SPD leadership or by the organized socialist movement generally. However, by that late date because of the factional situation within the SPD, the party was incapable of movement. It had achieved a static equilibrium that did not permit it to take decisive action in a fluid situation.

In this general fashion, one must see the interweaving of ideology and sociology as combining to paralyze the SPD. After 1907, the balance shifts to the right, and the SPD becomes predominantly the rightward-moving centrist organization epitomized by the 1918-20 developments.

Bismarck, sensing an ebb in the working-class

movement after 1874, seized upon that opportunity to outlaw both the SPD and the trade unions. By combining repression with the introduction of his famous "State Socialist" reforms, he attempted to rid Germany of the socialist menace.

PERIOD OF THE ANTI-SOCIALIST LAW

The SPD was framed on charges that it had conspired to attempt to kill the Kaiser; leaders of that party were arrested and deported. It was under such conditions of illegality that the new party had to develop its theoretical footing. The only area of legal work left open to them was parliament: they never overcame the habits cultivated by this enforced emphasis on parliamentary activities.

The first internal difficulty the party had to overcome was the reaction to the anti-socialist laws by its own tiny ultra-left faction. These latter wanted nothing to do with parliament, preferring to conserve their efforts for manufacturing bombs. This small fraction of anarchist "crazies" were easily and quickly defeated, and thereafter existed only in official SPD rhetoric, as a bogey-man with which to slander all left critics of the party regime.

The challenge from the nakedly reformist right wing was much more difficult, and indeed was not reduced to a minority by Bebel until the beginning of strike activity, in 1886, compelled Bismarck to reinstitute active political repression, shattering all the airy dreams of the extreme reformist factions. Despite that technical factional victory by Bebel (1887, St. Gall), the more general challenge of reformism proved more than the SPD could overcome. None of the party's left-wing leadership had assimilated the dialectical method. They literally had no program after Gotha and were not to acquire one until 1891 at Erfurt; the Gotha program, because of its rabid eclecticism, was useless as a statement of working principles or guide to action. Although the "radical" wing of the leadership had a purely-formal commitment to class struggle, they were incapable of developing a positive program based on the material needs of the class as a whole, and were limited to the hope of securing state power through the ballot.

Indeed, when Bismarck's "State Socialism" plan was unveiled, the sheepish SPD leadership could only make vague noises of opposition to it, based on the general observation that Bismarck's

provisions were insufficient to their taste. They could not oppose this plan by a different conception; they had no alternative to offer. This was the Imperial Social Welfare Bill of 1881. As indicated, the SPD parliamentary fraction opposed the bill on the grounds that its provisions were inadequate. This formula permitted them to maintain their position of opposition by voting against the bill, and thus appear to maintain their posture as the anti-Bismarck working-class party.

However, Bebel faced the predicament that such devices were not sufficient means for him to control those recalcitrant SPD moderates who were openly supporting Bismarck's "State Socialism." Bebel reluctantly turned to literary Marxism in an attempt to mount an ideological attack on the moderates. This proved insufficient; the fact prevailed, that since the "radicals" couldn't offer an alternative proposal to Bismarck's, the campaign to check the SPD moderates with a literary smoke-screen failed.

By 1884 the SPD had captured twenty-four Reichstag seats, and thus its ability to make deals with other parties was significantly enhanced. These opportunities created unbearable pressure against the SPD leadership's efforts to remain a purely oppositional party, a difficulty which assumed crisis-proportions over Bismarck's "Steamship Subsidy Bill." The moderates wished to support this on the grounds that it would bring work to the German shipyards. The radicals opposed it on the grounds that it would enhance Bismarck's colonial ambitions. The radicals found themselves with only six out of the twenty-four SPD Reichstag seats. They consoled themselves impotently with an ideological attack in the illegal *Sozialdemokrat*, the party journal under their faction's control.

While this sort of factional game was played out in the Reichstag, in the Saxon diet, where the "radicals" had the SPD parliamentary majority, they routinely played the same role which the SPD moderates played in the Reichstag. It is not strange therefore that the "radicals" should have lacked the conceptual equipment to handle the factional problem of the moderates' parliamentary policy.

The pervasive pluralist world-outlook of the SPD leadership is again decisive, this time respecting the organizational question. The inability of the SPD leadership to conceive of the working class as a whole, and to develop a program which answered

the needs of the entire class, implied its inability to integrate the regional constituents of its party work. The “radicals” themselves offered qualitatively different programmatic approaches to local, national and international work.

It was quite admissible, in their view, to support reform legislation in the regional Diets; if one didn't, what was the point in running for election? Socialist propaganda work on a regional scale was worthless, they reasoned, since reform in Saxony had nothing to do with the reform proposed for Prussia. Since socialism would not develop on a regional basis, there was no sense in attempting to develop a connection between regional activities and nation-wide (socialist) propaganda. In any case, each local section had a different constituency, with its autonomous peculiarities and needs. In general, the situation within the SPD as a whole was typified by the irreconcilability of the Brandenburg industrially-based radicals and the Bavarian right-wing SPD never-never land of small farmers and petit bourgeoisie.

Although “Marxism” was the name of the official theory, the SPD saw Marx's actual method and theory as essentially inapplicable to the practical side of party life and work. How could it be applied, indeed, in a party which attempted to gloss over the insoluble discrepancies among its own constituent parts? Marxian theory therefore had only a literary existence within special publications and related party functions. “Theory” for practice was never more than a fistful of shallow-minded slogans, such as Bebel's hoary parliamentary war-cry, “not a man nor farthing.”

1887 Defeat of the Moderates

As noted, it was not until 1886 that the SPD moderates faced defeat — not by Bebel's faction, but by the emergence of strike waves in London and in Belgium, and a growing mood of militancy in the European working class reflected into a sudden increase in SPD votes. In reaction to this threatening development, Bismarck moved toward new repressions against the SPD and trade unions. At the end of 1886 nine SPD deputies were arrested for “participation in secret and illegal associations,” among them leading moderates. In this situation, the moderates' policy of seeking cooperative relations with Bismarck was exposed as ludicrous.

This repression, and a number of related comi-tragic developments, produced Bebel's supremacy at the 1887 St. Gall SPD congress. Leading moderates had not been sent back to their Reichstag seats, increasing the relative strength of the “radical” parliamentarians. In addition, Viereck and Geiser (leading moderates), were not permitted to participate in the St. Gall congress, at Bebel's insistence, on the grounds of their refusal to sign the party executive's announcement of the conference. (They had declined for fear that they would be imprisoned as a result of their signatures.) Hasenclever, the old Lassallean leader, had suffered a severe mental illness, and another leader of that faction, Kayser, had died. With the opposition's leadership thus a shambles, and the moderates discredited by their capitulationist attitude toward Bismarck, Bebel easily carried the congress.

DEFEAT OF THE ANTI-SOCIALIST LAWS

During the 1888 parliamentary debate of the anti-socialist laws, the SPD pulled off a stunning defense of itself with documented exposure of two police provocateurs sent to work in the party. This campaign contributed to a result more largely accomplished by a more decisive intervention into the affairs of state by the German working class itself. The crucial development leading towards the eventual, 1890, repeal of the anti-socialist laws — and to Bismarck's downfall — was the great Ruhr miner's strike of 1889.

This strike began on May 2nd of that year, plunging 120,000 strikers into motion in defiance of the anti-socialist laws by May 20. The SPD's response to the strike is both revealing — and criminal. In general, they remained aloof from the workers' struggle and protested quite honestly to the German government that **the SPD did not approve of the walkout**. Shortly after the strike began, an unidentified miner addressed a private appeal to Bebel for funds from Social-Democratic colleagues abroad. Bebel replied: not only would no assistance be forthcoming from the Social-Democrats, but — anticipating Thorez of 1936 — he also advised the strikers to find an acceptable compromise with their employers!

Bebel was concerned lest the SPD be tainted by this labor radicalism; he feared that such a taint would prevent the Reichstag from carrying out what otherwise seemed its clear intention, to repeal

the anti-socialist laws. In reality, it was this mass strike which demonstrated to the Reichstag and to the Kaiser's government that those repressive laws had become unenforceable, and therefore must be repealed to save the very credibility of government itself. In response to this strike wave, not only were the anti-socialist laws summarily repealed, but Bismarck himself was thrown out of office.

The SPD was, of course, ecstatic. It understood these governmental actions as a concession to its party, and indeed, despite the SPD itself, they were.

By 1890, the SPD had clearly gained the offensive. The ending of the anti-socialist laws was enriched by the winning of 1,427,298 SPD votes in the February election. In the midst of this joyous state of affairs, the populace prepared for the Second International's planned May Day celebrations. The German working-class masses waited for word from the SPD on how the date was to be celebrated. Characteristically, the SPD proposed nothing. In the middle of March, 90,000 Berlin workers demanded a general strike; in response, still no word from the SPD leadership. Bebel's estimate of the situation: "The strike fever is general and the noisiest possible demonstration on May 1st would lead to strikes in unthought dimensions." Suppressing the "dangerous" tactic of demonstrations for an eight-hour day, Bebel and Company proposed a modest after-work meeting, and May 1st passed without incident.

Why had this "revolutionary party" backed down? Was it their development or lack of it that had destroyed their revolutionary potential? As Rosa Luxemburg emphasized, especially after 1905, the SPD leadership invariably postponed the moment of its readiness for bold action to the Greek Kalends. Bebel appeared to reason in 1890: "Here, just after we have kept our party alive through the period of the anti-socialist laws, these crazy workers want to get us into trouble again with some sort of general strike." "My God," he seemed to argue, "the Kaiser might be provoked to use force against us and we'd be back in the soup again, just when things were looking up."

With no hint of a socialist program for a German workers' economy, strike waves that challenged capitalist power seemed like nothing but chaos to Bebel and Company. Rather than deal with the great events thrust into their hands at critical

junctures, they repeatedly, as in 1890, resorted to pompous phrases about "political struggle," relegating the whole matter to the domain of parliamentary activity. They honestly had not the slightest notion of what to do. Kautsky, their ideologue, was of no help on this account; he was useful only to justify SPD leadership actions after the fact.

After May, 1890, the potential mass strike ebbed, and as the German economy settled into a new period of social stability for a while, the emergence of a trade-union bureaucracy on the backside of the workers' upsurge solidified the conservatism which had been invoked by Bebel's frightened abstentionism at the critical juncture. This was the sociological, material basis for the systematic blunders which rampaged through the SPD leadership up through the 1905 political upsurge.

ERFURT

In October, 1890, the SPD convened at Halle, where, on the motion of Wilhelm Liebknecht, author of the Gotha draft, the Gotha program was, in Engels' words, "given up even by its creators as altogether inadequate." Liebknecht's adopted motion specified the drafting of a new program, to be adopted at the next year's party congress — at Erfurt, a year later.

Reviewing the overall features of Kautsky's draft for Erfurt, we see the preceding history of the SPD and the Eisenachers embodied as the dead weight of an opportunist past encumbered upon the living of the years to follow. In general, the tragic irony of the Erfurt draft as a whole is its most conspicuous feature; that is, the contiguity without connection between the "maximum," or socialist, perspective, and the sterile mediocrity of its "minimum" perspective for day-to-day party work and life. This feature carries one's view back to the 1865-68 period, during which Schweitzer and Liebknecht-Bebel attempted to exploit Karl Marx's personal reputation in Germany merely as an expedient cover for their respective day-to-day opportunist practice in face of their factional competitions.

What had changed with Erfurt over Gotha was Kautsky's effort to actually emulate the 1848 Communist Manifesto in the portion dedicated to the "maximum program." In this change we see an

echo of Bebel's recent literary struggle against the parliamentary moderate faction, the use of a more liberal dosage of Marxian literary devices to herd the rightward-moving strata of Bavarians and others within reasonable bounds.

In the main, Erfurt embodies the SPD's abstentionist, even hostile regard for the mass strikes of the 1886-1890 period. In the lack of any semblance of practical connection of the "maximum" program to day-to-day life, we see the principle that Marxian theory, to the extent it was tolerated, was to be confined to the purely literary side of SPD life — until the Greek Kalends, when Bebel and Company might finally feel themselves prepared to establish socialism.

1890-1906

After Bebel successfully aborted the 1889-90 strike wave by his wretched May Day tactic, there were no strike waves of any significant proportion in Germany until 1905. Even so, in the wake of the gains made for legal trade-union organization as a result of struggles of the 1886-90 period, trade-union organization grew rapidly, especially among the SPD-affiliated unions. On the back of this growing economic working-class organization, there grew a trade-union bureaucracy, which in turn grew ever more remote from the ranks of the labor movement as it increased in power and wealth at its disposal and in personal distance from the work-bench.

During the latter part of the 1890s, this emergent SPD trade-union bureaucracy replaced the Bavarian section as the primary bulwark of conservatism, supplying the principal mass support for the "revisionist" tendency founded by Bernstein. Beginning with the turn of the century, this conservative trade-union bureaucracy, the SPD's General Trade Union Commission, established a behind-the-scenes political bloc with the "proletarian kernel" SPD leadership grouped around Bebel. This coalition of party leadership and party trade-union fractions became the new substance of the centrism of the 1865-90 period, substance for the centrism previously celebrated and embodied in the Erfurt program.

This coalition's domination of the SPD as a whole was based in part on two supplementary strengths. The first was the support the Bebel center could always rally against the left from

Bavaria and similar swamps of German backwardness. The second was the rigged composition of the SPD congress delegations, which emulated German capitalist practices in giving the conservative rural and semi-rural regions a proportional representation way beyond that of radical urban centers. In effect, even in those subsequent periods in which the left briefly represented the majority of the party's members, the center and right had a rigged majority in the party congresses and executive. . . as Schorske and others have already detailed sufficiently.

When Rosa Luxemburg first electrified the SPD's dull and inbred internal life in the late 1890s, she rallied around her a social force within the SPD which briefly reflected the waning influence of the 1886-90 upsurge of the German workers' movement. From the time of the revisionism struggle until 1905, the SPD left of that earlier period almost ebbed away. With the 1905-06 strike wave, a whole new upsurge of German workers' radicalism appeared, then ebbing, then re-emerging in renewed force during the pre-war years.

Schorske makes an elementary blunder in attributing the emergence of this left wing, later Communist, faction, to the influence of the "maximum" aspect of the Erfurt program. He is, in part, deceived by the factional necessity imposed upon Luxemburg et al., of situating the cause of an entirely new social force within the juridical legitimacy of the SPD's purely literary "maximum" embrace of Marxian theory. The root of the left-wing faction of the post-1905 period was not Erfurt "orthodoxy," but the pre-conjunctural upsurge of the German working class seeking political expression within the ranks of the existing SPD. Like Luxemburg herself, the left-wing was not an internal outgrowth of the pre-1890 SPD, but something assembled within it from the class struggle outside.

Under the impact of the 1905 strike wave sweeping Europe — and giving birth to the I.W.W. in the U.S.A. — the Bebel leadership was momentarily pushed toward the left. The instant that strike wave ebbed, the trade-union fractions, outraged by Luxemburg's devastating "labors of Sisyphus" indictment, took their revenge. Bebel stepped back into his character of 1886-90, and pushed the outlawing of the "mass strike" at the SPD's Cologne congress: Luxemburg was told, in

so many words, to “Go back to Russia!”

Bebel, more astute than the trade-union fractions themselves, displayed the classic attributes of the successful centrist. The sharp return to the right was disguised as a bit of Solomon’s wisdom: something for everyone. The rebuffed left wing was given literary concessions in *Vorwaerts*; to offset this, the trade-union fractions, received the secret power to veto decisions of SPD congresses; and the party executive appropriated the privilege of cheerfully doing pretty much as it pleased from day to day.

Out of the Cologne congress also emerged the foundations of that “iron centralism” which modern centrist parties comfortably misname “Leninist centralism.” Under Bebel’s manipulations, increasingly dictatorial powers were concentrated in the hands of a small “proletarian kernel” SPD executive headed by Bebel’s heir, Friedrich Ebert, the Ebert who is the true

predecessor and prototype for the later Josef Stalin and the latter’s emulators. In the symbiotic relationship between this executive dictatorship and the trade-union bureaucrats we also foresee the typical CP-CGT pattern typified in modern France and Italy, and eminently desired by CP officials elsewhere.

Nor is that emergence of “iron” discipline inconsistent with SPD traditions. In Marx’s “Critique of the Gotha Programme,” we read: “it is well-known that nothing of the ‘iron law of wages’ is Lassalle’s except the word ‘iron’ borrowed from Goethe’s ‘great eternal iron laws.’ The word iron is a label by which the true believers recognize one another.” As to the political results of such centrists’ metallic political-organizational arrangements, one knows the result of leaving iron too long exposed to the weathering of time. All bureaucratically centralized groups, like the CP — and SWP — of today are not accidentally the junkyards of past socialist hopes, like the 1918-20 SPD before them.

Rimbaud and the Commune

THE PROBLEM OF CREATIVITY IN MODERN ART

By ANNA KIEHL

The case of Rimbaud provides the most startling example of the ambiguity respecting the laws of creativity precisely because of the promise he held out as the only Promethean poet to emerge in the modern period. There has been no poet since capable of his poetic aspirations, though many have pretended to be, nor of laying the basis for the creative abstraction of language with which he struggled for the brief duration of a few years, between the ages of seventeen and twenty. In studying his success and his failure (the latter manifested more in his silence than in his work) one is studying the problem of the artistic impotence of the last hundred years. Rimbaud himself is a will o' the wisp due to the paucity of material available, and the occasionally fragmentary nature of his writing. But he is an episode of significance in the development of poetry.

Creativity and Pseudo-creativity in Art

That creativity is identified with destruction in modern art (the Dionysian mood) is seen most clinically in the ideology of surrealism. Surrealists "always stressed the fact that no clear demarcation can be made between a state of poetic creativity and a state of insanity," Wallace Fowlie remarks in passing in his book *Age of Surrealism*.

That defenders of this ideology seek forerunners in earlier periods to the point of complete historical distortion is directly responsible for the commonplace philistine view that Rimbaud, and to a lesser extent Baudelaire, was a raving anarchist. This view is not only held explicitly by such a

prominent critic of French literature as Wallace Fowlie, but also implicitly by a Marxist critic such as Lukacs who acknowledges the opinion of a contemporary critic that Rimbaud was nothing but "empty transcendence." He attributes to Rimbaud a flight of language autonomous to meaning — precisely the view held by bourgeois critics — and thereby directly aids the bourgeois critics in establishing Rimbaud as a precursor of that puerile tendency, automatic writing.

Fowlie begins by engaging in a macabre distinction between classicism and romanticism, posing them as a dichotomy in which neither could possibly have been the basis of human knowledge and consequently art. "The classical moment," Fowlie writes, "is that one when the artist is faithful not only to the rules of his art, established by such an authority as Aristotle, but faithful also to the government of his political state. As an artist, he is in accord with the moral, political and aesthetic beliefs of his society."

How does Fowlie account for the polemical nature of the greatest classical art, such as Goethe or Beethoven? His description of the classical artist's identity is closer to that of a rat in a cage than the tremendous unleashing of critical mind that constitutes the evidence provided by classical art. This view of classicism is held by other critics as well, such as Grierson, Brunetiere and Herbert Read. It is an expression of their estrangement from the Promethean concept of the artist as embodied in classicism in poetry and music as it actually occurred historically.

As a consequence of this view of classicism, Romanticism indulges the artist with everything that he has been denied by the strait-jacket of classicism. It is associated with "revolution and liberation" according to Fowlie because the artist formerly bound up with society (as a sheep) has found his freedom and self in his individuality apart from others. The act of destroying all human ties therefore becomes the most wildly exhilarating act of all. While one could agree that this form of anarchy is the underlying ideology of Surrealism, there is no evidence for such a refutation of species-being in Rimbaud — not even in moments of his deepest despair. On the contrary, in a poem such as "Angoisse," there is a desperate attempt to hold on to it even as the poet feels the basis for the Promethean concept of man slipping beyond his grasp.

The Illusion of Freedom in Surrealism

Perhaps the sharpest judgement of the confusion on the part of the surrealists between creative freedom and the "liberation" of the subconscious can be made by pointing to Baudelaire's *Spleen* poem ("I have more memories than if I were a thousand years old.") in which he compares his mind to a chest of drawers encumbered by dissociated objects. Since Baudelaire wasn't a forerunner of the Surrealists, he doesn't proceed in this poem to celebrate the nightmares weighing upon his brain as "freedom" — for the Surrealists, the "freedom" of the subconscious — but disposes unequivocally of them by saying "It is a pyramid, an immense burial vault,/ Containing more dead than a public grave." What to the Surrealists represents freedom is correctly diagnosed by Baudelaire as imprisonment.

Automatism represents another illusion of freedom. If Rimbaud is given as its source and extolled by Fowlie for his incomprehensibility it is only because he is incomprehensible to Fowlie. The incoherence theory of creativity is useful, particularly in a historical period in which music and poetry are indeed incoherent to the majority of people, since it confirms their underlying philistine conception. To extol incoherence in poetry as creativity, by disposing of meaning, quietly disposes of poetry.

Without embarrassment on this point, Fowlie can state that "words themselves are more real than the objects or the ideas which they signify.

Words are the reality, and not the things which they describe. To create a poem is therefore equivalent to rearranging words, to fixing words in new unaccustomed juxtapositions so that they will show different aspects and colors of their myth. Rimbaud and the surrealists and modern poets in general will not try, in their poems, to explain experience." Fowlie has just disqualified himself as a critic.

But this anarchy is not peculiar to modern poetry. Once only confined to the musical "avant-garde" freaks around Cage, it was recognized as a potentially useful way of galvanizing the atmosphere of late-afternoon graduate seminars. Composers can no more handle the problem of harmonic coherence in the wake of the destruction of tonality than poets can reconcile the paradox of abstraction and specificity in language.

By ignoring the problem of abstraction in language, Lukacs leaves the question open to bourgeois critics who can do nothing more than discredit those poets who displayed creative powers of abstraction by throwing them together with outright frauds. It is acceptable to Lukacs, who does not engage in a serious examination of Rimbaud's poetry himself, to quote the opinion of H. Friedrich, a German critic, who in his book *The Structure of the Modern Lyric* dismisses Rimbaud's work as displaying the characteristic of "empty transcendence." "The 'unknown' " he says "remains also with Rimbaud a contentless mood." This would be the only conclusion that could be arrived at by critics who do not understand where content is located in poetry and music.

Poetry as Musical Composition

Poetry, like music, creates its subject matter through the creation of relationships. There can be no more definite location of the real subject than that, and consequently to approach these two arts with a demand for concreteness other than the concreteness of relationships and their transformation is to demand something these arts cannot give. It is this peculiar location of the concrete which makes music and poetry the most abstract of all the arts.

What is the real subject in Shelley's "Ode to the West Wind?" To ask what in poetry is to ask how. The relation of destruction to creation in that

poem is developed through the paradox as embodied in images such as leaves/clouds, Autumn/Spring, chariot/clarion and its transformation through another paradox: nature/man. The entrance of the human through which the paradox of death and life can be resolved occurs in part III. After that development in the poem the image of dead leaves can no longer be the same as previously and its recapitulation in part V as "withered leaves" which "quicken a new birth" testifies to the previous dialectical transformation of the concept-relationship. This process of composition is so completely analogous to musical composition at its highest level that the example of the double fugue in A minor of Bach (not included in the Well-tempered Clavier) immediately comes to mind as a most appropriate metaphor.

The first subject and counter-subject, analogous to leaves/clouds in the poem, through complementary relationship seems capable only of symmetry, not resolution. But a new element is introduced outside of this relationship, the chromatically descending second subject, analogous to the entrance of man in part III of Shelley's poem introduced through the image of the wave. All three images — wave, leaf, cloud — are brought together in part IV culminating in line 54 "Oh, lift me as a wave, a leaf, a cloud!" in the same way in which the three voices (the initial subject/counter-subject and the second subject) are brought together from measure 61 to the end in the Bach fugue. Just as the leaves and autumn are no longer the same at the end of the poem, the first subject of the fugue is now provided with a new harmonic basis: the chromatically descending second subject, when played against the first subject, loses its purely linear character that it had by itself, and opens up a new wealth of harmonic (vertical) relationships derived contrapuntally.

The Abstraction of Process

Fugal development unfolded at the rate found in Bach's music was not necessarily unfolded at that same rate in Beethoven. What is extended in time for Bach is collapsed into simultaneity in Beethoven's abstracted fugue in the last movement of the piano sonata op. 109. For Bach, stretto and inversion, techniques of compression, would have been reserved for the climax of a composition; Beethoven starts out with it. It is process compressed into a moment. That is how Rimbaud's

"Depart" also about the dialectical transformation of destruction/creation distinguishes itself from Shelley's "Ode to the West Wind." In the latter, the process is unfolded in the developing particulars (imagery); in the former the process is seized in a moment whose quality gives specificity to the process essential to it but not represented. "Les arrêts de la vie" are not really halts but resolutions. For "Depart" is a series of paradoxes resolved by the moment of the poem itself.

DEPART

Assez vu. La vision s'est rencontrée a tous le airs.

Assez eu. Rumeurs des villes, le soir, et au soleil, et toujours.

Assez connu. Les arrêts de la vie. — O Rumeurs et Visions!

Départ dans l'affection et le bruit neufs.

A UNE RAISON

Un coup de ton doigt sur le tambour décharge tous les sons et commence la nouvelle harmonie.

Un pas de toi c'est la levée des nouveaux hommes et leur en marche.

Ta tête se détourne: le nouvel amour! Ta tête se retourne, le nouvel amour!

"Change nos lots, erible les fléaux, à commencer par le temps," te chantent ces enfants. "Elève n'importe où la substance de nos fortunes et de nos vœux," on t'en prie.

Arrivée de toujours, qui t'en iras partout.

"I am an inventor more deserving far than all those who have preceded me; a musician, moreover, who has discovered something like the key of love" Rimbaud had written. His experiment with language was to try to bring it to a point of abstraction approaching the self-consciousness of language in music. Not by ignoring the meaning of words as Wallace Fowlie explains it, for that would make Rimbaud an idiot child. But by representing the content of the poem through self-conscious decisions with regard to compositional organization. "A Une Raison" is a polemic against the pre-Kantian eighteenth-century rationalists

whose notion of reason was not located dialectically within a process of development. The static quality of previous rationality is ironically represented through a startling symmetrical organization of the third line located in a poem otherwise about dialectics. The one becoming the many is the subject of the first two lines. This is, of course, a variation of "I is another"; the one Prometheus liberating the many; the slight gesture, beginning each of the first two lines, through which an image of a goddess of Reason is adumbrated, opening up into universality. Each of the first two lines is left open. But the third line is disturbingly symmetrical. In a poem of this degree of terseness, where every gesture becomes significant, this symmetry does not escape unnoticed. In the center of the poem, then, is a reference through the process of composition to one of the properties of the Reason the poet is polemicizing against. The resolution of the two different concepts of Reason? The last lien whose universality includes each as a moment in the same historical process.

Origin of Alienation

The development of modern capitalism had separated labor from the conditions of labor as embodied in private property. Individual force had become estranged from its own realization to the extent that individuals had no control over that realization — a control which would have otherwise provided the basis for what Marx referred to as self-activity. Instead, out of this estrangement, labor, "that artificial product of modern society," was created. Since under conditions of labor the only relation between individuals were exchange relations, their unawareness of their interdependence prevented them from recognizing it as the only mediation possible between their individual force and its realization.

Instead, the productive forces were perceived by individuals as being outside of themselves, as the property of someone else. Under these circumstances the only force that seemed natural was the force acquired through possession, translated as the power over others. What began as the force of the proletariat was realized as the power of the capitalist.

The problem of human identity and creativity in modern history also has its origin in the conditions of the division of labor under modern capitalism.

The majority of individuals who are estranged from the realization of their force and consequently from the realization of themselves are therefore nothing. Those that have appropriated the force of others through ownership exist only to the extent that power over others still bears a resemblance to the power of realization it has denied others. Neither is fully human. The master/slave relation is the fundamental social relation of capitalism.

Poetry as Diagnosis

Baudelaire, who had been one of the few intellectuals to be found on the barricades of the proletariat in the June Insurrection, was not unconscious of the impossibility of being human as long as this dichotomy of being, immanent as we have seen in the capitalist mode of production itself, remained unresolved. That he should choose as his task the transmutation of this relationship into art in, for example, the third *Spleen* poem would not be incompatible with his avowed aim in writing the *Fleurs du Mal*: to practice his "passionate taste for the difficult."

The king suffers from a lack of force. The power offered to him is the power over others from which he recoils. Therefore he is powerless since he cannot enslave. "The corrupted element" cannot possibly be extracted from his being, by his alchemist or anyone else, but depends for its removal upon the removal of the society which poses the dichotomy of being. If any doubts exist as to the judgment here expressed about social relations in capitalist society, they should be dispelled by a quick consideration of the feudal setting of the poem. The solution in 1857? Despite a note of optimism provided by a depression of that year, still "the green waters of Lethe."

Who is the king? Not being a Young Hegelian, Baudelaire cannot accept the estrangement of pure mental labor, as so many artists of the modern formalist schools had no difficulty doing since. He chooses to identify instead with the individual who is robbed of his force at the moment of its realization, who is therefore robbed of himself, the product of his creativity. The king is impotent both artistically and sexually. If this isn't generally sensed as the poem proceeds, it is made explicit by the line "His flower-strewn bed is changed into a tomb." The poet must have regarded his own *Fleurs du Mal* as a poor compensation for real force. But where will that force come from?

Spleen

I am like the king of a sodden land,
 Wealthy but powerless, young and yet very old,
 Who, disdainful of the flattery of his tutors,
 Is as bored with his dogs as with other beasts.
 Nothing can cheer him, neither game nor falconry,
 Nor the view from his balcony of his people dying.
 The outlandish ballad of his favorite fool
 No longer smooths the brow of this cruel invalid;
 His flower-strewn bed is changed into a tomb,
 And the ladies heavily adorned, for whom each prince is fair,
 Can no longer find a shocking dress
 To draw a smile from this young skeleton.
 The alchemist who makes him gold has never found a way
 To extract the corrupted element from his being,
 And in those baths of blood in Roman tradition,
 (The kind remembered by the once-powerful at the end of their days,)
 Didn't know how to re-heat this vacant corpse
 In whom, instead of blood, the green waters of Lethe flowed.

.....

The year 1862 marked a turn in the political climate of France. Not content to play the role of Napoleon the Great alone, Bonaparte revived the idea of the *cahiers de doléances* of Louis XIV who, under similar strenuous circumstances of growing dissatisfaction had extended the concession of free speech in order to avoid extending any greater ones. The results were similar. The imperial regime had arranged and subsidized in part a delegation of workers to visit the London Exhibition of that year and after observing the condition of the working class there to write and publish reports.

Despite the fact that the years 1861-65 of the cotton crisis in England had created the most harrowing conditions of labor, the French workers returned with nothing but praise. Many reports predicted that strikes would soon become a feature of French life and that workers would resort to emigration if conditions didn't improve. The results were summed up in the words of the Police Prefect of Paris who observed that before permitting this it would have been better to repeal the anti-union legislation.

The misery of the working class in England during the cotton crisis had demonstrated the inadequacies of the trade-union in defending the interests of the workers. A "New Unionism" emerged out of the old. Bonaparte, in sending the French workers to London, had provided them with the opportunity of contacting the leaders of

the English trade-unions, a contact which in the years following the 1857 crisis added to the ferment out of which grew the first International. In the words of Mehring, the first International was "a transitional form of the proletarian struggle for emancipation and it was as necessary as it was transitional."

Transitional Art

By 1869 strikes became more frequent in France and soon acquired a mass character. The warm winds of an approaching spring stirred up aspirations that had remained underground for the last twenty years. In a letter of February 21, 1870 the poet Lautreamont, who today is remembered for his morbid despair and regarded as a forerunner of the Surrealists, in fact rejected this as the basis of art when he wrote: "I have repudiated my past. I will now sing of nothing but hope; but to do that it is first necessary to attack the doubt of this century (melancholy, sadness, pain, despair, baleful whinnying, artificial irascibility, adolescent pride, laughable curses, etc.)." He was to be seen during this period at the meetings of a political club presided over by Rigault, a future leader of the Commune.

In a letter of March 12, 1870 he wrote: "The poetic groanings of this century are only hideous

sophisms. . . That is why I have completely changed my method, in order to sing exclusively of hope, expectation, CALM, happiness, DUTY." And in his eccentric manner, this poet who only wrote at night seated at his piano, every now and then striking a chord, proceeded to immediately apply his method by taking the poetry of Lamartine, Hugo, Musset, Byron and Baudelaire and "correcting them from the standpoint of hope."

This outrageous attitude to art, bearing a resemblance in many ways to that of PL today, was somewhat compensated for by the appearance of his *Poesies*, which indicated that he was groping for a transitional art. In *Poesies II* he asserted: "Judgments about poetry have more value than poetry. They are the philosophy of poetry. Philosophy, thus understood, embodies poetry. Poetry will not be able to do without philosophy; philosophy can do without poetry." Why his preference for the precept? Because a precept could lead more directly to action, he thought, and hence its superiority to a poem. In his haste to discover an art that commanded social power, he sidestepped poetry. He made judgments about poetry; it remained for someone else to practice it.

The Apollonian in Poetry

Rimbaud, who consciously considered himself to be in the anti-Cartesian French materialist tradition, despite his reading of Helvétius, was still pantheistic in his early poems, such as "Sensation." He was materialist but saw the forces of nature as external to man. In that sense he was still religious, having a natural religion. It represented the transitional form of the religious consciousness on its way to becoming the consciousness of nature-for-man in which the conscious alteration of nature occurred through the alteration of human society. But if consciousness is a social product, then it is not surprising that in its early stages it perceives this in a very limited way. The adolescent growing up in the Ardennes region had only known the most restricted social relations and hence the most restricted relation to nature. This was the inevitable condition of life in the provinces that Rimbaud complained so much about. The origin of these conditions are explained by Marx in *The Eighteenth Brumaire*. . .

The small-holding peasants form a vast mass, the members of which live in similar

conditions but without entering into manifold relations with one another. Their mode of production isolates them from one another instead of bringing them into mutual intercourse. . . Their field of production, the small holding, admits of no division of labour in its cultivation, no application of science, and, therefore, no diversity of development, no variety of talent, no wealth of social relationships. Each individual peasant family is almost self-sufficient; it itself directly produces the major part of its consumption and thus acquires its means of life more through exchange with nature than in intercourse with society.

It was the consequent restriction of social relations resulting from these conditions that Rimbaud was fleeing from in his escapes to Paris in the fall of 1870, not his mother, as the literary critics are fond of suggesting. Nor was he merely seeking some vague "liberty." At all times "absolutely modern," at least in this period of his life, he was performing "the task of the modern era" which, as Feuerbach opens up the *Principles* by saying "was the realization and humanization of God — the transformation and dissolution of theology into anthropology."

And so Rimbaud left the countryside for Paris at a time when the order of nature was being taken into the hands of the proletariat in the city. His earlier celebration of nature was replaced by the celebration of nature-for-man, of human nature. It was the first manifestation of his social identity, of himself. He was seeking a way to make natural religion anthropology.

Marx had written in *The German Ideology*, "Communism differs from all previous movements in that it overturns the basis of all earlier relations of production and intercourse, and for the first time consciously treats all natural premises as the creatures of man, strips them of their natural character and subjugates them to the power of individuals united. Its organization is, therefore, essentially economic, the material production of the conditions of this unity; it turns existing conditions into conditions of unity."

The Class-for-Itself

The first cries of unity had been in the language of 1848. A social republic was demanded by the workers on September 4, after the collapse of the

Empire, which materialized in the grotesque form of the Government of National Defense. By March 18, 1871 following the capitulation of France to Bismarck and the subsequent period of Prussian occupation, the workers comprising the majority of the National Guard seized power themselves in the capital. By April 16 they had appropriated the abandoned factories and had drawn up plans for their operation through an organization in which separate unions were to be united in one great union.

“The social revolution of the nineteenth century,” Marx had written in the *Eighteenth Brumaire*, “cannot draw its poetry from the past but only from the future.” The Commune had recognized the need for a new language: the class-for-itself — the only organization which had presented itself as the appropriate form for the required alteration of man’s relation to the forces of reproduction. That it also foresaw in some sense the future of this institution on an international basis is demonstrated by the fact that although the majority in the Council of the Commune were Blanquists, the minority were all members of the first International. Ironically, the latter, many of whom were followers of Proudhon, had abandoned his theory of local control for the class-for-itself institution which had proved itself to be superior.

For this reason Engels described the Commune as having been “the grave of the Proudhon school of Socialism.” Yet today, despite the example of the Commune, the fragmentation of the working class is advocated as the method of organization and still practiced by the CP and SWP. Engels must have been equally correct when he observed, “Only among the ‘radical’ bourgeoisie are there still Proudhonists.”

Marx had characterized bourgeois society as natural society in the sense that the relation of individuals to each other as individuals, the achievement of bourgeois society alone, was still in its natural state, i.e. had not yet been made the object of human creativity. To transform individuality into human individuality was to regard it as individuality-for-man, an active determinant of the creativity of humanity. The bourgeois state with its illusion of the general interest and its reality of the particular interest of private property was recognized by the Commune to be an inappropriate formulation of the unity of the individual with his species’ being. What special

force beyond the the defense of this unity was required? Anticipating the reappearance of a consciousness in which the particular and general interests appeared antagonistic the Commune took two measures: all posts were filled on the basis of universal suffrage and subject to recall on that basis; all officials received the wages of other workers, none exceeding 6,000 francs.

The Promethean in Poetry

The Commune, by appropriating all religious property and removing all religious ideology from educational institutions, now made free and compulsory, abolished the embodiment of a conception of man predicated on his powerlessness. It had itself put into practice Feuerbach’s words “Man has his highest being, his God, in himself: not in himself as an individual, but in his essential nature, his species.” The assimilation of this world-view in Rimbaud, not surprisingly, has been consistently interpreted, with the rarest exceptions, by bourgeois literary critics as his religious mysticism. The transcending of one’s individuality, in bourgeois terms, could only possibly take the form of religion since the very basis of bourgeois society is the irreconcilability of the individual with his species. However, what these critics cannot conceive of today appeared quite natural to Rimbaud a hundred years ago in 1871!

His vision of new powers of human creativity occurred and was formulated at the height of the Commune, in the well-known Letter of the Seer of May 15, 1871 in which he writes:

Universal Mind has always thrown out its ideas naturally; man would pick up part of these fruits of the brain; they acted through, wrote books with them: and so things went along, since man did not work on himself, not being yet awake, or not yet in the fullness of his dream. Writers, functionaries. Author, creator, poet, that man has never existed!

“...The poet will define the amount of unknown arising in his time in the universal soul; he will give more than the formula of his thought, more than the annotation of his march toward Progress! Enormity become norm, absorbed by everyone, he will truly be the multiplier of progress!”

The promise of knowledge had been held out to men throughout their history. But men had known and made their history through the fog of ideology and their partial understanding had been reflected in the thought they produced, mere annotations of their march toward Progress. The basis of their limited knowledge had been the restricted nature of their relations to each other and consequently only a restricted consciousness of their own activity was possible. This was as true of primitive communism with its apparent social unity as of modern capitalism in which the fragmentation of individuals made their disunity more conspicuous. For in the former, what unity was achieved was as insignificant as the degree to which nature, in the process of social reproduction, had been modified historically.

But now the interrelatedness of men on a world-wide scale had provided the basis for a consciousness of their activity as total activity in which the multiplicity immanent in the activity of each individual was realized. His force was only real to the degree that it represented universal force. "For I is another," Rimbaud had written. "If brass wakes up a trumpet, it isn't to blame. To me this is evident: I give a stroke of the bow: the symphony begins to stir in the depths or comes bursting onto the stage."

Revolutionary Art

When he said in the same letter that poetry would be "en avance," he only suggested that the artist, like the revolutionary, would have a holistic grasp of the historical possibilities of humanity. If he defines the amount of the unknown arising in his time it is only because the moment has come when it can be known. For poetry to be "en avance" it must grasp the present; for it to be ahead in any other sense but that would be to place it outside of human history, and to create a non-human art. The degeneration of the notion of avant-garde in the twentieth century can be directly attributed to the declining creativity of humanity in reproducing its conditions of existence which renders it incapable of producing artists with the intellectual capacities with which to grasp the historical possibilities of humanity.

The aspiration of universality brought forth the poem *To a Reason*. "Arrival of all time, who will go everywhere." That is the moment in which poetry

takes place: the moment in which the force of history is known and transcended through its realization.

Rimbaud's poetic vision is a refutation of the view that socialism will bring an end to the necessity for art. On the contrary, only with socialism can art truly begin. The first view holds that art is a product of the estrangement between human creativity and the possibilities of its realization, in other words that art is a product of alienation. The second view holds that art is a product of the creative realization of human force, a celebration of the increased powers of humanity, and that it is dependent on the improved quality of social existence for the realization of its own force. Great art has always had as its subject matter the expansion of human capacities. With self-activity as the force of social reproduction men can begin to make their history with their eyes open. The continuous expansion of human capacities required for this task will not be carried out on a haphazard basis, giving rise to a great artist once an epoch, but will be a continuous and controlled process because controlled by all.

Struggle Between the Dionysian and Promethean

The artist for Baudelaire, if we recall, had been a king who couldn't rule, "wealthy but powerless, young and yet very old" whose flower-strewn bed had been changed into a tomb. In a parable by Rimbaud, "Tale," the king reappears but in the period after 1871. Who was the prince and who was the genie?

The prince is vexed by his mediocrity due to his power over his subjects. The more he increases his power the more impotent he becomes: he kills the women around him and more reappear, the throngs and animals remain. The artist (and it must be remembered that Rimbaud had been a child prodigy) was dissatisfied with beauty "embellished by heaven and luxury" in art. He "foresaw astonishing revolutions of love" and longed for "the truth, the hour of essential desire and gratification." He had perfected the estrangement of mental labor but found that through it he could have no relations to others. The promise of a complex and multiple relation to others appears as a genie. It is a spirit of a multiplied social force such as the one unleashed by the Commune. It is a spirit, then, in the other meaning of that word:

genius. Human genius. It had been annihilated by the way in which it had come into being: the old adhering to the new was both a sign of its historical reality and a cause of its defeat. Its "essential health" was the inevitable inadequacy of a first attempt which qualified it as a real historical event. Its success was its failure.

The artist had also been annihilated "in essential health" for he had arrived at the unknown. "Even if half-crazed, in the end," Rimbaud had written in the *Letter of the Seer*, "he loses the understanding of his visions, he has seen them! Let him croak in his leap into those unutterable and innumerable things: there will come other horrible workers: they will begin at the horizons where he has succumbed."

But perhaps there had been no encounter. The genie had been in the prince: the new had not yet been born but was still encircled by the old. There was after all "no sovereign music for our desires"; the new language had not yet been found.

But in reality it had not been properly defended. The aspiration of the Commune had been for universality but it itself had been hopelessly isolated. Communication with a potentially revolutionary section of the peasantry had been cut off by the *cordon sanitaire* surrounding Paris. The inadequate leadership of the Commune was sufficiently demonstrated by its failure, chiefly out of ignorance, to take over the Bank of France. The inevitable massacre of the Commune was savage. After its defeat thirty thousand more were executed without trial and more than 40,000 were either thrown into prison or sentenced to hard labor in the colonies from which the majority died.

Some "nameless" catastrophe, Wallace Fowlie remarks, hovers over the *Illuminations*.

The parable, then, had been a tale of Rimbaud's encounter with the Commune. Though it had been an encounter in "essential health" it ultimately annihilated him. Other poets would die "at an ordinary age," i.e. they would continue writing. But the Commune had awakened desires in Rimbaud for which in the years following 1871 there was no language — neither in society or gradually in himself.

In London, he lived with Verlaine among the *emigre* Communards. "An exile here," he writes, "I

once had a stage on which to play all the masterpieces of literature." The tale of his loss is related in yet another form in the poem *Working People*. Anomie is the subject of the poem. The working-class woman, dressed in a costume left over from the French Revolution — here one recalls the *Eighteenth Brumaire* — is unconscious of who she is. Equally uncomprehendingly she looks at the stagnant pool as at a curiosity, not aware that she is gazing at her own defeat. Memories of a former existence are stirred up by nature. Here as elsewhere in Rimbaud's poetry there is a suggestion that the event had occurred too soon: "The untimely south came to stir up our absurd paupers' memories, our young distress."

With increasing disorientation the ability to make the distinction between primitive communism and modern communism did not ultimately develop into one of Rimbaud's strong points. The suggestion of this is already in the imagery of this poem. The warm wind comes from the south, the area of Europe least developed by capitalist modes of production. Nature is posed in opposition to industry. The disintegration of historical consciousness that this view portends was probably representative of Rimbaud's state of mind by the time that he left Europe. He is already announcing his plans to do so in the line "No! we will not spend the summer in this avaricious country where we shall never be anything but affianced orphans." And then, announcing his intention to give up poetry, "I want this hardened arm to stop dragging a *cherished image*," binding in the two words "hardened arm" his force and fate with that of the working class.

The frenetic post-1871 activity of capitalism is never described by Rimbaud except with the most mocking irony. Historical self-activity with which he had identified himself is now clearly impossible. Now the bourgeoisie has a stage, a world stage, on which to play — but no masterpieces! If it had made its entrance in the 18th century, as Marx says in the *Eighteenth Brumaire*, with dramatic success, it now makes its exit with theatrical failure. The poet observes the monstrosity of the panorama of imperialism and satirizes it by representing it as vulgar theatricality. Should he have perhaps engaged instead only in a "sober portrayal... of a very mundane capitalist reality"? An example is the poem *Historic Evening*.

Anyone that would consider this to be an example of nothing but “the gibberish of the petty-bourgeois preconscious between sleep and waking” would be approaching a materialist poet from the standpoint of Cartesian materialism — confident that he least of all could be charged with being a romantic. But the poem must be understood as an intense compression of ideas, a high level of abstraction of the interpenetration of historical processes and ironical judgment.

The vulgarity of the bourgeoisie’s history is the vulgarity of his art. Unheroic as bourgeois society is, it must be depicted in legendary terms. After a strenuous day spent in systematically destroying and breaking up communal property, a reality which happily seems to escape the naive tourist, the mess that this inevitably creates is covered over by a supremely civilizing gesture: a “seignorial concert” amid other gestures nostalgically recalling the feudal period.

The bourgeoisie settles down to a performance of itself. Spellbound it watches itself struggle against the hordes of nomads, hunters and trembles before the spectacle of its own punitive massacres inflicted on the natives. It experiences a momentary discomfort as Germany sky-rocketing to power on France’s five billion francs’ indemnity appears on the stage. And as new areas of primitive accumulation light up on the stage it watches itself inciting revolutions in those areas where the social organization of the natural economy does not permit of a less ruthless introduction of the commodity market.

The “epic” is broken off here by the entrance of the ballet with its “artistry” of banal landscapes, tawdry glitter and cheap melodies, all of which reassure that it is all merely entertainment.

It is the “same bourgeois magic” everywhere. To acknowledge its universality is already to become afflicted. What a caricature of Marx’s words in *The German Ideology* that “the liberation of each single individual will be accomplished in the measure in which history becomes transformed into world-history.” Here is history transformed into world-history — but there is nothing legendary about it.

After 1871 fraudulent land speculation of communal land held by Arab clans in Algeria, which the French had been encroaching upon for

years but lacked the government force to conquer, were used as a desperate means of maintaining the credit system which by 1872 had threatened to collapse. A satire on the extremes of intensity to which the selling of things hitherto unexplored rose is found in the poem *Sale*.

Everything rare and precious to humanity, under crisis, becomes transformed in the poem into the most outlandish commodities. The “unknown,” “the enormity,” in the most cynical fashion, “become norm.” The qualities which are indeed scarce under conditions of capitalist society — love, creativity — are suddenly of interest here to the capitalist — as commodities whose scarcity can be speculated upon. The crisis of scarcity that Rimbaud is writing about is the scarcity of the possibilities of humanity achieved by the Commune, recalled in the lines, the “fraternal awakening of all choral and orchestral energies and their instantaneous supplication; the opportunity, the only one, for the release of our senses!” But under conditions of capitalism, the “release of our senses” becomes a commodity of “irrepressible connoisseurs.” The curiosity of human beings will henceforth be directed to activities which can be sold; the more monstrous or criminal, the more likely the discovery of new commodities. Even political expediency is rendered still more profitable by turning it into a commodity; anarchy for the masses (such as the counter-culture today) is sold to them.

This is the liquidation of Rimbaud’s poetic vision which had once rested on a real basis. He is really announcing the bankruptcy of himself as a poet, for he has come to regard his own poetry as a fraud — credit, but no real wealth. By now he has returned to his early conception of nature. The only place where communality will not be sold, he thinks, is in the orient or Africa. He had been looted of his former power and imagination, all those qualities which had made him human, but he would refuse to buy them back. He refused to become a professional artist. To have made art as he had known it a profession he would also have had to become a professional revolutionary. But the years immediately following 1871 were not the best years for that.

In a fog of illusions he travelled to those countries which he imagined were untouched by capitalism. He slowly discovered that he was only faced again with a choice between the master and

the slave. It should be remembered that Baudelaire when confronted with that choice had recoiled from the power of the master and chose instead to place the *Fleurs du Mal* on his tomb. It should also be recalled that Rimbaud's prince had to have power at any cost. Rimbaud finally became a master, by 1887 a gun-runner whose chief client was King Menelek of Abyssinia. Relentless in his role, as his prince had been, Rimbaud is found from 1888 on clandestinely accompanying the caravans bearing the most lucrative commodity of all. He had become a slave-trader.

One recalls his words "for I is another." With

the sale of everything that had been created through others it had happened that he himself had been sold. *Sale* is the last poem in the *Illuminations*. It was followed by a heart-breaking narrative of his defeat, *A Season in Hell*, and shortly after Rimbaud disappeared. Another poet rose to take his place, a poet who died "at an ordinary age." Mallarme, the great poet of entombment, who wrote the poetry that Rimbaud had ceased writing to avoid ever writing. Human failure, impotence and subsequently religion, had once again become the basis of poetry — and has remained so in the twentieth century.

Working Class Alternatives in the Election Year

Editor's Note: Following is the text of the resolution presented by the National Caucus of Labor Committees to the February 25-27, 1971 Conference of the Student Mobilization Committee (SMC). For an account of the conference itself and the open bloc of the Socialist Workers Party / Young Socialist Alliance with liberal capitalist politicians, see *New Solidarity*, March 6, 1971.

1. The unifying focus of the attention of working people in the United States during 1972 is and will continue to be the current national electoral campaigns. The real, central issue of the campaign is the growing attack on the material conditions of life and political rights of working people and their allies. This development exposes an irreconcilable division between us and those opportunist politicians who profess their opposition to the Indochina war but who simultaneously support the escalating war on wages and living conditions of working people here in the U.S.A.

2. Most of both the Republican and Democratic candidates agree in demanding that the organized section of labor betray itself and all working people by participating in some sort of governmental wage control apparatus. Those few conservatives and so-called liberals who oppose this recommend the alternative of wage-gouging by mere dictatorial bureaucratic decree.

3. This government-employer attack on labor has been so far mainly effective. Although a few of the strongest trade unions have been able to resist the intended full effects of austerity, the weaker unions, and especially the great mass of unorganized workers, unemployed, and oppressed working-class minorities generally have been placed under the iron heel of economic oppression — with the effective endorsement of this by all Republican and Democratic spokesmen.

4. The attack on employed wage earners is now especially sharp among employees of Federal, state and local government agencies, including the employees of those bankers' pork-barrels called public authorities. In this particular area of conflict we see the most clearly political character and forms of a present and growing class struggle in the U.S.A.

5. However, the most vicious crimes against the working class population as a whole are naturally being committed against the weakest and most helpless section, the victims of the welfare system. In this area we see the Federal government aligned with various state governments, in an ugly conspiracy which simultaneously imposes legalized slave labor with unconscionable slashes in already subsistence incomes. We have already seen this same policy used to herd defenseless mothers of dependent children into scabbing on the most oppressed strata of Black and Spanish-speaking groups among employed labor. It would not be too much an exaggeration to conclude from such evidence that the Nixon regime — with the sly complicity of most Democratic officials — is currently beginning the "Vietnamization" of the U.S.A. itself.

6. As vicious as these measures may be, they are not an accidental consequence of Nixon's 1968 election. The world's leading bankers have not only admitted but have insisted that such measures against all working people are now an absolute necessity for saving the value of the enormous mass of stocks, bonds and mortgages owned by the financial backers of both major parties. It is rapidly becoming clear to broad layers that the issue of a moderately-decent life itself is joined in an intensifying, if still fragmented, struggle between the two major classes of society. We would therefore be traitors to the interests of working people if we did not consistently apply the principle that there is no possibility of improvement or compromises within or with the major parties.

7. Under such circumstances it would be morally bankrupt of any serious anti-war group, such as the SMC, to propose to separate the struggle against the Indochina war from the growing struggles of working people in the U.S. itself. Even massive protests against a brutal attack

on Vietnamese working people — at a safe distance of thousands of miles — would be degraded into a moral travesty unless we were fully and actively committed to play a leading role in the struggles of working people where we live.

8. Some might argue that the issues of wage-controls ought to be the special province of the organized labor movement. They might argue that the SMC ought to limit itself to occasionally supporting labor leaders in these matters. Their policy would be disastrously mistaken on several counts.

9. The first major error in their policy would be that of substituting a minority of the working class — its trade-union sector — for the working class as a whole. We agree that it would represent the fulfillment of a commendable ideal if every working person, including the unemployed and aged, enjoyed the organization and protection of a united and effective union organization. To the extent that it is possible to make progress in that direction, every struggle for trade-union rights and every struggle against efforts to break existing unions must be actively supported. Unfortunately, at the present time, trade unions represent only a minority of working people. Worse, even militant rank-and-file groups within those unions tend to share the narrow outlooks expressed by many union officials. Union struggles therefore tend to represent only the immediate, special concerns of certain employed workers in particular industries, and leave the broader and more fundamental struggles affecting living conditions, taxation, and employment rights unsupported, as well as the rights to wages and tolerable working conditions of even other sections of the trade union movement itself.

10. A related error is made by certain critics of the present-day trade-union officials. These critics mistakenly argue that the faults of the organized labor movement could be corrected merely by successful agitation of rank-and-file forces within the unions concerning issues of wages and other shop conditions. These persons overlook two major facts of the organized sector of the labor movement. First, they ignore the fact that any agitation limited to issues as defined by the narrow framework of particular unions and shop problems merely re-enforces and perpetuates the very type of trade-union policies which are being criticized. The issues facing working people in general can be defined and union struggles effectively supported only to the extent that agitation is based equally on trade-union and non-trade-union sections of the working class, to the extent that the unorganized unemployed and oppressed minorities are given a direct voice in determining the policies to be supported by the organized sector. Second, the cited critics overlook the history of the labor movement itself, including the birth of the CIO, in which trade unions were made possible by broad struggles in which the organized and unorganized workers, including the unemployed, were united in common interest struggles.

11. If any section of the working class population is to win the present struggle against its enemies in the Republican and Democratic parties, it is indispensable that the struggle be broadened and unified to represent the most-active sections of all parts of that population.

It is indispensable that a growing mass movement be built around initiating forces which are an alliance of representative groupings from the ranks of organized labor, the employed unorganized wage-earners, the unemployed, the working people on welfare, and that the voice of the oppressed minorities of working people be clearly expressed in such alliances.

12. The practical question is therefore where and how to begin to create such alliances of initiating forces. For this purpose, the SMC and its sister, NPAC, organization have certain special qualifications and, consequently, certain inescapable moral responsibilities. These two organizations chiefly typify the only existing institutions in the U.S. which bring together virtually all of the much smaller groups and individuals professing a commitment to the unified organization of working people against the present wage-gouging and other oppressive measures. The SMC and NPAC therefore have a capacity and obligations which cannot be shunted off to any of the individual groups participating in these two organizations. The active effort to unify working people in this struggle could and must be undertaken by SMC, NPAC, and similar organizations, such as the PCPJ and TUAD, since none of the participating groups in those broader organizations could mobilize such efforts with even approximately comparable effectiveness.

13. Therefore, it has been resolved that the SMC will be governed by the following principal policies during 1972:

- (A) We will continue to campaign for the immediate and complete withdrawal of all U.S. military and paramilitary forces from all sectors of Southeast Asia, including the cessation of any deployment of military air and naval forces in this region.
- (B) Although we welcome active support for our campaigns from all the population, we shall not compromise our unconditional support of the interests of working people by making any deal in support of the party or electoral campaign of any Republican or Democratic candidate.
- (C) Wherever working people are engaged in struggles against the repressive policies of employers and Federal, state and local governments, we shall attempt to assist these struggles by mobilizing our own forces and others, with the aim of creating alliances among organized and unorganized working people and their allies which express the common interests of those united forces.
- (D) In opposition to the bankrupt policies of the Republican and Democratic parties and their candidates, we propose the following interconnected set of alternatives to the wage-gouging, taxation, inflationary and military-aerospace spending generally proposed by those factions:
 - a. Immediate and total conversion of so-called defense production capacities for satisfying either the just consumption demands of working people or for creating the additional productive

capacities and employment opportunities for increasing the nation's ability to produce useful wealth.

b. Repeal of all Federal, state and local sales and wage taxation on incomes of families below \$15,000 a year and on incomes of individuals below \$7,500 a year, with the main burden of necessary taxation to fall upon the income and wealth of firms and upon capital gains.

c. An effective minimum-income policy providing the necessary standard of living and educational opportunities required to produce individuals qualified for productive employment by the standards of emerging productive technology.

d. Unrestricted rights of working people to organize in trade unions and an unrestricted right to strike by all wage-earners, tenants, and student bodies without legal penalties or injunctions, including the right to defend their strikes against scabbing and other strike-breaking measures.

e. The right of all working-people, including unemployed and pensioners, to automatic escalation of their incomes to offset inflationary and tax reduction of their after-tax personal incomes.

f. A reduction of rent and mortgage-purchase payments by working people and unemployed to 15% of their income.

g. The right to a competent college education for all working people who desire it. For this to be a true right and not merely an empty legal fiction, such education must be possible in practice, which requires free tuition and competent subsistence payments to these students.

h. The right to freedom from speed-up and other oppressive conditions of employment.

i. Free mass transit and local commuter services for the entire population, and an end to the ugly multiplication of toll-gates at every turn of daily life. The immediate and rapid expansion of such transit services.

j. Massive expansion of construction of public housing, of educational and health-service facilities.

k. Free medical and dental service with a minimum of wasteful paper-work and other regressive bureaucratic procedures.

l. Freedom from frame-up and other forms of political repression.

m. The separation of church from state must be extended to end the barbaric religious ritual of retributive "justice." Actual crimes, against persons and their personal rights to means of personal consumption, must be prevented, and persons disposed to such anti-social acts must be treated. The object must be to put the rehabilitated felon back into the ranks of society with his or her full civil rights as a citizen. With the aid of concerned former felons, who thus have useful insight into the problems represented by such anti-social tendencies, the problem must be approached in the same terms as diseases. Prisons, to the extent they must continue to exist, must become effective rehabilitation centers and thus cease to be induction centers for the recruitment and training of a permanent community of certified criminals.

n. The treatment of older working people as though they, too, were guilty of the crime of uselessness must end. As long as he or she lives, every working person has the right to some productive or otherwise useful role in society, the right to be an important person

14. The objection will be raised to such demands that, in total they are utopian, that they represent expectations which could not possibly be met within the foreseeable future, given present levels of production. We counter such objections in two ways. Firstly, we point out that the decay of the cities and material deprivations of almost half the U.S. population are the direct result of U.S. employers' and government's refusal to appreciably increase the number of U.S. citizens employed in useful production of goods over the levels of 1953. The conversion of defense capacity for the purpose of increasing productive job opportunities would in itself represent a massive increase in the production of such necessary ingredients of personal consumption.

15. Secondly, to the extent that there are actual limits to the available level of general material consumption and leisure, we hold that it is the right of the majority of the population to determine how available wealth shall be allocated between creating new productive capacities and personal consumption. If those working people were told the truth about the economy and about the way in which its potential is presently being misused, they could decide rationally and collectively on what the possible levels of personal real income could be, and what sacrifices of possible improvement in personal consumption must be made for the purpose of "investment" to increase the level of possible consumption and leisure in the years immediately ahead. It is those who keep working people in ignorance of the necessary facts about the economy who argue that it is necessary to keep down their incomes by force! We insist that the majority of working people is incapable of collectively making an irrational economic policy decision, only provided that they are permitted to judge on the basis of the truth which is now deliberately concealed from them.

16. We emphasize that the list of possible demands we have listed either represent the demands already expressed by sections of the working population or represent the demands which those people would energetically support wherever they found themselves united for the purpose of collectively resolving the leading problems of present-day life. Therefore, wherever working people are found engaged in struggles for such demands, we shall actively support those struggles by working to mobilize broader coalitions of organized, unorganized, unemployed, and oppressed minorities of working people around a set of such common demands which provide the basis for unity in terms of common interest.

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