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In Defense Of ROSA LUXEMBURG

by
L. Marcus

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Managing Editors: Carol LaRosa and Ed Spannaus

Editorial Staff: C. Berl, P. Brand, R. Dillon, L. Marcus,
R. Rose, T. Perlman

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In Defense of Rosa Luxemburg

by Lyn Marcus

It was as inevitable as the bathetic destiny of countless "angle-trisectors" that none of Luxemburg's critics would have demonstrated a single significant error in either her *Accumulation of Capital* (1) or her *Anti-Kritik* rebuttal of the initial attacks on that volume. (2) In each instance, the ill-fated critic has attacked those writings for the purpose of attempting to discredit one or more of the conclusions on which she is devastatingly correct by the overwhelming empirical evidence of a half-century of subsequent imperialist development.

Despite her critics, there is a generally undetected collateral flaw in her statement of the realization of surplus value. Marx would have located her problem immediately. From the internal evidence of her writings, we judge she would have quickly conceded to any qualified critic that she had left an important, subsumed consideration unresolved. However, this single error, a kind of ellipsis in her systematic argument, has no hereditary implications for any of her principal conclusions, and no effort to demonstrate a flaw in those conclusions could have detected the difficulty.

The history of science is filled with similar cases. The successive achievements of the leading mathematicians of the past four centuries, from Kepler onward, constantly confront us with brilliant new conceptions essentially valid for the immediate ques-

tions considered, but which must be profoundly corrected on the basis of evidence of new investigation into new, broader topics of inquiry. The use of the term "wrong" to identify such short-falls not only has a bad smell, but is rather absurd from any meaningful overview of the criteria of progress in scientific practice.

That is the case for Luxemburg's single flaw. Insofar as she is studied only in respect to the immediate issues of "imperialism," "breakdown crisis," "primitive accumulation," and "military economy," she represents not only the most brilliantly — and uniquely — vindicated analysis and foresight, but there is not the slightest basis in fact to suggest she was mistaken in situating her achievements as derived directly from Marx's notion of capital-in-general. Not until one acknowledges the correctness of her analysis on these counts is the basis secured for inquiring as to where her approach might fail in application to new or broader inquiries.

Even so, there is an important flaw in her writings.

The present writer has recognized that flaw since his first study of her *Accumulation of Capital* approximately seven years ago, and has acknowledged that fact in his classroom and related work. However, until the past spring, he has beaten off recurring proposals from students and others that he take up this

matter in print. Outside the ranks of his students and a few others, there existed no readers qualified to follow the argument involved. The general reader would have ignored the theoretical development and simply abstracted the conclusion, the mere identification of her error, to add to his catalogue of "Luxemburg's mistakes." Unless circumstances improved to the extent that we could, in effect, hold the reader responsible for acknowledging that this was her only mistake, it was rather less than pointless to disseminate information into the hands of those unqualified to use it. The principal theoretical issues which had to be fought out respecting the very viability of the contemporary socialist movement were largely those on which she remained absolutely correct. It was only the emergence of the rapidly-increasing left-hegemony of the Labor Committee tendency, especially since the summer of 1971, which has altered the situation among most North American and some European professed Marxists and Marxologists to the extent to make effective published criticism of her oversight possible at this late date.

Part of such favorable developments was our 1972 publication of the first English edition of her *Anti-Kritik*. Our impending publication of a translation and analysis of her doctoral dissertation (3) reflects our presently leading position of authority in the socialist movement respecting the theoretical side of "Luxemburgology." (4) Otherwise, as a consequence of our growing influence as an organized tendency, the increased adversary importance attached to us by nominally socialist and pro-capitalist opponents, any critic would now risk credibility even in his own circles if he attempted to overlook or brush aside our independent authority in the interpretation of Marx's method and economic theories generally. We are thus situated to effectively police the uses made of our own report on the topic at hand.

During the middle of 1972, as we were mooting the proper form in which to circulate such a report, we received news of an impending *Monthly Review* Press publication of a second English translation of her *Anti-Kritik*, to be printed as a companion-piece to N. Bukharin's infamous attack on her in *Unter dem Banner des Marxismus*. (5) Since both the editor and publisher of that book were well-informed of the outrageous factional circumstances and pervasive falsifications of the Bukharin piece, their collaboration in presenting his slanders as a "scholarly balance" to Luxemburg's *Anti-Kritik* is an act of monstrous mendacity.

Even so, from our familiarity with reprints from *Unter dem Banner des Marxismus*, we anticipated that some good could be perversely extracted from *Monthly Review's* atrocity. Bukharin's slander has not only supplied the model for most subsequent Stalinists' glib falsifications against her, but in a more recent period have also become part of some "official Trotsky-

ist" catechism. (6) Taking up the wretched Bukharin serves as an efficient means for settling accounts with his disciples, typified by Sweezy (7) and Mandel.

First, we develop the case to show the flaw in her arguments.

THE PROBLEM OF "OVERPRODUCTION"

The most conspicuous feature of Marx's location of the intrinsic contradictions of capitalism, consistently a large feature of Luxemburg's argument, is the issue of "overproduction of COMMODITIES." This term does NOT signify the existence of too many products in respect to human need, but represents that circumstance of underproduction for need, in which the aggregate price of the insufficient products presented for sale as commodities is nonetheless in excess of the aggregate means of purchase apparently available. (8)

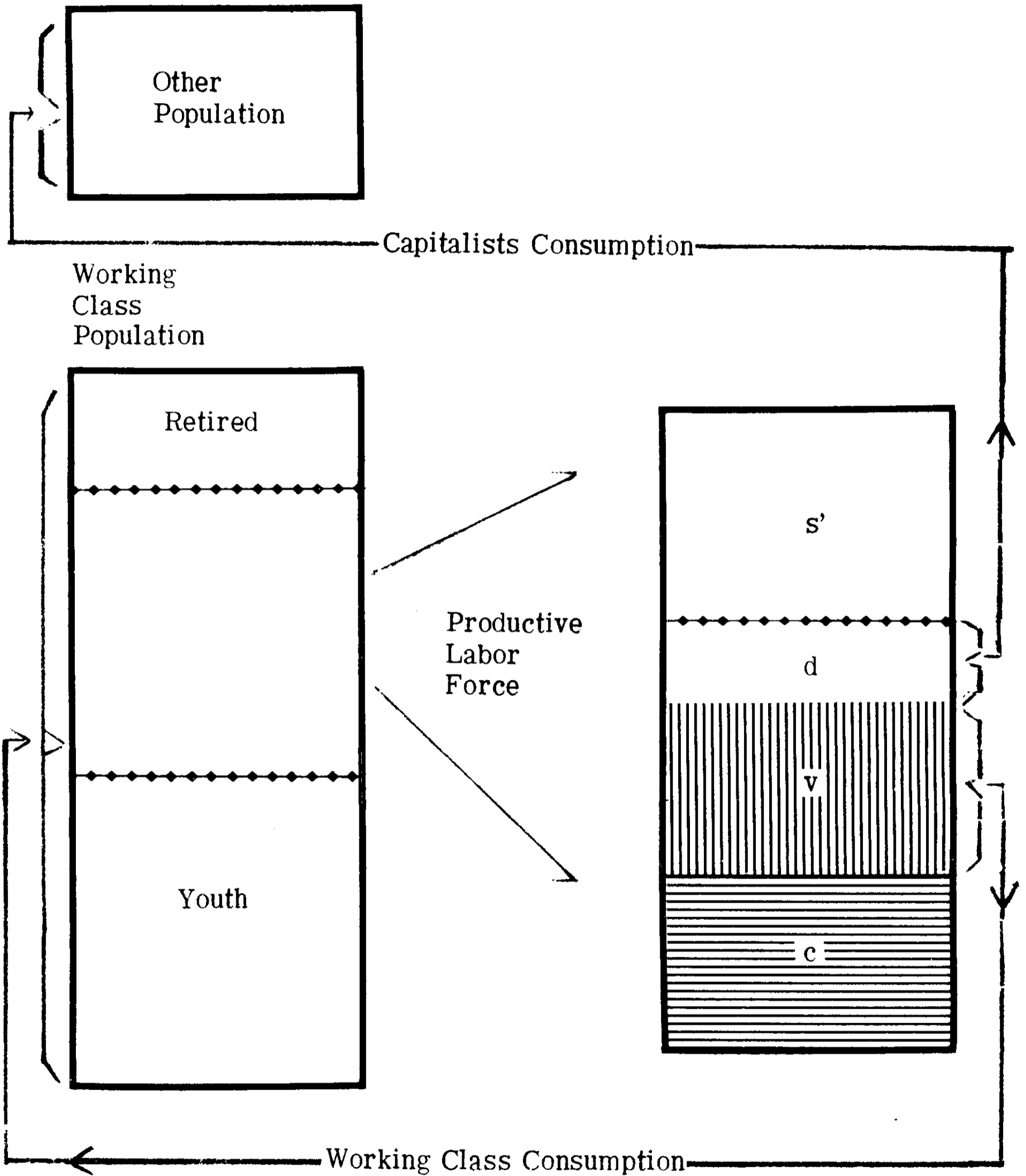
Marx insists that neither this nor any other fundamental problem of capitalist accumulation can be competently treated until we consider the capitalist system as a totality, (9) or what Luxemburg repeatedly emphasizes — to the frenzied protests of her critics — as her "total capitalist" rigor. (10)

The following summation of the problem of reproduction, already familiar to the writer's students and readers, (11) identifies the basis for our approach to the origins and significance of such "overproduction." As is our customary pedagogical ruse for initial presentation of such notions, we assume the hypothetical state of development of a capitalist economy in which independent farmers have been eliminated as a separate social-economic class from the main body of agricultural production. Thus, the labor force for agricultural production is simply a part of the working-class population as a whole.

SOCIAL REPRODUCTION

On the premises of Marx's hylozoic monism, we follow the rigor of his analysis of productive and unproductive labor in Part I of *Theories of Surplus Value*, limiting our definition of the ACTUALIZED production of use-values to that cooperative labor-power which directly effects MATERIAL ALTERATIONS OF NATURE in the immediate form of either MATERIAL means of consumption or MATERIAL means of production. That is, that actualized human activity which directly increases the negentropic relative state of nature for higher qualities of human social-reproductive existence, as we outline the case for this in our textbook and in other locations. (12)

Accordingly, resorting to the admissible pedagogical ruse already identified, we divide the entire



population of the capitalist economy into two major sectors, treated in first approximation as separate, symbolic species-populations. (Note the indicated exchanges of produced members of respective populations and of services between these two species-populations in the accompanying diagram.) The major of these two species-populations is the working-class population, from which the productive labor-force (labor-power) as a whole is extracted, labor-power which may not necessarily be employed in productive labor, but which is socially reproduced, in terms of material and cultural mode, to become labor-power. The other species-population includes capitalists as such, administrators, small shopkeepers, professionals, police, military personnel, bureaucrats generally, clerks, families of employees in "service occupations." The reasons for such distinctions will be obvious in a moment.

The productive labor-force is obtained from the working-class population in the following general fashion.

Firstly, two general categories of the population must be discounted as momentarily not available to be productive labor: firstly, the young, secondly those we think of as beyond "retirement age" in the U.S.A. today. There is no biological determination of "immaturity" which applies absolutely to capitalist working-class populations, as the case of child-labor illustrates. "Youth" as a social category is determined by the duration and mode of maturation appropriate to a certain state of technological development of the productive forces. "Education" symbolizes that point. In general, the more advanced the productive technology, the later the age at which a young member of the working-class population "enters the labor force," to the extent that persons entering the labor-force today with only a high-school or lower level of education are virtually unemployable, or fitted (immediately) only for occupations which are either becoming or ought to become obsolete. The notion of "retirement age" needs no development here FOR THE SPECIAL, LIMITED PURPOSES IMMEDIATELY UNDER CONSIDERATION. (There are vicious fallacies in the prevailing, capitalist notions of "retirement"; there is no justification, in either economic theory or morality, for the notion of dispensable human beings.)

These notions of the age-interval of the potential labor force are sufficiently clear that we need only acknowledge that working-class households demand socially-necessary services, such as those of housewives, and that certain other persons in that age-interval are not immediately employable for one reason or another. The general empirical result is that for each broad smaller age-interval of this "adult" population, there is at any stage of technological and cultural development a more or less definite percentile of the entire population of that group which is part of the

labor-force. After deductions for non-productive employment, such as military, police, clerks, services, etc., we have the total productive labor-force.

The bar to the right of the working-class population in the accompanying diagram represents the total labor-force of ACTUAL productive labor-power. (To rid our example of the problem of unemployment in this connection, one may either assume total employment or attribute unemployed persons to households.)

This right-hand bar is divided, by characteristic forms of realization of productive OUTPUT into three major categories and two sub-categories, as follows.

Since man's productive relationship to nature as a whole implies a continuum of (rising) negentropy — even by the crude engineering-school notions of "energy" relationships — the first general cost of social reproduction to be met from the output of total productive labor-power is a use-value category APPROXIMATELY corresponding to Constant Capital, of "C." (For the moment, we overlook the important, ultimately decisive contradictions between use-value and exchange-value determinations for this category.) The amount of C, as a proportion of total realized labor-power, is that mass of repairs to and improvements in nature which preserves at least the equi-potentiality of such nature for continued production in at least the same level of technology and negentropic "efficiency" for tomorrow's production as for today's. In use-value terms, this is one of the immediate direct social costs of reproduction (in the "here" and "now," immediate sense.)

The second major category of direct output costs is that category of use-value output which corresponds in a broad sense to Variable Capital, "V," for capitalist production. This is the mass of material consumption, required by the ENTIRE working-class population, to provide a growing mass of productive labor-power of at least the same quality as today's, in BOTH QUALITY AND MAGNITUDE. It is NOT wages for employed labor ONLY! It includes, necessarily, a level of material income and leisure for unemployed, marginally employed, and "welfare" families to qualify their members to become fully productive members of the force of labor-power for TOMORROW'S technology. (The admitted failure of capitalism to meet those necessary costs of labor-power reproduction for the entire working-class population is a major contradiction of capitalist accumulation, creating "primitive accumulation" profits from the working-class consumption — "underconsumption" in Luxemburg's sense of the term — and also creating apparent population barriers to capitalist expansion in itself.)

The residue of total labor-power output, after deducting (C+V), represents apparent "free energy,"

social surplus in the use-value sense, and "Surplus Value," "S," for capitalist accumulation. This is divided into two major sub-categories. The major deduction from Surplus Value is the consumption of the other population of capitalists, clerks, etc., termed by Marx "capitalists' consumption." Although wage-labor in this social category is often of even proletarian social origins, and potentially, POLITICALLY a part of the working-class population, it has the role of "house servant" to the capitalist class, and, under capitalism, is part of that capitalist class's consumption in the same generic sense as the household servants of the capitalist family home, etc. This consumption includes not only personal consumption as such, but also office buildings, yachts, military equipment, etc., or "capital goods" whose use is contingent upon the activities of persons in the social category of capitalists' consumption.

The residue of Surplus Value, after deducting capitalists' consumption as defined, "d," is Net Surplus Value, or "S'." Thus, the ratio, $S'/(C+V)$, is the key parameter for social reproduction. As S' represents not only the material basis for capitalists' accumulation, but also the "free energy" basis for expanding the productive forces in both quantity and quality, the ratio, $S'/(C+V)$, has the implication of "negentropy." To be more exact: exponential tendencies, relative to IMMEDIATE direct costs of C and V, for increases in that ratio determine AN IMPLIED CONTINUUM for which such notions identify the ELEMENTARY MATERIAL BASIS and INVARIANT quality. Rising values of that ratio are the primary "substance" of evolutionary social reproduction in general, as Marx details it. (13)

(Although the self-reflexive character of a COMPREHENSIVE model of evolutionary social reproduction precludes mathematical representation for reason of the axiomatic fallacies of existing procedures, there are obvious procedures appropriate to both useful, partial descriptions and to relatively short-term economic planning.)

Expanded Reproduction, or the effects of the POSITIVE realization of $S'/(C+V)$, Marx's "self-subsisting positive" (14) or "self-expanding value" (15) notions, signifies that the combined value of $(C+V)$, as a proportion of total productive labor-power, decreases. It is also necessary, for reasons beyond our immediate concern here, that the ratio, C/V , must rise in accompaniment to rising values for $S'/(C+V)$, even though the absolute "material" content of V, per capita of the working-class population, must rise, and the proportion of leisure per capita for that population must also increase. (16)

It is now only necessary, before proceeding with the main body of our text, to specify that capitalist payments for Constant and Variable Capitals do not

directly correspond to the socially-necessary use-value determinations as we have specified them here. There are vicious deviations both in classification and in amount of payments. These vicious deviations represent the fundamental contradictions of capitalist accumulation, but absolutely not in the sense of mere "proportionalities" or other notion of potential "trade-offs."

THE FUNDAMENTAL CONTRADICTION (ANTINOMY)

It should be apparent immediately that there is no explicit provision in this description of social reproduction for the value of "historic" or "Fixed" capitals. Nor should there be. What underqualified economists naively regard as a set of objects corresponding to "Fixed Capital" is merely an aspect of the general alteration of nature by production, an extension of the same general principle of "negentropy" embodied in agricultural improvements. Man's relationship to such useful changes in nature is directly subsumed in the notion of CURRENT Constant Capital use-value costs of maintaining "equi-potential" as we have defined the problem above. The intrinsic flaw in capitalist accumulation, as viewed from this vantage point, is the fantastic fiction by which historic (e.g. accounting) valuations of "previously advanced" capital are introduced into determinations of the rate of current profitability of production, a fallacy which aborts the development of the productive forces.

This intrinsic or fundamental fallacy of capitalist accumulation actively demonstrates itself to be such immediately we shift our point of view from merely simply reproducing existing production (Simple Reproduction) to Extended or (otherwise termed) Expanded Reproduction. Although the immediate concepts to be applied are specific to capitalist society (or socialist forms immediately transitional from capitalism), the principle underlying Expanded Reproduction is general for all human existence, as Marx himself emphasizes. (17)

Although laymen suffer the widespread delusion today that nature is "naturally" divided into "resources" and "non-resources," even the most preliminary mastery of the facts of human history in general show how transparent is the hysterical fetishism prompting such opinion. Nature, in itself, has no special category of objects properly termed "resources," as distinguishable from implied "non-resources." The notion of a "resource" is subsumed by the specific technologies which enable specific societies to make use of specific aspects of nature, but not to make equally effective use of other aspects of nature. As the dominant technology is altered, "old resources" cease to circumscribe the extent of "resources," as aspects of nature not previously considered such become dominant categories of "natural wealth" FOR MAN.

It is the general law of human development that the more successfully any society merely persists, the more "successfully" it is exhausting the relatively-finite "resources" on which continued material existence of that society, in that mode, depends. It is just that which qualitatively distinguishes man as Man from the lower beasts, that he has increased his ecological population potential fantastically over the past few ten thousand years without perceptible alteration in his physical type, without perceptible basis for this improved RANGE of "instinctual" behavior in any genetic determination of his "species powers." What distinguishes man as Man is his Mind, the ultimately deliberative creation of new conceptions, the synthesis through cognition of new invariant qualities of human behavior as a whole, which subsume new technologies and the appropriately corresponding new forms of social organization in general. Man, without altering his biological species nature, represents in the successful ordering of higher forms of society a whole succession of new species in effect, an evolution of species entirely attributable to the determinations of COGNITION in Hegel's and Marx's related notions of cognition as Freedom to synthesize new conceptions of practice appropriate to the higher quality of mastery of material Necessity. (18)

The primary fallacy encountered in most "models" of analysis of human behavior and existence, reaching their worst widespread forms of anti-humanist degeneracy of outlook in "cultural relativism" and behaviorism generally, is exemplified by the paradigm of "Simple Reproduction." The fallacy of composition, to attempt to adduce the essence of Man either by merely examining his behavior in terms of a fixed mode, or by comparing several fixed modes, obviously viciously excludes consideration of any portion of that decisive array of gross empirical evidence which pertains to what actually distinguishes Man from the lower beasts. It is not accidental that the "sociology" of Talcott Parsons et al., or the behaviorism of a Skinner or Eysenck, have so immediate a correlation with fascist ideology and practice. Their rejection of the most elementary human criteria could only lead to proposed "remedies" which degrade man to the worst sort of Lower Beast he might abstractly imagine. (19)

Once we shift the location of our investigation and conceptualization of the empirical evidence of ANY SOCIETY from "static models" of "simple reproduction," to locate the dynamic for Man's historic continuity of existence beyond that mode in the development of new technologies and social forms, only then have we premised the empirical investigation in terms susceptible of meaningful conclusions. This rigor assumes a specific form in studies of capitalist and socialist economy, in which technological development has been institutionalized within the mode of production as the immediate feature of social reproduction.

(We concede that Paul M. Sweezy, among others, has accused Luxemburg of the fallacy of adhering to the viewpoint of "simple reproduction." (20) As should be obvious to anyone who reads her writings, Sweezy is to be regarded as either astonishingly stupid or simply lying to avoid a debate for which he is unprepared. No more outrageous, inappropriate, pathetic slander could be imagined against her as a theoretician. It is ironically fitting, therefore, that it should be Sweezy whose entire special thesis is actually premised on the elementary fallacy of simple reproduction! See below.)

In respect to the pedagogical summary of reproduction given above, the generalization of the notion of development (extended or expanded reproduction) for capitalist or socialist economy is given by a continuum expressing increasing valuations of the social ratio of total labor-power to itself, $S'/(C+V)$. (That is, the terms, S' , C , V , aggregate to less than 1.00, each as "percentiles" of total productive labor-power. Rising values for this ratio fulfil Marx's requirement for expanded reproduction and human development generally. (21) Since C and V are increasing, and C more rapidly than V , in the relatively absolute terms given by any preceding per capita ratios for total labor-power, a tendency for an exponential rise in the value of the ratio, relative to existing per capita rates, is the precondition for development.)

Such rising social productivity under capitalism occurs as the effect of what Marx terms "universal labor" on an increasingly world-wide network of "cooperative labor." (22) If, and we have repeatedly stressed this empirical approach to that point elsewhere, (23) one uses the ordinary industrial engineering instruments of "bill of consumption," "process sheet," and "bill of materials" to trace out the antecedents of the means of material existence of any worker, the result is the description of a world-wide network of production as the immediate and unique basis for the existence of every, each worker in every, each part of the capitalist world. Examining this simple (if complex) network, it is obvious that any increase in social productivity in any portion of the whole results in generally increased social productivity throughout the whole!

If we use the term "universal labor" as Marx does, to signify creative innovations (e.g., new scientific advances) which can be generally realized through "cooperative labor," (24) we have the germ of his "Freedom/Necessity" conception (25) permeating his entire method of analysis and particular conceptions from at least his 1845 writings, (26) consistently through the last part of Volume III of Capital. Marx, to speak in terms of theoretical essentials, has located the self-developing Logos of Hegel not within the abstract Necessity of self-perfection of itself as such, but within positive, deliberative (cognitive) changes in the organization of nature, and has determined such

changes to be positive to the extent they result in increased population potential in the first approximation. (27) It is only by adducing empirical evidence of "universal labor," of the development of "universal labor," from the phenomena of total "cooperative labor" that the content of the notion of expanded reproduction, or of cognition, can be effectively adduced.

From the short-term view of capitalist economy, it might appear to laymen that it is the simple extension in scale of capitalist productive technology which accounts for capitalist development. There is a contradictory tendency in capitalist accumulation to produce such an apparent short-term effect of stagnation, but that regressive tendency is contrary to the main dynamic which has enabled capitalism to emerge as a dominant form and extend itself through the world. (28) The dynamic of capitalism's historically positive thrust has been located in the development and realization of major advances in technology through which the definition of "necessary resources" has been broadened as Man's increasing power over nature for perpetuating and expanding his existence.

In general, this increase in technological powers which occurs, even in the crude, engineering-school notions of "energy," as a "free energy" relationship, is merely epitomized by the exponential tendency in power requirements of advancing capitalist technology. Man's ability to keep pace with this requirement demands (Necessity) a corresponding advance in social productivity, or what must appear to be TENDENCIES for exponential increase in the value of the social ratio, $S' / (C + V)$.

To the extent that realized technological progress keeps pace with the relative exhaustion of "natural resources" as defined by old technologies, the social cost of production of any product must be rapidly reduced, thereby reducing the absolute labor-power content attributable to any products carried over from preceding cycles of lower modes of productivity.

Once we attempt to apply the notion of Fixed Capital to a capitalist society undergoing expanded reproduction, the intrinsic or fundamental contradiction of capitalist accumulation becomes clear as such. To the extent that there is undepreciated Fixed Capital at the conclusion of a cycle during which social productivity has increased, the residual Fixed Capital has been devalued as a commodity, provided that the notion of value is that given by labor-power.

It is from this that the so-called "tendency for the rate of profit to fall" arises. (29) If the mass of Fixed Capital were considered equal in price to the mass of Circulating Capital, then a five per cent net increase in the rate of profit on account of Circulating Capital would be approximately offset by depreciation-losses on account of the mass of Fixed Capital's historic valu-

ations. At such a point, it would seem that the rising social productivity of labor-power would cease to increase the rate of capitalists' profit on aggregate investment. For the same general reason, any further increases in the ratio of Fixed to Circulating Capitals would produce the ironical consequence that rises in social productivity would tend to produce a net fall in the rate of profit on total capitalists' capitals.

Since capitalist prices and valuations (as capitalist valuations) are not immediately determined by productive relations in themselves, there is no secular tendency for the empirical rate of profit of aggregated particular capitals to fall. (30) The credit-monetary process intrinsic to the processes of capitalist circulation permits capitalists to generate credit (monetary expansion) in excess of the equivalent actual value of total production, as value would be determined implicitly by the price of labor-power.

Consequently, as capitalist prices of commodities are immediately pressed upward by the struggle for liquidity, by the struggle to maintain a competitive rate of profit on total investment (including the valuation of stocks, bonds, mortgages, etc.), the effect of the "falling-rate tendency" is to maintain the rate of capitalist profits by inflation of commodity prices. (In the business cycle as a whole, the use of credit expansion to finance circulation of such over-priced commodities results in the capitalization of a growing potential illiquidity in the monetary system as a whole, leading toward the classical monetary-crisis form of periodic depressions. See remarks on this, below.)

From this standpoint, it should become immediately apparent to the student of Luxemburg's writings that the category of unrealized surplus value she associates with "underconsumption tendencies" is substantially FICTITIOUS value from the standpoint of social reproduction as a whole. It is obvious that she is aware of this, in a certain sense, by the way in which she connects the margin of unrealized surplus value to the overproduction of commodities and to the solution to the problem of giving materialized value to fictitious capitals through primitive accumulation. (31)

COMPLICATIONS (FUNDAMENTAL ANTINOMY)

The formal difficulty which confronts the analyst at this point of the development is, in part, the fact that stagnation tendencies in capitalist accumulation, occurring as secondary effects of the "falling-rate tendency," inevitably dump margins of real value (as potential value) into the unrealized surplus value category of underproduction. Furthermore, the margin of unrealized surplus value does indeed represent largely the margin of fictitious valuations relative to current production, but many of the unrealized commodities involved, as unsold or potentially unsold, rep-

resent an essential part of the total real value produced. One cannot mechanically, or otherwise arbitrarily, sort out the fictitious valuations embedded in the monetary system from the real values represented by the use-values of the products involved. Such distinctions are immediately feasible for sectors of pure speculation, but these sectors are only a portion of the total problem.

The essential analytical predicament here is that the capitalist accumulation process, since it determines where and how real values are invested, to that extent determines the actual successive states of the underlying total system of social reproduction — for capitalist society. Capitalist accumulation is not simply a system of paper fictions superimposed upon an enslaved but otherwise autonomous system of social reproduction. The immediate causal link between successive states of the underlying social-reproductive relations is purchase and sale in terms of capital and capitalist commodity forms. (Kant's Critique of Practical Reason?!))

While it is necessary and possible to abstract the underlying social-reproductive relationships from the monetary-capital superstructure in a certain sense, in capitalist society there is no independent social-reproductive process empirically distinguishable as a lawful process operating according to its own INDEPENDENT laws (Kant's problem). The abstractable existence of the kind of social-reproductive relationships we adduce from study of the economy could be realized in fact only if the entire capitalist superstructure were not only eliminated in fact, but replaced by a new determining superstructure agreeable to the adduced underlying relations, collectivized planning of production and investment according to the adduced Law of Value we have summarized above (Hegel's part-solution). To the extent it is theoretically admissible to abstract an underlying social-reproductive process distinct from capitalist determinations — and this is not only admissible, but imperative — it is legitimate only to the extent that we are at least implicitly conceiving of socialist revolution to provide a real, alternative form of society in which the underlying productive relationships (technology, social-reproductive forms) would be determined by an actual social agency which is not capitalist accumulation (Marx's solution). (32)

Thus, and this is key to understanding most of the motive for Luxemburg's single error, within the bounds of continuing capitalist existence capitalist accumulation must be systematically regarded as OBJECTIVE, in the sense of objectively lawful for momentarily determining the material form of social-reproductive development of that society. Capitalist accumulation is not merely a superimposition, an arbitrary, "subjective" contingency which can be brushed away once its actual, intrinsic delusions are demonstrated. The problem

which Luxemburg failed to resolve, but a failure which fortunately had no hereditary effect on the specific main conclusions she reached, was that of systematically adducing the notion of fictitious capital without thereby discarding Marx's notion of the historically specific objectivity of the laws of capitalist accumulation for society's reflection of the Law of Value.

There is no reason to suggest she was not aware of such a predicament. Her devastating criticism of Lenin's fundamental, mechanistic blunders in the interpretation of Capital is but one of the numerous appropriate illustrations of her consciousness of the need to maintain knowledge of the lawful essence of human development in general while also adhering, in rigor, to the recognized specificity of the form those general laws assume in particular societies. (33) More compelling is her implicit determination of a specific quantity of required primitive accumulation from non-capitalist sources. This conception demands a determination of a magnitude of nothing but fictitious capital in existing accumulation, a magnitude securing real material value through looting of socially-reproductive (for capitalism) forms of materialized wealth from sources outside the value relations of capitalist production.

This point is reenforced by emphasizing that the same problem of fictitious value is central to the notion of "overproduction of commodities." Marx deals extensively with just that in sections of Capital to which Luxemburg appropriately repeatedly refers in developing her thesis. (34) The systematical arguments of her Anti-Kritik also impel her to defend the theses of Accumulation of Capital by emphasizing the same point.

Finally, the way in which she applies her ambiguously defined notion of a magnitude of fictitious capital, demanding material realization through looting (primitive accumulation), is systematically a notion of such fictitious capital as we develop it, even though she abstains from presenting such a case. The question of where and when her thus-contingent error of ambiguity becomes a practical mistake is what remains to be shown in this immediate connection.

Her failure to adduce the relevant notions of fictitious capital, even where the completeness of her own argument demands nothing less, is her single, major principled error. This admission is potentially a source of major blunders in derived conclusions, which happily enough do not occur in the main results of the writings in which that potentially dangerous error appears. It certainly produced no significant error in any of the major conclusions for which she has been attacked, either by such political eagles as Lenin, or the worms in the socialist chicken-yard, such as Bukharin, Mandel, or Sweezy.

“ UNDER-CONSUMPTIONISM ”

The major practical difficulty of attempting to discuss actual issues of Luxemburg's views is the stubborn insistence of most professed socialists and Marxologists that she was a typical leading proponent of special nostrums described as “underconsumptionism” and “spontaneity.” The latter charge, usually defended by specious representations of her attack on the bureaucratic-centralist tendencies of (especially) the pre-1914 Bebel-Ebert “proletarian kernel” faction of the SPD, is shown to be worse than silly by her writings on the Mass Strike policy and her leadership role in the Polish revolutionary organization of that period. (35) The falseness of the charge of “underconsumptionism” is also beyond reasonable doubt, after we have isolated the content usually attributed to that term.

She is, admittedly, largely responsible for developing an important aspect of Marx's writings into a thesis which she associates with the problem of “underconsumption.” In essentials, she argues that the advancing of the technological level of productivity demands a corresponding, although not necessarily equal, rise in the material standard of living and leisure of the entire working-class population from which productive labor-power is obtained. (36) This emphasis of hers on Marx's own rejection of a biologically-determined “subsistence wage” she premised on a critique of the positive contributions of Sismondi, completing a project which Marx himself had not finished. (37) On this issue, she ran head-on into the dominant mechanistic prejudices of the Lassallean tradition (“Iron Law of Wages”) in both the Social-Democracy (38) and its Russian “orthodox Marxist” students. This conflict shows up as a later issue of the same form in those sillier features of Lenin's Imperialism which have had disastrous influence on later generations. (39)

The significance of her “underconsumption” thesis is that she correctly complements the capitalist dysfunction of underproduction of necessary means of existence and development, by noting also the primitive-accumulation profits obtained by capitalism through paying working-class households AS A WHOLE a lower level of material consumption and leisure than is required to maintain the entirety of the working class as a source of modern labor-power, labor-power in terms of the cultural requirements of advancing technology. This underconsumption tendency creates an apparent population-brake on the further realization of new technologies. As she uses this term, underconsumption, it signifies that the total wages and leisure of the working class are generally significantly below the wages and leisure determined by the value of labor-power for modern technology. This vicious discrepancy in capitalist value-relations, her thesis emphasizes, is

neither an episodic, cyclical deviation from a central tendency, nor a mere epiphenomenon of the perpetual greediness and power of employers. Absolutely consistent with Marx's own systematic treatment of the content of labor-power's consumption, she emphasizes that a general underconsumption by the working-class population AS A WHOLE as a major, necessary source of primitive accumulation for capitalism.

What is recklessly, falsely attributed to her by street-corner varieties of socialist opinion is an entirely different thesis identified by the term “underconsumptionism.” Vulgar “underconsumptionism” of this sort signifies the view formerly associated with a “wages fund” notion of capitalist overproduction, or what is conveniently dubbed “the buy-back problem.”

The slight basis for the otherwise far-fetched effort to deny a distinction between Luxemburg's “underconsumption” and the vulgar “buy-back” chimera is that the cited error of ellipsis in her development of the problem prevents her from presenting the sort of devastating variety of critique of the “buy-back” view which would have certified her for what she was, one of the most intransigent opponents of the vulgar “underconsumptionist.” Her failure to employ our own argument in that special connection is not the main significance of her error; the “buy-back” issue is only a symptom of the general range of problems which her omission tends to open up.

The money apparently put into circulation by capitalist production itself is in the order of payments for the elements C, V, and d, being payments to the accounts of Constant Capital, Variable Capital, and Capitalists' Consumption. But the total magnitude of production is $C + V + d + S'$, whence it might appear to the shallow-minded that there is necessarily inadequate money put into circulation BY PRODUCTION ITSELF to “buy back” the commodities produced by that same capitalist production.

One of the first economists to shout “Eureka!” over such a “discovery” was Parson Malthus. He, and such professed Malthusians as J.M. Keynes, hit upon the “solution” to overproduction of increasing the magnitude of “d” to the limit of S, by increasing the payments to such idlers and parasites as Malthus himself. This same Malthusian nonsense has intruded into certain strata of the socialist movement through the variety of professed Marxian economist which attempts (directly or indirectly) to effect an accommodation of Marx and Keynes. Sweezy is the most notorious if not the purest example of such Malthusian “underconsumptionist” follies.

The source of this “buy-back” hypothesis, from the standpoint of the technicalities of scholarship, is the illiteracy of its advocates. At the outset of Volume III

of Capital, Marx emphasizes the fundamental blunder (e.g., of Bukharin, Sweezy, Mandel) of attempting to construct a comprehensive notion of any of his categories of capitalist accumulation by the limited means of superimposing a reductionist's world-view on the one-sided standpoint emphasized, for pedagogical reasons, in Volume I. In the socialist movement generally, the corpus of "orthodox Marxist economics" was nonetheless developed on the basis of such a mechanistic reading of Volume I. Once that widespread sophomorphism is understood, one can readily locate the reasons an insufficiently educated student might imagine that a "buy-back" hypothesis is consistent with the corpus of "orthodox Marxist economics."

This historic fact is not offset by the references to isolated passages from Volumes III and IV of Capital which appear in some writings of advocates of the "buy-back" hypothesis. What is significant respecting all such ostensible evidences of supplementary readings which the writer has so far examined, is that the exegetical approach applied to the "later" volumes of Capital viciously avoids the most important passages of those same volumes. The "improvement" of old illiterate rubbish with some scattered evidences of broader research represents in these cases nothing but a deliberate fallacy of composition. Sweezy and others have been engaged in an obvious effort — we might be permitted to employ the term "fraud" — to bring the later volumes of Capital into a specious agreement with the mechanistic interpretation crudely imposed upon Volume I.

The extraordinary relevance of that clinical evaluation of Sweezy et al. is that, apart from significant observations in other locations, it is in Volume III of Capital that Marx devotes the majority of his writing to showing why a "buy-back" problem, as such, could not possibly exist for capitalist accumulation! (41)

To "sell" the margin, S' , of the total product, it is merely necessary that the seller issue credit to the buyer! To the extent that the buyer utilizes the material content of S' as both wages and means of production in terms of modern technology, the result is a mass of reproduced wealth significantly in excess of the capitalized credit issued!

The howling irony of the "buy-back" hypothesis is that money itself has necessarily and historically developed out of just such credit. Money is in principle only the most general form of the bill of exchange. To see in a mere mass of money a fixed limit to the capacity to sell commodities has no basis in empirical economics, but, admittedly, has long been the central fixation of generation after generation of "funny money" charlatans and the credulous, populist fools who trek after them.

This point is not a mere contingent feature of Capital. It is the central feature of Marx's demonstration of the notion of capital-in-general. It is the heart of Marx's political economy as a whole. Consequently, the person who professes to be expert in Marx's economic theories without mastering this point first, is by definition a wretched impostor. Unfortunately, the majority of professed experts, Luxemburg's better-known critics especially, are chiefly just such cranks and imposters.

What ought to be immediately discernible, even to the intelligent layman, is that the creation of credit between particular buyers and sellers is not a complete solution to the problem of circulation of commodities, but only the first step in the direction of a solution. The shortcoming of simple credit is that the creditor must wait until payment on the debt matured before he can realize the sale as purchasing power for his own use. This problem could not be solved by arbitrarily shortening the debt-service maturities, since the realization of newly produced values depends upon the length of the production cycle in which the value of wage-commodities and means of production are reproduced. The nature of the problem could be posed: What prevents the seller from suffering a greater or lesser degree of "liquidity crisis" during the period the debt is maturing?

The solution to this is quite ably illustrated by consulting a little book, "The Federal Reserve System, Purposes and Functions," issued by the publications office of that same august agency. The same principle is illustrated in the essential features of the history of mercantile capitalism from the middle of the second millenium, B.C. It is embedded in the rise of European mercantile capitalism from approximately the period of the Crusades, in the evolution of banking through the fourteenth century's House of Bardi, the fifteenth century's House of Medici, and the sixteenth century's Augsburg, Antwerp, etc. banking. It is necessary to capitalize the credit issued, i.e., as self-expanding capital. It is essential to have a generalized market for credit instruments, a discount market and a re-discount market, the latter a function fulfilled in today's U.S.A. by the incestuous relationship between the Federal Reserve System and Federal Treasury.

The power of the capitalist system to maintain the distribution of S' in a semblance of an orderly market lies in the existence of markets through which credit issued is immediately discountable for either money or credit usable by the creditor of the original issue. He must either be able to use the debts he holds against the account of his customers as security for credit from his own suppliers, or he must convert the accounts payable, liens, etc. he holds into cash by selling those claims.

The possibility of sufficient buyers of credit existing to create such a general market for debt demands a buyer of last resort, who himself has sufficient credit to maintain such a market. The possibility of such a buyer existing is located essentially in only one place, the power of the state to tax: the capitalization of the state debt.

The overwhelming historical evidence on this point is admittedly overlooked by the pathetic academic economists who teach from silly textbooks describing "Robinson Crusoe" models, or in the classrooms explaining capitalism in terms of Momma and Papa slaving and saving away for generations in their little store or sweat-shop business, creating thereby a Primeval Hoard of capital.

Historically, Europe began to pass out of its feudal forms of social reproduction as such following the onset of the Crusades, (42) with the English thirteenth century reforms and later periods providing the useful immediate fix of reference for the student of such developments. The transformation of feudal social surplus (in the form of "surplus" colonizing populations) into alienable surplus product for debt-service payments to the mercantile banking associates of the Papal Treasury was accomplished by the interpenetration of mercantile capitalist finance with the "competitive military technology" of a constricted, decaying European feudal society turned inward upon itself, cannibalizing as a form of continued social reproduction.

The original axis for credit of this development, echoing ancient tax-farming, was the treasury of the Papacy and the circulation of "Peter's Pence," the state forms of European feudalism. The concentration of magnate-power effected through mercantilist financing of feudal cannibalism undermined the Papacy, creating magnates of that sort, states, whose emerging treasuries (power to tax) provided the basis for further expansion of mercantilist power over the existing society. Although the internal contradictions of this PARASITICAL form of mercantile-capitalist development were reached during the period from the bankruptcy of the Spanish and Portuguese crowns to approximately the point of the English Restoration, (43) and although the shift from mercantilism to the labor-process AS THE CENTRAL AXIS OF CAPITALIST ACCUMULATION reified most of the earlier transitional forms created, the state debt and treasury have remained the central axis of creation of credit in general. The emergence of the Bank of England, the bitterly-delayed establishment of the U.S. Federal Reserve System, and the present schemes to make the International Monetary Fund the central bank in fact, are essentially evolved rationalizations of relatively more informal capital rediscount markets which attempted, and succeeded to at least a significant extent, in accomplishing the same indispensable func-

tions for capitalist accumulation.

The principle involved, the principle which makes this point the kernel of Marx's own notion of capitalist accumulation in general, is that the net capacity of a capitalist market to circulate a magnitude such as S' is limited to some multiple of the amount of re-discount market credit newly created at the expense of the state. Ergo, the term, "economics," is essentially a nonsense-term if interpreted in a literal sense (as is evident in the ridiculous "Robinson Crusoe" model-making). The existence of capital is a POLITICAL question from beginning to end. Not only is property-right in self-expanding-valued instruments itself a political fiction, entirely dependent upon political institutions external to the particular capital itself, but the credit-expansion on which the existence of accumulation depends is located in the state treasury and in the associated political-economic policies of capitalist governments.

There never existed a "laissez-faire" form or "stage" of capitalism, except in the rhetorical fantasies of demagogues and their credulous admirers. "Laissez-faire" existed only as a policy of legalized graft, the right claimed by the most enterprising capitalists to loot the state treasury with the assistance of parliamentary accomplices.

There is nothing exotic in the "multiple" we cited above. The principle involved is essentially a projective transformation of the determination of ordinary banking "reserve ratios." What determines the magnitude of the "multiplier" required is the ratio between the magnitude of all new credit created and the amount of net rediscount purchases required to maintain such a general market for credit-expansion. There are more "sophisticated" relationships between production and circulation which ultimately regulate what the range of the multiplier must be, but we were up to this point considering only the monetary aspect of that phenomenon.

The central point for Marx was this. In capitalist accumulation, we are immediately confronted with two forms, property-titles whose price is immediately determined by a price-earnings ratio, and the values associated with capital, whose value is determined by social-reproductive rates. No comprehensive direct mathematical (algebraic) representation of any connection or correspondence between the two magnitudes is possible! (44) Yet, there is an historical correspondence (coherence) of sorts (45) between capitalist accumulation as such and expansion of the productive forces under capitalism. Where and how is the semblance of such appropriateness determined?

ON THE MONETARY SIDE: The re-discount rate determines a general rate of profit (by implication) for aggregate accumulation of price of property-titles,

in respect to the determined rate of expansion of the credit-monetary mass. Adjustments for adjudged relative RISK and LIQUIDITY of instruments transform the general (monetary) rate of profit into a corresponding price-earnings ratio in the markets for particular kinds of instruments and specific instruments within those categories.

ON THE REAL SIDE: The expansion of the credit-monetary system determines the possible rate of realization of commodity production. Furthermore, the rate of expansion of real wealth through rates determined by a general rate of $S'/(C+V)$ for the total capitalist economy, determines the degree to which instruments created by credit-expansion are relatively illiquid: THE QUESTION WHETHER THE ENTIRE MASS OF NOMINAL WEALTH REPRESENTED BY THE AGGREGATE PRICE OF PROPERTY-TITLES COULD BE CONVERTED INTO REAL WEALTH AT CURRENT CAPITALIST COMMODITY-PRICES FOR REPRODUCIBLE FORMS OF MATERIAL WEALTH.

I.e., the "general rate of profit."

Taking the capitalist economy as a whole, there is a universalizing determination of shifting rates of capitalist accumulation (a general monetary rate of profit) in monetary terms, and of shifting rates of capitalist accumulation in terms of social-reproductive forces. Within this, the conflict between Fixed and Circulating Capitals under conditions of Necessity for rising rates of productivity of the social-reproductive forces, defines what Marx presents as his unique discovery of capital-in-general.

CRISES

It is directly from this that Marx's notion of crises arises.

Obviously, the monetary system provides the capitalists with the ability to circulate large masses of over-priced commodities, so that during the major part of the business cycle there is no constriction forcing prices into conformity with values determined by social-reproductive relationships. However, to the extent that the extra profit embodied in such overpricing of sold commodities is capitalized, this causes the creation of a corresponding mass of accumulated debt in the system as a whole, a portion of total debt for which there is no corresponding real wealth.

This paradox is a necessary condition, since the fictitious complement represented by over-pricing does not represent correspondingly added values of wages-goods or means of production, and therefore that added valuation could not contribute future wealth through reproduction.

Moreover, since debt itself is a form of self-expanding value, the expansion of the credit-monetary system must provide for future augmentation of this fictitious capital as well as providing for sale of net surplus values and the margin of over-pricing of new commodities currently sold. So, the debt-form of fictitious capital pyramids additional fictitious capital at the same time that new masses of the same are also being generated de novo from "overproduction of commodities" and pure speculations.

The inevitable result of this is the shifting of the so-called "Phillips Curve." (46) As the ratio of fictitious capital to real production increases, an increasing rate of unemployment will tend to be associated with equal rates of credit-expansion. This is a necessary tendency; since all credit-expansion flows into both fictitious and productive accumulations, a rising ratio of fictitious to productive accumulation determines a corresponding tendency for a declining proportion of full employment generated by equal ratios of credit-expansion.

This process of rising potential illiquidity in the entire system proceeds in the guise of inflationary prosperity until the relationship between the actual rate of productive accumulation and total accumulation reaches a critical point. That point, roughly speaking, is the juncture at which further efforts to maintain approximate full employment by credit-expansion must cause rising rates of inflation, an inflationary acceleration of the sort which leads toward an early general collapse of the entire system. Since the dangers of inflationary collapse are more horrifying than those of depression alternatives (to encapsulate a whole series of analytical procedures), depressions are the usual resolution of the process of fictitious accumulation intrinsic to capitalist accumulation.

What Luxemburg accomplished, without bringing in the full apparatus she should have employed, was to show that the phenomena of imperialism corresponded to such elementary features of Marx's notion of crises. It is obvious from the foregoing analysis that the illiquidity of capitalist accumulation can be temporarily offset as long as capitalism can obtain and absorb reproductive forms of material wealth from a source outside the value-relationships of capitalist production! The conversion of part of the mass of fictitious accumulation into instruments in the form of international loans, provided that the debt-service income of the loans exceeds the value of production exported to the debtor-sector, converts the debt-service collection on these loans into a means of looting natural resources and the product of non-capitalist production in favor of the credit of the lending sector.

Unfortunately, as we have insisted, she used only part of the necessary conceptual apparatus of Marx's notion to demonstrate the point and develop her thesis.

It is a simple historical fact today that she entirely succeeded in her immediate objectives despite the ellipsis.

The problem is that her limited range of analytical apparatus prevents her approach from being applied to resolve the new class of problems manifest in the post-war emergence of a single super-imperialism, the U.S.A. and its satrapies of the Bretton Woods system. Omitting to locate the basis for national capitalist accumulations, as competing imperialist accumulations, in the distinctions predicated by separate rediscount markets (state debts) would prevent her analysis from competently treating the circumstances in which all world capitalist accumulation has been situated on the basis of a single credit-system. Although her correct usage of the notion of primitive accumulation enables her to follow Marx exactly in defining the notion of material boundaries for capitalist accumulation as an historically-specific form, her approach's ellipses would prevent it from demonstrating that the recent outbreak of the so-called "ecology crisis" represents a fundamental breakdown crisis of a more advanced form than she defined for the impending break-up of the system of pre-1914 imperialism. Up through the Second World War, Luxemburg remains the generally reliable and the only source of strategical perspectives for the tasks of the socialist movements. While her analysis has continued useful bearing on certain important aspects of post-war developments, her error prevents her work from being used as the model apparatus for analyzing the process leading into the present, new breakdown crisis.

BUKHARIN THE SLANDERER

Nikolai Bukharin, only less so than E. Preobrazhensky (47) or George Lukacs, (48) was one of the better-known literary celebrities among a generation of secondary and tertiary socialist figures whose best work not accidentally shows the enlivening spark of Luxemburg's influence. This fact bears in an important way on the character of Bukharin's attempted literary assassination of her in his "Imperialism and the Accumulation of Capital." Not only was he at that time the principal literary hack of the Zinoviev-Stalin faction, which occupation predetermined that he would have been assigned to write some vile falsifications against her in any case, but he had been "guilty" of being "too much an admirer" of both Luxemburg and Trotsky in his recent past. His assigned task, in the document which Monthly Review Press now presents, was not only to denounce Luxemburg in terms agreeable to his employer's factional purposes, but to not incidentally degrade himself for "past errors," a hideous practice of public "self-criticism" which was already becoming ritual within the ranks of the emerging Stalin machine.

This is not to exaggerate the point, to imply that the electric life permeating leading revolutionaries during the onset and flood of the Russian Revolution was created by personal influences. In the crucible of mass upsurges, even many philistine mediocrities are ennobled to an extent defying evidence of their earlier natures — only, too often, to relapse into their old narrowness and stupidity once the tide of upsurge has ebbed. This is not limited to revolutionary upsurges as such. In every mass struggle, the movement of broader masses sweeps across and briefly submerges the traditional barriers of trade-unionist, ethnic, and regionalist parochialism among those sections of the class and its allies drawn into such ferment. The movement of masses, implicitly a new ("soviet") institution, confronts the mind of the participant with immediate possibilities which formerly seemed too distant to occupy the contemplations of vulgar, practical men.

To communicate that important notion, it is useful to employ the lessons of even more modest experiences. Every skilled mass leader learns, often through bitter experience, that the toleration of gambling, drunkenness, swinish conventional relations between men and women, expressions of anarchist pigginess, signify among the workers who tolerate such moral degradations a degeneration of the morality and intelligence of the working-class forces involved, a symptom and result of ebb in the social motion which had ennobled those same workers to become briefly representatives of truly human qualities. (49) In such situations, the experienced trade-union leader not so unwisely hurries to settle for what he can immediately get from the employers, before the tactical moral situation worsens still further.

We do exaggerate — for the sake of brevity on the point — in "underestimating" the cardinal significance of the "subjective" factor: It was, on balance at least, the general mass-strike upsurge developing prior to, during, and immediately following the First World War, not the writings or oratory of any individual or party, which lifted even some mediocrities out of their accustomed muck of bourgeois ideology and imbued them briefly with the power to stride events like titans. Despite such momentarily-useful exaggerations of the "spontaneous" aspect of such upsurges, Luxemburg, even after the first moments of the October Revolution, was properly the magical figure for most European revolutionaries. Lenin and Trotsky, strange figures suddenly bursting into flaming bourgeois headlines, were otherwise almost unknown and untested outside the Russian movement. To the socialist movement outside Russia, there was still only one revolutionary figure who towered absolutely above all others: Luxemburg.

Most of today's socialist literature, especially that occupied with the history of the movement, is lies

and myth. What occurred up through the period of the Third World Congress, what men and women actually thought, what touched their intellects and passions from 1914 to 1921, is hidden today behind a fog of lies and circumlocutions, the dense "official Marxist-Leninist" mythology created by one of the most massive and sustained campaigns of character assassination mobilized by a major power against any individual.

Even the Bolshevik Left Opposition, the tiny best of the institutionalized currents to emerge from the wreckage of the old Comintern, for factitious reasons slyly refused to acknowledge its own enormous debt to her direct and indirect influence. As Perlman emphasizes, (50) the nearest approximation of a revolutionary international strategy created by the Comintern was Lenin's and Trotsky's belated, bowdlerized, and fatally compromised comprehension of her "mass strike"/"united front" strategy. Despite the common gossip of various wretched little socialist rags and pamphlets, despite their ritual chanting of wild fabrications to the effect that she, unlike Lenin, "did not understand the importance of breaking with the parties of the Second International," she almost single-handedly launched the campaign for a new international, and fought the leadership of the old international during the same period that Lenin even briefly aligned with those centrists against her! (51)

Not to discount Lenin's massive achievements in the least, the Russian Revolution, which could not have occurred without the joint leadership of himself and Trotsky, was the realization of a new policy (52) which Lenin began to evolve from the day he first realized that Luxemburg had been absolutely right and he absolutely wrong concerning the Bebel-Ebert-Kautsky "proletarian kernal" orthodox leadership of the old international. (53) Lenin was capable of ruthlessly pursued political crimes, such as his unprincipled handling of the Levi affair, and his reckless epithets against Luxemburg during the heat of the later Levi publications of her writings. (54) Unlike such third-ranking Bolshevik figures as the labile Radek or Bukharin, Lenin had the most essential quality of a revolutionary leader, personal character. (55) Even while otherwise recklessly vilifying her principal theoretical achievements (on which in the main she had been right and Lenin badly mistaken), he could not prevent himself from adding, "But... for us she was... an eagle," a figure towering above Lenin and all their contemporaries.

Trotsky made a similar admission belatedly, during the same period he finally presented his own and Lenin's "united front" strategy (in the "Germany" writings), rising to her defense against a fresh outburst of even more hideous anti-Luxemburg slanders by Stalin. (56) Trotsky, as he himself mooted the point, lacked the thorough political integrity of a Lenin, (57) but he had at least the integrity to recognize where his relative

weakness lay, and to attempt to correct it, as he did in belatedly attempting to undo the fatal compromise of the Third World Congress. (58)

The extraordinary influence of Luxemburg, during a brief, critical period of the pre-war and later events, was by no means a matter of general respect for the personal heroism of a "mere woman" who had risen to such a leading political position within the German, Polish, and Russian movements. Her theoretical work was the only extant corpus or writings and systematical political argument which corresponded to the emergent reality of that period. Even to sections of the masses who lacked direct knowledge of the quality of her theoretical achievements as such, it was evident that she was the only leading figure whose long-ridiculed, vilified views corresponded to the reality then erupting about them. She was the only figure vindicated as one with the tested powers of comprehension to know what to do next!

Among the leaders of the socialist movement, she was variously admired and more widely feared. In all respects — mass leader, writer, educator, faction-fighter, theoretician — there had been no one equal to her since Marx himself. She was, to all the most sensitive young revolutionaries of that period, the most awesome figure of the revolutionary movement.

Lukacs is one of the best known of those young revolutionaries whose entire outlook was profoundly touched by her influence. (59) The value of his writings today, except as a poor man's improvised alternative to the trash of Marcuse and other "leading dialecticians," is mainly the clarity with which Lukacs' visible intellectual degeneration documents the vicious decay among so many cadres as they retreated back to philistinism under the interconnected pressures of general ebb and the Zinoviev-Stalin pogrom to eradicate "the virus of Luxemburgism" from the movement. (60)

Preobrazhensky's New Economics, (61) especially its polemical attacks on the Zinovievite renegade, Bukharin, is an application of conceptions which Luxemburg had stimulated in the ranks of the best Bolshevik thinkers through mainly her Accumulation of Capital. Bukharin, in his writings from the period before his demoralization made him Zinoviev's hack, had shared such influences to only a less effective extent. His reference to the Marxian notion of the "class for itself" was, incidentally, the earlier Bukharin's effort to put the Lenin-Trotsky faction's "united front" strategy (adapted from Luxemburg and Paul Levi) on its fundamental theoretical basis in Marx. (62) Bukharin's most important independent efforts, during the period he was becoming a Bolshevik, are a reflection of the impact of the Accumulation of Capital upon him. (63)

Respecting his filthy composition under consideration here, all the essential contextual facts of the writing are either well known or available in extensive documentation for any writer who attempted to approach that topic with a certain minimal degree of personal integrity. If we ourselves go further than most in adducing certain necessary conclusions respecting the deeper significance of those facts, the facts themselves are so well established and accessible that no honorable scholar would hazard his reputation by representing Bukharin's 1924 filth as even marginally "objective criticism."

It cannot be said that we propose to suppress the circulation of that filth. Like the ravings of a psychotic, it has approximately the theoretical merit of clinical evidence for broader insight into the species of moral and intellectual degradation symptomized by it. Psychotics' ravings have a place in the source literature of psychology, provided they, in themselves, are not published as scientific psychology. We insist it should be published and studied, to show not only what Stalinist hacks had to say against her, but to expose the dark origins of most of the wretched gossip repeated ritually against her in the movement today.

THE ODD MR. KENNETH TARBUCK

Let us consider on what various accounts the editor of the Monthly Review book, Mr. Kenneth Tarbuck, is either a fool or prevaricator!

"When Bukharin wrote the present work he was just approaching his apogee as the theoretical spokesman for orthodox Bolshevism..."!!! (64)

A most interesting summation, especially once the reader is informed that Tarbuck is the resident chief British spokesman for a tiny "Trotskyist" cult of followers of M. Pablo. (65) It is such a professed "Trotskyist" who informs us that the Bukharin of 1924, the Bukharin of eternal snail's-pace crawl to socialism, in a perpetual love-embrace of NEPman and Kulak, was then approaching the "apogee" of "orthodox Bolshevism"! It must be that Tarbuck imagines it "good Marxist practice" to turn much more than Hegel on its head, and thus nadirs and zeniths may appear to him in such junctures as would most severely astonish one accustomed to viewing reality right-side-up.

More instructive (and disgusting) is Tarbuck's summary argument for the alleged "objectivity" of Bukharin's criticisms:

"Bukharin wrote this work at a time when there was a campaign being waged against 'Luxemburgism' in the German Communist Party. Thus it assisted those KPD leaders — such as Maslow and

Fischer — who wanted to rid the party of its Luxemburgist heritage... Nevertheless, Bukharin does not attack Luxemburg's integrity and his polemic can not be seen merely as a ploy in a factional fight"!!! (66)

Oh, absolutely not! Provided that one accepts Tarbuck's monstrous rearrangement of history.

He informs us that certain German Communist Party leaders, Maslow and Fischer, "had this thing about Luxemburg going at the time." The fact is that the campaign against "Luxemburgism" was launched by Gregory Zinoviev, with energetic encouragement from the vindictive little Karl Radek. As to Maslow and Fischer, they were literally fourth-rate leaders of the KPD, who owed their authority entirely to their creator, Zinoviev, following the successive destructions of the previous leaderships: 1) the assassination of Luxemburg by the SPD's imported fascist gangs; 2) the expulsion from the Comintern of the figure who built the VKPD from handfuls to a mass party (Paul Levi), an expulsion effected as Lenin's unprincipled concession to — guess whom! — Zinoviev on this point; 3) the expulsion of Brandler and Thalheimer as scapegoats for Zinoviev's and Stalin's German blunders of 1923. Maslow and Fischer were entirely Zinoviev's Comintern hacks, whose policies were whatever mush was currently being dished out to them by the Russians.

Surprise, Mr. Tarbuck! Coincidence, Mr. Tarbuck! Bukharin, at the time of his attack on Luxemburg, was a third-rate hack of the Zinoviev faction in Russia! In "coincidentally" launching a Zinovievite slander against Luxemburg, in a Zinoviev-controlled Comintern publication (Unter dem Banner des Marxismus), at a time Zinoviev's four-year pogrom against Luxemburg was being escalated, Bukharin's effort "merely seems to be" a part of a general campaign of falsifications aimed at discrediting every facet of her former celebrity!??

Tarbuck must also make it seem merely coincidental that the political conclusions of Luxemburg's which Bukharin mainly attacks are the same political issues for which the Zinoviev-Stalin faction are hurling slanders at the same moment against the Bolshevik Left Opposition of Trotsky and Preobrazhensky! It is merely coincidental, of course, that a sizeable part of the slanders Bukharin throws against Luxemburg are similar to those he is simultaneously writing against the Left Opposition. As to whether Bukharin refrains from attacking her "integrity," the entire evidence of the piece indicates the contrary.

Oh, certainly, the Bukharin piece is by no means "merely... a ploy in a factional fight." It is, according to the odd Mr. Tarbuck, largely the purest epi-

phenomenon of the abstract, unearthly Logos, which happened to eructate this particular critical gem out of a clear, blue political sky, "accidentally" at the same time that the entire machinery of the Comintern, the employers of Bukharin's more earthbound pen and ink, happened to demand an attack on the last shred of her political reputation! How exceedingly wise and kind of our "Pabloite scholar" to have consented to reveal this wonderful truth to us.

In fact, Tarbuck is by no means the innocent academic lamb misled by his admittedly sophomoric intellectual gifts. Since certain institutions have been so long occupied with searching for the pandemic virus of "Pabloism" in every serving of Fish and Chips, one gags a moment before risking to lend the slightest credence to that mania. Nonetheless, despite the curious Thomas Gerard Healy, (67) there really is a special aberration among socialist sects properly called "Pablosim," and Mr. Tarbuck's four-member British grouping (as of last summer's report of it), like a similarly-sized bakery back-room group in New York City, is an accredited representative of that tendency. Tarbuck's editing of the volume in question here is not accidentally a back-stabber's sort of sly defense of the essential Pabloite thesis. Our innocent Pontius Pilate of a "scholar," Tarbuck is really a shabbily disguised political assassin.

To typify the evidence of this, it is sufficient to show the connection between two particular frauds presented as casual matters of fact in his introduction. The first of these merely sets up the situation for introducing the second, the main point.

Characterizing the approach he recommends to adduce the general political implications of *Accumulation of Capital* and the *Anti-Kritik*, he improvises the following gems for the archives of political historiography:

"The answer can only be found by placing these economic researches in a POLITICAL context — that of Luxemburg's fight against revisionism, and of her attempts to warn the German party of the dangers of imperialism AND ITS ASCENDING INFLUENCE WITHIN THAT PARTY." (68)

The first bit of "explanation" credits Mr. Tarbuck with at least a certain amount of sheer chutzpah, since it is rather well-known, even among the scantily-educated rank-and-filers of today's CP and other groups, that the "revisionism" fight occurred during the 1898-1899 period. Perhaps he imagines that what has been said of Reform or Revolution?, her writing of that earlier period, is worth repetition for her work of 1912. Yet, most of those same rank-and-filers also know, especially since the recent circulation of Nettl's biography, that during the period from about 1907 until her assassination, she was preoccupied almost exclusively in a much more bitter, more fundamental struggle

against her erstwhile allies of the "revisionism" fight, Bebel, Kautsky, et al. The factional context for the *Accumulation of Capital* and *Anti-Kritik* is her opposition to the "orthodox Marxism" of the SPD's "proletarian kernel" center, and, to a lesser extent, an attack on the credulous adherence to aspects of the same centrist "orthodoxy" by Russian Marxists, including Lenin himself! Was the bitter attack on Lenin's economic-theoretical bungling and related political errors pervading so much of *Accumulation* a reflection of her fight against "revisionists," Mr. Tarbuck?

It is true, in an irrelevant sense, that she was concerned with the growing ideological adaptation to imperialism within the Second International generally, but it is to lie by deliberate fallacy of composition to cite that concern as the active political issue affecting the intended use of her 1912-16 economic-theoretical writings. What she opposed from the standpoint of her "mass strike" strategy and its later-developed "united front" strategy application, was the "constructivist" outlook of these "orthodox Marxists" who supported a "national stages" policy of socialist strategy, and, in the most advanced capitalist countries, a policy of projecting socialist transformations through better attention to both parliamentary "successes" and "building a party base in the existing trade union organizations."

Such misrepresentations by Tarbuck cannot be treated as accidental. It is significant that his efforts to suppress the well-known facts correlate most directly with certain peculiarities of the "Pabloite" chimeras. The most notorious of such peculiarities is Pablo's effort to reintroduce the old "orthodox Menshevik" "national stages" strategy into the body of what Pablo represents as "orthodox Trotskyism"! Although Pablo's former collaborator and aide-de-camp, Ernest Mandel, has also attempted to do much the same in the name of applying the notion of "permanent revolution" (as also did Joseph Hansen), the extreme version of this fantastic phrase-juggling of Pablo's is distinctly the hallmark of himself and his followers, such as Mr. Tarbuck. To identify Luxemburg's central preoccupation in denouncing and exposing such views — as Mr. Tarbuck's — would be most inexpedient for both the editor and his host publishing house.

He really lifts the tent flap on the behind-the-scenes arrangements in the attempt to represent the gist of Bukharin's slanders as a moot issue:

"Bukharin sees Luxemburg's ideas on imperialism as leading her, unwittingly, into the camp of those who believe in an harmonious development of capitalism. He points to her definition of the phenomenon: 'Imperialism is the political expression of the accumulation of capital in its competitive struggle for what remains still open of the non-capitalist environment.' Bukharin argues that her theory of

imperialism has a large voluntaristic element in it which in some ways puts her in the same camp as Hobson." (69)

The essence of Luxemburg's theory of imperialism is that the development of capitalist accumulation depends constantly upon supplementary accumulation, primitive accumulation, through looting natural and human resources of wealth from outside the use-value relations of capitalist production itself. On that premise, she shows that the process of such "combined and uneven development" within essentially (although by no means exclusively) the national bounds — as by looting national mineral resources, agriculture, etc. — leads to the successful enlargement of capitalist production to the point that the required margin of primitive accumulation exceeds the rate of possible primitive accumulation for the capitalist economies emphasizing national (semi-autarchical) development. By exhausting the material basis for semi-autarchical development in this fashion, capitalism is forced to break out of such relative bounds into imperialism. "Colonialist" looting is not sufficient for this purpose; international loans, and navies, etc. to enforce the integrity of such debts, are the key feature. Since, she emphasizes, the rate of imperialist development has expanded the productive forces to the degree that there is insufficient rate of potential further looting for all existing imperialist powers simultaneously, the imperialist system was then (1912) approaching a general breakdown crisis, which must either be a period of socialist transformation or the prelude to a new form of capitalist development, a form of auto-cannibalization associated with "military economy."

Not only is Bukharin fully aware of this, but his sole major contribution to socialist theory was the amplification of her views to project a more general "statist" change in capitalist economy as the alternative to successful socialist revolutions during the emerging breakdown period! For him to suggest that her views on imperialism lead her, even unwittingly, into the French "solidarist" or similar "socialist" camps, is absolutely a lie by him!

The Bukharin-Tarback alliance grows shoddier in moral character the more exactly we probe its contents, the more we consider the moral effects of Tarback's voluntary attachment to it. The issue between Luxemburg and her opponents, throughout the period from 1907 to her assassination, was her strategical conception of the social process of mobilizing the working masses for the conscious seizure of power through the "mass strike"/"united front" strategy, a strategy which Bukharin, as we have noted, several years before his attack had attempted to assimilate and defend. At the time of his break with Lenin and Trotsky, he went over to the "constructivist" thesis of "socialism at a snail's pace" and general conjunctural pessimism respecting the possibilities of socialism in the advanced

capitalist sector. (A kind of early, right-wing Maoist.) In sum, the main thesis, "conjunctural pessimism," which Bukharin is defending against both Luxemburg's writings and the 1924 Left Opposition, is the very thesis which he charges Luxemburg as "unwittingly" supporting!

This same right-wing pessimistic thesis has been the central premise advanced by Pablo and his followers since the late 1940's. Pablo, following faithfully in the traditions of all centrists, like Zinoviev before him, has been characterized throughout his political life by abrupt flip-flops between "revolutionary" adventurism and shameless opportunism. At the end of the Second World War, he shared the conviction embodied in the SWP's "American Theses," that the capitalist system was on the verge of collapse, in which the "Fourth International" would bypass the Communist Parties to zoom into leadership of successful revolutions. (On the premises of its left-centrist variety of "Stalinophobia" the SWP leadership and its supporters could not conceive of "Stalinists" as being confronted with the historic mission of leading a revolutionary upsurge at the critical juncture, and thus refused to acknowledge that leading CP's, on orders from Stalin, had passed an entire new era of capitalist development into the hands of the U.S. capitalists during 1944-45.)

As soon as it became evident, even to Cannon's followers, that there were to be no immediate revolutions in Western Europe or North America, they were plunged from the manic stratosphere to the nadir of political despair. Pablo reacted with a vengeance. Instead of proceeding from the errors of the "American Theses" and the manifest errors of Cannonite "Stalinophobia," and recognizing that the issue of the next opportunity for socialist struggle in the advanced sector had been postponed for perhaps a quarter-century, he flopped into a perspective of centuries without socialist revolutions, centuries during which the power of the Red Army and similar influences might advance socialism through the form of creeping spread of "degenerated workers' states," within which developments and their onset the "Trotskyists" must encyst themselves. Pablo's theses, like the similar views of his then aide-de-camp, Mandel, have each undergone certain modifications since then, but the essential features underlying the surface adaptations to "new realities" have remained the same.

Like Sweezy, Tarback's momentary host, who is also hysterical in his soft-spoken fashion at the demand that he hold himself accountable for the predictive implications of his "theories," the Bukharin of 1923 onward, the Pablo cult, have been violent in their rage against the very idea the socialist practice be based on a definite strategy — i.e., a predictive political-economic analysis of the emerging course of developments, regarded as tasks submitted to the movement. This is the same bitter issue separating the centrists

of the Zinoviev-Stalin faction from both Luxemburg and the Bolshevik Left Opposition. Tarbuck, as a "Pabloite" hack-writer, represents a degenerate form of that same hereditary centrism of the Zinoviev faction.

BUKHARIN'S THESIS

There are two principal aspects of Bukharin's thesis against Luxemburg. The obvious motivation of the writing, the dominant aspect, is the Zinoviev-Stalin faction's justifiable fear that the Left Opposition would manage to break out of its self-imposed Russian confines by capitalizing on the potential international support available in the fragmented but still-ralliable and still-powerful Luxemburgist traditions in the German movement. Such factional preoccupations are heavily underlined in the curious sort of afterthought "Conclusion" to Bukharin's piece, in which two of the three charges against Luxemburg are absolutely identical with those made against the Left Opposition. The secondary, subordinate feature of the piece as a whole is the hysterically mechanistic reification of Marx's notions which Bukharin drags in in the attempt to justify his faction's slanders against her.

Someone might be tempted to argue mistakenly that Bukharin's mechanistic reification of Capital credits him with at least sincerity in reaching conclusions contrary to Luxemburg's. That is an important, but nonetheless secondary feature of the polemic; there are certain arguments, the most important of which we shall summarize, which do belong to such a category. However, as we shall show, his main charges against her depend upon intentional falsifications.

The following four examples are sufficient to justify that general characterization.

Throughout both the *Accumulation of Capital* and the *Anti-Kritik*, she emphasizes that her criticism of the fragmentary concluding chapter of Volume II is based on Marx's own, most emphatic judgments on the same issues in other, more authoritative sections of *Capital* itself. Bukharin responds to this by, first, defending Volumes I and II against her repetition of the identical point Marx himself makes at the outset of Volume III. (70) (She also makes the point in her section on Volumes II and III of *Capital* in Franz Mehring's *KARL MARX*.)

Bukharin's defense of the concluding chapter of Volume II is entirely sleight-of-hand. Where Luxemburg shows that the implications of the incompleting models from that chapter tend to be in opposition to Marx's emphatic stipulations on Volumes III and IV, Bukharin resorts to other parts of *Capital* to show that Marx does indeed reject the sort of conclusions which Luxemburg insists he would have rejected for the affected chapter! Bukharin represents that as a total discrediting of Luxemburg! (71)

His second gross falsification is his insistence that Luxemburg is irresponsible and silly in attempting to discover any contradiction between capitalist accumulation and expansion of the productive forces. This despite the fact that the definition of "internal contradictions" in Volume III is entirely based on the systematic analysis of just such contradictions! (72)

He resorts to a confidence man's devices again in the effort to discredit her "third person." Luxemburg demonstrates that the contradiction between capitalist accumulation and the development of the productive forces requires capitalism to loot materialized value from "third persons," through such forms as imperialist debt-service on international loans. The complicating feature of this is the need of the metropolitan countries' credit-system to accomplish the circulation of domestic potential "overproduction" through securing material backing of looted overseas wealth for the credit-expansion used in that domestic circulation. Thus, in one of these interconnected moments of the connection, domestic "overproduction" assumes the real but also deceptive form of being domestic overproduction, requiring a "third person" purchaser. This is solved by international loans, which obtain security for growth of its monetary system in the materialized values looted from abroad through international loans' debt-service! Bukharin removes one aspect of this interconnected relationship to degrade her into a "buy-back" underconsumptionist, "overlooking" the core of her analysis, that it is the looting of material value from non-capitalist sources, not the "selling" of material value to those "buyers," which is the essence of the whole arrangement! (73)

In a fourth fraudulent exertion, in the effort to show that her notion of imperialism leads her to political errors, he insists that she proceeds from her notion of accumulation to deny the importance of the oppressed peasantry and colonial peoples' struggles. Here he really outdoes himself in chutzpah. The kernel of her entire dispute with Bebel-Ebert-Kautsky during the 1907-14 period of factional disputes within the Second International was her Mass Strike strategy, which denounced the "Sisyphus" perspective of "building a socialist party base in the existing trade unions" as opportunism, as blocking the road to class consciousness by even trade-unionists, by cutting off the ranks of organized labor from common-interest struggles in alliance with the most oppressed proletarians, including, she explicitly underlines to the horrified faces of the centrists, the agricultural proletarians. (74)

Zinoviev, Stalin, and Bukharin employ exactly the same swindle of an argument against Trotsky and Preobrazhensky. The Platform of the Left Opposition, which proposed an alliance of the Bolsheviks and workers WITH THE POORER PEASANTRY, in opposition to the Stalin faction's proposed alliance with the Kulaks, the rich peasantry, was denounced by Stalin and Buk-

harin, as the Left Opposition's "underestimation" of the peasantry!

We encounter a similar logic among such professed "Trotskyists" as the Socialist Workers Party, the International Socialists, and such minor cults as the Spartacist League and Workers' League. All of these, proceeding from the same centrist argument as Luxemburg's opponents in the Bebel faction, denounce the policy and strategy of building "united front" alliances of organized labor with unorganized, unemployed, and welfare members of the working class, on the grounds that, as they usually assert IN SUCH CONNECTIONS, that struggles around narrow, parochial formations secrete "class consciousness" as an epiphenomenon. Since the social basis for expanded reproduction is the use of the surplus product created by employed labor to productively employ unemployed labor, appropriate conclusions follow. Their "logic," like that practiced less viciously by the CPUSA(!), leads most of these "Trotskyist" groups to unwitting but nonetheless effectively racist practices against the most oppressed strata of the working class. (Simple-reproduction "socialism.")

Despite the conceded fact that Bukharin's reifications of Marx would ordinarily suffice for sharp opposition to Luxemburg's views, the cited and other examples of falsifications suffice to demonstrate that he actually proceeds on the basis of deliberate misrepresentations. Take away those falsifications from his piece, and nothing remains of it itself as a criticism of her principal conclusions.

BUKHARIN'S METHOD

The secondary problem of the reification of Marx nonetheless merits examination here as a typification of the commonplace errors of "orthodox" and "revisionist" "Marxist economists" down to the present date. One could properly say that Bukharin's efforts to state the "correct" view of the Law of Value and expanded reproduction represent an hysterically mechanistic misrepresentation of Capital in entirety.

The particular problem is underlined for most efficient address by the poor fellow's conceit that he has accomplished an epistemological victory over the axiomatic fallacies of arithmetic by resorting to "algebra"! (75) This has two implications for his piece.

The first of these two implications is readily dispensed with. Since Luxemburg has already delivered a devastating attack on the "Vienna School" of Otto Bauer respecting the issue of "if only the right algebra," Bukharin is committing a mere falsification of his case by re-advancing a refuted argument without acknowledging even the fact of her refutation. (76)

There is a fundamental epistemological fallacy in

any effort to construct an arithmetic — or "algebraic"! — model of expanded reproduction for any purpose but preliminary (e.g., classroom) statements of certain problems. To insist that such models actually represent the problems to be examined, or can be subsumed in arguments respecting proof of a contended point, is utter nonsense.

Luxemburg herself escapes anything worse than casual entanglement in such difficulties by eliminating further consideration of accounting models after destroying the models of Volume II *reductio ad absurdum*. (77)

On the premise of that demonstration, she resituates the problem of conceptualized expanded reproduction entirely in the "total capitalist" terms provided, especially, by Volumes III and IV of Capital — but also presented as an analytical method in the material appended to modern editions of Marx's Critique of Political Economy. She demonstrates the validity of Marx's conceptions for then-modern capitalist economy by showing the embodiment of his conceptions in the emergent system of international loans. (78) The fact of the 1914-33 general breakdown crisis of the old imperialism, the emergence of "military economy" from 1933 onwards, adds to the evidence to the point of not only demonstrating the validity of her own contributions on these subjects, but also demonstrating afresh the empirical validity of Capital.

Bukharin, insipidly deluding himself that he somehow escaped the paradoxes of reductionist axioms by "advancing epistemologically" from arithmetic to algebra (!), constructs thereby the most monstrous mare's nest out of an elementary, soluble problem of rigor.

If he had been competently educated in dialectics and mathematics, he would have recognized that the epistemological fallacies reflected in arithmetic models of expanded reproduction had already been systematically and comprehensively diagnosed — as epistemological fallacies — by both Hegel and by such leading mathematicians as Weierstrass, Riemann, Cantor, and Klein. Hegel, resolving the form of the problem of "universals" posed by Kant (and others) before him, recognized the pathetic fallacy of "sense-certainty" in efforts to arrive at "infinities" by asymptotic methods of induction from arrays of particulars. (79) Georg Cantor, prompted to reconsider fundamentals (80) after proceeding from the starting-point of Weierstrass and Riemann, made a rigorous discrimination, essentially identical with Hegel's, between "true" and "bad" infinities ("actual" versus "potential" infinities), locating the implications of this for the problem of "transcendentals." Among less comprehensive well-known approaches to the same class of problems, we associate the Russell "meta-mathematical" paradox, and the elegant special case treated by Goedel's famous

two, interconnected hypotheses. The physical content of such problems was extensively explored by Einstein, to an admittedly hysterical wall of incomprehension from most of his would-be peers.

The implication is that any effort to represent comprehensive models of expanded reproduction by "value adding" incremental methods is the most devastating sort of blunder, with the most extreme consequential incompetence in economic constructions themselves. This is the problem involved in the fragmentary state of the concluding chapter of Volume II. The error in that chapter, as far as it proceeds, is that Marx, undoubtedly because of his ignorance of theoretical mathematics, did attempt to give a mathematical representation to notions he had developed elsewhere by directly cognitive methods. The incompleteness of that chapter is not accidental, nor is it, like the sketchy condition of much of Volume III, a matter of Marx's illness's intervention in his completion of these volumes. Marx could not possibly have completed that chapter along the lines it was undertaken — unless it had been his intention to discredit accounting models per se by reductio ad absurdum methods!

In any case, it should have been instructive to Bukharin and others that Marx offers no conclusions respecting expanded reproduction in that fragmentary chapter! The issue is not that of correcting Marx for any conclusions he offers in that location — he offers none! — but of whether the continued effort to solve the problem in this vein of accounting models leads to fundamental errors!

No general conclusion can be offered against Marx on account of this chapter except the cited fact that he obviously was not grounded in theoretical mathematics. Apart from the fact that he was well versed in Hegel's Science of Logic, he was acutely aware and self-disciplined respecting the problem of "infinity." Indeed, he elaborates the dialectical method involved at considerable length, repeatedly, in his advancing the reasons for the use of the "total capitalist" rigor as the exclusive basis for reaching competent cognitions respecting any of his categories! His difficulties with mathematics simply represent a "blind spot," in which he failed to focus that power of cognition he so marvelously displays in nearly all other ways.

On the basis of such evidence, there is no need to make a great fuss about the flaw in the concluding chapter of the second volume. Its approach is not only unfruitful, but inevitable leads to wrong judgments, for the most elementary reasons of an epistemology on which Marx based the entirety of his work. It's wrong, epistemologically unacceptable, and that's that. (This flaw is not to be compared with the pedagogical limitations deliberately imposed on Volumes I and II respectively.) (81)

Fortunately, to the extent that Marx avoided such mathematical excursions, avoided the problem of "transcendentals" by proceeding from the conceptual standpoint of "actual infinities," the total capitalist economy, he was not only able to express his conceptions with absolute lack of such stumbling or ambiguity as we see in the cited chapter, but also thus demonstrate that the problems of that chapter — for him! — are entirely a reflection of nothing more than his lack of knowledge of — theoretical mathematics. He had the proper conceptions, but lacked the knowledge necessary to deal with the enticing impulse to give them a formal-logical representation.

There are two ultimately connected reasons for this epistemological difficulty. The more rudimentary of these two is located by recognizing that maximization of the "price-earnings" determination of the price of aggregate capitalist accumulation, and the maximization of the development of the productive forces do not admit of a coherent formal-mathematical interpretation of their interconnections. The more profound, ontological demonstration of the general problem involved could be obtained by attempts to construct a comprehensive model of evolutionary social reproduction for the conditions specified in the present writer's textbook. (82)

Such a model, implicit in the portrait of expanded reproduction given above, eliminates the possibility of regarding the counting of numbers of individuals as the basis for studies of reproduction. In addition to such simple actuarial contingencies as mortality, fertility, fecundity, etc., we have to confront the more fundamental difficulty that the value of the individual is not the number "one" but a phasal valuation of the form of tendencies for increase in the ratio $S' / (C + V)$, where that ratio is defined in terms of proportions of the labor force as a whole. Although such a problem of representation can be usefully approached through certain extant procedures, no comprehensive model would be possible without first overcoming the presently unsolved limits of mathematical practice respecting "self-reflexive" continuities in which the basic "elementarity" is not that of simple quantity.

With that background review, the epistemological cretinism of Bukharin, Sweezy, Mandel, et al. is sufficiently proven by pointing to the fact that all of them restrict the problem of representing comprehensive expanded reproduction to "models" which simply add increments of value to a fixed base rate of Simple Reproduction! Thus Bukharin commits the very blunder of which the silly Sweezy falsely accuses Luxemburg: of failing to free himself of the world-outlook of Simple Reproduction! (83)

We recapitulate Luxemburg's essential argument

in the terms of reference given just before this.

Let us consider Bukharin's hypothetical case of Simple Reproduction, in which all the surplus value is consumed as capitalists' consumption. Since any mode of fixed technology involves the cumulative depletion of the "resources" defined by it, perpetuated Simple Reproduction must result in rising costs of Constant Capital, through compulsion to turn from depleted "richer resources" to "marginal resources." If technology does not advance, the rising cost of Constant Capital could be met only by eliminating capitalists' consumption entirely. It would not stop there, but the entire society would consequently collapse in negative accumulation in an "ecological crisis"!

If there is expanded reproduction, not only does this invariably subsume alterations in technology in the direct sense, but even simple expansion in scale, by expanding the division of productive labor, results in advances in technology. Whenever there is expansion of technology, the following alterations in the historic valuations of production occur.

There is, generally, a necessary rise in the quality of labor-power, such that the required levels of material consumption and leisure are raised. In that sense, the absolute costs of labor-power increase. Similarly, the absolute amount of Constant Capital consumption per capita of labor-power increases. Yet, the current reproductive costs of both labor-power and of old forms of Constant Capital are cheapened!

The nature of the relationships involved is that we have underlined to exist for any "model" of evolutionary social reproduction; no comprehensive formal-mathematical model of it is possible. This is not to suggest that expanded reproduction is therefore not deliberate, rational, but simply that its representation involves a class of procedural problems which has not yet been mastered — apart from direct cognition. Cognition of expanded reproduction is quite accessible, despite the formal problem — as, indeed, Marx's Capital itself demonstrates! Such cognition leads Marx, through conceptualization of "total capitalist" accumulation and productive forces, to exactly the conceptions of the fundamental contradictions, and their consequences which we have cited above. (84)

There is, therefore, a point at which Bukharin's conceits about "algebraic models" do lead him into conflict with Luxemburg in the most fundamental way. It is obvious that any models based on adding increments to a base of Simple Reproduction — such as those of Bukharin, Sweezy, Mandel, et al. — are inherently incapable of defining or suspecting the existence of the fundamental contradictions (fundamental antinomies!) of capitalist accumulation. Since such models, by definition, exclude the systematic devaluation of historic capitals of the Simple Reproduction

base, their constructions must seem to demonstrate to anyone sufficiently credulous that no such contradictions actually exist. On the basis of such "proof," Bukharin limits the contradictions of accumulation to "proportionalities," or, in short, a bad proportioning of the increments. Sweezy, for the same reason, deludes himself to the same general effect, and falls into Malthusian economics (his "underconsumptionism" thesis). Mandel resurrects the Bukharin school (in his own eclectic fashion) in the guise of "the fundamental principle of competition," degrading the notion of contradictions to that of simple, bourgeois economists' "trade-offs." (85)

This does involve a problem of locating objectivity in capitalist accumulation. On first encounter with the contradictions of such accumulation, the fact that capitalist accumulation exceeds the value of the productive forces realized, one might be initially impelled to insist that the underlying values as determined by social reproduction are uniquely objective and the capitalist valuations merely subjective. Yet the price-earnings valuations of capitals actually determine the fashion in which the successive moments of the real social-reproductive process are realized, what and how capitalists invest. Therefore, capitalist accumulation is objective as immediately determining UP TO THE POINT THAT ACCUMULATED UNDERLYING CONTRADICTIONS IN THE SOCIAL-REPRODUCTIVE BASIS BREAK THROUGH THE SURFACE TO PRODUCE CRISES.

Since the capitalists do proceed immediately from historic valuations of capitals, in accordance with the assumption of adding increments to a Simple-Reproduction base, such an epistemologically false representation of the development of the social-reproductive forces does have an objective correspondence to the short-term impulses of the capitalist system! Yet, through the development of the business cycle toward the next point of outbreak of new illiquidity crisis, this same objectivity is becoming subjective in the sense of an objectively-determined collapse of capitalist valuations during a depression! That is exactly an aspect of the objective contradictions of capitalist accumulation, (86) and an epitome of the problem of "transcendentals."

The reader should now have an appreciation of Luxemburg's cited difficulties in dealing with the representation of this problem, that of contrasting the momentary objectivity of historic valuations of capitals with the unfolding contradictions of those valuations through expanded reproduction over the totality of an economy for the span of a business cycle — e.g., an "actual infinity" with respect to the particularity of the "here" and "now" of the immediate moment of accumulation. It should be apparent that by locating her analysis of the process in respect to the "actual infinity" of the total capitalist over the span of ordinary

business and larger breakdown cycles, Luxemburg effectively bypassed the implicit fallacies of failing to criticize the "here" and "now" moment of the process to arrive at correct conclusions respecting the connection of that moment to the process as a whole: e.g., the notion of fictitious capitals.

By contrast, Bukharin lacked the equipment to understand the problem competently, even had he not been diverted from simple personal honesty in writing by his prior concern to accomplish intentional falsifications of the issues.

THE TAIL ON THE DONKEY

The most remarkable feature of the organization of his piece as a whole is that it ends twice. He sums up every argument previously made in what is obviously the concluding portion of his original draft. (87) He pins the Hallowe'en tail to his own ass, so to speak, with an entirely new set of supplementary conclusions. Hallowe'en? — better said, a Stalinist eternal Night on Bald Mountain! The author of the postscripted "Conclusion" may be Bukharin; the author of his decision to add it is Stalin.

The last two of the three principal charges against Luxemburg in the donkey's tail are identical with Stalin's principal allegations against the Left Opposition of that same period. "Underestimation and incorrect position on the colonial question": the Left Opposition's denunciation of the Menshevik-Kautsky "theory of national stages." "Underestimation and incorrect position on the peasant question": the Left Opposition's alignment with the poor peasantry against Stalin's cronies, the Kulaks. As for the "national question," the issue of Georgia and other locations is a topic in itself.

Such evidence, taken together with the evidence of deliberate falsifications essential to the criticisms, suffices to show the entire piece of Bukharin's — and our odd Mr. Kenneth Tarbuck — for what they are. It is therefore appropriate that Monthly Review Press should adorn the dust-jacket of Mr. Tarbuck's and its own collaboration with the portrait of sixty pieces of silver. As Karl Marx wrote: "Crises are usually preceded by a general inflation in the prices of all articles of capitalist production." (88)

FOOTNOTES

1. Schwarzchild, trans., Monthly Review Press, New York, 1964.
2. DeCarlo, Griffin, McAllen, Berl, trans., Campaigner, Vol. 5, Nos. 1,3, New York, 1972.
3. "Die industrielle Entwicklung Polens," Gesammelte Werke, Dietz Verlag, Berlin, Vol. 1/1, 1972. An English translation of this in preparation will be published in the Campaigner together with a critical review by L. Marcus outlining the relationship of this dissertation to her later political and economic-theoretical writings, and analyzing the connections and divergences among her own, Trotsky's, and Lenin's later notions of "combined and uneven development" and "permanent revolution."
4. Lelio Basso, a leading Italian socialist, is continuing his work to restore recognition of her merit along somewhat different lines of approach than our own.
5. Kenneth Tarbuck, editor, Rosa Luxemburg: The Accumulation of Capital, An Anti-Critique; Nikolai Bukharin: Imperialism and the Accumulation of Capital, Wichman, trans., Monthly Review Press, New York, 1973.
6. Ernest Mandel, Marxist Economic Theory, Monthly Review Press, New York, 1968, p. 363: "Rosa Luxemburg's mistake lies in treating the world capitalist class as a whole, i.e. in leaving out competition..." Mandel, going through the motions of registering criticism of Bukharin, actually adopts the entire gist of Bukharin's denial of any fundamental contradiction in capitalist accumulation; Mandel's "competition" is a roundabout way of introducing "proportionalities" (e.g., "trade-offs") as the only possible form of contradiction in capitalist accumulation as such. Elsewhere (for analysis, see L. Marcus, "The United States of Europe..." passim, Campaigner, Vol. 5, No. 4, 1972), Mandel does attack the "younger" Bukharin for propagating Marx's "class for itself" conception. This, ironically, occurred during the period Bukharin was an admirer of both Luxemburg and Trotsky. Mandel concurs only with the gist of the attacks on Luxemburg and Trotsky by the "mature," Stalinist Bukharin of "Imperialism and the Accumulation of Capital." More recently, drawing out Bukharin's blunder to its worst possible anti-Marxian conclusions, Mandel has denied the necessity for Expanded Reproduction in the June, 1972 pages of Rouge. (See R. Rose, "Mandel and Mansholt Agree: 'Zero Growth Does Not Go Far Enough,'" New Solidarity, Vol. III, No. 40, Jan. 8, 1973.)
7. Paul M. Sweezy, Theory of Capitalist Development, Monthly Review Press, New York, 1942, pp. 202-7.
8. Typical of relevant passages throughout the chapter, "Ricardo's Theory of Accumulation..." in Theories of Surplus Value:
 "(We are entirely leaving out of account here that element of crises which arises from the fact that commodities are reproduced more cheaply than they were produced. Hence, the depreciation of the commodities on the market.)

"In world market crises, all the contradictions of bourgeois production erupt collectively; in particular crises (PARTICULAR in their content in extent) the eruptions are only sporadic, isolated and one-sided.

"OVER-PRODUCTION is specifically conditioned by the general law of production of capital: to produce to the limit set by the productive forces, that is to say, to exploit the maximum amount of labour with the given amount of capital, without any consideration for the actual limits of the market or the needs backed by the ability to pay, and this is carried out through continuous expansion of reproduction and accumulation, while, on the other hand, the mass of producers remain tied to the average level of needs, and must remain tied to it according to the nature of capitalist production." Moscow, Part II, pp. 534-5.

This passage epitomizes, without fully encompassing, Marx's own extensive refutation of Bukharin's falsifications of his view on the issue of depreciation of commodities through rising productivity and on the issue of tendencies for rampant capitalist expansion of production.

Note also, more generally: "Crises are usually preceded by a general inflation in prices of all articles of capitalist production. (What, then, happens to the Volume II accounting models? — L.M.) All of them therefore participate in the subsequent crash and at their former prices they cause a glut in the market. The market can absorb a larger volume of commodities at falling prices, at prices which have fallen below their cost-prices, than it could absorb at their former prices. The excess of commodities is always relative: in other words it is an excess at particular prices." Ibid., p. 505.

For Marx's more general refutation of Bukharin's attacks on Luxemburg, note: "The stupendous productive power developing under the capitalist mode of production relatively to population, and the increase, though not in the same proportion, of capital values (not their material substance), which grow much more rapidly than the population, contradict the basis, which, compared to the expanding wealth, is ever narrowing and for which this immense productive power works, and the conditions, under which capital augments its value. This is the cause of crises." Capital, Vol. III, Kerr, Chicago, 1909, pp. 312-3. See also, pp. 306-8.

9. Capital, Vol. III, pp. 947-1030.
10. The Accumulation of Capital, passim, N.B., pp. 110f.
11. Dialectical Economics, D.C. Heath, Boston, 1973 (in publication); "Why It Had To Happen?", Socialism or Fascism?, NCLC, New York, 1971.
12. Ibid. Also, L. Marcus, "The United States of Europe...", loc. cit.
13. See comparison of "early" and "mature" Marx in L. Marcus, "The United States of Europe..."
14. 1844 Manuscripts, concluding chapter, passim.
15. Theories of Surplus Value, Part I, pp. 377-400.
16. Capital, Vol. III, pp. 954-5. Also: "The actual value of his labor-power differs from this physical minimum; it differs according to climate and condition of social development; it depends not merely upon the physical but also upon the historically developed social needs, which become second nature." Ibid., p. 1000. "This reduction of the total quantity of labor incorporated in a certain commodity seems to be the essential mark of an increase in the productive power of labor, no matter under what sort of social conditions production is carried on. There is no doubt that the productivity of labor would be measured by this standard in a society in which the producers would regulate their production according to a preconceived plan..." Ibid., pp. 306-7. And, so on, through Capital, especially Vols. III and IV.
17. Capital, Vol. III, pp. 954-5. Discussion of this passage in L. Marcus, "The United States of Europe..."
18. Ibid.
19. Richard Rose, "A Hindsight on Skinner's Beyond", Campaigner, Vol. 5, No. 2; Richard Cohen, "The Sociology of 'Strength Through Joy,'...", Campaigner, Vol. 5, No. 4, 1972. Blueprint for Extinction, NCLC, New York, 1972.
20. The Theory of Capitalist Development, Monthly Review Press, New York, 1942, loc. cit.
21. See note 17, above.
22. Capital, Vol. III, Chap. 5, Sec. 5, pp. 123-4.
23. Dialectical Economics for extended discussion. Summarized in "Why It Had To Happen" and "The United States of Europe..."
24. See note 22, above.
25. See note 17, above.
26. Ibid.
27. Marx identifies the "first approximation" significance of simple expansion in population in "Feuerbach," The German Ideology. The next approximation of increase in magnitude of the quality of the population as a whole is the increased "absolute energy" content of $(C + V)$ per capita. However, rising values of $S' / (C + V)$ determine subsumed increases in the per capita value of $(C + V)$ relative to lower negentropic rates. "Momentary" exponential tendencies for increase in $S' / (C + V)$ implicitly determine all the

- notions of magnitude which might otherwise be employed to approximate successful reproduction. Provided that the notion of $S'/(C+V)$ is determined for proportions of the entire proletariat in accordance with the pedagogical summary given above, the necessary notion of quality/quantity is set forth. Increase in ecological population potential, for which population is determined by rising values of the rate of increase of $S'/(C+V)$ for the entire proletarian population.
28. The "falling rate tendency" produces a derived tendency to abort the development of the productive forces.
 29. Capital, Vol. III, Sec. III.
 30. Cf. Joseph Gilman, *The Falling Rate of Profit*, Cameron, New York, 1958, and the ensuing "Gargantuan" nonsense-debate on this book in *Science & Society* and other locations of that period. For more of the same nonsense, see E. Mandel, *Marxist Economic Theory*, pp. 166-70. The consummate banality on this topic is achieved by Michael Kidron's critique of Mandel's cited passage in *International Socialism*. Where have you gone, Rabelais?!
 31. *Accumulation of Capital*, Chap. IX.
 32. *Ibid.*, p. 106: "Ultimately, it was the limitation of their bourgeois mentalities which doomed both Smith and Ricardo to failure. A proper understanding of the fundamental categories of capitalist production, of value and surplus value as the living dynamics of the social process demands the understanding of this process in its historical development and of the categories themselves as historically conditioned forms of the general relations of labour. This means that only a socialist can really solve the problem of the reproduction of capital..."
 33. *Ibid.*, p. 317f.
 34. *Ibid.*, pp. 339-47. N.B., p. 339: "The adjustments we have tried out on Marx's diagram are merely meant to illustrate that technical progress, as he himself admits, must be accompanied by a relative growth of constant against variable capital." And, p. 341: "However we may regard the technological alterations of the mode of production in the course of accumulation, they cannot be accomplished without upsetting the fundamental relations of Marx's diagram." (The accounting-model diagram.)
 35. "Leninism or Marxism" criticizes Lenin's and Plekhanov's incredible manipulations of the agenda at the second congress of the RSDLP, but this attack — in the pages of the SPD's German-language theoretical journal — is what those circumstances of publication should immediately suggest. This is an "Aesopian" attack against the center of the SPD, using the "Russian Question" as a convenient device for advancing the principles at issue in her attack on Bebel et al. The role of the vanguard is very clear: "Its mission is to represent, within the boundaries of the national state, the class interests of the proletariat, and to oppose those common interests to all local and group interests. Therefore, the social democracy is, as a rule, hostile to all manifestations of localism or federalism." (Integer, trans.) In her *Mass Strike...*, the role of the vanguard — the decisive role of the vanguard! — is clearly emphasized. Her motion for the ruthless disciplining of the SPD reformists, her expulsion of Radek from the Polish movement, her attempted expulsion of him from the SPD, are certainly not the hallmarks of a "spontaneist."
 36. This takes the form of the "population barrier." The shortage of labor-power amid a surfeit of unemployed labor. See note 16, above.
This set of relations, as Marx notes, is peculiar to the underlying relationships, and is not the immediate form of relations for capitalist accumulation. To have continuous development, it is essential that the material incomes and leisure of the working-class population as a whole increase more or less continuously, and that this increase always occur in advance of the rises in social productivity resulting from improved labor-power. This is exactly opposite to the prevailing capitalist myth (and practice), that the worker ought to be paid today for yesterday's "fair day's work." If a young man begins productive labor at the age of eighteen, in a certain technological mode, he is able to produce at that age only because society first "paid" for his material income and leisure for the preceding eighteen years of his life! "Each according to his work" is the most naked bourgeois ideology! Similarly, the tendency of "for each according to his work" fixes the quality of labor-power for obsolete technology, or technology becoming obsolete, creating the "population barrier" of which we wrote above.
 37. *Theories of Surplus Value*, Part III, p. 53: "I exclude Sismondi from my historical survey here because a critique of his views belongs to a part of my work dealing with the real movement of capital (competition and credit) which I can tackle only after I have finished this book." See, *Accumulation...*, p. 217f.
 38. Marx, "Critique of the Gotha Programme."
 39. E.g., his notoriously mechanistic interpretation of the wages of labor-power, forming the basis for his crude economic-political analysis of the "aristocracy of labor" in imperialist countries.
 40. *Theories of Surplus Value*, Part III, pp. 40-63.

41. Chaps. XVI - XXXV.
42. The fallacy of most conventional descriptions of "feudalism" appears to be the result of searching for "pure models." Since feudal reproduction (military colonizing by surplus populations) involves not merely vacant arable land, but populated land, feudal society thrives only as a form of "combined and uneven development." Once feudalism has rid its environs of non-feudal populations, etc., it is already dying. The emergence of the Crusades proper reflects a convergence upon such historical-material limits of continued progressive development of Western European feudalism. Otherwise, the Crusade is simply the intrinsic form of social reproduction of feudalism transformed into the dimensions of hordes. The bounding of feudal expansion during this and the ensuing period introduces the more general emphasis on cannibalization, under which conditions thriving mercantile capitalism reified feudal relations by introducing the generality of an alienable surplus product, etc. The Crusades mark the death-agony of feudalism's "combined and uneven development" mode, in a broad sense, and the beginning of the end of feudalism.
43. The "Great Crisis" thesis associated with the initiative on this point about two decades ago by Eric Hobsbawm. Our analysis of the process involved apparently differs significantly from Hobsbawm's, but on the essential facts of the phenomenon as such, our thesis is broadly the same.
44. This point is made, for reasons opposite to ours, by von Neumann and Morgenstern, *The Theory of Games and Economic Behavior*, Princeton, 1953, sec. 2.2.3., pp. 10-11. Much of the formal "proof" for the assumptions of modern varieties of "mathematical economics" is similar to those authors' Procrustean Bed approach, of circumscribing the fundamental laws of the universe by what is agreeable with whatever analytical procedures those "economists" happen to have handy.
45. More generally, problems of sub-systems which are respectively coherent without enjoying relations susceptible of mathematically consistent interpretation.
46. A curve plotting the inflationary consequences of monetary expansion against the rate of unemployment for that rate of expansion. If the Y-axis is inflation and the X-axis increasing unemployment, any shift of the curve to the right. The particular, special sort of development to which we refer here is a process of continuous shifting of the curve, as opposed to momentary shifts.
47. *The New Economics*, Brian Pearce, trans., Oxford, London, 196 .
48. *History and Class Consciousness*, Rodney Livingstone, trans., Merlin, London, 1971.
49. Cf. L. Trotsky, "Lenin's Death," in *My Life*, for a remarkable summation of this same lawful process respecting the moral and intellectual degeneration of many Bolsheviks.
50. T. Perlman, "Lessons of the Third Comintern Congress," in an upcoming issue of *Campaigner*.
51. Trotsky mistakenly reports, respecting the pre-1914 SPD factional struggles, "Lenin did not participate in this fight." He is only partially correct in reporting that "Lenin... did not support Rosa Luxemburg up to 1914." (Stuttgart, 1907, joint resolution against the Bebel-sponsored view.) He, however, documents the most essential point to be made: On October 27, 1914, Lenin wrote to A. Schliapnikov: "...I hate and despise Kautsky now more than all the rest, the filthy, vile and self-satisfied brood of hypocrisy:.. R. Luxemburg was right, she LONG AGO understood that Kautsky had the highly developed 'servility of a theoretician' — to put it more plainly, he was ever a flunkey, a flunkey to the majority of the party, a flunkey to opportunism..." *Rosa Luxemburg Speaks*, Pathfinder, New York, 1970, pp. 443-44. Much of Trotsky's defense of Luxemburg suffers from his notorious personal political shortcoming (cf. Joffe's *Testament*, *My Life*), in this instance, his continued factitious device of Lenin-hagiolatry.
52. The "April Theses" policy, repudiating the Kautsky-Menshevik "theory of national stages" to which Lenin had mistakenly adhered (and from which his mistaken conceptions on the "national question" derived) until the period of the First World War.
53. Trotsky had been guilty of the same credulousness toward the "proletarian kernel" centrists. From Vienna in 1910: "Today every newcomer finds, in the Western European countries, the colossal structure of working-class democracy already existing. Thousands of labour leaders, who have automatically been promoted from their class, constitute a solid apparatus at the head of which stand honoured veterans, of recognized authority, figures that have already become historic... there... stands between the intelligentsia and socialism, like a watershed, in addition to everything else, the organizational apparatus of Social-Democracy." Indeed! — Bebel, Ebert, Kautsky, Legien, Scheidemann, et al.! (Quoted from *Fourth International*, Jan. 1966, to whose pages this regrettable folly of Trotsky's opportunist period was consigned to provide "sacred" words of support for the cult of banality around the notorious anti-intellectual, Thomas Gerard Healy.)
54. "The Russian Revolution," Luxemburg's manuscript on the Bolshevik seizure of power and its problems (largely vindicated by subsequent developments) published by her executor, Paul Levi, following his expulsion from the Comintern (as a result of Lenin's fatal compromise with the centrist faction of Zinoviev).

55. "Personal integrity" signifies a large degree of unification of "persona" and deeper "self," eliminating — or nearly eliminating — the "normal," diseased form of behavior and judgment in which the outward profession of the "persona" is slyly manipulated by the "inner self's" "psychological needs." The poor wretch of a professed socialist, who is at the same time attempting to be a "true-blue" "orthodox Bolshevik," and also slyly pursues the gratification of his "own, inner felt needs," is a virtual schlemihl, who by virtue of reaching simultaneously for two "souls," has ended up with none. Such persons, persons occupied with their "felt psychological needs," are placed in the leadership positions of the movement at the peril of the future human race.
56. Rosa Luxemburg Speaks, Appendices C, D. The campaign of vilification of Luxemburg began with Radek's insistence, during the fight over the "March Action" adventure concocted by Zinoviev, "now is the time to rid the movement of the virus of Luxemburgism."
57. Joffe's Testament (My Life).
58. Perlman, op. cit.
59. History and Class Consciousness.
60. Radek's proposal; note 56, above.
61. Especially the reply to Bukharin and the opening section on method.
62. Mandel's repudiation of Marx is reviewed in L. Marcus, "The United States of Europe..."
63. Lelio Basso, "An Analysis of Classical Theories of Imperialism," Bertrand Russel Memorial Conference, Sept., 1972.
64. Tarbuck, op. cit., "Editor's Introduction," p. 16.
65. Michel Pablo, a minor Greek Trotskyist who escaped to France and participated in the resistance. Appointed makeshift head of the decimated "Fourth International" at the end of the war. Toward the end of the 1940's, Pablo was plunged, together with his aide-de-camp of the period, E. Mandel, into extreme depression respecting the possibility for socialist revolution in the advanced sector for the remainder of the century. Promoted the "centuries of degenerated workers' states" thesis, proposing that Trotskyist groups encyst as political "time capsules" within CP and peripheral organizations. "Minister without portfolio" for the Ben Bella government for a time. An energetic and talented apparatchnik, occasionally rising to the heroic, a mechanic who usually makes a scandalous mess of important political-strategical and theoretical issues unless kept on a firm rein.
66. Tarbuck, op. cit., p. 16.
67. Titular head of the British Socialist Labour League, since April, 1966 has sometimes been called "the Pope of Clapham Common." Formerly a minor figure in the tiny British "Trotskyist" organization of the 1940's, like Browder abruptly lifted from obscurity over the heads of the group's leadership in one of Pablo's typical Stalin-style organizational maneuvers. Later, broke with Pablo. Retains almost paranoid awe for Pablo's improvisational skills in organization, elevating "Pabloism" into the primary principle of universal evil. "Pabloite" in Healy's lexicon is roughly any professes "Trotskyist" except an outright "Third Camper" who omits to kiss the foot of "The Pope of Clapham Common."
68. Tarbuck, op. cit., p. 15.
69. Ibid., p. 33.
70. Chap. 1, opening fragment.
71. Accumulation, pp. 164-70; p. 155: "...in a different context, Marx actually shows the question about the 'sources of money' to be a completely barren formulation of the problem of accumulation." p. 311-23. Tarbuck, op. cit., pp. 238-57.
72. P. 293: "THE REAL BARRIER OF CAPITALIST PRODUCTION IS CAPITAL ITSELF. It is the fact that capital and its self-expansion appear as the starting and closing point, as the motive and aim of production; that production is merely production for CAPITAL, and not vice versa, the means of production mere means for an ever expanding system of the life process for the benefit of the SOCIETY of producers. The barriers, within which the preservation and self-expansion of the value of capital, resting on the expropriation and pauperization of the great mass of producers, alone can move, these barriers come continually in collision with the methods of production, which capital must employ for its purposes, and which steer straight toward an unrestricted expansion of production, toward production for its own self, toward an unconditional development of the productive forces of society. This means, this unconditional development of the productive forces of society, comes continually into conflict with the limited end, the self-expansion of the existing capital. Thus, whilst the capitalist mode of production is one of the historical means by which the material forces of production are developed and the world-market required for them created, it is at the same time in continual conflict with this historic task and the conditions of social production corresponding to it." See also, pp. 306-8, for the section in brackets.
73. Tarbuck, op. cit., pp. 258-68.

74. The Mass Strike...
75. Tarbuck, op. cit., p. 162f.
76. Luxemburg, Anti-Kritik, Part I, pp. 56-7. See also, note 34, above.
77. Ibid.
78. Accumulation, pp. 416-67. Compare with Capital, Vol. III, pp. 306-8, and Section VII.
79. The Science of Logic, Vol. I.
80. "Grundlagen einer allgemeinen Mannigfaltigkeitslehre."
81. Chap. 1, opening fragment.
82. Dialectical Economics, Chaps. IV - V.
83. Theory of Capitalist Development; cf. Tarbuck, op. cit., Appendix II.
84. Note 72, above.
85. Tarbuck, op. cit., pp. 224-37.
86. Capital, Vol. III, pp. 303-5, beginning: "The barrier of the...," and ending with: "...limited epoch in the development of the material conditions of production."
87. Tarbuck, op. cit., "5. The Theory of the Capitalist Collapse," pp. 258-68.
88. Theories of Surplus Value, Part II, p. 505.

Toward A Myth-Free History of "American Trotskyism" I: The Myth of the Origins

by Phil Valenti

STALIN'S MIRACLE

During the mass strike period of the 1930's in America, the socialist movement underwent a very curious development, one that could not have been possible without the "aid" of the Soviet bureaucracy: The Socialist Party, long dead and discredited, experienced a miraculous resurrection. Of all the miracles attributed to Stalin in those days, he deserves most genuinely the credit for this one.

The CP, even as degenerate as it had become by 1934, certainly seems to have been capable of drawing to itself enough of the revolutionary element of that decade to effectively preclude any stirrings by the SP. The halo of the Bolshevik revolution hovered steadily over the CP's head in those years; the party promised for depressed America the same economic advances achieved by real men and women in the Soviet Union; the Communist International, which still sent perceptible shivers down capitalist spines, promised worldwide support to the revolutionary American worker.

Admittedly, the Social Democracy can always claim more than its fair share of labor fakers, dilettantes, careerists, etc., a fact which has heretofore guaranteed against its disappearance. But what possible appeal could such an organization have for any actual revolutionary in the 1930's?

The secret lay in the unique repulsive power of

the CP, a power bestowed freely by the Russian bureaucrats. A twisting and turning party, a party required to vilify and murder the critics of liberal "good" capitalists — all in order to implement Stalin's distorted conception of a "defense of the Soviet Union" — forced thousands of radicals to look for an alternative. These thousands, each unprepared to plunge into the relative isolation offered by adherence to Trotsky's alternative, found the Socialist Party with an open door. Among these thousands a key few were potentially Bolsheviks, caught up in the movement "Back to Debs."

So the SP of the 1930's emerges — a party repulsed by the "excessive" commitment of the CP to the bureaucratic clique dominating the Soviet Union; a party likewise repulsed by the relative tinyness of the Trotskyist left and the "impractical" nature of Trotsky's political perspective. The SP of the 1930's — a large centrist mish-mash, with a dash of radical phraseology. A political misunderstanding from start to finish.

Unfortunately, such misunderstandings have not been completely cleared up in the socialist movement; in fact, they threaten to arise anew in the 1970's. The CP today still retains its appeal to political workers as the "enemy of his enemies," the representative of Russia and communism and all things evil to capitalism. The CP also, however, retains its commitment to subordinate itself to the equally distorted notion of a

"defense of the Soviet Union" promulgated by the Brezhnev clique. So in 1972, the party was required to support McGovern! It is also reviving its policy of physical terror against socialist opponents of the "Popular Front" strategy. The revolutionary left — represented by the NCLC and its co-thinkers — to many still appears much too tiny and politically "extreme."

Can we therefore expect that the mass strikes of the 1970's will generate a new movement "Back to Debs" and the SP? We are almost embarrassed to see such a question in print — even this is much too serious treatment for such an absurd proposition. The mish-mash of the 1970's will require traditions and memories with more marketability — to workers — than the sterile old "all-inclusive SP."

The tradition exhumed by this generation of anti-Stalinist Mensheviks in order to rally an organization into being and justify its existence must fulfill two necessary requirements: 1) it must deify the Menshevik tendency towards political adaptation to "clean trade unionism," i.e., the policy of upholding the trade unionist's assertion that he, and only he, is a bona fide member of the working class; 2) it must be capable of mounting a defense against left critics by claiming the formal endorsement of some "irreproachable" revolutionary figure.

With a minor strain on our imagination, we can already begin to hear the new Menshevik rallying cry swelling in the distance: "Back to the Old Proletarian Socialist Workers Party! Back to Cannon!" And, added parenthetically, "in the days of Trotsky."

Such slogans need not be openly scrawled on the banners of our "new Mensheviks" for us to be certain that the "old SWP" and the "old Cannon" are prominent ghosts weighing heavily on their brains. Pro-working-class SWPers already have chosen the title of a chapter of an old Cannon polemic (in the days of Trotsky) as the very name of their faction ("proletarian orientation"). They, along with especially the Spartacist League, all look wistfully back to the days when the SWP was supposedly a real "proletarian" "Trotskyist" organization. The Workers League in fact owes its existence, in its present form, to pipe dreams of its British proprietor, Gerry Healy, along these exact lines. (If only Cannon and the SWP "proletarian kernel" had remained "faithful to their traditions," Healy would have gladly and gleefully removed the little Wohlforthite pin-prick from their presence long ago.) The U.S.A.'s International Socialist group has already publicly declared that their "pure trade unionist" opportunism — pure treachery — was the ingenious invention responsible for the success of the Minneapolis strikes of 1934! All feel compelled to justify their present misguided practice with embellished bowing and scraping to the traditions of the old

SWP-in-Trotsky's-days, the grand time when the "proletarian" Cannon was a "real Trotskyist."

All of this, of course, if not downright pitiful, is thoroughly soaked in irony — but a very appropriate irony. What our incipient Mensheviks are worshipping in kneeling before 1930's "American Trotskyism" is... themselves. As we shall demonstrate, Cannonism (in the days of Trotsky) was never more than Cannonism — a most philistine and abject political adaptation to "clean," "progressive," and ignorant militant trade unionism. It is this Cannonism which our Mensheviks propose to transport to the 1970's, in the person of themselves — an adaptationist tendency supposedly blessed by a living Leon Trotsky.

SECRET OF CANNONISM

We propose here to demonstrate — with much more than a gloss on the well-known 1940 stenogram — that James P. Cannon and his "American Trotskyism" (in the days of Trotsky) represented no more than an adaptationist (methodically anti-Trotskyist) "Cannonite" tendency in the socialist movement.

Here of course lies the secret of the religious admiration that is still stubbornly directed at Cannon — "If he could do his thing in the 1930's, when Trotsky was alive," drool our Mensheviks, "then today, the sky's the limit!" The ultimate result of the "thing" that Cannon "did" we see in the SWP now before our eyes. The resurrection of Cannonism today will lead to much less humorous results.

That James P. Cannon was never more than nominally a "Trotskyist" — that he was politically a "Cannonite" from start to miserable finish — we must be exaggerating! Disposing of such widespread protests is the first order of business.

In the Fall and Winter of 1924, the Workers (Communist) Party, forerunner of the modern CPUSA, was engaged in intense debate over the problem of the Farmer-Labor Party. The Foster-Cannon bloc, at that time a majority in the Party's Central Executive Committee, argued ferociously against the labor party policy put forward by the Lovestone-Pepper-Ruthenberg leadership. Cannon led the debate from his side, fiercely attacking the Ruthenberg group's proposals to "build a Farmer-Labor Party" in America.

It is not the merits of Cannon's position per se which interest us here — not the "what?" but the "how?" How did Cannon argue his position?

"From the very beginning of the discussion," Cannon writes in the Daily Worker (12/8/24), "the CEC, placing itself on the ground of reality, has put one, insistent question to the advocates of an 'intensified cam-

paigned for a class farmer-labor party.' That question is: Where is the sentiment among the working masses for this so-called 'class' party? Time and again we have begged them to tell us in what trade unions, in what cities, states or localities this sentiment exists and how it manifests itself."

This philistine demagoguery, of course, recurs as a favorite Cannonist tune. Revolutionaries must "place themselves on the ground of realities," in particular "American realities," in developing a perspective and strategy. If there does not exist the requisite "mass sentiment" for socialist politics among the "masses of workers," then... we must give them something else, something more palatable ("clean" trade union chauvinism, perhaps?).

A long document printed in the Daily Worker earlier that winter (11/26/24), signed by William Z. Foster, Cannon and others, presents the Cannon political method (a method also long championed by Foster) with crystal clarity:

"The fundamental conditions determining the attitude of our party towards the farmer-labor movement are the same now as at the beginning of our experience in this field on the basis of the united front tactics of the Communist International. At the time when the farmer-labor movement was developing a mass character, moving in the direction of an independent party, it was correct for our party itself to raise the slogan of 'a farmer-labor party' and participate actively in the movement for it. When, as became apparent in July, 1924, and as it is apparent now, the idea of a farmer-labor party lacks mass support and appeal among industrial workers and poor farmers, the basic reasons for our support of this movement are not in existence. The Workers Party, therefore, cannot advantageously promulgate the slogan of a 'farmer-labor party' at the present time. The further development of the class struggle may eventually again create a mass sentiment for the formation of a farmer-labor party. In such case the Workers Party may find it advantageous to again raise the slogan for such a party and actively participate in the movement for it..."

"We are not opposed to the labor party in principle... We approach the problem from the point of view of whether the labor party slogan can now be used as a means of mobilizing masses for immediate class political action."

So, the revolutionary party must put forward only those "slogans" which "the masses" has ALREADY thought of without its help! The party is "the masses'" TAIL which wags only when "the masses" itches.

A fairly amusing corollary to this not-so-unique

thesis of Cannon's in the early CP was his insistence on the eradication of "foreign-sounding" words and phrases from the party's propaganda. For example, in a speech to the 1921 founding convention of the Workers Party, Cannon was pleased to point out that "... In our Conference Call you will notice we are not being verbose. We did not put in very many revolutionary words or foreign phrases, because that period is past and the time has come for action." (The Toiler, 1/7/22) "Revolutionary words" and "foreign phrases" are burdensome baggage when the time comes for "action."

In the 1924 debate, the conflict of Lovestone-Pepper with Foster-Cannon was appropriately characterized as a conflict between the concepts of the "united front from above" (opportunist deal-making with the labor bureaucracy, whose reactionary politics faithfully reflect the backwardness of the majority of rank and filers) and the "united front from below" (opportunist adaptation to the mass of backward rank and filers directly). A conflict over the mere style of adaptation. The Foster-Cannon bloc flung itself whole-heartedly into the swamp of a "real united front from the bottom with the broad farmer-labor movement, upon the basis of an immediate program of partial demands." (DW, 12/27/24)

CANNON AND TROTSKY

Of course, all of this can be dismissed as the gropings of an inexperienced and undeveloped potential cadre, tossed into the whirlpool of a quickly degenerating party and International. But what about Cannon the "Trotskyist"?

In 1938, Leon Trotsky proposed a campaign in favor of a "Labor Party based on the trade unions" to the SWP. Having freshly emerged from a period of intense class warfare, the American working class and the CIO were beginning to come under escalating open attack by native proto-fascists, as well as by the government and employers. The time, according to Trotsky, was ripe (actually well over-ripe) for American trade unionists, the unemployed, and the yet-unorganized to take the road of independent political action together — or face new crushing defeats one by one.

Cannon's immediate reaction to this proposal (after ten years as a "Trotskyist") is well-known and documented. The key question for Cannon, as well as for the entire leadership and ranks of the SWP, in deciding on this policy was — does there exist mass sentiment for the Labor Party in the unions?(!)

In 1938, not only do the SWP heads debate the Labor Party question exactly as they had debated it in 1924, but (after ten years as "Trotskyists") they continued to debate about 1924 as they had in 1924 (in the days

of unconcealed Foster-Cannonism)!

"SH(achtman): I wouldn't say the labor party is so strong among the workers today. Most of the labor party sentiment that might have arisen has been canalized toward the channel of Roosevelt... In any case if you compare 1938 with 1924 you can say there is barely a labor party movement now; then there was more real sentiment in the trade unions..."

"JPC(annon): It is not true that the sentiment now is less than in 1924 for a labor party. Then it had no basis in the unions; it was mostly a farmers' movement."

The conversation is broken by a stenographer's note: "(More argument about the relative strength of labor party sentiment in 1922-24 now took place between Comrades JPC and VRD(unne) on one side and SH on the other.)"

Later in the discussion, Trotsky is confronted with shattering Cannonite "political argument":

"Some comrades have even collected figures," he is informed by the SWP leaders, "tending to prove that the labor party movement is actually declining among the workers."

At least some consolation: by 1938, the Cannonites have learned a little arithmetic! (Note that in 1955, in a March 22 letter to Theodore Draper, Cannon still refers to his 1924 position with a perceptible sense of pride.)

Trotsky goes on to propose that the SWP agitate for the formation of a workers' militia, as a defense against what he perceived as a developing fascist threat in the U.S., and as a step towards dual power. Cannon takes the opportunity to sink to low, but familiar, Cannonite comedy:

"JPC: What name would you call such groups?"

"CRUX(Trotsky): You can give it a modest name, workers militia."

"JPC: Defense Committees."

"CRUX: Yes. It must be discussed with the workers."

"JPC: The name is very important. Workers defense committees can be popularized. Workers militia is too foreign sounding."

This Grand Guignol permits one a belly laugh, until we remember that the last years of Trotsky's life were expended in a futile effort to drum into Cannon's consciousness the basic notion that:

"WE MUST HAVE THE COURAGE TO BE UNPOPULAR... It is necessary to shake the worker from

time to time, to explain, and then shake him again — that all belongs to the art of propaganda. But it must be scientific, NOT BENT TO THE MOODS OF THE MASSES." (Writings of L.D. Trotsky, 1938-39, p. 52, emphasis added.)

Trotsky is still patiently explaining these principles to those aspiring Cannonites today, for those few with functioning sense-organs. It is also necessary, however, TO SHAKE THEM.

DAMASCUS ROAD

What has, up until now, been euphemistically termed "American Trotskyism," made its first appearance in 1928 under very "mysterious" circumstances. James P. Cannon's sudden declaration in favor of Leon Trotsky, already expelled from the CPSU and in exile, came that year as a shock sufficient to challenge even the most loyal Cannonites' faith in the coherence of the universe. Cannon himself has unraveled the mystery ever so slightly in his admissions that he had been "disgruntled" and "dissatisfied" with the way things were going in the CP for some time previously — so much so that he almost refused to go to Moscow to participate in the Sixth Congress of the Communist International (CI) in the Summer of 1928. As Cannon puts it:

"We had had so many disappointments in Moscow that I couldn't get up any real enthusiasm about better luck the next time." (First Ten Years of American Communism, p. 200.)

When one correctly understands the "we" to which Cannon refers to be the old CP Foster-Cannon bloc, the mystery is near solution. In 1928, Cannon's vague "dissatisfaction" was well justified — since 1924, each of his schemes and maneuvers aimed at gaining control of the party had been brutally sabotaged by the CI. At each turn since 1924, the CI had artificially snatched party control from his anxious fingertips and handed it over to the hated Lovestone-Pepper clique. By 1928, a combination of particularly unfavorable circumstances had effectively shattered every last hope of the Cannonites for power. What were the circumstances and why did they lead Cannon to Trotsky?

Cannon initiated his ill-fated collusion with Foster in 1923. Predictably enough, Cannon's immediate motivation in approaching Foster was his horror at the CP's split with the so-called "progressive trade unionists" of John Fitzpatrick's Chicago Federation of Labor, over the formation of the Federated Farmer-Labor Party in that year. Cannon fell over himself in his enthusiasm for a "rapprochement" with such "progressive" bureaucrats — even if this meant the virtual liquidation of the CP and the transformation of party cadre into the bureaucrats' errand boys. (1)

The split with these "progressives" in July, 1923,

carried out while Pepper, Lovestone and Ruthenberg were in effective control of the party, impelled Cannon to declare factional war against them for organizational power. He first sought out Foster, whose prestige as a "labor leader" would make him a fine "expert spokesman" for a "proletarian" Cannonite group. Cannon, as he "respected Foster as a realist, and as a man who knew the labor movement through and through" (First Ten Years, p. 86), correctly expected a positive response. After all, Foster, a man who was "realistic" enough to publicly deny his Communist affiliations until 1923, and who had a good enough sense of "American realities" to peddle Liberty Loans for Sam Gompers in the unions during World War I, certainly would recognize the danger of breaking with "progressive" bureaucrats.

Sure enough, Cannon reports that Foster "saw the danger of all our trade union positions crumbling. It was then that he began to relate the new turn of events to his own position in the party." (First Ten Years, p. 88.)

Having thus gained Foster's agreement, and pushing him forward as the main spokesman for a FOSTER-Cannon group, Cannon strained his unique talents to assemble a strong power bloc out of "disgruntled" elements. As Cannon writes:

"Foster, at that time, was very little acquainted with the various important personalities in the party outside the trade union section. He left the business of dealing with them, in these preliminary stages of the fight, to me."

And Cannon adds, with a touch of pride: "He was well satisfied with the results." (First Ten Years, p. 92.)

So, at the third convention of the Workers Party in the Winter of 1923, Cannon had "organized a caucus of delegates held together by a common dislike for the policy that had resulted in the split with the Fitzpatrick forces." (Draper, p. 91) In a later reflective moment, he pinpointed exactly what he was aiming for in creating the Foster-Cannon bloc:

"I thought it was not enough to legalize the party and get it out of its self-imposed underground isolation. The party had to be Americanized and 'trade unionized' at the same time, if it was ever to become a factor in the labor movement and in American life generally. The party had to recognize realities, and adjust itself to them. It had to proletarianize itself not merely in its membership, but in its leadership, too. A party regime dominated by 'intellectuals,' who knew nothing of the labor movement and had no roots in American reality, could only lead the party from one adventure to

another until there was nothing left of the movement as a bona fide expression of American radicalism." (If our quotations from Cannon seem to be getting monotonous, that is Cannon throughout.)

For Cannon, the struggle against Pepper, Lovestone and Ruthenberg was a life-death one. A party controlled by "City College boys" and intellectuals would never be an effective instrument for political adaptation to the "undeveloped, unorganized, and uneducated" American working masses. "City College boys" were good only for tip-toeing among petit bourgeois journalists and authors, SP bureaucrats, and the like; but these snobs didn't have the knack, or inclination, to carry out the tough, day to day task — of adapting politically to "progressive" labor fakers and the backward rank and file. (2)

At the 1923 convention, Cannon's strategy won a quick victory. His organizational maneuvering produced a Foster-Cannon majority on all of the party's leading bodies. His dreams for a "well-adjusted" party seemed within easy reach. But the honeymoon was short-lived.

In 1925, the CI plucked party control away from Foster and Cannon, handing it over to Lovestone and the detestable "City College boys." For the next three years, every challenge mustered by Cannon was beaten back by forces beyond his control in the CI, until he could conclude that the struggle was hopeless; it seemed certain that Lovestone would keep control for good. (3)

So, in 1928, Cannon was "trapped," without a future in the CP, and with no daylight ahead. All of his best factional efforts had come to nothing, and all of his hopes for control of a "realistic" party had been cruelly smashed. Most kibitzers, in dealing with this period, make some reference to Cannon's "trapped" feeling (mainly because Cannon himself acknowledges it). What they all overlook is Cannon's one last hope for salvation in the CP, and his last great hope to be extinguished — Zinoviev. The snuffing out of this final prayer in early 1928 led Cannon directly to Trotsky.

CANNON AND ZINOVIEV

At the Fifth Plenum of the CI in Moscow in 1925, the careers of these two men, Cannon and Zinoviev, intersected at particularly critical times for them both. Both were hunted men who could distinctly hear the swish of the factional axe as it approached their respective necks. Zinoviev was becoming uneasily aware of the machinations taking place behind his back — Bukharin, with the "friendly" support of Stalin, was openly beginning to encroach on Zinoviev's turf within the CI, as well as within the CPSU itself. Zinoviev was in no mood to alienate any possible friendly voices with the bluster and theatrics formerly so characteristic of this centrist windbag.

Cannon himself describes his 1925 predicament in Moscow, as well as his fond memories of Zinoviev:

"The eventual decision (on the American clique struggle — P.V.) was pretty clearly intimated beforehand. I soon got the chilling impression, and I think Foster did too, that the position of our faction was far weaker in Moscow than at home, and that we couldn't do anything about it. The other faction had the advantage there. With Pepper as an active representative, busy in the apparatus of the Comintern, the Ruthenberg faction seemed to have the inside track.

"Bukharin was particularly outspoken in favor of the Ruthenberg faction and acted like a factional partisan... Zinoviev appeared more friendly and impartial.

"I had the definite impression that he wanted to correct our position on the labor party question (the "political" question in debate between the two cliques at the time — P.V.) WITHOUT UPSETTING OUR MAJORITY, to restrain the majority from any suppression of the minority, and in general to slow down the factional struggle. I remember him saying to Foster at the end of one of our talks, in a friendly, persuading tone: 'Frieden ist besser.' ('Peace is better.')" (The First Ten Years, p. 132, emphasis added)

The discovery that "peace is better" came to a man who had just waged a vicious, lying, all-out war against Leon Trotsky. Zinoviev made his discovery, of course, only after his own "peaceful" stranglehold on the party apparatus began to be threatened. So in 1925, Zinoviev maneuvered to win the Foster-Cannon group as factional allies, proposing in Moscow that "the new Central Committee (of the American party — P.V.) is to be so elected at the Party Conference that the Foster group obtains a majority and the Ruthenberg group is represented proportionally at least by one-third."

But Zinoviev was no longer the absolute authority in the CI; the final decision was to set up the famous "parity commission," which eventually allowed Bukharin and his ally Stalin to give party control to the "City College boys." Nevertheless, Cannon left Moscow firmly convinced that he had a great potential friend and ally in Zinoviev. (4)

Cannon's warm personal feelings towards Zinoviev in fact can be traced directly back to at least 1922. Cannon has consistently maintained the self-image of a free-wheeling, foot-loose, down-to-earth agitator who never had much use for hard-line theorists and "hair-splitters." Zinoviev was a "free-wheeling agitator" if ever there was one! Cannon freely

expresses his affinity for Zinoviev's "style" in another letter to Draper, ironically counterposing the mediocre political type represented by Zinoviev to the no-nonsense "businesslike" Trotsky:

"I was struck by the difference between his (Trotsky's — P.V.) manner and method and Zinoviev's. The latter had impressed me as informal and easy-going, even somewhat lackadaisical. He always seemed to have plenty of time, and could always be counted on to open a meeting two or three hours late. In spite of that he obviously did an enormous amount of work. It was just a difference in his way of working."

And Cannon continues, wistfully:

"The greatness of Lenin and Trotsky was the greatness of genius. Zinoviev receded before them, but on a lesser scale he was a great man, too. I had a soft spot for Zinoviev, and my affectionate regard for him never changed. I still hope, someday, to write something in justice to his memory."

Such "affectionate regard" for mediocrity is, not miraculously, characteristic of all centrists.

With the American party split into well balanced, permanent cliques after 1925 (none of which had any chance to win control without the support of the Russian leaders) Cannon's main hope for a "realistic" party with a "proletarian" leadership (remember that Cannon is a "realistic proletarian") rested on the possibility of support from Zinoviev. Of course, by 1926 Zinoviev had been forced into an oppositional bloc with Trotsky, resulting in their joint expulsion from the CPSU one year later. Then, in early 1928, Zinoviev capitulated to Stalin without much delay. (As Trotsky later wrote, seconding Lenin, that Zinoviev's quick capitulation was "no accident.")

So in 1928, Cannon must finally face the fact that he was absolutely isolated, with the Comintern seemingly intent on propping up Lovestone and suppressing all opposition. Cannon himself has freely credited Zinoviev for making the future developments possible: "It was Zinoviev's bloc with Trotsky and his expulsion, along with Trotsky, that first really shook me up and started the doubts and discontents which eventually led me to Trotskyism." (First Ten Years, p. 186)

Cannon found himself in Moscow in the summer of 1928, a reluctant delegate to the Sixth Congress of the Comintern — there to lead what he was convinced was a lost and hopeless factional cause. But, as a member of the Congress's "program commission," he had an avenue of escape from his depressing predicament laid in his lap, translated into English — Trotsky's criticism of Stalin's and Bukharin's draft program for the CI.

Cannon's oft-quoted account of the conversation follows:

"We (J.P.C. and Maurice Spector of the Canadian CP — P.V.) let the caucus meetings and the Congress sessions go to the devil while we read and studied this document. Then I knew what I had to do, and so did he. Our doubts had been resolved. It was clear as daylight that Marxist truth was on the side of Trotsky. We made a compact there and then — Spector and I — that we would come back home and begin a struggle under the banner of Trotskyism."

What a holy image — Jim Cannon, expert factional finagler and political adaptationist, is suddenly struck by the "daylight" of Marxist truth and is forthwith transformed into James P. Cannon, Trotskyist!

THE CONVERSION

What made Trotsky an acceptable escape route for Cannon in 1928? First of all, the old bogeyman Trotsky had long since been rehabilitated in his eyes. For him, the job of rehabilitation was done, of course, by none other than Zinoviev, during the months of the Russian Joint Opposition. (5)

But if Cannon even appeals to Zinoviev's authority in order to help justify his "Trotskyism," why didn't he simply eliminate the middleman and openly declare for Zinoviev? Zinoviev himself had already double-crossed his disciple by capitulating in early 1928, leaving Trotsky the only prominent Russian leader still in opposition. Zinoviev "lacked sufficient character" to give Cannon the chance to give birth to an American Zinovievism IN NAME, as well as in fact.

Despite all of the freely available evidence to the contrary, gullible people continue to spread the unsupported assertion that the "founding document" of American "Trotskyism" was Trotsky's 1928 Criticism of the CI draft program. The better bookkeepers of that myth point to the centerfolds of the first issue of the *Militant*, in which Trotsky's CI document was printed in serial form — as if this were final "proof" of their Cannon canon. (Cannon himself, in a momentary bookkeeping mood, does just this in his *History of American Trotskyism*.)

Such people reveal, thereby, that there is a method to their gullibility — they fail to turn the page! Printed along with Trotsky's work was the most recent document produced by the Foster-Cannon clique, written mainly by Foster himself (and his crony Bittelman) and presented jointly with Cannon to the Sixth CI Congress. This last gasp of the Foster-Cannon group — the "Right Danger in the American Party" — was in fact the founding document of American "Trotskyism"!

The "Right Danger" which was the subject of attack in this unfortunate document was, of course, the Cannonite's habitual "devil," the Lovestone-Pepper clique. Just four years before, Lovestone had been denounced by Cannon et al. as the ultra-left "unrealistic" sectarian splitter in the controversy over the Farmer-Labor Party. In 1928, he was attacked as personifying the "right." Two months later, Lovestone and Foster would attack Cannon as the very incarnation of a "rightwinger," while claiming the "left" for themselves. The labels "right" and "left" were pasted on clique enemies in the American CP simply according to which label the centrist Soviet bureaucracy was compelled to paste on its enemies in the Russian party.

In 1928, the faint odors of a "left turn" had been steadily drifting from Moscow towards New York City. The old Foster and Cannon cliques were quick to smell out the new line — at least, quicker than Lovestone. Ergo, the "Right Danger in the American Party." Those Foster-Cannonites with more hopefulness than Cannon simply sniffed the air and proceeded to grab at the possibility that the new CI winds would blow in their direction.

The "Right Danger..." is a true testimony to the potential capabilities of the political olfactory nerve. The document very carefully displays the catchphrases and formulas of the embryonic "Third Period." It speaks passionately of the "new" immediate revolutionary possibilities; it argues strongly in favor of an "energetic" campaign to build new unions; it calls for strict observance of the policy of the "united front from below" with the "masses" against the "reactionary trade union, liberal, and Socialist Party leaders" — quite a good job of piecing together the developing "Left" line of the CI, despite Cannon's pessimism. (6) The "united front from the bottom" ("adapt politically to the rank and file" — P.V.) had been the old slogan of Foster-Cannon in the 1924 discussion; all the more easy to revive it — and then some! — in 1928. (7)

There is no need of labored analyses to demonstrate the role of the "Right Danger..." document in the founding of American "Trotskyism." The first issue of the *Militant*, dated November 15, 1928, graciously saves us the exertion.

Usually the very first words of the first manifesto issued at the birth of a political tendency are quoted proudly and often in later years. These words continue to set a political tendency apart from all others and provide it with a unique historical identity. The American "Trotskyists," however, have shown a mystifying reluctance to refer to their earliest period, and in fact become distinctly annoyed when anyone brings it up. The reason is not complex.

The first "manifesto" written independently by the Cannonites after their expulsion, appearing on the very

first page of this very first Militant — the first “Trotskyist” newspaper to appear in the Western Hemisphere — begins its stirring call to arms, thus:

“We stand on the main line of the document entitled ‘The Right Danger in the American Party’ (excepting certain erroneous formulations dealing with the world position and role of American imperialism), presented to the Sixth World Congress of the Comintern by the delegates of the Opposition, in the drafting of which we actively participated.”

With the small exception of Bittelman’s idiosyncratic theories of “the world position and role of American imperialism,” the new “Trotskyists” wholeheartedly “stand” on the 1928 CP document of Foster-Cannonism! No wonder the framed first page of this historic Militant cannot be seen above the desk of any SWP bureaucrat today (next to his or her first political dollar).

The Cannonites did not merely reprint the “Right Danger...” in the Militant, and declare that they steadfastly stood on it—they praised it, and its Fosterite authors, to high heaven. Another short article appearing in the first Militant declared that:

“The document on the ‘Right Danger in the American Party,’ in the trade union section (written by Foster) which is printed in this issue of the Militant, speaks warningly of the harmful consequences which ensue when irresponsible dilettantes and opportunist faction mongers gain control and direction of mass work. This warning, fraught with the gravest consequences for the future of the movement, is written in blazing letters in the experience of the past year, and particularly the past six months, of the Party’s trade union work.” (parenthesis in original)

So, William “E-Z” Foster’s opinion on the “trade union question” is written in “blazing letters” for the “Trotskyists”! Can any greater travesty be conceived by mortal man?! We will get to these latter in due course. (8)

CANNON’S REAL MOTIVE

The extravagant praise heaped on this Foster-Cannonite document by the American “Trotskyists” gives us the clue we need to solve another puzzle posed by Cannon’s action in 1928 — what gave him the guts to finally go through with it? Any man or woman would have had nagging second thoughts before plunging into the profound political isolation of Trotskyism in the late 1920’s. Cannon did have second thoughts but finally DID take the plunge. What a courageous man Cannon must have been, ready to stand alone in defense of his Trotskyist principles.

What nonsense! Not only did Cannon have little choice in 1928, as demonstrated above, but he had a real, positive incentive as well. He did not believe that he would remain isolated very long at all. Cannon split from the CP in the conviction that Lovestone would increase his control over the party, further repressing the remaining Fosterite element of the Foster-Cannon opposition; and that these factors, combined with the discrediting of Foster himself in the eyes of his own followers, would impel the entire sizeable base of the Foster faction into his waiting arms. When this perspective didn’t quite pan out, Cannon was stuck with Trotskyism and all of its nasty, unforeseen implications.

Even Ernest Mandel might protest our “exaggeration” here; it would be difficult to exaggerate and emphasize this point as greatly as did the American “Trotskyists” in 1928-9. The Militant at that time posed as the only true and consistent representative of the Foster-Cannon opposition in America. Foster, charged the Militant, was selling out the “principles” of the Foster-Cannon bloc to the “right wing” Lovestoneites, while only the “Trotskyists” remained loyal and unswerving Foster-Cannonites.

Again we refer to the embarrassing first page of the first Militant for corroboration. Cannon, Abern and Schachtman there declared, in no uncertain terms, that

“The present attempt of some of the leaders of the Foster-Bittelman group who signed the document on the ‘Right Danger’ to abandon that platform, to moderate the struggle against the Lovestone-Pepper right wing, and to effect a political coalescence with them in order to direct their attack against those who remain true to that platform and develop its logical and inevitable international implications, in no way alters the fundamental correctness of the document. It merely demonstrates the political instability of these leaders which hampers the process of developing an opposition to the right wing leadership and line of the Party on a principle basis. We have no doubt that the supporters of the (Foster-Cannon — P.V.) Opposition who have regarded the struggle against the right wing leadership as a principle question will continue to adhere to this position despite the vacillations and maneuvers of a section of the leaders.”

This is how the “Trotskyists” appealed to the cadre of the CP. Trotskyism, they claim, is simply the “logical and inevitable” extension of Foster-Cannonism! (This is number one in the ensuing roster of such specific “inconceivable” travesties; we will not continue to keep count.)

The perspective for rank and file Fosterite defection to the “real Fosterites” was not farfetched, assuming ever-tighter Lovestone control of the apparatus. Foster, desperately and madly scurrying under

the waiting protective wing of the CI out of fear of being branded a "Trotskyite sympathizer," had already, in effect, "capitulated" to Lovestone. Stalin still had some use for Foster and so accepted his resignation from the "opposition."

The Militant heaped scorn on Foster the "centrist," declaring that no quantity of such capitulations would mollify Lovestone. Again we quote the Cannonite "manifesto" from the first Militant:

"The aspirations of certain former leaders of the Opposition in the American Party to grasp this banner (of slanders against the Russian Opposition — P.V.) for themselves are pathetically futile. The hopes of the Foster group to escape thereby the factional persecution of the Lovestone group and to secure their organizational positions can succeed only insofar as they surrender their former oppositional standpoint. The whole course of the Lovestone group, which has no roots in the labor movement, is toward a monopoly of the Party apparatus and cannot be otherwise."

In the Militant of February 1, 1929, the Cannonites ridiculed the futile maneuvers of the discredited Foster leadership:

"Foster and Bittelman are fooling the proletarian fighters in the Party with all kinds of rumors, illusions and false hopes. They are waiting for a 'cable'; a new secretarial decision; a new 'concession' from Moscow. This 'concession' will come but its whole import will be to further entrench the Lovestone faction and disarm its opponents."

The Cannonites were absolutely convinced that the expulsion and capitulation of Zinoviev had eliminated the last hope of removing Lovestone. The only course for the Foster-Cannon opposition was to leave the party. Cannon's action had merely been the first drop of an inevitable avalanche — or so the Cannonites thought.

The Militant (2/1/29) presented a concise outline of the "necessary" next developments in the CP. According to this prognosis, the future was quite, quite rosy; the distasteful isolation was merely a temporary discomfort:

"The Fosterites who really believed the statement of their leaders to the effect that our stand is 'counter-revolutionary' naturally and logically decided to subordinate everything to the fight against it and passed over to the CEC majority. Those who did not believe it passed over to us. This process of disintegration which flows inevitably from the untenable position of the Foster group, will develop with cyclonic speed after the (1929 CP — P.V.) Convention."

In 1929, what developed with "cyclonic speed" was Stalin's international "left turn." Cannon, in his "History..." tearfully recounts the devastating effect of this turn on his high hopes:

"The Stalinist 'left turn' piled up new difficulties for us. This turn was in part designed by Stalin to cut the ground from under the feet of the Left Opposition; it made the Stalinists appear more radical than the Left Opposition of Trotsky. They threw the Lovestoneites out of the party as 'right wingers,' turned the party leadership over to the Foster and Company and proclaimed a left policy. By this maneuver they dealt us a devastating blow. Those disgruntled elements in the party, who had been inclined towards us and who had opposed the opportunism of the Lovestone group, became reconciled to the party... There were, I would say, perhaps hundreds of Communist Party members, who had been leaning towards us, who... returned to Stalinism in the period of the ultra-left swing.

"Those were the real dog days of the Left Opposition."

The "hundreds" of the Foster clique who were "leaning towards" the true, consistent Foster-Cannonites, naturally turned back to the party when the "right danger" was expelled by Stalin. No matter how much they protested in the Militant that the new turn represented "no change," the Cannonites were left out in the cold. Their threat to recruit "disgruntled" Fosterites became clearly non-existent — so clearly, in fact, that even the systematic CP hooligan campaign directed against them came to a halt in this period.

But there was no turning back — Cannon had branded himself a Trotskyist and the mark proved indelible.

COMEDY OF ERRORS

So in 1929, we have James P. Cannon the "Trotskyist," a state of affairs unthinkable even to Cannon just a few months previously.(9) The entire affair, far from the reverent myth propagated by faithful Cannonites today, was a comedy of Cannon's maneuverist calculations and political naivete.

Cannon, searching for a way out of the CP cliquist cesspool, in which his own clique (despite all of his best organizational power-plays) had been repeatedly robbed and roughed up by the CI, looked hopefully towards the "peace" offered by Zinoviev. Zinoviev's oppositional bloc with Trotsky and their expulsion from the CPSU stirred up "doubts and dissatisfactions" directed at the victors of the Russian struggle; when the CI clearly seemed intent on continuing to back the Lovestone regime against Foster-Cannon, Cannon declared for Trotsky — Zinoviev's ally and the only

leading Russian oppositionist who had not capitulated by 1928.

Cannon then claimed that his "Trotskyism" was the "logical continuation" of Foster-Cannonism in an optimistic effort to win over "hundreds" of disgruntled Fosterites. Finally the 1929 CI "left turn" left Cannon with nothing but his "Trotskyism," for better or for worse.

Out of all this, Cannon's only actual (unwitting) insight was the aspect of this mess which seems most absurd; that is his insistent claim that "American Trotskyism" was the "inevitable," "logical," "consistent" extension of Foster-Cannonism. This it certainly was, at least to the extent it was "free" of L. Trotsky's political influence. Cannon has made clear to us just where, in turn, that leaves today's logical extenders of his American "Trotskyism"!

History now seems to repeat itself — but the farce of 1928-29 can only be followed by the more intense farce in the 1970's.

However, it remains difficult to conceive how Cannon could rationalize, even to himself, his assertions that the Foster-Cannonite fight against Lovestone was "indissolubly bounded up with the Bolshevik fight of the Russian Opposition"; or that "the course of the American Opposition insofar as it develops consistently merges with the path of the Russian Opposition. This is the logic of the whole situation" (Militant, December 1, 1928). Foster-Cannonism leads logically to Trotskyism — this was Cannon's and the Militant's constant refrain.

What Cannon did was merely seize — energetically — upon Trotsky's correct characterization of the Russian struggle as one between working-class and growing petit-bourgeois tendencies in a period of decline, and translate it into a very familiar Foster-Cannonite tune. The American "Trotskyists" advanced the not-so-original "analysis" that, "at bottom," the struggle in the American party since 1923, after the initiation of the Foster-Cannon group, "has been a conflict between the proletarian and petit-bourgeois tendencies" (Militant, February 15, 1929). It followed, therefore, that the American "Trotskyist" opposition was simply a "continuation" of the five-year struggle against the City College boys in the CP, with Trotsky himself leading the fight against their compatriots in Russia.

What actually constitutes a petit-bourgeois tendency in the socialist movement? Foster-Cannonism and all of its variants reply: Any bunch of snot-nosed students, lawyers, dentists, journalists or professors that don't want to do working-class organizing! SO FAR — if they did not stop there — they are certainly correct.

The petit-bourgeois mentality keeps arm's length from a working-class perspective, lurching its head away in terror from the sight of the consequences which would ensue from the adoption of such a point of view. It argues — I can't tell my constituency to subordinate its interests to those of the working class. Most of them wouldn't understand and I'd be terribly isolated. How distasteful in any case to be pushed down into the grimy ranks of the proletariat. Why, I'd lose all of my popularity!

Foster-Cannonites would giggle at this caricature, confident that as "trade-union communists" they are, by definition, incapable of being the butt of the joke. Trotsky, the land-owner's son, is, of course, politely excused from the festivities.

Foster-Cannonites are incapable of recognizing the petit-bourgeois character of trade-union chauvinism, as they then would have to admit that, in their own tragic political clownishness, they themselves represent a very dangerous petit-bourgeois tendency in the socialist movement!

The "average" trade unionist is as fearful of subordinating himself to the interests of the working class — in a political, not simply "economic," sense — as is the "average" student or dentist.

"What concern is it of mine?" protests the "average" trade unionist when confronted with the fact of capitalist-sponsored forced-work projects, which aim to convert the U.S.A. welfare population into a terrified herd of slave laborers. The "average" trade unionist is confident that his constituency is self-sufficient: "If the boss tries to bring 'em in to scab, me and the boys will take care of 'em."

For Foster-Cannonites, the chauvinism of the average trade unionist is a "reality" to which the socialist movement must "adjust" — to the point of "theoretically" denying that the unemployed are actually a bona fide element of the working class! All of this in order to avoid the "terrible isolation" which follows from consistently representing the interests of the working class as a whole. Recognizing that such "isolation" — which results in the political development of that small layer of advanced workers who are the potential leaders of the "mass" — is the key to the success of the socialist movement, we recognize that the Foster-Cannonites are simply "adjusting" themselves to accept the defeat of the revolution in advance.

PETIT-BOURGEOIS WORKERS

The period following the massive 1919 strike wave was one particularly appropriate for the growth of openly petit-bourgeois currents within the CP. The

objectively revolutionary upsurge of that year was violently smashed by the capitalists, leading to a prolonged period of retreat and demoralization on the part of the American labor movement.

The bungling of the German revolution by the CI in 1923 helped capitalism postpone the crisis until the end of the decade. The masses of American workers, in contrast to the revolutionary potential displayed by them just a few months previously, became conservative. Organized workers of the AFL, in particular, retreated into the old trade-union chauvinism, according to which the unemployed and unorganized workers are some sort of inferior animal. These latter responded with an equal hostility and suspicion.

In short, the American working class, after the defeated struggles of 1919-20, became imbued with a petit-bourgeois cliquist spirit! It was with a certain degree of empiricist self-righteousness, then, that CP bureaucrat Cannon denied the existence of "mass sentiment" for politics among the workers in 1924.

Whereas the Foster-Cannonites, for reasons of personal background and prejudices, "naturally" chased after popularity and respectability among the masses of backward workers, in particular trade unionists, the Lovestoneites just as "naturally" aspired to achieve recognition among liberal students, journalists, lawyers, professors, etc. Both groups, though entering the socialist movement out of sincere and principled motivations, had been totally unprepared theoretically to withstand the disorienting effects of the revolutionary decline of the early 1920's. Both fell back on the ideological muck which they had dragged with them into the socialist movement.

Trotsky was the victim — in another way — of a similar process of degeneration taking place in the Russian party. He was singled out for persecution precisely because he refused to succumb to that process; he continued to defend an (actual) working-class perspective against the petit-bourgeois cancer which was eating out the guts of the bureaucratized Bolshevik Party.

Trotsky, in fighting to defend the interests of the working class AS A CLASS, had to face the onslaughts of literal workers — the Russian trade union leaders (Tomsky et al.) and the so-called Workers' Opposition — as well as literal petit bourgeois — kulaks, NEPmen and bureaucrats. Trotsky stood for a political working-class perspective, representing the future of the proletariat — its actual class interests — within its sordid, self-defeating hysteria of the present movement.

The petit-bourgeois clique leaders — Zinoviev, Stalin, Bukharin — appropriately heaped most abuse

and scorn upon the unique path to that future. The Permanent Revolution — the mass strike process leading to the development of working-class-wide, soviet institutions — was officially buried in favor of the petit-bourgeois policy of adaptation (Kuomintang, Anglo-Russian Trade Union Commission, Popular Front, etc.).

The rebirth of the degenerate phenomenon of Foster-Cannonism today should be of particular concern for revolutionary socialists since, in fact, it is the only variety of petit-bourgeois tendency capable of subsisting within the working-class movement in itself. This, of course, was Cannon's real objection to the "petit-bourgeois Lovestoneites." He correctly demanded: How can a party dominated by students, journalists, etc., ever become popular among the masses — of backward workers? Everyone knows that most workers despise such people with a passion.

For Cannon, the Lovestoneites were an obstacle to his efforts to fashion a party capable of effectively adapting to the "ordinary workers." Because the City College boys insisted on adapting to other City College boys, rather than petit-bourgeois currents within the rank-and-file labor movement, they were, to Cannon, the one and only bona fide "petit-bourgeois tendency" in the Communist Party.

Cannon, in his own vulgar fashion, details his real objections against all City College boys in his "History..." (p. 92). He relates that in the early days of American "Trotskyism,"

"I waged a bitter fight in the New York branch of the Communist League (the early Trotskyist group — P.V.) against admitting a man to membership on the sole ground of his appearance and dress.

"They asked, 'What have you against him?'"

"I said, 'He wears a corduroy suit up and down Greenwich Village, with a thick mustache and long hair. There is something wrong with this guy.'

"I wasn't making a joke, either. I said, people of this type are not going to be suitable for approaching the ordinary American worker. They are going to mark our movement as something freakish, abnormal, exotic; something that has nothing to do with the normal life of the American worker."

Cannon wished for an organization which would seem "normal" to the "ordinary American worker" — as if revolutionary socialism itself is not necessarily a "freakish, abnormal, exotic" concept to most workers, except in the most unusual periods of revolutionary advance. While Cannon wanted a party "suitable for approaching the ordinary American worker," Trotsky,

opposite to philistine Cannon, aimed his appeals at the EXTRAORDINARY Russian worker capable of resisting the petit-bourgeois cliquism and chauvinism sweeping through his class.

While petit-bourgeois backwardness is characteristic of workers in "normal" times, given a crisis which impels the capitalists to initiate class struggle and given a revolutionary leadership on the scene capable of actually leading, this backwardness can be rapidly replaced by a growing sense of class solidarity and consciousness. Likewise, the disorientation of many potential Bolsheviks in the ranks of Cannon's clique in 1929 could also have been corrected, given a proper

theoretical education.

James P. Cannon, however, based his very political "principles" and "theory" on the glorified "normal" backward qualities of the working class. He transformed what was (potentially) a temporary disorientation in the ranks of his clique into its greatest virtue and asset. While Cannonism worshipped the backside of the masses of workers as they were in 1929, Trotsky held up the image and foretastes of the working class as it must BECOME.

The two tendencies were bound to clash.

1. The whole Farmer-Labor movement of the early 1920's had been supported by labor bureaucrats, such as Fitzpatrick, only when capitalism began applying the naked stick to the organized labor movement after World War I. Until the U.S. economy began raking in the fruits of its accelerating looting of South American and (especially) German labor power and natural resources in 1923-24, no concessions were available to support even a domesticated AFL bureaucracy. But the hard line on organized labor began to be softened by 1923, and the half-hearted "progressives," like Fitzpatrick, soon scurried back to the AFL and the two capitalist parties. In 1923, Fitzpatrick saw the Workers Party as a convenient fall guy, a starry-eyed self-effacing sap that would organize an independent base for use in bargaining favorable terms for his return to the fold.

The character of these "progressives" and Cannon's "instinctual" tendency to adapt is conveniently laid out on a page of Theodore Draper's *American Communism and Soviet Russia* (p. 41):

"Swabeck recalls (of the Workers Party negotiations with Fitzpatrick and his crony Anton Johannsen for formation of a Farmer-Labor Party — P.V.): 'At the very first meeting Fitzpatrick started out by bluntly saying: "Let's get the record straight — we are willing to go along, but we think you Communists should occupy a back seat in this affair."'

"Johannsen also warned Browder and Johnstone privately: 'If you keep your heads, go slow, don't rock the boat, then the Chicago Federation will stand fast. But if you begin to throw your weight around too much, the game will be up.'

"While Fitzpatrick feared that the Communists were getting out of hand, the New York Communists feared that the Chicago Communists were too close to him. The Chicagoans realized that a break threatened and tried to stave it off. They appealed for help to the Workers Party chairman, James P. Cannon, who happened to be passing through Chicago on a lecture tour, and he sent off a 'serious warning' to the New York office against further endangering relations with Fitzpatrick's group."

The "progressives," for Cannon, were rare and precious objects d'art that had to be handled carefully — too many "revolutionary words" and "foreign phrases" would scare them away. The "progressives," finally seeing that the Communists were not playing the second banana role they had laid out for them, took the first opportunity to repudiate them. Fitzpatrick soon found his place in Sam Gompers's warm embrace.

2. In all fairness, we must recognize that Cannonism was a far more sophisticated "philosophy" of adaptation than Fosterism. On one point — the need to "adjust to American realities" — there was absolute agreement. But Cannon went one step further: he recognized that in order to reap the profits from adaptation, an organizational apparatus was essential. This is the difference between Foster, with his "apolitical" "trade union one-sidedness" (Cannon) and Cannon, the party man and organizational whiz kid.
3. One of the earliest Militants (2/15/29) recounts the disappointments of those years in the bitterest terms: "This (Lovestone — P.V.) leadership was established in the Party in 1925 by cable of the ECCI plus the jesuitical machinations of Gusev, the representative of the ECCI, after it had been decisively rejected by the Party membership. Again in 1927 a cable from the ECCI prohibited a majority in the Central Committee (the bloc of Cannon-Weinstone-Foster groups) from exercising their right to reorganize the Polcom and elect Party officers; thus safeguarding the Lovestone control. The "Supplementary Decision" cabled to the Party later in 1927 called upon the Party to support the Lovestone

groups after the ECCI had been compelled to reject its main line.

"Further help in mobilizing the Party for the Lovestone faction was given a little later by cables hypocritically protesting against the 'factionalism' of the (Foster-Cannon — P.V.) Opposition while ignoring and condoning the most criminal and corrupt factional practices by the Lovestone group. Ewert, present leader of the 'conciliators' group in the German Party, in his capacity as representative of the CI to our Party in 1927, helped the Lovestone faction to gerrymander and steal the Party Convention in Tammany fashion. The secretarial decision of the ECCI after the Sixth World Congress in 1928 ignored all the big political questions and simply declared the contentions that the Lovestone leadership follows a right wing line... to be unfounded and thus again indicated its political support of this faction.

"By all these means, by political pressure, by direct organizational interference, by abusing the confidence of the Party members in the Communist International, by tricks and machinations, the Centrist leadership of the CPSU and the Comintern has strengthened and supported its American counterpart and entrenched its control in the American Party."

4. In a letter to Draper (3/31/55) on this CI decision, Cannon expresses his conviction that Zinoviev was really on his side:

"The decision of the Comintern in 1925 to set up a Parity Commission to arrange the Fourth Convention of our party, with Gusev, a Russian, as chairman, was manifestly a decision against us, for in effect it robbed us of our rights as an elected majority. I do not think Zinoviev was the author of this decision; it was far different from his original proposal. His acceptance of the parity commission formula manifestly represented a change on his part, and probably a compromise with others who wanted to give open support to the Ruthenberg faction." (First Ten Years..., p. 133)

Later in the same collection of letters to Draper, Cannon waxes eloquent in a "Note on Zinoviev":

"I have long been thinking and promising to write an appreciation of Zinoviev in the form of a condensed political biography," Cannon begins. No such "appreciation" has yet appeared, 17 years later. Of course, the qualities of the centrist Zinoviev which Cannon might admit "appreciating" would have embarrassed the SWP too greatly to be printed in any case.

"I was greatly influenced by Zinoviev in the early days of the Comintern," he continues, "as were all communists throughout the world." Zinoviev's influence in fact was very direct — party leaderships were made and broken to suit him in his degenerate power play against Trotsky. His wrecking of the German revolution of 1921-23 certainly also had considerable "influence" in the early days of the Comintern.

Cannon expresses his sincere "outrage" at the "impudent pretensions of so many little people to deprecate Zinoviev... I feel that he deserves justification before history."

Remember that "little" Lenin in his will, pointedly declared that it was "no accident" that Zinoviev, along with Kamenev, opposed the insurrection in October, 1917. Of Zinoviev and Kamenev, Trotsky later admitted: "Personally, I did not place much trust in them... They lacked sufficient character." (Writings, 1937-38)

Cannon appeals to "historical justice" which "cries out" for "a full and objective evaluation of this man's life... In spite of all Zinoviev deserves restoration as one of the great hero-martyrs of the revolution." Such poetry wasted on the wretched architect of destruction of so many early Communist parties! But it was this wretch, we must remember, who indicated a willingness to defend the Foster-Cannon group from its Russian enemies in 1925.

In any case, Cannon remembers! He concludes his eulogy: "As far as I know, Zinoviev did not have any special favorites in the American Party (poor J.C.! — P.V.). The lasting personal memory I have of him is of his patient and friendly cooperation, summed up in his words to Foster which I have mentioned before: 'Frieden ist besser.' ('Peace is better.')" "Peace" is just what Cannon (as well as Zinoviev) needed in 1925 since "peace" would maintain Foster-Cannon control of the party.

5. Cannon, in the first Militant (Nov. 15, 1928), justifies his "Trotskyism" in the following terms, in reply to a letter to him from a CP member understandably confused by the whole business:

"What is the great historical significance of the action of Zinoviev and Kamenev in uniting with Trotsky in 1926 but acknowledgement that the campaign against 'Trotskyism' in 1923-4-5 had been a false one? Zinoviev, who above all others 'educated' us in this campaign said so in as many words."

6. For the skeptical, excerpts from the document (as appearing in the December 12, 1928 and January 1, 1929 issues of the Militant respectively) follow:

"The CI line against the united front from the top with reactionary trade union, liberal, and Socialist Party leaders, and for united front with the workers against them applies with special emphasis in America. The new objective factors making for the discontent of the masses and strengthening their impulse and will to struggle create increasingly favorable conditions for leading them in the fight

against the reactionary leaders and the capitalists. The firm adherence to this basic conception is a prerequisite for the full utilization of the possibilities to broaden and intensify the fight of the workers and build the Party."

"The Party must carry on active campaigns for the organization of united front actions with the masses from below on concrete immediate issues of struggle against the capitalist offensive, on the political as well as on the economic fields. More than ever must the united front policy from below be applied by our Party in the fight against the reformists and to win the masses for the class struggle.

"In the present period, the Party's chief means of furthering the political awakening of the American masses, is the vigorous participation and leadership in the everyday struggles, deepening the context of these struggles, **CARRYING OUT ENERGETICALLY THE PROGRAM FOR THE ORGANIZATION OF NEW UNIONS**. In the process of these struggles the Party will establish united fronts with the masses on the political field." (emphasis in original)

7. Cannon, of course, learned to criticize the Third Period in America, but always from his own peculiar Cannonite point of view. His stated alternative policy clashed audibly with Trotsky's policy as developed in the "Germany pamphlets" and elsewhere. As we shall show in the later sections of this dissertation, the implementation of Cannon's — not Trotsky's — policy by the American "Trotskyists" in the middle to late 1930's spelled ultimate disaster for the SWP (as well as, thereby, for the socialist movement as a whole in the subsequent period).
8. Cannon never mentions the "Right Danger..." in his self-serving "History of American Trotskyism" — a very clever maneuver. But in 1955, he momentarily lets his guard — and his pants — down in a letter to Draper. Cannon writes (this after 27 years to reflect on the matter): "At the Sixth Congress of the Comintern in 1928 the delegates of the Foster-Cannon bloc presented a lengthy indictment of the Lovestone administration entitled 'The Right Danger in the American Party.' **I THINK IT IS WELL WORTH READING EVEN TODAY.**" (emphasis added)
Cannon then quotes some economic gobbledygook from the document which concludes that a depression and "deep-going crisis" was imminent — merely a Foster-Cannonite echo of much more sophisticated Third Period Comintern gobbledygook which purported to predict the same thing. For Cannon (in 1955!) it is all still "well worth reading." From a different point of view, of course, we can agree.
9. Cannon later admitted, in a flash of brilliance usually alien to him: "I just happened to be standing there at the time..." (First Ten Years..., p. 224)

DeGaulle: Bonaparte in Transition

by Richard Cross

Bonapartism, as an historical phenomenon, re-appeared on the stage of contemporary politics in the form of General DeGaulle, the President of the Fifth French Republic. His interest for us is not that he represented the reincarnation of previous strong men of history, but that his career from 1940 onwards reveals the transitional forms from which modern Bonapartism will develop.

As capitalism's unravelling political crisis begins to affect the political sphere, most markedly in Europe, where orthodox bourgeois parliamentary forms become less and less able to guarantee capitalist property titles, "strong men" are spotted — Strauss, Almirante, Powell — around whom will form the transitional regimes of the pre-revolutionary period. But the strong man does not make a Bonaparte. Bonaparte must raise himself above parties and classes to become the arbiter and guardian of property and order.

To this extent the general form of Bonapartism can be adumbrated for any capitalist crisis. But, as Trotsky emphasized in his Germany pamphlets, the generalities of form, though necessary, are not in themselves sufficient. Bonaparte, the world-historical figure, is himself the object of history. Just as in the 1930's the concept could not be developed by abstract analogy, so today the patterns provided by nineteenth-century France must be retailored. Bonaparte must be formed from the tissues of developing social processes, his blood transfused from the arteries of contemporary class struggle, his nervous system and its synaptic responses a function of the realities of the capitalist system.

Bonaparte must be sought, not among this or that nation's emerging contribution to the demi-monde of political thuggery, but among those supra-national institutions which alone have mediated the rapidly accumulating demands of the dollar's paper credit in-

stitutions on Europe's base in the real world of social reproduction. The "Bonaparte" of the coming crisis will achieve particularization in the collective policy-making bodies of the capitalist class. "Bonaparte," to become the guardian of property, must become Uncle Sam's not-so-benevolent debt collector. To defend order he must prepare the ground for the implementation of the no-growth future of Mansholt and Peccei.

The first approximation of the needed institutions exists. It is the supra-national, self-financing commission which administers the EEC's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). The CAP milks funds from Europe's industrial centers to prop up backward French agriculture. In 1968 France paid \$436 million into the CAP's guaranteed fund and received back \$875 million. Germany, Europe's largest producer of industrial goods, paid in \$413 million but only received \$168 million in subsidies.

European workers are bearing the social cost of supporting French agriculture at its present unproductive levels. The CAP's system of price supports ensures that Europe's workers pay twice the world market price for all their food products, while farmers produce surpluses of butter, sugar, and grain which are either stored, destroyed or dumped in Africa and Latin America.

The irony should be evident. DeGaulle, who seemed sometimes to be a reincarnation of Louis XIV — as far as the bourgeois press was concerned — was only able to maintain his own position by preparing the ground for the supra-nationalism he professed to detest. Indeed, it was his systematic refusal to introduce the measures demanded by the realities of the international capitalist system after the May-June events of 1968, which signalled that his reign had come to an end.

The lone General rose to prominence twice in the recent history of France. In 1940 he pronounced that old soldier's saw about lost battles and wars on the BBC's French service. He then went on to build the kind of movement which prevented both the U.S.A. and the Parti Communiste Francais (PCF) — had it been capable — from taking political control of post-war France. Then in 1958, as the Fourth Republic disintegrated under the threat of civil war — the army had taken control of Algiers and Corsica, and was threatening to dispatch paratroopers against Paris — the General "reappeared" to save France from "catastrophe."

As his brief taste of power at the end of the Second World War can be seen as a dress rehearsal for the post-1958 period, the two periods will be examined in that order.

A "NATIONAL" RECONSTRUCTION PROGRAM...

DeGaulle's lone stand in 1940, about which he later wrote in his Memoirs, "Here I was alone and deprived of everything, like a man on the shore of an ocean he was now going to swim," ended as he floated to power on the crest of a tidal wave at the Liberation of Paris in August 1944. DeGaulle entered Paris as the head of a movement stretching from the PCF on the left of the political spectrum to the nationalist right via an assortment of trade union federations and resistance groups. Once more the leadership of the working class was handed its exemplary lesson. Though it is the activities of the masses which make history, they must remain under the programmatic leadership of, and make history for, the bourgeoisie until such time as the institutional form and programmatic content of the class-for-itself are developed by a socialist leadership.

DeGaulle's success can therefore be understood for what it is: an indictment of the suicidal politics of the Popular Front. When both the U.S.S.R. and the PCF insisted that the "first stage" of struggle must be "national liberation," they were arguing that the second stage had to be a defeat for the working class. By attempting to build a movement for the reconstruction of society on the basis of capitalist forms of organization, they ensured that society would be rebuilt by and for the bourgeoisie.

...FOR AN INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM

Until Russia's entry into the war in 1941 DeGaulle was left almost alone in London, with just his pretensions for company. He had grouped the scattered French exile movement around his leadership. Higher ranking officers, colonial administrators and diplomats had all been offered his services if they would assume command. They had all refused.

Some of the leaders of French colonial territories did rally to his cause. Men like Felix Eboué of Tchad and the rulers of French Equatorial Africa took out insurance policies against the imposition of fascism by acknowledging his hegemony. The allegiance of these secondary colonies enabled DeGaulle to form his Committee for the Defense of the Empire. At this stage in the war, however, it was not always clear who he was defending the Empire from. Britain's lone opposition to Hitler ensured that DeGaulle's handful of troops would only be mercenaries in the service of British war aims. Even when his troops could play a larger than insignificant role they were allowed no tactical independence.

In the Syrian campaign, for example, DeGaulle's future prospects were rigorously subordinated to Churchill's attempts to secure British oil supplies. In military terms the General was, at best, helping Churchill to liquidate the French Empire to build a vital life-line for British capital. DeGaulle could only fume as Vichy troops were shipped back to France, instead of being offered the chance to join his forces, and as the British took over the administration of the territory.

Russia's entry into the war gave DeGaulle the chance to break away from the tutelage of the "Anglo-Saxons." He could offer no material assistance to Stalin, though later the Normandy squadron of the Free French Air Force made its mark in the battle of Stalingrad, but he could now bargain with Hitler's opponents for his own ends. His trump card was, of course, the second front.

Britain, when alone in opposition to Hitler, was more interested in the North African theater than in direct intervention in Europe. Oil provided the tactical key. After Russian entry the European battle was still of secondary importance. Hitler and Stalin were to wear each other's armies down in a war of attrition. Britain would then pick up the pieces. U.S. entry did not change the strategic design. Britain was absorbed as a junior partner in the execution of the final phase of New Deal politics, the carving-up of the non-socialist world under dollar hegemony. The question now, as the conclusion of lend-lease agreements made clear, was not who would get what, but when the U.S. would get the lot.

The Russians answered the General's call for a second front by promptly recognizing his Committee. To consolidate and convince the U.S. and Britain of his intentions, he began to adopt an independent position. He offered to send troops to fight on the Eastern Front. He planned to move his military headquarters to Ankara, as near to the U.S.S.R. as possible. He sent a delegation to Moscow to establish independent lines of communication with the Kremlin, thereby excluding the possibility of interference by the British

diplomatic service, which had provided a mediating link.

Above all he was determined to distinguish his movement and his intentions from those of the U.S. and Britain. He lost no opportunity to ridicule their pretensions as fighters against fascism. Even after entry into the war the U.S. still maintained an ambassador at Vichy. Britain used his good offices to retain contact with Marshall Petain. More and more DeGaulle was able to strengthen his call for the opening of the second front with references to those two continental powers who were serious in their opposition to the axis powers.

As Stalin's armies began to push back the Germans, it became obvious that DeGaulle's arguments were not aimed at the ears of his international allies, but at those of the internal French resistance forces. He was using his relationship with Russia and developing his "anti-fascism" to build a left cover for his movement. But Stalin built DeGaulle to guarantee his own war aims. The Teheran and Yalta conferences made this clear. Stalin negotiated from a position of strength; he had beaten Germany in the East, and drained its forces in the West. He wanted annexations to compensate for the devastation of his scorched-earth retreat in 1941-42. To achieve this, Communist Parties outside the lands occupied by the Red Army were to act as the guarantors of his good faith. To this end, the PCF was allocated the same role as the Greek Communist Party. Both were to form the "suicide squads" which would protect the U.S.S.R.'s enlarged borders by self-sacrifice within their own frontiers.

DeGaulle, who had been useful horse-trading material, inherited the PCF's movement because of his past services, even though Stalin sought to exclude the French from the European settlement. Russian intervention not only established DeGaulle's movement; through it he obtained a viable, independent hold on France's internal politics.

THE PCF AND ITS WAR OF NATIONAL LIBERATION

Hitler's invasion of Russia catalyzed the French internal situation in the same way it had precipitated the chemistry of international relations. The PCF was at last able to play a role in the resistance movement.

The speed with which the Party was able to regroup its shattered, demoralized forces testifies to the enthusiasm of workers to fight fascism and its leading representative, Hitler. That they did so under the programmatic leadership of the bourgeoisie was once more the result of the PCF's failure to pursue actually socialist politics. In the summer of 1942 DeGaulle's London Committee was joined by Fernand Grenier in the name of the PCF. In this way the bourgeois reconstruction of France, which had been

approved a year before by Stalin, was finally guaranteed by the leadership of the working class.

From the start of its resistance work in 1941 the PCF had conceived its work in national, not class terms. The Party's "Front de la Liberation Nationale" (FLN) became an umbrella grouping for all shades of political opinion, from the Party through to Bidault and Marin of the nationalist right. In an organizing drive which makes the SWP's constituency efforts look paltry, the PCF built mini-FLN's for every section of the population — women, lawyers, shopkeepers, trade unionists, each had its own organization, its own press and its own demands. Opposition to the German occupiers became a by-word for the politics of the lowest common denominator, just as opposition to the Vietnam war was once the acid test of the "progressive" movement in the U.S.A. and Europe.

The evident difference of degree should not disguise the common sociological type of these two movements, despite the different "brand names" of the instigating groups. Both attempted to build an alternative by organizing the parochialized fragments of bourgeois society within existing organizational forms. Neither attempted to challenge the chains of illusion of bourgeois ideology by developing approximations of socialist institutional forms. Both, for that reason, failed to transcend the hegemony of bourgeois ideology.

The fate of only one of the PCF's special interest groups need be examined here. It serves as a paradigm of how not to build a movement for most groups in the U.S.A. and Europe who claim to be factional opponents of the various CPs. It is, of course, the trade union movement which now provides a tail for the eager noses of "gauchistes," just as it once did for the PCF.

The PCF had achieved a position of dominance within the Confederation Generale du Travail (CGT) by 1936, only to see the membership evaporate under the collapse of the Popular Front and the pressure of war. The Party was outlawed before the outbreak of war and excluded from CGT positions. After France's defeat, the rump of the federation, under non-communist Belin, joined the Vichy Government's corporatist regime for the same reasons Britain's Vic Feather now uses to justify his refusal to collaborate with the Labour Party in the elaboration of a political program: the special interests of the "labor pressure group" have to be represented whatever the government may be.

The PCF subordinated their politics to the same special interests and failed to draw the correct conclusions about the relationship between parochialized forms of organization and consciousness. They built another such organization as a home for the rank and filers who had been left in the lurch by Belin's treachery. The two federations were reunited in May 1943 with six non-CPers and three Party members on the

political bureau. Then, after the war, CP government members insisted that their now viable special interest group be provided with almost exactly the undemocratic bureaucratic structure which had been used to keep the pre-war PCF out of positions of influence within the union movement. It is in this back yard that latter-day French syndicalist groups like Lutte Ouvriere are planting the seeds of a future "movement." Rather than protect their turf, Lutte Ouvriere comrades have decided to grow it.

The legislation which makes the subordination of socialist politics to the special interests of the rank and file as ridiculous now as then, stipulates that all union officers — including the delegue du personnel, the equivalent of the shop-steward — be approved in their appointment by the hierarchy. That Lutte Ouvriere should now be able to maintain a foothold in such positions demonstrates not that the PCF changes as the rank and file identify with the abstract phrases of workers' democracy, but simply to the fact that the PCF has at last realized that as long as the Trotskyist group continues to tail unionized workers, its own position can only be strengthened. Lutte Ouvriere now organizes for the PCF in the same way the latter did for the CGT during the war.

With this organizing drive as a paradigm, the PCF's post-war behavior is shown to be more than just a sell-out. Pure and simple movements built with all the honesty common sense can muster will only make history for the bourgeoisie. It was the CP's "national" organizing drive which enabled France to be rebuilt. To that extent the PCF sold out no one; it continued the politics of class collaboration it had begun with the Popular Front. Now, when the question of the reconstruction of Europe is posed again, those would-be socialists who persist in tailing the politics of collaboration, because that's where the workers are at, should ask themselves who's fooling whom?

DEGAULLE FILLS THE GAP

By the summer of 1942 the preconditions for DeGaulle's later success were filled. Russia had recognized him and pushed the PCF's movement into his orbit. Yet the alliance between the man whose politics had been characterized correctly in 1941 by a Soviet diplomat as close to the Italian version of fascism and the PCF remained formal. The PCF was officially represented on his London Committee, but refrained from active involvement with him in France.

International developments once more gave De Gaulle's growing movement a push. It was becoming obvious that the U.S.A. was trying to establish a form of puppet government in France. Continuing approval of an extension of the life of the Vichy regime was shown by the manipulations of U.S. diplomats Leahy

and Cordell Hull. They selected fascist sympathizer General Giraud as the head of a post-war French government. If the White House had had its way, there would have been no change of regime after the war, just a change of personnel. There were few in France who would have been prepared to tolerate this. The potential for a revolutionary social explosion was clear, if the PCF had been able to rise above its confirmed tendency to ally with the right.

But DeGaulle was the only political leader who could possibly benefit from the maneuvers of the U.S. The PCF would only participate in the work of "national liberation." The Socialist Party had been discredited by its 1940 sell-out to Petain. The Right, even if unconnected with Vichy, was still too suspect for most people to stomach. But if DeGaulle was to take charge, the PCF had to transform its formal involvement in his committee into active support.

The General redoubled his efforts. From the beginning of 1943 the anti-fascism of his public speeches found positive development in the theme of "national revolution." His organizers in France worked to build the coalition which could be presented for State Department approval as representative of the national interest. These internal efforts ended successfully on May 27, 1943, when the Conseil National de la Resistance (CNR) was formed.

DeGaulle's organizer, Moulin, had originally intended it to include even those political parties which had approved the Vichy regime. This move was opposed. Instead the CNR was formed by the representatives of both union federations, the CGT and the CFTC, while eight representatives were drawn from various resistance groupings, including the PCF's FLN, and six from political parties including the PCF.

Despite the temporary opposition of Villon, the CP's representative from the FLN, the Conseil passed a resolution which entrusted the management of the nation's interests to DeGaulle. Giraud, the main opposition, was given charge of military affairs — after all, he was in North Africa with U.S. support and had an army — but he was implicitly excluded from political involvement. Villon's opposition proved to be momentary. The PCF collaborated eagerly in the establishment of the Conseil's various sub-committees. A bureau of five, including Villon, was formed to coordinate resistance work and draw up the reconstruction program. Later, in 1944, a Comite d'Action Militaire was formed to unify and command the secret internal armies. Villon and another CPer, Kriegel-Valrimont, formed the majority on this three-man committee.

The PCF hoped to achieve "great things" to this point by colonizing the CNR. Hence the opposition to DeGaulle's caretaker mandate, and the enthusiasm with

which it did the Conseil's work after he had the mandate. Inevitably, the Party began to maneuver for some degree of independence. The PCF refused to collaborate in the foundation of the Comite Central de la Resistance; it would have been outvoted in all departments. In the CNR it was the majority tendency. Then, after the death of Moulin at the hands of the Gestapo, it was decided that DeGaulle's representative and the head of the CNR could no longer be the same person. Such pitiful efforts to stake a claim to independence were doomed to failure. The PCF had given its approval to DeGaulle by participating in the institution which had acknowledged him. The PCF had helped draw up his program. The Party's enthusiasm for independent organizing could at this point only strengthen his position.

With this mandate and organizational base DeGaulle left London for Algiers to intensify the faction fight against Giraud. The latter had done nothing to strengthen his position. He was becoming more and more of an embarrassment to his U.S. supporters, despite the fact that he had commanded the liberation of the first department of metropolitan France, Corsica. He kept up Vichy's North African concentration camps, with their communist and Gaullist inmates. Beside him, DeGaulle's credentials seemed immaculate. Throughout the summer his influence declined as the Vichy troops and their officers in North Africa switched their allegiance to the anti-fascist who still spoke of "national revolution." A few days before the Allied invasion of France, about which DeGaulle was not informed until the last minute, the expanded CNR formed itself into a Provisional Government of France.

THE STATE DEPARTMENT SEAL OF APPROVAL

Even though DeGaulle's hegemony over the French movement was now clear for all to see, the U.S. State Department would still not recognize his claim to the leadership of the government of France. Perhaps some administrators continued to nurse hopes that something of Vichy's regime could be recuperated. More likely, however, DeGaulle's relationship with the CP-led resistance was too close for the comfort of U.S. civil servants. The evident danger was that the armed and organized PCF would drop the General and organize its own government.

One week after the Normandy invasions DeGaulle visited Bayeux. He appointed one of his assistants Commisaire de la Republique, and received the submission of the local sous-prefet. This gesture made his intentions clear. He would not allow the resistance movement which had been his main-stay to develop its own government machinery. Equally important, the proceedings were welcomed by a large, enthusiastic crowd. This first "approval" by the people was to provide him with much needed ammunition in the events which led up to the liberation of Paris in August. Mean-

while Free French forces in Brittany, acknowledging the General's overall command, had routed occupying German troops, thereby simplifying Eisenhower's advance.

Accordingly, the State Department issued DeGaulle's clearance. His Provisional Government was cursorily deemed "qualified to administer France." This recognition still did not end the schemes of some U.S. officials to establish a Third Republic Mark II under the compromised leadership of Laval and Herriot. Such plans were finally ended, not by the U.S., but by Hitler. Laval, Petain and others were removed to Saaringen and declared a government in exile.

Coupled with the reluctance of the PCF-led resistance to take any kind of governmental initiative, this last fling by Hitler created a vacuum DeGaulle could rise to fill. Eisenhower courteously saw to the details: Leclerc's mechanized division was to be the first to enter Paris. DeGaulle would follow him in. Then and only then would the Anglos appear. In the event the activists in the Paris resistance, led by the PCF, under the slogan "a chacun son boche" — perhaps the worst headline to appear in a socialist paper since the SPD's Vorwaerts reported the war credit vote in August 1914 — preempted the issue. With regular, armed troops only hours away the inhabitants of Paris rose against the Germans. At a cost of 3000 dead and 7000 wounded, Parisians could claim to have "liberated" themselves.

"PARTICIPATION" BEGINS

The resistance movement had built DeGaulle, had prepared a program, called the Resistance Charter for the reconstruction of France, and confidently expected to be called to collaborate in the building of the now post-war world. Their hopes were crudely dashed the moment DeGaulle entered Paris. Ignoring the welcome which had been prepared for him by the resistance organizations at the Hotel de Ville, he went first to the Ministry of Defense to confer with his underlings. Next he went to Notre Dame, and while rifle bullets ricocheted around the inside of the Cathedral he celebrated the Deliverance of France from the Hand of the Heathen.

The snub was calculated to offend, and was followed by more. After the Liberation of Paris he never knowingly associated himself with the leadership of the Resistance movement in public. At Marseilles he could not avoid it. He was placed between two local leaders at a banquet. The General did not address one word to either of them throughout the meal. Concomitantly, his earlier mention of National Revolution was dropped from his speeches. The nearest he came to using the word was when he spoke about "renovation." The resistance had served its purpose. As far as he was concerned it was now

an encumbrance to be removed.

If the resistance could be ignored by the General, he could not destroy it. Once more the PCF was called onto the stage, and given the task of breaking its creation and its organizations. To achieve this the Party had to supervise the disarmament of the paramilitary organizations which had sprung up since the liberation. This would guarantee the PCF's refusal to actually establish new organs of government. At the same time DeGaulle began to draw all the threads of the administration back into Paris. The new Prefects and Sub-prefects had to be approved by Paris before they could begin to exercise their functions. Nowhere were the local organizations allowed to establish their autonomy through independent action. Many a militant of the PCF can still remember the tears that were shed as the local militias were disbanded.

As usual the stick which beat workers back into their "place" was preceded by a carrot which guaranteed the PCF's cooperation. In return for its services the Party was allowed to "participate" fully in the reconstruction of bourgeois democracy. There would be no return to the days of illegality which had ended the Third Republic. This "participation" was the handsome trappings, the fig-leaves which covered the Party's self-emasculation. Four CP members became Ministers of State in the first government of the Fourth Republic. They were entrusted with the departments of Labor, Armaments, Industrial Production and National Economy. Now that the Party had agreed that the bourgeoisie would benefit from reconstruction, they were to ensure that the working class spared no effort.

The support of the PCF was bought by the gift of "participation" — on the bourgeoisie's terms. Just as in Britain, this participation meant shifting the social cost of production onto the shoulders of the working class via the public ownership mechanism. Credit, insurance, four deposit banks, electricity, gas, coal and the Renault car plants were all taken over by the State — all except the latter with "compensation"! Comites d'entreprise — factory committees — were created to involve workers at the point of production. These committees could make suggestions about the production process. They had some say in the running of canteens; they had no say in questions about wages or working conditions. A social security system was set up, with the working class as a whole paying through taxation what individual workers could no longer afford to pay.

DeGaulle resigned from the leadership of the government on January 20, 1946. The parliament had reduced his proposed military budget by 20 per cent. Such a rejection was intolerable for him. Then as later his corporatist world-view precluded criticism

or disagreement. For him, the government had to be above the squalid squabbles of party advantage.

His contribution, however, had been invaluable. Production figures for 1946 showed coal and electricity above pre-war levels, results which were evidently due to the efforts of the PCF to win "respectability." Maurice Thorez, whose war-time exile in the U.S.S.R. had earned him the nickname "le premier parti de France," led this the most far-sighted faction among those involved in the process, at least where its own interests were not concerned. Almost alone the PCF clamored for more imports of coal, steel and machine tools. Fervently the Party demanded the annexation of the industrial resources of the Ruhr. Persistently it justified the use of German prisoners in France for the reconstruction of villages and railroad tracks, as well as the expansion of coal production, as part of a slave-labor force.

It was in this way that Thorez's slogan "We must produce" became reality. After all, "La grandeur de la France est a refaire," as he so appropriately said.

DEFEAT FOR THE WORKERS

As far as Thorez was concerned, France's greatness could be restored while workers went without the necessities of life. The presence of the PCF in the government legitimized the most vicious attacks on the working class. No action was taken to prevent the growth of an extortionate black market in food and clothing as well as luxury goods. Nothing was done to stamp out speculation in the franc. Instead workers were asked to tighten their belts once more, to sacrifice themselves again on the altar of France's greatness. The PCF in government ensured that no section of the working class made or received the kind of wage demands which were not only necessary to ensure a decent standard of living, but would also have outraged the PCF's partners in government. Wages stood still as prices (on the index of 100 in 1938) rose from 481 in January 1946 to 865 in December 1946. During the same period the amount of paper money in circulation rose from 570 billion francs to 722 billion.

The PCF's attempts to keep the lid on the developing crisis situation were shattered by the international political crisis. As relations between the U.S.S.R. and the U.S.A. steadily worsened, it became clear that France would not qualify for desperately needed aid until the PCF was removed from the government.

Leon Blum, the almost-senile head of the Popular Front government of 1936, visited Washington in March 1946. There Fred Vinson, Secretary of the Treasury,

formally asked him to form an anti-PCF coalition. Afterwards Blum gave an interview to Jean Davidson, AFP correspondent, in which he stated: "I am convinced that thanks to our agreement with the U.S. we will be able to avoid a Russian invasion, which would be a real catastrophe for Western Europe, and secondly, prepare slowly but surely a revolution toward real Marxism. We can use the Americans for that purpose. Numerous American diplomats with whom I have spoken are sure that Socialism can become the best rampart against communism in Europe. Only it is all a question of very delicate handling." At the same time the CIA, in concert with AFL hucksters like Jay Lovestone, began to finalize plans to split the CGT and establish a non-Christian, non-Communist third force federation.

Somehow the PCF managed to continue as if none of this was happening. The breakdown of the Moscow talks in 1947 and the blockade of Berlin, however, provided a hint that not even the most obtuse could ignore. Accordingly, the Party began to cover its tracks in preparation for the internal explosion that was bound to come. The massacre of thousands of Malagaches, the result of the suppression of an insurrection in Madagascar — which the PCF had earlier approved — provided the formal excuse for the Party's ministers to withdraw their support from the government. Then on April 17, deputies were freed from their obligation to vote for the government.

The timing of these moves was probably determined by intelligence received from the CGT, for on April 30, 20,000 workers at the Renault plant in Billancourt struck against the wage-freeze the Party's Ministers had implemented. True to form, the CGT refused to propagandize for the strike in any other than the most local terms. This was no class movement against austerity politics; it was just that Renault workers wanted more money. The PCF withdrew from the government in a huff. Though it could mastermind the implementation of anti-working-class politics, it could not be seen to side with strikebreakers and scab-herders nationally. But equally, the Party was in no position to offer any alternative to the strikers, and well they knew it. Renault workers went down to defeat, and with them the rest of the French working class. The paltry concessions they had gained over wages and holidays were bitter compensation for the years of sacrifice. The Party, discredited by its years of collaboration, the precondition of its inability to take the appropriately bold steps which alone could have vouchsafed it state power, retreated into the isolation of parliamentary opposition, from which it has yet to recover.

EXEMPLARY LESSONS FROM THE STRIKE WAVE

The political bankruptcy of another group, the Union Communiste Internationaliste (UCI), was also revealed by this strike. The UCI was the ideological ancestor

of the Trotskyist group now known as Lutte Ouvriere. The role of that group in the 1947 strike deserves passing mention, if only because events are now sufficiently shrouded in the mists of the mythology of the non-CP French left for LO to argue, rightly as it happens, that the conduct of the UCI group provides a paradigm of how they see their own contemporary organizing efforts developing.

It provides more than that. It also shows what will happen again if LO continues to follow the same path. The UCI group was established by a Romanian known as Barta, the result of a split in the French Trotskyist movement over the war question. Barta's letter to Trotsky requesting that his group be acknowledged as the French section of the Fourth International went unanswered because of the intervention of Stalin's hatchet man. (A close examination of the Harvard papers may yet reveal otherwise!!)

The group stagnated through the war trying to organize French workers and German soldiers on the basis of their common class interest. Their efforts were often balked by the intervention of the "national" PCF, which actually betrayed the most famous common cause resistance movement, a Breton network, to the Gestapo. After the war Barta's followers took a turn towards the French working class. Their numerical and ideological weakness dictated the course they would follow. Rather than develop a cadre group of organizers for the period ahead, they went off to "colonize" the Renault factory, which has been a symbol of working-class strength and discipline for the gullible petit-bourgeoisie ever since the occupations which preceded the Popular Front.

Once there, the combination of their "pure and simple" unionist organizing tactics and CGT complicity in the austerity politics being implemented by the pusillanimous PCF, enabled them to win numbers of workers away from the hegemony of the CGT. Consequently, they were able to play a significant role during the course of the strike. Elected committees were established to ensure that the workers ran their own strike. The final settlement completely discredited the CGT in the eyes of many workers. Yet at this point the UCI had nothing to say. While workers wanted to split from the CGT to form their own organization, UCI militants faithful to their own narrow vision, but unable to cope with the lawful consequences of their own parochialized organizing practice, recommended that their sympathizers go back to the CGT to carry on the fight for a democratic union. This was too much. The workers formed their own union, the Syndicat Democratique Renault, and their movement died a natural death. It was followed into the grave in the early 1950's by the tailists in the UCI.

Yet as that strike demonstrated, the potential existed in France in 1947 to win large numbers of

workers away from their allegiance to the discredited PCF. The danger is that now LO will use this example from the past as continued justification of its pitiful base-building tactics. In recent years the same routine has been performed at the central office of the Agence Havas. Dedicated rank and filers who discredited the CGT were expelled, but then, lacking any alternative, collapsed back into it again. The same process has been witnessed in other work places, as LO militants heavily disguised as honest unionists traipse from federation to federation with their coterie of disgruntled unionists in tow. It's a shame that Lenin's prescription in *Left-Wing Communism* that revolutionaries should work in trade unions, merely intimated what they should do therein. If he had been more explicit, perhaps LO comrades would not have to re-tread the path of their ideological forebears to discover that a socialist movement is not built on the parochialized forms of self-organization which dominate in bourgeois society. The task of the revolutionary is to unite the disparate sections of the working class around a program which expresses their common class interest, and seeks through its propaganda work to build the political class-for-itself.

DEGAULLE BOWS OUT...

While the UCI was organizing its pure and simple alternative, oblivious to the world beyond the gates of the Renault plant, DeGaulle was building an open fascist movement throughout France.

France's "liberator" did not drop out of politics after his resignation. He set to work to build the kind of movement which could realize his corporatist aims. His platform was simple: He was opposed to the internecine strife of party warfare, and wanted to create the kind of government which would rebuild France's greatness. To this end his *Rassemblement du Peuple Francais* (RPF) consistently attacked the parties represented in the Chamber of Deputies. The RPF embodied higher, non-sectarian interests. The masses and their leadership, the PCF, were also violently attacked. Their pursuit of sectional interest jeopardized the nation's survival potential.

The U.S.'s refusal to include France in the Marshall Plan until the PCF was removed from government gave the RPF the momentum it needed to get its organizing efforts off the ground. France was in the throes of economic and social breakdown. The vital imports from the U.S., on which the country depended, could not be obtained; credit could not be obtained. The speculative black market was out of control. All the parliamentary parties had proved their impotence many times over since the liberation. The PCF's complicity in the defeat of the Renault workers left the class robbed of any kind of leadership.

U.S. blackmail over the PCF had prized the door

open for the alternative DeGaulle had been preparing on the right. Throughout 1947 the ugly specter of fascism cast its deadly shadow over French political life. DeGaulle organized his own version of the "Hitler over Germany" campaign. He proceeded from rally to rally, decrying the impotence of the parties, the impertinence of the masses, before large ecstatic crowds. His government alternative would represent a higher authority than the sectional interest of the parties. His program would ensure that workers would once again "participate" in the establishment of a new regime.

He used more than just the rhetoric of fascism. His rallies assumed all the trappings of Hitler's pre-war festivities. The Cross of Lorraine loomed large over the torchlight processions of the uniformed followers of "Le Guide" — DeGaulle was actually known in the RPF at this point by the French synonym for Fuehrer. His squads of armed bodyguards ensured that no oppositionist was able to "disrupt" his meetings, and, of course, ensured that RPF arguments were aired at other meetings. His tactics of intimidation reached such a pitch that the government withdrew his army bodyguard, and cut down on the petrol subsidy he received from the state.

In the municipal elections at the end of 1947 his movement received 40 per cent of the vote. Then as if by magic the RPF evaporated. The reasons for its disappearance were as lawful as the social processes which had created the preconditions for its meteoric rise. The U.S. had finally begun the shipments of Marshall Aid. Loans, aid, and the importation of essential manufactured goods enabled the crisis of 1947 to be overcome. Recourse to the fascist alternative was no longer necessary.

DeGaulle began to drop out of politics as the RPF disappeared. Certainly, some Deputies in the Chamber maintained their open connection with the General throughout the Fourth Republic. Deprived of the crisis conditions in which it had flourished, the movement became a parliamentary party like any other. Its anti-communism, anti-trade unionism were now ill-afforded luxuries. Voting returns went down proportionately from 20 per cent in the 1951 general elections to 10 per cent in the 1953 municipal poll. In 1953 he disassociated himself from the remaining Gaullist deputies. The movement would live on outside the arena of party conflict he maintained. Then in July 1955 he bowed out of public life to the seclusion of his retreat at Colombey-les-deux-Eglises where he began to write his war memoirs.

THE "STRONG MAN" IN THE HISTORICAL PROCESS

Thus the early part of DeGaulle's career reveals the first germs of the seeds which will develop into Europe's Bonapartist future. The General's strength was derived, not as if by magic from any personal

charisma he may have had, but from his estimation of the international correlation of class forces.

Even in this early period, before the post-war dollar looting of Europe was underway, DeGaulle succeeded because of his willingness to act on the assumption that the key to France's internal political life was not to be found within that country's frontiers, but in Washington and Moscow. His personal rule from August 1944 to January 1946 would have been unthinkable if Moscow had not deemed him capable of acting in the only way which could have eased the process by which French productive capacity was brought under the hegemony of the dollar. His "nationalism" was predicated on the international guarantees which ensured the continued existence of a petit-bourgeoisie in France. Significantly, the RPF mobilization on the basis of an anti-communist, anti-American platform only confirms the premise. The injection of Marshall Aid ended the crisis which had driven significant layers of the population to seek a radical solution to the hopelessness of their daily lives, just as Moscow's fear prompted the PCF's abject surrender and ensured that the French working class could provide no alternative.

It is this theme which provides the conceptual framework for the understanding of DeGaulle's post-1958 career, and for political developments in Europe since the resolution of the 1968 French crisis. The later post-1958 period differs from the earlier in so far as DeGaulle's need to maintain a petit-bourgeois base resulted in the institutionalization of the international relationships on which his "personal" rule depended. Thus the crisis which began in 1958 was resolved by the formation of the EEC. European workers would from that point on pay the cost of maintaining a backward French peasantry. The 1968 crisis found its solution when those supra-national institutions developed to support French peasants assumed political responsibility for the continued existence of that social layer.

... SECOND TIME AS FARCE

DeGaulle was recalled to play an active role in the political life of France in 1958, as the inability of all political parties to end or win the Algerian war, and the army's threat to invade the metropolis, reduced the country to chaos. Yet DeGaulle did not reappear as a fascist. He reemerged as Bonaparte. The old General was brought out of retirement and invested with the presidency by doubtful means, because he was the only political figure who remained untarnished by the war, and because his military connections would enable him to "buy time" from the army to permit reorganization to proceed.

After more than fourteen years of the Gaullist regime the Bonapartist republic survives. But, for

both Marx and Trotsky, the Bonapartist republic was a transitional regime. Its emergence in periods of crisis meant that the transitional period would be brief. Either working-class organizations would be crushed, or the bourgeois state would be smashed. Despite the proliferation of various police department special sections, working-class organizations have not been crushed. As for the alternative case...

DeGaulle's regime, however, has been transitional. Despite the formal continuity of the institutions he established in 1958, the content of those institutions has changed. Then as now the constitution of the Fifth Republic ensured that no government was dependent on a parliamentary majority. Parliament has neither executive nor legislative powers. The President is elected by popular vote every seven years. He appoints his government, without reference to parliament, choosing Ministers from the ranks of the deputies of whichever parties he sees fit, or from outside the political sphere. Changes in the composition of the government are made at the President's discretion. The Chamber of Deputies has no say in the matter. Legislation is prepared by the government, then submitted to the Chamber for ratification. There is no machinery to prevent the implementation of projected laws. DeGaulle constructed the kind of regime which made certain that he would not have to resign again because the Chamber refused to accept his government's proposals.

That much has remained constant over fourteen years. Yet within that framework the "strong man's" capacity for independent political action has disappeared. That this should be the case is in no way connected with the activities of the main self-styled opposition party, the PCF. It took four years to develop and consolidate the solutions to political crisis which brought DeGaulle to power. During that period France was wracked by the terrorist's machine gun and bomb, and by the threat of a mass working-class movement. For our purposes the latter is of more interest.

The very day the Socialist Party was negotiating the terms on which DeGaulle's takeover would be acceptable — to the General — members of both Socialist and Communist parties led a demonstration of 300,000 workers to protest against the transfer of power. In February 1962, shortly before the conclusion of the Evian agreements which brought the Algerian war to a close, over a million workers took to the streets to protest police killings of Algerians during the course of a previous mass demonstration.

The usual symptoms of working-class political activity, some form of strike, were absent from this period. As a consequence French leftists have focussed their attention on the immediate Algerian situation. In Whither France? Trotsky pointed out for the sake of empiricists that at certain stages in the development of

class struggles, the working class is poised on the edge of heroic exploits, without showing its enthusiasm for action by striking. He argued that such situations are usually the product of political crises. It is the problem of power which provides the focus of mass attention. Other struggles in this situation pale into insignificance, while the quiescence of the economic struggle indicates a gathering of strength for the emergence of the struggle in new forms. His analysis was vindicated months later by the Popular Front upsurge. The situation between 1958 and 1962 was, to all intents and purposes, similar. Those two demonstrations at the beginning and end of the period only indicate what could have been achieved if the PCF had been able to transcend its (by that point) congenital cretinism.

This alone makes a mockery of the PCF's pretensions to have opposed DeGaulle. In that period, as the army knew only too well, there was no parliamentary solution to the problem of power. The PCF stands condemned, not because its leaders failed to muster sufficient votes in the decisive ballot, but because it failed to organize in the one arena that was appropriate. The events of May-June 1968 are too close to need precision. The PCF, surprised by the amplitude of the biggest general strike in history, at one stage actually asked for the establishment of a people's government, then settled for a wage-rise and the promise that the length of the working week would once again be reduced to 40 hours. At that point the Party could only look with nostalgia at its 1936 "success." It was too mentally decrepit to even attempt a repetition. Similar double-talk about the consistency of its opposition role was used to justify the contortions of that period.

THE POLITICS OF THE EEC

The PCF, then, does not provide an explanation for the changing content of Gaullist institutional forms. The decisive factor is always overlooked. Political developments in France have been the concomitant of the development of the European Economic Community. In the same way that the life span of the RPF movement was lawfully circumscribed by the non-availability of Marshall Plan aid, so the different phases of French development since 1958 have been bounded by corresponding developments in Europe's supra-national institutional structure.

The motor of these changes is located in the need to continue primitive accumulation of real wealth, while attempting to preserve the paper values of property titles. As in the 1940-47 period, the key to DeGaulle's success was his ability to secure the international guarantees which would, in this case, enable the social cost of maintaining low levels of French agricultural productivity to be shifted onto the backs of European workers. That he was able to achieve this does not testify to his own special level of competence. Rather,

it signifies that the problem of French agriculture is one which affects the vital interests of the capitalist class as a whole. If France had been allowed to collapse in either 1958 or 1968, the whole capitalist system would have been plunged into the throes of crisis.

DeGaulle's seeming strength, then, was precisely his weakness. This is demonstrated by the negotiations which have preceded the implementation of the first two phases of the Common Market's agricultural policies. The first phase could not succeed without the elaboration of a pricing system appropriate to the development of "single markets" for all community agricultural products. But the size of the EEC's agricultural population was so large — even though 11.5 million workers left the land between 1950 and 1968, those employed in agriculture still made up 16 per cent of the community's population — and formed such a powerful lobby in European parliaments that decisions about common prices always resulted in the consolidation of the highest price. No one government was willing to brave the political consequences of actually lowering its food prices. The threat was real enough. Brussels, the center of community decision-making, was regularly invaded by farmers who gathered from all over Europe to protest about rumored price cuts. High prices, though, were a function of low productivity. In this way the community has actually made a relative virtue out of the weakness of its agriculture. The only country which could possibly benefit from this arrangement was France. For the French not only produced Europe's largest surpluses; they did so at costs which were lower than the price levels fixed by the community.

This system's success was predicated on the assumption that German concessions to French agriculture would be matched by French concessions to German industry. But while France was able to increase its exports of foodstuffs to Germany from \$170 million in 1960 to \$500 million in 1966, Germany was unable to establish a comparable industrial advantage. This was the price exacted for the relative stability France was to enjoy between 1962 and 1968. The German industrial heart of Europe became subordinated to the maintenance of backward French agriculture!

The problem was that the appetite of this beast increased exponentially. High price supports only encouraged the subsidized production of gigantic surpluses which could not be disposed of in Europe without toppling the system which had been created to prevent just such a collapse. Surpluses of butter and sugar accumulated. The cost, paid out of the Farm Fund, rose from \$1,800 million in 1967-68 to \$2,400 million in 1968-69, and to \$3,000 million in 1969-70. But subsidies were allocated by product and not to the individual farmer, and only benefitted the farmer with more than 250 acres. The result not surprisingly was

that migration from the land continued at its previous high levels, gains in productivity being swallowed up to maintain the paper values dependent on agricultural production.

The monetary and gold crises of 1968 precipitated the temporary resolution of the problem. Germany refused to accept the burden of importing undervalued French goods with overvalued Deutschmarks. A tariff of 8.5 per cent was levied on agricultural imports into the country. This struck a blow at the very basis of the community's existence. Established to prevent its individual members foundering on their own, the particular interests of members could no longer be allowed to dominate.

As International Monetary Fund and U.S. loans flooded into France to compensate for the flight of capital from that country, Dutch farmer and "socialist" Sicco Mansholt framed the outlines of the blueprint to "prop up" the Market again. The settlement took the form of the Common Agricultural Policy. Income from agricultural import levies, and a percentage of the revenues collected by member countries through the VAT, would replace the contributions paid into agricultural funds by individual countries. The machinery was established by which Common Market agricultural subsidies, which in 1968 accounted for 95 per cent of the community's budget, became entirely self-financing. The stated aim of this move was to create an independent source of funding so that the mountains of agricultural surplus could be run down.

The reality is different. Once more the future of French agriculture was at stake. Mansholt's plan envisaged reducing the agricultural population or Europe from 10 million in 1970 to 5 million in 1980, by which time only 6 per cent of the EEC population would be working on the land compared to 15.7 per cent in 1965. The reduction of population would ensure that the looting of the land and its produce could continue. EEC control of the Farm Fund purse-strings would institutionalize the attempt to offset the ravages wrought by rising productivity on paper values. Once more French agriculture was to "benefit." This time, however, control was removed from the French government. EEC commissions now mediate the demands of capital to the French sector. Once more the prosperous layer of French farmers has been saved from disaster. This time the rescue operation removed the last vestige of the fig-leaf which cloaked the emptiness of the French government's claim to independence of action.

THE BONAPARTIST FUTURE OF EUROPE

DeGaulle's last fling, before his slide into temporary obscurity began in 1948, showed him as a fascist. He returned to French political life as a Bonaparte.

The international correlation of class forces on which his war-time movement and his RPF movement had been built, provided the premise for his "reign" from 1958 onwards. His career as the Fifth Republic's Bonaparte shows how the political problem of guaranteeing the continued existence of layers of the French farming petit-bourgeoisie dominated the development of European-side institutions. This problem, which is crucial for the survival of capitalism in Europe, could not be solved within the frontiers of France. DeGaulle, the strong man, created the conditions in which emerging strong men would be kept in position as executives for the supra-national institutions which are mediating the demands of capital to Europe's national sectors.

It is the EEC and its institutions which will increasingly reveal itself as the arbiter of property and the guardian of order. DeGaulle was indeed a transitional figure. He formed the bridge between two forms of Bonapartism. The international situation, on which his original political independence was based, subordinated him to its own interests.

The institutional form this contemporary "Bonaparte" has assumed need not confuse anybody. The European Economic Community exists to arbitrate between Europe's reproductive base and the dollar's credit institutions. But "Bonaparte's" other function, the guardian of order, is only maintained by virtue of the collective death-wish of Europe's Communist parties. Their inability to transcend the limitations of the "nationalist" world-view has left the new Bonaparte to develop in conditions of relative peace. It is the "participation" of Europe's workers, under the joint leadership of the Communist Parties, which gives the capitalist class the time to build its own transitional forms.

If the EEC's institutions are not yet implementing fascist policies, it is not because such programs do not yet exist. Mansholt's Letter, the collaboration of Peccei and Volkswagen with the development of the bestialities of ZPG, show that sections of the capitalist class know only too well where they are going.

Moreover, they are already preparing the forms of transport which will take them to their destination. It is the potential ultranationalist movements, now developing rapidly in all Western European countries, which will help Mansholt's program on its way. The significance of these movements lies not in their potential to be the first approximations of the future fascist forms. These ultranationalist movements will be used to break the European working class. But, no matter how successful they will appear to be, the future "national leaders" will have to reckon with the supra-national strategy they will be forced to implement. Already in Britain, as if in a flashback to France in the 1930's the fascist movement is divided between national-

ist and supranationalist wings. Sir Oswald Moseley's pro-Common Market Union Movement is beginning to play the role that a previous crisis allocated to the Parti Populaire Francais of Jacques Doriot.

The future is indeed bleak if the Communist policeman of Europe goes unchallenged, for no group on its left, save the ICLC, is prepared to organize around the notion of the United Socialist States of Europe. Such nationalist "base-building," best exemplified by the so-called International Socialist group of

Britain, can only feed into the nationalism of the extreme right.

But as the Communist parties have already shown, no successful movement against the contemporary "guardian of order" can be built if it is constructed by boundaries which have long outlived their historical purpose. The contemporary "Bonaparte" cannot be defeated in his own country because "he" has no country.

Studies in

Lordship and Bondage

I: Richard Wright

by Dennis Speed

"In each single man we will discover what each 'single man' is. But we are not interested in what each single man is, which, after all, signifies what each single man is at each single moment. When we consider it we find that by putting the question 'what is man' we really mean 'what can man become?,' that is, whether or not man can control his own destiny, can 'make himself,' can create a life for himself. Therefore, we say that man is a process and precisely the process of his actions. When we consider it, the question 'what is man' is not an abstract or 'objective' question. It stems from what we have thought about ourselves and others, and relative to what we have thought and seen, we seek to know what we are and what we can become, whether it is true and within what limits that we do 'make ourselves,' create our own lives and our own destinies. We want to know this 'now,' in the given conditions of the present and of our 'daily' life and not about any life and about any man."

— Antonio Gramsci, "What Is Man," from *The Modern Prince and Other Writings*

"We believe that the supreme task of art in our epoch is to take part actively and consciously in the revolution. But the artist cannot serve the struggle for freedom unless he subjectively assimilates its social content, unless he feels in his very nerves its meaning and drama and seeks to give his own inner world incarnation in his art."

— Andre Breton, Diego Rivera,
"Manifesto: Towards a Free
Revolutionary Art"

"What Hegel claimed for philosophy in the *Phenomenology of Mind* must today be claimed for art if art is to once again become capable of the most profound social transformation. For the artist to merely refer to society does not fulfill this function, or in the case with the so-called 'political artist,' who merely grafts social references on to an art of alienation and fragmentary perception of the world. The self-sufficiency of a great work of art is this: that it summons up by means of the process of self-conscious consciousness the whole of man's knowledge about the world in symbolic form. When the delicate balance that exists between consciousness and self-consciousness is disrupted, decadent elements creep in."

— Christine Berl, "Towards a
Dialectic of Art," *Campaigner*,
Winter, 1971

"If others care to assume my mental stance, and through empathy, duplicate the atmosphere in which I speak, if they can imaginatively grasp the factors in my environment and a sense of the impulses maturing me, they will, if they are of a mind, be able to see, more or less, what I've seen, will be capable of appreciating the same general aspects and tones of reality that comprise my world."

— Richard Wright, *White Man, Listen!*

PART I: ON CREATIVITY

Creativity is not a **THING IN ITSELF**; it never occurs in a vacuum, produced by society or the individual due merely to his interest in attaining new and different insights into the world. That is to say, creativity is not some subjective Muse that sits inside the dark box of the mind and, turning over in its sleep, every once in a while injects man's mind with "genius." Creativity is organically connected with the need of society to find ways and means, both on a conceptual and practical level, to finance its future existence at an **EVER-EXPANDING RATE**. That is, innovation occurs precisely because of the necessity for man to extend appropriate ideas to social practice. This increases the standard of social reproduction and his consequent mastery over nature and his existence.

"It is man's successful line of development to societies of higher actual and potential rates of social surplus (equivalent of **FREE ENERGY RATES** in physical systems) which uniquely demonstrates the reality of human knowledge." (1)

This is why absolute truth is impossible — human knowledge isolated at **ANY** given point in time is **FALSE** relative to the development of knowledge as a whole, and at most can be considered **POSITIVELY-FALSE** ideology. Any attempt to isolate a given set of conceptual standards of creativity and to reify them acts to remove them from the process whereby they were given birth, acts to immediately **FALSIFY** them. It is just as if we at any point rigidified a certain type of reproductive process; society would be exterminated.

It is, in fact, the mentative process which occurs **IN BETWEEN** our direct "objective" experience and our conceptualization of (giving meaning to) that experience, which, properly speaking, is the source of creativity. The paradox is that the source of creativity lies outside the concepts of creativity we arrive at. They, at most representations, **PARTICULARIZATIONS**, of the process, can never contain it wholly within themselves.

THE PROBLEM OF ARTISTIC CREATIVITY IN GENERAL

If we approach artistic creativity from this perspective, certain guidelines emerge. Great art not only depicts the character, structure, and merit/non-merit of the society which surrounds it (man's relationship to nature and his relationship to other men as well); it must contain within it the embryo of an advanced world-view, potential passages to new realms of knowledge, which, if actualized, would result in an increased scale of socially positive productivity. This means that the artist, like any other relevant unit of production, must be gifted with the sense of "prophecy"; he must be able, through an understanding of the pro-

cess by which he creates, to indicate contours of and guidelines for the future development of his art and likewise for human knowledge in general. It is only in this way, in fact, that the contemporary representations of reality the artist ventures to make can contain truth.

Beethoven, for example, was gifted with such a talent. Given the revolutionary historical period in which he lived and composed, i.e., the era of the French Revolution, the same period in which other such figures as Goethe, Kant, and Hegel thrived, Beethoven's genius was such that he was able to compress in an amazingly short period of time all previous developments in European music into his own work.

Beethoven's compositions did not revolutionize Western music because they were entitled "The French Revolution" or "Kick the Aristocracy's Ass" (although certain rock "artists" because they entitle their pieces "Revolution" or "Free" would like us to believe that this is the case). Their value lay in the fact that Beethoven constantly posed to himself the problem of musical creativity in such a way that he literally **FORCED HIMSELF** to create, **TO WRITE IMPROVISATION INTO THE PIECE ITSELF**. He thus not only reflected on the trials of musical development, or his own difficulties as a composer, but he solved the problems of ideational progress in music, the most abstract of arts, in a way that extended itself beyond the confines of the particular historical period by exploring almost all significant avenues of its genre of composition. The vibrancy and brilliance of the late 18th and early 19th centuries is reflected in Beethoven's Promethean consumption of its actual accomplishments and potential promise for the future and his **EXPANDED** reproduction of advanced musical conception on a scale never seen or equaled in the West.

However, although this may serve to provide a starting point for literary criticism by providing some criteria for judgment, we are in this paper dealing with a specific form of literature — Black literature, a literature that has as its source of inspiration murder, suffering, death, fear, and a timeless resistance to human defeat. Black literature is the product of a specific social milieu — white American capitalist society — and the milieu cannot possibly be ignored when talking about Black literature, especially the works of Richard Wright. Wright's work has its reason for being largely because of the intensity with which he experienced these two phenomena — capitalism and racism.

All of his writing can be seen as an attempt to derive from the most dehumanized social conditions and social relations a content, or a least a shape, a mold, for human identity, for a definition of self that extended far beyond the powers of America to

negate or dismiss. Any discussion of his works is implicitly a discussion of the two "vast looming forces" of racism and capitalism.

PART II: MASTER/SLAVE/MASTER/SLAVE...

Robert Dillon, in an article entitled "Ecology Crisis; Who's Polluting Whom?" writes:

Men intervene in nature through their social organization or society. As they produce the means of their existence, their consumption in turn increases their productive powers. Increases in men's productive powers are expressed as improvements in technique and increases in the social division of labor.... Human consciousness is a reflection of the material conditions of man's existence and as such must be produced, reproduced, and modified. (2)

True, but the question to be asked is: Exactly who is doing this? Who is intervening in nature through labor to produce human society? Are they the same people who "reflect on" (explain, document) the development of society as a whole? If they are not, does this mean that the people who perpetrate the widespread assumptions concerning human history, and therefore human IDENTITY, have no real contribution to make to the continued REAL existence of society, as opposed to its FICTIONAL (bourgeois-historical) existence? Do they have any material basis for their conception of themselves except that which those directly involved in production provide for them?

Anyone vaguely familiar with the history of Western Civilization understands that there has been a dichotomy between the production of commodities in the labor process and the consumption of these commodities. This means that an exploitative relationship defines the lives of all of us, those who exploit, and those exploited. No benevolence or good intentions on the part of anyone can alter this basic reality. This relationship is that between master and slave — and it is a very deep one.

Karl Marx on "Alienated Labor":

The worker is related to the PRODUCT OF HIS LABOR as to an ALIEN object. For it is clear according to this premise: the more the worker exerts himself, the more powerful becomes the alien objective world which he fashions against himself, the poorer he and his inner world become, the less there is that belongs to him. The life he has given to the object becomes hostile and alien. (3)

Hegel, "The Relation of Master and Slave," in the Phenomenology:

...the one who serves is devoid of selfhood and

has another self in place of his own, so that for his master he has resigned and cancelled his own Ego and now views his essential self in another. The master, on the contrary, looks upon the servant (the other Ego) as cancelled and his own individual will as preserved. (4)

Fanon, "Concerning Violence," from Wretched of the Earth:

...the settler MAKES HISTORY AND IS CONSCIOUS OF MAKING IT. And because he constantly refers to the history of his mother country, he clearly indicates that he is himself the extension of his mother country. THEN THE HISTORY WHICH HE WRITES IS NOT THE HISTORY OF THE COUNTRY WHICH HE PLUNDERS, but the history of his own nation in regard to all she skims off, all that she violates and starves:... The coiled plundered creature which is the native provides fodder for the process as best he can, the process which moves uninterruptedly from the banks of the colonial territory to the palaces and docks of the mother country. (5)

In fact, the capitalist, or master, or settler, makes the history of the slave, who is unconscious of the fact that he is day by day SOLVING THE PROBLEM OF HUMAN HISTORY FOR THE MASTER — the continued production of the means of the master's existence. The slave produces the master, and this product of his labor, as Marx correctly noted, confronts him as an alien OBJECT (and can be identified as the forces of NATURE ITSELF). The slave is unconscious, then, that: 1) His material production of commodities is at the basis of the production of human history; 2) He must be conscious of the meaning of the labor process and his determinate contribution to it in order to no longer be a slave.

It is NOT true that the slave is unconscious of the FACT that he produces the master. The slave, in this instance, qualifies as an extremely conscious person — he finds aspects of his culture appropriated by the master and turned inside out to fit his advanced "spiritual needs" (music — white rock; painting and sculpture — Picasso, Duchamp, Cubism). His women are raped by the master as a matter of course; for the slave, the saying "your children are not your children" is too true. On these levels the slave is extremely conscious of his "value" to the master. Why is the slave the slave? — Because he is DEFINED BY THE MASTER and because he FEARS DEATH.

1. BECAUSE HE IS DEFINED BY THE MASTER: The slave does not know what social reproduction means. His world gives him no claim to interests in thought. He thinks that the conceptual process is reserved for the master only, to speak generally, and for whites only, to speak specifically.

Because of this, he cannot reveal to himself, cannot grasp as a conceptual principle, that reality exists for him beyond the confines of the master's claim to definition (or knowledge). The master will never voluntarily reveal this conceptual principle to him under any circumstances whatsoever. Whether the slave discovers this principle for himself or stumbles upon it makes no difference, if he still occupies his position of powerlessness vis-a-vis the master; execution will be swift and certain if he is discovered.

2. BECAUSE HE FEARS DEATH: The slave prefers life to freedom — "America is my home." He fails to recognize that for the master he does not exist, he is an invisible man. As pointed out in the quotation from Hegel earlier, "the master looks upon the servant as cancelled and his own individual will (appropriately termed by Nietzsche the WILL TO POWER) preserved." To protect himself from the realization that he is a coward, the slave identifies the power to give death as exemplified in the master with the correct use of power, just as he identifies the power of the master to define with correct definition. He may do this consciously or unconsciously depending on the strength of his allegiance to his present condition. In this way, 1) he absolves himself from guilt or cowardice and ignorance, 2) he deifies the master, who has always identified himself as the terminal of world history. This explains the desire of the slave to be the master.

Fanon says in *Black Skins, White Masks*: "The black man wants to be white. The white man desires to reach a human level." (6) I paraphrase this and say, "The black man wants to be white. The white man wants to be God. Both fear to be human. For the one it would mean 1) the negation of his identity as a slave and 2) the seizure of power — state power, and 3) the embrace of the consequent responsibility of rehumanizing himself, a process he wants to accomplish, but does not believe himself capable of achieving. For the other, it would mean 1) the negation of his identity as the master, 2) his expulsion as a self-reflexive unit from the graces of state power, and 3) the embrace of the consequent responsibility to rehumanize himself, a process he believes himself capable of, but does not want to achieve."

When talking about smashing the master-slave dynamic in terms of the necessary removal of whites from power by blacks, the additional constituent of racism behooves us to constantly check and recheck ourselves and the solutions we pose to the question of power for black people. We must be doubly sure of the thoroughness of our understanding of the problem of human identity in general, the problem of slave mentality in particular, the notion of positive self-

conception on the part of the slave as prerequisite to the world-meaningful act of seizure of state power IN ESSENCE. To be specific, it is impossible for any black writer to at this point present an authentic document concerning black people without including violence and death as important themes in his work, to not deal with ENSLAVEMENT as a dominant theme. But the mere presentation of the problem, even though it contains a correct view of the aforementioned problems of consciousness, is of no consequence unless the competence exhibited by the writer for an advanced conception of the obstacles to the continuance of life in this society realizes itself in the proposal of practical alternatives for the future, as stated earlier.

The line between "literary figure" and political activist has rarely affirmed itself as a prominent personality principle for black writers (Douglass, Baraka, Fanon, Nkrumah, DuBois). Richard Wright, however, is somewhat of a different figure than most because he was a writer of fiction, a novelist. How was he, given prevailing standards of artistic creativity, to invent meaningful political personages that could double as paradigms for sophisticated fictional artistry? What about his insights into the problem of human self-knowing in art has enduring relevance for the general POLITICAL problem of revolutionary social change?

At this point, with a general knowledge of the parameters of the discussion in their most immediate, crucial aspects, we can proceed to the examination of Richard Wright, the particular under consideration, on an "internal" basis, that is, through an analysis of his works "Big Boy Leaves Home" and "Bright and Morning Star" from *Uncle Tom's Children*, the novel *Native Son*, and the novel *The Outsider*.

PART III: THE BLACKSMITH OF MY OWN FATE — UNCLE TOM'S CHILDREN

Uncle Tom's Children contains in embryo all the themes Richard Wright was to expand on in different ways in the later works. Composed of five novellas dating from 1936 ("Big Boy Leaves Home") to 1940 ("Fire and Cloud"), the work, taken as a whole, reveals an increasing complexification of theme, style, and content, and a promise of great artistry which was to reach its apex in *Native Son*. In fact, *Uncle Tom's Children* may be the most "literary" of Wright's works in that the narrative form Wright was wont to use in all of his writing was less in evidence in this work than in any other. The characters are allowed to speak/mean for themselves more; through the sequences of events they experience and THEIR PARTICIPATION IN EVENTS NOT AS MERE IDEAS BUT AS IMAGES AND METAPHORS, we are given more avenues of responsibility as readers. We are given a basis for not only empathizing with the protagonists (something which tends to be adversely affected by

use of the narrative form); to the extent that an accurate rendition of the possibilities for action and reaction the characters are faced with in plausible situations is given, we can assume a critical posture toward 1) the characters' attempts to resolve their situation, 2) the nature, structure, and function of social relations in capitalist-racist society, 3) the talents of the artist in solving the problems he depicts, and 4) how ideas flow through art and their role in sharpening our ability to decide what positive social practice is and how to implement it.

A juxtaposition of the stories "Big Boy Leaves Home" and "Bright and Morning Star," the first and last of the volume, will serve to give a gauge of how Richard Wright was developing as an artist.

"Big Boy Leaves Home" begins with four young black boys, Buck, Bobo, Lester, and Big Boy, walking through the Mississippi woods, singing, being in sunlight and youth, chiding one another. In the course of their amusements, they decide to go swimming in Ol' Man Harvey's creek. Ol' Man Harvey hates niggers. If he catches a nigger in his creek, he will kill him. Big Boy, who at first has reservations about trespassing, finally agrees with the others to take a chance and they go swimming. Resting naked on a bank, they are confronted by a white woman named Bertha, the fiancée of Harvey's son, a soldier on leave. In an attempt to get their clothes on and run, Lester and Buck are shot and killed by Harvey's son. The soldier is forced to battle with Bobo and Big Boy, however, and Big Boy wrestles the gun away from the soldier and kills him.

After running home, Big Boy implores his parents for help. His father calls on a group of the black community's elders. They confer, and one of them mentions that his son is leaving early the next morning for Chicago and is driving a truck. The ride North is recognized as Big Boy's only real chance to escape. He leaves the house and hides next to the road where he is to be picked up, taking refuge in one of many kilns he and his friends have dug along the road. As night falls, a mob convenes by his hiding place and discovers Bobo on his way to meet Big Boy. Bobo is tarred, feathered, and set afire. Big Boy watches. He escapes detection and is taken to Chicago in the morning.

A number of themes which permeate Wright's work are found here, although they are differently treated in later works. The insurmountable force, the looming white mountain, the White World, subtly colors the characters' relationships to one another, more subtly than usual in Wright's work. This is because Lester, Buck, Bobo, and Big Boy are to a degree innocent of, unaware of, the magnitude of punishment the insane white South is apt to inflict on black people for the slightest affront to its dictates, its

definition of black people. Wright manages to convey this feeling of innocence by beginning the story in the woods, with the boys singing and telling jokes. We, however, immediately know it is a story about black people in the South because of the dialect used and the references to the train going North. (7) The white wall is as of yet undefined, but comes more sharply into relief when the swim in Harvey's creek is suggested. Big Boy is the only one who expresses an understanding of the nature of the thing being proposed:

"Naw, buddy boy," said Big Boy, slapping the air with a scornful palm.

"Aa, c'mon, don't be a heel."

"'N get lynched? Hell, naw." (8)

He is also the only one who escapes. It is as if Wright wants to indicate that because Big Boy makes a conscious decision to trespass on Harvey's property, to go beyond the laws or categories of power of the master, that he is made to escape. This same decision-making capacity crops up again when the boys face the white world in the form of Harvey's son, a SOLDIER (professional executioner). Lester and Buck are cut down without any chance to resist, and Bobo's life is only saved by Big Boy's decision to kill the soldier, to "murder" the murderer:

"Boy, I SAY GIVE ME THAT GUN!"

Bobo had the clothes in his arms.

"Run, Big Boy, run!"

The man came at Big Boy.

"Ah'll kill yuh; Ah'll kill yuh!" said Big Boy. (9) (my emphasis)

In "Big Boy Leaves Home," "Down by the Riverside," Native Son, and The Outsider, all the protagonists are forced to kill for reasons beyond their immediate control (in The Outsider, Cross Damon is given a much-desired opportunity to "kill himself" via the subway ACCIDENT). And in all cases but one, they are forced to in one way or another to commit themselves to murder again, to sustain the precarious level of freedom they have attained, of life they have acquired:

"Big Boy...":

"Yeah, if Pa had only let him have the shotgun! He could stan off a whole mob wid a shotgun. He looked at the ground as he turned the shotgun over in his hands. Then he leveled it at an advancing white man....'N the newspapers'd say: NIGGER KILLS DOZEN BEFO LYNCHED! Er maybe they'd say: TRAPPED NIGGER SLAYS TWENTY BEFO KILLED! He smiled a little. That wouldn't be so bad, would it?"

"Bigger":

His crime was an anchor weighing him safely in time; it added to him a certain confidence which

his gun and knife did not. He was outside of his family now, over and beyond them; they were incapable of even thinking that he had done such a deed. And he had done something WHICH EVEN HE HAD NOT THOUGHT POSSIBLE.... His crime seemed NATURAL. (my emphasis) (11)

"Cross Damon":

"Now I'd like to see them figure that out," he told himself with a grim smile. "I killed two little gods"...the universe seemed to be rushing in at him with all its totality. He was anchored once again in life, in the flow of things; the world glowed with an intensity so sharp it had made his whole body ache. He had no plan when he had dealt those blows of death.... He knew exactly what he had done; he had done it deliberately, even though he had not planned it. His mind hadn't been blank when he had done it, and he resolved he would never claim it had been. (12)

But this is to somewhat anticipate. Suffice it to say that all three conceive of their crimes as true barometers and apportioners of freedom from death (Mann in "Down by the Riverside" wants to kill the wife and two children of the man he has murdered earlier in the evening, but he hesitates. As a result, he is identified by the son of the man and executed, AFTER HAVING SAVED THE BOY'S LIFE. Moral — "Ask no quarter of fate and give none." — George Jackson).

Acts of violence toward oppression, whether it be the overt oppression of life in the South or the more amorphous, cryptic oppression of urban life, provide for Wright's characters REPRIEVES FROM CRIME in that they become "rebels against the limits of life, against the limits of experience as they know it." (13) The acts of violence in Wright's works help us to understand the nature and use of morality in capitalist-racist society as a tool for the production, distribution, and exchange of anesthesia and ignorance of human values; they also inform us of the price of the discovery (IN THE LITERAL SENSE) of humanity, or the embryo of humanity, when the rules of conduct enforced by the society are the exact uncompromising opposite of all principled human activity, all elevated feeling.

Wright's characters are not mere killers; they are iconoclasts in a vacuum, forced to use tools of death to "escape" death. They are without the type of social forces which could support and refine their underdeveloped vision of freedom. For them, there are only fleeting snapshots of themselves, that act as moments of focus only in so far as limited naked experience brings understanding. Although they feel their difference from the oppressor and the OPPRESSED in general, they do not understand why they are different (the same dilemma faced by Winston Smith in 1984 — "I understand HOW; I do not understand WHY."). Big-

ger only knows that somehow he feels no remorse over Mary's death; Cross Damon, dying, says that somehow he always felt that he was innocent. (15) Isolated from the known limits of reality as experience, blessed with double vision, yet bereft of knowledge of how to concretize the vision, to replicate it in others' eyes — given sight, yet deprived of movement of hands and feet — how could they live? How can they blast into the "looming white mountain" to sculpt the image of a free black face?

By "Bright and Morning Star" Wright has wholeheartedly embraced Communism as the only solution possible to the black man's problem and to the problem of man in general. Sue, the strong black woman who has raised two sons dedicated to the movement, is a woman possessed of double vision — the vision of her childhood and youth, religion, and the "new and terrible vision" her sons represent. There are no illusions in her mind about holding a black vision of Communism in the South; one of her sons, Sug, is already in jail: "Her fear was a quiet one; it was more like an intense brooding than a fear; it was a sort of hugging of hated facts so closely that she could feel their grain." (16)

When members of a mob of anti-Communist crackers come looking for her other son, Johnny Boy, she defies them with the courage of the prisoner who recognizes she has nothing to lose. She is beaten senseless. Awakening, she sees Booker, a new recruit to the Party, whom she suspects is an informer. HE informs her that her son has been captured on his way to inform secret members of the Party of a meeting. Booker asks her for the names of these Party people so he can deliver the message. In a moment of weakness, she gives them to him. He runs to tell the mob. She finds out he is an informer immediately afterwards, and tries to think of a plan to save Johnny Boy and the others by stopping Booker.

Wright's use of imagery here is somewhat more complex than in "Big Boy Leaves Home." He juxtaposes the imagery of religion and the "spiritual world" with characters that move through a real world of constant violence. This conflict is represented in natural metaphors. "Momentarily she could see a bright shaft of yellow light cutting through the rainy dark; it would hover a second LIKE A GLEAMING SWORD above her head, then vanish." (18) In the moment of her confrontation with the sheriff's mob, we have another two examples:

"White man, don't yuh ANTY me!"
 "Yuh ain't got the right sperit!"
 "Sperit hell! Yuh git outa mah house!" (19)

And then it was, while standing there FEELING WARM BLOOD SEEPING DOWN HER THROAT, that she GAVE UP Johnny-Boy, gave him up to the white folks. (my emphasis) (20)

Referring to Booker, the informer, she says, "He just couldn't be a Judas to folks like us, he jus' couldn't." (21) Through the story, Wright presents a paradox: how can the positive aspects of the visions of two different worlds be molded into one transcendent Weltanschauung? How can the promise of man's future existence as a free being be unified with the concept of struggle and transferred from the "spiritual" to the concrete? How can the Word be given flesh? "She stood up and looked at the floor while call and counter-call, loyalty and counter-loyalty struggled in her soul." (22)

Aunt Sue feels the need to reconcile her two visions into a common standard whereby she can judge her whole life and capture its total significance in one instant — "one more terrible vision to give her the strength to live and act." (23) She resolves her conflict by going to get her son, who has been caught and is being tortured to death, in a winding-sheet, to cover his body as Christ's mother and his disciples covered His body after the Crucifixion. (24) In the sheet she has hidden a gun with which to kill Booker. She succeeds.

Wright's way of solving the paradox brings home a profound insight. The core of truth religion contains AS AN IDEOLOGY is that the validity of Aunt Sue's existence lies outside of her mere biological presence and within something GREATER THAN HERSELF AS SO CONCEIVED. Her reason for living lies within the positive contribution she can make IN ACTUAL STRUGGLE to the lives of the unexposed Communists, who represent the only real potential for the development of humankind AS A WHOLE. In struggle, she gives meaning to her whole history — "the long years of her life bent towards a moment of focus, a point." (25) The sophisticated content of this story and its presentation show a marked development over "Big Boy Leaves Home." The struggle for self-knowledge is much more explicitly conceived of as a SOCIAL, rather than INDIVIDUAL, problem.

WRIGHT AND THE COMMUNIST PARTY

Communism (or what was being paraded as Communism in the 20's and 30's) formed a large part of Wright's concern. "Big Boy Leaves Home," for example, was inspired by some notes Wright had made in interviews with David Poindexter, a member of the Chicago branch of the Party, and his friends. (26) The whole of Uncle Tom's Children was written when Wright himself was a prominent member of the Party, which had attracted other black intellectuals of the period such as Langston Hughes, DuBois, and (by way of Richard Wright) Ralph Ellison. Wright, however, even despite his importance to the Party, never was comfortable in it. Rampant Stalinism and anti-intellectualism pervaded the Communist Party in that period (much as today). Wright felt that he was treated with distrust and condescension because he was a "writer"

and not an "organizer," an intellectual who read decadent bourgeois novels instead of a demagogue without interest even in studying Marx and Marxism (most of the members of the Communist Party were/are theoretically illiterate).

Wright joined the John Reed Club in 1932 and the same year was appointed executive secretary. The Club was an organization of radical writers affiliated with but not directly a branch of the Communist Party. When Wright entered the Club, a factional war was being waged between members of the Communist Party and "individuals," or non-members. His selection to the executive secretariat was an attempt by non-Party members to insure their autonomy of the Communist Party by electing a black non-Communist to head the organization. However, Wright joined the Party soon after his election to office.

A motion was eventually made to dissolve the John Reed Clubs in 1935 in favor of collapsing the most "revolutionary elements" of the order into the Communist Party. Much of the membership, still non-Communist, was ousted:

I asked what was to become of the young writers whom the Communist Party had implored to join the clubs and who were ineligible for the new group, but there was no answer. This thing was cold!, I exclaimed to myself. To effect a swift change in policy, the Communist Party was dumping one organization, scattering its members, then organizing a new scheme with entirely new people!! (27)

The same type of naked opportunism the Communist Party displays today (e.g., in the unprincipled gate-receipt recruiting of black people and others as a result of the Angela Davis case) existed during the 30's as well, and helped to stifle many creative talents. Wright, however, was not willing to be subjugated so easily to Party policy. At the American Writers' Congress, sponsored by the Party in April of 1935, the motion to dissolve the Clubs was presented and Wright was the only one to have enough courage to defend their existence, although many agreed with his position. Greeted with applause at the end of his speech, when the time came to vote on the measure, he was the only one to stand on record for preservation of the Clubs. (28)

This defense was a reflection of Wright's belief that art, in its ability to expose and give shape to inevident aspects of human character, could provide insight into the method whereby human character could be revolutionized. (29) Despite the ignorance and cretinism which surrounded him, Wright had the courage to continue to hold this belief regardless of social pressure. To make an apparently paradoxical analogy, Wright posed those same qualities of character — natural courage and insight — that enabled Lenin to

almost single-handedly whip the Bolsheviks into a revolutionary organization between April and October of 1917.

This is not to say that Wright was a revolutionary by any means, but he **COULD HAVE BEEN**, given the existence of a group of people of his uncompromising nature and intellectual caliber with **CONCRETE, CORRECT SOCIALIST POLITICAL PROGRAM**. Wright, much like Bigger, Big Boy, Cross Damon, and his other protagonists, was an iconoclast in a vacuum. A statement he once made on Communism, when compared with almost any "Communist" political writing of the 20's and 30's, reads like a welcome relief:

The rightness or wrongness of a given set of tactical actions of the Communist Party does not strike me as being of any great importance. What does fasten my attention upon Communist action is whether it overcomes settled and ready-made reality, whether it effectively pushes outward and **EXTENDS THE AREA OF HUMAN FEELING**, not like a book or work of art, but **REALLY**, whether it illuminates new possibilities for human life.... and creates incalculable surprises, when it disrupts the established hopes and despairs and notions of millions, when it achieves transformations in the patterns of human feeling so deep and sharp and sudden (compression of whole fields of knowledge into a "single sharp point" — D.S.) that **NO MECHANICAL INVENTIONS OR INDUSTRIAL PROCESSES WE HAVE CAN EQUAL OR SURPASS THEM**. (my emphasis, except **REALLY**)(30)

NATIVE SON: FREEDOM AND NECESSITY

Uncle Tom's Children was greeted with critical acclaim, but Wright was by no means satisfied with it. He thought that the book allowed people to be too easy on themselves; it was very easy for anyone to feel horrified at the murder of Bobo in "Big Boy Leaves Home" or to sympathize with Aunt Sue in "Bright and Morning Star." Not only did Uncle Tom's Children not demand enough from the reader; it did not expose the readers, mostly white, **AS AGENTS AND PARTICIPANTS IN THE PERSECUTION OF THE PROTAGONISTS (BLACK PEOPLE AS A WHOLE)**. As a result, the readership in general did not understand Wright's message — that the oppressed are awakening and coming to collect from the capitalist class. Uncle Tom's Children also made the process of coming to terms with existence a value too simple and straightforward, too obvious (and in that sense, **ABSTRACT**).

Native Son was a work designed especially to expose. Bigger Thomas at first appearance (and in some cases at first reading) is a monster, an uncontrollable animal unfit to live. "Why does he act in the extreme way he does, even though he **IS** oppressed?" asked the whites. "Is this supposed to be a representative portrait of black people?" asked the black "bour-

geoisie." Why are Bigger and his world so melodramatic? Native Son, if read superficially, could be categorized as a somewhat strange but entertaining mystery novel. Why is Bigger such an extreme human portrait?

Wright gives us some clues in his introduction "How Bigger Was Born":

In an effort to capture some phase of Bigger's life... I'd jot down as much of (first impressions) as I could. Then I'd read it over and over again adding each time a word, a phrase, a sentence, until I felt I **HAD CAUGHT ALL THE SHADINGS OF REALITY I THOUGHT WERE DIMLY THERE...** It was an act of concentration, of trying to **HOLD WITHIN ONE'S CENTER OF ATTENTION** all of that bewildering array of facts that science, politics, experience, memory and imagination were urging upon me. (my emphasis) (31)

Then, in explaining the jail-cell scene in the third movement entitled "Flight," Wright says:

... while writing that scene, I knew that it was unlikely that so many people (the entire cast of the novel — D.S.) would be allowed to come into a murderer's cell. But... I felt that what I wanted that scene to say to the reader **WAS MORE IMPORTANT THAN ITS SURFACE REALITY OR PLAUSIBILITY**. (my emphasis) (32)

Bigger mirrors the extremity of oppression, and the extremity of reactions to oppression, much in the same way that Fanon's colonized man does in *The Wretched of the Earth*. In fact, the overt parallels between the first section of Native Son ("Fear") and the first section of *The Wretched of the Earth* are very striking.

Native Son begins violently. An alarm awakens the family to danger, a rat stalking the one-room apartment for food (Wright doesn't **SAY** it's a rat until page three of the story). Bigger kills the rat with the help of his younger brother, Buddy. Bigger stands in awe and admiration over the body of the dead rat for a while, reflecting on its power to kill, to command attention and in a perverse way respect. Fascinated, he picks up the rat by its tail and dangles it in the face of his sister. She faints. His mother derides him for this, saying among other things, "I wonder why I ever birthed you."

Bigger is from the beginning of the novel portrayed as an alien to his family. This is because Bigger, in an amorphous, vague, yet very real sense recognizes that if he allowed himself to become filled with the consciousness of the insignificance and obscenity of his way of living, he could not continue to function as a deluded being. Bigger must keep from himself the realization that he and his "extended fam-

ily" (the oppressed) are trapped within an existence and state of mind as squalid as the dark rat-infested room he calls home.

Now listen to Fanon:

The town belonging to the colonized people... is a place of ill fame peopled by men of evil repute. They are born there, it matters not where, nor how; they die there, it matters little where, or how. It is a world without spaciousness; men live there on top of one another and their huts are built one on top of the other... the native town is a crouching village, a town on its knees, a town wallowing in the mire. (33)

Wright again brings home the bleakness of the life of the oppressed in the scene where Bigger and Gus stand on the corner, watching a plane writing in the air overhead. Bigger confides in Gus his desire to fly a plane. Gus exposes the absurdity of that wish, and after a moment of silence, the two break up into laughter — in desperation. Bigger and Gus then become involved in demonstrating to themselves and the reader the remoteness of power from their lives. In a game called "White," they systematically perform parodies on military, economic, and political power by mimicking a general, J.P. Morgan, and the President. They laugh loudly and then stop; the only strength they can find for themselves is in illusion:

They hung up imaginary receivers and leaned against the wall and laughed. A streetcar rattled by. Bigger sighed and swore.

"Goddamit!"

"What's the matter?"

"They don't let us do nothing!" (34)

Bigger realizes he is a trapped man. He is forced to step outside the universe, to exist in a vacuum. The white world, the world of the master, of power, rushes by him and sweeps him out of reality: "Cars whizzed past on rubber tires" (35) — "his eyes followed each car as it whirred across the smooth black asphalt" (36) — "a huge truck swept past" (37) — "A long sleek car shot past them at high speed." (38) The white world has used them and then conveniently placed them outside the twentieth century: "Half the time I feel like I'm on the outside of the world peeping in through a knot-hole in the fence." (39)

Fanon mentioned that the one great desire of the colonized is to set himself in the settler's place, and this occupies his dreams. (40) We can see this view reflected in the scene where Bigger and Jack go to the movies to see "The Gay Woman," a picture about rich whites, and "Trader Horn," a stereotyped portrayal of blacks in Africa. (41) Wright's double-vision idea is made very explicit in this passage, but in a somewhat different sense than in "Bright and Morning Star." Here

Bigger is given the double-vision of the Manichean world of the master and the slave. Both of the movie worlds are alien to Bigger, and once again his emotional reactions are those of awe and admiration; awe at the comfort of the master's life and the ease with which whites wield power, and a certain admiration for the "carefreeness and abandon" of Hollywood's African natives.

For Bigger, there is only as much connection between the two worlds as exists in their juxtaposition on the movie screen. He does not realize that he himself is the connecting link, the product that characterizes the relationship between the colonizing and colonized sections depicted on the screen. The relationship is one of violence, and Bigger is a violent man violently oppressed. With little reservation, we can say that almost his every deed as depicted in the first movement of the novel is that of the totally oppressed being whose actions and reactions, views and reviews occur within the boundaries of a separate, powerless anti-world (up to the murder of Mary Dalton, the daughter of a Lindsay-type liberal who employs Bigger as a chauffeur).

His is a senseless violence, the violence of the powerless toward the powerless. His attitude toward his mother and sister, his insane battle with Gus, his cutting the felt of the pool table with his knife, his need to carry his gun and knife to maintain a feeling of security are all attempts by Bigger to keep himself anaesthetized: "For the last resort of the native is to defend his personality vis-a-vis his brother." (42) Bigger's need to hide himself from himself provokes him to any activity intense enough and demanding enough to focus his attention away from the problem of the destruction of the colonial, the capitalist, the white world (there is an unmistakable contemporary parallel in the gang-warfare currently rampant in Philadelphia).

Bigger's job interview at the Dalton home is his first close-up encounter with whites. Bigger is totally embarrassed and confused. He does not understand how he should conduct himself. He is forced through the most intense emotional crises over the most minute events: "When he sat he sank down so suddenly... he thought the chair had collapsed underneath him. He bounded half-way up in fear; then, realizing what happened, he sat distrustfully back down again." (43) As his encounters with different whites in the Dalton home progress, we are given a portrait of a Bigger continuously beset by new concepts and feelings alien to him, fearing some unnameable abstract threat to his life which the Daltons (especially Mary) represent, slowly being brought to knowledge of the insignificance of his life when juxtaposed with theirs (as the movies were). All of this occurs in the presence of Mr. Dalton without his BECOMING VAGUELY AWARE OF IT. (44) Jan and Mary, the Communists, only become

aware of Bigger's discomfort on the most superficial level, when he agrees with reluctance to eat with them in a restaurant on Chicago's South Side. (45) Bigger himself remains unaware that THEY are unaware of this; this is why he feels such personal pain and embarrassment throughout his relationship with Mary.

The reason for this insensitivity to the content of an opposite personality that both Bigger and the whites manifest is that the assumptions of the validity of the Manichean world are accepted as valid. Whites are omnipotent, the most intelligent and humane of men, the controllers — "it was the rich white people who were smart and knew how to treat people." (46) Blacks are ignorant, perhaps incorrigible; but, O God, they ARE human!, Mary Dalton exclaims, and then to assure herself of this she latinizes: "There are twelve million of them (pray for us)... They live in our country (pray for us)... In the same city as we (pray for us — D.S.)." (47) Watching Bigger interact with these whites is exactly like watching two movies simultaneously. Up to the very time of Mary's murder, no one involved realizes that reality is closing its grip upon the Manichean stereotypes with awful rapidity, with a "terrible sharp and sudden leap."

Moments before the murder, Bigger becomes suspicious of the magnitude of what is about to occur as he attempts to get Mary into the house: "He felt strange, possessed, as if he were acting upon a stage in front of a crowd of people." (48) Bigger gropes his way through the darkened house and reaches Mary's room, but is unable to find the light switch. Thus the whole scene transpires in a kind of quarter-light, in a shadowy no-man's land of undistinguished forms, figures, and actions. The events that follow are like a descent into Bigger's subconsciousness. He finds himself full of desire for Mary. Does she move toward him in response, or does he manipulate her body in tune with his desire? "Her face came toward him and her lips touched his," (49) not "Mary moved her face toward Bigger and kissed him," or "Bigger moved Mary's face to his and kissed her." Neither of the characters are specifically given responsibility for this action. When Mrs. Dalton slides into the room unexpectedly, it cannot be said that she individually represents the kind of threat to Bigger that HE feels she does — "a HYSTERICAL TERROR seized him." (my emphasis) (50)

Bigger's murder of Mary is an individual accident, in a sense unavoidable given the circumstances. But the point of the whole scene is that the murder of Mary is not committed by Bigger but by what he represents — the COLLECTIVE PSYCHE OF THE COLONIZED. The point of the scene's being cast in darkness is that the characters are themselves and yet not themselves — they are more than themselves. Mary's physical surrender to Bigger is an attempt by the

guilt-ridden descendants of the colonizer to atone for the crimes of their fathers THROUGH A NON-CONSCIOUS REPUDIATION OF HISTORY AND LAW, through shattering the most jealously guarded taboo of the white man — the white woman. This is why Mary is depicted as drunk. Bigger surrenders to this challenge: "He was conscious only of her body now." (51) Then Mrs. Dalton appears. Why? Why does she come in now and not at some other point? Why doesn't she come in right after Bigger gets there with Mary, or after Bigger gets over?

Because Bigger is still the oppressed and Mary is still the oppressor. As long as the identity of both remain the same, any attempt to creatively interact is doomed to monstrous failure. No one can claim real knowledge of another through an alienated moment of physical contact. The social basis for creativity must be preceded by two things: 1) the negation of the social balance of power that provides the conditions for the colonized and colonizer to exist AS SUCH, and 2) the self-conscious creation of a notion of human identity that coheres with the development of man's positive self-knowledge as a whole as a reflection of Bigger's (the oppressed colonized) CONTROL over social reproduction (i.e., the means of human-Bigger's-existence).

For this to occur, Bigger must no longer see the white world as omnipotent. Bigger must therefore become conscious of its limitations and his own claim to power. And for THIS to occur, Bigger must force a violent confrontation with that world which will convince HIM of its finitude. The confrontation between the two worlds must come, because in a real sense NEITHER OF THEM EXISTS. Both are mistaken stereotypes of humanity; both worlds are subhuman and therefore SUB-CONSCIOUS.

According to Fanon, in colonized sectors, the native's dreams are those of muscular prowess, of running and jumping faster and higher than ever possible, OF DEFYING THE LAWS OF NATURE. (52) In his defense of Bigger at the trial, Max states, "This is a case of a man's mistaking a whole race of men as part of the natural structure of the universe and acting accordingly." (53) This sub-conscious desire of Bigger to defy the master through absolutely "impossible acts" collides with the real world (Mary), brushes up against it, and unleashes itself beyond the control of any individual involved: "And he had done something which he had not thought possible." (54)

Yet it had to happen; it, in fact, must happen again, but as a conscious, controlled effort by the most astute of society (revolutionaries) in the interest of laying the social basis for the negation of the necessity for the "uncontrolled, impossible, indefinably mandatory" act to occur: "The real men, the last men, are coming... Somebody has to prepare the way for them." (55)

How could Bigger know that? How could anyone in the whole city, the whole world outside of himself know? Bigger recognizes that an organized confrontation with the white force is necessary, but does not know how that could happen and therefore does not believe it can happen: "Dimly, he felt that there should be one direction in which he and all other black people could go whole-heartedly... But he felt that such would never happen to him and his black people." (56)

All Bigger knows, as Wright time and time again emphasizes, is what he feels; after the murder "He felt that he had been in the grip of a weird spell and was now free." (57) Bigger's flight is like the flight of Icarus, who through his father's invention of wings was able to defy nature and fly (incidentally, Bigger's flight begins in the basement of the Dalton home, and ends atop a water tower that is high above the city). In his elation, he flew too close to the sun; his wings melted and he was destroyed. For a moment, he held the secret of flight in his hands, although through no conscious process on his own part; but he did not understand how to control it and therefore how to preserve it. Likewise, Bigger feels freer than ever before; he feels as though he is seeing through new eyes: "He sat at the table watching the snow fall past the window and many things became plain." (58)

But Bigger thinks he must kill Bessie, his black girl friend, to guard the secret of his murder. He does not understand that in order for his secret to be guarded (which is that he, the slave, can choose not to exist within the confines of the master's definition of him), he MUST UNDERSTAND it. As an appropriation of power, Bessie's death results because Bigger is trying to understand what the knowledge he now possesses is. The paradox is that the worth of the secret does not reside within the secret but in its exposure as a scientific principle. IT MUST BE TOLD. Mary's death is Bigger's accidental triumph; Bessie's death is Bigger's conscious failure.

He felt that there was something missing, some road which, if he had once found it, would have led him to a sure and quiet knowledge. But why think of that now? A chance for that was gone forever. He had committed murder twice and had created a new world for himself. (59)

A world of intuitive judgment in which right and wrong depend on chance, a world which has as its satellites the sun, moon, and stars. A new world, but a false one.

Bigger ultimately realizes this in the third movement, "Fate." Apprehended, Bigger is no longer a danger. Caught, he is forced to understand that he does not exist in a vacuum: "He had lived and acted on the assumption that he was alone and now he saw that he had not been... His family was a part of him, not only in blood, but in spirit." (60) Yet none of the

people whom Bigger has affected — the Daltons, Jan, Max, Gus, G.H. and Jack, his family, Bessie — none of them have the slightest notion of why and how they are all tied to one another — they do not know how this consciousness has been produced, i.e., WHY THEY ARE WHAT THEY ARE AND WHY THEY ARE NOT OTHERWISE. Bigger has this knowledge, all of them have this knowledge, but do not recognize it as a thing to be known, a thing FOR consciousness.

Self-consciousness is at the root of all true creativity; the outcome of the day-to-day battles men wage for self-consciousness dictates elation and despair. However, men as a whole do not know why they feel elation and despair, what the source of feeling is. This means that success at the attempt for self-consciousness can be at best intuitive, a step above abject haphazardness. Bigger's inevitable mistake was to proceed to construct a new world, despite a total lack of any method of human development being supplied by society AS HE KNEW IT, on a set of standards approximate to appropriate real laws of development which he could only intuitively know. An iconoclast without a program.

"Man is free; but everywhere he is in chains." Bigger has to be a criminal by the standards of criminal society just as Cross Damon "cannot live by the articles of faith of his society." (61) Bigger is seen as a monster, a vicious black ape. Buckley, the state prosecutor, refers to Bigger as a "black lizard," (62) a "black thing"; (63) the paper says he is "a beast utterly untouched by the softening influences of modern civilization." (64) In fact, Bigger and Cross Damon are monstrosities, much in the same sense that Raskolnikov in *Crime and Punishment* and Stavrogin in *The Possessed* are monstrosities. They are men "pushing out to new areas of feeling, strange landmarks of emotion... telescoping alien facts into a known and felt truth" WITHOUT KNOWING IT. (65)

Bigger must have this self-knowledge; he is about to die and the focal point of attention for him has become the question: Why shouldn't I die? I feel in my life a truth, hidden, but real. Why, to borrow from Camus, is suicide, is homicide, a false solution to the paradox of anonymous existence? "And now here in the cell he felt more than ever the hard core of what he had lived." (66) Bigger's eclectic, stream-of-consciousness approach to life — the movies, games, robberies, and murder and their run-together into an indistinct continuum of facts, faces and voices — is totally inadequate to the task of preparing him to die, and he repudiates it. He has now accepted the insight that not only is slavery death, but ignorance is death. He accepts that if he does not discover the HOW and therefore the WHY of death — how to determine, i.e., conceptualize, the structure and function of his personality at the cost of his commodity/slave identity, he will die with the secret of flight still unknown to him. Big-

ger no longer seeks comfort; he seeks knowledge of creative human subsistence.

In the climactic scene of the novel, Bigger turns to Max, the Communist lawyer, for a way to face death, "knowing as the words boomed from his lips that a knowledge of how to live was a knowledge of how to die." (67) Max acts for Wright as the theoretic realization of Bigger's outrage and wild unharnessed insight into the nature of crime as the most accessible anti-repression device. It is Max who refers to Bigger's murders as acts of creation in his defense speech. (68) Max, however, is not the real source of this idea; Bigger is. Max's contribution lies in his possession of certain categories of mentation through which aspects of Bigger's tale of coming-to-consciousness can be represented.

Max's knowledge is AFTER-THE-FACT, and must necessarily be, since he has no really coherent perspective on how other Biggers can be avoided. This is symbolized in the book by Max's inability to understand what Bigger is trying to say about himself: "The white man was still trying to comfort him in the face of death." (69) Max has no access to the kind of knowledge that would allow him to identify and anticipate questions that Bigger was bound to ask.

The knowledge Bigger seeks must be mediated thought categories that process experience such that they extend his ability to conceive of himself beyond the present and immediate past, and make immediately accessible to him a vision of the future, the actualization of which can be "predicted" or determined. Bigger's wish to know how to die is aimed at destroying his dependence on "naked experience" for his notions of Truth and Self; he is attempting to make himself consistent with the sincerity of his feeling for existence, to become an open-ended dialogue with the best of human nature.

What is the conception that holds the secret of Bigger's murder? What is the idea that can MOMENTARILY release Bigger's mind from the Manichean stereotype, its status as a casualty of irrelevant colonized existence? Only he can discover the idea — he is the locus of creativity, the catalyst to which an entire city reacted and through which a petrified civilization bares its ghoulish aspiration to destroy humanity, HIS humanity. He must leap beyond his world, leap beyond the white world, to what? Some basic certainty, horrible yet indisputable, "a new and terrible vision." Wright metamorphosizes Bigger, he mutates his body to represent a coagulation of psychological tension: "Though he lay on his cot, his hands were groping fumblingly through the city of men.... He grew thin and his eyes held the red blood of his body." (60)

Bigger's sensitivity becomes fantastically intensified, superhumanly extreme: "...the shaft of yellow

sun cut across his chest with as much weight as a beam forged of lead." (71) He is unconsciously becoming able to take nuances, particles of feeling and amplify them into pictures, events, aspects of meaning. And when Max stutteringly tells Bigger that he must believe in himself, when Max vindicates the proposition Bigger had been struggling all his life to believe in — his self-value — the pieces fall together "spontaneously." Bigger leaps beyond Max, beyond the white and black planets, beyond the fact of his murders to a realization of the why of his acts, to knowledge of what he murdered for — the primacy of the positively free human character over any individual man's animal-biological existence. "What I killed for, I AM!"

THE OUTSIDER: THE SLAVE'S "NEGATION OF THE NEGATION"

When Wright remarks in the introduction to *Native Son* that Bigger Thomas had the potential for becoming either a socialist or a fascist, he implies a problem which he could not solve: How are the conditions to be established under which the first alternative would be embraced, instead of the second, by the black working class and the class as a whole? Wright, in other words, implied the problem of REVOLUTIONARY ORGANIZATION and program. The problem of organization and program is not merely a problem of how to begin to mobilize people on a class-wide basis through strikes, demonstrations, etc. The problem is: How is the class to attain consciousness of itself. How does the class gain the capacity to identify the highest aesthetic creations of the international productive system as part and parcel of the necessary knowledge which it must have to extend its notion of production beyond the "economic," so that it can begin to INVENT a self-consciously international art?

Wright's fundamental intellectual weakness was that he refused to think in these terms. He thought of himself as an artist whose fundamental contributions to the CP would be in the field of literature, not in the field of revolutionary organizing (of course, the CP has historically been one of the hardest schools in which to learn this trade). For Wright, this attitude manifested itself not only in his conception of day-to-day organizational tasks, but extended itself to the reading of and gaining a working competence in Marxist method itself. The only time Wright ever came close to reading anything by the Bolsheviks was when he skimmed through Stalin's writings on the national question.

The fact that the CP did not encourage the theoretic development of its members (especially its black members, since black people have "revolutionary class instinct" and "natural revolutionary rhythm") should have made Wright all the more suspicious. Before his expulsion from the Party, Wright was labelled a "Trot-

skyist." Yet, nowhere in his autobiography is it mentioned as to whether he actually ever even tried to find out what a "Trotskyist" WAS and to clarify the differences in the approach of the "Trotskyists" to the working class either directly by attempting to foment political debate, or indirectly by reading Trotsky. His position vis-a-vis the Party on the issue of the dissolution of the John Reed Clubs indicates that fear of the Party was not the reason he would not attempt to find out more about the political nature of the slanders.

This kind of parochialist non-approach to the question of realizing the potential of Bigger Thomas through class-wide organizing eventually all but sterilized all of Wright's work. How can you keep an idea, a vision alive without testing that vision against the parameters of society so that it can take on hands and feet, MEMBERS, a chance to flourish and expand the content of society itself? Wright should have recognized that if the Communist Party had become one of the main obstacles to that work, it was his duty as a writer, musician, actor, whatever he may have been, to take upon himself the responsibility of carrying out that work. Great art, music, drama cannot exist if there is not a Subject upon which it can establish itself.

As a result, Wright was totally unprepared upon his leaving the Party to sustain the promise that *Native Son* had contained. This is totally explainable. Without a notion of species-being grounded in the organizational conception of the POLITICAL WORKING CLASS FOR ITSELF, without understanding how centrism can as a result of the lack of this conception seize hold of the throat of a once-revolutionary movement, how could one explain the changing position of the CP (and for Wright the CP and communism were one and the same thing) on the black question, for example? In the early 1930's, the CP had advanced the opportunist politics of black nationalism as evidenced by the call for an "independent Negro republic" in the South. When in 1933 the Roosevelt administration was about to recognize the Soviet Union, all propaganda against the "social order of the U.S." was supposed to be curtailed as part of the deal. Consequently, the emphasis on the republic was down-played. During the time of the Hitler-Stalin pact (1939-41) the Party lambasted various black civil rights leaders, especially A. Philip Randolph and the march on Washington movement, for being too moderate and not taking a more militant stand against the war. However, after Hitler's attack on Russia in 1941, the Party attacked the same March on Washington movement, not on the basis of its moderation and failure (the march, for which 50,000 people had been mobilized, had been called off), but because of its continued agitation around civil rights in the face of the war effort.

The NAACP was said to be "too militant." In *Negroes on the March*, Daniel Guerin recounts that "a Stalinist Negro writer, Doey A. Wilkerson, wrote: '(Black people) must declare their unconditional sup-

port of the war effort... They must declare their full support of the win-the-war policies of our Commander and Chief... There are also Negro leaders (who) denounce the "government" and "white people" for still existing racial injustice and... organize mass struggles of the Negro people... They too are following a path which weakens the victory plan of the nation... To draft idealistic post-war plans for the Negroes... tends to divert much needed energy from the really urgent task of today — to win the war.'" (73) Policies like these led to the "ultrablacknationalist" CP supporting the calling in of the National Guard in Harlem in 1943 to stop a race riot.

The effects that this centrist activity had directly on the artistic life of Richard Wright had been discussed. The point is that even if Wright had been politically inclined, since he had not developed the kind of holistic framework from which he could intelligently criticize this organizational schizophrenia, the most he could do was be "personally" irritated, be "artistically" indignant. Because he conceived of centrism as an INDIVIDUAL phenomenon which was destroying "artists and other functionaries" in the Party, and not as a SOCIAL phenomenon with its own perverse logic, he made the inexcusable mistake of assuming centrism and communism to be one and the same. Therefore, Wright, having rejected "communism" as an AESTHETIC ALTERNATIVE, and having no use for fascism, became the moralist par excellence — the existentialist. He moved to Paris in 1946 and became close friends with Jean-Paul Sartre, Simone de Beauvoir, and others.

Existentialism is the conceptual basis of *The Outsider*. The master-slave relation is posed in the most universal terms. Race in the novel becomes subsumed as a theme. The question the novel poses is this: the rapid process of industrialization has wrenched man from his agrarian, feudal existence and thrown him into an environment in which "networks of raw human nerves (are) exposed without benefit of illusion of hope, to the new, Godless world." (74) Each form of ideology seems to have as its task the duelling of men's minds in order that they can ignore the anarchy and intellectual disorder in which they exist.

If it is true that conception is only a rationalization for the most ruthless behavior of mankind, then what happens to the sensitive man who DISCOVERS this and reveals that the guiding principle of human productivity is not the species-positive, but FEAR? In the past, society has counted on religion to provide the criteria for judgment as such; now, if God is denied and therefore immortality is a ruse and "man is nothing in particular," what is the necessity of categories of good and evil? Without the conception of man as self-reflexive species, OF WHAT USE IS VALUE?

The protagonist of the novel, Cross Damon (named by his mother after the cross of Christ) is a black college drop-out who had majored in philosophy and is employed in the post office. Cross's domestic problems are manifold — his estranged wife forces him to almost totally support her and their three children; his mother continually implores him to share her belief in God; his girlfriend Dot is about to have a baby and threatens to have him imprisoned if he will not marry her (she is under age). Unlike Bigger, Cross has the intellectual requirements to understand how squalid his life is — he drinks very heavily to keep himself together, and sometimes carries a gun with him in case he can no longer stand himself. But he does not have the courage to kill himself. "He lifted the glinting barrel to his right temple, then paused. His feelings were like tumbling dice... He wilted, cursed, his breath expiring through parted lips. Choked with self-hate, he flung himself on the bed and buried his face in his hands." (75) (Cross has no REASON to live, but he DESIRES to live. This vague, formless desire dominates Cross's life; he cannot account for it, therefore not for himself, therefore not for mankind. That is the way HE sees the development of knowledge — as dependent on the degree to which his self-contained discreteness, his death-like circular personality, mediates the world for him — "if the pressure from within or without got too great he would use (his gun)." (76)

He never has to. Cross gets in a subway crash one night. Awakening after the accident, he finds himself sitting on top of the roof of the subway trapped in the car by a seat wedged in place by a man's head. Cross must decide — will he risk killing a man to get free? "He panted with despair regarding the man's head as an obstacle; it was no longer flesh and blood, but a rock, a chunk of wood he wacked at with a stone." (77) He does so, and frees himself.

For Cross this marks an important transition in his life. He, an isolated, cornered, powerless "determinate nothing," has decided to release himself and has therefore made a judgment on the value of his life. The paradox of any self-evident world outlook, the problem of "Every ethic based on solitude is that it implies an exercise of power." (78) That is, an effective relationship, a continuity. This means, then, that nothing is self-evident, that human identity is a function of human activity and is a social question.

Cross, however, sees this only in a one-sided way — this becomes his chance to escape. Cross has allowed himself to be a "determinate nothing" and so he has no choice but to run from himself — to confront his personal history as an individual (and therefore, for him, ALL history) is beyond his resources of courage, and ultimately, intelligence. But flight, even from the beginning, does not free him — "since last night, since he had broken all the promises

and pledges he had ever made, the water of meaning had begun to drain off the world; and now he was seeing an alien and unjustifiable world completely different from him. It was no longer HIS world; it was just A world." (79)

To support the remnants of the structure of his sanity, Cross must recreate himself outside of HISTORY ITSELF. He becomes Addison Jordan, Lionell Lane, Charles Webb — he begins to "create men out of nothing." Any identity can be tacked around his frame; he becomes a law unto himself, the same god he has rejected — the anti-Christ. But each day he continues under this pretense, greater and greater disorder erupts. Inside the period of about a month, he has killed four men, caused his lover to commit suicide, his mother to die of shock after discovering that he is alive, and is finally killed by members of the Communist Party. The story of *The Outsider* then, above all is a novel about ENTROPY. Cross is religious, that is, sub-human. When his world is shattered by the subway crash he dies — the rest of the novel is about the decomposition of a corpse — the decomposition of anti-Christ, the religious man.

In *The Rebel*, Albert Camus comments: "The idea of God which Sade conceived for himself is... of a criminal divinity who oppresses and denies mankind. That murder is an attribute of the divinity is quite evident, according to Sade, from the history of religions. Why, then, should man be virtuous?... If God kills and repudiates mankind, there is nothing to stop one from killing and repudiating one's fellow man." (80) "The concept of God is the only thing, according to him 'which he cannot forgive man.' But it is himself whom he cannot forgive for an idea that his desperate view of the world AND HIS CONDITION AS A PRISONER completely refutes." (81)

Cross's pretentious attempt to devise individual laws for himself in a decaying capitalist society is motivated by the most vile kind of empiricism. Cross's notion of freedom is the same as that contained in the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen, 1791, Article 6. "Liberty is the power belonging to each man to do anything which does not impair the rights of others." (82) Freedom is the right of man to remain LIMITED to himself. Cross emphasizes this time and time again.

"Damon, do you deny meeting me in the dining car of a train on the eighth of February last?"

"I affirm or deny nothing."

"Do you belong to any organizations whatsoever?"

"I belong to nothing."

"Do you subscribe to any political philosophy?"

"I subscribe to nothing." (83)

Consequently, when he seeks to actualize this free-

dom of his, this UBERMENSCH identity he has constructed, revealing its principles so that someone else can understand — when he seeks to EXTEND himself — he fails. He tries to explain himself to Eva Blount, the wife of a member of the Party whom he has murdered and the woman he loves: "I killed Gil, but it was not for you"... "You see Eva, I don't BELIEVE in anything"... "Oh, Christ, I can't explain it. You've got to FEEL it." (84)

Hegel counters this popular twentieth century disease by saying: "Language, however, as we see it, is the more truthful; in it we ourselves refute directly and at once our own 'meaning;' and since universality is the real truth of sense-certainty and language expresses this truth, IT IS NOT POSSIBLE FOR US EVEN TO EXPRESS IN WORDS ANY SENSUOUS EXISTENCE WHICH WE 'MEAN.'" (85) Sensuous existence — self-contained "meaning" without the responsibility for judgment — is the basis of Cross's identity.

Feuerbach devastates Cross's convictions even further: "And what else is the power of melody but the power of feeling? Music is the LANGUAGE of feeling; MELODY IS AUDIBLE FEELING — feeling communicating itself. When love impells a man to suffer death even joyfully for the beloved one, is this death conquering power his own individual power, or is it not rather the power of love?" (86) Yet, Feuerbach, instead of drawing the conclusion that God exists, says: "Religion, expressed generally, is consciousness of the infinite; thus it is and can be nothing else than the consciousness that man has of his own — not limited and finite — but infinite nature... THE ABSOLUTE TO MAN IS HIS OWN NATURE." (87)

Cross believes the exact opposite: "Man's heart, his spirit, is the deadliest thing in creation" (88)... "Maybe man is nothing in particular." (89) The freedom that Cross speaks of is equivalent to lawlessness. Men are divided into the categories of victims and executioners. Since there is no law, the executioner (or revolutionary — since for Cross, the fascist and communist are one and the same) is the criminal, and the condemned, the victims, are innocent. The victims, however, do not KNOW themselves as innocent because knowledge implies guilt.

The executioners are OUTSIDERS — madmen, Overmen, murderers, saviours. "In order to test themselves, to make life a meaningful game, these Jealous Rebels proceed to organize political parties — Communist parties, Fascist parties, Nazi parties, all kinds of parties." (90) The main drama in human existence, as far as Cross is concerned, is the fight of the Overman for power, not as a seizure of wealth or military force, but as power-in-itself.

Cross cannot define freedom in SPECIES TERMS.

Freedom is the capacity of man to, through the appropriation of greater and greater amounts of natural energy and the "transubstantiation" of these energies into human form, realize greater and greater order in the world as a whole through expanded material production. The harnessing and multiplication of productive force at ever-expanding rates has its corollary in social terms in the increasing ability of individual man, as son and prototype of an ever more productive ecology. He can multiply his possible options for positive individual identity through making ever more concrete his knowledge of the infinity of human nature through more and more sophisticated, efficient, and productive social ordering systems. This means the creation of world cultural beings through socialism or the HUMANIZATION OF ECONOMY. Man, therefore, self-consciously complexifies himself, extends himself. "For I is another... 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." (86)

The problem with Cross is that he, being ignorant of the laws and processes governing evolutionary social reproduction and consequently human history, and therefore being ignorant of how and why capitalism or any obsolete mode of production absolutely destroys human society and therefore the process of thought itself, understands the complexity and myriadness of life as an abstract generality and takes CONFUSION AND LAWLESSNESS TO BE COSMIC LAW. And because Cross cannot ACCEPT the cosmos as the residence of law, his every action produces more and more paradoxes. Cross eventually sees himself as a demon, a man who lives in and only by paradox itself. He makes himself the statement of a frozen contradiction. He is a body at rest sent hurtling into motion by an inhuman energy (an accident). His relationship to everyone and everything he touches is the relationship of the accident to himself.

TRUTH OR FICTION?

It is rather interesting that the method of living that Cross adopts is the logical conclusion of the conceptions upon which radical artistic productivity has been based for the past fifty years. That is to say, if we were to take the surrealists, expressionists, existentialists and New Black Renaissance men seriously, if we made their "revelations" an indispensable part of our identity, we would be Charles Mansons, satanic cultists, Weathermen, and the like. Warhol, Baraka, Ferlinghetti, Burroughs, Beckett, etc., are what we might call "psychedelic terrorists." The general conceptual basis for this bestial phenomenon was best articulated by Antonin Artaud, the famous dramatist and addict, in his book *The Theatre and Its Double*, written in the 1930's. "We are not free. And the sky can still fall on our heads. And the theatre has been created to teach us that first of all." (87)

Cruelty for Artaud is the same as universal natural law. Since natural law is universal it is indecipherable. Mankind in the face of this "vast looming force" is a jumble of atoms, "a foul and pestilent congregation of vapors." But since man is not only no one in particular, but NOTHING in particular, and is therefore also an indecipherable everything, universal natural law can be sensed by him — just not understood. But since there are individuals who are discrete atoms who cannot understand one another, the individual is only a spectator, a detached observer, and society and nature are one and the same — a vast cruelty over which he has no power. Artaud says: "The theatre of cruelty is cruel for me first of all." (88)

How is the individual, the actual catalyst of creativity, treated? "I propose to treat the spectators like the snake charmers' subjects and conduct them BY MEANS OF THEIR ORGANISMS to an apprehension of the subtlest notions." (87) Therefore, if Artaud is conducting, then he is the source of universal law, the representative of God on earth. But the revolutionary artist as conductor, as LEGISLATOR, has to merely "give a stroke of the bow...(and) the symphony (THE CLASS) bursts on the stage." The revolutionary artist is a liberator; the fascist artist is tyrant. Now the real meaning of Artaud's statement comes through: "The theatre of cruelty is cruel for me first of all." Everyone else will be the spectator — Artaud, or Cross, will be the Fuehrer.

Reading Artaud in this dual-sided fashion we can, in two short quotes, derive from his essay "No More Masterpieces" how both the Fuehrer and "the masses" see the fascist state. "In the theatre of cruelty the spectator is in the center and the cruelty surrounds him." (88) What is the purpose of the spectacle? "To seek in the agitation of tremendous masses, convulsed and hurled against each other, a little of that poetry of festivals and crowds, when, all too rarely nowadays, the people pour out into the streets." (89) With the addition of a few dramatic "props" like guns, clubs and brown shirts, and a situation of general economic and parliamentary collapse, it would be possible for a Fuehrer and his menagerie to resurrect the Bacchanal, not as a festival but as the state. The nostalgic desire for return to the "polymorphous perversity" of man's pre-historical innocence, to "primitive communism" in which all men are equal because they are barely subsisting or dead, can become real. Who is a more "volkisch," "natural" man, a man "closer to the soil," than the concentration camp prisoner who feels larger and larger sections of his bowels torn away every time he excretes, whose skin is used for lampshades, who covers himself over with the bodies of other dead slaves and asphyxiates himself?

Cross, then, is a walking theater of cruelty. He believes that "everyday love, personal ambition, struggle for status, all have value only in proportion to

their relation to the terrible lyricism of the myths to which the great mass of men have ascended." (90) At this time in history, when the responsibility of mankind's survival rests on our shoulders, the religious man, Christ or anti-Christ, is dangerous and reactionary. "History has long enough been resolved into superstition, but now we can resolve superstition into history. The question of the RELATION OF POLITICAL EMANCIPATION TO RELIGION becomes for us a question of the RELATION OF POLITICAL EMANCIPATION TO HUMAN EMANCIPATION." (91)

No man is innocent of this task. "Innocence" and "guilt" are synonymous terms. At the end of *The Outsider*, when Cross is dying after being shot by a member of the Communist Party, he says that his attempt to individually negate capitalist society's negation of him led him to discover "Nothing." "He lay very still and summoned all his strength. 'The search can't be done alone.'" Then he goes on to conclude that his life was horrible "because in my heart...I'm...I felt...I'm INNOCENT... That's what made the horror." (92) To believe oneself to be innocent is to believe oneself to be powerless to judge. Innocence, therefore, is slavery. All my life I felt I was enslaved but I did not know what to do except to become the master, to substitute one chaos for another.

Wright is unable to make *The Outsider* a work of art. His characters are automatic, contrived, mere excuses for Wright to present his ideas, rather than AGENTS of those ideas themselves. There are repetitions of dialogue in the novel that even a member of the Workers League would identify as excessive. Cross's extended monologue toward the end of the book on the disintegration of institutionalized religion is republished almost word for word as an essay in *White Man, Listen!* Many times the characters themselves repeat what Wright has stated from his position as narrator — for example:

Wright:

His mother had been dead for him for years; and that was why he had been able to reflect on her so coldly and analytically while she had still been living. (93)

Hamilton, the DA:

"You must have known your mother well, understood her both emotionally and intellectually; and when one can see and weigh one's mother like that, well, she's dead to one." (94)

Wright's perspective on his characters never goes further than that of someone external to the events, of a chess player watching a replay of a previous match. But the characters of a novel are not the mere "philosophical we" — they are the "we" that see the

process of life unfolding from the inside, that tell US of things that THEY cannot yet be fully conscious of. The same language and perspective of the author cannot be taken on by the character unless the character is the author. But an autobiography is not a novel. To write a novel, one must understand how themes like guilt, fear, etc., are funnelled through a tightly-knit, plausible set of historically specific circumstances such that authentic and individually distinct personalities and characters rise beyond the page.

The Outsider is useful because it documents the ability of people under capitalism in general and the artist in particular to first, even recognize the "cross" or paradox of human identity as a social question, and secondly, to move to solve that question. Therefore, it offers a key to identifying the malaise afflicting the minds of the counterculture as consciously posed in artistic TERMS. But beyond that it has little significance. The Outsider is not "flesh and blood, but a rock, a piece of wood."

The kind of tragic suffocation of a mind that is witnessed by Wright's demise can only be alleviated in art by the conscious and persistent attempt of the black artist and all artists to engage in that kind of revolutionary struggle which can increase their ability to uncover new dimensions of feeling and emotion and to generalize these experiences in such a way that the capacity of the class to sense its wealth of life is continuously replenished and enriched. This kind, and only this kind, of accomplishment deserves the title of artistic genius. Richard Wright was a great TALENT but can in no wise be called a GENIUS. A genius fulfills his promise, a genius PRODUCES. His decay is a tragic event in twentieth century literature. But the tragedies we can point to in all fields of thought are countless. The point is to clinically identify the process of decomposition, not to become preoccupied with the results. We need revolutionary intellectuals, not necrophiliacs. We want to build revolutionary culture through expanded reproduction. Everything else is beside the point.

FOOTNOTES

1. L. Marcus, "Centrism as a Social Phenomenon," *The Campaigner*, Jan.-Feb., 1970, p. 36.
2. Robert Dillon, "Ecology Crisis: Who's Polluting Whom," *The Campaigner*, Winter, 1970, p. 82
3. Karl Marx, *Writings of the Young Marx on Philosophy and Sociology*, trans. and ed. by Lloyd D. Easton & Kurt H. Guddat, Doubleday, 1967, p. 202.
4. Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *The Phenomenology of the Mind*, trans. by J.B. Baille, Macmillan, 1949, p. 308.
5. Frantz Fanon, *Wretched of the Earth*, Grove Press, 1968, p. 51.
6. Fanon, Preface, *Black Skins, White Masks*, Grove Press, 1968, p. 7.
7. Richard Wright, "Big Boy Leaves Home," *Uncle Tom's Children*, Harper & Row, 1938, p. 16.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 20
9. *Ibid.*, p. 27.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 43.
11. Wright, *Native Son*, Harper & Row, 1966, p. 101.
12. Wright, *The Outsider*, Harper & Row, 1963, p. 230.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 227
14. Constance Webb, *Richard Wright: A Biography*, Putnam, 1968, p. 150.
15. George Orwell, *1984: A Novel*, Harcourt, Brace, 1949, p. 68.
16. Wright, *The Outsider*, p. 440.
17. Wright, "Bright and Morning Star," *Uncle Tom's Children*, p. 183.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 181.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 144.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 194.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 202.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 206.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 206
24. *Ibid.*, p. 207.
25. *Ibid.*, p. 207.
26. Webb, *op. cit.*, p. 125.
27. Richard Wright in, *The God That Failed*, by Arthur Koestler, p. 187.
28. Webb, *op. cit.*, p. 135.

29. Wright encapsulated his thought on the function of revolutionary art in a series of theses which composed the theory of personalism. This theory, although radical-bourgeois in character by Wright's own admission, did attempt to provide insight into the function of art as a political proposition. The final thesis is a summary of the whole theory: "Personalism will be anti-aesthetic in so far as it will seek to push art beyond mere contemplation. In short, its expression must become an objective act, having immediacy as its aim. Though using a high emotional content, its aim and end will be beyond the mere power to move. It will seek to make those who come in contact with it take sides for or against certain moral issues and these issues will be elementary ones (Webb, Richard Wright: A Biography, p. 138.).
30. Ibid., pp. 149-150.
31. Wright, "How Bigger Was Born," *Native Son*, p. XXX.
32. Ibid., p. XXXI.
33. Fanon, *Wretched of the Earth*, p. 34.
34. Wright, *Native Son*, p. 22.
35. Ibid., p. 20.
36. Ibid., p. 19.
37. Ibid., p. 24.
38. Ibid., p. 25.
39. Ibid., p. 23.
40. Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, p. 35.
41. Wright, *Native Son*, pp. 31-37.
42. Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, pp. 4-5.
43. Wright, *Native Son*, p. 47.
44. Ibid., pp. 47-55.
45. Ibid., p. 71.
46. Ibid., p. 36.
47. Ibid., p. 70.
48. Ibid., p. 83.
49. Ibid., p. 84.
50. Ibid., p. 84.
51. Ibid., p. 84.
52. Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, p. 364.
53. Wright, *Native Son*, p. 364.
54. Ibid., p. 101.
55. Wright, *The Outsider*, p. 440.
56. Wright, *Native Son*, p. 109.
57. Ibid., p. 84.
58. Ibid., p. 102.
59. Ibid., p. 226.
60. Ibid., p. 277.
61. Wright, *The Outsider*, p. 387.
62. Wright, *Native Son*, p. 373.
63. Ibid., p. 271.
64. Ibid., p. 260.
65. Ibid., p. XXX.
66. Ibid., p. 383.
67. Ibid., p. 388.
68. Ibid., p. 366.
69. Ibid., p. 387.
70. Ibid., p. 383.
71. Ibid., p. 386.
73. Daniel Guerin, *Negroes on the March*, p. 80.
74. Wright, *The Outsider*, Book I: "Dead".
75. Wright, *The Outsider*, p. 13.
76. Ibid., p. 13.
77. Ibid., p. 75.
78. Albert Camus, *The Rebel*, Vintage Books, 1956, p. 45.

79. Wright, *The Outsider*, p. 92.
80. Camus, *op. cit.*, p. 37.
81. *Ibid.*, pp. 37 - 38.
82. Marx, *On the Jewish Question*, in *Karl Marx: Early Writings*, p. 24.
83. Wright, *The Outsider*, p. 383.
84. *Ibid.*, p. 398.
85. Hegel, *The Phenomenology of the Mind*, p. 152.
86. Ludwig Feuerbach, *Essence of Christianity*, p. 5.
87. *Ibid.*, p. 4.
88. Wright, *The Outsider*, p. 133.
89. *Ibid.*, p. 135.
90. *Ibid.*, p. 364.
91. Arthur Rimbaud, "Letters" quoted in "Rimbaud and the Commune," by C. Berl, in *The Campaigner*, Winter, 1971, p. 53.
92. A. Artaud, *The Theatre and Its Double*, Evergreen, p. 79.
93. *Ibid.*, p. 79.
94. *Ibid.*, p. 81.
95. *Ibid.*, p. 81.
96. *Ibid.*, p. 85.
97. *Ibid.*, p. 85.
98. Marx, *Karl Marx: Early Writings*, p. 10.
99. Wright, *The Outsider*, p. 439.
100. *Ibid.*, p. 440.
101. *Ibid.*, p. 382.
102. *Ibid.*, p. 422.

Notes to "For A Working-Class Party"

by Anton Chaitkin

(The footnotes to the NCLC response to Lutte Ouvriere's "The Labor Party Issue in the United States," published in Campaigner, Vol. 6, No. 1, were regrettably omitted. They appear below. Editors.)

1. The prevailing, mistaken notions of "working-class parties" in the self-styled "revolutionary socialist" organizations generally, are a product of attempts to supply a mechanistic explanation of mass upsurges. In other words, an attempt to abstract a static interpretation of viciously isolated historical phenomena from what is properly comprehensible only as a continuous process.

Labor Committee experience with its "strike-support coalitions" epitomizes the need for the correct process-abstractions in this connection. Repeatedly, "strike-support coalitions" have momentarily dissolved into the Labor Committees, as leading representatives of the previously allied constituencies of the coalition joined our organization. Then, in the next action, the process repeats itself with generally the same sort of result.

LO itself has a parallel experience, of sorts, in its well-known distinctions between adherents of "militant" (inner group) and "sympathizer" status. It is this emphasis on cadre qualifications of LO which most immediately distinguishes it as at least a serious group from the heterogeneous petit-bourgeois French Ligue Communiste or the soft, ultra-centrist British International Socialist group. The distinctions between the Labor Committees and LO as PROCESSES of this sort are important, but not the point immediately at hand.

In general, momentary forms of struggle organization "intermediate" between political unorganized mass and vanguard party are an expression of a "continuous" process of the masses becoming the vanguard party. The necessary notion of joint action by a vanguard party plus such "intermediate forms" as "strike-support" organizations and "working-class parties" arises because immediate tasks of the class struggle cannot wait until the mass forces have completed the process of their maturation in class consciousness and self-organization. At the same time, such "premature" mass struggles represent an organic part of the "continuous" process of the development of class consciousness and class-conscious forms of self-organization.

See Rosa Luxemburg's 1906 thesis, "The Mass Strike, The Trade Unions, and the Social Democracy," and also a coming issue of the Campaigner for T. Perlman's exposure of the resolutions of the Comintern's "Third World Congress" as a disastrous compromise of the opposite positions of Zinoviev and of Lenin and Trotsky on the "united front."

Thus, the reasoning in the text, above. The question of whether a mass vanguard party or a "workers' party" accomplishes the transition to workers' political power is merely a question of the degree of maturation of the workers' class consciousness and self-organization at the point this historic task must be faced. Since the possibility that this will be accomplished by a mass vanguard party depends upon the proceeding development of the process through what are seen statically as "intermediate forms," there is no difference in method of mass work by the initiating vanguard for either specific tactical perspective of workers' power. It is, essentially, merely a concrete question of what degree of maturation of results of the identical method we find ourselves in when the task of power is posed. (Editors)

2. For obvious reasons, LO editors might rely largely on the authority of Art Preis's book, "Labor's Giant Step." Preis is one of the best examples of the regression of leading revolutionary cadres of the 1932-37 period into the trade-union opportunism of the Foster-Cannon tendency. He was actually a mass-leader, a key figure in the founding of the UAW, whose writings show increasingly the insidious influence of Cannonite opportunism, especially during the post-1938 period. It is such a Cannonite reification of Preis's own earlier revolutionary experience which determines the tendentious thrust of the entire text.

In addition, editing away of major portions of the original manuscript by Preis's SWP editors helps to make the book a seeming historical justification of the wretchedly centrist outlook seen in Dobbs' "The Teamster Rebellion."

The Labor Committee has documented this point through massive research in primary historical sources, including the pre-1935 *Militant*, demonstrating the prodigious amount of conscious falsification of even "American Trotskyist" history itself by James P. Cannon and other SWP spokesmen.

This is not to slander the actually heroic figure of Preis, who, deafened, paraplegic, painfully dying by degrees of the most vicious and painful sort of diabetic illnesses, mobilized every iota of his energies up to almost the last moment of his life to attempt to continue to make contributions to the movement as he understood that task. The term, "political regression," is not for us an epithet of idle gossip, easily tossed off to make a "debater's point" against opponents. "Political regression" is a term involving acute pain for us, since it is significant only as we are compelled to apply it to extraordinary, often heroic figures, whose former contributions, courage, and other general personal qualities evoke from us the deepest admiration.

3. In the U.S.A., the term "nut group" subsumes the "International Socialists," "Progressive Labor Party," and such minor cults as the "Spartacist League," "Workers League," splinters of the "Spark" group, or, presently, the temporary coalition of such decorticated Maoist anarcho-syndicalists as Klonsky, Wells, Hammersmith, et al. Despite the painfully elaborated Talmudic distinctions in points of exegetical-eclectic "doctrine" and cult life-style among these groupings, sausage, however distinguished from other sausage, remains sausage.

They share in common the essential pluralist world-outlook of enraged liberals, thus akin to the nineteenth-century splinters of *Zemlya i Volya* before them. They share the mechanistic, or reductionist, world-outlook which impels one sub-species of "nut group" to take an almost racist attitude of trade-union chauvinism against including unemployed in the working class, and other sub-species to bitterly reject trade unionism in favor of the extreme anarcho-syndicalist sort of local factory group chauvinism — all violently opposed to class-for-itself methods.

4. The first general published presentation of the Marxian overview of the trade-union question in terms of empirical U.S. labor history is found in the "Strike" Campaigner (Vol. 4, No. 2, Spring, 1971). Since then, the Labor Committees have produced numerous historical studies from primary sources in the same vein, some already published, the majority of this written material in various stages of pre-publication.

See, for example, "Toward A Myth-Free History of 'American Trotskyism,'" p. 31.

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