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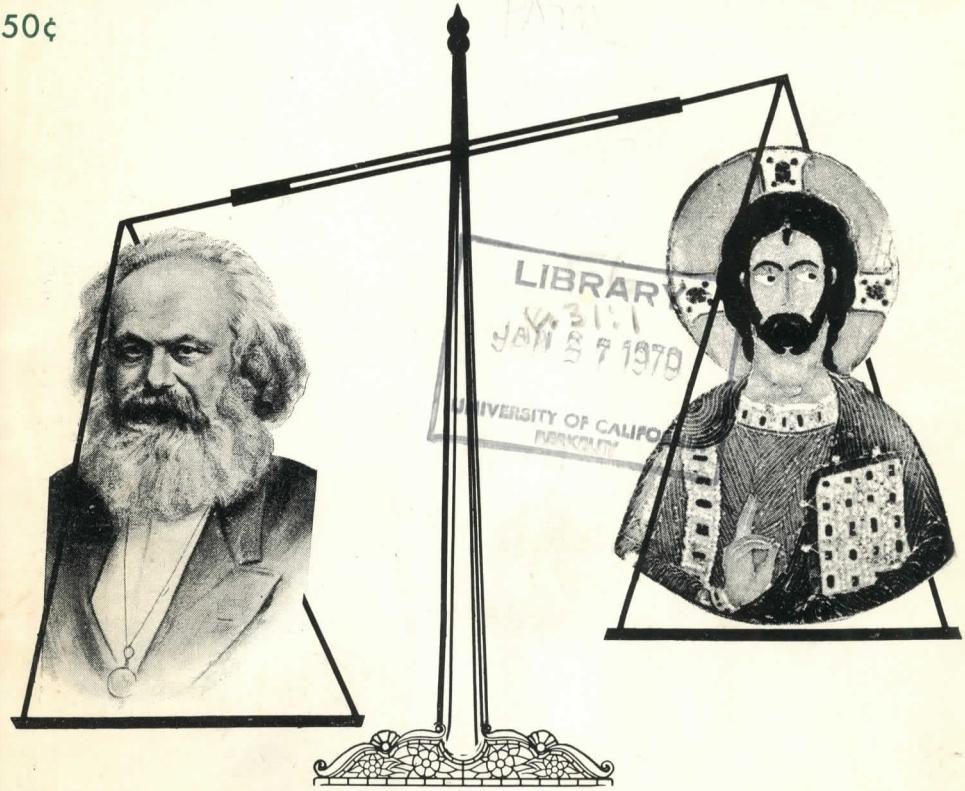

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Marxism & Christianity: Are They Compatible?

Nixon's Recession & Monopoly Rule

Mayakovsky's Suicide

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Theodore Edwards
Rev. Blase Bonpane

MARXISM AND CHRISTIANITY: Are They Compatible?

a debate

The following debate took place at the Los Angeles Militant Labor Forum, June 20, 1969. The first speaker is Theodore Edwards, a longtime commentator on KPFK, the Pacifica Foundation listener-supported radio station, the educational director for the Southern California Socialist Workers Party, translator of "What is Economics?" by Rosa Luxemburg, and author of "The Soviet Union Today." The second speaker, Rev. Blase A. Bonpane, is a Maryknoll Father who served as national director of the Cursillos de Capacitación Social, *an organization that drew international attention because of its success in peasant organization in Guatemala. In mid-December of 1967, Father Bonpane, together with other priests and sisters, was accused of "plotting an armed revolution" and expelled from Guatemala. He is presently a lecturer in Latin American Studies at California State College in Los Angeles.*

Marxism

Edwards: Marxism is a little over one hundred years old. Philosophically, it adheres to dialectical materialism. It is materialist in the sense that it believes that existence precedes consciousness and that reality precedes thought. It is dialectical in the sense that it believes that both nature and society are in flux, in evolution. This evolution takes place through the struggle of conflicting forces.

Marx also obtained new insights into the course of human history by holding that economic factors are basic determinants in human society. It is not multiple, independent, parallel and thus indeterminate causal factors that determine social organization, as contempor-

ary bourgeois sciences hold. Man's economic activity is the basis of human society. In the last instance, the economics of a historical epoch determine its religious, philosophical, political and moral ideas, and not vice versa. Marxism holds this view without denying the influence and interaction of certain superstructural factors upon the course of history, such as ideology, morals, art, religion and culture.

It also holds that changes in productive methods demand superstructural changes, that the institutions and property relations, the moral codes and the ideology have to be transformed, as the productive methods and technology are revolutionized. If they do not change, and they never do when a privileged class is interested in holding fast to them in order to safeguard its privileges, then social revolution is on the order of the day if a revolutionary class is present. If not, then the whole society enters a process of decline.

Lastly, Marxism is a science of economics. Through a detailed study of capitalist society, Marx was the first to show its inevitable decline as a system of production. He also demonstrated the presence of a revolutionary class, the industrial working class, that would institute a world socialist society by revolutionary means, by victory over the resistance of the capitalists.

Christianity, on the other hand, is almost two thousand years old. If Marxism is right and there are no eternal, unchanging moral precepts that are handed down by a supernatural lawgiver to keep evil humanity on the righteous path, then Christianity as an organization and as an ethical structure must have changed over its two-thousand-year history to conform with changing economic conditions.

The evolution of Catholicism

And indeed it has. Its origin is found in the decline of the Roman empire, a slow decomposition that lasted for centuries. There had been struggles by exploited classes within the Roman empire, by slaves and small farmers, in the two centuries before our era. They were defeated by the stubborn resistance of the patrician slaveholders. Roman society entered into a period of decline. The Roman peasantry was ruined, especially by the unending wars that provided slaves for the slaveholders. In the end, it degenerated into the unproductive and impoverished city proletariat of Rome. As the vitality of Roman society was sapped, the wars that procured the slaves diminished, the number of slaves diminished, the price of slaves went up, production declined, the population declined, and the Roman proletariat as an unproductive class had no hope of changing society by revolutionary means.

The early Christian communities reflected this sentiment. It is so close to the sentiment that we're familiar with that I can't help referring to it, namely the hippie-type, self-help, anti-poverty cooperatives, the idea of "wanting out" of society, of not being willing to change it, or having been disappointed or disillusioned by not having been able to change it in a revolutionary way. Similarly, in their

origin the early Christian communes were self-help anti-poverty cooperatives, composed of the city proletarians of the Roman empire. They were democratic communes at first; communistic in that property was held in common and democratic in that officials were elected. Like the hippies of today, they were persecuted by official Roman society. But they corresponded to an economic need in that society, the necessity for impoverished unproductive city proletarians to have some way of survival in a period of social decomposition.

In time the Christian communities grew and, as they grew, a process of bureaucratization set in, which is by no means just a modern phenomenon. The officials, the bureaucrats, gained in power and their privileges grew. Struggles between the laity and the clergy arose at the same time as inter-empire connections were made between the Christian communities. The first such synod, or congress of Church officials didn't take place till 200 A. D. The first all-empire synod didn't take place until 325 A. D. In 320, Constantine, one of the contenders for the throne of the Roman emperor, decided that the Christian communities made good allies in helping him capture that throne.

The Christian communities that had established all-empire connections thus became the state church, supporting the establishment, so to speak. Church contributions became compulsory and Church wealth rose. It was at this point that the communism of consumption that had been established by the nonproductive city proletarians, all but vanished as it had been diminished already by the bureaucratization of the Christian communities. The communal meals, the main constituent of the primitive communism of the early Christians, were abolished. The institution survives today only symbolically in the Mass, which is only a token and highly restricted meal.

The messianic, self-help type of commune, having become the state and saddled with a bureaucracy, began to safeguard the rule of the slaveholders in the Roman empire. The Christian Church supported the institution of slavery. Christianity until very recent times has been pro-slavery — as we know from the history of our Southern states only too well. Christianity became one of the principles by which slavery was upheld.

The Roman city proletariat was not interested in abolishing slavery; as a matter of historical fact, it was when slavery began to decline as a mode of production that Christianity rose and not vice versa. At least, that's the way it was in the Roman empire. Church wealth continued to grow over the centuries; the bureaucratization continued apace. Originally, in order to join the Christian community the new members donated their wealth and property to it, which was then shared in consumption. As bureaucratization proceeded, by 500 A.D. the Church property was divided as follows: one quarter went to the bishop; one quarter to the building fund; one quarter to the clergy; and only one quarter was left for the "poor," that is, the rank-and-file Christians. Thus, by the sixth century, the clergy had appropriated three quarters of what originally had belonged to all the Christians!

But even Christianity couldn't save the Roman empire. It eventually

was conquered by Germanic tribes who were still in a stage of agrarian communism. They owned the fields, meadows, the forests and water sources in common, and their communistic relations brought new vigor to the productive process. Productivity rose, poverty sank, the new feudal mode of production asserted itself. Christianity now was not as widely needed anymore as a welfare institution as it had been in the decline of the Roman empire.

But Christianity in feudal times managed to preserve its institutions; it continued to be the state church, a position which became the prime source of its wealth. It became the biggest landowner of the Middle Ages, generally owning one third to one quarter, or more, of the land.

Charlemagne — at the height of feudalism — wanted to continue the tradition of reserving one quarter of church property as the *patrimonium pauperum*, that is, as belonging to the rank-and-file church members, *i.e.*, the poor. But not long after Charlemagne's death, one of the bigger steals in recorded history took place. The clergy pretended to be the paupers, by taking an oath of poverty and quickly appropriating the rest of the church property.

In the twelfth century, the Pope, who by that time had established himself as the richest and most powerful of the bishops, began to administer all of the Church wealth in the manner of the former Roman emperors. The fiction arose that it all belonged to the Pope. This in turn led the Pope to fight to force celibacy upon all the clergy so that the princes of the church might not be tempted to distribute the landed property of the church to their progeny. Indeed, the Popes did succeed in forcing celibacy upon the clergy so that the Church would remain the largest feudal landowner. Today, the only reason that I can think of that the Papacy continues to decree the celibacy of priests is that unmarried priests are cheaper, and need less wages and can live in common, whereas somebody who's married has to have higher wages.

At the same time the Pope, who had become the supreme ruler of feudal Europe, organized the defense of Western Christendom against the incursions of foreign invaders such as the Normans, the Magyars, the Arabs, Avars and so forth. At a certain point in the Crusades, the Papacy went over to the offensive. In so doing, the door was opened to outside influences, to a tremendous upswing in international trade, and to the penetration of the natural economy of feudalism by the money economy. All of this eventually destroyed feudal society and brought capitalism into being.

Decline of the Catholic Church

Up to this point in history, Christianity and the Catholic Church could be conceived as playing a progressive economic function, starting from the decline of the Roman empire till the time of the Crusades at the height of feudal times. However, since then, at least in its Catholic version, it has played a reactionary role.

All its ideals hark back to the Middle Ages, to the tenth to thirteenth centuries. Thomas Aquinas, whom the Church considers the greatest thinker of mankind, lived back in those times. The structure ethically and morally, as well as internally and politically, of the Catholic Church is that of a medieval institution. Everything comes from the top down, and nothing much goes from the bottom up. Obedience, discipline, unquestioning faith, rule "by the grace of God," autocratic dictation, even in private matters such as birth control, marriage, divorce, birth, the treatment of disease, education and the meddling in science and in politics, all bear the mark of medieval times when theology *i.e.*, the Papacy, dominated everything.

Basically, the Roman Catholic Church continues to show to this day that it operates with medieval concepts. In those days, at the heyday of its power and its influence the Popes and the princes of the Church were no better and no worse than the rest of the feudal nobility. Celibacy, chastity and poverty were just for the rank-and-file priests, not for them. To this day, the Pope and the high princes of the Church dream of the "great" days when they could burn anyone who disagreed with them at the stake, roasting them very slowly over a slow flame.

But like everything else in society, feudalism also declined. Trade with the East opened up the frozen structure of feudalism; production for exchange began to displace production for use and the new capitalist mode of production began to make inroads. As the economic factors changed, the institutions had to be changed in order for the new productive forces to be allowed to expand. The biggest obstacle along that road was the Papacy, this feudal exploitative machine and international ruler of feudal times that safeguarded feudal institutions and property relations.

Reflecting the new capitalist productive mode, the Protestant sects arose. They fought against the internationalism of the Pope, because capitalism had to build on a national basis. They fought against the conspicuous consumption of the Catholic Church, the number of feast days, the nature of its wealth, in land and in treasures, that had to be broken up and utilized by nascent capitalist production.

The Protestants also democratized the Church. Their sects brought it more or less under the control of the rank-and-file people. In other words, they applied bourgeois-democratic ideals to the ossified feudal structure of Catholicism. They tried to separate state and church. They made religion a question of conscience rather than coercion, at least in their better moments.

The first class struggles between the incoming capitalist class and the antifeudal layers and the feudal classes were fought in religious guise, with varying degrees of success from country to country through Lutheranism and Calvinism, and other varieties of Protestantism.

Henceforward, class struggles were going to be fought out in political terms and not disguised anymore in religious terms. Conse-

quently, not just Christianity but all religious belief has become a detriment to historical progress.

If early Christianity ameliorated the misery of the impoverished city proletariat in the decline of the Roman empire, and Protestantism was the disguised ideology of the bourgeoisie in the rise of capitalism, what of Ecumenism today? I believe that the drive for unity between Protestantism and Catholicism is also motivated by economic as well as political factors. Revolution threatens the capitalist system as a whole everywhere in the world. Capital now operates not just on a national but on an international scale just as the Papacy does. All the reactionary forces feel the need to ally themselves against the forces of revolution. It is this reactionary feeling that motivates Protestantism and Catholicism and Judaism to drop their former disputes at the common altar of reaction.

Materialist base of religion

Since the great French bourgeois revolution, class struggles have been fought on open, nonreligious terms. In late 1793 at the height of the French revolution, the Hebertists, a faction of the Jacobins, abolished all the churches in France, converting them into public assembly halls, designating them as temples of reason. They also opened up the relics and found most of them to be fakes. The Archbishop of Paris appeared before the Convention and admitted that he had taught something that he himself had not believed in.

The Hebertists also decreed that there was no God, that trees of liberty should be planted and that the cult of human reason should be established. They wrote a new calendar, doing away with the traditional nomenclature, renaming the days of the week and the months of the year. In other words, they proceeded to uproot all vestiges of religion.

The Marxist analysis of religion as a social phenomenon states that it has a materialist base, as well as fulfilling a psychological need that arises therefrom. A seeming powerlessness before social and natural forces, the anxiety of being helpless before incomprehensible forces, lead to the supernatural bond of the human psyche.

The attempt of the French revolutionaries of 1793 to establish atheism by decree proved fruitless. Class society was still on the order of the day. Bourgeois class society needed religion once more so that the exploited classes would not be deprived of the balm of a better life after death.

One can quote no better witness than Napoleon Bonaparte because he was instrumental in this process. Napoleon Bonaparte was an ex-radical, as we'd call him today, an ex-Jacobin. Napoleon was quite frank about his own religious beliefs: "One must reestablish religion in order to have morality. How can one have order in the state without religion? Society [and he means bourgeois society — T.E.] cannot exist without inequality of fortunes and inequalities of for-

tunes cannot exist without religion. How can a man dying from hunger sit next to a man who is belching from overeating, unless there is an authority that says 'God wills it so.'"

Napoleon continues: "It is necessary that there be rich and poor in this world. We need religion to say that in eternity it will be different. I see in religion not the mystery of the incarnation but the mystery of the social order. It relegates to the heavens the idea of inequality so that the rich are not massacred here on earth."

Accused of being a Papist, Bonaparte said: "I am nothing. I was a Mohammedan in Egypt, I shall be a Catholic here in France, and were I to rule a nation of Jews, I would rebuild Solomon's temple." Napoleon signed a concordat with Pope Pius VII to reestablish the Catholic Church in France to protect the bourgeois order. Thus, religion was brought back to France. Because to reconcile the poor with the glaring inequalities of capitalist society, as Bonaparte put it so bluntly and, I think, correctly, they needed the salve of a better life after death.

Today, the Catholic Church and the various Protestant sects continue as instruments of bourgeois class rule on the very basis that Napoleon indicated.

Precisely because Marxists do understand that religion still has a materialist base under capitalism, and even for a time after the socialist revolution, we are against any type of anti-religious as well as religious coercion. We stand for the unconditional freedom of conscience of the individual, even while we oppose the counterrevolutionary machinations of any religious institutions.

The base for religion will disappear as the socialist transformation of the world will bring the at-present-uncontrolled social and natural forces under the conscious control of the human collective.

In the meantime, in the struggles for a new society, in the class struggles that take place, they are neither furthered nor actually fought under the banner of so-called eternal moral precepts. They are fought for economic and political goals that should be bluntly and clearly stated.

The struggle to salve one's own conscience, the desire for individual martyrdom is ineffective because it negates the demands of the class struggle. The appeals to the conscience of the ruling class are fruitless, as the assassinated Martin Luther King and the nonviolent movement that he led found out. In class society, moral precepts and general moral prescriptions safeguard only inequality, lack of liberty and exploitation. All of this, in the name of liberty, freedom and equality!

These supposedly eternal ideas, these moral precepts, have different meanings to different classes at different times and at different periods. To the early Christians, equality meant equality of consumption and to consume collectively. That was their main ritual of which precious little remains in the Mass, nothing at all, as a matter of fact. To the early Christians, freedom meant freedom from work.

As unproductive proletarians, they never were interested in work. As a matter of fact the ascetics and other early sects were completely indolent, and it was considered a great virtue not to do anything.

But to the capitalists, equality meant something else. It meant the institution of private property rights in the means of production. Not only the feudal landowners and barons should rule the society, but the bourgeoisie too should have a say. The capitalists too should get a large share in the wealth, and for that purpose they should be allowed to exploit people. That was what equality meant to the capitalists.

Freedom to them meant the liberty to use the means of production for their own private profit; that's why they call the capitalist world the "free" world—because they are free to exploit all the wealth of humanity for their own private profit.

To Marxists, equality and freedom mean something quite different. To the revolutionary industrial proletariat, what does equality mean? First, it means the ability of all to utilize the socially produced labor product. And freedom has a different content also. It signifies the diminution of the socially necessary labor time to a minimum by planning an economy for the benefit of everyone, by removing the impediment of the private appropriation of labor's product.

The liberty for the enjoyment of life, the sciences, the arts, will be increased not through the total elimination of all necessary work, as the early Christians thought, but by reducing it to a minimum and by sharing that necessary work equally among all the members of society.

Marxists pose their aims not in religious or general ethical principles but in scientific and political terms: the nationalization of the means of production, the establishment of a planned economy, and the extension of the socialist revolution, its benefits and its power, to the rest of the world.

It will be the revolutionary endeavors of the working masses that will make the forces of humanity obey the collective will and decision of society. In this manner, the need for religion and any other kind of nonscientific beliefs and practices will be overcome.

Christianity

Father Bonpane: I'm glad to be with you this evening. I think we've heard a marvelous analysis of where we've been, and I'll try to give a few thoughts on where we're going. Certain things are happening today that I think we want to keep abreast of. All of us would be repelled by any kind of religious coercion, whether it be dogmatic atheism, or evangelical atheism, or evangelical Christianity, or Mohammedanism. We as human beings reject this very strongly. So, as Christianity becomes aware of itself, slowly, we see the same awareness that all mankind is going through, something starts to happen. It's happened in a prison cell, in Germany, at the time of Adolph

Hitler, when Dietrich Bonhoeffer concluded that it would be a wise thing to participate in the assassination attempt against the dictator, as a Lutheran minister.

I'm happy tonight that we're here to discuss Marxism and Christianity rather than simply Marxism and Catholicism. Bonhoeffer, in reflecting in a very prophetic way where Christianity was going, said in his book *Letters and Papers from Prison*, "We're going on, to a religionless Christianity." It was a profound thought on his part because he felt very definitely that it was precisely the religion in Christianity that was the negative factor and, to him, the use of the word "religion" in this context meant ritualism: the association of salvation with ritual; the association of salvation with formalism or legalism, or what we might call triumphalism.

Formalism, thinking that through certain forms or being stiff in front of God that somehow we gave him homage. Legalism, that we'd have to have laws to be saved, whether it be laws of compulsory attendance at church, laws of celibacy, or any other ecclesiastical, human, civil laws that have made up so much of ecclesiastical practice in canon law through the years. And triumphalism, a concept that we do have the best possible church, and the best possible representatives and we do the best possible thing at all times.

Bonhoeffer conceded that those things were very negative factors in Christianity and he saw them as going out. He said a "religionless Christianity" which, in his vision, prior to his assassination, meant that the building of churches would not be important in the future, that somehow what was happening was that man was becoming more incarnational. And rather than think of incarnational as having man focus on pie in the sky by and by, the concept of incarnation in Bonhoeffer's terms was precisely that man enter into the hopes, desires, anxieties and sufferings of his brother, up to and including the ultimate consequences, which for him he would equate with the crucifixion.

So he could see this incarnational view of man which he found in no way contradictory or obstructionist to the revolutionary currents of his day. Now this has been going on in Christianity not only with Bonhoeffer, but with many others, even into the sacred confines of the Vatican itself.

The Vatican has said things which it has not carried out to this date. Whether we start with the writings of Leo XIII, which were clearly an answer to the writings of Karl Marx—clearly and distinctly—his letter *Rerum Novarum* written toward the end of the nineteenth century was a direct answer to the *Communist Manifesto.* Was it an answer? He simply began by mentioning that men were going into factories and being destroyed, while material is coming out of factories ennobled.

Something, a certain awareness was coming into these Church people, in spite of the fact that they continued to live as Oriental monarchs. Continuing with Pius XI and *Quadrogesimo Anno*, a reitera-

tion of the rights of the working man in front of his oppressors. All of this, I would say, still within the context of class structure, still within the context of private property, very definitely, very obviously. So that private property as a right was reiterated by both of these men, in the strongest possible terms. And it wasn't until that very dangerous character came along, John XXIII, that we began to see observations that, well really, private property cannot be seen as an absolute right, it's a rather relative thing, a certain weakening in the formal former capitalist line, that had been very strongly held by the previous Popes.

John XXIII scandalized the capitalist world with *Mater et Magistra* in which he spoke of the socialization process as an irreversible process of the twentieth century, and perhaps the most notable process of the twentieth century, and something that was not about to change. He acknowledged it. People like the columnist William Buckley at that time said *"Mater si, Magistra no."* (Mother yes, teacher no.) He as a Catholic, right-wing teacher, objected very strongly to what was coming out of the mouth of this old man in Rome. That was followed by *Pacem in Terris,* which was looked upon by many as an attempt to make a rapport with the Marxist world. John was called by all, "soft on Communism," to say nothing of "soft on socialism."

Oddly enough, the present man has become a tragic figure in terms of ecclesiastical law. In terms of economics and politics, he is not quite so tragic. If we analyze his letter, for example, *Populorum Progressio,* and see his understanding of the place of revolution in society, we can see that Pope Paul himself acknowledges the possibility of total restructurization of society, where he says—something that is so often quoted by Latin American rebels—in his letter written in 1966, "violent revolutions generally and frequently beget new evils, and we should try to avoid this type of activity—except in the case of long standing tyrannies where the fundamental rights of man have been violated."

Catholicism and revolution

Regis Debray, in Bolivia, quoted this immediately, saying this is where we're at in Latin America. I can recall very well the man second in command of the FAR [*Fuerzas Armadas Rebeldes*, Rebel Armed Forces] in Guatemala having in his back pocket a copy of this encyclical, and saying, "we have a mandate from the Pope himself, because we have longstanding tyranny, and we've had this tyranny for many years."

So I think the only position we can take in front of Christianity, is to defend nothing. I think the analysis we've heard is very striking, and any observations I might make in regard to it would perhaps be nitpicking. I think the analysis as given stands very, very

well.

For example, in nitpicking I could stress the fact of Paul's labors as a tentmaker and so on. However, we notice Paul had to tell the people to go back to work because they weren't working, they were expecting the Lord to return and he had a difficult time with them, and he said, well, go to work folks. There was a waiting that was very definitely there, and it certainly was noticeable in monasticism, which in time did show a great deal of industry, certainly industry in terms of bookmaking, printing and study, etc. However there was a rise of what we call contemplation, which at best is reflection and which at worst is laziness. So I would say, to attack the analysis we have heard would be nitpicking and I would rather let it stand. I would much rather let it stand and try to say where this thing called Christianity is going, because it, as all mankind, is growing.

I see history, not as a repetitious cyclic thing, but rather as a spiral going upwards, and mankind is to blame, when we think of world revolution. I sat there the other day in front of the Federal Building in Los Angeles noticing people looking for Communists and I was saying to myself, my God, if every Communist alive today in the world were dead, we would still be in the midst of international revolution. Things are happening regardless. Mankind is on the move, regardless of the ideologies that surround it. Nothing is going to stop mankind from changing. This structure and restructurization of society is going on, and it's continuing, so let's try to grab it where it is.

We have people like Teilhard de Chardin who came along and who was not a Marxist. And we found his writings in Spanish, and they started filtering around in Latin America, and the Latin American Marxists were just fascinated with him. Where did this Marxist come from — Chardin? What was it that drew the Latin American Marxist so much to Teilhard? It was the dynamics of Teilhard, of seeing the struggle, the constant struggle in mankind. This fascinated the Latin American who is steeped in a Christian culture, a culture that is coming out of his ears, that has been associated particularly with Roman Catholicism.

Then we had a fascinating occurence in this century — the second Vatican Council. I don't think we really appreciate as yet all that has come as a result of this council. Not so much in action but in words. First of all, by having a reverence for the unbeliever. There was a lack of reverence in the Church prior to this, a lack of reverence for the unbeliever. That's where the Church was. They would long to, and I have often felt as we have just heard, that the old-line group in the Church would enjoy returning to the days of the Inquisition, really would enjoy it. But with the coming of the Vatican council came a new reverence, and with this reverence comes a way of saying, here is a man who does not believe. I appreciate him.

But from this many things follow. From this we appreciate not

only other religions, but lack of religion, and from this reverence we're ready to say something, namely, "We don't know all there is to know. We don't always know about God. We don't always know about all these dogmas." We used to have the arrogant attitude, "Come to me and I will tell you all about God." Today, there is much less arrogance.

There are some people who wish to stand before a mystery. There are people who wish to say, "There are things in life which I do not understand." There are many who still use the word God. I remember sitting at the feet for hours of the Marxist Eric Fromm in Cuernavaca, Mexico, listening and sharing with him on these points, and saying, "Look Eric, people generally refer to you as an atheist. Would you explain atheism to us as we sit here, and relate it to your Marxism?"

And he said, "I'll explain my atheism, but only as a Jew. I explain my atheism by saying that the name of God is a name we don't say. The old Rabbis, they wouldn't focus on the word because they were too incarnate with their own body and with life here, and they thought that's the way it should be. And that's the way I, Eric Fromm, look at it, and people call me an atheist." I thought that perhaps this was one of the best expressions of faith I ever heard.

We flippant Christians throw the word God around very easily, as if we could comprehend God. We cannot. So perhaps we can just acknowledge a certain amount of mystery in life. I find today that man is the best focal point for all of this. I find in fact that basically I am a pragmatist, nothing else, I can't be anything else.

I am constantly trying to observe things at work, the things that bring results, and I find that in the Latin American scene—an area that is beset by revolution—the atheistic humanist and the theistic humanist can work together, and they don't have time for any problems. They are together in all the rebel movements in Latin America at this moment. I've heard young rebels say, "I'm in this because I believe." I've heard other rebels say, "I don't even believe my mother." Whether they believe or not is in a certain sense irrelevant. The important thing is that they can identify with the struggle of mankind—they're not going to waste time on the dogmatics of trying to create an evangelical atheist or an evangelical Christian.

I notice this in the revolutionary country of Cuba, which perhaps gives an example to us of the Church problem—there's never been a revolutionary country in history more considerate of the established church than Cuba. Far more considerate than the early days of the Mexican revolution, which was rather tough on the established church; the Cuban revolution has been very, very mild.

At the present time the Cubans cannot see their way clear to allowing a practicing Catholic to be a member of the Party. While I was there I talked to many people about this, and thought about it. I

wrote a couple of articles on the subject in Havana for their *Pensamiento Critico,* their critical magazine, thinking that the burden of this change is really on the Church structures, not on the Cuban government.

The Church structures are still rather inhibiting to someone who's involved in revolutionary politics and hence, in my view, as the Church can become less formalistic, the Catholic Church now, less legalistic, less triumphalistic; it will be possible for a revolutionary government not to have to make distinctions between those who are formal believers and those who are not. The fact is that in the past, the Church has been a refuge for counterrevolutionaries, and in certain places for example, even in Cuba today, it is that still. We can't make generalities on this, but we can say that for certain people it is a refuge of counterrevolution.

Where is it going? I think that the Church is going to become less and less visible and more and more Christian. It will go, I think, where Harvey Cox sees it going, will find its way into secular institutions, people having a reverence for this man Jesus, who far from being otherworldly, was a man who told us to do the will of God on earth. What we did to him was not to crucify him once, but practically to crucify him every time we set up a new church.

So, I do think the concepts are viable. Because I don't see them staying the same, I don't look back to Marxism any more than I look back to Jesus. I see them both as going forward, and both in a process of constant change. I could be called personally an eclectic, a person who does pick and choose from people who have gone before.

Are the two concepts compatible? I'd say that dogmatic Marxism is not compatible with dogmatic medieval Catholicism. I think that's quite clear. I'd say that nondogmatic Marxism is very compatible with revolutionary Christianity, because revolutionary Christianity is not more associated to capitalism than it is to Jesus.

I think that many of our Christians, say in places like the United States, are far more capitalistic than they are Christian. There's much more of a tie to capitalism than there is to Christianity. Hence for them, I think there would be a distinction.

However, as time goes on, I see more of a rapport between Marxism and Christianity than there ever could be between capitalism and Christianity. There's more room for rapport. It's more possible to be able to say that we will share with all according to their means and we will take from each according to his ability. It is more possible for us to say that no one had anything that they called their own, but that they shared things in common. These things are very scriptural, taken from the Acts of the Apostles. It is more possible to identify that with Marxist concepts than it would be to identify it with the concept of profit, especially profit as applied to a few. In answer to the question posed this evening, I would say yes, Christianity and Marxism are compatible.

Where is the Church going then? Mention was made of the celibate clergy. Many of us are working quite strongly against that at the present time. We're doing everything we can to change it because we do feel that that is one of the factors that has helped to maintain thought control, to say nothing of birth control, and to maintain economic control over the clergy. There's a very definite move against that.

Pressure for change

The move within the churches at the present time is coming from the bottom up, and that is very significant. People are voting for married clergy by getting married—that's their vote. And I don't know of any other way to do it. That's quite revolutionary in its own way, but that's what revolution is about, a small group of people doing something. There is only a handful of us here that are doing something. This is going on everywhere in the Church.

There are a lot of people who no longer identify with fear in the Church. They cannot base their spiritual growth on fear any longer. They say, "if you don't go to Mass on Sunday you'll go to hell." Their answer is, "you go to hell." Fear is not the factor at this point. It will not be. This has been the controlling factor, as it has been in many folk cultures, so in order to understand what is happening to the Church, perhaps we'd better look, rather than to politics, instead to anthropology. The Church, and Church people are leaving their folkways.

Folk cultures, as you know, are marked by a specific garb. We all dress the same way. What a connection there was between those folk communities in Guatemala and religious orders! I used to see Indians all dressed exactly the same way, from a given village. Not to dress the way everyone else dressed was an insult to the community worthy of excommunication. The Church, then, is changing its garb. Folk cultures all speak the same language. The Church is changing its language. Folk cultures operate on antiquarianism. The oldest must be the wisest. We are seeing a change in that.

What is happening then is that structures related to Christianity are leaving folk patterns and entering into urban society. And as they enter into urban society they are accepting the thoughts of urban society, one of which is Marxism. So our question has been whether these are compatible. I would say they certainly are compatible. Is present day Marxism compatible with medieval Christianity? No. Is revolutionary Christianity compatible with what is happening in revolutionary Marxism? Yes.

We have so many examples in Latin America—like the words of Fidel recently when he said, the Communist parties of Latin America are becoming more and more reactionary while the churches are becoming more and more revolutionary. There's the example of the State Department of the United States telling Professor Donald

Bray in Washington that at this point we're less worried about the power of some of the established parties than we are about the power of the mobilized Church. I heard the same idea while I was in Washington.

Why do you think the primary aid of Archbishop Dom Helder Camara was just found stabbed and beaten to death, because of his tremendous impact on the students of the University of Recife? The rightwing extremists knew that this man as a priest, as assistant to the Archbishop, was having a greater revolutionary impact on the students than their party line was. Why? Because he was telling them yes to revolution. Just as the Archbishop himself has. They're afraid to kill *him* at this point.

We probably have twenty revolutionary archbishops in Latin America. We have none in the United States. Don't get worried. We don't have any, not even one. We have very unusual people in the episcopacy in Latin America: some twenty—a small minority out of hundreds of bishops. Most of them are in the reactionary mold of time gone by. Some of them are already using Marxist terminology in their pastoral letters.

This began with a very striking one called "The Letter of the Bishops of the Third World." This started off by saying, "For centuries now, the Church has tolerated capitalism in its lending of money at interest, with its exploitation, and with its class system. And we cannot help but rejoice in seeing new systems, more just and more equitable." These are a handful of the only turned-on church leaders in Latin America. Fifteen to twenty bishops who realize that if things change the way they should be changing they are going to lose their homes and their Mercedes-Benz.

Then as we go to the lower clergy there are thousands, thousands of such priests in Latin America at the present time. The really dangerous ones (for all the agents present here) are the native-born Latin Americans. We North Americans are generally conservatives at the present time, because we're attached to apple pie. The Latin Americans haven't had much apple pie as clergy and they couldn't give a damn whether their country is "Communist" or "Socialist" tomorrow or not. They are interested in whether their people eat.

And when I say they couldn't give a damn, by that I mean they are not going to oppose it at all. They are not, and are not going to be, counterrevolutionary. We sat down, and I remember very well, with a group of rebels who would come in from the countryside for a little chat and some rest at a nice quiet church in Guatemala City.

And they don't have two heads. They don't have two lines. They have one line. They say what they think and they said, "We're going to be very hard on the Catholic Church." The priests sitting around said, "Gee, that's great." They said, "We have no objections to Christianity, but we're going to be very hard on the concept of buildings, on the concept of class, on the concept of privileges." The

priests listening to this were all safe in terms of revolutionary change, all, every one of them were safe. They had nothing to say except "sock it to them." So the churchmen of Latin America — I can't say all, I wish I could — are not going to be an inhibiting factor.

I guess maybe I've taken a step away from the ideology and tried to go to the reality a little more. I think you're conscious of what's been happening in Russia recently. They're certainly very interested in churches from the standpoint of history and culture, and there's been a lot more reflection in the *Science of Religion* magazine on the place of religion in culture. There has been more of this in the past year in Russia, I think, than we've seen since 1917. I don't think we necessarily have to consider this revisionist. I think it is simply trying to analyze a reality that man will deal with. If we hindered an analysis of some sort of Christian or Jewish or Moslem or Zen thought, I think we'd have little underground groups forming in China, having a secret discussion on religion.

That religion has been the opiate of the people, I would never deny. It has been. It can be the opiate. I don't think it has to be the opiate. It has consistently been an opiate, for telling people be patient and God will bless you in heaven. That is precisely what the revolutionary church does not tell people today. And that is precisely why they're screwing up the whole thing — as far as maintaining the status quo is concerned

It has an occupational hazard historically. It has with it historically redeeming factors of study, redeeming factors of social welfare, redeeming factors of printing, redeeming factors of culture, redeeming factors of getting man to contemplate spiritual reality, redeeming factors of helping man see that he is not a machine. There is a mystique about man — that he is something greater than the sum of his parts, that there are things that we do not understand, that there are things that we cannot put into a box, that there are realities in life that we cannot control.

"As philosophies, they are incompatible"

Edwards: Marxism believes in the primacy of economic factors in conditioning all superstructural phenomena, especially in the ideological field. I think that the ferment that today shakes even the most frozen structures of religious practice is testimony to that interrelation. The worldwide crisis that contemporary capitalist society is in and the revolutionary endeavors of millions of exploited masses have affected even the most traditional and hidebound institutions. I would certainly put the Catholic Church, the Vatican and the Pope in that latter category. An establishment that can hang on for seven hundred years after it has outlived itself — that is really quite a feat! It has continued to exist through seven hundred years of the incoming, fullblown and now decadent bourgeois society, without ever re-

forming itself or giving up any of its medieval ideas. If someone here or there pays lip service now and then to more modern ideas, I don't think that means too much.

If we're going to make a list of what the Popes have said, I think we should also mention the rejection of birth control by the Pope. Of all the reactionary positions ever taken by the Church here is one that is even rejected by most of the firm believers, who hold that this is a private matter, not subject to dictation by any authority, especially not a bachelor autocrat.

I indicated the materialist base for religion and that we Marxists believe that it is dwindling. In general, scientific concepts are being introduced into all conditions of life. You can't even buy food anymore without knowing something of the composition of what you buy in scientific terms. And if even you know that, you don't know that tomorrow it might not be declared harmful, contaminated by DDT, or what not. Scientific knowledge is needed today just for the plain, ordinary business of survival in this modern society with its growing complexity.

You have to have some knowledge of the natural sciences and increasingly the social sciences as well. Previously, perhaps partial awareness was enough in social struggles. But I don't think that it's going to be enough in the present and in the near future. The division of labor in the production of goods has increased to the point where it is imperative to become acquainted with scientific insights to achieve complete consciousness and awareness and particularly to reject any notion that there are some things that you cannot know. That all things are open to the human mind, given time and the will and the application to solve all problems, this is widely understood today. The hypothesis of a divinity lurking behind that which you do not understand right now, has begun to wither away.

Those oppressed sectors of society or those layers that are amenable to their pressure, will try hanging on to religion, even after having become infected with revolutionary ideology, and try to reconcile the two. But in order to do this, it is necessary first of all to look at the gospels not as divinely inspired but as historical documents written long after the events described, and falsified over the centuries in the interests of the Church bureaucracy.

One possible hypothesis is that Jesus was a Galilean guerrilla fighter who tried to make an insurrection in Jerusalem, and was defeated and crucified by the Romans. The Jews in Judea at that time were a conquered people oppressed by the Romans and generally were engaged in a struggle of national liberation against Roman conquest until the final fall of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. This concept of Jesus as a revolutionary liberation fighter is certainly within the realm of historical probability.

However, the Christian communities that spread throughout the Roman empire after the fall of Jerusalem didn't want to offend the Romans. They put the onus of the crucifixion on the Jews, perpetra-

ting one of the worst falsifications and no doubt the longest lasting slander in history. What reason would the Jewish people have for demanding (unanimously, say the gospels!) that their oppressors, the Romans, kill one of their own fighters for liberation? Since when, in a revolutionary period, does such a thing happen? Bits here and there in the gospels still show the historical falsification: The Romans scourged and put the crown of thorns on Jesus, and reviled him, etc.

If you really wanted to go to a revolutionary Christianity, you'd have to revise the gospels, treat them as historical documents and resurrect the historical Jesus. This is very hard if not impossible to do, because the record has been expunged and falsified for two millennia.

There is a certain similarity between the primitive communism of consumption of the early Christians and the communism of the Marxists. Both have the sense of equality and of sharing things, but modern communism is one of production, of freeing the productive wealth of society from the fetters of the private profit motive. Modern institutional Christianity has lost even the primitive communism of early Christianity.

I also find it difficult to reconcile the role that organized Christianity plays in the present worldwide struggles with the conception of a revolutionary Christianity. Even in the time of the Reformation and in the Middle Ages, in order to make the church into a revolutionary instrument, the Protestant sects had to break with the Pope and with all organized religion, forming new denominations.

There was no working within the confines of the established hierarchy, as Luther, Calvin and others found out. It might very well be that such new religious sects are in the making, but I think it would be an illusion for members of those particular persuasions to believe that they can reform either the Catholic Church or any one of the established Protestant institutions.

My answer to the question of whether Marxism and Christianity are compatible is that as philosophies they are not compatible. I think that religion is on the way out and science is on the way in, and I consider Marxism as the science of society.

In the ongoing process of struggle for the achievement of socialism, revolutionary Marxists and revolutionary Christians are certainly compatible as long as they're fighting for the same things. I think that the contradiction there lies not in the revolutionary Marxists but in the revolutionary Christians who vainly seek to reconcile their old religious beliefs with their new-found revolutionary ideology. I think they will find eventually that the time of Reformation, the time of heretical sects, the time of trying to reform the church ended long ago. The subsequent course of struggle will demonstrate that, if it isn't clear now.

As for Latin America, I have a slightly different appreciation of the influence of Catholicism in Latin America. In Latin America the Catholic Church has a long history of oppressing the people. My view of Latin American intellectuals is not that they're in the sway

of Catholicism, but that they pay no attention to it. I would like to point out that the Catholic Church in Latin America can't even raise enough cadres for its own priesthood from the local people. It has to import North American, Italian and Spanish priests in order to fill up the cadres of the Church, not being able to convince the Latin American intellectuals that the priesthood is the career for them. I would rather think that the Church in Latin America is on the skids. The revolutionary views expressed inside the Church in Latin America are an indication of how far the influence of revolutionary sentiment has spread, affecting even some of the upper hierachy who give lip service to it. But I'm not convinced that they're really revolutionaries.

The Third Congress of the International Union of the Christian Democratic Youth in Montevideo was quite a shift to the left on the part of the Latin Americans from Bolivia, Argentina, and Chile, who came out for building a class organization of the workers and for the socialist revolution. But I don't think that this means that the Catholic Church or the Protestant churches are going to become revolutionary organizations. It signifies that some of the lower ranks of the hierarchy and the rank-and-file Catholics are coming over to the revolution, and will participate to the fullest in the coming socialist uprisings, despite their religious hangups.

A role for revolutionary church figures

Bonpane: I would like to make a few comments on this: First of all, on the birth control thing, July 1967, when the last letter came out, and it was one of the clearest cases again of a grassroots movement of people within the Church saying "no" to a document from Rome. It came up in a very interesting way. The day it came out there was a comment with it, saying we hope that the faithful will understand that this letter is not meant to be an infallible document. The answer of course was, noninfallible indeed! It has been fairly well rejected. The thing that has fascinated me about it is that I feel that the document has a lot in common with the Marxist view of population. In other words, what the United States needs today is a better understanding of what I believe is the Marxist view of population, namely, that the earth is quite productive and with scientific means we can feed the population that we have. In other words, I find very little population paranoia in Marxist areas.

I think this horror of the population explosion is very definitely tied up with U.S. capitalism. We don't want those dirty brown or black people increasing too fast! So we want those people to limit their families so that they don't get too big. We never gave a damn about them before. We couldn't care less whether they live or die. We don't want them to get so big in Latin America that they outnumber us—so that the whites can rule. I feel that this is something

distinct to the States. I've seen Latin American Marxist demographers absolutely viciously attack U.S. birth-control programs as just another form of Yankee imperialism. The same as if you go into a black ghetto to preach birth control. The black revolutionary will say, "Man, have babies, have as many babies as you can. We'll outnumber you." What the hell do they want to practice birth control for? Go and have babies, lots of revolutionary babies.

I personally am opposed to the Pope's letter and do not accept it as it stands. I don't like the letter. As stated before, it doesn't give enough reverence to the personal decision. I don't think a decision like that is up to the Pope. It depends on the people how many children they want. A lot depends on the area: Latin America is land rich. Cuba would like to have twenty million people on that little island; there's no pressure to restrict births. The birth rate is lower than in the rest of Latin America: It's 2.2 now. Across the Caribbean, it's about 3.7 a year in Central America. But there are no pressures to limit birth in Cuba. Prior to marriage, anyone can receive birth control information. After marriage they can receive birth control information, and abortions are legal.

On this matter about Jesus and the Zealots — I put it that way because that's the title of a book by Brannon — I think the book has a very interesting hypothesis in it, and I can only see it as a hypothesis. Brannon's thesis, as an Englishman, is that Jesus did start off with a raid on the Temple and that raid was not made alone. We can find that in the New Testament. He followed this by riding into Jerusalem to take control of the city, as king. He was caught and crucified for this political act. Crucifixion was only reserved for political acts. Subjecting this to analysis, there could have been an overmystification of the thing, as there has been of what many great people have done. That is open to discussion, and believe me, Catholic theologians will be discussing these hypotheses along with the rest of the world, because they're very interesting ones.

One comment which I think very good is that those who have taken part in revolutionary activity and were associated with the formal church, were generally on the outside. They were not in good standing with City Hall. Let's put it that way. And that is consistent with the historical understanding and the role of the prophet.

Leaving Christianity aside, look at this in the Jewish analysis. The typical Jewish prophet stood outside of society, was in bad standing with the Church and particularly stood outside of the city and shouted at society, screamed at it, and told the people about their hypocrisy, their lies, about their fakery, until such time as the people picked up stones and killed him. That is more or less the history of prophets down through the years. The prophet is usually outside of the established political and religious structures, and I think that is still true today. And I think we do see many prophets today, people in a traditional prophetic stance.

This tension between science and religion perhaps will remain. I'm

not good at seeing the future. We have our astronauts circling the moon and reading the book of Genesis now, so man has always been tempted to do something pious at a moment of great discovery. That this can be used as a copout I will not deny. I don't know that it will fade away because of the great complexity of man and his culture, and of what he does not understand. Hence, revolutionary Christians usually are outside the pale.

In the history of Latin America this is clear. Hildago in the Mexican liberation struggle was a priest in very bad standing when he took up his musket, as was Morelos. These men were known as priests and fought as priests. Bartolomeo de las Casas didn't use arms. Camilo Torres certainly was armed to the teeth. What contribution do these men have to make at this time? I think they have the contribution to make that perhaps sectarian Marxists will not be able to make.

I think, because of the relationship of religious figures to society, whether they'll exist in the twenty-first century is another question—but in this period of transition, I think that religious figures are going to be people to build the united fronts in the world today. That is precisely what Camilo Torres was doing. And in his talks throughout Colombia he said, "I'm not here to play games with you about Marxist analysis. I want the Communists and the Socialists and the Christian Democrats, and I want all of us, instead of playing games, fighting each other, to strike upwards at the oligarchy, smash it, and restructure Colombia." And the people of Colombia said yes to him, as they could say yes to no other figure since Jorge Gaitan, who was murdered in 1948.

I think this is what is going to happen. Again, I am not saying this is the way it is always going to be. What I'm trying to do is analyze Latin America in terms of where it is. Latin America can identify with church figures, especially with revolutionary church figures, especially with those who have left the structure, or who aren't afraid of the structure. I think that we had best work together with this, and would recommend to you reading the platform of Camilo Torres for the unity of the Colombian people in revolutionary struggles to change their society.

Dick Roberts

NIXON'S RECESSION AND MONOPOLY RULE

(This is an edited text of a speech delivered at the Young Socialist Alliance "Conference on Revolutionary Politics," Cambridge, Mass., November 1, 1969.)

In a radio address to the American people October 18 and a letter to 2,200 businessmen and trade-union bureaucrats the following day, President Nixon outlined the administration's policies for "combatting inflation" in the coming period. The radio address was billed as a program to hold back the rising cost of living that has eaten at real wages and living standards in this country since the escalation of the Vietnam war in 1965. It turned out to be an exercise in demagogy. The essential message was a threat directed at American workers. About the only true thing Nixon said was, "We've asked the American people to take some bitter medicine."

In this talk I would like to review the policies Nixon outlined in his radio address and then examine in greater detail the conjuncture of the American and world capitalist economies that have necessitated Nixon's "medicine."

Nixon opened by stating what is certainly true: "All across this land, working men and women look at paychecks that say they've had a raise, but they wonder why those bigger checks don't buy any more than their lower paychecks bought four years ago. All across this land, men and women in their retirement, who depend on insurance and on Social Security and on their life savings look at their monthly checks and wonder why they just can't seem to make ends meet any more."

Nixon could have amplified these remarks. War-primed inflation has caused the real wages of American workers, that is, the pur-

chasing power of their wages after you take into consideration higher prices and higher taxes, to fall since the beginning of the escalated attack on Vietnam four years ago. Along with other taxes, Social Security taxes have also risen. But Social Security compensation has not risen, so that Social Security taxes themselves have been used to pay for the war. And at the same time the government has mercilessly slashed medical and other relief programs for the aged and indigent.

Federally-financed housing, one of the most highly touted projects of recent administrations, is in a shambles. "Government-owned housing for the poor across the country has begun a spiral of deterioration that some officials believe may end in catastrophe," a recent survey of the *New York Times* concluded.

Yet Nixon, in his radio message, called upon Congress to hold down Federal spending. This means cutting even further into the budgets for health, education and welfare, slashing federal construction and putting construction workers out of jobs.

The President asked the people to "urge state and local governments to cooperate in postponing spending that can be appropriately delayed," in other words, to support state and city cuts in education, welfare, medical and other budgets which are already being slashed in city after city.

Nixon then called upon "labor's leadership" — that familiar accolade of the capitalist ruling class for its lieutenants in the trade-union bureaucracies — to "base their wage demands on the new prospect of a return toward price stability," that is, to hold down on wage demands, when they have already fallen behind the spiraling cost of living.

The mechanism of recession . . .

These policies, increase of taxes, reduction of federal spending and restraint of the money supply, if followed long enough, can have only one result: a slowdown of industrial production and an increase of unemployment. This is already beginning to take place.

By curtailing production and consequently throwing workers out of their jobs, the capitalists hope to drive down wages even though they have already fallen behind the rising cost of living. In a capitalist economy, when there is full or even near-to-full employment, as has existed in this country since the escalation of the war, workers are in a position to fight for and get higher wages, and they have done that, even though not fast enough to keep abreast of rising prices. The threat of firing does not hold much water when the supply of unemployed labor is small and the capitalists cannot easily replace those workers who have jobs.

But when many workers are out of work, those who have jobs are more reluctant to press for higher pay since they might be fired.

Others who are out of work are willing to take jobs at lower wages than they would get in periods of high employment. This age-old mechanism of the capitalist system, which Marx called "increasing the reserve army of the unemployed," functions to hold down wages when there is "too much employment."

The long period of high employment in this country, the inflationary boom of the sixties, was sustained by the war in Vietnam. A recession would have taken place as long ago as 1965 without that war. What Nixon is doing now, then, is not at all new, regardless of the graduate degrees of his economic advisers: The administration is adopting policies to increase the pool of unemployed labor in order to drive down wages.

The following example shows how completely conscious this policy is. In its October 18 issue, *Business Week* commented on the then-impending nationwide strike against General Electric: "The union alliance [between the United Electrical workers, International Union of Electrical workers and 11 other unions] is still untested, and 1969 could be its last chance for many years. Rising unemployment figures could dim members' militancy by the time the next contract reopening rolls around." That is why General Electric is all of a sudden willing to grant a one-year wage reopening contract. By the following year GE believes that workers will be in a more difficult position to bargain for a wage increase.

. . . Coupled with inflation

But it does not at all follow that a slowdown in production and an increase in unemployment will roll back prices in the near future. Monopoly pricing policies have long vitiated the classical competitive pattern. The fact of the matter is that in the four preceding postwar recessions of the U. S. economy (1948-49, 1953-54, 1957-58, 1960-61), prices continued to rise during the recessions. The last time that a substantial price drop in an economic downturn occurred in this country was during the great depression of the early thirties.

For reasons that I will explain later, the "captains" of American industry really want to stem the rapid rate of price increases. But they do not know when that will happen or how deeply they will have to cut into employment in order to stem the inflation. When Nixon soft soaps the American people and says he is trying to help us if we are patient, he is aware that *prices will continue to rise long after total employment declines.*

Furthermore, Nixon is laying the groundwork for blaming price rises on "inflationary" wage settlements. He has no assurance that workers will cooperate with his demagogic appeal for cutting back on their wage demands. Nor should they cooperate for the simple reason that they are still trying to catch up with the pay that the inflation has taken out of their pockets.

Nixon's economic policies could bring on the first major recession since the beginning of the radicalization of the sixties, the upsurge of the black power struggle and the development of a massive anti-war movement. Since the youth will be the first to lose their jobs and black youth before white, it is evident that such a recession also contains an enormously explosive political potential. One can understand that there is a certain amount of trepidation in ruling-class circles about the consequences of the policies they are undertaking. They *hope* that they can undercut wages and retard the inflationary tide without a big recession.

The gross deception is that the Nixon economic policies are being undertaken in order to benefit the masses of American people. His administration is not concerned about the cost of living or about the aged or the poor. It is preoccupied with an entirely different question, the question of international monopoly competition, the fight of the U. S. imperialist monopolies for domination of world markets. The inflation, caused by the war which they intend to continue, is undermining the competitive position of U. S. monopolies in world trade. This concern of the ruling class and its government is why they are willing to risk a recession.

Profits and wage labor

In order to understand why international competition is the main driving force behind the Nixon administration's recessionary plans, it is helpful to recapitulate certain fundamental tenets of Marx's analysis of the capitalist economic system:

First, the labor theory of value: that is, that collective human labor power alone is the source of all new value created and consequently that the capitalist must employ wage labor in order for his capital to make profits.

Second, the law of accumulation: that is, the necessity of capital to expand. "Profit maximization" requires the accumulation of capital; capital which does not expand perishes.

Third, the contradiction between the advance of technology, which brings with it more productive machinery, and the uninterrupted accumulation of capital.

And fourth, the contradiction between the accumulation of capital and wage labor, between the necessity of capital to expand and the fact that the amount of labor power is limited. Capital accumulation, the indispensable factor for a healthy capitalist economy, is contradicted by the ways it takes place: purchasing machinery and hiring workers.

This is a very schematic outline of the laws that Marx uncovered. Let me be more concrete about each of these points.

If capital is not associated with living labor, if, for example, a corporation is idled by a strike, it doesn't yield any profits to its

owners. This is why the strike is the most effective weapon workers can use against their capitalist employers and against the capitalist ruling class as a whole.

On the surface it appears that the reason why the corporation can't make profits during a strike is because workers aren't running the machinery — and this is true. But this superficial judgment may lead to the false conclusion that not only workers, but the machines they use, the plants they work in, the raw materials they work on, are also the sources of profit — and that is not true.

Ford Motors, for example, might purchase its steel from United States Steel, its electric lightbulbs from GE, its plants from various contractors, its advertising from BBD&O, and so forth. But economists recognized even before Marx that the mere purchase and resale of a commodity cannot produce profits for all the capitalists involved in the process. Ford cannot buy an electric lightbulb from GE for a nicket and resell it in the finished Mustang for a dime. In that case, Ford would actually be gypping GE, it would be paying a nickel for a product actually worth a dime. The capitalist system cannot be explained by such a process of mutual gypping.

Taking each manufactured product apart, piece by piece, ultimately forces one to the logical conclusion that there is only one constituent in it that could be the source of its new higher value, and that is the human work done on it. In the case of the purchase and resale of human labor power, there really is a kind of gypping, called exploitation: The capitalist employer pays a price for the workers' labor power and resells at a price higher than the sum of that price of labor power and the price of the materials in the finished product. But this price difference cannot be explained in terms of adding a "margin" to the price of materials; it can only be explained as the difference between what the capitalist pays the workers and the value the workers add to the materials by working on them.

The whole legal system of capitalism, its legislative system, its police and its armies have the function of keeping this kind of gypping — the exploitation of wage labor — going. Try as he will, the worker can never go to the job market and sell his labor power at a price equivalent to the value he adds to the materials by working; in that case he wouldn't be engaged for long.

Marxists do not argue as is believed by many people that this exploitation of wage labor and appropriation of the surplus value it creates, ends up by *pauperizing* workers continuously. Under the conditions of imperialism, it is true, two-thirds of the capitalist world's population is subjected to permanent impoverishment, whatever the temporary fluctuations of this or that underdeveloped economy. Further, as is precisely the case in America today, workers even in the advanced capitalist nations are repeatedly subjected to attacks on their real wages and they must continually fight to defend these wages.

Nevertheless, as Marx wrote in *Wage Labor and Capital*, "The faster capital . . . increases, the more industry prospers, the more

the bourgeoisie enriches itself and the better business is, the more workers the capitalist needs, the more dearly does the worker sell himself." Marx was pointing out, and this was in 1847, 122 years ago, that in a boom more workers are hired and they can therefore get higher wages. I have already indicated that this has been the case in America during the latter half of the sixties and it is creating problems for U. S. business.

Marx's basic thesis is that the expansion of capital *proletarianizes* an increasing number of individuals. In the same pamphlet just quoted, Marx wrote: "If capital grows, the mass of wage labor grows, the number of wage-workers grows; in a word, the domination of capital extends over a greater number of individuals."

In the great American "boom" of the 1960s, over 15 million Americans grew up to join the ranks of the labor force. This was incomparably more than joined the ranks of the capitalist ruling class — particularly its upper echelon.

According to an article in *Fortune* magazine of May 1968, 33 Americans actually did become "centimillionaires" in this period, individuals "worth" over $150 million each. Every ten years *Fortune* compiles figures on the wealthiest Americans, and 33 of them were on the 1968 list who were not on the 1958 list. Both *Fortune* magazine and grade-school teachers make much of such facts to prove the social mobility of American society. But what does it prove when 15 million Americans join the ranks of the proletariat and 33 enter the ranks of the big bourgeoisie?

The accumulation of capital

My second point was that the capital accumulated from the surplus value produced by workers must expand. It is often argued that capitalists could agree to enter into some scheme to limit their profits and produce each year only so much as is needed and divide the profits equitably between themselves. But why should Henry Ford agree to limit his share of the market to 20 per cent if he can carve out 25 per cent? Why should he allow American Motors to get 5 per cent of the market if he can squeeze it down to 2 or 1 per cent, or even drive that competitor out of business altogether? And if he is not allowed to invest his profits to expand his control of the market, what is he supposed to do with the surplus capital?

In the real world of capitalist competition the scheme of "equitable" profits is utopian. The top capitalists who rule nations reap monopoly superprofits. This can be easily demonstrated historically by the example of the automobile industry.

Not so long ago in the United States there were 57 car corporations. Today there are only four. Three of them rank as the first, third and fifth largest manufacturing corporations in the United States; the first, third and sixth largest manufacturing corporations

in the world. General Motors, Ford and Chrysler have subsidiaries all over the face of the capitalist world and sell cars in over one hundred nations. These are not small accumulations of capital! GM, Ford and Chrysler employ 2,650,000 workers on a world scale; they account for 7 per cent of the total sales of U. S. manufacturing industries; they account for 8 per cent of the total profits.*

These three multinational trusts are owned by a handful of American families. The duPonts, Charles Mott, the Mellons, Ford—these are the well-known names on *Fortune's* list—and each holds millions and even billions of dollars worth of stock in the automobile trusts.

The Ford family owns 10 per cent of the outstanding stock of Ford Motors. Ferdinand Lundberg, in *The Rich and the Super-Rich* published last year, calculates the value of this stock at $2 billion. It is hard to grasp these high figures. One billion happens to be a little bit higher than the total number of *minutes* that have elapsed in history since the year 1 A. D.

Henry Ford II was the subject of an article in the *New York Times Magazine*, October 19, which can serve to give a more concrete idea of capital accumulation in one of its ramifications—its social ramification. Ford, according to this article, has been married since 1965, "when he married luscious, leather-brown Cristina . . . a kind of late-blooming fellow traveler of the jet set, visiting Acapulco, the Bahamas, the Riviera, hobnobbing with Italians and Greeks, with counts, industrialists and handsome women. . . . Once on Long Island, Ford, fully clothed, led a Dixieland band, its members also clothed, into a swimming pool. . . . At a White House dinner dance during the Johnson administration, Cristina wore a white strapless sheath cut so low that Henry himself is said to have complained about the exposure." According to the *New York Times*, the weddings of Ford's two daughters cost $250,000 each. If you were able to work for forty years at a salary of $6,000, you would not see that much money in your working life. Moreover, the vast majority of Americans do not even make $6,000 a year. The average per capita income is well below $5,000.

But the extravagance of the ruling classes is not the fundamental evil of the capitalist system. It is the fact that in order to guarantee its privilege of extravagance, the capitalist class maintains its private ownership of the means of production.

Technological advance and overproduction

Marx, who lived over a century ago, is accused of being relevant only to a period before the dawn of modern technological civilization. Despite this allegation, the reader of *Capital* will discover that the essential features of capitalism Marx describes are valid for our

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*Fortune magazine, June 1969.

own day. Technological advance does not play a secondary role in Marx's analysis; the machine is central to his theory. It was in the machine that Marx and Engels discovered a fundamental contradiction of the capitalist system.

The machine is absolutely necessary for the expansion of capital, it is the main vehicle of capitalist competition, and those capitalists who can afford the most modern and most expensive machinery can produce goods most cheaply and ultimately capture the market. However, the machine is not a source of values; only human labor power produces value.

In order to make up for this loss of labor power at his command, the capitalist who has purchased the more expensive, more automated machinery, must in the long run produce more and more products and he must more and more control the markets in which they are sold. The monopolist can make up for the costs of his machinery and the decline of the labor force under his control by increasing the volume of goods produced. Goods come to saturate the markets, not because of bad calculations by this or that market analyst, but because the competition between expanding blocs of capital expresses itself on the market as competition between masses of cheapened products.

At the same time the machine spurs further accumulation and leads to monopoly. Marx wrote in *Capital:* "The development of capitalist production makes it constantly necessary to keep increasing the amount of capital laid out in a given industrial undertaking, and competition makes the immanent laws of capitalist production to be felt by each individual capitalist as external coercive laws. It compels him to keep constantly extending his capital in order to preserve it, but extend it he cannot except by means of progressive accumulation."

"Accumulate! Accumulate!" Marx wrote in this famous chapter, "That is Moses and the prophets!"

The machine, taken side by side with the growth of the labor force that I have already spoken of, now impresses upon capitalist production the necessity of cycles. The greater the concentration of capital in machinery, necessitated by competition itself, the greater the necessity of producing more goods to pay for machinery. Investment in machinery consequently impels production towards overproduction. And at the same time, the boom produced by building the machines, the hiring of more and more workers, if not in this sector, then in the next, ultimately leads to full or near-full employment. This comes about just when the market is saturated with overproduced goods.

The disemployment of workers to drive down their wages coincides with the laying off of workers in order to clear the warehouses of too many goods. Large-scale unemployment is forced on the working masses because too many products have been manufactured. As the number of jobless increase, the overproduced goods are used

up, wages are pushed down to "tolerable" levels and finally the path is cleared toward new investment and a new production cycle. The advance of technology has not allowed capitalism to escape from the repetition of boom and bust. On the contrary it is exhibited in the consequent permanent job instability for the marginally employed, in the United States specifically, the "last hired and first fired," the black working class.

Monopoly and imperialism

It is evident that the tendency towards overproduction is inherent in the advance of technology, which is, in turn, a necessary consequence of capitalist competition. At the same time we have seen that competition entails a progressive centralization of capital and the growth of monopoly.

But what about monopoly? When one or a very few huge corporations come to control a given market or industrial sector, they can analyze the market down to the last detail and set their prices and amount of production at a level assuring maximum profits. They can adjust the rate of introduction of new technology in accordance with these profit-maximizing conditions. And they can do all this thanks to their monopoly position, because entry of new capital into "their" sector, which would upset all their "price-quantity" calculations, is so difficult, so costly, as to be impossible within very broad limits.

But the permanent necessity for capital to expand, to find new arenas for the exploitation of labor and sales of its product, assures that no stage of monopoly is stable. Monopoly does not resolve the contradictions inherent in the insatiable appetite of capital; in a certain sense it intensifies them.

In the first place it should be noted that the very existence of strong monopoly positions by no means precludes the entry of new masses of capitals; it only limits them. The existence of a number of enormous accumulations of capital results in the tendency towards the formation of an "average rate of monopoly profit."

If the profit rate very much exceeds this average rate for a very long time in any sector, capital from outside will flow in and drive prices back to a level commensurate with the average monopoly profit rate. There is no accumulation of capital so big and no condition of entry so formidable that another immense mass of capital will not be ready to break the monopoly if the profits rise far above this average rate of monopoly profits. The decline of prices of color TV sets a few years after they were introduced on the market is a recent case in point.

Nevertheless, within these limits and over long periods of time, monopolies can set prices and adjust output; they do not have to invest unlimited amounts in new technology to maintain their mar-

ket positions—something any owner of a car is acutely familiar with. But precisely to the extent that they do this, *monopolies tend to choke off arenas for productive investment.* The contradiction emerges: monopolies give rise to superprofits; but far from providing "super arenas" for productive investment, they tend to *limit* these arenas. The contradiction which, in the absence of strong monopoly positions, assumed the form of the overproduction of *goods*, under monopoly conditions assumes the form of overproduction of *capital.*

Is that really a problem for capitalists? Can there be such a thing as "too much money"? For the individual capitalist or mass of capital the answer is obviously no. But for the system as a whole, the answer is an emphatic yes. For accumulation is "Moses and the prophets"; every mass of capital must either grow or contract; the surplus value that has been appropriated in one cycle of production must be capitalized in the next so that more surplus value can be extracted in the future.

Capital is forced from monopolized sectors into other sectors. It must find new sectors and whole new regions to exploit labor in or it must try to take over existing sectors. Consequently the development of monopoly does not reduce competition and tend to stabilize the system. It intensifies competition, as capitals which have monopolized sectors and regions compete for domination and control of others and for domination and control of each other.

In the case of conglomeration, huge masses of capital that cannot find productive outlets for investment turn toward the stock market in order to extend their control. There is a spectacular leap in the centralization of capital and an intensification of the fight for control of markets. Peaks of conglomeration, although not on the spectacular scale of the merger wave that began in 1967, have occurred twice previously in U. S. history: in 1899 and 1929. Both years culminated long periods of capital expansion that were followed by periods of intense economic instability.

The competition between multinational trusts defines for Marxists the essential character of imperialism.

There are those who have been overawed by the impressive postwar power of the U. S. monopolistic trusts: their ability in one part of the capitalist world to control immensely profitable markets, fix prices there, sell billions worth of goods; and their ability in another part of the capitalist world to control governments, suppress colonial revolution, extract superprofits at the expense of the poverty, malnutrition and early death of these two-thirds of the world's population. The argument is made that so long as the super-exploitation of the Third World can be maintained, the monopolists can "buy off" the workers of the advanced capitalist countries.

Impressionism of this kind, which is not new in the history of the radical movement, is to be expected in periods of prolonged capitalist prosperity. One can find more sophisticated critiques of Marx-

ism in the writings of the leading theoreticians of the Second International written around the turn of the century. Eduard Bernstein then argued that the internationalization of the trusts—only beginning at that time—would enable the few great powers to solve the main contradictions produced by monopoly competition and he predicted a gradual and peaceful evolution of capitalism to socialism.

But World War I was to prove that the world division of markets does not resolve the antagonisms inherent in the need for different masses of capital to expand; it exacerbates them to the extreme. Surplus capital has penetrated every inch of the globe, it has choked off all outlets and superprofits are piling up crying out for investment. A crisis shakes the world imperialist system, not because there is potentially too little to go around, not potentially enough to feed everybody, but because the monopolies are glutted and can find no profitable outlets for their billions. Physical destruction of existing values in world war "solves" this problem.

Monopoly control of raw material resources in the under-developed world and of the markets in the advanced capitalist countries cannot be viewed as separable aspects of imperialism. They are complementary necessities of expanding capital.

Clearly the needs of imperialist capital far overreach the ability of national markets to satisfy them. If capital was, in fact, limited to the confines of national boundaries, each economy would be subjected to frenzied oscillation of boom and bust cycles. But the point is that capital long ago flowed over national boundaries into the colonial world, there to exploit labor and to fix its grasp on the sources of raw materials and to seize protected export markets, and into each and every market of the advanced capitalist nations. The internationalization of investment was forced upon capitalism exactly in order to overcome the restriction of national markets, without giving up the political and military prerogative of the national state. Among the consequences of this internationalization was the possibility it offered the monopolies to buffer themselves against the fluctuations of one economy by operating in many economies simultaneously.

The four postwar U. S. recessions have been relatively shallow and short-lived because U. S. imperialism could sell its goods abroad and pour investments into profitable European markets. The big inflationary upswing of the U. S. economy since 1965, on the other hand, has softened the impact of recessions in Italy, France, Germany and Britain.

But this does not free capital in the last analysis from the necessity of exploiting wage labor on an ever increasing scale. The reality is that the instability of the governments and markets of the Third World nations, itself the result of imperialist investment, also serves to greatly limit the amount of capital that can be profitably and safely invested in these plundered nations. And this at one and the same time explains the permanent underdevelopment of these nations *and*

the necessity of capital more and more to throw itself on the markets of the advanced capitalist nations in pursuit of profits.

The great disparity in development, manifested in the economic backwardness of such a vast area of the capitalist world, cannot free expanding capital of its fundamental contradictions. One should not forget that before the first world war and before the second world war, as today, the same peoples were superexploited, the same unevenness prevailed, and yet this did not save the workers of the advanced nations from the trenches of interimperialist wars, wars that had as one of their central aims precisely the redivision of markets and sources of raw materials in the underdeveloped world. The Vietnam war today is also tearing at every strand of the social fabric of this nation. International monopoly rule does not serve to free the workers in the bastions of monopoly power from the contradictions of world monopoly. It more and more closely binds their fate with that of the oppressed everywhere.

Roots of postwar prosperity

In the light of this discussion we should briefly examine the long period of relative stability and class peace that has prevailed in the advanced capitalist nations since the second world war. The United States decisively won World War II. This enabled it for almost a quarter of a century to open up paths for world trade and investment that had been choked off in the thirties. The needs of U. S. monopoly capital were clearly recognized by the rulers of this country in the period leading up to the war and during it.

There is an illuminating quotation from Dean Acheson, who is much in vogue because of the recent publication of his memoirs. In November 1944 — and one recalls what the world looked like in November of 1944 — Acheson as Undersecretary of State addressed a Congressional audience as follows:

"We cannot go through another ten years like the ten years at the end of the twenties and the beginning of the thirties without having the most far-reaching consequences on our economic and social systems," Acheson stated. "We have got to see that what the country produces is used and sold under financial agreements which make its production possible. . . Under a different system you could use the entire production of the country in the United States." However, to introduce such a system, namely, socialism, "would completely change our Constitution, our relation to property, human liberty, our very conception of law. And nobody contemplates that. Therefore you must look to the other markets and those are abroad." *

Expanded world trade, a stable international monetary system,

* Quoted by David Horowitz, Empire and Revolution, 1969, p. 233

a worldwide network of bases and investments, were the pillars upon which two decades of postwar imperialist prosperity rested. The physical destruction of the industrial plant and equipment of Europe and Japan; a dislocated and disorganized labor force subjected to Communist Party and social democratic misleadership—and consequently a *cheap* labor force; a flood of U.S. money and guns in the Marshall Plan and NATO; these were the ingredients of big and profitable markets for capital investment. The rebuilding of the European and Japanese economies helped sustain the long boom for a number of years.

It is unquestionable that the postwar U.S. recessions would have been longer and more severe if U.S. capital and goods had not found needed outlets in Europe. The "automobilization" of Europe is the fundamental cause of the "suburbanization" of the United States. Today U.S. foreign investments stand at the colossal figure of $150 billion. U.S. corporations do not export goods from this country so much as they manufacture and sell them abroad. "U.S. foreign investment" is now greater than the Gross National Product of Germany or Britain.

Acheson used the formulation "what this country produces." But what is this country? Who owns and controls these foreign investments that are so crucial in the world capitalist economy? Esso, Ford and General Motors account for 40 per cent of U.S. direct investment in Germany, Britain and France. In all of Western Europe, 20 U.S. trusts account for two-thirds of U.S. investment.* And if the "dollar must be salvaged," if the "balance of payments must be righted," if the "balance of trade must be corrected"—one must remember in whose interests these international economic operations are being conducted.

I pass over now from monopoly to the fourth point of my presentation: the irreconcilable contradiction between the unlimited needs of capital to expand and labor power, which is a limited commodity.

There are only so many workers available to capital at any one time, in each state, nation, continent or in the capitalist world as a whole, be they 70,000,000 in the U.S. market, 250,000,000 in the world capitalist market. The insatiable thirst of capital to expand drives it beyond the capacities of national markets and ultimately of the world market.

The long expansion of capital following the second world war has brought about a new redivision of the world markets and a new crisis of world trade and investment that inevitably flows from this conjuncture. There is a sharp intensification of the battle for access to each national market. Europe and Japan in the last five years have been like the United States of the immediate postwar period, hungry for foreign markets, especially for the most lucrative of all world markets, the U.S. market itself.

The Economist, December 17, 1966.

This gives the present period a different character from the period of prosperity and relative class peace in the advanced capitalist nations that flowed from an unfettered expansion of capital. Capital that has fully absorbed the labor power available and has glutted the world market with goods is like a caged beast. The overwhelming superiority of the U. S. military machine and the formidable advance of world revolution in China and Eastern Europe rule out for the present the murderous "solution" of interimperialist war resorted to in 1914 and 1939 and tend to ally the imperialists against the common threat of world revolution.

But this all the more impels the imperialists to search for weaknesses, real or supposed, in the military defenses of the noncapitalist world. It partially accounts for the attack on North Vietnam just a decade after the ill-fated attack on North Korea, both with the ultimate prize in mind of opening up the immense Chinese market itself to imperialist goods and capital.

And it all the more presses upon capital the need for "peaceful" outlets. It all the more reinforces the competition for control of markets and the need of capital to drive down wages in order to better its position in this competition. Once again, as in the first world war and its aftermath, and as in the second, the phenomenon of world overproduction, of world capital surpluses, does not find capitalism finally giving to the world working masses a stable share of the produce. On the contrary, capital is redoubling its attack on labor, seeking new means to deprive workers of what they already have.

The Nixon administration's economic policies are dictated by this new conjuncture of world monopoly competition. The inflation caused by the war has begun a process of undoing the seemingly unchallengeable U. S. monopoly in world trade that existed following World War II. Now, high prices of U. S. products tend to erode their competitive position in foreign markets and to open the U. S. market itself to a flood of foreign products.

The crucial automobile industry is a significant case in point. Over one million foreign cars poured onto the U. S. market in 1968, over one half of these Volkswagens, and the rate for 1969 is even higher. This has terrifically intensified competition in this industry, not only between U. S. and foreign car corporations, but between the U. S. corporations themselves. The target is production of the "compact." Chrysler's failure in this field was recorded in the precipitous stock decline of Chrysler shares that led the recent collapse of Wall Street prices. It forced one holder of Chrysler stock, whose name was not revealed, to drop in one sale, 531,000 shares of Chrysler, worth $35 million.

Ford's Maverick is supposed to be the big gainer, but Ford himself has not been happy about the situation. His firing of the president of Ford Motors in October brought Henry Ford into the news. This followed the report of third-quarter profit declines. Ford recently

told two correspondents from the German magazine *Der Spiegel*, "Yes, he was trying to reduce the U. S. market of VW and other imports. Yes, we were not on our toes in the past. Yes, the Japanese are more dangerous competitors than the Europeans. Yes, they make him furious." Ford added, "I would have gladly bought Volkswagen in 1948, but unfortunately that did not happen. I talked about it with representatives of the British Military Government in Germany at that time, but they said 'no.'"* The central problem is world overproduction. Italy's owner of Fiat, Sr. Agnelli, has been complaining about "too many" cars, at the same time Italian workers have erupted in a massive struggle for better jobs, wages, living conditions.

The central purpose of the Nixon administration's attack on American labor is to drive down the wages of American workers to levels that make U. S. monopolies more competitive in international trade. The auto industry is not exceptional. Foreign steel, textiles, chemicals and even TV sets have steadily eroded the grasp of U. S. monopolies on the world market.

While Nixon was making the radio address that I spoke of at the outset, the Business Council, representing the major corporations in this country, was meeting with administration spokesmen in Hot Springs, Virginia. From the report in the October 20 *Wall Street Journal*, it is evident that plainer words were spoken. The headline of that article was, "Recession Risk Needed to Combat Inflation, Administration and Business Leaders Agree." It contained the following paragraph:

"In private conversations, a sampling of key businessmen almost eagerly received the somber economic prescription. 'A recession might be just what it takes,' one said, to shake workers into more diligence about their jobs as well as to moderate wage settlements. Another said, unless the U. S. sharply improves its cost performance, it will face two 'gruesome alternatives,' either 'closing our borders' to foreign trade or devaluing the dollar, bringing 'the 1930s all over again.'"

Thus these spokesmen for U. S. monopoly dismiss in a few words a quarter of a century of imperialist economic artifice. To the second speaker, unless U. S. industry can improve its "cost performance," meaning "drive down wages," either it will have to dump free trade (i.e., reverse the trend of the Marshall Plan, GATT, the "Kennedy Round," etc.) or devalue the dollar (give up hopes in salvation through international monetary reform, "paper gold," etc.). In any case, both assert in their own way what Marxism has emphasized: The sole source of value to accumulating capital is the exploitation of wage labor. Nixon's economic policies are aimed directly at the wages of American workers. By driving American wages down, Nixon hopes to increase the "room for maneuver" of U. S. monopolies on a world scale.

Atlas, June 1969.

José Revueltas

Leon Trotsky

Two Essays on

VLADIMIR MAYAKOVSKY'S SUICIDE

"Under our great leader Chairman Mao's close attention, the modern revolutionary Peking opera, 'Taking the Bandits' Stronghold,' has been refined and revised many times to bring it to an ever higher degree of perfection. . . . Here we publish the libretto of the opera as it was staged in Peking in October, 1969, and recommend it to the masses of worker, peasant, and soldier readers on various fighting posts. All theatrical troupes are requested to take this version as the standard when they present the opera." (Hsinhua, *Peking, November 2, 1969.)*

* * *

"The crimes of Stalin cannot be covered up indefinitely, or the truth opposed forever — because these were crimes committed against millions of human beings, and they demand illumination. What influence does concealing them have on the youth? The young are not stupid, they understand. I do not take back a single line, not a single word of my letter to the writers' congress. I said in it, 'I am content. I know that I will fulfill my duty as a writer in all circumstances and perhaps after my death with greater success and greater authority than during my life. No one can bar the road to truth: I am ready to die so that the truth might advance.' Yes, I am ready to die and not just be expelled from the Writers Union." (Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's testimony to the Ryazan section of the Union of Writers of the USSR, November 4, 1969.)

* * *

The "Great Chinese Cultural Revolution" and Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn stand at opposite poles on the profound question of the relation of the creative artist to the revolutionary state. It is a question that is as hotly contested in Cuba today as in Russia in the period of the October revolution and Vladimir Mayakovsky's lifetime — the subject of the two essays which follow.

Following in the footsteps of the worst malformations of the Stalin

regime, the ruling bureaucracy in China opened its "Proletarian Cultural Revolution" with attacks on "bourgeois representatives" in such fields as literature and the arts, the drama, movie-making, education, dancing, opera, journalism and publishing. Today it asserts the right to control the artist and art down to the last word and it has sanctioned a vast destruction of the masterpieces inherited from China's past.

Solzhenitsyn and his courageous colleagues in the Soviet Union, like the Czechoslovak Writers Union and Literarni Listy *— which fired the first salvos in the struggle against the Novotny regime — are defending the principle of free expression in the arts, in the best traditions of Marxism. Revolutionary socialism has nothing in common with bureaucratic tyranny over the arts. This is the theme of the essays on Mayakovsky.*

The noted Russian poet committed suicide in 1930. This date is significant because it occurs after the expulsion of the Trotskyist Left Opposition and the triumph of the Stalin faction in the Soviet Communist Party. Mayakovsky's life and his poetry consequently spanned the rise and the first chapter of the degeneration of the Russian revolution. Both essays appear here for the first time in English.

José Revueltas, one of the most outstanding writers of Latin America, is known for such novels as El Luto Human *(Human Sorrow) which won the Mexican National Prize for Literature in 1943. A longtime member of the Communist Party, Revueltas began to drift away from it and to attack the Stalinist "socialist realism" it stood for in the late forties. As a result of his role in the Mexican revolutionary youth movement, Revueltas was arrested and imprisoned in October 1968, at the height of the Diaz Ordaz government repressions. His essay on Mayakovsky was written in Lecumberri prison in April and there translated into English by Daniel Camejo Guanche, a fellow prisoner. (Camejo was subsequently released, August 1, 1969, while Revueltas remains a prisoner.)*

Leon Trotsky's article first appeared in the "Bulletin of the Left Opposition," in May 1930. It will shortly be reprinted by Merit Publishers in an anthology entitled: Leon Trotsky on Literature and Art.

Revueltas: So that Mayakovsky's Suicide not be Repeated

While in Havana for a period of six months in 1961, working at a worthy task at the Cinematography Institute alongside the best youth of Cuba's film industry, I once suggested to a small group of young intellectuals that we form a club or literary circle to debate the problems a writer must face under socialism. The circle, club,

or whatever would develop from that idea, would have the following theme—theme and program at the same time: "so that Mayakovsky's suicide not be repeated." The idea did not prosper, although not for any weighty reason. That is, no one would have impeded its free and unrestricted functioning and activity in revolutionary Cuba, in spite of the influence exerted over public life at that time by Anibal Escalante's dogmatic group.

What is of interest here is to underline the meaning and importance of the proposed theme, a meaning and importance which are still valid, not only so far as Cuba is concerned, but also for the other socialist countries as well. "So that Mayakovsky's suicide not be repeated." Let's explain this.

Mayakovsky was—is—the poet of the Russian October revolution, the most brilliant and bold, the fullest and most devoted. What people have for a long time insisted on calling the "ivory tower," did not and could not exist for him. Mayakovsky was himself a tower, his own tower, in the same sense that St. John of the Cross called poets "towers of God." This, expressed by Mayakovsky, became "clouds in trousers."

Tower of the revolution, tower of the struggle for communism and for man, tower of militant poetry, that was Mayakovsky. (But what poetry is not militant? And speaking of St. John of the Cross, where else can we find another, more open, limpid, denuded, purer example of poetic combat—with the sole arms of poetry—than that of our Spanish mystic?) Mayakovsky intermingled with daily things, with contingencies, with politics, with unions, with meetings, with love, with fury and passion, with the resolutions of the executive committee of the Soviets, with Lenin's speeches.

But he did not subordinate himself to these, nor pile up empty words around them. Instead he extracted the poetic truths, the poet's truth. In favor, against, this did not matter since he was the tower of ivory, of steel, of smoke from the factories, of curses, of kisses, of clenched fists, of rifles, of tears, blood, hopes and languor: "tower of God," tower of the revolution, one of the purest poets of impure poetry—the only poetry, poetry that calls out its name on the streets or whimpers it in the loneliness of the spirit because nothing poetic is alien to it.

Then why does Mayakovsky commit suicide? He *does* it—poetry is *doing*, that is its etymological meaning, so that no other poet commit suicide (and Essenin had already done the same), revolutionary or not, pure or impure. No other poet, but also no one at all, when today, decades later, the same words burn in our hearts with another name, heinously new: so that Jan Palach's suicide not be repeated. What is the distinction between the two opposite ivory towers?

In the first place, it is absolutely not true of poetry that there can exist ivory towers, poetry closed up within its own pneumatic bell, uncommunicated and unable to communicate. That has been invented by the political schemers of all regimes who want to use poets as court jesters, as their dwarfs, as their scholastic and servile composers

of footnotes, as their eunuchs, uncritical and smiling. Real poetry never closes itself off, imprisoned voluntarily behind its iron mask.

A poetry masked with false poetry, whether revolutionary or reactionary, is always meant to conceal other things. It is simply true that real poetry is often not understood by those in its immediate environs. Well, but this is the fatal and inevitable risk of its adventure. It did not purport to be understood by *everyone* in the *here and now* of its being, of its presence.

And the Philistines and Pharisees shouldn't scratch their clothes nor cover their heads with ashes because they consider it a scandal that someone could promote—and from this side, from this side of revolution—the legitimacy of an art "for minorities." Art is precisely created for minorities and majorities at the same time, on the condition that it be art without conceding to either one. Each will receive from the art what he needs, what he seeks or what he deserves. The poetry of Paul Eluard hardly suffers any alteration—and this only in respect to certain thematic preoccupations, if we accept that the theme, in its strict sense, has something to do with poetry—from the time he enters the French Communist Party. Eluard's poetry remained the same, marvelous as always. The "ivory tower" is of the other variety, that of "left" political opportunism, radical, loudmouthed, that of utilitarian and dogmatic "tactics" at the service of one slogan or another, all that which mediocrity masks itself with in search of that lewd and repugnant acclaim which befalls it, that "infamous fame" Don Quixote spoke about.

Vladimir Mayakovsky commits suicide because he can no longer support the unbreathable atmosphere created by the Stalinist bureaucracy, which was inexorably advancing closed-rank towards its terrible victory during the second half of the 1920s, after Lenin's death. That is when the poet decides to shoot himself. Recall his severe, passionate poem, "Conversation with Lenin," in which the poet depicts before the revolutionary leader the panorama of a party and a state invaded and dominated little by little by the careerists, the servile, the bad communists, the traitors of the working class.

Poetry, as well as all art, was for Mayakovsky the assumption of a critical, alert and constant position; with the revolution yes, of course, but without mortgaging creative independence; aside from and against the conveniences of any tower—including the towers of the Kremlin that are constructed with the ivory of dogmatic doctrinairism, the blackmail of the mysterious and incomprehensible "reason of state," and the hypocritical and mendacious admonition of "not giving weapons to the enemy."

Real poetry cannot, in fact, be exploited by the enemy. (That kind of enemy fears it, opposes its very nature.) He tries to take advantage of poetry; in the long run it turns against him. It turns against him and smashes him because authentic art is always revolutionary under all circumstances.

A detailed study should be made to explain why, and this is not at

all accidental, the suppression of liberty by bureaucracies which have managed to usurp leading posts in the victorious Communist parties (and also in those parties which have yet to take power) invariably commences with a concentrated offensive against writers and the free expression of their literary thinking. It is followed by an extension of this offensive—often confronting less resistance—to the remaining spheres of public activity. At a given moment in the development of the new state, a certain political strata suddenly feels compelled to correct and reprimand writers for supposed "deviations" of a doctrinal or thematic nature in their works.

This would not be any more important than the acceptance, debate or denial of the criteria expressed, except that these criteria emanate from precisely those entities which dispose of a certain quantity of *power*. Consequently they end up by adding to their not very innocent reprimands the material and concrete aspects of their criticism. And this is all part of the voluminous circumlocution of "administrative measures" discrediting the writer concerned in the spheres of social life and literature.

This same discrediting, which was attempted against Mayakovsky in his time, was levelled shortly after against Isaac Babel—a magnificent revolutionary novelist!—even if in his case it did not lead to suicide. Today, at a distance of many years, we are reminded of Babel's tragedy by a prologue to a recently published Spanish re-edition of *The Red Cavalry*.

Until very recently, the new generations of the capitalist world completely ignored Isaac Babel, and we do not know if his work has been republished in the Soviet Union. Babel thus reappears as an absolutely new writer to all. The mass of indispensable information which would enable a new generation to develop a clear, free consciousness of historical memory was never transmitted—and not only with respect to Babel. Such information is invaluable to every revolutionary with a critical attitude in coping with the tasks of the present, and that is exactly why the bureaucracy evades it so cautiously.

When Isaac Babel's book appeared for the first time in Russia, it immediately provoked a very severe criticism in the organ of the Red Army—that incarnation of the armed forces of the revolution. Significantly, this criticism came from the pen of Semyon Budyonny, the head of the Red Cavalry, the entity whose participation in the civil war was the theme of Isaac Babel's work. The polemic became generalized in the Soviet press, with renowned persons participating for and against, since in those times this type of democratic discussion was still possible in the USSR.

Isaac Babel reaped the harvest of his literary work a few years later, in a concentration camp, where he ended up without any public explanation or clarification. (This prologue is a narration by his daughter in a reticent, anguished and confused language, since no precise, sure information was ever obtained. The fact is that Babel's magnificent talent disappeared from the horizon, lost forever. In the history of

Russian literature only a beautiful book of essays and a few loose pages remain. . . . Well, Isaac Babel was unable to commit suicide.)

But we are dealing here with another problem: Mayakovsky, Babel, and later Essenin—poetry, poets, literature, historical memory, but a very different problem. Was the criticism made by Semyon Budyonny, the military hero, against Isaac Babel, the poetic hero, just, honest and healthy? And, what is more important, since it involved two revolutionists, was it a matter between two fighters for socialism? No; it absolutely was not an honest or healthy criticism considering the political context in which it took place.

Budyonny accused Babel of slandering the Red Cavalry in his writings and of deforming the character of the personalities involved. The truth is that Babel had been discovered, as a writer, by Trotsky. Trotsky had written a few articles of warm encouragement to the young author, and the latter was a political sympathizer of the creator of the Red Army.

At that time in Russia, the "Military Opposition" (consisting of Stalin, Voroshilov and a few other leaders, Budyonny among them) was carrying on a struggle to the death against Trotsky. Trotsky had not yet been removed from power by the Stalin *camarilla*. Political interests, which least of all had to do with a struggle over doctrinal principles—and even less to do with the question of preserving revolutionary purity of literature—trapped Isaac Babel between the gears of its wheels, crushed him, and tore him asunder by the time the Stalin faction had triumphed. This was the essence of a malign literary criticism full of twisted and notorious undercurrents.

But if we have recalled these events, it is to speak about Cuba, about today's revolutionary Cuba and the attitude of the Union of Cuban Writers and Artists (UNEAC) to the works of Herberto Padilla and Antón Arrufat.

The UNEAC leaders are very young and did not have the opportunity to familiarize themselves with, or get to know in a direct way, all the experience of how Stalinism, step by step and *against* the Soviet Communist Party, slowly usurped power until it had erased any trace, alive, real and revolutionary, of the principles Lenin had fought for. And it also seems as if there has not been anyone among the older revolutionary generations who could explain to Cuban youth the vicissitudes, pitfalls, defeats, which the world communist movement has had to suffer during a long history of usurpations, deformations and betrayals, which began with Lenin's death and have still not ended in our own day.

A tremendous and incredible historical amnesia exists in Cuba and in all of Latin America. This contains the danger that revolutionaries of all countries may fall into the same negative experiences of which there are so many examples in the history of the Soviet and international communist movement. But there are books, there are documents, there are publications and it is unjustifiable that they not be read by the revolutionary youth of Cuba and all countries of the Americas

in order to forewarn our revolution and our movement lest identical errors befall us; errors which history has already proven to be real betrayals of communism.

Mutatis mutandis, these are the grave risks involved in the type of criticism which the UNEAC has expounded about the poetry of Herberto Padilla and Antón Arrufat. That criticism prompted Julio Cortazar's nonconformity in an article in *Le Nouvel Observateur* of Paris during the first week of April. Cortazar's article, reproduced in Mexico shortly thereafter, is a serene, honest and clear exposition, in keeping with the spirit of the Cuban revolution. It cannot be taken in any instance as an enemy attack.

I am absolutely in agreement with Cortazar's article in *Le Nouvel Observateur*. But there is more, much more still; the matter cannot be limited to the defense of one poet, although Cortazar has the indisputable right of not wanting to carry things further.

Nevertheless, from a Marxist point of view, the thesis maintained by the Union of Cuban Writers and Artists is completely unacceptable. UNEAC questions the revolutionary criticism which Herberto Padilla's poetry presents of an indisputable objective reality: the reality of the Stalinist era and its horrors, for example, a criticism which UNEAC scandalously rejects in its official resolution of October 28, 1968.

What is being debated here is a problem of principles. It seems evident that UNEAC does not understand at all the methodology of materialist dialectics in the field of art. My position on this is not recent: There have already been a few years since it was presented from a theoretical point of view, on one hand; and it is clearly reflected in my novels (unfortunately unknown in Cuba) on the other hand.

During my most recent trip to Cuba, in January of 1968, where I went as part of a jury on the subject of novels convoked by the Casa de las Américas, I presented the following points. (I do not remember the dates of the conference, although the copy I left is undoubtedly in the Casa archives.) Following are the first three points of this material, which was entitled, "Theoretical Schema on the Problems of Art and Liberty."

1) Art, as an ideological superstructure, reflects the interests, the situation and the contradictions of the society in which it is produced and of the historical stage in which one is living. At the same time, *for itself and by itself*, insofar as it is an activity of *historical thought*, art transcends such a reflection. It emancipates itself from its immediate conditioning factors: society, the class struggle, politics, etc. Art as art can only appear and endure by means of a *human* determination superior to the immediate realities of the social and political life in which it develops. This *human determination* is nothing else but *liberty*.

2) Liberty, as the knowledge and overcoming of necessity, expresses itself and *realizes itself* in the criticism of its object, that is, in its *nonconformity* with it: It does not *con-form* with its object, it does not submit to the form and the content of its object, but instead proposes to give it its own content (impresses upon it its own

movement as a *negation of the negation*) and, therefore, transforms it, substituting for its form a superior and more advanced form.

3) The object of liberty and of art is one and the same, *man's being*, man himself. Liberty and art (the same as philosophy and science) are nothing else but *purely human*, unalienable and immediately present. From this we can conclude that criticism of an object (the very reason for its existence) will always and in every case appear as constant unconformity with respect to concrete man and his specific environment, whatever the historical and social surroundings in which that man is located.

Consequently art leads to the dialectical negation of every alienated society and history, including socialist society and history, preceding the establishment of universal communism, which will be the beginning of disalienation in the natural history of humanity.

Trotsky: Mayakovsky's Suicide

Even Blok recognized in Mayakovsky an "enormous talent." Without exaggeration it can be said that Mayakovsky had the spark of genius. But his was not a harmonious talent. After all, where could artistic harmony come from in these decades of catastrophe, across the unsealed chasm between two epochs? In Mayakovsky's work the summits stand side by side with abysmal lapses. Strokes of genius are marred by trivial stanzas, even by loud vulgarity.

It is not true that Mayakovsky was first of all a revolutionary and after that a poet, although he sincerely wished it were so. In fact Mayakovsky was first of all a *poet*, an artist, who rejected the old world without breaking with it. Only after the revolution did he seek to find support for himself in the revolution, and to a significant degree he succeeded in doing so; but he did not merge with it totally for he did not come to it during his years of inner formation, in his youth.

To view the question in its broadest dimensions, Mayakovsky was not only the "singer," but also the victim, of the epoch of transformation, which while creating elements of the new culture with unparalleled force, still did so much more slowly and contradictorily than necessary for the harmonious development of an individual poet or a generation of poets devoted to the revolution. The absence of inner harmony flowed from this very source and expressed itself in the poet's style, in the lack of sufficient verbal discipline and measured imagery. There is a hot lava of pathos side by side with an inappropriate palsy-walsy attitude toward the epoch and the class, or an outright tasteless joking which the poet seems to erect as a barrier against being hurt by the external world.

Sometimes this seemed to be not only artistically but even psychologically false. But no, even the pre-suicide letters are in the same tone. That is the import of the phrase, "the incident is closed," with which the poet sums himself up. We would say the following: That which, in the latterday Romantic poet Heinrich Heine, was lyricism and irony (irony against lyricism but at the same time in defense of it), is in the latterday "Futurist" Vladimir Mayakovsky a mixture of pathos and vulgarity (vulgarity against pathos but also as protection for it).

The official report on the suicide hastens to declare, in the language of judicial protocol as edited in the "Secretariat," that the suicide of Mayakovsky "Has nothing in common with the public and literary activity of the poet." That is to say that the willful death of Mayakovsky was in no way connected with his life or that his life had nothing in common with his revolutionary-poetic work. In a word, this turns his death into an adventure out of the police records. This is untrue, unnecessary, and stupid.

"The ship was smashed up on everyday life," says Mayakovsky in his pre-suicide poems about his intimate personal life. This means that "public and literary activity" *ceased to carry him high enough over the shoals of everyday life*—and was not enough to save him from unendurable personal shocks. How can they say: "has nothing in common with"!

The current official ideology of "proletarian literature" is based—we see the same thing in the artistic sphere as in the economic—on a total lack of understanding of the *rhythms and periods of time* necessary for cultural maturation. The struggle for "proletarian culture"—something on the order of the "total collectivization" of all humanity's gains within the span of a single five-year plan—had at the beginning of the October revolution the character of utopian idealism, and it was precisely on this basis that it was rejected by Lenin and the author of these lines.

In recent years it has become simply a system of bureaucratic command over art and a way of impoverishing it. The incompetents of bourgeois literature, such as Serafimovich, Gladkov, and others, have been declared the classical masters of this pseudo-proletarian literature. Facile nonentities like Averbakh are christened the Belinskys of . . . "proletarian" (!) literature. The top leadership in the shere of creative writing is put in the hands of Molotov, who is a living negation of everything creative in human nature. Molotov's chief helper—going from bad to worse—is none other than Gusev, an adept in various fields but not in art.

This selection of personnel is totally in keeping with the bureaucratic degeneration in the official spheres of the revolution. Molotov and Gusev have raised up over literature a collective Malashkin, the pornographic literariness of a sycophant "revolutionary" with sunken nose.

The best representatives of the proletarian youth who were sum-

moned to assemble the *basic elements* of a new literature and culture have been placed under the command of people who convert their personal lack of culture into the measure of all things.

Yes, Mayakovsky was braver and more heroic than any other of the last generation of old Russian literature, yet was unable to win the acceptance of that literature and sought ties with the revolution. And yes, he achieved those ties much more fully than any other. But a profound inner split remained with him. To the general contradictions of revolution—always difficult for art, which seeks perfected forms—was added the decline of the last few years, presided over by the epigones.

Ready to serve the "epoch" in the dirty work of every day life, Mayakovsky could not help being repelled by the pseudo-revolutionary officialdom, even though he was not able to understand it theoretically and therefore could not find the way to overcome it. The poet rightfully speaks of himself as "one who is not for hire." For a long time he furiously opposed entering Averbach's administrative collective of so-called proletarian literature. From this came his repeated attempts to create, under the banner of LEF [Left Front of the Arts], an order of frenzied crusaders for proletarian revolution who would serve it out of conscience rather than fear. But LEF was of course unable to impose its rhythms upon "the one hundred and fifty million." The dynamics of the ebbing and flowing currents of the revolution is far too profound and weighty for that.

In January of this year Mayakovsky, defeated by the logic of the situation, committed violence against himself and finally entered VAPP [All-Union Association of Proletarian Writers]. That was two or three months before his suicide. But this added nothing and probably detracted something. When the poet liquidated his accounts with the contradictions of "everyday life," both private and public, sending his "ship" to the bottom, the representatives of bureaucratic literature, those who are for hire, declared it was "inconceivable, incomprehensible," showing not only that the great poet Mayakovsky remained "incomprehensible" for them but also the contradictions of the epoch, "inconceivable."

The compulsory, official Association of Proletarian Writers, barren ideologically, was erected upon a series of preliminary pogroms against vital and genuinely revolutionary literary groupings. Obviously it has provided no moral cement. If at the passing of the greatest poet of Soviet Russia there comes from this corner only officialdom's perplexed response—"there is no connection, nothing in common"—this is much too little, much, much too little, for the building of a new culture "in the shortest possible time."

Mayakovsky was not and could not become a direct progenitor of "proletarian literature" for the same reason that it is impossible to build socialism in one country. But in the battles of the transitional epoch he was a most courageous fighter of the word and became an undoubted precursor of the literature of the new society.

review article

Evelyn Sell

The literature of WOMEN'S LIBERATION

Over the past three years women's liberation has been developing and circulating written material detailing the oppression of women past and present, theorizing how and why this oppression came about and still exists, and formulating programs and activities to combat and decisively change the role of women in society. Boston's female liberation movement has been the major producer and circulator of this literature which encompasses about thirty pieces, ranging from a one-page statement to a journal of 128 pages.

Most of the material has been written by women active in the liberation movement on the East Coast (Boston, New York) but there are contributions from Chicago, Seattle, Nashville, Florida, and Great Britain and Canada. Some of the contributors are students, several are black women, others are: a research assistant in psychiatry, an artist, a graduate student in sociology, a psychology teacher; of the two most often printed contributors, one comes from a poor white Southern family and the other is currently a welfare mother working in the Welfare Rights Organization. Although biographical information about the writers is not always given, most of the contributors appear to have first become active or deeply affected by New Left groupings—a genesis which is reflected in their perspective of social revolution, their use of Marxist terminology, and their bitter critiques of male chauvinism in radical groups like SDS.

The outstanding theme repeated throughout this liberation literature is rejection of the institutions, ideologies, and practices of capitalist society. The goal of female liberation is not women's equality within present-day society but a complete transformation of this sick and dying social order.

A short article written by three Chicago women states, "There is no contradiction between women's issues and political issues, for the movement for women's liberation is a step toward changing the entire society. Women are not seeking equality in an unjust society, rather from an understanding of the basis of their own oppression they are developing programs for overall social change." (3)*

* Numbers in parentheses refer to book list at end of article.

Laurel Limpus, from women's liberation in Toronto, explains, "Since the problems that face women are related to the structure of the whole society, ultimately our study of our particular situation *as women* will lead us to the realization that we must attempt to change this whole society." (14)

The SDS (Students for a Democratic Society) "National Resolution on Women," adopted in 1968, declares, ". . . the fight for women's liberation is a concretization of the struggle for the liberation of all people from oppression. It doesn't stand apart from the fight against capitalism in our society, but rather is an integral part of that fight." (22)

In "Female Liberation as the Basis for Social Revolution," Roxanne Dunbar writes, "Ultimately, we want to destroy the three pillars of class and caste society—the family, private property, and the state—and their attendant evils—corporate capitalism, imperialism, war, racism, sexism, annihilation of the balance of nature." (7) A paper written for a conference of Canada's Student Union for Peace Action states, ". . . the liberation of women is a revolutionary demand in all its aspects, for it demands the most complete restructuring of the social order. The realization of this would mean in fact human liberation." (1) A San Francisco liberation group put it this way: ". . . there is no personal solution to being a woman in this society. We have realized that if we do not work to change the society it will in the end destroy us." (30)

In highlighting those aspects of western society that are destroying women, women's liberation writers present a criticism of cherished capitalist institutions and myths. The family, marriage, child rearing and romantic love are dissected, derogated, denounced and in some cases dismissed, as valid pursuits for today's women.

Beverly Jones and Judith Brown knock the family and marriage. "It is in the family that children learn so well the dominance-submission game, by observation and participation. Each family, reflecting the perversities of the larger order and split off from the others, is powerless to force change on other institutions, let alone attack or transform its own." In marriage a woman "is locked into a relationship which is oppressive politically, exhausting physically, stereotyped emotionally and sexually, and atrophying intellectually. She teams up with an individual groomed from birth to rule, and she is equipped for revolt only with the foot-shuffling, head-scratching gestures of 'feminine guile.'" Marriage "is the atomization of a sex so as to render it politically powerless. The anachronism remains because women won't fight it, because men derive valuable benefits from it and will not give them up, and because, even given a willingness among men and women to transform the institution, it is at the mercy of the more powerful institutions which use it and which give it its form." (10)

Juliet Mitchell, writing from England, describes women's role in reproduction and the socialization of children in harsh terms. No glow of rosy motherhood here! "At present, reproduction in our society is often a kind of sad mimicry of production. Work in a capitalist society is an alienation of labor in the making of a social product which is confiscated by capital. But it can still sometimes be a real act of creation, purposive and responsible, even in conditions of the worst exploitation. Maternity is often a caricature of this. . . . The biological product—the child—is treated as if it were a solid product. Parenthood becomes a kind of substitute for work, an activity in which the child is seen as an object created by the mother, in the same way as a commodity is created by a worker. . . . The child as an autonomous person inevitably threatens the activity which claims to create it continually merely as a *possession* of the parent. Possessions are felt as extensions of the self. The child as a possession is supremely this. Anything the child does is therefore a threat to the mother herself who has renounced her autonomy through this misconception of her reproductive role. There are few more precarious ventures on which to base a life." (18)

Psychologists' ideas about the "true" nature of women are attacked by Naomi Weisstein, a psychology teacher at Loyola University in Chicago. She quotes Bruno Bettelheim's idea that women "want first and foremost to be womenly companions of men and to be mothers"; Erik Erikson's idea that women's "somatic design harbors an 'inner space' destined to bear the offspring of chosen men, and with it, a biological, psychological, and ethical commitment to take care of human infancy"; and Joseph Rheingold's idea that "anatomy decrees the life of a woman. . . . When women grow up without dread of their biological functions and without subversion by feminist doctrine, and therefore enter upon motherhood with a sense of fulfillment and altruistic sentiment, we shall attain the goal of a good life and a secure world in which to live it."

Weisstein cites clinical experiments indicating that it is social context and not individual sex dynamics that decisively affect individual behavior. She concludes, "Present psychology is less than worthless in contributing to a vision which could truly liberate—men as well as women." Further, "one must understand social expectations about women if one is going to characterize the behavior of women."

"How are women characterized in our culture? They are inconsistent, emotionally unstable, lacking in a strong conscience or superego, weaker, 'nurturant' rather than productive, 'intuitive' rather than intelligent, and, if they are at all 'normal,' suited to the home and family. In short, the list adds up to a typical minority group stereotype of inferiority. . . . In a review of the intellectual differences between little boys and little girls, Eleanor Maccoby (1966) has shown that there are no intellectual differences until about high school, or, if there are, girls are slightly ahead of boys. At high school, girls begin to do worse on a few intellectual tasks, such as arith-

metic reasoning, and beyond high school, the achievement of women, now measured in terms of productivity and accomplishment, drops off even more rapidly. . . . In light of social expectations about women, what is surprising is not that women end up where society expects they will; what is surprising is that little girls don't get the message that they are supposed to be stupid until high school; and what is even more remarkable is that some women resist this message even after high school, college, and graduate school." (26)

In "Sex Roles and Their Consequences," Betsy Warrior describes the stereotype female as passive, submissive and obedient. "The rigidity of this stereotype makes for maladjustment and mental illness. Research shows that women who conformed were more popular and less neurotic than non-conforming females. Also, conservative girls who were willing to go along with accepted standards, even if they thought they might be wrong, were happier and better adjusted than liberal girls who had a tendency to think for themselves.

"This is damning evidence that if females don't buckle under, they're broke. The females who accept their roles are just as damaged. These females have given up using their own minds. Even though sex-role concepts do not fit actual human beings, any deviation from them incurs subtle psychological punishment, if not a more overt type. Many people argue that this isn't so any more. Females were treated as inferiors only in bygone days. . . . The oppression of women is still a fact in the twentieth century." (19)

One tendency in the women's liberation movement, represented by Cell 16 in Boston, the Feminists in New York and others, favors total separation between men and women, politically, socially and sexually, and economically. In "On Celibacy," Dana Densmore of Cell 16 states, "One hangup to liberation is a supposed 'need' for sex. It is something that must be refuted, coped with, de-mythified, or the cause of female liberation is doomed. . . . Sex is not essential to life, as eating is. . . . The guerrillas don't screw." Sex is "inconvenient, time-consuming, energy-draining, and irrelevant. . . . This is a call not for celibacy but for an acceptance of celibacy as an honorable alternative, one preferable to the degradation of most male-female sexual relationships. . . . Unless you accept the idea that you don't need them, don't need sex from them, it will be utterly impossible for you to carry through, it will be absolutely necessary to lead a double life, pretending with men to be something other than what you know you are. . . . An end to this constant remaking of ourselves according to what the male ego demands! Let us be ourselves and good riddance to those who are then repulsed by us!" (4)

In "Sexuality," Densmore affirms, "Sex is pleasurable, but not that pleasurable; erotic energy is easily transformed into creative, meaningful activity; and most of what passes for sex need is need for attention, affection, ego gratification, security, self-expression, to win a man or conquer a woman, to prove something to somebody. . . .

Happy, healthy, self-confident animals and people don't like being touched, don't need to snuggle or huggle and curl up in someone's (Mama's) arms. They are really free and self-contained and in their heads." (23)

In addition to psychological and sexual oppression women's liberation writers are concerned with economic exploitation. Lyn Wells, in "American Women: Their Use and Abuse," outlines the condition of women in America from the time 24 Pilgrim women landed at Plymouth Rock, through the industrialization of the country and into the era of today's "New Woman." In pre-revolutionary America, female colonials "generally faced exhaustive workloads and gross humiliation as a contributor to the good of the community. She shared all of the hardships and none of the privileges of men." After independence was won from Great Britain, industrial growth brought women and children into the developing factory system. "The typical working day for the factory girl lasted from sun-up to sun-down, and sometimes until after 'lighting-up time.' The hours ran from 12 to 15 or 16 a day. . . . Women's wages, always lower than those of men on similar work, ranged from $1.00 to $3.00 a week. . . . It is estimated that in 1833 women earned about one fourth of the wages earned by men."

Today, "Women's position has *changed some*, but *improved little*. . . . Women are in the crap jobs of society. Five and one-half million women are among the workers still unprotected by the Federal minimum wage standards, like cooks and maids. . . . We are secretaries, maids, the lowest paid factory workers. . . . Modern industry by its very nature draws women into the labor market. Constantly seeking levers to use against the prevailing wage rates and job conditions in its search for profits, it creates and maintains minority groups. These minority groups (e.g., Blacks and women) find themselves in a state of *super-exploitation*. They are exploited at a higher rate (more profits extracted) than other workers. To keep a minority's identity clear, attitudes — such as male (or white) superiority or chauvinism are perpetuated." (27)

Joan Jordan's pamphlet "The Place of American Women" concentrates on the economic exploitation of women in modern times and is loaded with statistics which reveal the role of women as super-exploited workers and as a reserve labor force, to be manipulated in and out of factory and home as it suits the needs of the capitalist economy. Average yearly income figures broken down by race and sex reveal that "Sexual exploitation is greater than color exploitation. Women, white and Negro, make less annual income than men, both on a national and state level."

In the last twenty-five years, "The age level of the woman worker has shifted and more than half of the women between the ages of 35 and 54 are working. One third of the mothers of children under 18 are working. Four out of ten women, married and living with their husbands with children over six are working today. The vast

majority of working women are married as compared to single in 1939. One out of every ten families has a female head. The double burden of home, children and work press down upon the American woman."

Jordan refutes rationalizations used by businessmen to justify super-exploitation. The old myths are presented: Women are not as well prepared for jobs as men and therefore deserve less pay; women can't be promoted because both women and men refuse to work under a "lady boss"; women are absent from work more often than men; men are really the family breadwinners so women don't really need as much pay. Jordan answers each with a formidable array of studies and statistics. The *coup de grace*: "During the Conference on Equal Pay, in 1952, when an employer was asked why he employed the women workers in his factory at less for a given job than he paid the men, he replied, 'Tradition, I suppose . . . anyhow it's cheaper.'" (11)

Exposing the dimensions of oppression in capitalist society as it affects women is one aim of female liberation literature; working out a program and a strategy for combatting and erasing sexism and seeking allies in their struggle are other aims. Diverse counter-attacks are proposed and they are often amorphous. The movement is in the process of clarifying and codifying its basic assumptions and its organizational concepts. In searching for a program, a set of tactics and allies, writers have drawn heavily from socialist literature, from their experiences in the New Left and the student movement, and from their involvement in and sympathies with the struggles of other oppressed groups.

A general tendency in women's liberation literature is to identify with the exploited and oppressed groups at home and abroad: workers, Afro-Americans, Third World peoples. There are constant references to the similarities between the oppression of blacks and women. Cordelia Nikkalaos presents the analogy this way: "Like Black people, this group could never 'pass' because they can't change the way they look. Like Black people, they have been taught to think of themselves as inferiors, servants, persons without enough brains to do important work. Like Black people, they have been made to understand that they have a place, and must stay in it. Many jobs are not open to them. Certain restaurants and 'clubs' keep them out. The Law of the Land did not let them vote, either, until they fought for and won that right. In some states they still cannot serve on juries. Newspapers have a separate section for their activities. The Man speaks of them as 'our Women.'" (23)

There is a marked influence of Marxist thought in women's liberation literature. The application of Marxism varies, however, in relation to the writer's identification of *the enemy*. Some writers see the enemy as society or, even more specifically, capitalism, while others identify the enemy as men. Use of Marxist terminology, in the latter case, can prove quite confusing.

Female liberation activists from Chicago explain, "The first step in building a movement is to see that the problems are that men as individuals are not 'the enemy'; rather 'the enemy' is those social institutions and expectations perpetuated by and constraining members of both sexes." (3)

Laurel Limpus defines the enemy as society and its repressive institutions. "Men and women are mutually oppressed by a culture and a heritage that mutilates the relationships possible between them . . . the mental repression that stifles [women] stifles at the same time the men who on the surface appear to be their oppressors. . . . The problem of sexuality again clearly illustrates that men and women are oppressed together in an institutional framework which makes inhuman demands of them and inculcates destructive beliefs about themselves. I want to stress, though, that we women shouldn't become obsessed with freeing ourselves from sick male sexuality. It is more important to free ourselves from the structures which make both male and female sexuality sick. The male definition of virility which makes women an object of prey is just as much a mutilation of the human potential of the male for a true love relationship as it is of the female's. . . . We must both be liberated together. . . ." (14)

Nancy Mann presents the same basic approach in "Fucked-Up in America." "I'm sure it's no coincidence that so many people in this country have bad sex. It goes along with the general disregard for human pleasure in favor of the logic of making a profit." She reasons that it is wrong for women to blame poor sexual relations on men or vice versa; what is needed is a united effort of both sexes to change the total situation. "Sex, work, love, morality, the sense of community—the things that have the greatest potential for being satisfying to us are undermined and exploited by our social organization. That's what we've got to fight. If you can't get along with your lover you can get out of bed. But what do you do when your country's fucking you over?" (16)

Anti-male arguments are often liberally sprinkled with quotations from Marx's *The German Ideology* and Engels' *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State.* There is frequent use of the term "class," but it is often used incorrectly as a sex category rather than to define a person's or group's relation to the means of production as Marx intended. Irene Peslikis writes about male supremacy as both a psychological privilege and a "class privilege with sexual and economic benefits." (20)

Dana Densmore warns, "it won't be easy for women to dump the oppressor off her back. He's at once the individual men who abuse her and ridicule her and ignore her, and the system they've built to perpetuate and institutionalize the arrangement." She accuses "successful women" of class collaborationism. "There is a complete identification with the ruling class, coupled not only with a rejection of their own class, but with an insistence that the pressures, influences, and conditioning that forced women into their oppressed situation did

not exist." Women who have made it "are identifying with the men. To have sympathy for women is by implication to condemn the circumstances that oppress them, and those circumstances are the male power structure. But the elitist women cannot afford to criticize the male power structure even by implication because they are so busy currying favor from men to maintain their own 'success.'" (4)

Beverly Jones and Judith Brown declare, "We are a class, we are oppressed as a class, and we each respond within the limits allowed us as members of that oppressed class. Purposely divided from each other, each of us is ruled by one or more men for the benefit of all men." (10)

The class concept of sexism is repeated in Kitty Bernick's article from *Women's Liberation Newsletter.* "Because our oppression is an integral part of our society, nothing short of a revolutionary change of the society will change the role we play in society. The women's liberation movement that we see surging all over the country is only an indication that women are receptive to learn about their history, to gain a consciousness that they are indeed a class that can effect a revolutionary change of society: of both economic and social institutions." (30)

Don't cross class lines! Don't join organizations that include men! is the message that comes through Maureen Davidica's "Women and the Radical Movement": "This is a call for separatism, for radical women to dissociate themselves from male-oriented, male-dominated radical organizations and join together in Women's Liberation groups as the most effective way to achieve their own independent identity and the liberation of all women, and to bring about the truly total revolution—the establishment of a radical society without oppression." (23)

Whether they believe men are the enemies of women or whether they believe the social order is the enemy of both men and women, all women's liberation writers advocate the formation of special all-female groups to work out women's demands and act on women's behalf. "Because the woman question is a dual problem, because they suffer special forms of discrimination and exploitation in addition to being workers, there is need for special organizations and special demands to meet their needs," Joan Jordan explains. (11)

Lynn Wells writes, "In order to insure our own interest in a major power change, we must be organized for our own self-interest. . . . This cannot be accomplished through 'women's auxiliaries,' groups of women simply following or supporting programs that are defined by men. We must organize ourselves for our own goals. We must also be a part of groupings that are fighting for the revolution.

"On a local level, this would mean that every radical woman would belong to a woman's group. Much of her organizing time would be spent working with other women, both on issues of Female Liberation and general problems. But she would also belong to groups that are working for total change (such as SSOC, SDS, poor white

community groups, etc.). It is important that she not only be represented but be an integral part of revolutionary and radical organizations. In major radical groupings, women would not only play a part in decision-making but also determine the position of the radical movement on women's questions." (27)

A major factor that convinced women of the need for independent female liberation groups was the treatment they received from males in New Left organizations such as SDS. Bitter and demoralizing experiences with male supremacy and chauvinism from men who termed themselves "revolutionaries" contributed heavily to present liberation organizational forms and the conception than man is the class enemy.

West coast female liberation activists describe how "the promises of the left proved empty. The white-male radical movement only mirrored the greater society in its refusal to accept women in other than traditional service roles and in its inability to understand and deal with the oppression inherent in this society's basic methods of personal relationships. . . . We once sought meaning in the politics of the left. It was in the 'movement' that we had our last measure of hope. We believed that they were going to 'make the revolution' for themsevles, for us, and for all people. Again, we were disappointed. We were used by the 'movement'—our bodies as sex objects, our labor as shit workers; again we weren't allowed to be full human beings. 'The movement' didn't fail us to any greater extent than the rest of society, it was only because we put so much of our hope in it that as a result we have come out of it bitter and frustrated." (30)

Roxanne Dunbar writes, "We resent most the hypocrisy of those who call themselves revolutionaries. Women are asked to help out, and even die machine gun in hand, helping their men, but ultimately they will be invited (forced) back home to raise children to be men. The young white radical likes very much the 'new girl' who is half-liberated—just enough to be willing to go to bed at any time with any one of them, and ask no questions. Democracy. A sort of free prostitution serves a busy politician's irritating sexual needs, and the girl will usually cook as well. She wants to serve the cause, and her man tells her that she can best serve by doing what she does best." (23)

Beverly Jones and Judith Brown sum up a prevalent view in female liberation circles: "For their own salvation, and for the good of the movement, women must form their own groups and work for female liberation . . . Radical men are not fighting for female liberation, and in fact, become accountably queasy when the topic is broached . . . they expect and require that women—*their* women—continue to function as black troops—kitchen soldiers—in *their* present struggle . . . for a time, at least, men are the enemy, and . . . radical men hold the nearest battle position." (10)

With such disappointments in their own personal backgrounds, it is not surprising that some female liberation writers express suspicion toward any and all male motives and distrust any and all male-

supported activities and programs. They are sensitive to any signs of sexism and are quick to print quotations from Marx, Castro and Che to prove that even great revolutionaries are riddled with male supremacist attitudes about the proper place of women in a revolution or in a "new society" or in their own personal lives. "The only position for women is prone" has been heard all too often in "radical" movements.

Female liberation insists that women will define their role in the revolution. Such a definition, however, can only come after women go through a consciousness-raising process. The point is made again and again: the first step to change the existing order is to gain deeper insights into the forces controlling and programming them as women; this can only be done within female groups where women can be free to express themselves openly and fully, to speak out their bitterness and their grievances; through such group discussions each participant will arrive at the understanding that her problem is not unique or personal but is social and tied into the fundamental institutions and modes of thinking of the entire social order. After shaking loose from the myths encumbering them, women will be able to engage in meaningful action.

Action to gain what demands? Although there is diversity of opinion about the means of winning, there is general agreement on the basic goals: female control over their own bodies in terms of sexual relations, child-bearing and appearance; a complete revamping of marriage, family and child-rearing forms; the end of all manifestations of sex discrimination so that women can develop their full human potential in all spheres of life.

These are the same fundamental concepts revolutionary socialists have been fighting for since the founding of scientific socialism one hundred and twenty years ago by Marx and Engels. The women's liberation and the revolutionary socialist movements have a mutual interest in exposing the truth about the capitalist system and its vicious oppression of human beings. Basing themselves on biological research, psychological experiments, anthropological evidence, historical studies and personal experiences, women's liberation writers have torn into the generally accepted notions of femininity—and in doing so have laid bare the diseased bones of fundamental capitalist institutions.

List of books mentioned

Abbreviations: NEFP—New England Free Press

(1) "Sisters, Brothers, Lovers . . . Listen . . ." by Judi Bernstein, Peggy Norton, Linda Seese and Myrna Wood. NEFP, Fall 1967.

(2) "Women—The Struggle for Freedom." *Black Dwarf,* NEFP, January 10, 1969.

(3) "Toward a Radical Movement" by Heather Booth, Evi Gold-

field and Sue Munaker. NEFP, April 1968.

(4) "Sex Roles and Female Oppression" by Dana Densmore. NEFP, (undated).

(5) "Poor White Women" by Roxanne Dunbar. NEFP, (undated).

(6) "Students and Revolution" by Roxanne Dunbar and Vernon Grizzard. Mimeograph, (undated).

(7) "Female Liberation as the Basis for Social Revolution" by Roxanne Dunbar. NEFP and Southern Student Organizing Committee, (undated).

(8) "Caste and Class" by Roxanne Dunbar and Vernon Grizzard. Female Liberation—Cell 16, (undated).

(9) "Are Men the Enemy?" by Roxanne Dunbar and Lisa Leghorn. Mimeograph, (undated).

(10) "Toward a Female Liberation Movement" by Beverly Jones and Judith Brown. NEFP, June 1968.

(11) "The Place of American Women: Economic Exploitation of Women" by Joan Jordan. NEFP, 1968.

(12) "Man-Hating" by Pamela Kearon. Mimeograph, (undated).

(13) "The Myth of the Vaginal Orgasm" by Anne Koedt. NEFP, (undated).

(14) "Liberation of Women: Sexual Repression and the Family" by Laurel Limpus. NEFP, (undated).

(15) "The Politics of Housework" by Pat Mainardi. NEFP, (undated).

(16) "Fucked-Up in America" by Nancy Mann. NEFP, (undated).

(17) "Sexual Politics" by Kate Millet. NEFP, November 1968.

(18) "Women: the Longest Revolution" by Juliet Mitchell. NEFP (reprinted from *New Left Review*, November-December 1966).

(19) *No More Fun and Games: A Journal of Female Liberation.* Cell 16, February, 1969.

(20) "Resistances to Consciousness" by Irene Peslikis. Cell 16, (undated).

(21) "Poor Black Women" by Patricia Robinson. NEFP, (undated).

(22) "National Resolution on Women." Students for a Democratic Society. NEFP, (undated).

(23) *Journal of Female Liberation.* (undated).

(24) "Females and Welfare" by Betsy Warrior. NEFP, (undated).

(25) "The Quiet Ones" by Betsy Warrior. Mimeograph, (undated).

(26) "Kinde, Kuche, Kirche as Scientific Law: Psychology Constructs the Female" by Naomi Weisstein. NEFP, (undated).

(27) "American Women: Their Use and Abuse" by Lynn Wells. NEFP and Southern Student Organizing Committee, 1969.

(28) "Consumerism and Women" by Ellen Willis. Cell 16, (undated).

(29) "The Politics of 'Free' Love: Forced Fornication." Women's Liberation. Female Liberation—Cell 16, June 1969.

(30) *Women's Liberation Newsletter*, Vol. 1, No. 2. (undated).

Women's liberation literature can be obtained from: New England Free Press, 791 Tremont St., Boston, Mass., 02118, and 371 Somerville Ave., Somerville, Mass. 02143.

BRIEF REVIEWS

Trotsky's Military Writings

Military Writings by Leon Trotsky. Merit. 158 pp. $1.95 paper.

The *Military Writings* of Leon Trotsky is not a manual on warfare. Nor is it a guide for political organizing within the army. Rather, it deals with specific theoretical disputes that arose within the Bolshevik Party after the Russian civil war.

Nevertheless, Trotsky's method of dealing with these controversies and then proceeding to general theoretical conclusions make the book relevant for present-day revolutionaries. The reader will find the material of more than just historical interest as over and over again he discovers that the analysis made by Trotsky in the 1920s sheds light on problems facing the movement today.

I will give a few specific examples of how Trotsky's conclusions relate to our present situation. But perhaps the greatest worth of the book lies in the way Trotsky marshals his arguments. In other words, it can be read as a good example of how the method of dialectical materialism is applied to illuminate the whole range of military strategy and tactics. "Our superiority over our enemies," said Trotsky, "lies in possessing the irreplaceable scientific method of orientation—Marxism. It is the most powerful and at the same time subtle instrument—to use it is not as easy as shelling peas."

In these writings Trotsky confronted a group of military doctrinaires in the Red Army and the party. Looking back at the civil war, the doctrinaires attempted to deduce eternal truths and universal principles from strategies and tactics associated with certain times, places and conditions. Trotsky challenged each of their military premises: idealization of the offensive under all circumstances, rejection of positional warfare, characterization of maneuverability as *the* revolutionary strategy. He pointed out that in the military sphere there is actually no such thing as "proletarian tactics" or "capitalist tactics." It is only when we look at the goals involved that the class content is added.

An underlying theme is the lesson that young revolutionaries should not scorn history or idealize whatever is new and current, that they must be anxious to benefit from the experiences and accumulated knowledge of the past. "Our doctrine is called Marxism. Why invent it a second time? Besides, in order to be able to invent anything except a hand-cart, it is necessary to go to school to the bourgeoisie,

once the ability to orient ourselves and the will to victory are given. . . Marxists have always assimilated the old knowledge; they studied Feuerbach, Hegel, the French encyclopedists and materialists, and political economy. . . It will do incalculable harm if we were to inoculate the military youth with the idea that the old doctrine is utterly worthless and that we have entered a new epoch when everything can be viewed superciliously and with the equipment of an ignoramus."

This polemic could well be directed against many of the American left. Many young radicals seem to believe that the history of the world began sometime after September 1960, when their own political consciousness began to stir. It is foolhardy to enter into a contest as difficult and important as the coming American revolution "with the equipment of an ignoramus." Even worse, it could be disastrous, since we can be sure that the capitalist enemy will not come to battle so ill-equipped; he will use every shred of knowledge gained attempting to crush revolutions in the past.

Part of this general rejection of the past is a healthy rebellion against the false and useless substitute for history which has been doled out to American youth. Even the summary rejection of Marxism, which until recently has crippled most of the American left, is part a healthy rejection of the vile record of Stalinism. But understanding the shortcomings of bourgeois history is entirely different from refusing to learn its lessons, and a revulsion against the aberations of "communism" in the Soviet Union should not lead to a renunciation of genuine communism. The prevalence of anti-historical attitudes is at least partly to blame for the theoretical impoverishment of the American left.

Joe Miles

Strike against GM

Sit-down: The General Motors Strike of 1936-1937 by Sidney Fine. University of Michigan Press. 448 pp. $12.50.

This book is an account of the 1937 United Auto Workers strike in Flint Michigan against General Motors and is the first documented narrative of this momentous social upheaval. Although Henry Kraus, a strike participant, has written a previous account of the strike, the massive documentation and detail of Fine's book makes it valuable.

Fine discusses the development of the UAW and GM up to the point of the strike, and also devotes a chapter to the history of Flint, as a town dominated by GM. The rest of the book deals with the strike, including an interesting chapter on how the strikers conducted themselves inside the plants and the spirit of camaraderie that arose among them.

The strike was "not only the 'most critical labor conflict' of the 1930s, and perhaps in all of American history, but it was also a part, the most dramatic and important part, of a vast labor unheaval." Fine indicates how the successful outcome of this crucial strike contributed to the growth of the UAW, as well as the CIO and its policy of industrial unionism as a whole.

Fine's failure to realize the full significance of the sit-down, however, constitutes a shortcoming of this book. As Art Preis notes in *Labor's Giant Step,** the sit-downs were "a defiance of the dogma of the sacredness of private property and free enterprise. If workers could seize the plants to enforce their union economic demands, why could they not seize them as part of a more far-reaching social program? Why could they not eliminate the private owners altogether and organize production on the basis of social ownership?"

The UAW and CIO leadership made a serious mistake in placing reliance on capitalist politicians, especially Governor Murphy of Michigan, to help settle the strike on terms favorable to the union. On this key point Fine also falls short of the mark. He quotes Wyndham Mortimer, a UAW vice-president, as saying that Murphy "may or may not have been on our side, [but] at least would not be against us." Fine says that Mortimer was guilty of an understatement!

Murphy sent 1,500 National Guardsmen to Flint at one point and then, calling for Guard reinforcements, alerted the Guardsmen to seal off all highways and prevent reinforcements for the strikers. Murphy constantly raised the specter of violence to discredit the strikers, themselves the victims of political violence, and he did everything in his power to convince the strikers to evacuate the plants without a contract.

Howard Reed

"Riot" in Detroit

The Detroit Riot of 1967 by Hubert G. Locke. Wayne State University Press. 160 pp. $6.50.

This is another account of the 1967 ghetto uprising in Detroit. The author is a black man, a native of Detroit, a minister of the Gospel, director of the Office of Religious Affairs, and a research associate for the Center for Urban Studies at Wayne State University.

At the time of the black uprising in Detroit, Rev. Locke was administrative assistant to Detroit Police Commissioner Ray Girardin. In the 1969 Detroit mayoral campaign, he was a lukewarm supporter of the black candidate, Richard Austin, and since the election, has been mentioned as a possible member of the new mayor's ad-

* Available from Merit Publishers, 873 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10003. $7.50.

ministrative staff. The new mayor is Roman Gibbs, a white candidate who narrowly defeated Austin.

Rev. Locke refers always to "the riot" as he does in the title. This is a "bad" happening, a kind of natural catastrophe like a hurricane. Before it, "Detroit was somehow by-passed as urban rebellions erupted in Cleveland, swirled around America's fifth largest city, swept through Chicago and Omaha and out to the west coast, venting their fury on Los Angeles and San Francisco."

The city is personalized: "Detroit's apprehension grew. . . The city's anxiety was deepened. . ." Who in Detroit was apprehensive and anxious? The rulers? Their police agents? Or was it the people in the ghetto? Such questions are foreign to the Reverend's search into what happened.

He sees everything from the window of a precinct police station. A section of his book, purporting to give a day-by-day account of the "battle" reads like the police blotter.

Other sections of the book, such as "Riot Aftermath," in which the author attempts an appraisal of what he describes as "Post-Bellum Negro Leadership," are tainted with a police outlook and mentality with some "enlightened" refinements.

How to avoid future "riots"? "Restructuring the police system is one of the most critical and difficult tasks cities could conceivably undertake. But if the need is acknowledged and the possible benefits are recognized. . ."

This book adds nothing to the factual information of the Kerner Commission Report and lacks the insights of John Hersey's great book, *The Algiers Motel Incident.* But the Rev. Hubert G. Locke has presented the testimony of a rather common type of lower level politician and job seeker now operating in the black community.

Frank Lovell

BOOKS RECEIVED

AFRO-AMERICAN STRUGGLE

Black Chicago: The Making of a Negro Ghetto 1890-1920 by Allan H. Spear. University of Chicago Press. 254 pp. $3.45 paper.

Black Economic Development. Edited by William F. Haddad and G. Douglas Pugh. Prentice-Hall. 176 pp. $4.95.

The Black Panthers: Eldridge Cleaver, Huey Newton, Bobby Seale by Gene Marine. Signet. 224 pp. .95 paper.

Black Power and Student Rebellion. Conflict on the American Campus. McEvoy and Miller. Wadsworth Publishing Co. 440 pp. Paper.

Color and Race. Edited by John Hope Franklin. Beacon Paperback. 391 pp. $2.95.

Revolutionary Notes by Julius Lester. Baron. 209 pp. $5.95.

AMERICAN HISTORY

Big Bill Haywood and the Radical Union Movement by J. R. Conlin. Syracuse University Press. $6.95.

The Crisis in Welfare in Cleveland. Report of the Mayor's Commission. Edited by Herman D. Stein. Case Western Reserve. 170 pp. $1.95 paper.

Kansas Populism: Ideas and Men by O. Gene Clanton. Kansas University Press. 330 pp. $8.50.

Union Man by David J. McDonald. Dutton. 352 pp. $7.95.

We Shall Be All: A History of the IWW by Melvyn Dubofsky. Quadrangle Books. 557 pp. $12.50.

The World the Slaveholders Made by Eugene D. Genovese. Pantheon. 274 pp. $5.95.

The New Left Reader. Edited by Carl Oglesby. Grove Press. 312 pp. $8.50.

ARAB-ISRAELI DISPUTE

Encounter with the Middle East. An Intimate Report on What Lies Behind the Arab-Israeli Conflict by Winston Burdett. Atheneum. 384 pp. $10.00.

ASIA

Asian Dilemma: United States, Japan and China. Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions. 238 pp. $2.25 paper.

The China Watchers. Edited by Anthony Austin and Robert Clurman. Pyramid Books. 301 pp. .95 paper.

Chinese Foreign Policy in an Age of Transition. The Diplomacy of Cultural Despair by Ishwer C. Ojha. Beacon Press. 234 pp. $5.95.

Mao by Philippe Devillers. Shocken Books. 320 pp. plus bibliography and index. $5.95.

A Study of Chinese Communes 1965 by Shahid Javed Burki. Harvard East Asian Monographs. 101 pp.

The Protracted Game by Scott A. Boorman. Oxford University Press. 242 pp. $7.50.

ECONOMICS

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

The Corporation in American Politics by Edwin M. Epstein. Prentice-Hall. 365 pp. $8.50.

EDUCATION

Pedagogues and Power: Teacher Groups in School Politcs by Alan Rosenthal. Syracuse University Press. 192 pp. $3.50 paper.

Student Power. Edited by Alexander Cockburn and Robin Blackburn. Penguin. 379 pp. $1.25 paper.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

ABM: An Evaluation of the Decision to Deploy Antiballistic Missile Systems. Edited by Abram Chayes and Jerome B. Wiesner. Signet. 281 pp. .95 paper.

The ABM and the Changed Strategic Military Balance. A Study by a Special American Security Council Committee of 31 Experts. Acropolis Books. 71 pp. $3.95.

Empire and Revolution by David Horowitz. Random House. 274 pp. $6.95.

CBW: Chemical and Biological Warfare. Edited by Steven Rose. Beacon Press. 209 pp. $7.50.

Controlling Small Wars. A Strategy for the 1970s by Lincoln P. Bloomfield and Amelia C. Leiss. Alfred A. Knopf. 421 pp. $8.95.

History of the Cold War by Andre Fontaine. Pantheon. 523 pp. $10.00.

LATIN AMERICA

Che: The Making of a Legend by Martin Ebon. Universe Books. 216 pp. $5.95.

Che Guevara. A Biography by Daniel James. Stein and Day. 380 pp. $7.95.

Guatemala: Occupied Country by Eduardo Baleano. Monthly Review Press. 159 pp. $5.95.

Latin America: The Hegemonic Crisis and the Military Coup by Jose Nun. Institute of International Studies, University of California, Berkeley. 73 pp. $1.50 paper.

The Youngest Revolution. A Personal Report on Cuba by Elizabeth Sutherland. Dial Press. 277 pp. $5.95.

POLITICAL THEORY

The End of Ideology Debate by Chaim I. Waxman. Funk and Wagnalls. 397 pp. $7.95.

Marxism and the Existentialists by Raymond Aron. Harper and Row. 176 pp. $5.95.

Minorities and Politics. Edited by Henry J. Tobias and Charles E. Woodhouse. 131 pp. $4.95.

The Role of Popular Participation in Development. David Hapgood, editor. M. I. T. Press. 222 pp. $5.00.

Studies on Marx and Hegel by Jean Hyppolite. Basic Books. $6.50.

To Free a Generation. The Dialectics of Liberation. Edited by David Cooper. Collier. 207 pp. $1.95 paper.

The Urban Guerrilla by Martin Oppenheimer. Quadrangle Books. 188 pp. $5.50.

Vladimir Akimov on the Dilemmas of Russian Marxism. Two Texts in Translation edited and introduced by Jonathan Frankel. Cambridge University Press. 390 pp. $10.00.

SOVIET UNION AND EASTERN EUROPE

The Communist Party of the Soviet Union by Michael P. Gehlen. Indiana University Press. 161 pp. $5.95.

Czechoslovakia 1968: Reform, Repression and Resistance by Philip Windsor and Adam Roberts. Columbia University Press. 200 pp. $2.50 paper.

History of Russia: Reforms, Reactions, Revolutions by Paul Miliukov et al. Vol III. Funk and Wagnalls. 451 pp. $10.00.

The Russian Literary Imagination by Avrahm Yarmolinsky. Funk and Wagnalls. 259 pp. $8.95.

Marshal Zhukov's Greatest Battles by Georgi K. Zhukov. Harper and Row. 304 pp. $6.95.

That Day in Budapest by Tibor Meray. Funk and Wagnalls. 503 pp. $10.00.

The Unperfect Society: Beyond the New Class by Milovan Djilas. Harcourt, Brace and World. 267 pp. $5.00.

In Russia by Inge Morath and Arthur Miller. Viking Press. 240 pp. $12.95.

VIETNAM

Trip to Hanoi by Susan Sontag. Noonday Press. 91 pp. $1.45 paper.

Viet Cong by Douglas Pike. M. I. T. Press. 490 pp. $2.95 paper.

Who We Are. An Atlantic Chronicle of the U. S. and Vietnam. Edited by Robert Manning and Michael Janeway. Atlantic Little Brown. 391 pp. $3.95 paper.

WESTERN EUROPE

Between the Bullet and the Lie. American Volunteers in the Spanish Civil War by Cecil Eby. Holt, Rinehart, Winston. 342 pp. $7.95.

The History of the Nazi Party 1919-1933 by Dietrich Orlow. University of Pittsburgh Press. 338 pp. $11.95.

The Story of Fabian Socialism by Margaret Cole. Stanford University Press. 366 pp. $2.95 paper.

Problems of

WOMEN'S LIBERATION

A Marxist Approach

by Evelyn Reed .95

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I certify that the statements made by me above are correct and complete. (Signed) Beverly Scott, Business Manager.

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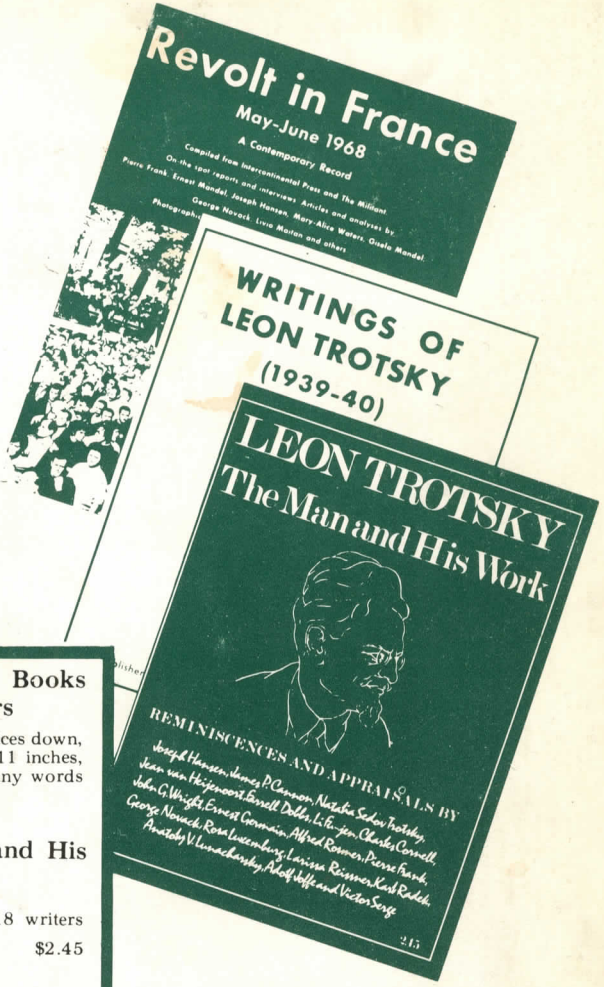

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