

Against the Current

Summer, 1981
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a socialist quarterly magazine

**American Labor:
The New Deal Legacy**

**Reproduction Rights—
Big Leap Forward**

**Has the Working Class
Moved Right?**

**Anatomy of the L.A. Police
Review Board Campaign**

Affirmative Action and the EEOC

Thesis on Auerbach

China and the Crisis of Maoism

Revolution in El Salvador



THE MILWAUKEE WORKERS EDUCATIONAL GROUP

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Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53201

To the editors of *Against the Current*:

We have received the first two issues of your magazine and are very impressed. We have long felt the need for a theoretical journal of the revolutionary left, and that you have been able to put one out in a language that is accessible to workers is an added plus. *ATC* holds forward the possibility of establishing a meaningful dialog between the scattered and fragmented remnants of the left. This dialog, in turn, is an essential first step in beginning the process of regrouping the American left. For this reason, we see the publication of your journal as a landmark event.

Not only do we find your journal a welcome alternative to the static and lifeless "in-house" publications of the traditional left, we also find much of your analysis to be refreshing. In particular, your conception of the "rightward drift in the working class," although somewhat pessimistic, is infinitely preferable to the two conceptions prevalent on the American left — one that we are on the verge of fascism, the other that the working class is in the depths of a radicalization, chafing under its reformist leadership, waiting only for someone to give it the "correct program." Your analysis, which we believe in the long run may lead you to underestimate the potential for working class initiatives, is at least rooted to a large degree in objective reality and not in the rarified atmosphere of a sect.

We are also attracted to your method for doing work in the unions. Not only do you stress the importance of organizing the rank and file, you also point to the need to *politicize* trade union work. This means attempting to infuse revolutionary socialist politics into the consciousness of the working class by *helping* the workers to draw the lessons of *their own experiences*. This is sharply counterposed to either relying on "left-wing" bureaucrats to politicize the rank and file, or to posing as the new messiahs of the working class.

We are also happy to see that you stress the importance of independent self-organization of women and oppressed minorities. Such organization is too often underplayed by the left — our experience has shown it to be indispensable to building a united workers' movement.

We see the continued publication of *Against the Current* to be of tremendous importance, and we are submitting articles for publication. In addition we offer you whatever financial and organizational aid we can give.

In Solidarity,
The Milwaukee Workers Educational Group

Against the Current

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Revolution in El Salvador <i>The Editors</i>	4	Editors Robert Brenner Steve Zeluck (This issue was produced with the editorial assistance of Johanna Brenner, Carl Feingold, Jack Gerson and Seymour Kramer)
American Labor: The New Deal Legacy <i>Mike Davis</i>	5	
Reproductive Rights— Big Leap Forward <i>Barbara Zeluck</i>	20	
Has the Working Class Moved Right? <i>Michael Wunsch</i>	22	
A Third View on the Turn to the Right <i>Steve Zeluck</i>	27	
The Right Wing and the Working Class <i>Johanna Brenner and Robert Brenner</i>	28	
The Anatomy of the Los Angeles Police Review Board Campaign <i>Joel Jordan and Anthony Thigpen</i>	32	
Affirmative Action and the EEOC <i>Steve Burghardt and Jim Haughton</i>	38	
Theses on Auerbach <i>Seymour Kramer</i>	43	
China and the Crisis of Maoism <i>Richard Smith</i>	47	

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REVOLUTION IN EL SALVADOR

by The Editors

The people of El Salvador are today engaged in a combat of enormous significance. In rising up against the terror of the Fourteen Families fully backed by the U.S., they have drawn to their side the passionate support of all socialists, anti-imperialists, and class conscious workers throughout the world. *Against the Current* takes its stand within this united resistance alongside the determined people of El Salvador who have our fullest support.

The revolution unfolding in El Salvador, alongside those in Nicaragua and Guatemala, provokes an understandable fear among America's rulers. Very recently, they set themselves the task of exorcising the ghosts of Vietnam. They now face the spectre of working class revolution invading their once secure backyard haunts. How can American foreign policy be retooled for the eighties when "terrorists" (workers, Indians, students, farmers, women) keep scratching at the old hurt? How can anti-communism once again capture the popular imagination when it is so closely identified with the pathetic cowards who daily transfer gold, paper, allegiance and household from Guatemala City, San Salvador and Managua to Miami? How indeed is the authoritarian catechism of the Reagan regime—family, flag, fear of God, work and capital accumulation—to be enshrined in a new model of arrogance, if little people of little means are free to defy Washington with machine gun bursts, liberation theology, popular mobilizations and general strikes?

The fears of America's rulers are well founded. The movements unfolding along the Central American isthmus threaten to deprive them not simply of a field for safe investments but of an ideological prop for their shrinking self-confidence. Their anger and hysteria in the face of the survival of the Cuban revolution is now compounded by the spread of social revolution throughout Central America.

In Nicaragua, a profound and radical social revolution has been developing since the overthrow of the Somoza regime. Especially because of the massive destruction of the country's economy and because of the political legitimacy achieved by significant groups of the national bourgeoisie in the course of the unified struggle against the dictator, there have been severe limits to the on-going revolutionary process.

Nevertheless, the imperial power has been shaken, and we have witnessed the steady organization of the masses, the evicting of the representatives of capital from the centers of state power, and the expanding practice of workers control. If this process has not as yet led to a decisive break with imperialism, it is strengthening the forces that will be required to make that break definitive.

In El Salvador, the struggle for a democratic overthrow of the military state may be more protracted. But once the old regime is overthrown, the social revolution promises to develop more swiftly and radically than in Nicaragua. Unlike in Nicaragua, Salvadorean revolutionaries must fight a *united* bourgeois. But as a consequence, they may be less burdened in the post-revolutionary period by bourgeois resistance. In addition, the more developed economic structure of El Salvador provides the working class with a greater political weight, just as the tradition of Salvadorean socialism—especially the 1932 insurrection based on soldiers/workers councils—lends them a greater political maturity than exists elsewhere in Central America.

These factors are reflected in the radical character of the united front in El Salvador—the hegemony of the in-

dustrial and rural working classes within the front and the dominant influence exercised by the revolutionary political forces such as the BPR, FAPU and the LP-28. Their radical program is based on national property, the suppression of Big Capital, and a radical land reform.

A workers and peasants government involving some form of collaboration between the parties in the united front is envisioned, and the organs of popular power that have developed in the course of the struggle (the barrio committees, workers self-defense groups, and rural village councils) are to be encouraged.

Taken together, the Salvadorean and Nicaraguan revolutions can have an enormous effect on the politics of the eighties. They swim bravely against the current of imperialist restabilization, and point toward the possibility of a real democratic and socialist alternative to the crisis of the world economy and culture.

The Reagan administration is well aware of the far reaching effects these revolutions could have. The overthrow of Somoza gave the combatants in El Salvador confidence and important political assistance, (the FSLN apparently helped bring about today's United Front in El Salvador). In turn, a victory in El Salvador will help end Nicaraguan isolation, support its most radical tendencies, and make less difficult the final and necessary break with capitalism. This in turn would encourage the fighters of the Frente Democratico Contra La Represion (FDCR) in Guatemala while exposing the democratic, anti-imperialist pretensions of the Mexican, Venezuelan and Costa Rican governments.

At the heart of this process, the US ruling class faces a truly terrifying set of dominoes. To avoid this catastrophe, they will utilize every lie and atrocity. In the face of this difficult situation, revolutionaries in the US have a special responsibility. Our ability to organize massive obstacles to US planned interventions can play a key role in permitting the Central American revolutions to win. Toward this end, we should work to build a broad movement based on the demand of non-intervention by the U.S. This campaign should give voice and organization to the skepticism that many American working class people have about the US military in the post-Vietnam period.

In addition, socialists active in this effort should see it as our special task to promote Marxist, anti-imperialist, pro-working class ideas within the broader movement. Besides fighting against US intervention, we should:

- Organize in open solidarity with the FDR-FMLN
- Defend the right of the revolutionaries in Central America to receive military and economic aid from any quarter.
- Point out the connection between US intervention in Central America and capitalist crisis at home. In doing so we can show how a defeat for Reagan in El Salvador will place an enormous obstacle in the path of the New Right juggernaut.
- In addition to attempting to gain the support of union officials for the campaign against intervention, we have a special responsibility to go to the ranks of the unions, because experience has shown that no sector of the labor officialdom can be depended upon to involve the ranks.

**US OUT OF EL SALVADOR
SOLIDARITY WITH THE SALVADOREAN
REVOLUTION
VICTORY TO THE FDR/FMLN
SOLIDARITY WITH THE FDCR OF GUATEMALA
HANDS OFF NICARAGUA, CUBA AND GRENADA**



American Labor: The New Deal Legacy¹

by MIKE DAVIS

On the eve of the New Deal's inauguration in the winter of 1933 the auto industry in Detroit was stunned by an energetic and well-planned walkout at the Briggs auto plant. Following three and a half years of nearly catastrophic unemployment and paralysis by the American Federation of Labor, the Briggs strike signalled the revival of industrial militancy. This "Lexington and Concord of the auto rebellion," as it was later called, was fought for two demands that would be central in most early New Deal strikes: company recognition of rank and file controlled shop committees and the limitation of the authority of foremen and line supervisors.

Seventeen years later, and in the wake of hundreds of local strikes as well as two nationwide walkouts (1937 and 1946), the United Auto Workers signed the so-called "Treaty of Detroit" with General Motors. The 1950 contract with its five-year no-strike pledge symbolized the end of the long New Deal/Fair Deal cycle of class struggle and established the model of collective bargaining which has prevailed for the past quarter century. On one hand, the contract conceded the permanence of union representation and provided for the periodic increase of wages and benefits tied to productivity growth. On the other hand, the contract affirmed the "sacred right" of managerial prerogatives, relinquished worker protection against technological change, and ensnared grievance procedure in a bureaucratic maze. In doing so, the contract liquidated precisely that concern for rank and file power on the shop floor that

¹This is the second installment of a two part article on American Labor history. The first appears in *Against the Current*, Vol. 1, No. 2.

Against the Current

had been the central axis of the original 1933-37 upsurge in auto and other mass production industries. As *Fortune* slyly put it at the time: "GM may have paid a billion for peace....It got a bargain."

The long route from the informal shop-floor democracy of the first Briggs strike to the boardroom wheeling-dealing of the 1950 settlement has usually been attributed to the gradual bureaucratization of the new industrial unions. This transformation was accelerated, it has been argued, by wartime government intervention, and consolidated with the final transformation of formerly militant labor leaders into the post-war era's "new men of power". Whether the triumph was due to the repression of the Labor Left or to a more general corruption of power, this bureaucratism has usually been seen as the principal deterrent to rank and file militancy.

However, there is a more complex relationship between the two poles of bureaucracy and mass militancy. The CIO was not, as it has been popularly depicted, the product of a single, heroic upsurge of working class ardor. On the contrary, the new industrial unions were formed by highly uneven, discontinuous moments of mass organization which mobilized different strata of the working class. As I have tried to show in a preceding *Against the Current* article, the CIO was the heir to a contradictory legacy. On the one hand it inherited the accumulated defeats of earlier eras: the deep divisions between sectors of the working class, the absence of a unifying bond of common working class institutions, the "dark ages" of craft unionism under Gompers, and the forced marriage between the Catholic working class and the Democratic Party. On the other hand, it received the unquenched fire lit by the Wobblies, and the Knights of Labor before them, which burned on in the small, but ongoing groupings of revolutionary workers in unorganized mines and mills.

Many American leftists, still bewitched by the magic image of the thirties, believe that the course of it all was predetermined in the deep structures of American history. On the other hand, it has been easier still to believe that everything was possible—that the working class of the thirties and forties was simply waiting for the "correct" revolutionary call, like the characters in Clifford Odett's play.

A more cautious relating of the CIO's conflicting possibilities must focus on precisely this tension between the conditions from which the CIO emerged and the new possibilities opened up by the creative struggle of the rejuvenated working class. The inevitability of the bureaucratic incorporation of the new unions; the counterpotentials of mass radicalism and a labor party—these are questions which must be seen in the context of that seminal period 1933-50. The first step is to identify the key moments in the history of the CIO which crystallized certain balances of forces while simultaneously annulling others. In fact, four periods stand out clearly as phases in the formation of the CIO.

1. **The First Upsurge, 1933-37:** The original rebellion of the unorganized industrial working class starting with the 1933 "NRA" strikes and culminating in the sit-down "fever" of winter/spring 1937. This was arguably the highwater mark of the class struggle in modern American history.

2. **Labor's Civil War (I) 1937-41:** Beginning with the "Roosevelt Recession" in the summer of 1937, the CIO's great offensive suddenly ground to a halt in the face of

growing unemployment, renewed employer terrorism, and especially the increasingly effective competition of the class-collaborationist AFL.

3. **The Second Upsurge, 1941-46:** A second phase of CIO expansion with the defense-induced industrial recovery of late 1940 and early 1941. After a series of new mass strikes in 1941 (Ford, Goodyear, Bethlehem, and Allis-Chalmers), official trade union action was suspended for the sake of a wartime "no-strike" pledge ameliorated by government-imposed unionization of war industries. This incipient state control of the industrial unions provoked an explosive wave of wildcat militancy through 1943-45 until the restoration of bureaucratic dominance with the great "safety-valve" strikes of 1946.

4. **Labor Civil War (II), 1947-50:** The postwar organizing strategy of the CIO (public employment, retail, 'Operation Dixie', and so on) collapsed in the midst of a new employer-state offensive (Taft-Hartley in 1947). The Cold War bloodletting within the CIO itself—the purge of left-led unions, mass blacklisting, and wholesale intra-CIO raiding—deepened the crisis. The result was a new stagnation of CIO growth and further gains by the AFL.

In the argument which follows, I employ these periods as a framework for attempting to reconstruct the internal dynamics of CIO militancy in relation both to the actual and *potential* development of political consciousness within the industrial working class.

I. FROM BRIGGS TO FLINT

The original period of the CIO's formation—1933-37—has been incomparably better studied than its wartime expansion; yet at the same time, the history of this heroic period has tended to become so encrusted with myth that certain crucial features have become obscured. In particular there are three aspects of labor's "great upheaval" which need to be clarified:

Firstly, the majority of the militant base for the new unionism was provided by second-generation workers, sons and daughters of the 1900-1920 "new immigrants", whose activation as trade unionists went hand in hand with their mobilization as the electoral base of the New Deal. In 1930 there were twenty-five million of these second-generation Americans; together with their parents they constituted a third (forty million) of the white population and a majority of the working class. Although native-stock and Irish-origin leaders still tended to exercise a disproportionate weight in the general staffs of the unions and organizing drives, the CIO's early grassroots were the second-generation workers. Occupationally frozen in unskilled slots, forced to bear the brunt of urban poverty, but no longer limited by their parents' language or peasant superstitions—this second generation was ripe for rebellion.

Secondly, when the industrial uprising finally began in 1933 it was not primarily concerned with wages or even working hours. Indeed, the underlying thrust was surprisingly non-economistic; in a majority of cases the fundamental grievance was the viciousness of the workplace incarnated in the arbitrary power of the foremen and the inhuman pressures of mechanized production lines. It must be recalled that in 1933 the typical American factory was a miniature feudal state where streamlined technologies were combined with naked brutality. In Ford's immense citadels at Dearborn and River Rouge, for example,

workers were openly terrorized and beaten up for such transgressions of plant rules as talking to one another on the line. But the most totalitarian settings were undoubtedly the grim steel towns of Ohio, Pennsylvania, Illinois, and Indiana. As Mayor Crawford of Duquesne once put it, "Jesus Christ couldn't speak in Duquesne for the American Federation of Labor". Thus it is not surprising that the deepest impulse of the early industrial strikes was the fight for democratization at the workplace and civil liberties in company towns. This quest for a degree of workplace control took specific forms in different industries: in Buffalo steel mills, for example, the overriding grievance was the foreman-controlled hiring "shape-up", while for auto workers it was the indiscriminate speedup on the assembly lines.

Thirdly, this rebellion (even at first in the mines) owed nothing to the benevolent hand of John L. Lewis or other official leaders. In fact the most striking aspect of the early thirties insurgency was the defiant autonomy of (usually clandestine) plant committees from any of the official apparatuses. Liberal studies have not been careful to distinguish between the militancy developed at the base and the very different interests involved in the struggles within the old AFL bureaucracy. To weigh events more accurately, we need to keep one crucial fact in mind: *the original Committee for Industrial Organization (CIO) was an alliance of dissident trade union bureaucrats, with important financial resources and friends in high places, created for the purpose of capturing an already existent mass movement of industrial shop committees and rebel locals—a movement with dangerous embryonic tendencies toward an anti-Gompers model of "class struggle unionism"*.

A brief review of the emergence of the CIO may make it clearer why the intervention of the Lewis-Hillman wing of the AFL bureaucracy, supported by Roosevelt and Secretary of Labor Perkins, was *ultimately* a greek gift to the rank and file movements involved.

The Rank and File Vanguard

Following the passage of the National Recovery Act of 1933 (with its famous Section 7-A asserting, with a calculated ambiguity, the "right of labor to representatives of its own choosing"), a wave of strikes broke out across the industrial heartland. With the exception of garment and coal-mining, where rank and file spontaneity was soon harnessed by established bureaucracies, the leadership of these "NRA strikes" was provided by two sorts of unofficial vanguards.

On one hand, there were the implanted nuclei of revolutionary cadre, the most important of which were the Communist Party's factory cells, its dual-unionist Trade Union Unity League, and, perhaps most significantly, its Slavic, Finnish, Magyar, and Yiddish language federations and cultural organizations which gave it privileged access to the first- and second-generation "new immigrants".* There were also the much smaller, but locally important bands of Trotskyists, Wobblies,

and American Workers' Party members ("Musteites") as well as the trade union membership of the old Socialist Party.

On the other hand, there were informal groupings of highly skilled workers who conserved and transmitted traditions of a more radical direction than the AFL mainstream. Including highly paid machine makers and maintenance technicians, this elite strata tended to be loosely supervised and, by virtue of their mobility or position in the labor process of mass industry, were uniquely placed to provide leadership and coordination to the organizing efforts of operatives and line workers. Drastic wage-cutting in the late twenties, followed by the impact of the Depression, drove broad sections of this skilled layer in mass production industry to reject the craft exclusivism and nativism which had proven so divisive in the industrial strikes of the 1909-1922 period. Instead groups of craftsmen played catalytic roles in the organization of the NRA strikes. The outstanding early representative of this insurgency of skilled workers against "fordism" was the Detroit-based Mechanics' Educational Society of America (MESA), which was composed primarily of tool and die makers under the influence of British shop-stewardist traditions. In the fall of 1933 MESA, uniting with groups of semi-skilled workers, successfully struck contract tool and die shops in the Detroit area and created the first union beachhead in the auto industry.

By late 1933 and early 1934 these advanced detachments of radicals and rebel craftsmen had begun to cement alliances with strategic groups of second-generation semi-skilled workers who, in turn, mobilized the hidden strengths of informal workgroups and ethnic networks. The enlarged shop committees sought further linkages with other plants in the same city or industry. This search for solidarity at both city-wide and industry levels produced a flood of new applications for AFL charters (forcing the CP to abandon its dual unions at the end of 1934) as well as a dramatic reinvigoration of somnolent city central labor councils. The craft union bureaucrats' problem was finding a way of keeping control over the new unionism while simultaneously preventing its blossoming into mass industrial unions. The AFL Executive Council's solution was to force the new unionists into temporary "federal locals" subject to future redistribution amongst craft internationals, and to establish dictatorial control over organizing campaigns in basic industry.

AFL Machinations

The entry of the AFL apparatus immediately acted as a dampening force upon the rank and file movements in industry. What the auto, rubber, steel, and electrical insurgents demanded was a militant plan of battle against the corporations which aimed at the earliest possible national walk-outs backed by the resources of the AFL. Instead, the AFL exercised every ounce of guile to derail the strike movements and to reach accommodations with management and the government. In auto, for example, the scheming acceptance of a pro-employer industrial code by chief organizers Collins and Dillon, sparked an open revolt of the local shop committees who went ahead, under the influence of the left, to prepare the basis for an independent auto workers international. In rubber and electrical, similar ruptures took place between militant rank and files and their appoint-

*Communist Party membership almost doubled from 1933 to 1935 (14,000 to 27,000), but its real influence was greatly amplified by its weight within the various ethnic communities. Some historians have belabored the overwhelmingly foreign-born composition of American Communism (90% at its founding in 1919, still 80% fifteen years later) as the reason for its alleged marginalization, but this assessment must be balanced against the actual composition of the industrial working class itself. In 1933, for example, the factory proletariat was still 60% foreign-born or second-generation "new immigrants".

Against the Current

ed "leaders". In steel, however, the AFL's sabotage of the great 1933-34 movement for an industry-wide strike led to a more permanent demoralization as thousands made an exodus from federal locals and Amalgamated lodges.

In the meantime the reformed ties of solidarity at a local level found explosive expression in the three successive city-wide strikes which rocked Toledo, Minneapolis and San Francisco in 1934. In each case the struggle of a leading sector of local workers (auto, truck-drivers, and maritime) under the leadership of avowed revolutionaries (Musteites, Trotskyists, and Communists) sparked massive and violent confrontations between labor and capital. The national AFL responded to these upheavals with denunciations, while Tobin of the Teamsters dispatched goons to strikebreak against the radical drivers in Minneapolis.

Thus by the time that John L. Lewis "proclaimed" the industrial rebellion at the 1935 AFL convention, symbolically precipitating the exit of the future CIO unions, broad sections of the industrial grassroots were already either deeply alienated from the AFL leadership or in open revolt. Even more ominously, there was a visible *radicalization* of the rank and file movement expressed both by the growth of left-wing groups, and, especially, by their ability to lead masses of workers in broad struggles like the 1934 strikes. This capacity to act as an alternative pole of leadership was greatly enhanced by the de facto industrial united front between the Communists and Socialists which emerged in 1935 and lasted, at least in auto, until March or April of 1937. Although this season of left unity was all too brief as the CP moved towards a parasitical link to the New Deal, it was a vital factor in the next and most dramatic phase of the rebellion in industry: the sitdown wave of 1936-37.

Sitdown Fever

In the year between the summers of 1936 and 1937, the shop committees in auto, rubber, and electrical—along with similar rank and file movements in maritime—launched a sustained offensive which was quite unequalled in American history both for its tactical creativity and its demonstration of the workers' collective power in modern industry. By uniting the skilled and unskilled, the native and the foreign-born, these strikes created a solidarity that had hitherto eluded American workers. At the root of the success of this strike wave were two invaluable resources. One was the recovery, or, perhaps, reinvention, of those radical tactics based on rank and file solidarity and initiative which the Wobblies had pioneered in the previous generation: the sitdown strike and the mass picket. The other crucial element was the quality of strategic leadership and inter-plant coordination which was supplied by the left, particularly the Communists. Unlike the top-down generalship which unfortunately became all too typical of the CP's trade union 'influentials' after 1938, the Communist strike leaders of 1936-37 such as Mortimer and Travis in auto, were genuine tribunes of the rank and file who worked with relentless energy to expand and deepen mass participation in strike organization. Perhaps one can point to a synthesis of the IWW tradition of workers' democracy and participation, and some of the best elements of American Leninism's emphasis on organization, discipline, and strategy. Unfortunately this "synthesis" was only achieved temporarily on a practical plane; no important attempt was made to

theorize the lessons of the sitdowns or to strategically appreciate the importance of defending the autonomy and democracy of the shop committees.

The results were staggering: an epidemic of sitdown strikes beginning in rubber in 1936, then taken up by the autoworkers in their epic GM strike of winter 1937, and finally exploding in the spring fever of 1937 as some 400,000 workers staged 477 sitdowns. Mighty corporations seemed to fall like dominoes before such prodigies of rank and file energy as the ingenious capture of "Fisher Number Four" or the *eleven* mile long picket line at -9° which the rubber workers staged at the Goodyear complex in 1936. By directly encroaching upon the sanctity of corporate property and by providing workers with a premonitory revelation of their collective power, the sitdowns seemed to be transforming working class consciousness and dissolving old indoctrinations.

The goal of the secessionist bureaucrats led by Lewis and Hillman was to dam this torrent of mass militancy and to rechannel it into pacific tributaries under their command. Their model of industrial unionism was Lewis' own United Mine Workers (UMW) which banned radicals and whose constitution provided for "tight central control, limited local autonomy, and minimized rank and file participation". Where prior industry-wide organization of shop committees or union nuclei was lacking, as in steel and meatpacking, this was exactly the structure which was imposed. Both the Steel and Packinghouse Workers' Organizing Committees (SWOC and PWOC) were strictly top-down operations, headed by handpicked lieutenants of Lewis from the UMW who supplanted existing local leadership. In the industries where such an attack was impossible (i.e. where some national framework already existed: auto, rubber, electrical, and oil) Lewis created a dual structure of field representatives and regional directors. The CIO staff worked hand in hand with New Deal officials to promote "responsible" negotiated settlements and to suppress the use of the sitdown strike. It was ironically Adolf Germer, the former leader of the socialist opposition in the UMW, whom Lewis entrusted with the mission of squelching the sitdowns soon after their first outbreak in Akron at the end of March 1936. With the collaboration of the Department of Labor, Germer tried to end the strike but the rank and file, already soured by its earlier experiences with AFL organizers, shouted Germer down at a mass meeting. After a few more trying months in Akron, Germer followed the sitdown epidemic to Detroit where he was the highest ranking CIO representative at hand for the beginning of the historic General Motors strike. Bypassing Germer's objections, however, the Socialist and Communist leadership at Flint and Cleveland forced the GM showdown upon Lewis as a virtual *fait accompli*.

Taming the Rank and File

The success of the rank and file leadership in retaining its autonomy and initiative during the Flint strike contrasts with what happened a few months later. By March 1937 Lewis was able to abort a repeat attempt of the GM sitdowns at Chrysler, foiled a proposed general strike in Detroit, and, by the end of the spring, brought the sitdown wave to a halt. Although the onslaught of a second depression in summer, 1937 helped dampen



John L. Lewis

mass militancy, other more directly political factors contributed to the sharp decline of strike momentum and the assertion of greater control by the CIO bureaucracy. First Lewis commanded indispensable financial resources drawn from the treasury of the UMW—a decisive advantage over the relatively impoverished federations of shop committees. Secondly, and more importantly, the secession of the CIO leadership from the AFL coincided with a fateful realignment of Roosevelt's political coalition that favored a new collaboration between the state and the industrial unions. Until the middle of 1935 FDR had managed to draw support both from the majority of the unions and from the so-called "progressive" wing of capital (including the management of GE, US Steel, the Rockefeller oil interests, and even the President of the US Chamber of Commerce). He balanced this antagonistic alliance by offering the AFL a generally pro-union interpretation of NRA codes in lighter (and Northern) industries as well as more energetic relief measures; to big business, on the other hand, he ceded an interpretation of the NRA codes in heavy industry which buttressed the "company unions" which had been thrown up as roadblocks to genuine organization. This political juggling act worked for a while, but as the rank and file insurgency in the plants continued to grow regardless of the codes, corporate capital began to reevaluate its support for the New Deal. It was this mass desertion of business from the administration in 1935 that drove a reluctant Roosevelt temporarily into the arms of Lewis and the CIO insurgents. With a weakened base of business support (now primarily composed of anti-Wall Street segments of Western and Southern business), Roosevelt needed the powerful electoral bulwark that the surge of four million workers into the CIO during 1935-37 offered. Lewis and Hillman, in turn, needed the charisma of Roosevelt's backing and the clout of his political-judicial support to bring the rank and file in line. Thus, during the brief Roosevelt-Lewis honeymoon in 1936, the CIO created Labor's Nonpartisan League (LNPL) to mobilize support for Roosevelt and help make up the deficit in campaign financing left by the defection of Democratic businessmen. Roosevelt reciprocated by allowing the pro-CIO liberals in the Labor Department and the National Labor Relations Board to provide the new unions with tacit support.

At the same time it is highly unlikely that Lewis and Hillman could have so easily consolidated their control without aid from a third source, the Communist Party. Almost immediately after the stunning victory at Flint, the CP began to end the limited relationship with the

Socialists and turn toward a new alliance with Lewis (and later with Murray and Hillman). Again it was a marriage of convenience: the bureaucratic integration of the CIO would be an incomparably easier matter with Communist complicity and Lewis also needed the kind of superb organizing talent which they possessed. On the other side, the CP's turn toward Lewis, under the rising star of Earl Browder, was a logical part of a broader maneuver to legitimize the Communists as the left-wing of the New Deal coalition. In time they would have to pay a terrible price at the hands of their erstwhile allies for this "center-left coalition." Meanwhile the Party's work in the unions began to take on a totally new character as the needs of intra-bureaucratic struggle acquired priority over the defense of rank and file democracy or the creation of a mass socialist current in the unions. Communist criticism of Lewis ceased, the call for an independent labor party was muted, and by 1938 the party's factory cells and plant papers were abolished.

In a recent memoir, John Williamson—a principal architect of the CP's strategy of the "left-center coalition" within the CIO—outlined what he believed were the Party's three fundamental errors in this period: (1) failure to build socialist consciousness in the unions; (2) failure to keep building a CP mass base in the unions; and (3) failure to build a left current within the AFL. Furthermore he observed that it was the weakness of the CP's implantation in the trade union rank and file that ultimately made the Party so vulnerable to McCarthyite persecution.

The Debacle in "Little Steel"

The full import of these new alignments was revealed in the organization of the campaign against hold-out "Little Steel" in 1937. The Communists contributed at least a third of the organizers for the Steel Workers Organizing Committee (SWOC), but abstained from attempts at recruitment or at criticism of the autocratic Lewis-Murray leadership, even when, at the end of the campaign, all Party members were summarily purged from the staff. Tactically conservative and determined to keep a tight rein on local strike committees, SWOC avoided sitdowns and prepared for a long, conventional walkout. This played into the hands of the ruthless Tom Girdler, leader of the Little Steel employers, who launched a preemptive lockout, barricading forces of scabs and heavily armed company guards inside the mills. Girdler's "reverse sitdowns" were combined with massive anti-union propaganda, middle class vigilantes and terrorism against picket lines. Lewis, in turn, counted on FDR and New Deal state officials (newly elected with the backing of LNPL) to overcome the steel barons' blatant defiance of the Wagner Act of 1935. Thus when Democratic Governor Davey of Ohio sent the national guard into the steel towns, they were welcomed as "brotherly heroes" by the SWOC strikers. Instead the guardsmen launched a reign of terror, reminiscent of the suppression of the 1919 Steel Strike, which virtually drove SWOC underground in Ohio. Meanwhile, the even more "pro-labor" Governor Earl of Pennsylvania, who earlier had supported the CIO's fight to establish civil liberties in the Allegheny and Monogahela valleys, also turned to repression. The key to the behavior of these Democratic politicians, of course, was the attitude of the administration in Washington. Roosevelt, shifting ground to rebuild support with business circles as well as with anti-CIO leadership of the AFL, cynically repaid

Against the Current

his electoral debts to the CIO by playing the role of Pontius Pilate in the aftermath of the bloody Memorial Day (1938) massacre of striking steelworkers in South Chicago. While Lewis was busy defusing the rank and file anger inside SWOC which was pushing for a general strike in Chicago, FDR declared "a plague on both houses". The combined result, therefore, of Lewis' bureaucratism, the CP's new-found moderation, and FDR's betrayal was the defeat of SWOC and the crashing halt of the CIO's offensive in industry.

II. THE LABOR PARTY THAT NEVER WAS

The awakening of class solidarity that welded together industrial workers in the struggle for unionization was reflected on an electoral plane as a tendency toward political unity of working class constituencies previously fragmented by religious and racial division. The New Deal landslide victory of 1936 marked, for the first time, the overcoming of the traditional ethno-religious patterns of the Northern electorate by a clear polarization of workers and capitalists between the Democratic and Republican parties. This political recomposition was primarily a product of the rise of a second-generation ethnic-proletarian voting bloc enlarged by the conversion of formerly Republican blacks and many native Protestant workers. A contradictory situation was involved in this realignment of political axes: on one hand, as an expansion of the Democratic Party's active base, it contributed to a spectacular reinforcement of capitalist political domination; on the other hand, to the extent that it tended to politically unify the working class, it created new potentials for eventually undermining capitalist party control.

While conventional political history has stressed the irresistible tide of the first movement; the contemporary left of the thirties, dubious of the New Deal's capacity to cure the ills of American capitalism, was much more impressed with the opportunities created by the second. It was the consensus of the left that the rise of the CIO was finally producing, where the Knights of Labor and the Industrial Workers of the World had failed, the successful structure and strategic imperative for a labor party. Indeed the emergence of the new industrial unions, while largely buttressing the Democrats, also coincided with a dramatic ferment of alternative political movements and labor-oriented third parties. In Minnesota, for example, the "radical" Farmer-Labor Party consolidated its dominance in 1934-36 with the election of a Governor and two US Senators, while in Washington and Oregon the labor-based "Commonwealth Federations" captured their state Democratic Parties for several years. Meanwhile in California Upton Sinclair's "EPIC" movement promised to redistribute the wealth, and in Wisconsin the LaFollete dynasty continued its reign through the powerful Progressive Party (later fused with the state's farmer-labor movement).

Simultaneously, the surge of industrial unionism, confronted with the challenge of corporate and state repression, became unavoidably politicised. In "feudal" steel towns political mobilization for democratic rights was a virtual precondition for union organization. Similarly in auto centers, the sitdown strikes spurred UAW militants to campaign against corporation-dominated local governments. Local after local of the auto,

electrical and garment workers voted support for the concept of a labor party in a groundswell of political independence that discomfited Lewis and Hillman. A Gallup Poll conducted in August, 1937, following the sit-down wave, showed that at least 21% of the population supported the eventual formation of a national farmer-labor party.

Why, then, did this convergence of politicised trade union militancy and third party experimentation fail again—as in 1894 and 1919—to produce any lasting synthesis? Two interrelated explanations have been advanced. One is that the "leftward" turn of the New Deal in 1935 coopted the popular rationale of the insurgent political movements. The other is that, contrary to the strike-breaking of Cleveland and Wilson, Roosevelt's tacit support for the CIO in 1936-37 allowed him to appear as the savior of industrial unionism. Both of these explanations have obvious kernels of truth. There can be no doubt, for instance, that the broad reforms of FDR's "second hundred days" in 1935 constituted a powerful force which pulled contemporary radicalism much closer to the orbit of the Democratic Party. One example was the increasingly intimate alliance between the Minnesota Farmer-Labor Party and the New Deal. Another was the unprecedented creation of the American Labor Party in order to channel New York's significant radical vote toward the support of the regime in power (FDR and Mayor LaGuardia). Even Labor's Non-partisan League, nominally the independent political expression of the CIO, was little more than a captive campaign apparatus for Roosevelt and selected pro-labor Democrats.



Franklin D. Roosevelt

The Crisis of the New Deal

But this line of analysis loses much of its strength when it is extended beyond the 1935-37 honeymoon of FDR and the CIO. The attachment of the LNPL and the farmer-labor movements, for example, was emphatically not the same as their actual absorption into the Democratic Party, and most contemporary Marxists, counting on the crisis of the New Deal and the eventual replacement of Roosevelt from the right, still visualised these organizations as the foci of a future realignment to the left. Indeed it is precisely such a crisis of reform which occurred in mid-1937 with the onset of the second slump and the increasing defiance of the National Labor Relations Board by an intransigent sector of capital (Ford, Dupont, Little Steel, and so on). Roosevelt's attempts at shoring up the New Deal with an exemplary "purge" of congressional reactionaries and

his strategy of packing the Supreme Court were both dramatic failures; and in 1938, following the decimation of liberals in the fall elections, a resurgent bloc of Republicans and "Bourbon" Southern Democrats actually took control of Congress away from New Deal liberals. This shift in the national political balance, combined with FDR's overriding desire to win support for an increasingly interventionist foreign policy, cut short any further reform initiatives. More than that, it led to a drastic cut in public relief in 1939 (which sparked widespread strikes and riots) and, as we have seen, renewed state repression of strikes and organizing drives.

Thus by 1937-39 the crucial popular props of Rooseveltian Democracy—economic restoration, social reformism, and suspension of state repression—were openly in crisis and conditions again seemed to exist for the further growth of local labor or farmer-labor movements and their eventual national coalescence. The puzzle, however, is how to explain why 1938 was actually a year of disaster for third party and labor party hopes, which instead of growing at the expense of the New Deal's crisis, virtually collapsed. In Wisconsin and Minnesota, for example, the Progressive and Farmer-Labor Parties suffered the devastating losses of both governorships and a reduction in their combined congressional delegations from twelve to four. In Washington the Commonwealth Federation lost its command of the state Democratic Party, and in California the EPIC movement quietly disappeared from the scene. Meanwhile the UAW's "Vote Labor" campaign in the Detroit municipal elections of 1937—the CIO's most ambitious foray into local politics—lost by a surprising margin, while the LNPL's anemic performance in the 1938 elections cast doubt on its continued viability.

The AFL Resurgence

The key to this paradox of declining third party fortunes was the veritable "civil war" which broke out between the AFL and the new unions in 1937-38. It was not just a question of labor disunity, but rather of an extraordinary resurgence of right-wing trade unionism allied in informal, but decisive ways with the contemporary offensive of capital. On a local level the AFL colluded with employers to undercut CIO organizing drives by the signing of toothless, "sweetheart" contracts or even the chartering of company unions. At the same time the national AFL Executive, long anxious to tame the power of central labor councils, ordered a thorough purge of the CIO from all local labor bodies. On the west coast the AFL Teamsters countered the CIO's famous "March Inland" from its waterfront base with a wave of violence and secret agreements with employers. Even bloodier guerrilla warfare erupted on the New Orleans' docks between AFL and CIO longshoremen.

The strange bedfellows of the AFL and big business also cooperated on a political plane by demanding the amendment of the Wagner Act to "guarantee to the employer 'free speech' to express his union preference". This dangerous attempt to re-legalize company unionism was typical of the AFL's frenzied strategy to stop the growth of the CIO at any price. The AFL's political endorsement policy as adopted by its 1937 convention, for instance, placed it in opposition to any candidate sympathetic to the CIO. By thus splitting the labor vote, the AFL effectively undermined the base of state third-party movements, city-wide labor tickets, and the left wing of the New Deal. In 1938 the AFL withdrew from the Minnesota Farmer-Labor Party,

the Oregon Commonwealth Federation, and the New York American Labor Party, as well as severing its remaining links with Labor's Nonpartisan League. Simultaneously the AFL worked to defeat Mineworkers' leader Tom Kennedy in his gubernatorial bid in Pennsylvania and radical congressman Maury Maverick in Texas. (In some cases, however, the AFL's endorsements were so odious that its local affiliates rebelled and temporarily united with CIO unions.)

Thus the AFL's fratricidal mania was self-destructive to the extent that it undermined the political leverage of the entire labor bureaucracy on the eve of World War Two. At the same time, however, the AFL did manage to grow rather spectacularly in the late thirties, and by 1940 had recouped most of its membership and financial losses from the CIO schism. Although part of this growth was built on the flimsy support of sweetheart unionism, another part reflected the re-emergence of militancy in the ranks of the AFL itself. Unlike the strike movements in mass production industry, however, the new combativity of the AFL lacked a broad vision since it was constrained within a narrow economism. Faced with the CIO challenge, the larger AFL unions like the Machinists, Carpenters, Meatcutters, and Teamsters launched new organizing campaigns and adopted quasi-industrial structures and jurisdictions. But these membership drives failed to generate the sustained rank and file activism that accompanied the emergence of industrial unions like the UAW. Indeed the modernization of the AFL after 1937 took place through an enlargement and recomposition of the bureaucracy itself; a process typified by the rise of young turks like Jimmy Hoffa in the Teamsters who gave old-fashioned business unionism a new aggressiveness (with tactics borrowed from radicals or the CIO) without changing one atom of its social and political conservatism.

It would be mistaken to assume, however, that the rightward and divisive posture of the AFL in the late thirties was exclusively the result of its rigid bureaucracy defending its traditional privileges. Equally important was the fact that the AFL ultimately drew its solidity from the relative conservatism of its predominantly skilled, native-Protestant and "old immigrant" membership. It was, moreover, precisely this stratum of the working class which was most susceptible to the ideological and cultural pressures of the middle class. The relative social weight of the middle strata and the degree of interchange between its lower levels and the upper sections of the working class have both been unusually high in the United States — perhaps higher than in any other industrial country. It is clear that while middle-class insurgencies of the first Roosevelt administration tended in a generally "populist" direction which politically reinforced the New Deal, after 1937 there was a profound middle-class counter-reaction to the CIO and the growth of the left. This anti-CIO, anti-radical backlash, incessantly fanned by the press and the corporate media, contributed to the retrenchment of the AFL bureaucracy and provided it with a broad patriotic sanction for opposing the new industrial unions. At the same time the resurgence of the AFL in the context of the rightward shift in national politics put the CIO leadership under increasing pressure; especially after the Ladies Garment Workers and the Millners unions rejoined the AFL in 1940 in protest of the dominant "center-left" alliance within the CIO. Under siege, Lewis and Hillman clung even more desperately to their links to Roosevelt and the shrunken liberal wing of the Democratic Party.

Against the Current

The "Americanization" of the Communist Party

Increasingly uncritical support for Roosevelt also came from the Communist Party which, decked out in its new image as "twentieth century Americanism," took popular-frontism to such extremes as the endorsement of the Kelly-Nash machine in Chicago which was directly responsible for the 1937 massacre of steel strikers and of the infamous, anti-union regime of Boss Hague in New Jersey. Such policies did little, however, to broaden the base of the CP in the industrial working class. Although the party reached the zenith of its popular influence in this period with perhaps 75,000 members and a periphery of more than 500,000, a majority of its growth came from an influx of second-generation, Jewish white-collar and professional workers. Thus between 1935 and 1941 the non-blue collar component of party membership jumped from barely 5% to almost 45%, while the New York component more than doubled from 22.5% to nearly 50%. The party strength in the unions—except for maritime and longshore and the white-collar unions—was not a mass-membership strength. It was based on organizational control. While the Communist Party was undergoing this paradoxical process of simultaneous growth and relative "deproletarianization", the rest of the left was near collapse. The Socialist Party, unable as always to give its trade union interventions any strategy or coherent leadership, virtually disintegrated in a series of factional splits and defections after 1936, while the Trotskyists were seriously weakened by major doctrinal schisms in 1940. The curious result was to give the CP a visibility in national politics and a domination on the left which was quite unequaled since the heyday of the old Socialist Party in 1910-12, while at the same time the party was becoming more detached from strong roots in the newly-unionized industrial working class.

FDR Represses the left

The political weakness of the labor-left and its dangerous over-dependence on bureaucratic alliances were vividly demonstrated by the Roosevelt Administration's success in repressing and isolating CIO radicals on the eve of the 1940-41 rearmament boom. First with the active support of the Minneapolis employers, President Tobin of the Teamsters (the most outstanding AFL Democrat and friend of FDR) cashed in his political debts with the White House and obtained massive federal sedition prosecution of the Trotskyist leadership of Drivers' Local 544. (Ironically the Communists, who would later be decimated by the Smith Act, supported its initial application against their Trotskyist factional opponents in Minneapolis.) Then, in the summer of 1941, the Communists were evicted from the strategic aircraft industry after Roosevelt ordered the Army to break the North American Aviation strike led by Wyndham Mortimer, the hero of the 1936-37 Flint strike. But unlike the Pullman Strike of 1894 there was neither massive national solidarity with the blacklisted workers nor any political break with the administration. Instead the CIO leadership (Murray and Hillman since the resignation of Lewis in 1940) eagerly collaborated with Roosevelt's strike-breaking in the dual hope of weakening the Communists within the CIO while simultaneously gaining administration support for the "top-down" unionization of the defense industry. The Communists, for their part, could only mount a weak campaign of defense; their temporary militancy since 1939 was broken by the inva-

sion of Russia and the party returned to virtually uncritical adulation of Roosevelt and Murray.

III. WWII: WILDCATS AND HATE STRIKES

After nearly four years of trying to hold the fort against the attacks of employers and the rival AFL, the CIO regained the initiative in 1941. As industrial production revived under the stimulus of Lendlease and rearmament, previously organized workers struck on a broad front for the first wage increases since 1937. Leading the way were Lewis' indomitable Mineworkers whose solidarity and tenacity in successive strikes were probably unexcelled in American history. Striking in direct defiance of Roosevelt and his ill-fated Defense Mediation Board, the UMW set important precedents by winning the union shop and eliminating traditional Southern wage differentials. Meanwhile, workers in holdout, open shop industries again began to respond to CIO organizing drives. Ford and Bethlehem Steel were the most important of these anti-CIO employers; within weeks of one another in spring 1940, however, both capitulated to offensives of the UAW and SWOC. The great Ford strike, in particular, recalled the heroic days of Flint, with its mass picketing, flying squads, and—a new and distinctively American invention—encircling mammoth blockades of strikers' cars.

This Indian summer of mass militancy was brought to an abrupt halt, however, by the bombing of Pearl Harbor. Rank and file labor was quickly shackled by the restrictions of a wartime no-strike pledge and regressive wage ceilings. At the same time the coming of the war was also the catalyst for far-reaching transformations in the organization of the labor force and the role of the state in the economy.

The War Transforms American Society

First there was an "unprecedented recomposition of the working class" as millions of rural immigrants, women, and blacks entered the industrial labor market. It has been estimated that more than fifteen million Americans moved from one city, state or region to another in search of employment between 1940 and 1945. Four and a half million permanently moved from the farm to the city. Underlying these great wartime migrations was the "pull" of a new industrial revolution in the South and Far West, and the "push" of accelerating agricultural mechanization and the collapse of cotton tenancy in the Southern blackbelt. The expanding economy was the midwife of both processes as new concentrations of industrial labor emerged almost overnight in California aircraft plants or Southern shipyards, while older manufacturing centers underwent drastic alterations in their social composition. Particularly striking was the rapid proletarianization of the black population as a result of a new and ongoing exodus northward, which between 1940 and 1945 reduced the percentage of black men employed in agriculture from 41% to 28% while simultaneously doubling the percentage of black workers in the total manufacturing labor force (from 5.9% to 10.1%). Similarly millions of women gained entry for the first time to formerly male-exclusive citadels of mass production and heavy industries. The convergence of these trends produced a very dramatic, and, as we shall see, decisive change in the social base and consciousness of industrial unionism.

Secondly the war sparked a restructuring of the historic relationships between organized labor, capital, and the state. The previous estrangement of the dominant fractions of corporate capital from the New Deal was overcome by the new collaboration. The reigning congressional alliance of Republicans and right-wing Democrats was reinforced by the rise of a bureaucratic network of "dollar a year" corporate executives and Southern Democrats in command of the war economy. In contrast to World War One when the army had been uncooperative with business's efforts to coordinate procurement and production, the generals and the admirals now entered into a new and permanent collusion with war contractors and their political agents.

Labor's "New" Theory

But this new coordination of private accumulation and the state required a level of labor productivity and industrial peace which could only be secured through the willing collaboration of the trade union bureaucracy. Interestingly, the CIO leadership on the eve of World War Two submitted precisely such a plan for permanent harmonization of the interests of capital and labor through an integration of collective bargaining and scientific management. The proposal which Philip Murray took to Roosevelt in December, 1940 as a basis for the organization of defense production advocated the formation of "industrial councils" which would allow unions to participate in various aspects of plant management while encouraging a common interest between workers and the front office in raising productivity. This reorientation of CIO strategy was codified in a book by Clinton Golden and Harold Ruttenberg, *Dynamics of Industrial Democracy*. These high officials of the Steelworkers, offered management a bundle of olive branches ranging from cessation of wildcat strikes to CIO cooperation in raising productivity in return for the establishment of the closed shop. For them "industrial democracy" meant "worker participation in management as an outlet, improving productivity and reducing costs". Murray made the argument—later expanded by Walter Reuther—that the greater the degree of formal union "partnership" with management and government, the more effective the control which the union leadership could exercise over disruptive "minorities" in the rank and file.

The political clout of the CIO, however, had been too badly eroded by fighting with the AFL and desertions within its own camp (including the all important UMW in 1942) to win much support for this industrial council scheme. Instead the labor movement as a whole, including the AFL, paid for its disunity by its exclusion from the top levels of the war economy as well as by its continuing weak influence upon Congress. Although like the Wilson administration of 1917-18, FDR's third term mouthed the rhetoric of a "tripartite" war effort, its real commitments were revealed by the demotion of labor to a minor role in the key War Production Board while billions of dollars worth of contracts were being awarded to notorious violators of the Wagner Act.

The defeat of the CIO's call for "industrial democracy" was partially softened, however, by the War Labor Board's reluctant concession of a generalized "maintenance of membership" (quasi-union shop) and automatic union dues check-off in the summer of 1942. The administration was above all concerned to shore up the position of the labor bureaucracy in face of internal union decomposition

and the consequent loss of control over the workforce. Increasing restiveness against the no-strike pledge amongst war workers (especially in the strategic shipyards) as well as the re-emergence of Lewis as an independent and possibly rebel pole in the labor movement compelled the government to reinforce the power of the CIO bureaucracy. The result was a kind of social contract which "conscripted" war workers into unions while at the same time denying the unions any authentic capacity to represent the economic interests of their members. "Maintenance of membership" thus helped produce a dramatic increase in unionization, but with entirely different consequences from the struggles of the early thirties, since workers were now organized by the state into unions, rather than organizing themselves.

The Wartime Strike Wave

At the same time the turbulent recomposition of the workforce was breaking down many of the social networks and primary work groups which had been important roots of the CIO. Continuity of militancy was now provided by the layer of veteran secondary union leaders—stewards, committeemen and local officials—while the base became more atomized, volatile and transient. As a direct consequence the class struggle within the war plants regressed to a more primitive level of semi-spontaneous outbursts. These flare-ups nonetheless acquired a cumulative dynamic of their own as inflation and declining real wages continued to stir mass discontent. The *catalytic agent* which transformed this simmering unrest into an explosion was, predictably, Lewis' Mineworkers. The least affected by shifts in the labor force or the turmoil of wartime migration, the UMW rank and file exerted continuous pressure on Lewis to keep up the fight against the employers. In the face of a determined wildcat strike by Pennsylvania anthracite miners in 1943 that, for the first time in a decade, challenged his control, Lewis was forced to lead the UMW into an open rebellion against the no-strike pledge. After four general walkouts in defiance of Roosevelt's threats to draft strikers and send the army into the coalfields, the Mineworkers won their demand for "portal to portal" pay. The UMW victory electrified rank and file workers in war industries. By 1944 as large a proportion of the workforce was taking part in work stoppages as at the height of the sitdown strikes. The rebellion was particularly extensive in rubber and auto where it took the form of successive waves of wildcat strikes. More than half of the UAW membership joined an unauthorized walk-out of some variety in 1943.

The CIO was thrown into an acute crisis. With the support of the War Labor Board the bureaucracy attempted to isolate and punish individual militants: in rubber alone hundreds of shop stewards were purged and blacklisted. But conditions on the shop-floor—particularly the nearly complete breakdown of grievance procedures—continued to fuel the wildcat movement. As national trade union executives became virtual representatives of the government, the secondary leadership increasingly took up the complaints of the rank and file and began to coordinate resistance to the no-strike pledge. In rubber this new layer of rebel leaders took control of key Akron locals, while in auto Briggs Local 212 led by the fiery Emil Mazey became a national rallying point for insubordinate shop stewards and local officials.

Politically this rebellion of the local leadership was translated into new enthusiasm for the concept of a labor

Against the Current

party. There was a widespread sense in union ranks that the New Deal had collapsed and that the country was caught in a wave of reaction, exemplified by the passage of the anti-labor Smith-Connolly Act in 1943. In the UAW a militant current headed by Emil Mazey of Briggs Local 212 and having supporters in fifty locals, was committed to the creation of an independent labor party. In 1943 they took over the almost moribund Michigan Labor's Nonpartisan League, revitalized it, and changed its name to the Progressive Labor League with the declared purpose of creating a state labor party as soon as possible. Meanwhile the Dubinsky (ILGWU) wing of the American Labor Party in New York, which was engaged in a fierce battle with the Hillman-CP "left wing", was advocating a state by state expansion of the ALP. Dubinsky had not the slightest desire to challenge FDR's national leadership, but he was dissatisfied with the sycophantic subservience of the ALP to the New York Democratic Party. He envisioned a multiplicity of state labor parties which would allow the trade union bureaucracy to exert more forceful and independent leverage versus local and state Democratic apparatuses. Although Dubinsky and the UAW dissidents were motivated by different visions, their mutual interests in fostering a more independent labor politics impelled them in a similar direction. Clearly this renewal of third-party agitation, connected as it was with the massive grassroots upheaval against the role of the bureaucrats and the government, offered the best prospects since 1937 for the revival of a socialist current in the working class.

Tragically, however, no large, industrially implanted left cadre was available to coordinate the struggle against the no-strike pledge and the movement for independent political action. The Communists possessed the only left organization of sufficient size and resources, but they were adamantly opposed to the wildcat movement and to its political offshoots. The CP had moved so far to the right since 1941 in support of the war effort that the traditional left-right spectrum no longer accurately measured the real differences between factions of the CIO. The Browder leadership surpassed the most reactionary layers of the bureaucracy in its advocacy of speed-up and piecework; and when rank and file workers struck for higher wages or against inhuman conditions on the assembly lines, the party was the first to defend the no-strike pledge. They also consistently supported the Murray-Hillman leadership in its efforts to crack down on "divisive" third-party currents. In Michigan the Communist-dominated Industrial Union Councils fought tooth and nail against Mazey's attempts to float a state labor party, while in New York the CP collaborated with Hillman in reducing the ALP to an uncritical appendage of the regular Democratic Party. Finally in 1944 Browderism reached its logical end with the formal dissolution of the party and the adoption of the so-called "Tehran Line" with its illusions in a permanent pacification of the class struggle and a post-war Soviet-American alliance.

The Communists' abdication of leadership opened the way for anti-communist forces within the CIO to manipulate the rank and file unrest to their own factional advantage. The later postwar destruction of the CP's trade union influence can only be understood against the background of its isolation from wartime strike currents and its dependence upon inter-bureaucratic politics as well as its failure to build a political base in the rank and file. Within the important United Electrical Workers (UE), for example, anti-Communist dissident James Carey and

his Jesuit-led allies from the American Catholic Trade Unionists (ACTU) (who modeled their organization on CP factory cells) profited from grassroots dissatisfaction with the Communist-dominated international leadership. Meanwhile in the UAW, the explosive issues of incentive pay and speed-up—both of which were defended by the Communists and their allies—provoked a deep split in the leadership. The Reuther faction alone reoriented itself to the rebellion of the locals and outflanked the Communists and their center allies by appearing as the most militant wing of the national leadership. Reuther's leadership of the 113-day General Motors strike in 1946 was the ultimate masterstroke in this strategy of channeling rank and file energy for factional ends. It provided a "safety-valve" for the accumulated anger of the autoworkers while simultaneously consolidating Reuther's organizational hegemony and dismantling the rank and file caucus movement which had provided leadership to the war-time wildcats.

This dismantling was facilitated by the fact that the rank and file leaders in the organization of the wartime strike wave never developed a "shop-stewardist" perspective that could survive into the postwar period. Still employers and union bureaucrats alike were convinced by the experience of the wartime wildcats that industrial stability required the replacement of voluntary rank and file representatives by more "responsible" full-time officials. The 1946 auto contract, for example, replaced working shop stewards (one per twenty-four workers) with full-time union "committeemen" (representing hundreds of workers). This tendential decomposition and bureaucratization of rank and file leadership, together with the anticommunist purges of the late forties, was a major factor in the erosion of militancy in the postwar period.

The Racist Backlash

The weakness of left influence over wartime labor militancy also diminished one of the few counterweights to the pervasive and growing racism of the white working class in the war plants. At the beginning of rearmament, blacks had been universally excluded from defense jobs, and it was only after the rise of the "March on Washington" movement in 1941 organized by a black trade unionist, A. Philip Randolph, that Roosevelt reluctantly signed an executive order against job discrimination. Although real job equality was never remotely achieved, significant numbers of black workers did obtain footholds (usually the worst jobs) in aircraft, vehicle assembly and shipbuilding, where they often worked side by side with newly proletarianized whites from the rural South and Southwest. The result was that the wartime insurgence against working conditions and the no-strike pledge often overlapped with racist attacks on the new black workers. Thus between March and June 1943, over 100,000 man-days were lost in a wave of 'hate strikes' against the upgrading of black workers. Two months later all of Detroit erupted into anti-black riots which took thirty-four lives. A year later, and following innumerable incidents in shipyards and rubber plants, a massive racist outbreak in Philadelphia, sparked by the refusal of white streetcar employees to work with blacks, forced FDR to send 5,000 federal troops to restore order. Anti-black virulence also undermined the CIO's attempt at its greatest political coup—UAW leader Richard Frankenstein's campaign for the mayoralty of Detroit in 1945. Frankenstein's anticipated victory was snatched from under his nose by the defection of white auto workers

protesting the CIO's endorsement of the federal Fair Employment Practices Committee. Unlike the 1933-37 strike wave which had produced a deep unity-dynamic within the factory working class, the 1943-45 strikes vented frustration and anger without socializing the new workers in a common "culture of struggle" or assimilating their racial and sexual divisions.

IV. THE CIO'S POLITICAL ACTION COMMITTEE (PAC)

A Surrogate Social Democracy?

So far we have been primarily concerned with the various unsuccessful attempts to build a third party on the basis of industrial unionism, and have skirted the question of the CIO's actual relationship to the Democratic Party. For some other leftists, however, the greatest watershed in American labor history was the trade union movement's entry into the Democratic Party as its liberal pole. It has even been argued that the debate about the unique "failure of socialism" in the United States is spurious to the extent that the Democratic Party itself has become a surrogate social democracy. Michael Harrington has proposed that there exists a full correspondence between the labor wing of the Democrats and European social democracy.

Has the integration of the trade union movement into the Democratic Party produced, a peculiarly American version of social democracy in capitalist drag? A sketch of the history of the CIO's troubled alliances with the Roosevelt and Truman regimes may help clarify to what extent labor succeeded in institutionalizing its vital political objectives through the Democratic Party.

The political alliance between the CIO and the Democrats dates, of course, from the formation of Labor's Nonpartisan League in 1936; but the real institutional coalescence of the two only permanently took hold in 1944 with the launching of the Political Action Committee (PAC) as the CIO's new campaign apparatus. The PAC was created in response to parallel crises in the party and the CIO. On the Democratic side, the party had suffered a serious defeat in the 1942 Congressional elections with the defection of most of the Midwest to the Republicans. Within the reduced New Deal alliance the urban vote was thus more crucial than ever, but the big city Democratic machines were in profound crisis and could no longer guarantee the delivery of the ethnic working class vote. The undermining of the machines was partially due to the decline of their patronage resources following the increasing federalization of relief and employment, and partially as a result of the success of industrial unionism in weakening traditional dependencies between workers and ward-healers. Roosevelt and his chief politico thus attached priority to the creation of a trade union political apparatus which could compensate for the increasing electoral deficiencies of the boss system, while also extending Democratic control to the newer industrial centers in the South and West.

On the CIO side, a review of tactics had taken place in the wake of the failures of its congressional lobbies and its relative marginalization in the councils of the war economy. The need for a new political strategy was given special urgency in June 1943 with the passage of the Smith-Connally Act authorizing presidential take-overs of strike-torn industries and banning direct union political contributions. This defeat was compounded by the fact

that the AFL's chief lobbyist had secretly allowed a number of pro-AFL congressmen to vote with the majority in overriding President Roosevelt's veto. They saw the specter of an AFL-conservative alliance armed with the power to hamstring or even rollback industrial unionism. At the same time they were disturbed by the pro-labor party rumblings within their own ranks, particularly since much of it came from the same dissident corners responsible for the wildcat movement. The essence of the CIO's political problems, as the Executive Board saw it, was its failure to deeply politicize its membership. Voter non-participation was notoriously high in the industrial working class, and the wartime recomposition of the labor force made the situation even worse. The goal, therefore, of the CIO in establishing PACs on a national and local basis was to create a new "CIO voter" whose adherence to the New Deal wing of the Democratic Party would be as natural and reliable as a British laborite or European social democrat. The PACs aimed to achieve this through massive, ongoing voter registration campaigns and the creation of a permanent army of precinct workers.

"The Last Great Hope of the New Deal"

Leftists and liberals welcomed the PAC as the last great hope of the New Deal. Although a few dreamed from time to time that PAC might ultimately prove the nucleus of a future labor party, the more widely held view was that it was the vehicle for establishing liberal supremacy within the Democratic Party. The CIO leadership, the Communists, and a broad spectrum of "progressives" all agreed that the formation of the PAC was part of a process of realignment which would eventually rally labor, New Dealers, and progressive Republicans into a single liberal party, while forcing Southern Democrats and the Republican mainstream to regroup in a second, conservative party. Moreover it was generally held that such a realignment was the indispensable precondition for resuming the march of reform and breaking through the right-wing roadblock.

Unquestionably the CIO invested tremendous energy and resources into building the PAC, and great claims were made for its role in the Democratic successes of 1944. The new grassroots campaign machinery with its tens of thousands of campaign workers was indisputably vital to the Democrats, but the CIO gained surprisingly little in exchange. This was partially due to the PAC's reluctance, under Hillman's leadership, to actually exact any meaningful quid pro quo from Roosevelt. Specifically in 1944 the struggle between the right and liberal wings of the Democratic Party had become focused on Vice-President Wallace's quest for renomination. Wallace had emerged as the champion of beleaguered New Dealers; almost alone in the administration he continued to defend regional planning, to make populist attacks on monopoly, and to advocate the CIO-sponsored proposal for an "Economic Bill of Rights". With FDR in failing health, the Southern conservative wing (which supported Byrnes) and the big city machines (who supported Truman) were united in their opposition to Wallace's renomination as heir apparent. Although the stakes were clear, the CIO leadership hesitated to openly challenge the power of the machine bosses. The result was tacit CIO endorsement of Senator Truman and the defeat of Wallace.

The PAC's failure to defend Wallace was the prelude to a series of further defeats over federal reconversion policy, as

Against the Current

the supposedly "progressive" 79th Congress repeatedly gave way to the corporations on tax policy and emasculated welfare and employment legislation. The tax concessions were particularly significant since they allowed corporations which showed losses after the war—as a result of strikes, for instance—to claim rebates from their wartime excess profits tax. This was little more than a publicly subsidized war-chest for the anticipated corporate showdown with the unions. The attack on labor, however, was to take a different form from the employers' offensive at the end of World War One. Rather than seeking to roll-back unionism in mass production industries altogether, the strategy of big business in the Truman years pivoted around the containment of industrial unionism within institutional constraints which harmonized collective bargaining with the restoration of full managerial control over the labor process. Over a decade of intermittent rank and file guerilla warfare, spiced with sit-downs and wildcats, had eroded the formerly despotic powers of foremen and line supervisors. Rejecting the CIO's pleas for more "industrial democracy", the front-line corporations in auto, steel and electrical manufacture adopted a plan of battle which, by maintaining a hard position on wages, aimed purposefully to provoke long, draining strikes to deflate grassroots militancy. Ultimately the corporations hoped to force the unions to accept a tough trade-off between wage increases and control over working conditions. In particular they wanted strong curbs on the role of rank and file leadership, the restriction of the right to strike, and long, multi-year contracts.

1946—Year of the Big Strikes

The explosion when it came in the late fall of 1945 was bigger than any previous strike wave in American history, and it wrecked havoc with relations between the CIO and the Democratic Party. In the year after V-J Day over five million workers hit the picket line, and by the end of January 1946, the industrial core of the economy was virtually at a standstill as the auto, steel, electrical and packinghouse workers were simultaneously on strike. In contrast to 1936-37 or even 1941, however, there was minimal rank and file initiative in the organization of the strikes; the corporations generally did not attempt to run scabs and the CIO bureaucracy was in firm control of day to day tactics. Indeed, as we have already seen in the case of Reuther and the GM strike, there was a deliberate strategy to use the strikes to let off steam in the ranks while centralizing further the power of the national union leaderships. In the one case of "run-away" militancy—the series of city-wide stoppages led by militant local CIO Industrial Councils—the Executive Board clamped down ruthlessly, stripping the Councils of their autonomy and removing them from local democratic control.

Meanwhile Truman responded to the labor movement's plea for support by enjoining the miners, threatening to conscript the railroad workers, and calling for broad repressive powers. This anti-labor stance, reminiscent of Wilson's sharp turn in 1919, coincided with a purge of Wallace (now Secretary of Commerce) and other former members of the New Deal inner circle. As a result the political strategy of the CIO and their liberal supporters was temporarily thrown into chaos. Murray was briefly and uncomfortably thrust, for the first time, into a position of opposition to the administration, while his erstwhile Communist allies, shedding their longheld position that

the Democratic Party was "the popular front", were gingerly exploring the possibility of a left-liberal third party supported by units of the PAC and its non-labor affiliates. Not to be outflanked by the Communists, Walter Reuther, Norman Thomas, John Dewey, and a host of other social democrats came together in May 1946 as the shortlived "National Educational Committee for a New Party". Neither the Communists nor the social democrats, however, proposed an immediate political break with the Democrats; instead they counted on PAC successes in the 1946 congressional elections to shift the balance of power to the progressive pole. But millions of workers, alienated by Truman's return to government strike-breaking and his failure to control the rising cost of living, ignored the pleas of the PAC and boycotted the congressional elections of 1946. In the face of the PAC's inability to clearly demarcate itself from administration, the "new labor voter" proved to be a fantasy. With the participation of a mere 30% of the electorate, CIO candidates were crushed, and the first Republican Congress since Hoover took office. This first postwar US congress set aside earlier promises of an "Economic Bill of Rights" in order to concentrate on the passage of the Taft-Hartley Act of 1947 and the salvation of anti-Communist regimes in Greece and China.

The Taft-Hartley Act codified the employers' aims of deradicalizing the CIO and of legally suppressing the most effective weapons of labor solidarity. It accomplished the former by imposing the requirement of anti-communist pledges for trade union officials, and the latter by outlawing sympathy strikes, supportive boycotts, wildcats, and mass picketing (the sitdown had already been banned by the Supreme Court in 1938). At the same time Taft-Hartley also renewed the Smith-Connally Act's prohibition against union campaign contributions in clear attack on the operations of the PAC. Recognizing the gravity of the threat posed by the implementation of Taft-Hartley, Lewis' Mineworkers and the Communist-led United Electrical Workers immediately proposed a campaign of non-compliance via mass mobilizations and, perhaps, even, a general strike. (Lewis, once a strong advocate of state intervention and reliance upon the Democrats, had since 1940 become increasingly disenchanted with the role of the government in industrial relations. By 1947 he had become a solitary champion of the return to strict Gompersian *laissez-faire*, favoring the repeal not only of Taft-Hartley, but of the Wagner Act as well).

The CIO chieftains were thus confronted with the dilemma of crossing two Rubicons at once: on one hand they had to decide whether to defy Taft-Hartley and lead the industrial unions outside the pale of the National Labor Relations Act; on the other hand, they had to choose whether to support the popular-front groundswell behind Wallace which, with the support of the Communists, was becoming a movement for a third party.

However, they declined either to go back into the streets again or to join with the embryonic third-party forces. Instead they chose to reconsolidate their shaken alliance with Truman and the national Democratic Party, allowing the CIO in the process to become an integral part of the administration's escalating anti-communist crusade. Many different pressures were operating to force Murray and the CIO "center" to repudiate their longtime allies on the left. In an era of bureaucratic retrenchment, for example, there was no longer the same practical need for the Communists and their particular skills at mobilization and propaganda. In addition, the CIO's one-sided and obsequious tie to the

Presidential level of the Democratic Party—like Gomper's earlier reliance upon Wilson—bound it naturally to the twists and turns of American foreign policy from the "one world" enthusiasms of the Tehran Conference period to the nuclear imperialism of the late forties.

Anti-communism and Working Class Nationalism

But there were even deeper reasons for the sudden rip-tide of anti-communism which pulled asunder the decade-old 'left-center' alliance within the CIO. The integration of the unions into the Cold War consensus corresponded to a far-reaching recomposition of the cultural universe of the American working class. The Second World War, in particular, was a watershed of enormous importance in reforging blue-collar identity. Earlier I contrasted the imminently and perhaps even social-democratic thrust of the CIO with the recharged conservatism of the AFL. By themselves these divergent ideological currents only denoted the contradictory possibilities of the period and the highly unsettled, transitional state of working class consciousness. What ultimately created the basis for a new cultural cohesion within the postwar American working class was the rise of wartime nationalism. It must be recalled that "Americanism" had previously served as the watchword for successive nativist crusaders, and that broad strata of the "new immigrants" stubbornly clung to their old ethnic identifications, refusing to submit to a coercive cultural assimilation. Even the savage, official patriotism of the First World War, far from welding together a nationalist unity within the working class, further divided it through its antagonism of the Germans, alienation of the Irish, and persecution of more radical immigrant groups. The significance of the new nationalism which had grown in the thirties and reached fever pitch with the war mobilization was that it was broadly inclusive of the *white* working class (blacks, Mexicans, and especially Japanese-Americans need not apply) and, moreover, was propped-up by powerful material supports. The latter included the job-generating capacities of the permanent arms economy, and, in a more general sense, the new structural position of the American working class within a post-war world economy dominated by U.S. capital. Furthermore with the adoption of peacetime universal military service in 1946—whose burden fell almost entirely on working class youth via a system of class-biased educational and occupational deferments—the American state acquired a potent instrument for injecting patriotic, anti-radical, and pro-authoritarian attitudes in each generation of workers.

Ironically, "progressives" and popular-front leftists were amongst the most zealous missionaries of the new nationalism. Unlike the First World War when there was courageous and massive resistance to militarism by the Socialist Party and the IWW, the majority of the left of the forties uncritically supported Roosevelt's war time leadership. The Communists, in particular, translated anti-fascism into an excuse for promoting official chauvinism—even supporting the "relocation" of the entire Japanese population of the Westcoast into concentration camps in 1942. The CP's attempt to manipulate patriotism, like its abdication of leadership in the wartime wildcats, only further disarmed the left before the CIO bureaucracy once virulent anti-communism became fashionable once again after 1946.

Cold War jingoism sunk its deepest roots in precisely those sectors of the working class which had previously

been most insulated from patriotic hysteria. The Red Army's entry into Eastern Europe had an explosive, negative effect upon the Slavs and Hungarians who composed perhaps half of the CIO membership. The left-wing ethnic organizations which had played such a heroic role in the early organization of the CIO, and which had been one of the most important sources of socialist influence on the industrial working class, either collapsed or were marginalized by a huge renewal of right-wing anti-communist nationalism in each ethnic community.

Thus when Philip Murray and his chief adviser, Andrew Biemiller, sat down to design a new strategy for the PAC in 1948, their first consideration was how to recapture the Slavic and Catholic working-class vote. To accomplish this they emphasized the CIO's strong support for the Marshall Plan and in general for Truman's anti-communist foreign policy. At the same time they argued that Truman's election would guarantee the passage of long blocked social legislation and the repeal of Taft-Hartley. Through herculean efforts involving armies of trade union precinct workers, the PAC together with the AFL's newly formed Labor's League for Political Education (LPE) mobilized the largest (relative) class vote in American history and gave Truman his seemingly impossible victory over Dewey.

Hollow Victories and More Fratricide

If the Democratic victory of 1948 was the labor movement's most stunning electoral success, it was its most hollow. The supposed mandate for a "Fair Deal" which had been given to Truman and the liberal 81st Congress turned out in reality to be a license for compromise of the reform program. As proposals for national health insurance were simply shelved (where they remain today), Truman sided repeatedly with private construction interests to transform the Housing Act of 1949 into a subsidy for business and middle-class home owners rather than the public housing program for the working class which the CIO had originally envisioned. Meanwhile, in the classic pattern of FDR's second administration, Truman yielded to the congressional power of the Dixiecrats and began to sacrifice liberal items in his domestic program to secure Southern support for his Cold War policies. Not surprisingly, the first to go were the much vaunted civil rights reforms promised in the 1948 Democratic platform; next was the repeal of Taft-Hartley, the first priority of the PAC program.

While the CIO bureaucracy was losing the legislative battle in Washington, some of the largest industrial unions were being bled white by labor's "second civil war"—the struggle between the right and left wings of the CIO. The reluctance of the CIO mainstream to accept John L. Lewis' proposal for mass action against Taft-Hartley is more understandable when it is recognized that many of the same unions were actually exploiting the anti-communist provisions of the act to raid other left-led CIO unions. Thus in 1948 the UAW launched major raids against both the Farm Equipment Union and the United Electrical Workers (UE). After the 1949 expulsion of eleven allegedly Communist-controlled unions from the CIO, these raids turned into a cannibal feast. The most tragic case was the dismemberment of the UE, the third largest union in the CIO and traditionally one of the most militant. In 1948 the UE had been able to negotiate from a position of strength representing all the workers in the electrical manufacturing industry; by 1953, after five years of raids and the chartering of a rival international, some *eighty* different unions

Against the Current

had sliced up the UE's jurisdiction and were bargaining for a membership only half the size of the 1948 UE rank and file. While raiding was in progress, employers were given a free hand to conduct long sought purges of the militant local and secondary leaderships.

The fratricide within the CIO was also the principal cause of the collapse of "Operation Dixie", its Southern organizing campaign. The original strategy launched in 1946 had envisioned a two-stage process of mobilizing Southern workers: first concentrating organizing efforts against key regional open-shop employers, followed by the political consolidation of the new recruits into local PACs. Implicit in this second stage of "Operation Dixie" was an ambitious attempt to reshape the national balance of political forces by overthrowing reactionary power through massive voter registration and the cultivation of Southern labor voters. But Operation Dixie barely got off the ground before it was embroiled in the CIO's internal feuds and anticommunist purges. The crisis came to a head in Alabama when Murray's own Steelworkers tried to break a local of the leftish Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers that represented militant black iron miners around Birmingham. Anti-communism blended with overt racism as the white Steelworkers leadership terrorized rank and file iron miners and prevented black CIO members from voting. Similar scenarios were enacted in textile and tobacco.

V. THE BALANCE SHEET

In 1952 following Eisenhower's defeat of Stevenson, Jack Kroll, the head of the PAC, sent Walter Reuther a confidential memo in which he sketched a dismal balance sheet of the CIO-Democratic alliance. According to Kroll, the CIO despite its extensive and expensive exertions for the Democratic Party still found itself bargaining with it "much as it would with an employer". He pointed out that unlike the British TUC's relationship with the Labor Party, the CIO did not possess a single vote in the inner councils of the party nor any voice in its day to day operation. Its relationship to the congressional Democratic Party was even worse, since Southern conservatives, rather than Northern liberals, held the levers of power in the House and the Senate. Kroll cited the particularly galling example of Dixiecrat support for anti-union "right to work" legislation. In summation Kroll argued that the situation had become "intolerable" and that the CIO should scuttle the status quo as soon as possible for a new political policy more in line with its interests. His recommendations—never debated—ranged from abandoning politics altogether to concentrating on running CIO members for office.

Kroll's pessimistic assessment seems to have overlooked the material advantages that the labor bureaucracy exacted from the coalition (political appointments and local patronage power), but it otherwise remains a compelling confession of the bankruptcy of the Democratic road to labor reformism. This fundamental one-sidedness in the process of power brokerage which so frustrated the CIO leadership was the inevitable result of the absence of three factors that were the necessary preconditions for any "social-democratization" of the Democratic Party: (1) labor unity, (2) a class realignment of the political system, and (3) the elusive "CIO voter".

The Problem of Labor Unity

As we have seen, the "civil wars" between the AFL and CIO, and later within the CIO itself, undermined every at-

tempt to cohere a liberal bloc in American politics or to develop the basis for independent political action by labor. Without minimizing the purely political or inter-bureaucratic aspects of the schism between the AFL and CIO, the underlying and dominant factor was still the persistence of those divisions between the craft and mass production workforces which had polarized the American proletariat since the turn of the century. As noted, the AFL exploited the residual prejudices of the native and old-immigrant-stock workers against the second-generation ethnic laborers in the mines and factories. Working-class disunity was further augmented by the pervasive white racism which all too frequently subverted wartime industrial militancy. Finally, the Cold War dramatically strengthened the hold of Catholicism and right-wing nationalism in broad sectors of the industrial working class.

Yet these centrifugal tendencies within the labor movement might not have been so decisive if the CIO had preserved the momentum of its earlier organizing drives. The reality was, however, that industrial unionism was only a *partial* success, and that its defeats were as fateful as its victories in shaping the subsequent history of the labor movement. The anti-communist inquisition within the CIO, in particular, produced a staggering series of losses: the "deunionization" of the electrical and textile industries, the destruction of promising beachheads in the white collar, professional and agricultural sectors, and the collapse of "Operation Dixie". These reverses, in turn, had long-range effects on the structure of both the working class and of the trade union movement in the 50's and 60's.

First, the failure to extend union organization to the rapidly expanding female, clerical and Southern workers in general formed the basis for a new structure and for divisions within the working class. Henceforth the old ethno-religious dimension of working-class stratification, although scarcely abolished, lost primacy to racial and sexual divisions in the workforce. Likewise skill differentials became relatively less important overall than union organization and the incorporation into the generalized norm of mass consumption from which most blacks, Southern workers, and female breadwinners were excluded.

Secondly, the powerful "unity" principles of the original CIO increasingly gave way to the "new model" business unionism which the Teamsters, Machinists, and other large AFL unions had pioneered in the late thirties out of an unholy amalgam of craft and industrial union principles. Especially destructive of intra-union solidarity were the establishment of separate elections for different skill categories, of separate departmental seniority lists (particularly discriminatory to blacks and women), and of percentage (rather than "flat rate") wage bargaining. The result was the reinforcement of the social divisions within the factories based on ethnicity, race, and sex so that the solidarity achieved during the CIO drive two decades earlier was destroyed. This erosion of the distinctive features of the industrial unions, as well as the relative stagnation of their growth, cleared the way for a political, and then organizational harmony with the AFL. The result was as much a surrender to the legacy of Gompersism as a victory for trade union unity.

The South: Pivot of Political Realignment

Labor disunity also contributed to the failure of the strategy of electoral realignment which a majority of social

democrats and labor reformers had embraced in preference to the project of an independent labor party. As we have seen, relations between the two wings of the labor movement were at their low point in 1937-38 precisely when Roosevelt tried to rally liberals in his sole attempt to dislodge the most reactionary wing of the Democratic Party. But the Democratic right wing easily weathered Roosevelt's half-hearted purges, and through its new alliance with congressional Republicans, actually was strengthened. This congressional united front of Southern Democrats and Republicans held the balance of legislative power for most of a decade after 1937 and provided the indispensable political machinery for the increasingly bold corporate counter-offensive against the CIO. In order to gain a majority around their foreign policy initiatives, both Roosevelt and Truman were forced to woo the Democratic right with compromises on social programs and civil rights. Thus from 1938 onwards, the maintenance of a bipartisan consensus in support of American imperialism overrode the need for social legislation or political reform.

In the 1950s, the enfranchisement of the Southern masses was clearly key to the recomposition of the Democratic Party and the consolidation of a liberal-labor congressional majority. But the problem of suffrage was inextricably bound up with the existence of those two other pillars of class rule in the South: Jim Crow and the open shop. Only a massive unionization campaign closely coordinated with full support for black civil rights could have conceivably generated the conditions for interracial unity and a popular overthrow of right-wing power. The abandonment of "Operation Dixie" in the face of systematic repression of the CIO's own internal cold war contradictions was an almost fatal blow to the once bright hopes for such a labor-based rebellion in the South. At the same time the national CIO's gradual backtracking on civil rights (a trend again connected with the rise of anti-communism) left the black movement even more vulnerable to the racist backlash which swept the country in the late forties. This rupture of the labor and black movements had devastating consequences for both. Its immediate result was to give the political "aristocrats" in Dixie a new lease on life and to allow the Dixiecrat secessionists of 1948 to bolt the regular ticket in protest of Truman's civil rights platform and to triumphantly reestablish their power in the Democratic Party during the early 1950s. In the long run it made the civil rights revolution incomparably more difficult and bloody, reinforced white working-class racism, and forced black liberation into a greater dependency on the state.

The Elusive "Union Voter"

Finally there is the problem of the "union voter". The ultimate rationale of PAC was the politicization of the CIO membership to produce a reliable and disciplined electorate. To achieve this, PAC tried to convince industrial workers that the labor alliance with liberal Democrats was the best political representation of their class interests. It failed to do so in two ways. First because the Democrats did not usually represent the workers' interests, even their most short-term, defensive interests. Repeated experiences of disillusionment and programmatic failure produced cycles of working-class abstentionism and withdrawal from the political system, as in 1942 and 1952; only the threat of complete liquidation of previous reforms provoked high levels of working-class electoral participation, as in the very polarized presidential races of 1936 and 1948.

But the PAC also failed because it misunderstood the nature of the bonds which attached the European working-class voter to his party. It is not, after all, merely a narrow self-interest that translates membership in a labor movement into a profound, hereditary commitment. Even the weakest social democratic party in Western Europe harvests the working class's deep cultural self-identification with its institutions. To reproduce European-style political class loyalties in the United States was to assume a similar set of primary identifications with union and party. There were, of course, moments in the thirties and forties when the struggle for industrial unionism seemed to be creating an alternative culture and a new mode of daily life. The sight of the Women's Auxiliary driving the goons off the streets of Flint or the sound of ten thousand Ford strikers singing "Solidarity Forever" were such experiences. But the overall character of trade union militancy in the 30s and 40s was defined by the limited, episodic participation of most industrial workers. The wartime recomposition of the working class introduced a break in the continuity of the institutions of rank and file power. Add to this the persistence of labor disunity, and it is clear why CIO militancy lacked the social coherence to create the embryo of a new working-class "culture". What was created, instead, was a new structure of relations and alliances in the workplace that provided sufficient unity to ensure the effectiveness of the union, but outside the plant the working class continued to find its social identity in fragmentary ethnic and racial communities.

The political strategy of the CIO contributed to this dilution of militancy as the subordination of the unions to the Democratic apparatus reinforced the channeling of shopfloor activism into contracts, government mediation, and legislative lobbying. It was ironically John L. Lewis, the original architect of the CIO's subordination to the New Deal, who played the role of a lonely prophet to the trade union bureaucracy in the late forties, reminding them that the real political influence of the unions was ultimately anchored in their capacity to mobilize and sustain mass action at the point of production. Accordingly he advocated a fighting response to the passage of the Taft-Hartley Act. By relying on lobbies and campaign support for the Democrats instead, the CIO leadership conceded the last vestiges of their political independence and demobilized the rank and file militancy which was source of their own political leverage. (For a critical interpretation of the contemporary crisis of the American bureaucracy, see R Brenner, "A New Social Democracy?", in *Against the Current*, Fall 1980.)

In the absence of unity with the black movement and a revitalization of rank and file participation, the unions therefore became the captive political base for an anti-communist "liberal" wing of the Democratic Party. The New Deal's "capture" of the labor movement broadened the base of the Democratic Party, but it scarcely transformed it into a Social Democracy. The survival of Taft-Hartley and the stunting of the welfare state in America are among the most eloquent monuments to the failure of Labor's basic strategy and its unprecedented marginalization in the political councils of the party.

Thus, despite the wishful thinking of contemporary social democrats, the historical reality of modern American politics is precisely the success of the Democrats, that unquestionably capitalist party, in integrating the union bureaucracy—and at a bargain price ■

Reproductive Rights—Big Leap Forward

BY BARBARA ZELUCK

The March 27-29 conference of the Reproductive Rights National Network (R₂N₂) in N.Y.C. marked a big step on the road to the creation of a left women's movement in the U.S.

From the dozen groups present at its founding meeting in February 1979, R₂N₂ has grown to a network of 65 organizations. Expressions of interest from groups in North Carolina, Mississippi, Alaska and elsewhere continue to flow in. Of the 247 women who registered, some came from as far away as Seattle, Santa Fe, Eugene, Oregon, and Orange County, Los Angeles, San Francisco, California. Many midwest and east coast groups were present.

The 1973 victory of winning legal abortion lulled many feminists into a false sense of security. When, in 1977, the Hyde Amendment cut off Medicaid funding for most abortions, feminists realized that this was not only the first step toward denying abortion rights to *all* women, but an attack on the even broader issue of women's self-determination. If these attacks were to be beaten back, the struggle had to be broadened to include working class women, especially Black and Latin. That, in turn, meant a much more expanded definition of women's needs. It required a break from the single-issue strategy of most previous pro-abortion rights organizing, and the creation of an expanded notion of "reproductive rights" as the goal of our movement.

Thus, if "reproductive rights" is defined as the right to decide *to have* a child as well as the right to choose *not* to have one, then other things follow: For working class women, making the decision to have a child depends on whether or not a woman has an income (wages or welfare) adequate to support herself and her child, with or without a partner; whether quality community controlled child care, health care, schools are available. To make the right to decide if and when to have a child real, a woman needs access to safe, effective, convenient birth control. And since no birth control method is 100% sure, she needs access to free abortion on demand. Furthermore, to decide not to have a child at a particular moment should not mean giving up the ability *ever again* to conceive by being sterilized. Many poor women, particularly Latin and Black, had been sterilized without their knowledge or consent, without being informed that sterilization is permanent, or had been pressured into "consenting" during the stress of abortion or childbirth, or by threats to cut off their welfare or Medicaid if they refused. Opposition to sterilization abuse therefore became a major issue of the reproductive rights movement.

Opposition to sterilization abuse is linked to opposition to population control *which must be clearly distinguished from birth control*. A prime example of population control policies is the U.S. gov't.-funded sterilization of 35% of women of childbearing age in Puerto Rico on the ground that "overpopulation" (not maldistribution of resources) causes poverty. R₂N₂ defines population control as one group *imposing* limits on another group's fertility and reproduction *for the benefit of the first group*.

WOMEN TAKE TO THE STREETS, USE SUFFRAGETTE TACTICS

The April 23 Senate Subcommittee hearing on the HLS was marked by the exclusion of all (but one) "unfriendly" witnesses. Requests to testify by the American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology, NARAL, Planned Parenthood, R₂N₂ member groups, the American Civil Liberties Union, the Center for Constitutional Rights, and many other groups and individuals were denied.

This meant that in a situation where women's very lives are at stake, women were not allowed to speak for themselves.

Besides a rousing picket line of 400 outside, 6 women (5 from N.Y.C. Committee for Abortion Rights and Against Sterilization Abuse (CARASA), 1 from the publication "off our backs") stood on their chairs in the hearing room, unfurling banners and chanting "A Woman's Life is a Human Life! Stop the Hearings."

The audience gave them enthusiastic applause, all the major media (which ignore events involving much larger numbers) covered their action, but the 6 were hustled out of the hearing and arrested on the federal charge of "disrupting Congress" (which had not been foreseen and which carries penalties of 6 months in jail and/or a \$500 fine.) The government has refused an attempt to plea bargain and is insisting on a jury trial.

CHECKS TO HELP WITH THE DEFENSE AND POSSIBLE FINES SHOULD BE SENT TO THE April 23 Defense Committee, % Smith, 687 Sackett St., Brooklyn, NY 11217.

As just one other example of R₂N₂ response to April 23, N.Y. CARASA tried to hang banners "Abortion Woman's Right" from the Statue of Liberty (the press notified the FBI who stopped us), and considered hiring a plane to sky-write and drop leaflets over the city and/or beaches.

When we learned that women workers had been forced to choose between being sterilized and keeping high paying jobs handling substances capable of causing sterility or genetic defects in children they might conceive, we extended our concern to opposing the subjection of women or men workers to reproductive hazards on the job. On our way to defining the key question as that of woman's right to make her reproductive decisions independent of other individuals or the institutions of church and state, we added lesbian rights, a woman's right to determine her own sexuality.

Thus defined, reproductive rights form the underpinning of a serious strategy of women's liberation. As long as women can be defined by our biological, reproductive role, we cannot be equals in the world of work or in society at large. The struggle to win reproductive rights implicitly challenges the present organization of society (capitalism, patriarchy, racism). No wonder that



single-issue groups like NARAL (the National Abortion Rights Action League) consider us too radical!

THE R₂N₂ CONFERENCE

R₂N₂ met under 2 pressing immediate dangers: The first of these was the "Human Life Statue" (HLS). This bill declares that from the moment of conception a fetus is a "person" whose civil rights are constitutionally protected by the 14th and 15th amendments. Thus it would allow states to make abortion punishable as murder. Other versions of the HLS, as well as the Human Life Amendment (HLA), define human life as beginning at the moment an egg is fertilized, thus threatening to include use of the pill and the IUD (which act *after* fertilization to prevent conception, the implantation of the fertilized egg in the uterine wall) in the category of criminal actions. (The devotees of "fetal civil rights" are the same men who are out to gut the Voting Rights Act and OSHA. OSHA (the Occupational Safety and Health Administration) could help both women and men workers protect themselves from sterility and the genetic deformation of future offspring.)

The HLS is intended as an end run around the Supreme Court's finding (in the 1973 Roe v. Wade case which legalized abortion) that the judiciary is not competent to "speculate" on when life begins, by claiming Congressional competence. For the moment, its masterminds, while preferring the HLA, have counted noses and found they do not have the 2/3 vote necessary to get a constitutional amendment through Congress.

The second immediate pressing danger was the "Family Protection Act" (FPA) which aims to reinforce

the traditional heterosexual, patriarchal white middle class family, and impose those values on *all* of us (See BOX for some of the FPA's provisions.)

The Hyde Amendment, first passed in 1976 and upheld by the Supreme Court in 1980, targeted *poor* women by turning abortion from a right into a privilege for those able to afford it. Now, the HLS-HLA and the FPA consciously aim at reinstating patriarchal control of women's sexuality, and at putting ALL (i.e. not just Medicaid eligible) women back in our "place".

R₂N₂ POLICIES & STRATEGIES

The conference made a number of decisions, some of which are already being put into effect:

- Within the context of our politics of building a movement to fight for women's control of our lives, our national focus will be to combat the HLA in all its forms. On April 23 the Washington D.C. R₂N₂ group would (did, in fact—see BOX) coordinate actions around the HLS hearings, with the support of other east coast groups. We will undertake a national petition campaign, and a national media campaign in R₂N₂'s name.

- We will continue to fight for Medicaid funded abortion.
- We endorsed the May 16 International Day of Action (at least 18 countries are participating) for abortion rights, for safe effective contraception, for lesbian rights, and against sterilization abuse. The R₂N₂ national office developed a leaflet for national use. (About 3000 turned out in N.Y. for a spirited march and rally sponsored by a broad coalition. Smaller events occurred in other cities.)

- We decided to launch a mass education campaign, to include street leafleting, petitioning, canvassing door to door to talk to working class women about how the HLA affects their lives, talking to workplace and union groups and engaging them in joint actions, "creative legislative work" (e.g. picketing legislators' local offices or camping on HLS-sponsor Senator D'Amato's lawn), making a videotape of testimony by women who experienced illegal abortions to show on street corners.

- Continuing to combat sterilization abuse, we decided to organize to defend the Federal sterilization regulations when they come up for review in 1982.

- We will join anti-budget cut, anti-racist, anti-militarist, anti-nuke and pro-labor coalitions. Although abortion rights and other women's issues are not now priorities for these groups, a strong feminist voice raised for their issues—which are also our issues—can only have a positive effect. We will demand that no speakers be allowed to voice attacks on abortion at such rallies, and the right to an immediate reply if such an attack occurs despite promises to the contrary.

- Wherever possible we will undertake to build broad-based coalitions against the HLA and FPA with NOW, NARAL, Planned Parenthood, groups combatting violence against women (rape, battering, etc.), health care activists, lesbian and gay movements, teen age organizations, community groups. Our role in these coalitions will be to fight for a broad visioned reproductive rights perspective. In negotiating common demands for an action we will insist that what is at issue in the struggle for abortion rights is not population control or saving on welfare, but rather women's control of our bodies and our lives.

At R₂N₂'s next conference in San Francisco the last weekend in September, we will evaluate how much of this plan of action we have been able to carry forward ■

SOME OF THE PROVISIONS OF THE "FAMILY PROTECTION ACT"

(These may be introduced in clumps, separately, or as riders to other bills.)

- to cut funds for child care centers and old age care
- to ban federal funds for the protection of battered women and abused children
- to prohibit funds to schools using materials that would "tend to denigrate, diminish or deny the role differences between the sexes as it has been historically understood in the U.S."
- to cut affirmative action programs
- to cut funds for health care and public education, while subsidizing private (religious, segregated) schools
- to prohibit funds to schools not "allowing voluntary prayer"
- to deny federal funds to school districts requiring union membership
- to give tax breaks to women who can already afford to be full time housewives
- to deny basic civil rights to lesbians and gay men
- to prohibit funds to counselling, contraception and abortion services, and to treatment of venereal disease, for unmarried minors without parental notification
- to bar the Legal Services Corporation from any litigation involving abortion, school desegregation, divorce or gay rights.

The following piece was written in response to the article, "Reagan, The Right and The Working Class," which appeared in the second issue of *Against the Current*.

Has The Working Class Moved Right?

A Reply to the Brenners

by Michael Wunsch

Anyone familiar with the traditional left press will no doubt have noticed that many of these publications advance one of two analyses of the current period. Some have become clarions of the rise of a fascist America. Others maintain that the American working class is in the midst of a deep and thoroughgoing radicalization. One left-wing organization has even gone so far as to compare the current period with the radicalization of the working class during the late 1930s. In stark contrast to these positions is the more sober view advanced by Johanna Brenner and Robert Brenner in their article *Reagan, the Right and the Working Class*, in the Winter issue of *ATC*. In that article they argue that "... since the early '70s in the absence of any significant working class mobilization, real forces have been at work to push large numbers of working people to the right instead of left because of what they *perceive* to be—and what in a limited but important sense really are—their immediate, short-run economic interests. . . ."

The Brenners' method of analysis is also substantially different from that of the traditional left. In spite of the tremendous amount of information available in statistical studies and polls, the various left-wing theorists have yet to lay out in a systematic, coherent fashion the facts and theories supporting their analyses. The Brenners', to their credit, have broken with this method of "analysis by assertion" and have attempted to systematically analyse the current stage in the development of working class consciousness. Unfortunately, their attempt has been riddled by a number of inconsistencies.

The first and most important of these inconsistencies flows from the attempt to impose on the working class as a whole the consciousness of *one* of the sectors of the working class—the comparatively well off and well organized industrial workers. It is true that, *Reagan, the Right and the Working Class* deals with how, in the absence of collective resistance to the capitalist austerity drive, the better off sections of the working class are compelled to defend their standard of living at the expense of the weaker sections of the working class. This provides the material basis underlying the possibility of a drift to the right among the better off workers. But the Brenners did not leave off there, they proceeded to argue that there is an "overall trend" to the right in the working class as a whole. This is not to say that they are blind to the fact that the capitalist offensive is moving some layers of the working class to the left, indeed, there are references to the fact on the last page of their article. But making the trend to the right an "overall trend" is inconsistent with even the Brenners' expectation that the less privileged sectors of the working class will be able to respond in the short term.

Unlike the relatively privileged workers in the industrial unions, these workers are not in a position to defend

themselves at the expense of others in their class. To defend themselves they are being forced to unite with broader sections of the working class. As just one example of this we can look to the 1980 firefighters strike in Chicago. The inclusion by the mostly white firefighters of an affirmative action clause in their contract demands undercut Mayor Byrne's attempts to turn the Black community against the firefighters and was the ultimate cause of the strikers' victory. The inclusion of this demand not only showed the rapidly developing consciousness of the firefighters, it also showed the power of a united labor movement. This lesson has not been lost to other workers—we can expect this non-racist consciousness to spread as the capitalist austerity drive continues and the workers realize the need to confront the capitalists in a unified manner.

Thus, for the more oppressed strata in the working class (these strata constituting an absolute majority of the working class), defending themselves at the expense of other workers does not seem realistic precisely because it is not, to any large degree, possible. They must either stand together or fall separately. This is the material basis which will make it possible for wide sectors of the proletariat to move to the left.

To justify their theory of a rightward drift in the working class the Brenners' rely on an analysis of the last election, as well as on an analysis of the development of working class attitudes on militarism, affirmative action, abortion, the family, etc. How well do their analyses stand up under close scrutiny? We shall see.

WHAT THE ELECTIONS DID AND DIDN'T SHOW

Much has been made of the "conservative tide" which swept Reagan into office. The "tide" was far-reaching: the Republicans picked up 12 seats in the Senate, 33 seats in the House, 4 governorships and 218 seats in the state legislatures. Does this landslide signify a shift to the right by the American working class?

For the Brenners, at least, the answer is yes. In a hesitant, qualified manner they subscribe to the idea that the working class has given a mandate to the Right. In their own words:

"... polls taken at the time of the election and since have registered an overwhelming sentiment in favor of building up American military power and of a more aggressive foreign policy, against welfare and affirmative action. There can be no denying the right wing trend. After all, the last candidate who ran with an orientation similar to Reagan's—Barry Goldwater in 1964—was buried beneath one of the greatest landslides in American history.

"On the other hand. . . voter turnout was the lowest since 1948. . . A large majority of those who didn't vote opposed

Reagan . . . close to 40% of those who voted for Reagan, did so apparently as a protest against Carter and his politics . . . only a relatively small percentage of those working people who voted for Reagan supported the full program of the right.

"Nonetheless, when all is said and done, many workers who want traditional liberal social programs still supported Reagan even knowing that he opposes these programs . . . *They drifted to the right* because it appears the only way to defend themselves."

How real is this drift to the right? Is it really a turn to the right or is that just its appearance, its form?

The Republican victories overstate the shift to the Republican Party. Taking the vote totals for 37 states where both parties had a candidate in statewide races the Democrats received 52.9 percent of the vote as opposed to 44.2 percent of the vote which Carter received in the national elections. This seems to underline the Brenners' point that many people voted for Reagan out of disgust with Carter's austerity programs. Indeed, even among people who voted for Carter one had to look far and wide for an enthusiastic Carter supporter. As Jerry Wurf, president of the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees put it: "There's such bitterness against Carter in our union, and concern that he's cut back on services to the needy and he's using unemployment as an economic policy, that our members want to lash out at the betrayal they feel . . ."

In view of the austerity drive carried out by the Democratic Party, it is truly amazing that Reagan did not come away with a larger percentage of the vote. In 1976 Gerry Ford received 48% of the vote, in 1980 the "conservative tide" garnered Reagan only 51% of the vote. While this shows a general shift towards the Republican Party, there was a shift *away* from the Republicans between '76 and '80 among lower income groups (a shift of about two percent.) More blue collar workers voted for Reagan than for Ford in '76, about 46% as opposed to 41%—hardly a major shift when one considers the Democratic austerity program. And Reagan made hardly any headway at all in the cities where he receive 36% of the vote—his main support came from the traditionally more conservative suburbs, small towns, and rural areas.

The Republicans themselves realized that there was no significant shift to the right among the American working masses. For this reason they tried to mask the right wing character of their platform as much as possible during the campaign. As *New York Times* reporter Adam Clymer put it, ". . . the Republicans are trying to look like Democrats this year. Last night Ronald Reagan was nominated with a speech that stressed his concern for the poor and disadvantaged. His acceptance speech tonight was barely begun before he called for an end to discrimination against women, and as he finished he was quoting Franklin D. Roosevelt." Would the Republican Party be going to such efforts to pose as liberals if there was a drift to the right in the American working class as a whole? Perhaps the Republicans realized that they could pick up the working class vote only by counterposing their "liberal" program to the Democrats' austerity program.

This is not to say that the election of the Republicans does not show a shift to the right—it does, but the shift is a shift *within* the American *ruling class*. The Republican Party platform is the explicit statement of what the Democrats had already been carrying out in practice. Republican policy is just a deepening of the Democratic austerity policies. There can be no doubt that the capitalists intend

to use the Republican victory to escalate the assault on the standard of living and working conditions of the working class.

An important feature of the election has been the post-election campaign in the media hailing Reagan's "landslide" victory as a mandate for the right wing. This appears to be part of a concerted campaign to isolate, demoralize, and contain the opposition to Reagan's reactionary program as he attempts to put it into practice.

But perhaps the two most significant features of the 1980 elections were the lack of popular support for Anderson, and the low voter turnout. These two points are actually inter-related. The Anderson campaign was the primary vehicle for certain sectors of the bourgeoisie who were attempting to draw those people alienated from Democratic and Republican politics back into the electoral system. "As the editors of the *New York Times* put it April 25 (1980): 'A large body of voters is dissatisfied with the Carter-Reagan choice in November. To deny them an independent alternative risks harming something larger than the two party system: confidence in the whole political process.'" While his support at times was well over fifteen percent of the electorate, by the day of the election people had realized that Anderson represented no fundamental alternative to Carter and Reagan, that his program was not radically different, and that a vote for Anderson was a vote for the same austerity program of the Democratic and Republican Parties. On the day of the election Anderson's base of support had dwindled to only 7% of those voting. But this is not all. Underlining the utter failure of the bourgeoisie to lure people back into the political system is the fact that, of the people who voted for Anderson, 49% said they would have voted for Carter and 37% said they would have voted for Reagan had Anderson not been running. Thus at the most only 14% of the people who voted for Anderson, or about 800,000 people, were drawn back into the system by the Anderson campaign. The failure of the bourgeoisie to draw people into the political system is further illustrated by the low voter turnout. The 1980 turnout was estimated at 52.3% of those eligible, making it the lowest voter turnout since 1948 as well as the fifth Presidential election in a row in which voter participation went down. The most significant feature of the election is not, as the Brenners maintain, the rightward drift in the working class; the most significant feature is the continuing and increasing disillusionment of workers with the two major capitalist parties and the electoral system, which, while not in itself a move left, does provide a potential for such a move.

WAR AND THE DRAFT

One of the cornerstones of the Brenners' theory is the belief that the working class is succumbing to the militaristic propaganda of the bourgeoisie,

"One apparent way out (of the economic crisis) is to compensate for the weakness of the U.S. economy by reasserting U.S. military muscle. This policy *appears* to many workers to offer an alternative to declining jobs and real wages. Indeed it *is* the only "realistic" alternative once class struggle at home appears as a dead end.

" . . . today support for a hard line foreign policy is widespread. This is expressed not only in the demand to balance the "human rights" policy with even more backing for oppressive anti-communist regimes, but also in rising sentiment against the Soviet Union. In 1972, 49% of Americans were concerned about keeping our military defenses strong, in February 1980, a staggering 78%. In 1974, only 33% wanted

Against the Current

the U.S. to play a more important role as a world leader; in February 1980, the figure had jumped to 57%. Polls taken at the November election found that more than half of the voters agreed that the U.S. should be more forceful in dealing with the Soviet Union, even if it would increase the risk of war."

On the face of it these are pretty convincing statistics. But if one looks a little closer he or she will find that there is a good deal of truth to the old adage that you can twist numbers to prove just about anything.

As part of their argument the Brenners use "polls taken at the November election." These polls were taken among voters. Now, by the Brenners' own statistics, 48% of the electorate did not vote, and a large majority of the non-voters were working class. Thus they base part of their analysis of working class consciousness on polls that were conducted with people from all classes in American society, with the exception that at least half of the working class (those abstaining from the elections) was not represented! Is it too much to suppose that the workers, who were too disillusioned in the American political system to vote, might have substantially different views on U.S. militarism than the workers, students, bureaucrats, and capitalists who voted?

And what of the rest of the Brenners' statistics? Of interest here is not who was *involved* in the polls, but rather, *when* these polls occurred. It is significant that the two periods the Brenners' chose to quote statistics from were the last years of the Vietnam war, when the anti-war sentiment was at an all time high; and from February 1980, when the bourgeois press was in a jingoistic uproar over the taking of American hostages in Iran. If we fill in gaps in the statistics we will arrive at a somewhat different view of the working class than the Brenners'.

At the time of the "hostage crisis" the working class was psychologically more prepared for war than at any time since the end of the Vietnam war. Gallup polls show that as of February 1980 (three months after the hostages were taken), 59% of the general population, 68% of the union members and 63% of manual workers in general supported the reinstatement of the draft—this is opposed to 45%, 42%, and 44% respectively in March of 1979 and about 43% for the population in general in 1978. Not surprisingly, there was substantially less support for the draft among lower income groups. So far the Brenners' analysis appears to ring true.

Then came Carter's unsuccessful raid into Iran. In the face of the bungling defeats on the military front the bourgeoisie has always had problems developing and maintaining a war consciousness among the masses, and this time was no exception. The decrease in readiness for war was quite small however. By July 1980 58% of the general population, 66% of the union members and 59% of manual laborers still supported the draft.

The reinstatement of draft registration at the end of July also served to abate the readiness of the working class to accept yet another of capitalism's wars. In a poll conducted by *Newsweek* magazine between October 8 and October 15 it was found that there was a fourteen percent decrease in support for the draft between July and October, and a similar decrease between February and October in the willingness to support U.S. military intervention in other parts of the world. And, as of March, presidential mail was running 10-1 *against* sending military advisors to El Salvador.

Thus the bourgeoisie attained initially stunning results in shifting the consciousness of the working class to the

right by exploiting the issue of the American hostages in Iran. But this groundswell of support for militarism evaporated as rapidly as it formed.

Why the rapid changes in the working class's attitude towards militarism?

The ruling class is careful to couch its warmongering propaganda in terms of "defense." The prospect of defending friends, family, and people with a shared cultural heritage from "terrorism" and "foreign aggression" strikes a chord in the heart of almost every worker—patriotic or not. Thus the masses rapidly succumb to the propaganda in the media. But their swing away from militarism can be, and often is, just as rapid (as witness mass turnabouts against the Korean and Vietnam wars). It comes as the masses realize the sacrifices the bourgeoisie expects them to make; and as the masses uncover the truth hidden by the capitalist propaganda. In certain cases these realizations can be a powerful spur in the radicalization of the masses.

We have found that working class views on a "strong foreign policy" and militarism are extremely volatile and are not necessarily representative of the general political mood of the proletariat. Therefore, the need for extreme caution in analyzing polls and statistics dealing with the masses' attitude towards war and militarism is evident.

THE EFFECTS OF A PRO-FAMILY IDEOLOGY

The Brenners provide an excellent and insightful analysis of what appears to be a turn within the working class towards the traditional nuclear family relationships. They explain how this turn is being brought about by the workers' need for non-competitive, inter-dependent relationships at a time when the capitalist crisis is making the world "outside" the family all the more competitive. So far so good. But then they maintain that: "It is this desperate need for solidarity and support, ideally, but not really provided by the family, which more than anything else seems to be the well-spring for the *increasing opposition to the women's and gay movements.*" (Emphasis added.) Unfortunately, the Brenners have provided no figures to back up their assertions . . . so we shall provide a few.

Perhaps the most incredible feature of working class views on women's rights is how little these views have changed over the past decade! Since 1975 support for the Equal Rights Amendment has remained fairly constant at about 58% of the general population (with about the same support among manual laborers); opposition to the ERA has risen from 24 to 31 percent of the population in the same period, with the gain coming from those who were previously undecided. This is most likely a reflection of the incredible media push aimed at turning people against the ERA, as well as a result of the reformist policies of the NOW leadership which took the women's movement off the streets and reoriented it to petitioning elected officials.

Support for abortion rights has changed somewhat over the past few years. About 25% of the general population, 20% of union members, and 20% of manual laborers support legal abortions under any circumstances; 53%, 59%, and 54% respectively support having abortion legal under some circumstances; while 18%, 17% and 13% oppose legal abortion under any circumstances. This was the result of a survey taken in July 1980. Compare this to a poll taken in March 1976 when 45% of those polled and 47% of the manual laborers polled supported a constitutional

amendment banning abortion and we see what tremendous headway the pro-abortion movement has made.

On the question of gay rights the statistics are more ambiguous. This is primarily due to the lack of them. In a July 1977 Gallup poll it was found that 58% of manual workers supported equal rights for gays in hiring, while only 32% of manual workers opposed those rights. Moreover, support for gay rights increased among younger workers. While it is impossible to detect any trends from just one poll, it is evident that there is more support for gay rights than the Brenners would have one believe.

The working class is turning to the family as a refuge from the capitalist austerity drive. This "turn" is a reflection of the pressures which the capitalist system is applying on the working class. In the absence of collective resistance the brunt of the crisis falls on the worker as an individual. He or she seeks an individual refuge. This will be but a stage in the development of the workers' movement. It is important to emphasize that the turn to the family is the result of economic pressures on the individual worker—it is not the result of ideological conviction. Indeed, if the "turn" was the result of ideology, how would one explain the widespread acceptance and practice by members of the working class of "living together"? There is no evidence that the individuals opting for the family are attempting to impose their choice on other workers. Nor is there evidence to show that the turn to the family is fueling opposition to the women's and gay movements. In fact, if one looked at the growing participation of workers and their unions in the national ERA marches one would be led to the opposite conclusion.

The Brenners, in their discussion of the family, are confusing the wishes and propaganda of the Moral Majority and the new Right with the reality of working class existence today.

THE GROWTH OF RACISM

The Brenners argue that one indication of the drift to the right in the working class is the growth of racism:

"It is in the context of the material opposition between white and black workers, given that the working class has so far failed to counter the employers' offensive, that we should understand the alarming revival of racist sentiment. . . . This heightening of racism within the broader population forms the background to the alarming rise of the Klan and racist killings. There is, of course, no more direct line to the politics of the right than through racism."

There is no argument with the Brenners on the prevalence of racism. Objection is taken, however, with the Brenners' argument that there is a *growth* of racism *within* the working class as a whole. They would have us believe that opposition within the white working class to busing and affirmative action is on the rise. In some sectors of the working class this is undoubtedly true. But the reality is, that for the white working class as a whole, opposition to busing and affirmative action have been the norm for years!

Readers are aware of the major gains against racial oppression made by the Civil Rights and Black Consciousness movements. One effect of these movements is that racism, although it still permeates society, has become generally less blatant.* Another effect has been that the vast majority of (non-Black) American workers feels that Blacks have achieved equality with the white population.

*In saying that racism is less blatant than previously I am of course referring to the subtler forms of institutionalized racism in jobs, housing, education, etc., and am not referring to the recently escalating attacks on Blacks by the militant right wing.

This is fueling an overwhelming opposition to affirmative action programs, which only 10% of manual workers and 8% of union members supported in March of 1977. This opposition to affirmative action is then not new. It has been going on for years.

What has apparently attracted the Brenners' attention is not an *increase* of racism in the working class but the increasing visibility and vocalness of the racists. The racists have for years held their tongue in the face of adverse public opinion and official government sanction for affirmative action. Today, they have been made bolder by the impact of the economic crisis and the implicit and explicit racism of the courts, and by the rampant bigotry of the press.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF WORKING CLASS CONSCIOUSNESS

Looking over the evidence, there is precious little that we can find which might support the Brenners' hypothesis that the working class is drifting to the right. The capitalists attained dramatic results in shifting the consciousness of the working class to the right by manipulating the issue of the hostages in Iran. But the groundswell of support for militarism disintegrated as rapidly as it had appeared. One could point to the election results as an indication of a rightward drift, but such an argument would show a lack of understanding of the dynamic by which the workers are shedding their illusions within the confines of the two party system. The resurrection and the growth of the new far right might also be pointed to as an indication of a conservative turn in the working class consciousness. Their increasing visibility and growth is not an indication of working class consciousness but is rather an indication that the bourgeoisie is willing to sharpen its methods of attack on the working class. The capitalists want to establish the possibility of using fascist and neo-fascist gangs against the working class should the necessity arise.

The errors made by the Brenners in their article fall into four general categories: 1) they confuse the privileged sectors of the working class (the workers belonging to the powerful unions in the core industries) and the processes affecting the consciousness of these strata, with the broader issue of the consciousness among the working class as a whole; 2) they underestimate the effect which the capitalist austerity drive will have in uniting the more oppressed layers of the working class, which is by far the majority of the working class; 3) they place an overemphasis on the material factors pushing the privileged sectors of the working class to the right, thereby underestimating the tremendous role of ruling class propaganda*; and 4) their method of analysis leads them to ignore statistics which don't back up their theory.

Thus, while it is obvious that there is no generalized radicalization in the working class, it is equally apparent that the working class is not drifting to the right. While the one position has led organizations to commit absurd sectarian adventures on the edges of the workers' movement, the other position holds the possibility that the Brenners will seriously underestimate the potential for initiatives by the working class. To bend the stick in either direction holds serious consequences.

Both of these analyses are flawed, in that they look at the development of working class consciousness in a one-sided manner. Consciousness evolves in a very hesitant

*This underestimation of the role of capitalist propaganda is the first step on the road to despair. For indeed, what role do revolutionaries have in directing the consciousness of the working class to the left. . . . If objective, material forces are pushing the working class to the right?

Against the Current

and contradictory fashion and our analysis must give expression to those contradictions. Is the working class drifting to the right? In some ways yes, in others no. Is the working class radicalizing? In one sense yes, in another sense no.

As I stated earlier, the very austerity drive which establishes the *possibility* of a rightward drift among the privileged sectors of the working class also makes *possible* a leftward movement among the oppressed layers of the class, and indeed, among the class as a whole. Were this not the case, social revolution in this country would become a utopian ideal. The austerity drive creates the *necessity* for collective resistance on the part of the more oppressed and unorganized strata of the working class. It also makes such resistance *possible*. As these layers of the working class unite to defend themselves they will present a *real* alternative to the individual resistance of the privileged strata. This will be the basis for drawing the heavy infantry of the working class, the industrial unions, into the fight against capitalism.


There are, at present, two basic processes at work in shaping the consciousness of the American working class. These two processes interact with one another in a dialectical manner. On the one hand we have the increasing economic crisis of capitalism which is forcing the corporations to step up their attacks on the working class. These attacks are drawing a sporadic response from a working class which is beginning to fight to defend its standard of living. But there is, as of yet, no generalized active response by the working class to the capitalist offensive. The working class has yet to show the militancy which the American workers have historically been noted for. On the other hand we are faced with the growing political crisis of the ruling class, which is underlined by the disillusionment or loss of faith by the workers in the capitalist government, the parliamentary system, and the Democratic Party. This is coupled with a loss of faith by many workers in their trade union organizations. The trade unions, stifled by an immense bureaucracy, have unfortunately come to be viewed by many workers as corrupt organizations that are only seen at dues collection time. In the absence of a credible alternative to the Democratic Party and the trade union bureaucracy the working class has been unable to see a way out of the current crisis.

The working class is rapidly losing its illusions in its trade union organizations and in the capitalist political and economic system. As such, one could say that the working class has developed a rudimentary form of consciousness under the impact of the economic crisis. In no sense can this development of a rudimentary consciousness be termed a radicalization, however, for a radicalization implies not only a disillusionment with the present system, it also implies that the workers have seen a credible alternative to the capitalist system and are actively pursuing that alternative. The fact that the Democratic Party and the union bureaucracy are intent on preserving the rule of capitalism and are therefore attempting to limit the scope of workers' struggles points to the objective need for the working class to develop a new class struggle leadership. In the absence of such a new leadership the working class as a whole will be unable to see a way out of the present crisis. This inability to chart a course out of the crisis is, at the moment, stunting the growth of consciousness in the working class. The absence of direction tends to prostrate the working class in the face of the employers' offensive. Should this aimlessness become protracted it will blunt

the ability of the working class to fight the capitalist offensive and will decrease its political consciousness.

The present period, then, is one of assessment for the working class. It is gauging the depth and extent of the capitalist offensive, it is re-evaluating the bourgeois political system, it is reassessing its future prospects under capitalism, and it is hunting for a credible alternative to capitalism. At the same time it is casting a critical eye on its own organizations and their methods of struggle. It is looking at the various possible solutions to the crisis and is assessing the costs of each. More than anything else the working class is looking for the way forward.

It is the interaction of the political and economic crises of capitalism that conditions the level of consciousness and activity on the part of the working class. In the present period the dialectical interaction of the two crises of capitalism has led the working class into a temporary impasse from which it can see no way out. Having no credible class struggle representative in the political arena they are increasingly forced into the defensive in the economic struggle. But one of the contradictions of capitalism is that it cannot solve its economic problems without aggravating its political crisis and vice versa. Thus, by pushing forward in its austerity drive, the capitalists are all the more surely further discrediting their political regime in the eyes of the working class. By tearing away the shroud hiding class relations in the United States, the bourgeoisie is facilitating the development of a class struggle leadership in the working class. The aggravation of the political crisis of the bourgeoisie will allow the working class to qualitatively alter the situation to its advantage through the elimination of the trade union bureaucracy, and *in that process*, through the formation of a labor party politically independent of the capitalist class. I hope to be able to address both of these questions in a future article ■

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A THIRD VIEW ON THE TURN TO THE RIGHT

by Steve Zeluck

I have three observations to make about the article in ATC 2 on the working class and the right, of both a supportive character and a questioning character.

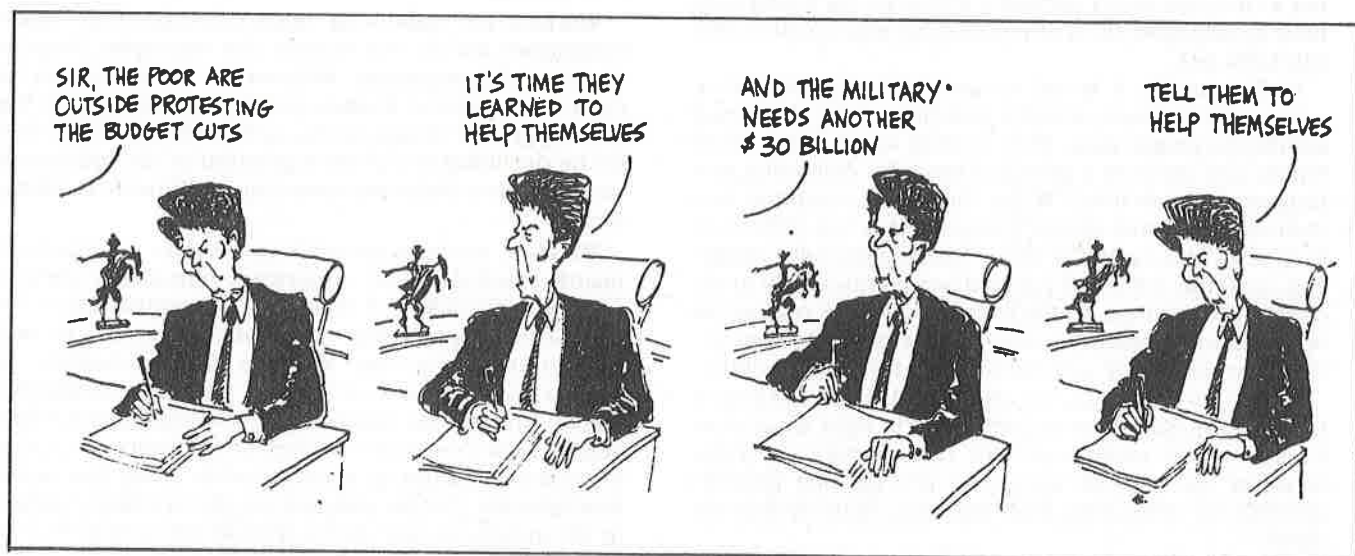
Empirical support for the Brenners' case can be found in N.Y.C. That city is by most yardsticks the most liberal city in the country. Nowhere were the poor, the welfareed, etc., more liberally served than in that city. And yet, nowhere among the major northern cities is there *now* a greater tolerance for *anti-poor*, racist backlash than in this most liberal of cities. Mayor Koch will run as a not-so-covert racist (disguising his essentially anti-working class policies). The situation is so crystalized that it seems to offer the projected new black party a splendid opportunity for a debut into politics—but no sign of it.

As for the Brenners' thesis that workers have a material interest in some right wing policies, it seems to me that the case would have been more accurate (and at the same time less open to pessimistic *interpretations*), if we recalled a parallel case which properly preoccupied many of the left for years. The question was: Did whites in the South have a stake in discrimination? It is obvious that they did in one sense—priority in getting jobs and in getting better paying ones. That is, they had a *relative* advantage. But was it an *absolute* advantage? For at the same time, the racial split weakened the class immeasurably resulting in an average *white* wage which was far below what it could have been had there been no racial divisions. In this sense, the wage level was absolutely lower than it might have been. A case of relative but not absolute advantage. Surely the situation is similar today with respect to the workers and the right.

The more skilled, home-owning workers may experience some *relative* gain through some conservative policies such as tax cuts. These workers may be better off with the tax cuts, than without them. But the overall effect of the rightwing policies will serve to depress the quality of life and wages of *all* workers. As a result, the net effect of the right's policies will, *in absolute terms*, leave the workers worse off than before (without even a short-run stake in the right). The belief that the right can have even a short-term *absolute* advantage for workers is more appearance than reality.

The suggestion that *within* the working class there is some shift to the political right understandably strikes a raw nerve among socialists. But certainly the possibility of working class taking a "right turn" can not be precluded. We are all familiar with uneven development and even repression. Surely the class's perceived options are *not* limited to political stasis or moving left. The important question appears to me to be, what conclusions one draws from the analysis. Many in the left have already concluded that what is needed is a turn toward social democracy, i.e., that the left make its own turn to the right. The Brenners do *not* draw that conclusion, and Mike Wunsch's analysis makes such a conclusion unnecessary. Both take cognizance of the deepening anti-establishment mood in the working class. The real issue then is one which remains to be adequately addressed—what are the tasks of revolutionaries in the working class today, and how to carry them out effectively. Hopefully the pages of ATC will be open to this challenge ■

A VIEW FROM THE RIGHT



The Right Wing and the Working Class

A Response

BY JOHANNA & ROBERT BRENNER

I. FACING REALITY

Michael Wunsch concludes his critique of our "Reagan, the Right, and the Working Class" with the statement that it is "apparent that the working class is not moving to the right." He is right to say that today working class political consciousness is very mixed and volatile, and that not all sections of the working class have participated to the same degree in the drift rightward in the U.S., while some sections have not participated at all. Nonetheless, he is also forced to agree with us about the following fundamental trends: For the time being *at least* the working class as a whole has largely foresaken the political liberalism, trade union and militant struggle by rank and file workers and oppressed communities which prevailed in the 1960s and early 1970s. These have been replaced, not with a left alternative, but with cynicism and demoralization. Now Wunsch says, correctly, that cynicism is not a stable viewpoint and that leaps in consciousness can occur in short spaces of time. But he does not address our argument that unless and until such change occurs cynicism opens the way to the right.

More generally, Wunsch has failed to deal with our major argument: that significant sections of the working class have become open to right wing political ideas in response to very real conditions and very difficult problems. Therefore, these political positions have a logic which must be confronted—not ignored or simply written off as "false consciousness."

Wunsch appears to think that the political ideas of the working class should be understood primarily as *imposed* by the ruling class through the media or such powerful socializing bodies as the schools. Capitalist control over these institutions is important. But the media is not at the root of our problem. If it were, we would only have to propagate the truth more diligently to counteract capitalist lies.

Unfortunately, it is not so simple. For political consciousness is fundamentally determined by the actual conditions people face. They tend to adopt world views which can serve as a practical basis for defending and improving their lives. When capitalist economic and political structures appear overpowering, it is difficult to hold onto anti-capitalist ideas. Correspondingly, people can, as a rule, adopt left political perspectives only to the degree that change seems possible. For this reason the organizational resources and level of working class action provides a critical *material base* for radical politics.

From this viewpoint, we argued that even sections of the working class have become open to right wing ideas because these ideas seem, for the moment, to make sense of their world, appear to provide one possible strategy for defending their interests. Why is this the case?

II. DE-INDUSTRIALIZATION AND THE FISCAL CRISIS POSE DIFFICULT PROBLEMS FOR STRUGGLE

The deepening economic crisis is evident to everyone. But what makes the situation extremely difficult for the working class is the fact that the U.S. is no longer the most profitable place to build cars, steel, rubber, electrical goods, etc. The cost advantage of other economies stems from their higher labor productivity due to more advanced technology, or from lower wages, or from a combination of the two. As a result the production of these goods is being transferred to other countries where they can be made at lower costs.

Industrial Workers

For the first time in history, workers in the industrial unions, who have traditionally constituted the heart of working class power in the U.S., face not merely the "breakdown" which comes with cyclical downturn, but the possibly *permanent collapse* of their industries.

The problems of organizing a fightback are enormous. In the first place, the rapidly diminishing number of employed workers in basic industry are still relatively privileged, compared to most of the rest of the working class (their wages did not fall behind inflation during the '70s, except in the very recent period). Second, these workers see unemployment growing all around them in their industries—possibly the best discouragement to militancy that capitalism has invented. Finally, the most intractable difficulty—even with the strongest will, what can be done?

Workers are convinced, often correctly, that "their" companies are in real trouble (for example, Chrysler, some steel companies). Without an alternative to the capitalist property framework, it can often seem that placing greater demands on capital will only contribute to the declining competitive position of the industry in comparison to those overseas (Japan, Taiwan, Germany etc.)

Moreover, workers are well aware that an across the board renovation of American industrial plant is necessary to make U.S. industry competitive again. The capitalist program for "reindustrialization" is built around austerity for workers and subsidies for employers. Alternatives to this program—controlling capital investment, imposing severe penalties for plant closures, etc.—require a level of militancy and class organization (often at a nation-wide level) that seems unattainable. For the moment caught in a bind, workers in the industrial core find it difficult not to *hope* that by

cooperating with the capitalists and the right, their jobs and industries can be saved.

Now, Michael Wunsch seems to agree that the workers in the industrial core have become politically weaker and, perhaps more than other groups of workers, open to right wing ideas. Nonetheless, he does not seem to pay attention to the implications of this development for the potential fight against capitalism in the period immediately ahead.

First, the workers of the industrial unions, for something like 40 years, provided the most consistent base for what has passed for left or liberal politics in the U.S. True, after the later 1930's little in the way of radical, or even very liberal, political initiatives came from the industrial unions. Nevertheless, to the extent that left or liberal initiatives were taken by others (for social spending, civil rights, etc.) the industrial unions represented a section of society which could be expected to respond positively (not in the way they should have, but better than most other sections). And as this sector of the working class has seen its power decline, while what remained of its progressive social vision has evaporated, the overall potential for working class opposition to capital has, at least for the moment, been correspondingly weakened.

The Public Sector

The declining power of the industrial unions presents problems for workers well beyond the manufacturing center. Workers in other sectors can no longer rely on what were once potentially powerful allies, at a time when these allies are most needed. Here, public workers appear especially vulnerable.

Wunsch thinks the situation is bound to get worse for public workers and that therefore militancy is bound to increase. This sort of economic determinism is, in our view, quite disorienting. For along with decaying conditions for public workers has come their increasing isolation from private sector workers and the community.

In a recessionary economy it is difficult to resist capital's demand for tax cuts. There seems to be little choice but to give the corporations incentives so that they will invest. Moreover, it is relatively easy for the corporations to fight off attempts to make them shoulder more of the tax burdens. They simply blackmail city and state gov'ts with the threat to relocate should taxes "be too high". Yet, if the corporations can not be forced to pay, workers will inevitably have to. But with sharply declining living standards, they can less and less afford to pay the bill. Thus, the tax revolt.

In this situation public workers feel themselves to be deeply on the defensive. How can they ask other workers to pay for them? How can they force the capitalists to pay? Only a firm alliance of public sector workers and private sector workers can begin to challenge capital. Yet, how many among them think that this is on the horizon? How many are not, for the moment, demoralized by the impossible organizing effort that seems necessary?

The Oppressed Communities

Finally, the Black and Latin communities will obviously be hit the hardest. They will face the most vicious cuts. Moreover, as the money to "buy off" the minority communities dwindles to nothing, the application of direct force in those communities will be stepped up. That means more systematic police repression, as well as less-organized attacks from lunatic right wingers. It would seem that here, more than anywhere else, the tinder

exists for an explosion. Nonetheless, the Black and Latino communities have relatively few weapons at their disposal to exert material pressure on the authorities (as, for example, the strike weapon). New methods of resistance have to be constructed. Moreover, these communities represent the most politically-isolated sectors of the working class, and they know it. Racism is rampant; allies are scarce. Certainly a powerful movement of resistance from these communities can be expected, but this is hardly a certainty in the short run; and, even if opposition is likely, it will not be easy to make it effective, or to give it the sort of staying power that will allow it, eventually, to ignite other sectors.

III. THE PRESSURES TOWARD THE POLITICS OF THE RIGHT

The decaying strength of the traditionally powerful industrial unions—especially in the face of de-industrialization—combined with the increasing isolation of public sector workers and the communities of the oppressed—especially in the face of the fiscal crisis of the state—has opened the way to the erosion of working class self-confidence. Confronted with their apparent inability to stand up to the capitalists, workers from the "better-off" sectors have turned to strategies of self-defense which set them objectively against other, weaker sectors of the class. Thus, the turn to tax cuts—and therefore public service, public jobs and welfare cuts—to defend incomes being hit by declining wages (especially via inflation); to a militant foreign policy to protect U.S. interest abroad (oil); to protectionism to defend "our" industries. In each of these cases, of course, working people effectively align with their own employers. In so doing, they open themselves up to the racist and chauvinist ideas of the right.

IV. ELECTIONS, POLLS, AND CLASS CONSCIOUSNESS.

Reagan's victory only brought into sharp relief tendencies which were already fairly evident in the decay of liberalism, the decline of trade unionism, the drop off in militancy. Nevertheless, Wunsch's challenge to our viewpoint is based largely on his argument that we misunderstand the election results and poll data. We do not believe an interpretation of workers' consciousness can be constructed on the basis of voting and attitude surveys alone. But we do think this evidence tends to buttress our position, and shall try to show why.

The Reagan Victory

Michael Wunsch argues that Ronald Reagan's victory at the polls did not signal increasing right wing strength within the working class. He notes that Reagan, with 51% of the vote in 1980, got only marginally more votes than did Gerald Ford, who had 48% of the vote in 1976. Furthermore, while acknowledging that blue collar workers voted for Reagan in greater proportions than for Ford, Wunsch says that this was "hardly a major shift when one considers the Democratic austerity program."

In response, we would point out, first, that to properly compare the Reagan with the Ford vote, it is necessary to adjust for Anderson's third party bid. Polls show that Reagan would have picked up 37% of Anderson's vote. Thus, it can be argued that voter sentiment for Reagan actually amounted to 54% compared to Ford's 48%. In turn, if the blue collar vote for Anderson is distributed between Reagan and Carter sympathizers, Reagan's

Against the Current

total would have been 49%, as compared to the 41% of the blue collar vote garnered by Ford in 1976. This 8% jump is no trivial increase: it amounts to a leap of some 20%. Even without taking the Anderson vote into consideration, the blue collar vote for Reagan represented an increase of 12% in comparison with the blue collar vote for Ford in 1976. So, whether or not you take account of the Anderson candidacy, there was a measureable shift—a shift which was probably all the more significant given Reagan's extremely conservative politics.

This brings us to a second, related point—i.e. that the significance of Reagan's victory is brought out at least as well when his vote totals are compared with those of Barry Goldwater as with those of Jerry Ford. Ford was considered a "moderate." Goldwater was the last candidate fielded by either party who ran on a program and an explicit ideology anywhere near as right wing as that of Reagan. Yet, in 1964, Goldwater's ideas were clearly at the margins of the U.S. political spectrum and he was, of course, buried in a landslide. Is not Reagan's success in the last election indicative of a significant shift of the political spectrum to the right since the 60s? Can it really be the case that the working class has not taken part in this shift?

Finally, Wunsch is no doubt correct to say that Carter's inability to deliver economic stability, combined with his blatantly anti-working class austerity measures, turned off many of the union voters who had supported him in 1976. Polls do show that around 25% of the non-voters did not cast a ballot in order to protest against the lack of choice. Here is clear evidence of the disillusionment with the two major capitalist parties which Wunsch correctly sees as one of the significant features of the 1980 election. But there was a parallel development which seems to have different implications and raises a different question. How could it happen that so many working class people (47% of the blue collar vote), even though disillusioned with the Democrats, could go beyond abstention to take the step of supporting an extreme right winger such as Reagan, a candidate with the views of Barry Goldwater?

Militarism and the Draft

Michael Wunsch denies that there is adequate evidence of increasing support for militarism among working people. He argues that the poll data we used was unrepresentative.

First, because only voters were surveyed, Wunsch thinks that workers who abstained "might have substantially different views on U.S. militarism." Nevertheless, Wunsch gives no reason to accept this conjecture, and in fact recent evidence contradicts it. Consider the following figures from the Los Angeles Times' national poll following the November election.

	Registered- Did not vote	Non- Registered	Carter	Reagan	Total
Approve major increases in defense spending	65%	64%	60%	81%	68%
Approve Reagan's tougher stance toward Russians	68%	67%	66%	81%	70%
Approve reinstating draft	69%	58%	68%	77%	67%

Non-voters were, on average, about the same as Carter voters in their approval of major increases in defense spending and in their approval of Reagan's tougher

stance toward the Russians. Reagan voters—as might be expected—were significantly more militaristic. On the draft there is some difference between voters and non-voters. But this is very likely due to the fact that young people make up a disproportionately large part of the "non-registered" group. Overall, the proportion favoring hardline policies is extremely high for both voters and non-voters.

Second, Michael Wunsch thinks the poll data we quoted showing increased support for militarism over the decade distorted the real trend of opinion. He argues that we compared results from the early 70's "when anti-war sentiment was at an all time high" to February 1980 "when the bourgeois press was in a jingolistic uproar over Iran." Wunsch attempts to demonstrate that there was a decline in militaristic sentiment from that high point in February.

While he is probably right that the February figures are unusually high, they do not represent much of an exception. Pro-militarist opinion has been growing throughout the 70's

Take the draft. Well before the hostage crisis, in March 1979, surveys showed a substantial increase in support for the draft from two years previously. 45% of the population was for the draft in 1979, compared to 36% in 1977.

Similarly, support for increased military spending has risen continually from a low point in the late 60s; it remained high even after the hysteria of the hostage crisis died down. (See figures below).

	Defense Spending			
	Too Little	Too much	About Right	Don't Know
Jan.-Feb. 1981	51%	15%	22%	12%
Jan.-Feb. 1980	49%	14%	24%	13%
1979	34%	21%	33%	12%
September 1973	13%	46%	30%	11%
July 1969	8%	52%	31%	9%

Pro-Family Ideology

Wunsch argues that opposition to the gay and women's movements has not increased.

On the ERA, he somewhat confusingly presents figures which confirm that resistance to the women's movement is growing. For he reports that while support remains constant at 58%, opposition to the ERA has risen from 24% to 31% of the population.

Wunsch believes that the pro-abortion movement has made tremendous gains based on data from two surveys in which the proportion saying that abortion should be illegal dropped from 45% in 1976 to 18% in 1980. Unfortunately these two polls are not comparable since in 1976 respondents could only support or oppose legalizing abortion whereas in 1980 they had a third option—to support abortion "under some circumstances." Data from comparable surveys in 1975 and in 1980 show that Wunsch greatly overestimated the shift. In 1975 21% favored abortion under any circumstances, 54% under some circumstances, and 22% thought abortion should be illegal. In 1980 the respective figures were 25%, 53% and 18%.

Opposition to abortion has decreased slightly, yet what needs to be emphasized is how limited support for abortion really is. Only 25% support abortion under all circumstances. And those who give conditional support to abortion do so only in extreme cases such as rape or incest or where the life of the mother is at stake. In other cases, such as the mother's inability to care for the child, very few respondents support abortion. This ambivalent and limited support for women's right to abortion is tied,

we would argue, to a more general commitment to the traditional family and women's place within it. And this commitment has disarmed the women's movement in facing the right's attack.

Wunsch argues that attitudes toward pre-marital sex, living together, etc. have become more tolerant and liberal over the 70's rather than less. In general it does seem unlikely that the restrictive ideals of the "moral majority" can reverse the social-sexual revolution of the last two decades. Nevertheless, it is important also to recognize the limitations of that revolution. For example, while divorce rates are increasing, most divorced people remarry. Serial marriage and the search for that perfect partner with whom one can make the traditional family work is more the norm than non-traditional families. Much of the movement away from traditional attitudes toward sex effects primarily teenagers and young adults. The eventual establishment of a two-parent family with children is still overwhelmingly the life plan of even young people. In a recent Gallup survey, over 80% of respondents in all age groups affirmed that strengthening the traditional family was one of the changes they'd like to see in the 1980's.

But perhaps more important than arguing over how significantly attitudes have changed, it is necessary to distinguish between private attitudes and public actions. For while some private attitudes may be more liberal, public actions are more restrictive. The right has had increasing success in organizing around single issue demands such as stop-ERA and restrictions on abortion. Many cities have defeated gay rights ordinances (Miami, St. Paul-Minneapolis, Eugene etc.). For this to be the case, significant numbers of working people must have lent their support, and others must at very least have been ambivalent, for they could not be organized to *act* to stop these restrictive policies.

Racism

Wunsch argues that widespread racism in the working class today is not indicative of a drift to the right because racism has always been pervasive and has not really grown in the 1970's. We agree that racism has been a critical factor in shaping the development of working class consciousness and struggle in the U.S. But Wunsch misses the point. During the 1960's, partly as a result of the movement of Blacks and other racial minorities, and partly because of the dominance of liberal politics in those years, it became, for a time, much less acceptable to voice racist sentiments and more difficult to build an overall political outlook on the basis of racist ideas. Today, however, there is a reversal of those trends which Wunsch fails to recognize.

Thus, we must re-emphasize our conviction that in the recent period openly racist views are being expressed to a far greater extent than a few years ago.

No doubt, as Wunsch says, only a tiny minority of the working class would identify with far right racist groups like the Klan. But he is wrong to conclude that these groups are flourishing today *because* of the racism expressed by the mass media and by court rulings. Growing racist sentiment among the general population has provided the primary encouragement for these groups, allowed them to recruit and to show themselves in public (where a short time ago they would not have been able to). This general growth in racism, far more than the extremist groups themselves, poses, today, probably an increasing danger to the development of militancy and left politics in the working class as a whole.

V. CONCLUSION

In recognizing the inroads made by the right, even within the working class, our aim was not to paint a hopeless picture. Even today, at a lowpoint in the class struggle, openings exist for building the fight back against the all-embracing employers' offensive and for developing a socialist current. Moreover, as Wunsch rightly emphasizes, powerful forces are at work to undermine economic and political stability even in the medium run.

The right's ability to win the support of certain elements within the working class lies ultimately in its ability to offer a plausible strategy for protecting their *material interests* without having to confront capital—that is, by a *de facto* alliance with capital against weaker sections of the working class, at home and abroad. However, especially given the depths of the economic crisis, it is doubtful the right can make good on its "populist" promises.

First off, eliminating affirmative action programs or busing will offer ever smaller advantages to white male workers when increasing unemployment and decaying education touch everyone. More directly to the point, tax relief—the centerpiece of the right's populist program—will not actually meet working class needs.

In the first place, it is likely that powerful financial interests will succeed in limiting the tax cuts proposed by right-wing politicians because they are too inflationary. But even if these cuts are granted, they are likely to lead to such large price rises as to wipe out almost all potential benefits. Rising prices will cut directly into real wages. Meanwhile, those workers who succeed in getting wage increases to keep up with the rising cost of living will have to pay a higher percentage of their wages in taxes, because they will be forced into higher tax brackets.

Secondly, the impact of drastically reduced tax revenue simply will not fall solely on the poor, although this is where the effects will be felt most. In cities and states all across the country, not just welfare but education, parks, libraries, not to mention fire and police protection are under attack. These cuts have already begun to spark movements of opposition.

When such movements do break out, our main task will be to confront the divisions within the working class which have opened the way to the right. It can not be overemphasized that unity will not arise automatically, just because there is a need for it. The basis for unity must be prepared by showing how the interests of different groups within the working class can *in practice* be made to coincide.

For example, a declining economy and shrinking tax revenues make cuts in social services seem unavoidable. It is therefore important to be able to pinpoint funds available to meet working class demands, provided a movement develops to win that. Here the exploding arms budget is a particularly good target. An effort to support the movement in El Salvador offers the chance to link the fight against U.S. imperialism abroad to the struggle against austerity at home.

Military spending is being increased to protect the U.S. based multinational expanding into the third world, especially in Latin America. As we step up support for national liberation movements in El Salvador and elsewhere, we should argue that the money which is defending capitalist interests abroad ought to be spent instead on raising working class living standards at home. ■

The Anatomy of the Los Angeles Police Review Board Campaign

BY JOEL JORDAN & ANTHONY THIGPEN

On Jan. 1, 1980, the Campaign for a Citizens' Police Review Board launched a petition drive to gather 150,000 signatures to place the question of establishing an elected Citizens' Police Review Board in the city of Los Angeles before the voters in the November 1980 elections.

The campaign appeared to be an organized, dynamic force capable of expanding and deepening the ongoing struggle against police brutality in Los Angeles. For six months prior to the actual launching of the petition drive, the forces within the Campaign had worked to formulate the strongest possible review board proposal, and to build a broad coalition on which to base its efforts.

Yet, six months after its official beginning the campaign had collected only 70,000 signatures—less than half its goal. Much of the campaign's work force was demoralized. Moreover, the supposedly broad and united coalition was seriously divided over campaign strategy. Eleven months after the campaign's official beginning it was over. Only a little over 90,000 signatures were collected—60,000 short of what was needed. The base of active support for the campaign had shrunk considerably, the coalition having dwindled to a few, mostly Leftist, organizations and individuals. What few new community people had been attracted dropped away, and no ongoing activities emerged once the campaign was over.

By almost any criteria, the campaign must be judged a failure. But why this failure and could it have been avoided? This article will discuss the roots of this failure, with particular attention to the experience of the campaign's Left wing. We will argue that the inability of the Left to accurately assess the nature of the period, the unique qualities of the issue, or the actual tasks involved, contributed to the failure. It is our hope that this examination of the dynamics of the review board campaign will help Left activists avoid similar failures in the future.

1. HISTORY OF STRUGGLE

The Los Angeles Police Department (L.A.P.D.) has a long and bloody history of repression, particularly in the black and brown communities. Between 1975 and 1980, some 334 people were shot by L.A. police officers, 138 of them killed. Approximately 80% of the victims were black or Latino. As in other cities, the 1965 Watts rebellion was sparked by an incident of police abuse. Indeed, the number one problem cited by the major com-

missions investigating the rebellion was the racist repression by the L.A.P.D. After the Watts revolt, community patrols were organized as a means of self-defense against police abuse. In 1966, Community Alert Patrols (CAP) were set up, funded largely by the federal government. Two years later, the Black Panther Party took the CAP idea a step further with armed community patrols. While these patrols succeeded in causing a noticeable decrease in police harassment, the police were able to draw the Panthers into a number of shoot-outs (leading to arrests) which helped destroy the Panther presence in L.A.

By far the broadest of the anti-police abuse groups was the Coalition Against Police Abuse (CAPA), formed in 1976 during a rash of killings by the L.A.P.D. The core of CAPA were 10 to 15 justice and defense committees made up mostly of black and brown community people who came together to protest particular instances of police brutality and abuse. In addition, left organization from every political tendency, church groupings, community organizations, and traditional civil rights organizations participated.

Earlier, CAPA adopted an orientation toward mass protest and pressure as its main strategy for combatting police brutality. CAPA organized a series of mass demonstrations both in the local communities, usually at local police stations, and at centralized targets such as L.A.P.D. headquarters and city hall. In addition, CAPA became a center for community people to lodge complaints against the police and get political and legal assistance.

By the late 1970's CAPA faced a profound crisis. On the one hand, it was difficult to sustain stable community organizations based on the single issue of police abuse. The defense and justice committees would typically dwindle to a few hard core activists after six months or so with little to show for their efforts. On the other hand, CAPA organizers offered little political direction to these community activists to keep them in the struggle for the longhaul at a time when the mass movement was at a low point. Without that mass basis, CAPA increasingly gravitated toward mobilizing only the left. In 1977, CAPA organized a mass protest against a meeting in L.A. of the International Conference of Police Chiefs. While perhaps as many as 1,000 people took part, very few were indigenous community people. Similarly, CAPA initiated the Mobilization Against Police Terror in 1978, a mass march in downtown L.A. Again, this was a predominantly left event.

2. THE EULIA LOVE MURDER

By 1979, the struggle against police abuse was at a low point. Then Eulia Mae Love, a 40 year old black woman, was shot eight times in front of her children by two L.A. policemen. She had been resisting attempts by the utility company to collect her gas bill. This killing triggered off mass outrage in the black community, culminating in a Police Crimes Tribunal, attended by over 400 people, which dramatized the injustice of Eulia Love's death as an example of L.A.P.D.'s pattern of brutality. The idea of a campaign for a Citizen's Review Board grew out of this stormy protest, and reflected the political orientation of the forces involved in leading that protest.

The reaction of the traditional civil rights organizations such as the NAACP and SCLC, and an organization of black ministers called the Gathering, was to call for an investigation by city and police agencies and express shock at the shooting. Their political approach was to organize "influential" people to meet with and pressure police officials to punish the individual police involved.

On the other hand, activists from the CAPA experience saw the death of Ms. Love as part of a systematic pattern of police terrorism in the black community. They identified the problem as not simply the individual police officers, but also the policies, politics, and role of the police institution itself. They sought to organize the masses of people in the community into a powerful, political movement which could begin to contend with the power of the police.

But, the forces favoring a grass roots organizing approach, were faced with formidable problems. First, the period of mass struggle in the black and brown communities characteristic of the late '60's were long past. The '70s exposed the organic weaknesses of those movements and the repressive reaction of the State. With no sustained mass movement, the Left and progressive forces were splintered. This motion affected everyone. Even those with a theoretical orientation toward the working class began to look elsewhere for a base of power.

However, movement around the Eulia Love case did push some of the traditional liberal elements, along with their social democratic allies, to take the initiative, though in their own way and only for a brief time. The call went out for some kind of independent agency to "police" the police.

3. THE CAMPAIGN BEGINS

From the start, the review board campaign reflected the political orientation of the liberal and social democratic elements. The main organizers of the campaign put their emphasis on building a broad coalition of already existing organizations, rather than reaching out to unorganized community people. The strategy was to "woo" big name leaders and organizations to endorse the campaign, which in turn would generate the required number of signatures.

At first, this strategy appeared to make sense. Within a few months, over 80 organizations pledged their support. On paper, at least, the list was impressive. It included the traditional black and Chicano liberal and professional organizations, various churches and church groups, the A.C.L.U. and other predominantly white, liberal and Left-liberal groups, as well as several gay, lesbian, and womens' groups. An assortment of Left groups—black,

white and Chicano—as well as a few community organizations and coalitions consisting mostly of Leftists, such as CAPA, also endorsed the campaign. The Leftists ranged from social democrats, from the Citizens Commission on Police Repression and New American Movement (NAM), to revolutionary socialists. Labor unions were conspicuously absent from the list, with the exception of initial endorsements from the International Longshoremen and Warehousemen's Union (ILWU) and a United Electrical Workers local, as well as from the rank and file groups Teamsters for a Democratic Union (TDU) and Teachers for Change from the United Teachers of Los Angeles. (Later on, several other union locals added endorsements). But, while many organizations endorsed the campaign, very few actively participated.

As the campaign progressed, it became clear that two distinct strategies among the campaign activists were emerging.

From the beginning the liberals wanted a review board which would appear to address the problem of police brutality without actually disturbing or challenging the fundamental power relationships of the city. Pushed forward by the protest over the Eulia Love murder within the black community, the black petit bourgeois political elements could gain credibility with militant rhetoric and improve their position within the city's power structure. Basing themselves on the growth of a significant black professional elite in the city, these elements were closely tied to Tom Bradley, L.A.'s black mayor, the rest of the city administration and even the police, who through the Police Protective League were large financial contributors to many black politicians and organizations, such as the NAACP and SCLC. Of course, this support largely depended on the ability of this layer to "contain" the black community by preventing any "spontaneous" independent movement from arising. For these elements, the creation of a new city agency (i.e. the review board) was the logical extension of their reliance on city agencies to solve social problems.

The Left, led by black cadres from the CAPA experience, saw the struggle to establish a review board as providing a focus for building the more general movement against police abuse, not as an end in itself. They viewed the electoral initiative as only a method, but they lacked a clear idea of what kind of groundwork needed to be laid in order to ensure that the initiative campaign would become a mass campaign.

Nevertheless, within the campaign, the Left was able to win a few victories over questions of tactics which reflected these political differences. Some of the liberal forces thought the campaign should approach the city council and to place the review board on the ballot. The Left countered that the political significance of the review board struggle was its potential to bring people into a movement and that organizing a mass petition drive was the best vehicle for accomplishing that. Since it was also apparent that both the city council and the police commission were adamantly opposed to any kind of review board, the campaign decided to go forward with the petition campaign.

The second battle was over the form and content of the review board itself. The liberals wanted a board which would review the activities of the police, but would have no power to take action (much like the review board that was set up by the Oakland City Council after a storm of protest over the police killings of several black youths).

Against the Current

On the other hand, the campaign's left-wing fought for a review board that would challenge the police as much as possible. First of all, it was to be elected by councilmanic district, not appointed like the police commission. Also, "community assemblies" would be established, composed of community people. Each review board member would be required to give a monthly account to these assemblies. Thus the board would provide a forum and focus for the community's struggle against police abuse. Since it was also anticipated that sooner or later the review board would become absorbed into the city bureaucracy, they reasoned that the community assemblies would then function as vehicles of struggle exposing the role of the board and pushing the movement against police abuse forward.

In terms of formal power, this review board would have been the strongest in any city. It would have had the power to discipline and fire police officers, and to hire an independent investigator with the power to subpoena both police officers and their files. Moreover, the board would have had the power to deal with a wide range of police behavior: verbal and physical harassment and violence of any kind, as well as surveillance of organizations and individuals.

In the end, the liberal elements had to accept the Left's conception of the board. This was because in the wake of the Eulia Love murder, the Los Angeles Police Commission, appointed by Mayor Bradley, had suddenly begun to stake out a position independent of Police Chief Gates. For years a rubber stamp for the L.A.P.D., this group of political professionals realized that it had to give at least the appearance of independence in order to stave off more radical proposals, such as a review board. So, they issued several reports on the Eulia Love killing which admitted that the officers had acted improperly, *but refused to discipline them*. These reports also called for independent investigations of complaints against the police and other reforms that were also contained in the review board proposal. This gesture was enough to split the liberals. Tom Hayden, who had at one point indicated support, now withdrew in favor of closer collaboration with Mayor Bradley. Other liberals, recognized the inconsequence of the Bradley Commission report, and weakened by the defection of people like Hayden, went along with the left's version of the Review Board structure.

4. THE PETITION DRIVE

The petition drive officially began on Jan. 1, 1980. The campaign was kicked off with big fanfare. In January, over 500 people rallied in support for the campaign. Assemblywoman Maxine Waters pledged her wholehearted support and it appeared as if important sections of the black political establishment would also.

The truth, however, was quite different. By the time the petition drive was underway, it was clear that the campaign could, at best, count on only token support, if any, from the traditional black organizations. At the same time, what mass base had arisen from the Eulia Love killing had all but evaporated by the time the campaign was underway.

This situation led to the development of an even sharper division within the campaign itself with the campaign's Left wing wanting to put the emphasis on community organizing and the liberal and social

democratic forces more desperate than ever to make the campaign palatable to the big name organizations and individuals who were either peripherally involved or not at all. This situation created tremendous problems for the moderates in the campaign. Since the forces they looked to were not really active in the campaign, they were constantly in danger of being outvoted by the Left which could often outnumber them at meetings.

Nervous about the wording of the review board proposal itself and afraid that the Left would "turn off" the forces they wanted, the moderates increasingly sought to bureaucratize the campaign in order to shield it from Left influence. At one point they put forward a proposal to take the political decision-making power away from the general meetings and place it in the hands of a small coordinating committee, which they controlled. When this was defeated, they attempted to stifle any real political discussion and struggle within the general meetings by calling for political differences to be handled by the coordinating committee, with all forces showing "unity" before the general body. This too was rejected by the Left.

Another tactic employed by the moderates was to take control of the official organization of the campaign. They made sure they had three of the four functional chairpersons of the campaign committees. These were the individuals who were seen on T.V., quoted in newspaper articles, and in general were the public voices of the campaign. They also controlled the campaign's literature committee, which they used to put forward their political orientation to the public.

These tactics went hand in hand with their orientation toward the petition drive itself. They argued that political dialogue, political education, and political organizing were not important during this period. The only important thing was gathering the necessary signatures. The success or failure of the campaign would be determined solely by the number of signatures collected. A Political education and organizing would come only after the review board was on the ballot.

In contrast, the Left pointed out that the only way the campaign had a chance of gathering sufficient signatures was to generate motion among the vast unorganized masses of community people. This, in turn, could only occur through political organizing and education. Rather than seeing political organizing as a dispensable tactic during the petition drive, they argued that it should be the key element in the campaign's overall strategy. Finally, they maintained that the success or failure of the campaign should be judged not by the number of signatures on the petition, but by the increase in the level of political organization and consciousness in the community.

Towards this end, the Outreach Committee, which was dominated by the Left, embarked upon a number of small organizing and educational projects but without appreciable success. For instance, attempts were made to organize meetings in Knickersons' Gardens, an all-black federal housing project in South-Central Los Angeles with a long history of police violence and abuse. However, there was little response. These and other experiences highlighted a basic problem for the Left: the lack of motion in those communities particularly oppressed by the police. Without that motion, it would be hard to "prove" in practice their arguments against the moderates.

5. THE MODERATES LAST STAND

By mid-June, the mostly muted conflict finally broke out into the open. The first six-month deadline had passed and the campaign was not even close to its goal of signatures. However, it was discovered that signatures were valid for 12-months, so the campaign had to decide whether or not to continue for a second six months, and to assess the progress of the campaign.

By this time, the moderates were better organized and coherent. The social democrats had taken a clear lead now that most of the liberals had dropped away. They organized a formal faction and drew up a document outlining their position. They argued that the campaign had suffered from "disruptive political polemicizing", disorganization, and unprofessionalism. Consequently, they called for the hiring of professional staff people to run the campaign and for all the working committees to be subsumed by the petition committee with an exclusive focus on signature gathering. Finally, they called for the outright abolition of the general meetings to be replaced by a coordinating committee composed of 15 to 20 "key" organizations, almost all of them representing their perspective, and including some groups that had never even joined the campaign!

The appearance of this faction not surprisingly prompted a counter-faction which put forward a political strategy based on building a united front with a grass-roots political organizing orientation.

Once the Left began to organize its forces, the liberal opposition evaporated. The Left position was adopted overwhelmingly, new points of unity and statements of purpose were drawn up, and a new organizing strategy was formed. After this, a number of moderates who had been active in the campaign formally withdrew. Better to give the campaign to the Left and make it bear the responsibility for failing. Moreover, by then, the social democrats and liberals undoubtedly felt that the campaign was not an effective way to reach the forces they wanted to involve.

For the Left, the victory had its costs. It was not possible for the campaign to make a "running" transition from the old political orientation to the new one. Nothing short of a complete halt to campaign activities and a prolonged period of reorganization could have accomplished this, and the campaign did not have the time.

It was inevitable then that the Left's political orientation and perspectives could only remain on paper. Ironically, it was forced to develop an increasingly "pragmatic" orientation, similar to the one they had attacked the moderates for having. Efforts were made to rebuild a broad viable steering committee, to reinvolve community people who had dropped out, to hold mass demonstrations to refocus the movement, and to sharpen the educational content of the campaign's literature. But all these efforts met with minimal success, as the increasing pressure of the Nov. 14 deadline and number of signatures still to be gathered pushed the campaign increasingly towards signature gathering.

With a core group of 15 to 20 people, over 20,000 signatures were collected in the last 2 months. The total amount was approximately 92,000 (58,000 short of what was needed). At this point, the campaign decided to fold up rather than continue until January 1981. There had been some talk during the campaign of continuing some form of organization to deal with police abuse or more general issues, but given the size of the group this was impossible.

6. DRAWING THE BALANCE SHEET

The central task for the Left in this campaign was to construct a realistic strategy for the anti-police abuse movement. To do so would have involved confronting a number of objective and "subjective" difficulties.

FIRST, there are inherent problems with organizing around police abuse as a single issue. It is difficult to win any significant victories. On the one hand, the police are the front-line defenders of the social order and enforcers of its laws. As such, the police are one of the most powerful, well-entrenched institutions of the capitalist State. Particularly in periods of economic crisis, when the system is even less able to meet the material needs of working people, the ruling class needs even greater instruments of repression. Representing the law, the police can increasingly stand "above the law". On the other hand, organizing people on a neighborhood basis brings people together where they have the least power to back up their demands. Unlike workers at the point of production, people in the neighborhoods are more isolated from and less dependent on each other; they have little economically necessary interaction. Therefore, they have few effective weapons of direct action against the police, such as the strike, rent strike, or even consumer boycott. These factors give the anti-police abuse movement an episodic character. Hence, by the time the campaign was undertaken, the furor and flurry of activism surrounding the Eulia Love murder had died down, thereby depriving the campaign of a genuine mass character.

SECONDLY, organizing around police abuse in the black community is faced with a more recent difficulty, — that of growing support for police protection. Historically, black people have always regarded the police as their direct oppressors, enforcing the laws of their white masters. First, there were the slave patrols under slavery. After emancipation, the police enforced the laws establishing segregation and black peonage. As blacks moved into urban ghettos, with their poverty and unemployment, the police continued to act as the agents of social control. Under these conditions, black people came to look upon the police as an occupying army. So, like the frontiersmen of the old West, black people handled their own internal problems.

However, since the Civil Rights and Black Power movements, black people have been able to throw off some forms of racist oppression, most particularly legal discrimination. At the same time, the tremendous expansion of the economy after WWII also made possible a certain degree of economic progress for black people, including the growth of a sizeable black professional strata and a stable black working class. Consequently, many black people have come to feel they have something to protect and that the State is not necessarily always their enemy. On the other hand, post-war capitalism has also created a permanent and growing black sub-proletariat, chronically underemployed and unemployed, which has been the major contributor to the growth of internal violence, theft, and drug use in the black community. This class polarization has in fact led to a split over the question of the police. With a number of cities now run by black administrations, and with the recruitment and advancement of more black police officers, many black professionals increasingly look to the police as their allies.

This tendency has been strikingly confirmed in Los

Against the Current

Angeles recently. Last winter, the police department announced the formation of a task force which would move large number of police from one section of the city to another to fight crime. The major complaint of the black leadership establishment was that the police did not choose the black areas of the city for their first task force assignments. This spring, Police Chief Gates spearheaded Proposition A, which would have raised property taxes to hire 1,500 additional police officers. The entire black leadership, including Mayor Bradley, the Gathering, the NAACP, and SCLC, supported the measure.

Nevertheless, the great majority of black working class people continue to be ambivalent toward the police. Extremely distrustful and critical of police behavior, they overwhelmingly supported the demand for some kind of check on the police. During the campaign, black workers constantly expressed resentment over police harassment and, especially, lack of police protection. Yet, for the most part, they did not understand that this harassment and lack of protection was not an accident or a mere matter of departmental policy, or the result of the prejudices of individual officers, but rather a necessity for a system based on race and class oppression.

Consequently, they did not see how police repression was likely to increase as the system goes further into crisis. In times of economic expansion, when jobs are plentiful and wages relatively high, there is generally less need for the police to harass and intimidate working class people, particularly the better off, white workers. In prosperous times, the system appears to be meeting people's needs: there is less crime and less class struggle. However, even in prosperous times, certain groups, such as blacks and Latinos, do not share equally in capitalist expansion because of racial oppression. For these groups, police repression has been a constant fact of life no matter what the state of the economy.

As the system enters an economic crisis, this repression, not surprisingly, is intensified and extended to the entire working class. In the name of "fighting crime," more and more money is allocated to hire more policemen (not to mention giving the FBI and CIA a freer hand in conducting political surveillance). At the same time, worsening economic conditions in the black and brown communities leads to an even higher level of internal violence. Given the political defeats of the black movement in the '70's, the general movement to the right in the country, and the lack of any viable, organized vehicles of struggle, many black people feel increasingly helpless to confront their problems. This in turn results in spontaneous individual acts of rebellion and frustration which, unfortunately, are often aimed at people with whom their misery is shared. Desperate for an end to this internal violence, many black community people themselves begin to call for more policemen, more prisons, and "tougher" laws. Therefore, it is not just the black middle class which feels the need for police protection. And this makes the struggle to control the police more difficult to organize.

The other side of this demand for police protection is the lack of self-organization in the black and brown communities. Only when organized to struggle against their real oppressors does reliance on external agencies such as the police begin to fade. Feeling powerless and vulnerable because isolated, people will continue to hold on to the illusion that the police can act in their interests.

If organizing against police abuse was difficult in the black community, which has a history of resistance to police repression, then it was virtually impossible in white neighborhoods except in heavily gay areas of L.A. where police abuse is rampant. On the whole, white people suffer considerably less from police abuse than do black and brown people, even during times of economic crisis. Their consciousness is therefore more backward regarding the role of the police. During times of crisis, they are far more likely to look to the police to shield them from its effect, particularly to the extent they are willing, due to racism, to make minority groups bear the brunt of the crisis.

Any strategy around the issue of police abuse must take this question of protection into account.

A THIRD problem faced by the Left in the campaign was the temptation to give in to a certain logic inherent in the demand for a police review board. Because of the low level of mass struggle and "false consciousness" toward the police among community people, there were strong pressures to present the review board in such a way as to legitimate the police.

The review board would only censor or penalize those individual officers guilty of "overreaction," "unprofessional behavior," "irresponsible action," or "excessive force." Acceptance of these categories could imply acceptance of their opposites, for instance, that some police behavior is "professional" (and therefore legitimate), or that their actions are "responsible", or that their use of force is not excessive. If the police are legitimate and necessary, then a review board which has the power to weed out those "bad" officers is the logical solution.

Without a clear understanding of this danger and its political roots, many campaign leaders who were avowed revolutionaries were quoted on T.V. and in the newspapers as saying that the police should have the right to shoot down people under the "proper" conditions or to use whatever force necessary to "enforce the law."

A FOURTH problem was the electoral character of the review board struggle. For socialists, participation in electoral struggles pose certain problems. On the one hand, there is the danger that such activities will perpetuate the illusion that significant victories can be won through winning political office or creating new legal mechanisms, rather than through mass mobilization and organization. On the other hand, electoral activities, precisely because they do offer the masses a limited degree of power, offer socialists a vehicle for exposing the system as a whole as well as for winning certain reforms which make political organizing easier.

There can be no doubt that establishing an elected review board in Los Angeles would have been such a reform. While it would not have transformed the L.A.P.D., it would have checked their "freedom of repression" to a limited degree. It appears to be no accident that the number of police killings declined significantly during the course of the campaign. Moreover, the establishment of community assemblies, mandated by the initiative, would have provided more openings for community organizing.

The central problem, however, was that the movement was not strong enough—organizationally or politically—to counter the negative features of electoral campaigns.

Without a strong movement to back up the demand for a review board, there was a tendency to put it forward as

the solution to the problem of police abuse, rather than at best as a limited check on the police and a step toward organizing a mass movement addressing a broader range of social problems. In this way, the campaign tended to reinforce the essentially reformist notion that people must look outside themselves and toward a review board to solve their problems. As one would expect, such an approach was met with a good deal of cynicism, particularly in the black and brown communities where faith in the electoral process is at a low point.

This pacifying dynamic was also expressed in the petition gathering process. Petition gathering, if supplemented by forms of direct action, could help to publicize and involve new people in the campaign. However, given the small number of people working in the campaign, there was always a great pressure to concentrate solely on petition gathering, itself a very passive process. This made the process of building a real movement more difficult, ultimately undercutting the petition campaign itself.

All these factors worked to undermine the viability of the campaign coalition. Since none of the organizations active in the coalition had an active mass base, the coalition clearly lacked the active base to qualify the initiative for the ballot, much less launch a respectable campaign for the review board itself. This fact alone had enormous consequences for campaign activists, who were put in the impossible position of having to substitute themselves for what only a mass campaign could accomplish. At first, this meant attempting to create that mass base during the campaign. On the one hand, the liberals and social democrats tried to involve the traditional civil rights groups, ministers, and politicians, but this could not succeed without mass pressure pushing them to break with Mayor Bradley and the rest of the black political establishment. On the other hand, the Left tried to create that community base, but it proved too difficult. No matter how dedicated, organizers cannot usually ignite mass struggles, but only help give them direction once they break out. Then, when the Left finally inherited the campaign, with all its pressures and demands, it was unable to take advantage of what organizing possibilities did exist. For instance, during the second six months of the campaign, there were at least two particularly dramatic police attacks on black men which the campaign was too busy to organize around.

In short, the conditions for building a coalition or real forces representing real struggles did not exist. Instead, the campaign had more the character of a "home" for isolated activists, each seeking to accomplish through the campaign what they could not accomplish through their own organizations.

THE PROBLEM OF THE LEFT

This brings us finally to the critical subjective problem in the campaign: the lack of an organized, conscious, political Left to analyze and counter these objective dangers of the campaign from the beginning. A number of factors limited the ability of the Left to organize itself.

First, many of the independent Leftists shared a strong anti-theoretical, action-oriented predisposition. Seeing themselves as "movement" people, they tend to shy away from forming sharp political poles which they see as possibly splitting the movement. Lacking a clear

theoretical perspective and sense of purpose, they have a tendency to reflect the mood of the movement in general. In periods of mass activity, they are very militant. But in slow periods, they gravitate toward reformist methods.

Related to this problem was the tendency among some Left activists to see mass organizing as an alternative to forming a Left pole, rather than as complementary. This "voluntarist" tendency assumes that organizing is more a matter of technique than politics, since the masses are already conscious presumably of what is necessary and possible. This neglects the critical role of an organized "conscious" element in helping people become aware of their true interests.

A third factor was the lack of coordination between white and black Leftists. While extensive discussions between black and white revolutionaries with similar political orientations had been going on for some time in Los Angeles, these never got to a practical, working stage. Undoubtedly, this lack of political contact served to weaken the ability of either group to undertake the necessary tasks. This campaign illustrates once more the necessity for both white and black Leftists to take the necessary steps to break down the historically-based barriers between them.

7. SOME STRATEGIC CONCLUSIONS

A number of strategic implications follow from this critique of the police review board struggle. First, we can see that at this time electoral methods, such as the review board campaign, will generally be ineffective in combatting police terror in the black and brown communities. Rather, the only kinds of struggles which can confront the overwhelming power of the police and create the conditions for stripping away the community's reliance on police "protection" will be mass upsurges leading to the creation of politically independent grassroots organizations. Only such mass organization will possess the authority to begin to regulate internal violence and other forms of anti-social behavior within those communities, as well as to begin to put more effective restraints on the police.

From a strategic perspective, then, revolutionaries, particularly in the black and brown communities, must begin to expand upon the ideal of self-defense patrols developed by the Black Panthers to include self-regulation of internal violence as well. However, such forms of self-organization cannot be built in isolation from other issues and struggles. On the contrary, the massive upheavals necessary to create the conditions for such self-organization will necessarily have to take up the many grievances of these communities: poor housing, health care, education, jobs, etc.

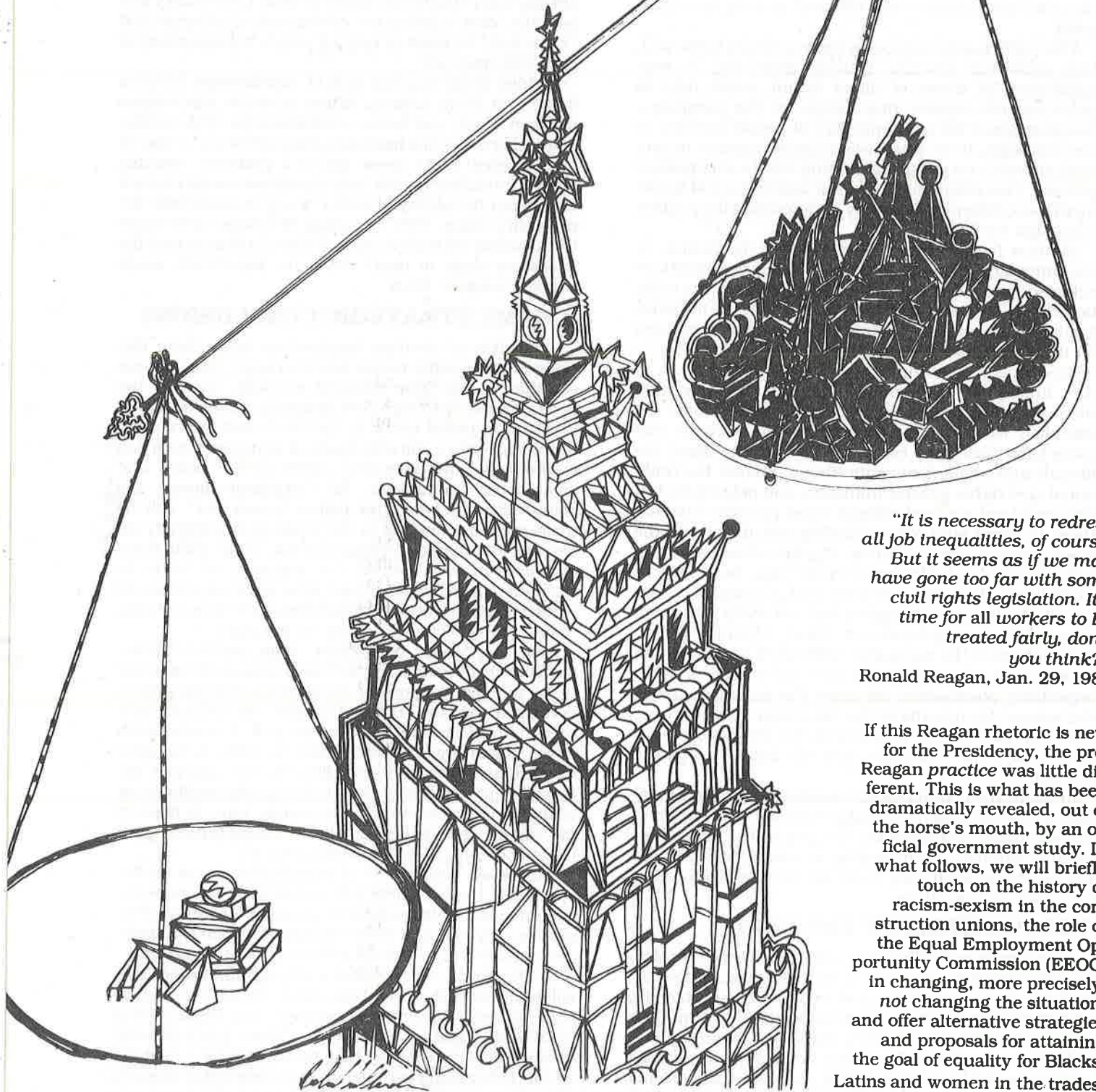
While such a high level of organization is not on the immediate horizon there will undoubtedly be mass explosions and mobilizations in response to ruling class attacks. The key task for revolutionaries then is to position ourselves to politically influence those struggles.

As the police review board campaign indicated, this will be impossible without the creation of a coherent Left wing in these movements encompassing those with a bottom-up organizing perspective. Once this is at least partially achieved, it may then be possible for Leftists to initiate community organizing and/or education projects whose major purpose would be to politically develop a larger core of community activists with a long-term anti-capitalist orientation ■

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION and the EEOC:

The Myth of Legislative Reform in the Construction Industry

by Steve Burghardt & Jim Haughton



"It is necessary to redress all job inequalities, of course. But it seems as if we may have gone too far with some civil rights legislation. It's time for all workers to be treated fairly, don't you think?"

Ronald Reagan, Jan. 29, 1981

If this Reagan rhetoric is new for the Presidency, the pre-Reagan practice was little different. This is what has been dramatically revealed, out of the horse's mouth, by an official government study. In what follows, we will briefly touch on the history of racism-sexism in the construction unions, the role of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) in changing, more precisely, not changing the situation, and offer alternative strategies and proposals for attaining the goal of equality for Blacks, Latins and women in the trades.

[Steve Burghardt, a member of Workers Power, has been a public sector activist for ten years. Jim Haughton is founder of Harlem Fight Back.]

Brief History of Racism-Sexism in the Industry & Union

The tradition of racism & sexism in the construction trades is as old as the modern labor movement itself. Until the 1940s, most craft unions had clauses in their international constitutions limiting membership to white males. Even the subsequent removal of those clauses didn't remove the racist and sexist practices. Today, most building trades still admit members through a "fraternal" system under which members are accepted or rejected by a vote of the members of the local union. The international constitutions also require that a new candidate must be "endorsed" by two or more members in good standing. Such procedures make self-evident why friends and family will easily be supported, while Blacks, Hispanics and women* will not.

Furthermore, each local union sets its own admission tests for journeymen applicants to pass. Giving locals such wide discretionary authority has allowed the testing committees to demand oral, written and performance tests "as it sees fit"—another clear signal to discriminate against minority and female candidates. The same procedures are used for entry to most apprenticeship programs with the additional problems of daily job harassment and preferential treatment during training, which naturally increase Black and women drop-out rates. These higher drop-out rates can be used to argue that there weren't enough qualified Blacks, Latins, or women to fill the positions readily taken by the sons, nephews and neighbors of present journeymen.

The ultimate source of the building trades unions' ability to exclude Black workers and others from *unionized* jobs (the well-paying ones), is their control over the labor supply on a daily basis through the use of the union hiring hall. The hiring hall is a powerful weapon of the working class and has been used (in the ILWU and other unions) to foster racial equality. But as it presently functions in the construction industry it serves to obstruct equality of sex and race. Most contractors have fluctuating demands for workers. Business ebbs and flows on a weekly basis. Given the structure of the hiring hall, a contractor's reliance on the union for his labor supply increases when he expands outside the area of his normal operations (which happens often). Then he must depend on journeymen from other locals if he has entered another local's jurisdiction. The city locals often interconnect and have reciprocal arrangements whereby each local sends its surplus workers to those locals which are experiencing a temporary shortage of men. This way, the contractor can fulfill his fluctuating labor needs, and the locals keep most of their journeymen employed. Such control of the labor supply has placed much power in the locals whose informal agreements have maintained a narrow pool of well-employed, satisfied journeymen. Until recently, in prosperity, the increasing

**Recent trends seen in Louisville and elsewhere are ominous for potential class divisions along racial lines. For there, women were being hired in preference to blacks. It is incumbent upon feminists not to allow the allure of a few better jobs to be used to further racism but instead work with Blacks and others to create genuine alliances of common interest of all.*

numbers of non-union construction jobs in every city was of little matter to the unions, for the locals were able to maintain enough power over enough jobs to keep their smaller but still satisfied membership employed.

Exactly how does the hiring hall work in the interest of racism and sexism *in the construction industry*? In many ways. For one, to white males, the business agent will explain referral procedures and job openings. On the other hand, Blacks, Hispanics and women are provided either no information or are deliberately misinformed regarding the procedures to be followed in getting one's name on "the out-of-work" list. Again, the business agent can indicate that there is "no work," "it's been slow," even if it's a lie, or he can use arbitrarily-determined "criteria" for grouping people on a job referral list—a list on which Blacks and others always found themselves at the bottom. Thus, at the hiring hall, union members are often pre-registered and individuals "historically" assigned to various employers, perpetuating racist-sexist practices administratively.

By 1970, even though thousands of skilled Blacks carried on their trade in the lower-paying, *non-union* jobs forced upon them, it was obviously no accident that overall Black membership in the crafts never went above seven per cent. Even this figure is misleading, for most Blacks and Hispanics are in less skilled and lower paid trades, like laborers. Those in masonry and other, higher paid crafts are well below seven per cent Black and Hispanic. It seemed as if something had to be done, and Blacks, Hispanics and women looked to the civil rights affirmative action programs for help.

Establishment of the EEOC: From Legislative Victory to Regulatory Impotence

The first serious attack on discrimination in the trades came as a result of the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s. The movement was powerful enough to force through much progressive legislation, especially the now-famous Civil Rights Act of 1964. Title VII enumerated the types of unlawful discriminatory practices, including those of unions, and set up a five-member commission to administer its investigating and enforcement responsibilities. The EEOC, broken into seven regions and thirty-two districts, was given two charges: (1) to provide relief through complaints of discrimination; (2) to eliminate patterns and practices of discrimination. Given the successful legislative assaults of the 60's that were meant to demonstrate the government's commitment to ending racism and sexism in society, the EEOC appeared to many to signal the beginning of a new era—one we often look to in 1981 as a past age of much success and accomplishment.

Nevertheless, a recent study by the US Comptroller General's Office ("Federal Efforts to Increase Minority Opportunities in the Skilled Construction and Craft Unions Have Had Limited Success") makes it painfully clear that the gains made under the EEOC have been illusory and token at best. In fact the majestic Civil Rights Act, complete with its regulatory powers and sweeping jurisdiction, was in disarray within the construction trades from its very inception. It lies a dismal failure 15 years later. The actual increase in Black journeymen in the building trades unions has risen from only 7.2% before the law, to 8.5% by 1979. This

Against the Current

number appears even more ludicrous when one considers that the construction unions are strongest in the cities where Blacks and Hispanics are increasingly an *absolute majority of the total work force!*

Furthermore, the report tells us, whites continue to advance from apprentice to journeymen in shorter periods of time and without always completing long and often expensive apprentice training programs. The few Blacks who achieved journeymen status did so only through the apprentice programs which were normally closed to them, first by rules, then by manipulation.

The lack of Black progress cannot be laid at the doorstep of a stagnant economy. During the 1970s, 14320 union journeymen retired and their positions were filled—clearly a wide structural opening for Blacks, women and others that had nothing to do with a lack of work or with displacing other workers on the job. And, finally, as few changes in hiring hall practices occurred, whites made between \$1565.00 to \$2,751.00 more a year than equivalent blacks. Thus even though the construction industry was hurt in the 1970's and early '80s, the patterns of racist discrimination continued to be applied for the benefit of a small number of white males.

EEOC FAILURE: Why this painful lack of progress?

The EEOC, regardless of its twin responsibilities under the law, focused from its inception on only *individually*-initiated charges of discrimination, and ignored its responsibility to eliminate *patterns* and practices of discrimination. In 15 years, they have done only one self-initiated study on the pattern and practice of craft union discrimination. Instead, the EEOC has served as a *reactive* agent, acting only after complaints are received. As most of these complaints were by grieved individuals, the investigations themselves were on *locals*, not *national unions*, which further weakened any systematic approach to the problem. Even a city-wide approach where, say, 15 locals work out closely co-ordinated but different hiring halls, were exempted from this narrow focus.

The problem of passivity and neglect of patterns of discrimination continued even where discrimination seemed easiest to attack—in cases of Federal contracts where we could assume that the Office of Contract Compliance Program (OFCC) would have more power of enforcement. This office was authorized to cut off the flow of Federal money if discrimination was found.

Perhaps the best known example of what "might have been" was the famous Nixon "Philadelphia Plan". It was announced with great fanfare, along with general anti-union propaganda. The plan proposed to eliminate racist hiring patterns in the trades. Voluntary agreements to that end would be worked out on each job site with the affected unions. It was expected that the number of minority members at each Federal work site would triple. Blasted by the unions and inhibited in its enforcement power, the "plan" was in fact never implemented. Today, Philadelphia is the sight of a major suit brought by Blacks and Latins in 1975 to end industry-wide discrimination. The case finally went to trial in August 1980, and is still going on a year later! Meanwhile, a city with 40% Black population has less than 12% black membership in skilled trades.

It was not just the Philadelphia plan that flopped. The Comptroller General found in 7 OFCC cities studied that *all* failed to achieve their goals on hiring and promotion, even with the presence of the OFCC. In only one program did they even come close. That was in *one* apprenticeship program in which, out of a goal of 1,315 black apprentices, 1,100 were filled, in one city. But even here, 50% worked 20 hours a week or less, compared to many more hours for equivalent whites. In NYC, only 3 blacks filled 52 new journeymen's positions.

The continuing pattern of racism throughout the craft trades while under the umbrella of the EEOC and OFCC legislation is horrible, but not surprising, when one looks at these bodies closely. First there is the obvious reality that the OFCC and EEOC did not even attempt to set up or maintain real enforcement procedures, promotion, wage differentials, hiring hall practices etc. For example, no enforcement procedures were developed to make certain that the 14,320 available and filled new journeymen jobs of the '70s had a high percentage of Blacks, Latins and women—no monitoring of unions, no compiling and preparing of readily available minority and female candidates for journeymen, etc.

Instead, EEOC offices were found to spend most of their time making demands on such merely procedural matters as *promptness* of local reports being filed, not on their actual contents. The most consistent threats made to locals involved *filing dates* of quarterly data. The second most common were complaints over *presentation* of data! Such bureaucratic attention to administrative minutia at the expense of the more substantive issues can hardly be expected to substitute for the correction of social injustice.

All this "ineptness" and indifference existed even before recent legislative efforts requiring minorities and women to prove *intentional* discrimination even where the discriminatory effects are obvious. (The passage of *such* legislation would put the final nail in the EEOC-made coffin of Blacks' and women's hopes in the industry.

WHY THE FAILURE?

The widespread illusion that the EEOC could be effective is part of the larger set of illusions. Good laws are far from enough. They can be reduced to trivial formalities by powerful groups who oppose them, unless a countervailing power base *stays* mobilized at the local level to withstand the pressure of racist and sexist unions (and other institutions) anxious to hold onto their white male bastions of power—in this case in the construction industry. Historic victories can turn to ashes if a mass movement is dismantled because legislative successes have taken place. In place of the movement of the '60s we now have hundreds of black officials, mayors of large cities, and a congressional Black Caucus—all with next to no power to effect the lives of black workers. Without constant mobilization and "taking things into our own hands", even good laws quickly lose their teeth, or more correctly, are quickly defanged.

The methods of teeth-pulling are numerous. They range from open sabotage to more covert techniques. To take only three cases:

Ralph Nader has taught many people how Federal Regulatory Commissions like the EEOC can be rendered impotent and even changed into enemies of the law they were supposed to enforce. The Comptroller General's report is just the latest of an endless series of such histories.

It is not much different on state and local levels. Thus, N.Y.'s Governor Carey issued Executive Order #45 to prevent discrimination in the industry. But he neglected to appropriate or ask for the appropriation of funds to enforce the order (which was later declared unconstitutional).

Finally, there is the "token official" method. The system selects individuals who will subvert the law (in this case, Black and Hispanic officials). The presence of blacks in positions of seeming power (such as Eleanor Holmes Norton, former head of the EEOC) has often led black community rank and file activists to assume that "things will now be different". But such Blacks understand their roles—are to placate the militants into waiting a little longer . . . and longer. The structure is replete with Black and Hispanic officials of this stripe.

Of course, as Harlem Fight Back has documented, when a rare, dedicated black official tries to be different, as was the case of N.Y. City Director of Bureau of Labor Services, Daryl E. Green, they don't last very long. In 1974 Greene ordered an audit of the N.Y. Plan for Training, revealing gross failure of compliance. The first and only disbarment of a contractor occurred. As Greene set out to develop a genuine enforcement plan, his power was stripped away, forcing him to resign. Lacking a powerful organized base to support him, "the differences" ended with his departure.

SOME CONSTRUCTIVE PROPOSALS

The Community Hiring Hall: An Action Alternative to Affirmative Action.

One remedy, proposed by Harlem Fight Back, a well-known activist organization concerned with discrimination in the construction trades, is the Community Hiring Hall. An important agitational demand, the hall would work as follows:

"As a new route to advance non-whites in construction jobs, it is proposed that the city establish community hiring halls for recruiting Black, Hispanic and Asian-American workers on construction projects throughout the city. The proliferation of groups that serve to divide and split the non-white communities serves to impede the integration of the building trades and intensifies conflict between non-white and white workers. The plan would be implemented as follows:

"Contractors working in the city and for the city would be obligated contractually to take 50% of their work force from the community hiring hall and 50% from the union controlled hiring hall. This procedure is to be followed until non-whites are in all the trades proportionate to their numbers of the total city population.

"With this hiring mechanism in place, the traditional barrier of "can't get a job without a union book and can't get a union book without a job" is broken. Once on a job with a unionized contractor the non-white worker becomes eligible for a union book. If he is refused, there are ample court remedies available while the individual continues to work. Further, with contractors obligated to take their non-white workers from the community

hiring halls, the balkanization of turfs among many different organizations claiming to represent the community, petty graft, and on-site non-white-white confrontation would be eliminated."

The elegance in this proposal is its emphasis on a simple procedure at the base of operations that creates a countervailing force to that of the white craft unions. At the same time, the community hiring hall, as it is a transmission belt into the craft unions and not a union itself, avoids any possible charge of "dual unionism." Such a hiring hall, as a permanent, mobilized fixture within the construction industry, also becomes a natural training ground, resource network, and support system for minorities in the way that the hiring halls now are for white males.

By using criteria that are unambiguous and understood by everyone at the local point of work itself, it would be possible for the community hiring halls to alter the racial and sexual composition in a relatively short time. Of course, Fight Back has no illusions that this demand can and will be easily won. Racism runs too deeply within our society to make such struggles easy ones, especially in the right wing climate of today. However, this demand, because it is attainable enough to fight for, opens people up to a level of mobilization that goes beyond simple propagandistic, educational efforts. In the process, the community hiring hall, as an agitational demand, exposes the limitations of our present system's political and economic institutions in important ways, for the hall's feasibility exposes the indifference and passivity of the EEOC and OFCC.

It is the combination of this alternative's "programmatic attainability" (the halls would even be cost efficient) and the system's (the EEOC's) failure, which can serve to heighten the political development of workers. Instead of creating the illusion that more good laws will eradicate racism and sexism in this country, the demand pushes all of us forward to consider deeper and bolder forms of struggle that can unite more and more workers together in common efforts of joint benefit—the kind of benefits unattainable under this present economic system.

It won't be easy, of course. The defensive character of most rank and file community struggles has led most of us into focusing on attempts to keep the limited gains of the past. We need to do this, but the litany of racist abuse under the nose of the EEOC and OFCC should alert us to our political responsibility to not only defend these gains but point to their limitations, suggesting new directions in the process.

Affirmative Action programs in the industry have not only been "Mickey Mouse" programs that only served to create the illusion of racial and sexual equality in employment. They have done even more damage. For one, the focus of attention on the EEOC diverted attention from the more fundamental question of a decent job for all workers. Secondly, not only has the EEOC program not done much of a positive nature, but it has worsened the situation by exacerbating the racism of many white workers who have been falsely led to believe that Blacks, Hispanics and other minorities and women are threatening their supposed job security. The result has been not only no increase in jobs, but a reinforcement of the division between Black and white workers and competition for jobs that are fast being eliminated or that simply are not there. This has en-

Against the Current

couraged whites to stick ideologically to a degenerate political-economic system.

The demand for community hiring halls is a blow at the myth of affirmative action in the construction industry. (And not just there. It raises the question of the significance of EEOC effectiveness for women and others as well.) The hall is a structural program directly controlled by those affected, to put non-white and women workers in jobs. Such a program would serve to integrate the building trades, laying a real basis for unity between Black and white workers.

But how successful can community hiring halls be in a situation of declining union strength and declining jobs? Clearly community hiring halls are just one facet of a much larger need.

Organize the Unorganized:

It is a notorious fact that 80% of all private housing in the US is done by non-union labor. The huge mobile homes industry is unorganized. The union's strength is increasingly localized in the metropolitan areas where deals can be cut with politicians and the politically active construction companies. Needless to say, this situation tends to and in the past decades *has* increasingly undermined the unions' power.

To restore union power, the industry has to be organized. But to do so would mean to organize the vast army of Black and Hispanic workers who work in the *unorganized* sector of the industry. And that in turn would threaten the racist dimension of the unions. Resistance to this change is one major obstacle to organizing the unorganized. But without such organization, the construction unions may well shrivel into tiny job trusts, eventually impotent, as most European construction unions have been, for similar racist reasons. In Britain it was racist contempt for the Irish, in France for the Algerians, in Germany for the Turks, which has kept construction workers' wages and conditions at the bottom of the ladder.

JOBS for ALL:

Jobs for all is inseparable from success in Organizing the Unorganized. Construction unions will find it difficult to organize, even with the best of intentions and practice, so long as there is a vast reservoir of unemployed and semi-employed construction workers. The craft and provincial traditions of the construction unions have made them particularly alien to any concern, much less action, with respect to jobs for those not already members of the union. It thus seems likely that changes in these unions may be dependent upon other great political changes and developments. But this question is clearly beyond the scope of this essay ■

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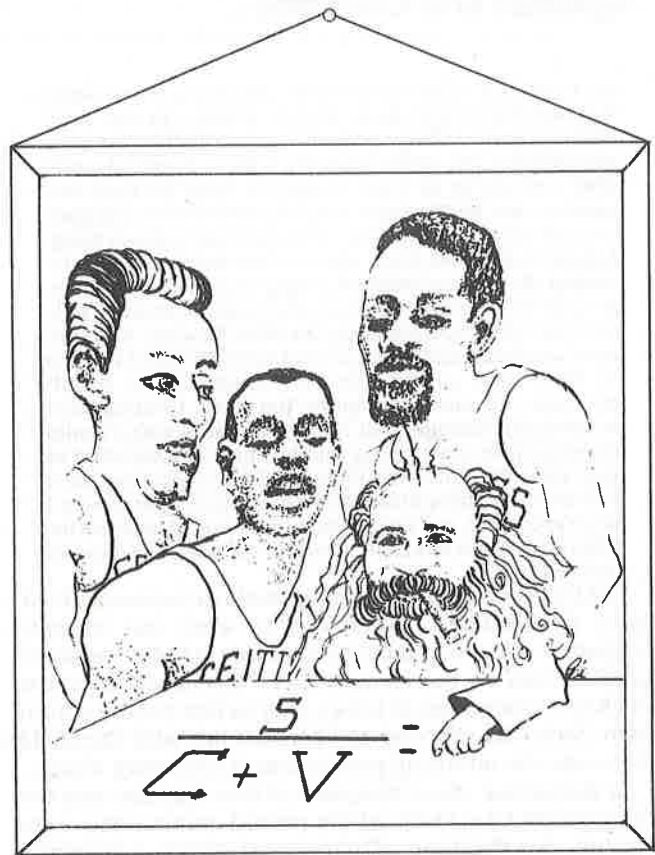
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THESES ON AUERBACH

by Seymour Kramer

(These theses were written by a N.Y. Knicks fan obviously thrown into a state of hysteria on the occasion of yet another defeat by Red Auerbach's Boston Celtics.)

I

The chief defect of all previous 'sports critique' is that things—competitiveness, rules, sweat blisters, sensuous achievement—are sifted with dull scolding hands, coldly abstaining from the playfulness which alone can transform.

The principal thing, says Marat: "is to lift oneself up by the hair to turn oneself inside out and to see the world in a different way..."

The principal thing is to tear into the throat of late-capitalist sport and to find communist play and polymorphic perversity at the edges of its gullet.

II

The original design of the game of basketball contrasted man's propensity for remaining fixed to the floor

and the ball's affinity for free air. This opposition was established not simply by a set of rules arbitrarily selected, but *corresponded* to the lingering hegemony of a certain small-town myth in American mass psychology. Thus long after the forging of national markets by the development of new urban frontiers, the North American Anglo-Saxon imagination curled within itself and staged a final defense of these myths in the face of the triumphs of late capitalism.

The natural fortress of this nostalgia as it came to be expressed through sport, was of course baseball, a game which is based on a complete subordination of man to rules—to an inveterate authoritarian credo which the novelist Phillip Roth elicited in his interview with Bill Veeck, pioneer baseball owner.

... In order to bring home to the youngsters the central importance of the Rules and Regulations, he would draw their attention to the model of a baseball diamond on his desk and he would say:

"Now I am not telling you that somebody won't come along tomorrow and *try* to change that distance on us. The streets are full of people with harebrained schemes,

Against the Current

out to make a dollar; out to make confusion, out to make the world over because it doesn't happen to suit their taste. I am only telling you that ninety feet is how far from one another the bases have been for a hundred years now, and as far as I am concerned, how far from one another they shall remain until the end of time. I happen to think that the great man whose picture you see hanging above my desk knew what he was doing when he invented the game of baseball. I happen to think that when it came to the geometry of the diamond, he was a genius on a par with Copernicus and Sir Isaac Newton, who I am sure you have read about in your schoolbooks. I happen to think that ninety feet was *precisely* the length necessary to make this game the hard, exciting, and suspenseful struggle that it is. And that is why I would impress upon your young minds a belief in following to the letter, the Rules and Regulations, as they have been laid down by thoughtful and serious men before you or I were ever born, and as they have survived in baseball for a hundred years now, and in human life since the dawn of civilization."

But if baseball was the strong castle in a system of cultural fortifications, other games were not entirely neglected. Thus one recalls the titanic struggle to maintain the ban on the forward pass; the shock at Knute Rockne's adaptation of urban chorus line routines from *New York* and *Chicago* to offensive line and backfield play; and the enduring prohibition of the flying wedge.

In Basketball the centerpiece of this reaction was the domination by a clock which moved continuously; reinforcing the rhythms of a pastoral idiocy. Contained within this prison of moving time was a repetition of regular, earth bound operations: the splendor of the deliberate pass, the set play and zone defense. Even leaping, with its attendant sexuality, was strictly limited both through a universally accepted standard and in the breach, by a resort to repression. As Bill Russell writes:

"The very philosophy of the game in those days would be unrecognizable to most people now. The idea was never to leave your feet except to jump for a rebound. If you had the ball on offense, the idea was to dribble, fake, and move past the man guarding you so that you had a clear path to the basket for a moment. Then you would drive in for a layup. If your path was blocked you would shoot a set shot if you had time, if not you would pass...The jump shot was thought to be hot-dog confined to the playgrounds where it originated, AND many coaches were dedicated to stamping it out. 'If you have to jump to shoot, you didn't have a shot in the first place'. Some coaches would bench a player automatically for taking a jump shot and I witnessed a couple of strict disciplinarians who actually threw players off their teams for this offense."

III.

The long wave of economic expansion following World War II completely undermined the basis of this transcendent nostalgia for the past stability. While it continued to dominate in baseball, the fabled national pastime went into a sharp decline (only reviving in the present pervasive reactionary reflex.) In Football, which had become recognized as America's Game, the vocabulary of the Permanent Arms Economy overcame the older town-based images, petrifying them in a military ether and a computerized cast. The long bomb ended forever the controversy over the legalization of the forward pass. The outlawed flying wedge secreted itself into the fibre of the sport in the form of the Wishbone. These then combined with the shot gun offense, spearing and the reddog to enlist sport in ideology heralding the American Century.

Basketball also experienced a similar transition. For if

in Baseball the new phase of capital accumulation yielded decline and marginalization, and if in Football expansion was won at the price of a new violence and rigidity, Basketball telescoped and reflected all that was elastic and "revolutionary" in the third technological revolution.

With the decline of the set shot; the rediscovery of the sexual pleasure of the leap; the drive for the mystery space between feet and floor in the jump; the powerful assault on the Anglo Saxon imagination by an expansive Negritude; and the natural selection of new standards of height, mobility and balance, the game of Basketball was compelled to explode the limitations of its traditional envelope and search for a new container.

IV

The new synthesis, arising as it did at the mid point of anti-communist agitation, could not transcend the limitations of sport. While it freed the game of most of its blockages, it could not transform it into play. Basketball remained a sport and resisted its tendency to become a new, collective expression. Blind to its own horizons, a deep and revolutionary assault began on the old fortress. This, through the slow linking of individual motions, was replaced by a flexible synthesis of spectacular physical activity. At its best this new form could appear as a fully synchronized yet completely individuated sweep over time and space. From the upper rafters young workers had the sense of watching something elemental; something controlled and free;—a vision of Gramsci's New Order and Reich's sexual revolution—an integrated plunging and receiving that swung from team to team in a bisexual rhythm of tremendous sensual power and with a magnificent orgiastic energy.

V

At these moments the game tended to leave the confines of sport and become an epic dance—to reproduce the vision of communist creativity indicated so majestically by Trotsky at the Conclusion of *Literature and Revolution*.

"It is difficult to predict the extent of self-government which the man of the future may reach, of the heights to which he may carry his technique. Social construction and psycho-physical self-education will become two aspects of one and the same process. All the arts—literature, drama, painting, music and architecture will lend this process beautiful form. More correctly, the shell in which the cultural construction and self-education of Communist man will be enclosed, will develop all the vital elements of contemporary art to the highest point. Man will become immeasurably stronger, wiser and subtler; his body will become more harmonized, his movement more rhythmic, his voice more musical. The forms of life will become dynamically dramatic. The average human type will rise to the heights of an Aristotle, a Goethe, or a Marx. And above this ridge new peaks will rise."

But as so often occurs 'consciousness limped after reality'. Given the division of labor between player and spectator—the one reduced to an unconnected series of limbs, the other, to an eye severed from the brain's reflective potentialities—a space for interpretation and control was cleared for the bureaucratic imagination. Thus in sport too the sequel of revolt is not the revolution in permanence but a new Thermidor.

In the person of Red Auerbach the new synthesis was stripped of its revolutionary potential and rendered as a new model of victory—a hope. Auerbach wanted sensual achievement, but not at the expense of private ap-

proprietion and distribution—nor at the cost of a withered authoritarianism.

Through the genius of Auerbach the new potentials of the game were successfully amalgamated. The leaps, and jumps; the swift pass, the blocking movement without the ball, the end of the zone defense, the 24 second clock were all stripped of their sexuality, repressed and allowed to reemerge as the new way of winning.

Thus one has the inauguration of the five man system—the dominant, passing, defensive center; the shooting penetrating forward; the enforcing rebounder; the scoring guard and the controlling point guard. Thus one has the switching defense.... the coordinated sweep down court...the first real attempt at a theorization of the transition game. But each and every one of these moments is designed not for generalized pleasure but for increasing the pace and ability to accumulate points. The climactic explosions of Celtic power that characterized the opening of every second half against the Knicks in the late fifties and sixties were not the exploration of sexual freedom and collective creativity but simply a means for destroying the weaker teams and demoralizing their fans.

In the years that have passed all of the innovations in the game that have taken hold have been no more than modifications of Auerbach's thesis. The sixth man; Red Holtzman's purification of movement without the ball, and team defense; the Ramsey/Wilkins transition game... Al Attles use of 10 men in 1975-76 are little more than mannerisms within the unchallenged register of Auerbachism.

The Auerbachian hegemony—resulting from 12 world championships—has yielded a magnificent, brocaded redundancy that appears masterly because it corresponds to the inability of late capitalist culture to distinguish pleasure from victory.

At the level of play the greatest achievements are generally accepted. The awesome combination of Cousy and Sharman and the Jones boys shuttling in and out of the championship Celtic lineups; Oscar Robertson, Jerry West, Walt Frazier and Len Wilkins; Baylor, Pettit, Debuscherre, Rick Barry, Gus Johnson; Russell, Reed, Chamberlain and Jabbar.

Of these, Russell's achievement is transcending; not only because of his play but because of his attempts to theorize the game and to pierce through the essence of the Auerbachian synthesis that was in practice designed around him. This heroic effort requiring a psychological balance that could only come from the struggle against oppression, and a deep immersion in the game of golf, almost provided Russell with a path leading out of the sport into an expansive, collective play.

"I think of all sports as a mixture of art and war. The mixture changes with different sports, but it's always there. The art jumps out at you in a sport like women's gymnastics, a sport of dance and body sculpture, but I can tell you from having seen several Olympiads that those young girls are as competitive as any boxer. They're out there to win, and they'd sharpen their teeth on the balance beam if it would help.

Looking at all sports on a scale between art and war, I've always thought of basketball as being on the artistic side, more of a ballet than a brawl. But of course every athlete tends to emphasize the artistic qualities of his own sport. Still, when we see Julius ("Doctor J.") Erving fly through the air and under the basket, his back arched, his arms stretched, holding the ball like an orange, and

see him make an impossible twist at the last instant to stuff the ball backwards through the basket, we say that was a beautiful move. And everybody means that adjective literally. Doctor J.'s moves are beautiful in the same way that an ice skater's leap is beautiful—or even in the same way that a painting is beautiful. The form inspires wonder, and the motion has something to say . . .

In any sport a spectacular star will be known as an "artist" of the game. Pele was one in soccer. When he played, photographers focused on him to get shots of him in the air, his feet, his moves. Jim Brown had the same sort of grace in football. I've observed people, who don't like football, watching slow-motion films of him running with the ball, spellbound by the way he did it. If there's an ideal way for the mind to control the body, Brown had it.

On a fast break in basketball, the ball flies between three offensive players running at full speed—zip! zip! zip! zip!—and lastly to the unexpected man cutting under the basket at a rakish angle, who goes up and banks the ball off the glass in a lay-up, while the fully extended body of the defensive player climbs the glass after it within a quarter of an inch of touching it before the ball plops through the net. All this within two seconds. By their speed, eyes, minds and coordination, the three offensive players controlled the ball so that it approaches the net from just one of millions of possible angles and heights; at the same time the defensive player figures all this out instantly and inserts his hand at the only point in all that space where he might intercept the ball if his timing was perfect. The whole play has a collective beauty to it . . .

It is possible to change the mixture of art and war in any sport by changing its sacred rules. Let's imagine that in another time and another world, Florence Nightingale suddenly became Commissioner of the NBA. To eliminate all violence from basketball and to reward artistry, she threw out the automatic two-point basket and installed a panel of judges to award points based on the beauty of each particular basket scored. Doctor J. might get ten points for one of his flying whirlygigs, but only a point or two for a "garbage" shot off a rebound. But there was still too much hostility in the game, so Commissioner Nightingale eliminated the scoreboard. All beautiful plays in basketball should be appreciated on their own merits, she decreed, without regard to which team made them. As a result, basketball games became exhibitions of jumping, weaving through people, dribbling, leaping and marksmanship; players were motivated only by their love of the art. With all its warlike elements removed, the sport soon became a form of dance for elongated players with certain peculiar moves. Wilt Chamberlain and I came out of retirement to resume our careers and did a splendid *pas de deux* together. My *arabesque* came together with his *prouette* in what looked like a hook shot from the old brand of competitive basketball.

Curious fans turned out in droves to see the first few games of Commissioner Nightingale's reformed basketball, featuring the bizarre but serene partnership of Chamberlain and Russell. But after a few performances the crowds began dwindling; attendance was soon way down. It fell even further when Wilt and I quit. He walked out because he wasn't getting paid enough, and I because I didn't like having him step all over my feet. Commissioner Nightingale didn't last long; her basketball had ceased to be a sport at all."

But in the end we are brought flush with Russell's theoretical limitations. Faced with the end of the game; unable (with certain French philosophers,) to fully grasp the category of negation; cut off from both a living Marxist praxis and any anticipation in present struggle of the Communist future; he ultimately rejects the effort to "change" the game, seeing this revolution as something perverse, as a triumph of entropy rather than as a new explosion of physical, sexual and intellectual energy.

Against the Current

VIII

With the collapse of theory, the attempt to smash out of the prison of sport returns to the level of practice. Two intersecting moments can be seen here, each developing a certain explosiveness and then retreating back toward a refinement of Auerbachism.

The first—the rise and fall of the ABA—was predicated on a feverish search for new arenas of profitability. This in turn coincided with the formal end of the post war economic expansion and the reassertion of the tendency of the rate of profit to decline. The ABA became a temporary refuge for certain factions of Capital, who were willing to manipulate the achievements of Afro-American urban culture to provide a cover against the gathering storm.

But if these economic facts were determinant, they were so only in the infamous "last instance." For, on the terrain set by ABA capital, a new mode of playing set in. In order to justify a professional league outside and against the traditional, one, a whole set of 'styles'—from colored balls to 3 point plays—were instituted. These, however, were merely illusion. In fact the principal change in the game was the unleashing of the pure physicality of the players—many of whom were drawn from small often black southern colleges or directly off the urban playgrounds. Mostly young, untutored in the Auerbachian regime, they imposed a creative chaos, a new true artfulness on the game. The "Move" became more crucial than the score. A continuous search for new movements and new physically expressed emotions became more central than team work. The whole concept of late capitalist collectivity was questioned apparently by a new burst of undisciplined individuality, in reality by a demand for a freer integration of individual personality and social well being. The ABA unconsciously pushed at the already exposed restrictions of the sport. For a moment, the center no longer held—the 6-8 guard-forward-high point man was loosed upon the world.

George Gervin, one of the ABA's last stars, summarized this new attitude when he stated, after a losing effort in an NBA playoff, that he got more pleasure out of the way he scored than out of scoring itself. In the work of Gervin and George McGinness and penultimately Dr. J, the ABA pragmatically asserted the new potential breaking through the thinning crust of the old game.

But, at this point, alas, the forces of Auerbachian traditionalism asserted themselves. Auerbach, himself no longer a coach, now more cut off from players than ever—a part of the managerial elite—led the counter-revolution. The ABA style of play was slandered as too individualistic, too undisciplined. Just as the broad population was beginning to hear the siren calls of sacrifice, of an end to permissiveness, of a new austerity, the power-bloc in the NBA was calling for a return to the tested verities. One could not win outside of the old mode. Didn't the failure of the physically awesome combination of the McGinness-Erving 76ers prove that? Even Bill Russell was brought out of retirement to preach the gospel according to St. Red.

It is at this point that "We're No 1" becomes the fundamental rallying cry of fans throughout the country; replacing Black is Beautiful for Afro-American youth as the Black Liberation movement enters into a temporary decline.

The completion of the counterrevolution occurs with the full integration of the ABA stars into the NBA. Gervin, Erving, Moses Malone, Rick Barry, Maurice Lucas, Larry Kennon now become the dominant players in the merged league. Though they retain a shadow of their old playfulness the slam-dunk is trivialized into a new competition and rendered harmless. The new form appears to conquer but is itself conquered. Thus, as Perry Anderson has noted in his study of Antiquity, the defeat of an old power by a new is subverted by the stronger cultural and ideological traditions of the Ancient Regime.

IX

This then completes the initial trajectory of Basketball towards communist forms of play. With the failure of Russell to fully confront the Auerbachian synthesis, with the defeat and integration of the ABA into the resurrected monopoly of the traditional league, with the failure of any of the new players to work their "styles" into a pattern of counter hegemony, the sport's qualities reassert themselves and now with more apparent power than ever before.

But this decline cannot be permanent. The tendencies we have noted are so powerful precisely because they are inherent in the game. Like Capital itself Basketball is continuously assembling its gravediggers. The performance of 6-9 Magic Johnson, moving brilliantly from passing guard to point man from strong forward to baseline grace, only to emerge in the final game of the NBA championship in 1980 as the center replacing Jabbar is a portent of the playful future that is ahead of us. Once the new wave of magic play finds its theorization, the Auerbachian synthesis will deservedly enter the museums as a once pioneering but now antiquated system of play.

But what will happen when this new hegemony unfurls? Will it simply establish a new set of standards and styles, a new refinement on a sport which can only be realized in its elimination? What will happen when this playfulness becomes dominant, when either as a general example or in concert with transformations in other arenas of politics, economy, and everyday life it becomes a part of a collective project? Won't the needs of this "epic dance" push the boundaries out, suppressing the limitations of the sport's physical dimensions, expanding the field of play further and further? This expansiveness will in turn require new surfaces and new barriers to play around, to weave in and out of. The uselessness of scoring will become recognized and universal. Exploding out of the pragmatic insight of George Gervin, a new standard of achievement will develop. At a certain point computers will be attached to all the pleasure points of "players" and "spectators" connecting them to a continuous tally of ecstatic sexual, emotional, and intellectual well being; the arenas will explode; the fans blending with the players in delightful physical and mental exertions, investing the streets and the world with their revolutionary desires and communist capacities.

X

The standpoint of the old sports critique is watchful condemnation; the standpoint of the new is imagination and human liberation.

XI

The sports critics have only analysed the game in various ways, the point is to play with it ■



CHINA AND THE CRISIS OF MAOISM

By RICHARD SMITH*

(This is the first of a two-part article)

CHINA: WHAT WENT WRONG?

More than a decade ago, on the fiftieth anniversary of the Russian revolution, the American socialist Staughton Lynd despaired that "For me and for many others of my generation, the Soviet Union is the most discouraging fact in the political world...What is discouraging is that the Soviet Union is so very different from what we had hoped a socialist society would be like, and...shows little evidence of developing into such a society."¹ The bureaucratic and repressive nature of the Soviet regime, the unwillingness of the ruling party to put international revolutionary solidarity above national interests had, in Lynd's view, undermined the USSR as a force for revolution.

Today, in the wake of the traumatic events in post-Mao China, another generation of revolutionaries find themselves equally disillusioned. Ironically, it was to China and especially to the politics of the Cultural Revolution that Lynd and most of the New Left in this country and Europe turned for inspiration and an alternative revolutionary model to the discredited USSR. China's

achievements were indeed impressive. The Chinese revolution was one of the two greatest social revolutions of the twentieth century—an event of epic and heroic dimensions. At one stroke, the victory of Mao's armies dealt a stunning setback to world capitalism ending more than a century of imperialist predation in China. At the same time, the destruction of the old ruling classes closed the book on two thousand years of feudal oppression. And once in power, the Communist Party set itself the awesome task of building a new society by reorganizing agriculture, introducing planned industrialization, expanding basic education, health care, etc. These were giant strides forward, and remain enduring accomplishments matched by few comparably positioned third world nations today. Finally, Mao's egalitarian, collectivist and anti-bureaucratic vision of socialism appeared to hold out the prospect of a non-repressive model of development that could avoid the inequalities characteristic of both the capitalist and Stalinist paths.

Yet despite these impressive achievements, and despite two periods of significant popular mobilization (the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution), the overall trend in China has been to the right. Most dramatic has been the sharply rightward drift of economic policy: the rapid abandonment of the egali-

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Against the Current

tarianism and mass mobilizations that were the hallmarks of the Mao period in favor of a "productionist" ideology, the restoration of bureaucratic management, the revival of material incentives, and the shift from self-reliance to the current regime's unprecedented "Open Door" policy toward the world's capitalists. No less alarming has been China's nationalist foreign policy—a policy that has abandoned even the militant rhetoric of the sixties for open collaboration with the ruling classes of the west, lending political and even military support to the world's most reactionary regimes including Chile's Pinochet, the Shah of Iran, South Africa, calling for the strengthening of NATO and endorsing the most right wing European and American politicians from Nixon to Britain's Heath and Thatcher, and Germany's Strauss. But perhaps most telling has been the steady bureaucratization of the ruling party, and the systematic repression by the Party leadership of all opposition, beginning with independent leftists and trade unionists in the early 1950's and culminating in the military suppression of the popularly based "communes" and workers councils that emerged at the height of the Cultural Revolution. The closure of "Democracy Wall" and the recently concluded show trial of the Gang of Four only confirm this trend.

So now in China too, the direction seems clear: the erosion of popular power—in so far as it existed—the bureaucratization, the repression and nationalism, recapitulate in essentials, the history of the USSR. And with due consideration for differences in degree and form, much the same could be said for the remaining "post-revolutionary" societies: from Russia to China, to Vietnam and Kampuchea, this "two-phased" pattern of successful revolution followed by deradicalization and a drift to the right has become depressingly familiar—once again dashing the hopes raised by these revolutions.² For much of the American Left, these events have provoked, in Paul Sweezy's words, "a deep crisis of Marxian theory" or more precisely in that *form* of Marxism based on Mao's theory and practice—of which Sweezy, Charles Bettelheim, William Hinton, Malcolm Caldwell, and Regis Debray have been the most influential and articulate contemporary exponents. The failure of Mao's strategy to lead to a successful *socialist* outcome in China—despite the country's material achievements—poses the crisis in sharpest relief. On the positive side, the "crisis" has sparked an exciting and deep reaching theoretical debate to which this essay aims to contribute.

Maoism and the Chinese Model

Mao's conceptions of revolutionary strategy and socialist construction took shape in the context of three broad historical trends: first, the defeat of the great wave of proletarian revolutions that swept Europe and China in the years 1918-1936, and the relative stabilization of class conflict in the advanced countries since WWII; secondly, the degeneration of the Russian revolution, its bureaucratization and the bureaucracy's efforts to subordinate China's revolution to its national interests; and thirdly, Mao's own highly unorthodox but striking success in constructing a new revolutionary force—a peasant-based cadre party that could complete China's national liberation and undertake the project of socialist construction. From the point of victory in 1949 forward Mao faced huge problems. He aimed to get economic

development, industrialization, and transform social relations and consciousness *at the same time*. But the mass base of the revolution—providing both the army's recruits and the party's political support—was the peasantry. And the peasants' goals in the revolution were not necessarily socialist. Therefore a subjectively socialist force was needed to lead the peasant masses. This was the cadre party. But, as Mao saw from the Russian experience, and indeed from his own experience in the thirties and forties, the cadre party was itself subject to elitist and bureaucratic tendencies. Mao tried to prevent this development through mobilizing mass participation, through the "mass line", and through ideological struggle or "rectification". Finally, to counter the isolation of the Chinese revolution, Mao looked to cadre leadership plus mass mobilization to build socialism through self-reliance. Thus, in searching for a solution to the problems he faced, Mao developed a distinctive revolutionary "model" that in one version or another was to serve as a prototype for a generation of revolutionaries on three continents—from Kim Il Sung and Ho Chi Minh in Asia, to Fanon and Cabral in Africa, to Guevara, Castro and Debray in Latin America. In the west, Mao's ideas have been systematically codified and elaborated as a "third way" for the third world (what used to be called the Chinese model) by a long line of Maoist theoreticians and Sinologists beginning, most notably, with the Marxist economists, Sweezy and Bettelheim.³

As synthesized by Sweezy and Bettelheim, Mao's distinctive contribution to revolutionary theory and practice may be summed up in three main ideas: the theory of the vanguard party as the "substitute proletariat"; the theory of the "two-line struggle"; and the conception of socialist construction through "self-reliance".

1. The Vanguard Party as the "Substitute Proletariat"

Mao and many succeeding Marxists advanced the theory that in underdeveloped, predominantly peasant countries such as China, a "vanguard party" comprised usually of revolutionary intellectuals and peasant guerrillas may "substitute" for the industrial proletariat as the agent of socialist revolution and socialist construction.⁴ Paul Sweezy has perhaps put the case most succinctly. Socialist revolution in the third world countries depends, he says, on

the existence or nonexistence in the population of a sizable element capable of playing the role assigned to the proletariat in classical Marxian theory—an *element with essentially proletarian attitudes and values even though it may not be the product of a specifically proletarian experience*. The history of the last few decades suggests that the most likely way for such a "substitute proletariat" to arise is through prolonged revolutionary warfare involving masses of people. (OTTS pp. 52-53; emphasis added; see also p. 120).

Thus the establishment of socialist relations of production can be *independent* of any specific social class. A revolution can be "proletarian" in character and take a "socialist" direction without the participation of the proletariat, without the workers actually taking power through their own institutions of self-rule such as workers councils or soviets—*so long as* the substitute proletariat remains *subjectively committed* to socialism, to a "proletarian line". (CS, 1, p. 109).

2. The Two-Line Struggle to Socialism

Secondly, where classical Marxism assumed that a developed economy was a precondition for socialism, Mao and Maoist theorists have argued that subjective ideological struggle could facilitate economic development and establish socialist relations of production *at the same time*. Mao understood that the mere seizure of political power by a revolutionary vanguard could not, obviously, solve the problem of economic backwardness, of real material inequality, of poverty and privilege. These structural inequalities, reinforced by the prevailing conditions of scarcity, would tend to promote the resurgence of new class contradictions, and give rise to a new privileged elite and ultimately a new exploiting class.

Where Stalin maintained that the development of the productive forces would *in itself* lead more or less "automatically" to the transformation of social relations in the direction of socialism, Mao insisted that socialism depends not so much on objective conditions as on *subjective factors: cadre and ideology*. Thus, by putting "politics in command", through ideological struggle to "revolutionize human nature", to build "socialist men and women" with the "will to subordinate individual and particular interests to the overall interests of the revolution", the material base for socialism, industrialization, can be built without the exploitation that accompanied economic development in the Soviet Union. (CRIOC, p. 20). As Bettelheim put it, "China proves that a low level of development of the productive forces is no obstacle to a socialist transformation of social relations and does not necessarily require passing through forms of primitive accumulation with aggravation of social inequalities, and so on." (CS, 1, p. 42). Correlatively, tendencies toward bureaucratic degeneration, the re-emergence of new classes and new forms of exploitation can be prevented through permanent "cultural revolution": the permanent mobilization of the masses by a politically correct leadership against self-interest and "bourgeois right", against the resurgence of bureaucracy and privileges, and for a rededication to socialist principles and values. Thus says Sweezy, through permanent "class struggle under the dictatorship of the proletariat", the "barriers to advance along the socialist road can be removed, and proletarian policies in the classical Marxian sense can be implemented." (OTTS, p. 53).

3. SOCIALIST CONSTRUCTION THROUGH SELF-RELIANCE

Third, the failure of revolution in the capitalist West, isolated the Chinese Revolution from immediate economic assistance from more advanced economies. To solve this problem, Mao looked to the combination of cadre leadership and mass mobilization to make the socialist revolution within a national framework.

So in Mao's conception, the transition to socialism is seen as a lengthy historical epoch in which each nation is "revolutionized" more or less independently, each passing through an extended "transitional phase" in which, as he put it, "Classes, class contradictions, and class struggle will exist from beginning to end of this historical stage as will the struggle between the two roads of socialism and capitalism..."⁸ The ultimate outcome of this two-line struggle is determined neither by

objective conditions nor by class forces but depends on the subjective *political line* of the party leadership. Thus, as Sweezy and Bettelheim put it, having won state power, the "substitute proletariat" can follow one of *two courses*: reliance on mass mobilization, moral incentives, on raising political consciousness, this leading forward to socialism, or, reliance on material incentives, on the market, on profit, etc., leading backward to (state) capitalism (OTTS, pp. 9, 30-31, 52-53, 65-66; PRS, pp. 94-95). It is in this context, that we must understand the determinant role in historical causation that Maoists give to leadership and political line. (CS, 1, p. 346; "Interview", p. 10; OTTS, p. 122).

Maoist Analyses of the Degeneration of China's Revolution

Finally, the theory of the two-line struggle has also provided the explanatory motif for a growing body of Maoist analyses of the deterioration of China's revolution, especially in the post-Mao period. Perhaps the most influential among these is Bettelheim's booklet length essay, "The Great Leap Backward" published in *Monthly Review* (Jul.-Aug. 1978). The central thesis of Bettelheim's polemic is that the present decay of China's revolution is the result of a *change of political line*, a reversal of Mao's policies as a result of the rise to power of a "revisionist" "bourgeois" Party leadership in the aftermath of Mao's death. In Bettelheim's account, from 1949 forward, Mao was engaged in a long uphill battle both against the centrifugal tendencies of Chinese society, against worker "economism" and peasant "individualism," and against an inexorable political and ideological decay of his own revolutionary party. Mao and the Party left fought ceaselessly against these tendencies through ideological struggle and mass mobilization but in the end were overwhelmed and defeated.

The turning point in that struggle, Bettelheim says, came with the defeat of the "Shanghai Commune" in February 1967. In the winter and spring of 1966-67 millions of workers and students overthrew local Party authorities and set up popularly based Paris-type "Commune" governments in Shanghai and other Chinese cities. At the height of that struggle, Mao and the left sought to link up with the mass movement from below to build a countervailing power to the "Rightists" within the Party. In the end, it was their failure, after some initial gains, that opened the way for the bureaucracy to secure bit by bit, its control over the Party and state, and to begin to systematically reverse the gains of the Cultural Revolution. That failure, says Bettelheim, was crucially determined by certain tactical failures, by Mao's closest associates, the so-called "Gang of Four". In the aftermath, says Bettelheim, the Communes were politically undermined or militarily suppressed by the Rightists. These were replaced by "Three in One Committees" comprised of what remained of the autonomous mass organizations, and of representatives of the Party and the Peoples Liberation Army—all in roughly equal proportions, in effect insuring the re-consolidation of Party-military control from the top. By the early 1970's, Bettelheim reports, even these residual vestiges of popular power had been discarded in favor of direct bureaucratic rule and "one-man management" in the factories (GLB, pp. 42-43). It was this isolation of the Maoist Left from its potential mass base that facilitated their relatively easy defeat after the death of Mao himself in October 1976.

Against the Current

However problematic the question of the Left's relationship to the mass movements during the Cultural Revolution (a question we will treat below), the really fundamental question, which Bettelheim's analysis systematically *avoids* rather than confronts squarely, is, how is it that the very leading force of the Chinese revolution, the vanguard party, has itself become the agent of counterrevolution?

Contradictions of the Maoist Vision: an Overview

The history of post-revolutionary China can be understood in terms of the tendency toward bureaucratism and attempts to overcome it in the context of isolation and backwardness. This history has been marked by two major periods of degeneration of revolutionary momentum followed by two major attempts by Mao and Party leftists to counter this—the Great Leap Forward and the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. Each anti-bureaucratic upsurge only ended up in the restoration, indeed the strengthening, of bureaucratic rule and a weakening of the left forces. The result has been a gradual downward spiral toward the consolidation of a new bureaucratic ruling elite.

The thesis of this article—against Bettelheim and Sweezy—is that Mao's strategy of cadre-led development itself fed bureaucratic degeneration. At the same time, his ultimate reluctance to give power over the cadre to the masses disarmed Mao in his attempts to stem the bureaucratic tide. Mao wanted mass mobilization, mass participation, mass criticism. But he stopped short at real mass control from below. Thus, the ultimate contradiction of Maoism was, who is to "revolutionize" the cadre? Who is to "educate the educators?" Mao's answer was *permanent cultural revolution*: the *self-transformation* of the cadre through "politics in command", through two-line struggle", through criticism and self-criticism. But the assumption here, itself rooted historically in the Party's self-substitution for the proletariat, is that the cadre are essentially "classless", that they neither have nor develop interests of their own apart from the working class. This was to prove a fatal assumption on Mao's part.

Mao was confronted with an impossible dilemma. In the first place, to build socialism he needed to develop the economy, therefore to accumulate. Mao in no way rejected the need for accumulation, (as western Maoists such as Sweezy and Bettelheim think). Development required machinery to increase the productivity of labor and ultimately raise the standard of living. But given China's backwardness and isolation from aid from more advanced economies, the labor and raw material resources to build machines could only come at the expense of people's consumption. Therefore, as Mao well knew, huge sacrifices by China's workers and peasants would be necessary through the period of industrialization. Yet, it would be difficult if not impossible to elicit such sacrifices unless the people themselves could decide on them. Real popular power and control over the state was therefore required. But Mao was never willing to rely on real institutions of popular control, even at the height of the Cultural Revolution.

By presenting the workers and peasants with no alternatives but long-term sacrifice *without popular power*

and control, Mao invited the very "economism" he sought to overcome. He had more and more to rely on the cadre to force the masses to produce the required surpluses. But the more he relied on the cadre, the more the cadre used their objective position of power to transform themselves into a bureaucracy concerned with maintenance of their positions and privileges.

THE YENAN EXPERIENCE SHAPES MAO'S REVOLUTIONARY STRATEGY

The revolution Mao led to victory in 1949 began with the defeat of the revolution of 1925-27. More than three hundred thousand Communists, workers and peasants were slaughtered, the CCP was all but annihilated, the labor unions and peasant associations crushed, the bourgeois revolution aborted, and China was again plunged back into warlordism and laid open to imperialist invasion.

In the years to follow, the shattered and demoralized urban-based leadership of the CCP proved unable to rebuild the workers' movement and it remained to the ruralized wing of the party to pick up the pieces. It was, as we know, under the inspired leadership of Mao and a few close comrades that the Party was eventually rebuilt to lead another and finally successful revolution. The historic saga of this great revolution is well known. It began with the Communists' retreat from the cities in the late twenties; the regroupment of remnants of the Party and military units to form the first Red armies and found the first rural "soviets"; the fall of the Kiangsi Soviet in 1934 and the harrowing "Long March" over near impassible terrain and against overwhelming odds to remote Yen'an in northwest China; and finally, after more than two decades of rural isolation, the conquest of power in 1949. The great events of 1925-27 notwithstanding, this has been regarded, and deservedly so, as the heroic period of modern Chinese history, and more than anyone else, Mao has been rightly credited as the political and military architect of that victory. It was above all Mao who summoned the courage to break with Stalin in order to relaunch the revolution, and it was principally Mao who devised the unique political-military strategy of "people's war" that was responsible for the success. In reviving China's socialist revolution on the foundation of a peasant-based rural strategy, Mao's revolution succeeded where China's proletariat had failed. But as we shall see, while Mao's strategic and theoretical innovations in a sense "solved" the problem of revolution in China, they did so in ways that actually deepened the already profound contradictions of socialist revolution and socialist construction in a backward country. What were these?

1. From Self-Emancipation to Revolution From Above

In the first place, in shifting from the working class to a peasant social base, Mao and his comrades had to find a new *agent* of socialist revolution. And who, in the countryside, could this be? In searching for a solution to this dilemma, Mao at first tried to transpose the idea of "proletarian leadership" to the poor and landless peasantry.⁶ But this soon proved to be hopelessly mechanical. It was not a question of whether or not the peasantry was inherently "revolutionary". As both the Russian and Chinese experiences had shown, an aroused peasantry

could be a massive force for revolution. But the peasants were not a force for *socialist* revolution. Physically isolated and atomised in predominantly self-sufficient patriarchal family units of production, limited by a primitive technology and culture, the peasants' conception of emancipation and hence of revolution flowed from their existence. Above all this was an essentially *negative* conception: they sought mainly to get rid of their oppressors, the landlords and tax collectors, to be left alone to enjoy the untrammelled security of their small property.

It was this elemental struggle for the land, born of misery and desperation that had powered countless peasant revolts in China's past—each time, as Mao noted, with the same ineffectual result: the restoration of landlord rule. Shackled by grinding poverty, split against itself by conflicting interests, the peasantry was incapable of breaking out of this ancient cycle on its own. It could neither consolidate itself as a national ruling class nor pose a real revolutionary alternative. The essence of this contradiction was brilliantly captured in William Hinton's *Fanshen*.

Without the Communist Party the poor peasants could easily have carried the Revolution so far to the Left as to convert it into its opposite, a restoration from the Right. Without the Communist Party the poor peasants might well have divided everything right down to the last bowls and chopsticks on the farmsteads and the last gears and shafts in the factories and in so doing would have destroyed the only productive base on which they had to build. In the end, the peasants could well have gone down to defeat betrayed by a vision of justice and a program of action that was impossible of fulfilment in an economy of scarcity. The vision: absolute equality; the program: extreme levelling; the result: complete restoration of gentry rule.⁷

The peasants presented an enormous reservoir of "energy", but their driving interests were not toward socialism, collectivization, industrialization, but toward equal division of the land, toward small property. Their whole perspective was petty bourgeois, localist and particularist. So the peasants, and least of all the poor peasants, could never substitute for the industrial proletariat, could not be depended upon to lead the revolution in a socialist direction. Who then, could do so?

Socialism by Surrogate: the Cadre Party as the "Substitute Proletariat"

Mao and his comrades gradually, and almost unconsciously at first, began to assume the task of constructing a new *subjectively socialist* revolutionary social force. While maintaining the fiction of the "leading role of the proletariat", Mao and the leadership in the Kiangsi period of the early thirties built an entirely new Communist Party of de-urbanized intellectuals, mutinous KMT soldiers, lumpen bandits, and ultimately the peasantry itself. Given the tremendous centrifugal pressures arising from the heterogeneous social origins of the cadre, as well as the rural classes' disinterest in the Communists' long-range objectives, the Party could only hold onto its politics and build itself into a coherent political force by *distancing* itself from this peasant milieu, by lifting its recruits "up and out" of the village and welding them ever more cohesively into a self-conscious elite over the peasantry and over all rural social

classes—through intense ideological remolding, through military discipline and collective struggle. The Red Army, as Liu described it, was the "crucible" that forged this revolutionary cadre into an independent political force:

More than twenty years of civil war and national war have steeled our Party. Hundred of thousands of Party members have given up their respective occupations in society for a long time and engaged in revolutionary military collective life and life-and-death struggle. They have had to undergo a stern ideological and organizational schooling and tempering; as a result, their class-consciousness and collective will have been raised and their sense of organization and discipline strengthened.⁸

2. Communist Party and Rural Social Classes

Since the peasantry could not be organized directly for socialist revolution, Mao had to find a means to mobilize and unleash the tremendous power of the peasants' struggle for the land, at the same time harnessing and channeling this energy toward the Party's immediate objectives. The solution was the construction of a popularly based army, and the productive base to support it, which could win state power for the Party through armed struggle (people's war). But such a strategy of revolution through military conquest instead of class struggle and popular insurrection altered not only the nature of the Party but its whole relationship to the masses.

Mass Mobilization: the Yen-an Way

With the fall of Kiangsi and the Long March to Yen-an the Party was forced to adapt still more to its rural milieu. Foremost among the difficult tasks in this period was to mobilize a passive and often fatalistic peasantry, while simultaneously winning the support of the landed classes. Largely by experiment the Party leadership devised increasingly innovative and sensitive approaches to building this broad rural support. It did so first, by building a highly *politicized*, extraordinarily disciplined, and even partly self-sufficient army and civil administration that contrasted sharply with the corrupt and plunderous forces of the Kuomintang and the Japanese occupation armies. Likewise, the Communist "people's governments" of the rural base areas were models of "clean government." Secondly, to broaden its base of support, the Party in 1937, dropped its radical land reform program for a program of partial (roughly 25%) reduction of rent and a reduction of interest. This preserved the landlord system intact, but significantly improved the conditions of the tenantry and broke the unchallenged power of gentry control over village life. And thirdly, to improve the peasants' livelihood and mobilize existing resources for the war effort, the Communists organized agricultural and industrial cooperatives and sponsored literacy campaigns and medical programs. These all relied on primitive technology, "men over machines," on popular initiatives and local self-reliance, and were designed to overcome the peasants' fatalism, to give them the confidence in their capacity to win the war and the revolution. It was the Party's consistent and ever more refined application of these policies that eventually enabled the cadre to win the active support of the rural classes who fed, clothed and hid the Red Army, provided it with spies, informants and recruits, and permitted the party-army to move through village society as "fish in the sea."

Against the Current

The Mass Line

But Mao's responsiveness to the wishes of the mass movement (his "Mass line"—"from the masses to the masses") had especially sharp limits in the context of a rural peasant-based movement. While building grass roots popular participation and support for its goals, the Party could not permit these rural classes to exert real *democratic control* over either the Party or the governments of the base areas. For not only were the Party's long range objectives radically different from those of the peasantry or the landlords, but even in the short run, the peasants' struggle for the land ran up against the Party's overriding need to build an army and boost productive output to support it. Consequently, from the Party's point of view, it became increasingly critical to put the brakes on the rural class struggle, to restrain poor peasant and worker "excesses," to subordinate the rural class struggle to the "primary contradiction," the national struggle. However resourceful and creative *in their own interests*, none of these rural classes could pose socialism as their historic goal. It was not "from below", from the rural masses that the idea of socialism came, but "from above", from the Party cadre and especially from the leadership. While Mao had profound faith in the creative *energy* of the masses, he had little confidence in their capacity to provide political leadership for the socialist revolution. The masses themselves had to be "corrected" by the cadre. So while Mao insisted that the cadre "must listen to", and "be close to" the masses, he warned at the same time against "an erroneous emphasis on 'doing everything as the masses want it done', and an accomodation to wrong views existing among the masses." (SW, 4, p. 197).

To "steer" a mass movement whose basic interests were not in the direction of socialism, the cadre party had to constitute itself not just as an elite but as a bureaucracy over the masses. Mark Selden, the most sympathetic historian of the Yen'an period points out, for example, that while popular elections were designed to elicit mass *participation* they were more *paternalistic* than democratic and designed to win popular execution of policy rather than popular formulation and control:

Although the laws stipulated that all anti-Japanese parties were entitled to campaign, there was at this time but one party, the Communist... This did not eliminate debate, discussion, or criticism, nor did it assure that all candidates elected were party members. Indeed, party branches had not yet been established in large areas of the border region. But it redefined the grounds for discussion: this focused more often on policy *implementation* than on formulation of policy guidelines, and on the performance of individual officials and local issues where there was considerable latitude for maneuvering within established policies. Finally, elected government was never the ultimate authority; rather, it was but one facet of New Democratic politics in which power was shared by the party, the bureaucracy, the army, and mass organizations... The party remained the ultimate arbiter in policy matters.⁹ (emphasis in original)

Popular Participation Without Popular Control: The Roots of Bureaucratization

Such built-in elitist practices, however, tended inevitably to generate increasingly serious problems of

"commandism" and "bureaucratism". In combatting such tendencies, Mao and the leadership confronted one of the central contradictions that would run throughout the revolution and through Mao's thought: So long as Mao was determined to make a socialist revolution without the working class, he could not try to overcome such tendencies through the establishment of democratic control from below—since, whereas workers' democracy and socialism were compatible, the establishment of a peasants' democracy would mean no socialism. Yet without popular control from below it was almost impossible to prevent the growth of bureaucratization. Mao's only other weapon, therefore, lay in periodic ideological "rectification" campaigns which Mao initiated with increasing seriousness in the Yen'an period. By forcing the Party cadre to renew their revolutionary commitment through "criticism and self-criticism", through participation in manual labor, and through close association with the masses, Mao hoped to build a cadre permanently dedicated to "serving the people", to a non-bureaucratic "style of work". Given the Party's critical dependence on the support of the rural masses, such reforms were crucially necessary. But just as certainly, so long as the Party could not rely on the masses themselves to lead the revolution, such reforms could only be temporary, limited essentially to "style", precisely because if the revolution was to reach Mao's objective, such reforms must end up in the re-establishment of top-down control. Given the limitations of peasant politics and the Party cadres' objective monopoly of military-political power within the base areas, the logic of such "self-reform" tended not only to reinforce the internal solidarity, the camaraderie and collectivist spirit of the cadres, but tended *at the same time* to reinforce their self-conception as a distinctive and relatively autonomous (if as yet little privileged) *elite*.

3. From Internationalism to Self-reliance

The Chinese revolution of 1925-27 had been a profoundly internationalist event. Not only did Chinese revolutionaries receive arms, advisors, and support from the Soviets, but revolutionaries from all over eastern and southeastern Asia flocked to Shanghai. However, with the Party's shift to the countryside in the 1930's, "proletarian internationalism" became less and less a relevant idea as it became less a practical fact. As the Party gradually reoriented itself to a new rural-based strategy, its survival came to depend in practice not upon the solidarity and support of the international workers' movement in addition to its own resources, but entirely on the strength of its own military machine, the support of the rural classes and therefore the effectiveness of its political rule in the base areas. Least of all did the party depend upon aid from the Soviet Union.

Mao's revolution succeeded in large part because he broke in practice from Stalin's efforts to sacrifice the Chinese Revolution to the interests of Russia's national bureaucracy. Stalin's new course for the Russian Revolution since 1924 had been "socialism in one country," and this policy helped to a large extent to ensure that there would be no successful socialist revolutions elsewhere, as Fernando Claudin, among others, has so

effectively demonstrated. To build socialism in isolation, Stalin needed above all certain minimal international guarantees for Russia's territorial security. Nothing could have been more likely to jeopardize that security by antagonizing British and Japanese imperialists against Russia, than a socialist revolution in China. Stalin therefore preferred the "safer" course of helping to construct a "friendly" bourgeois government under the nationalist Kuomintang (KMT). So instead of supporting the CCP, Stalin in the mid-20's poured in arms, money and advisors to build an army for the KMT. He instructed CCP members to join the KMT as individuals rather than as a block, to subordinate the workers' demands to the agenda of the bourgeois-democratic revolution under the leadership of Chiang Kai-shek. They were ordered to neither criticize Chiang nor to arm workers and peasants independently of Chiang's forces.

Stalin's policy disarmed the workers militarily and politically, and left them defenseless when Chiang turned against the Communists and joined the bourgeoisie and the imperialists to crush the 1927 revolution. Mao learned the lesson of this tragic defeat and broke decisively with Stalin's policy of subordination to the KMT. Although he formally agreed to cooperate with the KMT from 1937-1946, Mao maintained a strictly independent military and political posture in his base areas. In result he received no Soviet aid.

Not surprisingly, Mao's theory soon came to reflect this practical "self-reliance". The negative experience of being on the receiving end of Stalin's "internationalism", and the positive experience of the almost super-human will and endurance of the Long March and the cadre-led mass mobilization of Yen'an communism, gradually worked to reorient Mao's politics toward an explicitly nationalist revolutionary strategy and a voluntarist conception of socialist construction. Mao's idea, as yet in germ, was twofold: He envisioned that the "Yen'an spirit" of subjective will, self-sacrifice, and mass mobilization would carry over to the project of economic development, to build socialism through self-reliance, and he hoped that the exemplary selfless, egalitarian and altruistic cadre leadership styles forged in the heat of guerrilla warfare would carry over to lead this post-revolutionary "struggle for production."

The tasks of national liberation and the abolition of feudalism carried out in the west under the bourgeoisie and in Russia by the working class were, in China, carried out in their stead by a new social force—a revolutionary cadre-bureaucracy, the vanguard party. Two decades of common struggle had molded the cadre party into a disciplined and collectivist revolutionary force that was indeed subjectively committed to socialism. Yet however revolutionary, it was *at the same time* elitist and nationalist—committed to building socialism without relying on the working class and without an internationalist strategy. The question was, could it build socialism under these constraints?

THE TWO-LINE STRUGGLE IN PRACTICE: THE GREAT LEAP FORWARD

Mao's break toward the politics and theory of the two-line struggle originated in the two-sided interrelated

crisis faced by China's new revolutionary government by the mid-nineteen-fifties: the loss of revolutionary élan, the deradicalization of the social forces that had made the revolution, and the problem of slow economic development.

1. The Crisis of the Mid-Fifties: On Whom Could Mao Rely?

Confronted with Cold War political hostility and economic blockade by the west, China's new revolutionary government "leaned to one side" in the early 1950's. Despite the strong strategic differences with Stalin which existed prior to 1949, the Chinese had nowhere else to turn, and so looked to the Soviet Union for aid and modeled its own industrialization strategy after the Russians. Starting off very late, and with a far smaller industrial base to begin with, China's First Five Year Plan (1952-1957) mirrored and magnified its Soviet predecessor: The Chinese Plan allocated more than half (58%) of its fixed capital investment to industry, and less than 8% to agriculture (the corresponding Soviet figures during its First Five Year Plan of 1928-32 were 49% and 19%). Within the industrial sector itself, heavy industry received 88% of investment capital versus 11% for light industry (Soviet proportions were 82:18).¹⁰ The Chinese likewise adopted the Russian "command" style bureaucratic planning structure based on centralised output and productivity norms and a managerial responsibility system based on highly stratified ranking, grading and salary incentives.¹¹

Over the period of the Plan, China's industrial growth was indeed impressive. Most industrial targets were achieved or surpassed: crude steel output multiplied five-fold, coal more than doubled, petroleum and electrical power tripled. However, by the mid-nineteen-fifties the industrialization drive began to stall. It was held back mainly by a growing bottleneck in agriculture on which the state depended for 90% of its raw materials for light industry and 75% of export products to pay for machinery imports.

Industrial expansion had been predicated on three sources of finance: Soviet aid, self-accumulation out of industry, and the taxation of agriculture. As it turned out, Soviet credits and technical assistance, while critical to certain key industrial projects, were far less than expected. Soviet credits financed 30.5% of the cost of the 156 core industrial projects initiated under the First Five Year Plan (the remainder being paid for by commercial exports to the Soviet Union). As a percentage of total fixed capital formation this amounted to 3.6% of investments. However, these credits were entirely in the form of short to medium term loans, not grants. They had to be paid back.¹² China's industrial sector provided roughly 50% of the state's budget revenues in these years. But, of course, at this point, the industrial base was tiny. For this reason, only limited resources could be hoped for here, at least in the short run. Consequently, rapid industrialization depended crucially on accelerating agricultural growth over and above population growth, and taxing off surpluses to support industry.

These expected agricultural surpluses failed to materialize. After an initial spurt during the post-war

Against the Current

recovery period, agricultural production leveled off, and in some sectors actually declined. The Plan set targets for increased grain output of up to 6.5% per annum (1953-57). But far from providing a surplus, actual growth rates (of around 1.7% to 2.0%) just barely kept pace with population growth.¹³ Similarly, against a target of 4.6% p.a., cotton production *declined* by 9.3% in 1954. Low government-set prices for these staples meant that the peasants had little incentive to produce and market surpluses over subsistence.¹⁴ So they tended to cut back on production or conserve their surpluses for higher consumption. The output of peasant subsidiary industries also stagnated or fell. The government reported that between July 1954 and July 1956, 17 million pigs were lost resulting in serious shortages of pork and the loss of half a million tons (or 4.6 kilograms per arable hectare) of ammonium sulphate fertilizer. Again, the peasants preferred to slaughter their pigs rather than market them at low prices, or turn them over to the collectives.¹⁵ By the mid-1950's, the situation had reached crisis proportions. There were increasingly sharp "grain crises" in 1953, 1955, and 1956, resulting in widespread food shortages in the cities. The lack of agricultural raw materials brought some industries, such as textiles to a virtual standstill and undermined accumulation.

Peasants and Accumulation

The inability of the state to elicit sufficient agricultural supplies needs to be placed in the context of the peasants' position, and the basis and limits of their alliance with the Communist Party.

The Chinese revolution of 1949 was, as we've seen, in reality two revolutions in "tandem". While the Party military cadre took over the state and the urban industrial sector, the peasantry took over the land. The redistribution of some 44% of China's arable, mostly to the poor and landless, installed the social power of a vast "sea" of small proprietors. And here was the problem. For in the absence of massive foreign aid, socialist construction would have to be based on internal accumulation, therefore largely through taxing agriculture, by making the peasants both produce more and give more of their surpluses up to the state (See Mao's remarks on this in SW, 5, p. 197).

Several barriers, however, stood in the way of this strategy.

In the first place, the extremely low productivity of Chinese agriculture meant that, by and large, the massive surpluses needed for industrialization did not exist in the Chinese countryside. For example, Chinese per capita grain production in 1952 stood at less than half that of the Soviets in 1928 (480 vs. 220 kilograms per annum).¹⁶ This meant that there could be no question in China of a purely "extractive" solution to the grain crisis; the Party could not simply go and seize huge surpluses from rich peasants, as Stalin did in Russia from 1928. Secondly, because of the extremely labor intensive nature of China's agriculture, particularly rice cultivation, there was little prospect of raising production and productivity without substantial capital inputs. The early stages of collectivization yielded significant gains through economies of scale: the consolidation of small plots, pooling of village resources, the mobilization of slack season labor for

local construction, irrigation projects, etc. But these were essentially one-time gains and were limited, given existing technology and capital resources. Finally, the new government lacked the industrial capacity to produce sufficient light industrial goods to coax more production out of the peasants through trade.

In short, with respect to the peasantry, the state was caught in a double bind: it aimed to be developmental and extractive at once. To industrialize, to build steel plants, to produce tractors, the state needed both to maximize agricultural output and to skim off surpluses from agriculture to support industry and a non-agricultural labor force. So agricultural collectivization had a two-fold aim: to boost output through more cooperative production, and to centralize surplus extraction by preventing peasant hoarding. But taking away the peasants' support not only undermined their capacity to reinvest to expand output; it threatened their very subsistence. To win the peasants' support, "socialist construction" had to bring an immediate improvement in their material life, in their standard of living. A policy which demanded sacrifices with little hope of gain in the near future would tend to provoke their resistance. Consequently, each attempt by the state to step up taxation and collectivization was met with peasant opposition.

During the 1950's, the state sponsored a series of "socialist upsurges" (the 1950-52 land reform, the 1952-53 mutual-aid campaign, the 1954-55 cooperativization campaign, the 1955-56 cooperativization and collectivization drive). To each, the peasants responded by cutting production, slaughtering or neglecting their livestock, felling orchards, stopping fertilizer collection, and fleeing the land for the cities.¹⁷ Each advance and the reaction forced the state to retreat, at least partially and temporarily—to cut back on taxation and compulsory grain purchases, to grant concessions to the more highly productive middle and rich peasants, to permit some restoration of the private economy in order to get production moving again.

Rural discontent, falling production, and the alarming level of rural emigration to the cities convinced many cadre that accelerated collectivization disrupted production, that the most effective means of generating increased agricultural output lay through relying on the market, on the toleration of a controlled peasant "capitalism". But this policy had its dangers too. Such a strategy tended not only to undermine state control of planning and priorities, but as Mao warned in July 1955, threatened to undermine political support for the government:

Everyone has noticed that in recent years there has been a spontaneous and constant growth of capitalist elements in the countryside and that new rich peasants have sprung up everywhere. Many...middle peasants are striving to become rich ones. Many poor peasants, lacking sufficient means of production, are still not free from the toils of poverty; some are in debt, others selling or renting land. If this tendency goes unchecked, the separation into two extremes will get worse day by day. Peasants who have lost their land...will complain that we do nothing to save them...And the well-to-do middle peasants who tend towards capitalism will also find fault with us...because we have no intention of taking the capitalist path. If that is how circumstances stand, can the worker-peasant alliance stand fast? (SW, 5, pp. 201-202).

Herein lay the embryo of the two-line struggle.

Workers and "Economism"

Mao's problems in the mid-fifties did not end with the peasants. Peasant resistance to state surplus extraction was paralleled by productivity problems in the industry and increasing discontent and opposition from China's industrial workforce. From the early 1950's the Chinese press complained repeatedly of "slackened labor discipline", of chronic absenteeism, of "go-slow strikes" and "counter-revolutionary sabotage" in the factories and mines. These escalated into widespread strikewaves in 1955 and 1956.¹⁸ One can understand the reluctance of peasants to support socialist construction, but why the workers' opposition?

The development of workers' opposition may be understood in terms of the revolution's failure to develop institutions of workers' self-rule. In contrast to the revolution of 1925-27 when workers' strike committees—embryonic soviets—took control of Canton, Shanghai and other cities, no similar institutions emerged in the 1949 revolution. In fact, as Mao's armies swept southward to conquer the cities in the years 1948-49, workers here and there actually did rise up and seize their factories. But to their surprise, the CCP ordered them to remain passive and return their factories to their owners. Thus before the fall of Shanghai, Tientsin and other cities, Mao and Chu Teh issued proclamations stating in part:

It is hoped that workers and employees in all trades will continue to work and that business will operate as usual... Officials of the Kumintang Central, Provincial, Municipal or County Governments of various levels, or delegates of the 'National Assembly', members of the Legislative and Control Yuans or People's Political Council members, police personnel and heads of 'Pao Chia' organizations... are to stay at their posts, obey the orders of the PLA and People's Government.¹⁹

Instead of workers' control from below to organize production and determine economic policy from the factory up to the level of national economic policy, the Party imposed a top-down hierarchical factory management structure and absolute Party control over a centralized national plan. The workers themselves were effectively shut out of decision making about economic policies—how much for accumulation, how much for improved living standards, how far and how fast to push expropriation of the capitalists, etc.

Without control over the production process, workers had little incentive to contribute. So the Party could not tap into and release their creativity and initiative in production. To improve productivity and increase the surpluses available for development, therefore, the Party had to *force* people to work hard through harsh labor discipline, material incentives, etc. CCP Labor Codes from 1949 made no mention of the right to strike but enforced compulsory arbitration between workers and management and imposed a rigid labor discipline with severe penalties for infractions. A system of police records or "labor books" was instituted to restrict mobility, job entry and to prevent organized opposition. Trade unions were deprived of all independent power and harnessed to the state in the effort to maximize production. "Collective bargaining agreements", the *Daily Worker* now declared were "the best means for organizing all employees and workers to launch emulation campaigns and for ensuring the overall and balanced fulfillment of the state plan".²⁰ Whereas in the 1920's, the

principle demands of the Communist Party had been the abolition of piecework and the institution of the eight-hour day, in the early 1950's workdays were lengthened, vacations cut, and piecework expanded to one-third of the workforce in 1952, and 42% by 1956. The state imposed massive speedups including "shockwork" campaigns, and instituted sharply graded wage scales in state-owned and private enterprises.²¹ Over the years 1952-1957, while labor productivity increased by 10% to 15% per year, real wages were held to increases of barely 1.9% per annum on average.²² Workers who protested the speedups, productivity drives and low wages were attacked by the Party leadership for "economism" and "syndicalism", and told that they "spoke merely from the standpoint of individual welfare and did not sufficiently recognize that the state must accumulate capital to strengthen its defence and develop its industry."²³

Of course, the leadership was right that current consumption had to be sacrificed in the interests of accumulation for future development. But the need to sacrifice did not require party rule to replace workers' rule. On the contrary, China's workers may have been willing to accept such austerity *had they been free to collectively and democratically make this choice for themselves*, had they been free to determine for themselves what was in the interests of their class and the revolution, rather than the Party deciding for them. Workers' control had the possible disadvantage that workers may not have been willing to sacrifice their consumption for accumulation *quite as much* as the Party desired. On the other hand, workers' control offered the potential of bringing tremendous increases in productivity through overcoming alienation, absenteeism, and relying on the workers' own initiative, creativity and cooperation—potentials that could be liberated only if the workers themselves could decide who must sacrifice, how much and for how long. That China's workers had the will and capacity for self-rule was demonstrated in the 1925-27 revolution, in 1948-49 (and would be again in the Shanghai Commune of 1967). But coming out of its whole Yanan experience, the Party had learned to rely upon the masses for mobilization, but to distrust their capacity for self-emancipation. Where it saw the peasants as spontaneously petty bourgeois, it now tended to see the workers as basically "economist". Therefore, the Party never seriously considered giving political power to the workers but instead approached them from the same top-down perspective. Indeed, through the mid-fifties it relied on the old capitalist bosses to guarantee accumulation until the long-ruralized Party cadre became sufficiently acquainted with industrial management to take over directly. Alienated from real control over the determination of industrial policy, China's workers inevitably responded not with cooperation but with passive and active resistance.

The Political and Ideological Degeneration of the Revolutionary Party

Finally, by the mid 1950's, socialist construction was running into difficulties from a third quarter: from a loss of "communist consciousness", a loss of commitment to discipline and self-sacrifice by the Party cadre itself. As Mao complained in January 1957: "They vie with each other not in plain living, doing more work and having fewer comforts, but for luxuries, rank and status.

Against the Current

They scramble for fame and fortune and are interested only in personal gain." (SW, 5, pp. 350-55). As a result, Mao later remarked, "their work is in a state of chaos...they are divorced from reality, from the masses, and from the leadership of the party...Their revolutionary will is weak; their politics has degenerated..."²⁴ Such "bourgeois" tendencies not only violated Mao's conception of what a revolutionary should be like, but were equally disastrous from the point of view of production. As he observed, "Our experience is that...the lordly behavior of the cadres makes workers unwilling to consciously observe and implement labour discipline". (*Miscellany*, p. 283). Moreover, cadre self-interest and careerism led to gross mismanagement of the economy. The press complained constantly that many factory and mining managers and provincial cadre "put their own interests above the needs of the state and the people" systematically sabotaging national planning and accumulation by resisting higher output quotas, hoarding funds and supplies, and feeding misinformation to the leadership.²⁵

From Cadre to Bureaucracy

How could the Party's once selfless and dedicated revolutionary cadre degenerate into a privileged and authoritarian bureaucratic elite? "Elitism", "commandism" and "bureaucratism" were not mere attitudes. One might start with the admitted and not surprising class origins of the cadre, especially the top leadership. "A considerable number of our ministers, vice-ministers, heads of departments or bureaus as well as cadre at the provincial level are from landlord, rich peasant or well-to-do middle peasant families." Of these, Mao tells us, "Though more or less tempered in long years of arduous struggle, quite a number have not acquired much Marxism..." (SW, 5, pp. 351-52)

In late 1926, the party claimed a membership of 66% industrial workers, 22% "intellectuals" (i.e., of urban petty bourgeois origin), 5% peasants, and 2% soldiers. In 1956 working class members were only 5% of the Party, and only 15% in 1960.²⁶ During the Party's reconstruction in the 1930s and '40s, its membership was drawn mainly from China's traditional urban and rural petty bourgeoisie, and this bias was reinforced in the 1950s by the flood of former officials, bourgeois managers, professionals and so forth drawn into the Party and state-industrial structure.

But more than their social origins, what crucially enabled the Party cadre to transform themselves into a ruling elite was their unchallenged monopoly of political power, free from any practical control from below. In command of the old state apparatus, the Party cadres had unchecked access to the income from industry and agricultural taxation. And, as Mao noted, the cadres both "old" and "new" lost no time in appropriating this income. After years of "plain living and hard struggle", the Party elite soon dispensed with the old egalitarian "supply system" of the Red Army. By the mid-fifties, the army reestablished military ranks with all their trappings. Meanwhile, civilian state administrative personnel were ranked in thirty grades (with salary differentials ranging from ¥ 560 to ¥ 30 per month). Industrial management and technical personnel were ranked correspondingly in twenty-five grades (and these were separate from the eight-grade system for ordinary production workers). Such pay differentials could yield a factory manager

more than fifteen times the salary of an unskilled worker. And this was to say nothing of the uncounted income enjoyed by the Party elite: first class travel, preferred housing, servants, resorts, special shops, etc. No doubt, after decades of hardship and privation the former cadres were entitled to some improvements. But in the midst of the poverty of China's masses, they (and the millions more who joined the Party after the revolution) had, in Mao's words, "gone to heaven."

From the standpoint of mismanagement, irrational planning and corruption, Mao had every reason to want to "get rid of bureaucratism". But what would he put in its place?

3. "Politics in Command": Theory and Practice in the Great Leap Forward

So by 1957 China's socialist construction was at a critical impasse. The Party leadership faced alienated workers, alienated peasants, and alienated cadre. Grain production had increased only one per cent over the preceding year and the industrial growth rate was the second lowest since the Party took power. The domestic crisis was, in turn, worsened by the cutoff of Soviet loans in 1957, and by heightened political tensions with the U.S. over Taiwan.

In the face of the crisis, Mao sought desperately to reverse these trends by breaking radically with the Soviet model on which the Party had based its economic and political reorganization of the early fifties. In its place, Mao aimed to mold the principles of Yanan "war communism": people over machines, mass mobilization, mass-line style politics, military collectivism, local self-reliance etc., into a *strategy* for national development: a "Chinese Road to Socialism".

The centerpiece of Mao's strategy was his thesis that the key to social change lay through the transformation of *consciousness*: "Socialist transformation is a twofold task, one is to transform the system and the other is to transform man" (SW, 5, p. 460). China's masses, Mao observed in April, 1958, "have two remarkable peculiarities: They are, first of all, poor, and secondly, blank. That may seem like a bad thing but it is really a good thing. Poor people want change...A clean sheet of paper has no blotches, and so the newest and most beautiful words can be written on it, the newest and most beautiful pictures can be painted on it" (PT, p. 352). So the key to social transformation lay through *socialist education*, through a permanent "cultural revolution" in the superstructure.

Mao hoped in the Great Leap Forward to mobilize the enormous creative potential of China's masses through an ideological offensive to smash "bourgeois right". This aimed to "re-revolutionize" the cadre and the masses by restoring revolutionary values, and, through subordinating private individual interests to the collective, to concentrate China's human and material resources for a frontal assault on the development problem. Mao aimed, by shifting to *advanced social relations* to overcome "economism" by abandoning material incentives for a radically egalitarian wage structure. He hoped to eliminate cadre bureaucratism, privileges, etc. through "mass line" criticism from below, through worker participation in management and cadre participation in labor. He sought to break through the "objective limits" of productive capacity by relying on mass mobilization and by turning "reds" into "experts" and vice versa, and

to overcome peasant individualism and narrow the gap between town and country through accelerated collectivization and rural industrialization. The idea was to overcome the alienation of the direct producers, to maximize the commitment and involvement of the masses by removing the barriers posed by entrenched and privileged managers and bureaucrats, and encouraging bottom-up participatory leadership.

Sweezy and Bettelheim: Accumulation Without Squeezing

Now Paul Sweezy and Charles Bettelheim argue that Mao's shift to "politics in command" was indeed a solution to the problem of bureaucratism because it allowed China to go beyond the need for forced "primitive accumulation" and therefore the need for a repressive state that must inevitably be bureaucratic. As they see it, socialist construction "by means of the most rapid attainable development of the forces of production" (Stalin's method), must inevitably lead to the "subordination of politics to economics". Thus the logic of "forced draft" industrialization requires, to start with, priority investment in producer goods at the expense of consumer goods. The drive to accelerate accumulation requires maximizing surplus extraction, therefore the "squeezing" of direct producers. The need to subordinate consumption to accumulation necessitates a repressive state, and reliance on a privileged bureaucratic-managerial stratum. This, in turn, reinforces and perpetuates social inequality, therefore ruling out the possibility of transforming social relations in the direction of socialism. (Sweezy, *PRS*, pp. 85-86).

By contrast, say Sweezy and Bettelheim, under Mao, "Priorities were re-ordered...the absolute priority accorded to heavy industry in the Soviet model was abandoned [and replaced by] a strategy which put agriculture (and the 80% of the people dependent on it) at the top of the nation's concerns." (*PRS*, pp. 86-87). This, says Sweezy, opened up the possibility of getting accumulation and socialist social relations simultaneously, rapid development without squeezing:

This meant that the "capital" needed to develop the Chinese economy [could come from] a general increase in the productivity (agricultural and industrial alike) of the Chinese labor force. *In this way the imposition of a special burden on any particular section of the population could be avoided and the whole issue of primitive socialist accumulation rendered irrelevant and meaningless...* which in turn would make the build-up of a specially repressive state apparatus as unnecessary as it would be irrational. (*PRS*, p. 87; emphasis added).

But Sweezy and Bettelheim fail to see that the unstated *implication* of their model, is, in fact, slow growth, little or no accumulation and industrialization. For, given a relatively fixed and limited technology (and no capital inputs) the only practical way one could actually get more production and productivity (i.e. more accumulation) is either by lengthening the working day or by lowering consumption—in other words, precisely by imposing an added burden on the direct producers. The only alternative to this (within a national context) would be to lessen the impact by slowing down accumulation to develop as the Russian economist, Nikolai Bukharin suggested, "at a snail's pace" if necessary, in order to prevent the alienation of the peasantry. But while slowing down accumulation may forestall a

political crisis, it cannot solve the problem of industrialization. It is characteristic of the whole Sweezy-Bettelheim approach that they try to get around this contradiction essentially by *abstracting* from it, by treating the entire project of socialist construction as a question of political "line" divorced from the *practical* concrete problems created by poverty and underdevelopment.

This was a luxury, however, that Mao could ill afford. Mao indeed warned that China must not repeat the disastrous mistakes of Stalin's industrialization—particularly the forced collectivization and excessive squeezing of the peasantry. Nonetheless, Mao (no less than the current leadership) understood that socialism required a material base, hence massive increases in output, and defense against the very real threat of imperialism required a strong military-industrial base. So to survive and develop, China must develop its productive forces *as rapidly as possible*, indeed "faster and better" than the USSR. (Mao, *SW*, 5, pp. 198-99, 291, 491; *Miscellany*, pp. 25, 29, 115, 123, 143-48). But within the confines of one backward country, self-industrialization meant the need to accumulate. And the need to accumulate meant that in the meantime living standards could not be raised, in fact would have to be held down, if not reduced, and that therefore (Sweezy and Bettelheim notwithstanding), industrialization must impose a severe burden on China's workers and peasants. Consumption would have to be subordinated to accumulation to an even greater degree than in the Soviet Union, at least for some time:

In the Soviet Union accumulated capital amounts to one-fourth of the national income. In China the figures were as follows: 27% in 1957, 36% in 1958, 42% in 1959, and it appears that in the future it will be possible to maintain regularly a figure of over thirty percent. *The main problem lies in the vast development of production. Only if production increases and percentages of accumulation go up a bit can people's livelihoods be finally improved* (*CSE*, p. 99).

So contrary to Sweezy's and Bettelheim's presentation, Mao himself did not pose the question of the two-line struggle as one of "politics" as *opposed* to accumulation and production ("economics"). Rather he thought they were *compatible*. He thought that the adoption of advanced social relations would actually *pave the way* for the development of social productive forces by *accelerating* accumulation (See esp. Mao, *SW*, 5, pp. 184-206). But, however much he may have *wished* otherwise, this put him squarely up against the dilemma as posed by Sweezy and Bettelheim. How could he "squeeze" the direct producers in order to develop as rapidly as possible, and still have socialist relations of production? These two aims appeared to be in contradiction, as Mao himself implicitly recognized: "It is wrong to ignore people's livelihood" he wrote in 1955, "but the emphasis must be on production" (*SW*, 5, p. 105). Could he have it both ways?

The Great Leap Forward was launched in the winter of 1957-58 in a gigantic effort to break through the impasse and hurl the country forward into modernity in a few years of intense "exertion". The Party promised the masses of peasants and workers that the transition to advanced social relations (within basically existing techniques) would bring huge breakthroughs in development through the reorganization and political mobilization of labor.

Against the Current

"Walking on Two Feet"

Now for many, Mao's shift to the Great Leap strategy of "Walking on Two Feet" appeared to mark a reversal of the previous Soviet type heavy industry bias in the economy. But while Mao called for "simultaneous development of industry and agriculture", this did not mean, as Sweezy and Bettelheim think, a diversion of capital away from heavy industry to light industry and agriculture. In October 1957, on the eve of the Leap, Mao reminded the Party that: "we should of course concentrate on heavy industry and give priority to its development; this is a principle about which there can be no question or wavering" (SW, 5 p. 490). In the first year of the Great Leap Forward, the state's capital investment in heavy industry *more than doubled* to ¥ 15,120 million from ¥ 6,140 in 1957. In the years 1958-59, fixed capital investment (as a percentage of gross investment) climbed to 40% (up from 29% in 1957). By comparison, state investments in light industry held roughly constant at 5.9% (compared with 5.7% the year before—and both were down from 10% in 1952).²⁷

The strategy of "Walking on Two Feet" aimed not to divert capital away from heavy industry but to conserve scarce capital for reinvestment in heavy industry, by *shifting the burden of light industrial production onto the peasantry*. Through "self-reliance", local communes were supposed to raise their own savings to finance local re-investment, and to make up for the lack of state produced light industrial products by setting up masses of small-scale foundries, chemical plants, etc.—thereby permitting the state to cut capital imports. Meanwhile rural agriculture would be expected to provide *increasing surpluses* to be taxed off by the state to support the growth of heavy industry.

Mass Mobilization and the People's Communes

But without imports of capital and modern technology such massive increases could only result from the intensification of labor, the lengthening of the working day, and cutting consumption—in other words, only a *further impoverishment* of the peasantry. Instead of less work, the peasants' overall workload more than doubled during the Leap. Whereas in 1950-52, men put in about 119 (and women about 70) full-time labor days in agricultural field work per year (excluding domestic labor and private plot sideline activities), in 1958-59 some communes were requiring more than 330 days from men, and 300 days for women.²⁸ On the promise that the commune "free supply" system would guarantee housing, free meals in public mess-halls, provide nurseries and "happiness homes" (for the aged), peasants were directed to turn over "to the common ownership of the commune all privately-owned plots of farmland and house sites and other means of production such as livestock, tree holdings, etc."²⁹ So, it was said that "The adoption of the combined system of grain or meals supply and wage payment marks the beginning of the gradual transition to the stage of 'from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs.' It ensures that everyone in the commune can equally eat his or her fill—a great liberation no doubt..."³⁰ But how could the peasants' consumption increase when the *overriding* objective of the "free supply" system was to centralize and maximize accumulation? As the *People's Daily* of August 18, 1958 described it:

Grain can be saved...on a planned basis...everyone in the mess halls has a plan for grain consumption, which is less [than would be consumed in their homes]. For example, Yin Fu-yuan and his family formerly consumed eight catties and two taels of grain per day, now in the mess hall they consume only seven catties...Consumption of firewood is also reduced.³¹

Peasant income and consumption, as a whole, was sharply reduced during the Leap. In 1956, government regulations stipulated that 70% of agricultural income should be distributed as income to the peasants, with 30% going for accumulation. By 1958 the percentages were almost exactly reversed—with few, if any gains in productivity.³²

Likewise, the collectivization of domestic labor through the establishment of communal mess halls and nurseries was intended, it was said, to liberate women from household drudgery and break down the sexual division of labor. *But, since the state was unwilling to divert resources for funding child care*, etc. this could be no more than a reorganization of existing resources: women still had no choice but to do "double duty".³³

Mao said there was nothing China's peasants could not do with a measure of "exertion"—and it was in this spirit that during the height of the Great Leap Forward, enormous battalions of peasants were sent into the fields and engaged in round-the-clock "shock work" in a monumental effort to "turn labor into capital": The press reported that tens and hundreds of thousands of peasants "fight for every single minute or second regardless of night or day, rain or shine";³⁴ in Hopei some 150,000 commune members "continued working even on windy and snowy days, eating and sleeping right in the field. They broke the frozen earth in the morning, plowed it deep in the afternoon and kept on fighting in rotation during the night"; in Honan, "people fought day and night, shifting all the activities of life—eating, sleeping, office, conference and even nursery—to the field". In the "Battle for Iron and Steel", peasants and workers in Kirin province "fought round the clock, eating and sleeping beside the furnaces"; and in Peking too, workers moved their bedding into the shops during the latter half of 1958 under the slogan "not to leave the forefront before accomplishing the task" and "not to leave even when slightly wounded", etc., etc. Under such conditions, mass mobilization could only result in mass exhaustion. As a Honan Party Secretary (later purged for his protests of the overdriving of the peasants) described it:

The peasants were not equal to beasts of burden in the past, but are the same as beasts of burden today. Yellow oxen are tied up in the house and human beings are harnessed in the field. Girls and women pull plows and harrows, with their wombs hanging down. Cooperation is transformed into the exploitation of human strength.³⁵

Moral Incentives in Industry

It was the same story in industry. The abolition of piecework, wage-differentials, material incentives and the like was, in principle, "a step closer to communism". As the *People's Daily* editorialized on November 13, 1958:

during the Great Leap Forward movement, workers voluntarily abolish the piecework system and the extra-pay for extra-work system. People now work not eight hours but ten hours, even twelve hours. If work requires,

they work throughout the night. Each one is not working for himself but for the whole nation and the future. This kind of enthusiasm breaks down capitalist principles, the remuneration system and the strife for personal gains...it gives a big lift to the Communist spirit...³⁶

But again, how long could they keep up this pace, especially on reduced incomes? The policy of the state was "to hire five workers on three workers wages". "Excessive increase in consumption and elevation of the wage level will run counter to the demand of the Chinese people for fulfilling the prescribed historical task", a ministry spokesman commented, "Hence the necessity for austerity...³⁷

Similarly with the question of industrial safety and working conditions, given the demands of the leadership to "double steel output" and capital construction in one year, Po I-po, Chairman of the State Economic Commission maintained that it would be possible to produce more "with the same amount of money", and "the same or even inferior equipment" by, among other measures, "slashing unproductive expenditures" such as "lower(ing) the standard and quota planned, revising particularly those for safety, health, anti-airraid, fire prevention, anti-flood and anti-shock measures"³⁸

Participatory Management

Finally, Mao and the leadership tried in the Great Leap Forward to involve the masses in participatory leadership both to overcome "economistic" approaches to production on the part of workers and peasants, and to counteract individualistic and bureaucratic tendencies of industrial managers and Commune administrators. So, in industry for example, one-man management was replaced with a new system of "two participations" (worker participation in management and cadre participation in labor) and the "triple combination" (worker, technician, and political cadre teams to facilitate technical decisions and innovation).

Now many western Maoists, such as Bettelheim and Sweezy have looked to such innovations as these in the Great Leap Forward and the People's Communes as examples of the displacement of the coercive state and top-down bureaucratic control by bottom-up self-management.³⁹ Mao indeed mobilized the workers to "participate" in management in order to break through the resistance of management to higher output quotas, to break through the "limits" posed by technical experts, to recapture for the accumulation fund resources formerly diverted to private consumption through material incentives and bureaucratic corruption. But Mao did not call on the workers to take over and run the factories, to actually subordinate management to workers' control from below. This was a crucial distinction. Workers were given the freedom to "criticize" management but they had no real power to enforce reforms. Moreover, all real authority to determine national planning, priorities, output quotas etc. remained lodged at the top, in the hands of the Party; workers' "democracy" was limited essentially to implementation. In both industry and the communes top-down control by "bourgeois" managers was replaced by top-down control by more "radical" cadre-bureaucrats.⁴⁰ To cite but one of many examples from the press, here is how a *New China News Agency* report of November 20, 1958 described life in the Meihshien people's commune in Hunan province:

Members of the commune are directed to lead a collectivized life. Each person must work ten hours and engage in ideological studies for two hours a day. They are entitled to one day of rest every ten days.

In directing the militarization of organization, the adoption of combat spirit in action, and collectivization in livelihood, the CCP committee of the commune has discovered that some minor personal freedom should be granted to the members in order to develop their enthusiasm to the fullest extent. For this reason, the CCP committee rules that all members are free to use their time as they wish outside of the ten hours of labor and two hours of ideological study each day, that husband and wife may have a room of their own, that members are permitted to make tea and other refreshments in their own quarters for themselves, and that women members may use their spare time to make shoes and mend clothes...

The commune members have enthusiastically welcomed the small personal freedoms granted them by the CCP committee.

4. The Collapse of the Great Leap Forward

The Great Leap Forward and the Commune movement collapsed in early 1959 in the face of massive peasant resistance. The Party attributed failure of the Leap to the excesses of overzealous cadre. There were many excesses, but the error lay in the theory of the Leap, in Mao's overestimation of the transformative power of ideology.

The idea behind the Leap was Mao's assumption that he could mobilize China's masses through ideology and education to overcome the objective barriers to development. So, as he put it in December 1955, "Chinese peasants are even better than British and American workers. Hence they can achieve greater, better and faster results in reaching socialism" (*Mitscellay*, p. 29). His basis for this assumption was, once again, his Yanan experience. In the civil war against the Kuomintang Mao and his comrades succeeded in mobilizing thousands and ultimately millions of individually powerless peasants into a mighty revolutionary force. This was done in part, through patient education of the peasantry, through building up their confidence and overcoming their fears of the landlords, through convincing them of their own power and ability to "move mountains". *Yet even then, the Party was able to do so successfully only because of a basic (if temporary) correlation of interests between the Party and the peasantry.* The Party's program: "land to the tiller", represented an immediate improvement in the peasants' livelihood.

But it was a very different matter in the 1950's and especially in the Great Leap Forward. The Maoist leadership indeed promised the peasants that "90% would gain" from collectivization and communization. But in fact, "politics in command" represented big sacrifices, with little or no gain and for a long time. Peasants are not "immutable": They could be won to collectivism, to a "socialist consciousness" but only if it worked, if it in fact produced a better life. Without improved conditions, without a payoff, Mao could not keep the masses "revved up" for long.

So, without inputs of capital and technology everything turned into its opposite. Without inputs of fertilizers, irrigation pumps, tractors, etc., the reorganization and intensification of cultivation could produce few gains, and resulted in serious overfarming. Shifting masses of peasants out of agriculture and into small-scale industry resulted in crop losses and

Against the Current

industrial waste. Finally, neither peasants nor workers could stand, for long, the gruelling pace of round-the-clock work, still on cut rations. In the end, despite intensive "socialist education", the peasants, like their Russian predecessors, but much more effectively, resisted collectivization and the Communes: they cut production, slaughtered their livestock, sabotaged collective production, hoarded and concealed their surpluses, refused tax collection, and where possible, reverted to self-sufficiency.⁴¹ Without modern industrial inputs, the overdriving of people, machinery and the land brought the economy to the brink of collapse by the spring of 1959. In that year and the next, disastrous weather aggravated an already desperate agrarian crisis, and the spectre of famine loomed once again over the Chinese countryside. In 1960, in Honan and elsewhere, desperate peasants, driven by starvation and the exactions of the state, rose in rebellion against the government.⁴² In the end, Mao got neither accumulation nor socialism.

Peasant Resistance Blocks Development

In terms of production, the leadership got nothing out of the Great Leap Forward. In August of 1959, Chou En-Lai admitted that grain output figures for the previous year had been overestimated by more than a third (actual output of food crops in 1959 amounted to 168 million metric tons vs. the planned target of 275 million tons, and this was down from the 185 million tons produced in 1957 and the 194 million tons in 1958). Production fell still further in 1960 (to 160 million tons), the worst year since the war.⁴⁶ Confronted with the double threat of economic collapse and peasant revolt, the state was forced to retreat (much as the Bolsheviks had done after Kronstadt and a wave of peasant insurrections forced them to abandon "War Communism") to what amounted to a Chinese NEP. In the early 1960's the Communes collapsed down to the "production team" level (which corresponded, more or less, to the traditional pre-liberation village and kinship units of cooperation, usually numbering some fifteen to thirty families each). The private plot was restored and the free market reinstated. Compulsory grain purchases were cut back, agricultural taxation sharply reduced, and the terms of trade turned steadily in favor of the peasantry through the 1960's. The inability of the state to make huge advances in agriculture in turn put the brakes on the industrialization drive. Capital investment in heavy industry was substantially cut back and redirected into agriculture and light industry, in order to coax the peasants back into production. While this facilitated recovery, it also returned the economy to a trajectory of slow development.

By 1965, overall agricultural production recovered to the level of 1958, but grain production remained relatively stagnant requiring continuous and growing imports beginning in 1961. Agricultural resoration was only managed at the cost of substantial economic concessions to the peasantry. But with the pressure off, the peasantry took advantage of the market by specializing in cash crops instead of undervalued staple grain, or simply increased their own consumption when the state had nothing to trade. So peasant "capitalism" was once again rampant in the countryside—to the detriment of central planning.⁴⁷

In industry, widespread exhaustion from the overdriving of workers during the Great Leap Forward seriously demoralized the workforce and resulted in falling productivity and rising absenteeism. To restore productivity, the state was forced to revive material incentives, re-emphasize piecework, and grant a general wage increase of forty percent in 1963, the first since 1956.⁴⁸ But this once again tended to reinforce "economistic" attitudes toward production, pitting individuals against the needs of accumulation.

Further Entrenchment of the Bureaucracy

Ultimately, these economic changes provided the material basis for the reconsolidation of the bureaucracy. The catastrophic results of the Great Leap Forward demoralized the great mass of the cadre and convinced many who had supported Mao in 1958, among them Liu Shao-chi, that "politics in command" was dangerous as well as utopian. Many of them became convinced "capitalist roaders." Moreover, the pressure to adapt was reinforced by demands from the peasantry and workers for greater incomes. Finally, political demobilization, the restrengthening of managerial authority, the revival of incentives and with them privileges, fitted directly with the material interests of the bureaucracy. So by the mid-1960's, the bureaucracy was more strongly entrenched than ever, and Mao himself was becoming convinced that the cadre/bureaucracy were becoming a new "red bourgeoisie" as in Russia: "The bureaucratic class," Mao wrote in 1960, "is a class sharply opposed to the working class and the poor and middle peasant classes. These people have become or are in the process of becoming bourgeois elements sucking the blood of the workers."⁴⁹

Yet to some extent at least, this further entrenchment of the bureaucracy can be explained by the self-imposed limits of Mao's own anti-bureaucratic campaigns. Mao and the leadership had fairly successfully restrained bureaucratic tendencies in the 1930's and 1940's, through ideological struggle and mass line "criticism and self-criticism". But, of course, in the context of the privations of war communism, there was little material basis for the establishment of a privileged bureaucracy. It was a very different situation in the 1950's. Given the cadres' objective position of power, and their new control over the social surplus, they naturally used their positions to promote their own material interests, to reinforce and extend their power and privileges.⁵⁰ Under such conditions, it was unrealistic, to say the least, to expect the bureaucracy to continuously revolutionize itself.

In this context Mao only strengthened the bureaucracy he sought to overcome by his refusal to rely on the masses, especially the workers. So while he mobilized the masses to "criticize" the bureaucracy, at no point did Mao suggest the only real solution to the problem of "bureaucratism": that classical formula posed more than a century ago by the Paris Commune: that officials of the state should be subject to *direct election and recall*, and *paid at no more than average workers wages*. Mao mobilized the workers to "participate" in management and gave them free scope on the shop floor to use their initiative and creativity to boost production. But he did not propose that the workers should actually take over and run industry and the economy through

their own institutions of self-rule such as soviets and workers councils—to control not just the shop floor, but national economic policy, planning, distribution, foreign policy, etc. Indeed, as we noted, Mao was directly instrumental for short-circuiting the potentials of workers' control in the factories in the late 1940's. But without such alternative bases of popular power that could actually supervise and *control* the cadre, what was to prevent their transformation into a bureaucracy, a new ruling class?

As we shall see, it was precisely the spontaneous emergence of such institutions of self-rule, and the Maoists' reaction to them, that formed the axis around which turned the struggles of the Cultural Revolution.

In launching the Cultural Revolution Mao again

notes

¹*Monthly Review*, (Nov. 1967), pp. 29-31.

²See Sweezy's remarks on these developments in *Monthly Review* (June 1979), pp. 20-24, and his recent essay, "Post-Revolutionary Society" in *idem. Post-Revolutionary Society*, New York 1980, pp. 139-51; see also the important historical re-evaluation by Gerard Challand, *Revolution in the Third World*, New York 1977.

³Bettelheim and Sweezy developed their ideas in a series of essays and books since the late fifties, and in particular through an extended debate in the pages of the *Monthly Review*. These exchanges were subsequently collected and reprinted under the title *On the Transition to Socialism*, New York 1971 (OTTS). Other works by Bettelheim quoted in this discussion include: *Cultural Revolution and Industrial Organization in China*, New York 1974 (CEIOC); *Class Struggles in the USSR 1917-1923*, New York 1976 (CS 1); "Interview with Charles Bettelheim: Economics and Ideology" translated by David Fernbach in *China Now*, no. 52 (June 1975) (Interview); "The Great Leap Backward", *Monthly Review* (July-August 1978), pp. 37-130 (GLB). Sweezy has recently republished a second series of essays reflecting his further thoughts on the debate, including reviews of Bettelheim's books, under the title, *Post-Revolutionary Society*, New York 1980 (PRS). Hereafter when quoting from these works, I will cite the collected editions of the essays, and indicate the source whether book or essay by using the indicated abbreviations, with page numbers, placed in parentheses in the text.

⁴This thesis has usually been advanced in conjunction with the idea that the industrial working class, especially in the advanced countries, has been "bought off" and displaced as a revolutionary force in the contemporary world. See Paul Sweezy, "The Proletariat in Today's World", *Tricontinental* no. 9 (Nov.-Dec. 1968), pp. 22-33; and Malcolm Caldwell, "The Revolutionary Role of the Peasants", *International Socialism*, no. 41 (Dec.-Jan. 1969/70), pp. 24-30.

⁵Stuart Schram, *The Political Thought of Mao Tse-tung*, revised edition, New York 1969 (hereafter: *PT*). The official and unofficial works referred to in this paper include in addition: *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung* volumes 1-5, Peking, various dates (SW); *Miscellany of Mao Tse-tung Thought*, Joint Publications Research Service no. 61269-1, Arlington Virginia, February 1974 (*Miscellany*); *Chairman Mao Talks to the People: Talks and Letters: 1956-1971*, edited by Stuart Schram, New York 1974 (CMTP); *Mao Tse-tung: A Critique of Soviet Economics*, introduction by James Peck, New York 1977 (CSE). Henceforth when quoting from these works of Mao, I will here also note the source by using the indicated abbreviations, with page numbers, placed in parentheses in the text. I have retained the standard Wade-Giles system of transliteration for romanizing Chinese terms and proper names rather than the newer *pinyin* system (thus Mao Tse-tung rather than the now preferred Mao Zedong) as the

looked to the masses—to their creativity, their revolutionary elan, their egalitarianism—to defeat the entrenched Party/bureaucracy. In mobilizing the masses Mao indeed unleashed a mighty revolutionary force. For the movement quickly ran beyond the limits *which he set for it*, challenging Party rule and creating new institutions of self-rule in its place. The defeat of this movement and of its highest expression—the Shanghai Commune—paved the way for the final triumph of the bureaucratic class that rules China today. In the conclusion of this essay to be published in the next issue of *Against the Current*, we will try to show how the tragic defeat of the Cultural Revolution reveals the ultimate weaknesses of the theory and practice of Mao and Maoism ■

latter is still much less familiar and may in some instances be confusing to many.

⁶See Philip C.C. Huang, "Mao and the Middle Peasants, 1925-1928", *Modern China* (July 1975) pp. 271-296; and *idem*, "Intellectuals, Lumpenproletarians, Workers and Peasants in the Communist Movement", in Philip C.C. Huang, Lynda Schaffer Bell and Kathy Lemons Walker, *Chinese Communists and Rural Society 1927-1934*, Berkeley: Center for Chinese Studies, 1978, pp. 5-28.

⁷*Fanshen*, New York 1966, pp. 605-607; See also, Mao, *PT*, pp. 262-263.

⁸*Amerasia* (June 1974), pp. 162-163. For Mao's own assessment of the difficulties involved in constructing a "proletarian" party-army out of declassed elements and peasants, see *PT*, pp. 267-82.

⁹*The Yenan Way in Revolutionary China*, Cambridge, Mass. 1971, p. 135.

¹⁰Li Fu-chun, *Report on the First Five Year Plan for Development of the National Economy of the People's Republic of China in 1953-1957*, Peking 1955, pp. 22-23, 34-35, 47.

¹¹Stephen Andors, *China's Industrial Revolution*, New York 1977, pp. 53-62.

¹²Choh-Ming Li, *Economic Development of Communist China*, Berkeley 1959, pp. 169-175.

¹³Nai-Ruenn Chen and Walter Galenson, *The Chinese Economy Under Communism*, New York 1969, p.95; and Anthony M. Tang, "Policy and Performance in Agriculture", in *Economic Trends in Communist China*, edited by Alexander Eckstein et al., New York 1968, pp. 504-505.

¹⁴On the grain supply crisis of the mid-fifties and peasant resistance to collectivization, see Kenneth R. Walker, "Collectivization in Retrospect: The 'Socialist High Tide' of Autumn 1955-Spring 1956", *China Quarterly*, no. 26 (Apr.-June 1966) pp. 1-43; and Thomas P. Bernstein, "Cadre and Peasant Behavior Under Conditions of Insecurity and Deprivation: The Grain Supply Crisis of the Spring of 1955", in A. Doak Barnett (ed.) *Chinese Communist Politics in Action*, Seattle 1969, pp. 365-399.

¹⁵Kenneth R. Walker, *Planning in Chinese Agriculture*, London 1965, p. 56; also Mao, *SW*, 5, pp. 196-7.

¹⁶By 1957 Chinese per capita grain availability was still only 256 kilograms: Tang, p. 466.

¹⁷Walker, "Collectivization", *passim*.

¹⁸See Ygael Gluckstein, *Mao's China*, London, 1957, pp. 218-223; and Mao's contradictions speech of February 27,

Against the Current

1957 in his *Selected Works* vol. 5, pp. 414-415.

¹⁹*New China News Agency* (hereafter NCNA), May 3, 1949, quoted in Gluckstein, op. cit., pp. 212-213.

²⁰*Daily Worker*, October 18, 1953; *Survey of China Mainland Press* (hereafter SCMP) no. 705, quoted in Gluckstein, op. cit. p. 234.

²¹On China's industrial and labor policies in this period, see Gluckstein, op. cit., chapters 10-14; Andors, op. cit., chapter 3; and Kenneth Lieberthal, "Mao vs. Liu? Policy Towards Industry and Commerce: 1946-1949", *China Quarterly*, no. 47 (July-Sept. 1971), pp. 494-520. Official Policy Statements may be found in *Regulations Governing the Procedures for the Settlement of Labour Disputes*, NCNA, Nov. 25, 1950; and *Outline of Labor Regulations for State-Operated Enterprises*, *People's Daily*, July 14, 1954; SCMP no. 859.

²²Chu Cheng-ping, "Production and Consumption in China's 1st and 2nd Five Year Plan" *New Construction* (Feb. 1957); *Extracts From China Mainland Magazines* (hereafter ECMM) no. 81, p. 23; Christopher Howe, *Wage Patterns and Wage Policy in Modern China 1919-1972*, Cambridge 1973, p. 33; Gluckstein, op. cit. p. 260.

²³*Liberation Daily*, June 25, 1952; SCMP no. 375, cited in Gluckstein, op. cit. p. 235.

²⁴"Chairman Mao Discusses Twenty Manifestations of Bureaucracy", *Joint Publications Research Service Translations on Communist China* no. 90, Feb. 12, 1970, pp. 40-43.

²⁵See for example, "The Case of the Shenyang Transformer Plant", NCNA, July 22, 1956; and "Politics as the Guide: Ministry of Coal Industry Deals with the 'Under-assessment of Capacity' Question", *Political Study*, no. 5, May 13, 1958: ECMM no. 139.

²⁶Edgar Snow, *Red China Today*, Great Britain, 1970, p. 338.

²⁷See Yang Po, "Simultaneous Development of Industry and Agriculture with Priority to Heavy Industry", *Political Study*, Nov. 13, 1957: ECMM no. 117; and William Hollister, "Trends in Capital Formation in Communist China" in Joint Economic Committee of the U.S. Congress, *An Economic Profile of Mainland China*, New York 1968, pp. 132ff.

²⁸Peter Schran, *The Development of Chinese Agriculture 1950-1959*, Urbana 1969, pp. 69-78.

²⁹"Tentative Regulations of the Weihsing People's Commune", August 7, 1958, reprinted in *People's Communes in China*, pp. 61-80.

³⁰"The People's Commune Movement in Hopei", *Red Flag*, Oct. 1, 1958, reprinted in *People's Communes in China*, p.55.

³¹Quoted in Geoffrey Hudson, et. al. *The Chinese Communes*, New York 1960, pp. 23-24.

³²See Cheng Chu-yuan, *The People's Communes*, Hong Kong 1959, p. 23

³³See the study by Phyllis Andors, "Social Revolution and Women's Emancipation: China During the Great Leap Forward", *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars* (Jan.-Mar. 1975), pp. 33-42.

³⁴*Red Flag* no. 11, 1958. This and the following examples of "shock work" are drawn from Cheng Chu-yuan, *The People's Communes*. See especially chapters three through six.

³⁵*Current Background* (hereafter CB) no. 515.

³⁶See Hu Shang, "Speaking of the Government Issue System", *Joint Publications Research Service* (hereafter JPRS) no. 6230.

³⁷Sung Ping, "Why is it Necessary to Introduce a Rational Low Wage System?", *Study*, Dec. 3, 1957: ECMM no. 118. See also articles on the abolition of piecework, "bourgeois right", and "money in command" in CB no. 537.

³⁸"Several Problems in the Rectification Movement in the Economic Departments", *Study*, Mar. 3, 1958: ECMM no. 136.

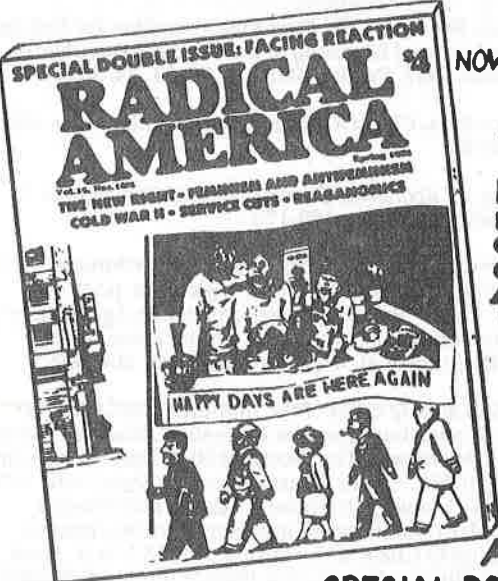
³⁹See for example the commentaries by Sweezy and Bettelheim in *China Shakes the World Again*, Paul Sweezy and Leo Huberman (editors), New York 1959.

⁴⁰For an account of the substitution of party-committees for old-style management in the factories see, Andors, *China's Industrial Revolution*, p. 71-96; Franz Schurmann, *Ideology and Organization in Communist China*, pp. 284-96.

⁴¹The most concise summary of peasant resistance to the collectivization and communization drives is to be found in Walker, *Planning* pp. 59-98. See also Cheng Chu-yuan, *The People's Communes*, pp. 125-129; Parris Chang, *Power and Policy in China*, London 1975, chapters three through five; and articles in the *Far Eastern Economic Review* of June 27, Sept. 5, and Oct. 24, 1957, and Feb. 20, Oct. 9, and Dec. 11, 1958.

⁴²Walker, *Planning*, pp. 81-92; Chang, *Power and Policy*, pp. 96-121. The full extent of the losses was revealed only in April of this year when the government of the People's Republic reported that nearly twenty million people died in the famine of 1960-1962. *Los Angeles Times*, May 6, 1981.

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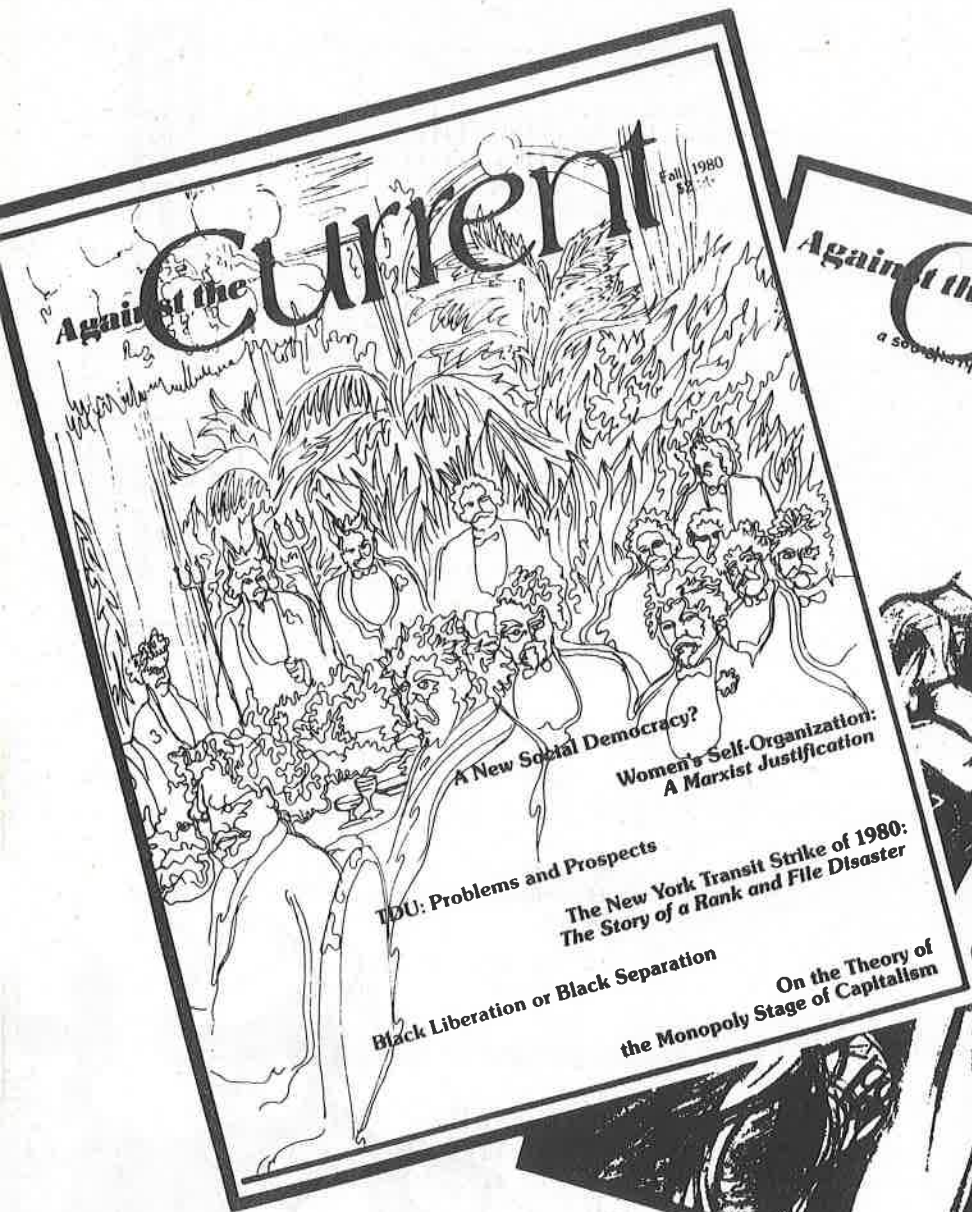
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