# new foundations

## A STUDENT QUARTERLY

PRAGO: *SWEEZY'S THEORY OF CAPITALIST DEVELOPMENT* • *A LETTER FROM SPAIN* • GERSUNY: *SETH LUTHER: AMERICAN LABOR HERO* • GREENBERG: *PARIS LETTER* • POETRY • STUDENT LIFE • REVIEWS • BIBLIOGRAPHY.

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## *The Principles . . .*

NEW FOUNDATIONS is a publication devoted to the political, cultural and intellectual problems of American students. Its purpose is to stimulate clear thinking and progressive social action in all fields of study and activity and to express the needs, activities and aspirations of student America. NEW FOUNDATIONS actively combats reactionary and fascist ideologies in all their manifestations and presents a positive approach to the solution of the problems of American students—an approach infused with the creative spirit of socialism. The orientation of this magazine will be militantly progressive, with the aim of stimulating Marxist thought and practice.

## *The Staff . . .*



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THE EARTH SHALL RISE ON NEW FOUNDATIONS

VOLUME I
NUMBER 3


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*The Editors regret that due to conditions beyond our control, we have been obliged to omit publication of an issue in Winter* 1948, *Vol. I, No. 2. All subscriptions will automatically be extended by one issue.*

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# *UMT: The Seventh Step*

## AN EDITORIAL

"I HAVE been somewhat of a student of history," modestly declared Mr. Truman to his UMT advisory commission, "and I have discovered that great republics of the past always passed out when their peoples became prosperous and fat and lazy, and were not willing to assume their responsibilities."

Many of us can probably recognize this as somewhat the sort of sentence that appears below flunking grades on returned exam papers. Perhaps it's all right for Mr. Truman to make foolish statements; he has no more than an election to pass. But for serious students there is an incentive to think carefully about so important a matter as the adoption of UMT; the UMT sights are fixed on youth of student age.

A student who is anxious to deepen his understanding of American history accepts as axiomatic that the policies of each administration are consistent, patterned according to certain definable purposes. He rejects as superficial the chaotic picture of a group of men in Washington considering issue after issue "on its own merits" (Sen. Vandenberg's dictum for the proper way of considering UMT). He probes beneath this surface in order to find the opposing forces and their resultants in the Civil War period, the rise of the American labor movement, or the post-war twenties. And he evaluates the present administration in the same manner in order to understand the historic importance of his life today.

A perusal of Congressional voting records since the war reveals first of all the cooperation of forces across the boundaries of the major political parties. What is the significance of this bi-partisan cooperation? The answer begins to emerge when some of the administration's acts are recalled:

OPA, the people's protection against large-scale economic greed, was killed.

Taft-Hartley, the NAM-written bill to "free" the worker from the benefits of his hard-won organization, was made law.

FEPC was killed. On the other hand there is no federal anti-poll-tax law; no anti-lynch law.

Loyalty oaths; thought control.

Rent controls were partially saved when Congress was dissuaded from scrapping them by hundreds of thousands of tenants' letters. Congress knew that rent rises would mean hardship for tenants. Yet they had to be actively pressured. Congress has proven anxious to pass measures against the people's interests, unless an aroused public stops them.

In foreign affairs, the achievements of Potsdam, Yalta and Teheran are slandered daily, and the UN is being destroyed by extra-UN maneuvers. When Churchill first proposed a "Western Federation" at Fulton, Missouri some two years ago, America was shocked. For the newly-formed UN had seized the imaginations of a war-weary people, in whose memories the valiant battles fought by our great Eastern ally were still fresh. Yet today the Western Federation is not only accepted in the minds of our officials, but provides the framework for our shameful political interference in those countries "benefited" by the Truman doctrine and its matured cousin, the Marshall Plan.

The question arises: why does a government which has travelled such a path since the end of the war find UMT important?

UMT is a program to provide the fighting force required for the aggressive war now in preparation; it is also the means for turning the minds of youth from the failure of the administration to solve their pressing problems.

Plaintive voices will warn us about our use of words; they will say that USA 1948 is a long cry from Nazi Germany; that six months of training, even if it is military, is not such a bad thing for youngsters, and certainly doesn't indicate that we're heading for war. But what are the legislative proposals on UMT?

The UMT Commission's report proposed in the name of American security:

1. *An extensive campaign against rival ideologies at home and abroad.* This means endless state and local loyalty orders, the Truman method for driving progressive thinking out of the government. It will mean more freedom of the press and radio to brand any people's movement or candidate as subversive. Only he who beats the drums of war will be an "American."

On the campus only "safe" ideas will be presented. Free and open discussion of controversial issues will be cautiously avoided. Textbooks and library shelves will be carefully sifted of any thought which authorities deem not proper fare for young minds. The recent investigation of books at Wyoming University would be repeated in every one of the 1700 colleges in the country.

Abroad, propaganda by the ton, and broadcasts 24 hours a day, will paint glowing pictures of "free enterprise" and conveniently edit out the depression of workers' living standards, discrimination and lynchings, and the assault on civil liberties.

2. *A world-wide espionage service, to "encompass developments in international diplomacy, in the scientific laboratory, in industry, on the proving ground, and in the political life of all the countries of the world" (p. 22 of the Report).* We have become the bulwark of the most corrupt and reactionary elements in all countries. On the domestic side, under the pretext of preventing "fifth column" activity, FBI agents are checking meetings to see who attends and to record what is said.

3. *Militarization of scientific research, to "provide new instrumentalities of warfare."* All our experimental resources, especially in universities, are being mobilized to improve the army and navy: that is, to increase their efficiency in destruction. Bigger bombs, more deadly biological weapons and guided missiles replace disease control and human welfare as the goals of technological progress. Last year Congress granted more money for military research than the entire country spent for *all* types of research in the pre-war years. Many university laboratories are already subsidized by the Army and Navy as part of this program.

4. *Industrial mobilization and stockpiling.* The setting up of advisory councils in all major industries to facilitate rapid reconversion to war production has proceeded quietly but effectively for two years. Instead of maintaining high levels of employment through conversion to peacetime purposes, many plants are now idle so that hundreds of thousands of bombers and tanks could be turned out on short notice. Hundreds of factories, among the largest in the country, are still operating on a war-time basis, producing weapons for our new-found "friends" in Greece, Turkey, Arabia, and China. Guns instead of houses are turned out as forests of canvas-covered weapons grow in remote parts of the country. Corollaries of this feverish preparation for war include placing military personnel on the boards of directors of the biggest monopolies; infiltrating of generals into all branches of the government; putting into uniform leading bankers and industrialists. Charles E. Wilson, a member of the UMT commission, writing in the Army Ordnance Journal, suggests: ". . . let us make this three-way partnership (industry, government, army) permanent and workable, and not just an arrangement of momentary convenience."

5. *A huge mobile striking force. "Our mobile striking force must be prepared to operate in the Arctic or in the tropics and to deliver punishing blows half-way around the world" (p. 27).* We have more super-bombers available for combat today than when the war ended. The bases we captured from Japan, only a few hundred miles from the Soviet borders and tens of thousands of miles from our West coast, are being strengthened continuously. The official policy of "defense by attack" also clarifies the meaning of naval maneuvers in the Mediterranean and the dispatch of 2,000 marines to that area.

6. *A unified military command.* The creation of the cabinet post of Secretary of Defense after this report appeared is another proposal al-

ready realized. This position is now filled by James Forrestal, who was vice-president of Dillon, Read & Co., Wall Street bankers, while they helped finance Hitler and the Nazi war machine.

7. *Universal Military Training.* This is the last recommendation made by the Commission, and to date is the only one not yet put into practice. Under the Towe Bill, which embodies the plan of the Commission, every boy would register at the age of 17 and would be called when he reached 18. He would spend 6 months in training camps, after which he would have to choose from one of the following:

A. A second 6 months of training in a camp, or
B. Enlistment in the National Guard or Organized Reserves for as long a period as the President may prescribe (can be changed any time *without* the consent of Congress), or
C. One of the service academies or officer training programs, at the end of which he would have to accept a reserve commission, or
D. Enlistment in the Enlisted Reserve Corps of the Army or in the Volunteer Naval Reserve for a period of six years.

Instead of being a program for 6 months of training, *it is actually one lasting from one to six years.* The bill also provides college aid to limited numbers, who, after graduation, would have to agree to serve in one of the armed forces "for at least such a period as the President may direct." Trainees could be called back into service any time after they have completed their training, if the President declares a "national emergency." And those who are in reserve components can be called without this formality. This is the way of providing additional military service without Congressional authority.

The rejection of certain amendments further indicates the driving purposes of the bill and its sponsors. One barring racial discrimination and segregation was categorically turned down. Another, which would terminate the law when a UN police force had been formed, and another which would end UMT if the UN approved a general reduction of armaments, were just as summarily dismissed. A fourth, barring the use of trainees for service in connection with labor disputes, or civil disturbances, met the same fate as the others.

However, even if approved, no amount of amendment would alter the evils and dangers of conscription. Nor would it in any way ameliorate the rapid militarization of the entire country, of which the campaign for UMT is only the most obvious example.

Against these facts we often hear the "peace-through-strength" argument: peace must be fought for; we are weak and must arm ourselves against some unknown stronger potential enemy. But the decisive balance of military, industrial, and atomic power is already in American hands. And this sense of power has made our foreign policy not more peaceful

but more belligerent. This is the true reason for the UMT drive. Aid to post-war fascism in Greece, Turkey, China, etc., must be backed up with young troops trained in the latest weapons of destruction and indoctrinated with a contempt for democracy—troops who have been taught that Tsaldaris, Franco, and Chiang are apostles of the democratic way of life. Such troops will be ready to move anywhere in the world to prop up dying systems at the points of their bayonets. The building of the American Empire proceeds under cover of our excited cries of "aggression" on the part of other nations.

Universal disarmament through the UN, as advocated by the Soviet Union and side-tracked by the US delegation, would surely go a long way towards guaranteeing peace. While Washington is increasing military appropriations, the Soviet Union, the unknown "enemy" in the UMT Commission's report, cut its corresponding budget item by 2,500,000,000 rubles. (*New York Times,* Feb. 1, 1948.)

At home the blueprint calls for regimented youth who will be effective strikebreakers, who will think of workers on strike for legitimate wage demands to keep pace with the rising cost of living, as saboteurs and enemy agents. The training received at the experimental unit of the U. S. Army at Fort Knox, holds out ample promise of fulfilling this formula.

In spite of the huge propaganda barrage laid down to gain the public's support of UMT, the opposition to it increases. A partial list of organizations who have spoken out against UMT indicates the growing strength of the fight against militarization. All the major labor unions, the AFL, CIO and Railroad Brotherhoods; the Farmers Union, the National Grange, and the American Farm Bureau Federation; the major educational associations, including the American Association of University Professors, the National Education Association, the American Council on Education, and the American Federation of Teachers; every major organization of churchmen, Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish; the AVC and the Catholic War Vets; and every single student and youth organization.

The list is so imposing that both the Democrats and Republicans seem inclined to wait for a year in which the people cannot answer back with votes at the polls. But no matter what demagogy Washington may now be using to avoid the popular resentment to UMT, the issue will continue to hold high priority in the plans of the bi-partisan administration. As long as our present foreign policy and domestic program continue, the American people can expect UMT to be sprung on them the moment they relax their vigilance.

As reaction is today trying to mobilize for war, so must we mobilize ourselves for peace. The fulcrum in the struggle against reaction is the defeat of UMT; for it would serve sharp notice on Truman and his banker friends that young people will not accept a uniform as the solution to their problems.

The fight is not only defensive, but equally as much the beginning of a counter-offensive, in the form of an alternative to UMT: a program to guarantee peace through the building of educated and healthy youth, with adequate security against unemployment, and with equal opportunity in all spheres of life regardless of color, creed, or religion. The huge expenditures for UMT in the first year alone would, according to the National Education Association, pay for a 3-year graduate course for 90,000 students, pay the tuition of 900,000 boys in colleges or technical schools, and build a $750,000 technical school in every Congressional District in the country, and still leave $15,000,000. The expansion of hospital facilities, a cradle-to-grave social security program, an adequate low-cost housing program, implementing the goals of the GI Bill, increasing subsistence allowances to an adequate level, and special attention to the needs of Negro college students: these are what young America imperatively needs. A strong FEPC, anti-lynching legislation, ending of all poll taxes, and guaranteeing civil rights would be a more effective "education in democracy" than the regimentation of one million boys annually.

Organizing against UMT as well as for solving many of the crying needs of the country, involves a full-scale political program. The two major parties, inextricably bound to the financial interests of Wall Street, are steering a course for war. They are committed to rustling their sabres in European and Asian political arenas, as well as in the UN, and they need troops to back up their adventures. Of all the major political figures, only Henry Wallace has taken a forthright stand for peace and against the Marshall Plan and militarization. In announcing his Presidential candidacy, Wallace stated that "the defeat of UMT is the primary political objective for progressives today."

Wallace is the outstanding spokesman for domestic welfare and civil liberties, and a foreign policy based on cooperation rather than conflict. His third party is the only one which offers the people an opportunity to register stern opposition to the plans of the Wall Street-Washington coalition. For those determined that peace instead of war shall guide our policies, support of the third party is an urgent necessity, and their support will prove to the world that the US does not intend to add a page to Hitler's handbook for fascism.

***EDITORIAL NOTE: This editorial was set in type two weeks before Truman's melodramatic warmongering address to Congress. The threat of a more drastic UMT law—and of more extensive conscription—has multiplied many-fold. The struggle against UMT, conscription and the administration war policy now demands immediate, more dramatic and sustained action by all Americans.***

**ALBERT PRAGO**

# *Sweezy's Theory of Capitalist Development**

*THE Theory of Capitalist Development,* sub-titled "Principles of Marxian Political Economy," by Paul M. Sweezy,[1] is an attempt to explain Marxist economic principles in American terms.

The intention of this critique is to analyze some basic questions examined by Sweezy which have not been considered in detail elsewhere. It is not our aim to study every specific point made in the entire volume.

This critique is prompted by the growing interest in Marxism arising out of the intensification of capitalist contradictions in the period of general crisis. Apparently Sweezy's text is becoming increasingly popular —especially in academic circles—during the current celebration of the 100th anniversary of the *Communist Manifesto,* an anniversary coincident with the most serious and decisive struggles ever conducted by the working peoples of the world.

## THE LAW OF VALUE: ITS RELATION TO THE FORMATION OF THE AVERAGE RATE OF PROFIT

"In the final analysis the law of value dominates economic events in a capitalist economic system. . . ." [2] Thus, the law of value, as the economic law of motion of capitalism, is the foundation of Marxist political economy. Revisionists, like Bernstein, rejected the law of value. Sweezy accepts it. Before we see how he interprets and makes use of it, we will restate familiar, basic concepts in order to refresh the reader's memory.

The value of a commodity is measured by the amount of socially necessary labor time required to reproduce it. In its money form, value is expressed as price; price is not identical with value but is its monetary

* In view of the widespread discussion of the issues raised in this article, the editors are particularly interested in receiving communications and comments concerning it.

expression. While the price of an individual commodity may be equal to, above, or below its value, the total of prices of all commodities must equal the total of values.

Surplus value is that portion of the value produced by the working class which is appropriated by those who own the means of production without paying the workers an equivalent.

The law of value permeates all of Marx's economic analyses. Its dialectic application in the hands of Marx cleared up the most complex problems which had confounded bourgeois economists.

Sweezy, however, considers the law of value only a useful abstraction which does not reflect reality. He says: "The conclusion is therefore inescapable that in the real world of capitalist production the law of value is not directly controlling." [3]

Sweezy justifies the use of the theory. The trouble lies, he maintains, not in the validity of the law, but in Marx's proof! Challenging Marx's proof of the formation of the average rate of profit on the basis of the law of value, Sweezy substitutes an "adequate proof."

First let us examine Marx's "proof."

To recall the problem which confronted Marx: capitals of differing organic composition* yield different amounts of surplus value. Hence it should follow that if all products sold at their values, a higher rate of profit would accrue to those industries least technically developed, since only labor-power produces value and surplus value. The real world, however, discloses a tendency toward the formation of an *average* rate of profit regardless of the organic composition of any individual capital.

Marx resolved this seeming discrepancy with his *price of production* theory,[4] which demonstrates how the total surplus value is socially distributed by anarchic methods, so that all the capitalists participate in the pool of surplus value in such a way as to account for an average rate of profit. By way of illustration, let us assume five different capitals all operating with a rate of surplus value of 100 per cent. The figures used below are percentages:

| Industry | Constant Capital | Variable Capital | Surplus Value | Value of Product | Rate of Profit |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I | 40 | 60 | 60 | 160 | 60 |
| II | 50 | 50 | 50 | 150 | 50 |
| III | 60 | 40 | 40 | 140 | 40 |
| IV | 70 | 30 | 30 | 130 | 30 |
| V | 80 | 20 | 20 | 120 | 20 |

* The organic composition of capitals differ according to the proportions of constant capital (value of the means of production) and variable capital (the value of the labor-power) employed.

Thus, there would be varying rates of profit if each commodity sold at its individual value. However, blind, anarchic competition and distribution of surplus value among capitalists account for a price of production for each industry (the cost of production plus the average rate of profit). That is, each industry will be compelled to sell its commodities not at their value but at their individual price of production. "These different rates of profit are equalized by means of competition into a general rate of profit, which is the average of all these special rates of profit."[5]

In the situation we have constructed, if each commodity sells at the price of 140, then each industry will appropriate a rate of profit of 40 per cent—although some goods will have been sold below their value and others above. Marx's law of value is still valid since the *total of prices* equals the *total of values,* and the average rate of profit is formed on the basis of the law of value. ". . . The sum of all the prices of production of all commodities in society, comprising the totality of all lines of production, is equal to the sum of all their values."[6] Marx further says:

> Now, since the total value of the commodities regulates the total surplus value, and this the level of the average profit and the average rate of profit—always understanding this as a general law, as a principle regulating the fluctuations—it follows that the law of value regulates the prices of production.
>
> Competition first brings about, in a certain individual sphere, the establishment of an equal market-value and market-price by averaging the various individual values of the commodities. The competition of the capitals in the different spheres then results in the price of production which equalizes the rates of profit between the different spheres.[7]

Through anarchy of production, through competition, an average rate of profit is thus evolved. The law of value functions within the anarchy of production (a concept not at all considered by Sweezy). Market price is always established under conditions of this anarchy. The average rate of profit is always determined as a result of competition; it is this activity which bridges the gulf between value and market price.

Sweezy rejects Marx's demonstration. The difficulty arises when Sweezy uses a table formulated by Marx in Volume II of *Capital;* here Marx was concerned with demonstrating the equilibrium between the departments of production under conditions of Simple Reproduction. In this table Marx used absolute magnitudes, i.e., actual amounts. But in Volume III of *Capital,* where Marx deals with the topic under consideration—the formation of prices of production and the average rate of profit on the basis of the law of value—all figures in the table are necessarily expressed as percentages. Why did Marx use percentages? Was it merely a whim?

> The different organic composition of various capitals, then, is independent of their absolute magnitude. It is always but a question of what part of every 100 is variable and what part constant.
>
> Capitals of different magnitude, *calculated in percentages,* or, *what amounts to*

*the same in this case, capitals of the same magnitude,* working with the same working time and the same degree of exploitation, may produce considerably different amounts of surplus value, and thus of profit. . . .[8] (My emphasis—A.P.)

The importance of this methodology is reiterated a number of times.[9] This approach abstracts the problem to be resolved from the modifications which arise when capitals of different absolute magnitudes are used. These modifications can be understood *only after* we have posed and solved the essential question.

The confusion appears when Sweezy uses absolute figures instead of percentages; instead of expressing the capital investment in value terms, he expresses it in price terms! Here are Sweezy's tables:[10]

VALUE CALCULATION

| Dept. | Constant Capital | Variable Capital | Surplus Value | Value |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| I | 225 | 90 | 60 | 375 |
| II | 100 | 120 | 80 | 300 |
| III | 50 | 90 | 60 | 200 |
| Totals | 375 | 300 | 200 | 875 |

PRICE CALCULATION

| Dept. | Constant Capital | Variable Capital | Surplus Value | Value |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| I | 288 | 96 | 96 | 480 |
| II | 128 | 128 | 64 | 320 |
| III | 64 | 96 | 40 | 200 |
| Totals | 480 | 320 | 200 | 1,000 |

By using arbitrary amounts instead of percentages, Sweezy is compelled to indicate a dilemma—of his own making. The price of constant and variable capital may be above or below the value; but the subject under discussion is how value is converted into price! Thus Sweezy unwittingly traps himself in a vicious circle from which there can be no escape. Marx avoided the dilemma by calculating the invested capital in terms of percentages, he justifiably insisted on the necessity of using this percentage relationship as the basis for solving the problem. Sweezy's solution is to evolve a circuitous theory of converting the value of the constant and variable capital into cost price, in order to convert that price into a price of production![11]

How does Sweezy accomplish this feat? He sees the problem as a mathematical one which can be solved by algebraic manipulations. Sweezy objects to Marx's assertion that the total of prices tends to coincide with the total of values. He says that Marx calculated all factors in "units of labor time." Sweezy has an alternative solution:

> . . . from a mathematical point of view there is an alternative method which is simpler and hence more attractive. [!]
>
> Instead of calculating the value scheme in terms of units of labor time we might have put it in money terms. Thus the value of each commodity would not be expressed in units of labor but in terms of the number of units of the money commodity for which it would exchange.[12]

The passage quoted contains a number of confusions. Marx did not use units of labor time in his demonstration. In posing the constant and variable capital as percentages of 100 he was using value relationships. In any case, by substituting money units for alleged labor units, Sweezy has confused determination of value with the general power of commodities to command others in exchange. Value is not synonymous with exchange value, but is *expressed* as exchange value—or in its monetary form, as price. Marx wrote:

> When, at the beginning of this chapter, we said, in common parlance, that a commodity is both a use-value and an exchange value, we were, accurately speaking, wrong. A commodity is a use-value or object of utility, and a value. It manifests itself as this two-fold thing, that it is, as soon as its value assumes an independent form—viz., the form exchange value. It never assumes this form when isolated, but only when placed in a value or exchange relation with another commodity of a different kind.[13]

Consequently, by using money units instead of labor units, Sweezy has thrown out the labor theory of value and erroneously substituted a price theory. (There is no need here to prove the labor theory of value, for Sweezy's acceptance of the theory is negated by his application of it.)

In addition, Sweezy holds that the total value of the goods produced, 875, is less than the total price, 1,000. (Cf. the tables quoted.) His explanation? "The problem turns on the organic composition of capital in the gold industry relative to the organic composition of the total social capital before the transformation to price terms has been carried through."[14] He assumes a relatively high organic composition of capital in the gold-mining industry, so that the price of gold will be greater than its value; hence, if all other commodities are expressed in terms of gold, their total price must be lower than their total value. Instead of a labor theory of value, Sweezy has injected a money theory. "Only in the special case where the organic composition of capital in the gold industry is exactly equal to the social average organic composition of capital is it true that total price and total value will be identical."[15] This is utterly erroneous.

Marx's theory of price of production demonstrates that the law of value formulated in Volume I is perfectly valid; for despite the fact that the prices of commodities oscillate above and below their respective values, the total of prices must coincide with the total of values. Why is this the case?

Price is determined by value. Value "is expressed in its [the commodity's] price before it goes into circulation, and is therefore a precedent condition of circulation, not its result." [16] Prices constantly fluctuate. Necessarily, they fluctuate around value—the basis. Over a period of time, the oscillations above and below value must cancel each other. Any *general* rise or fall in price is purely a nominal one since it has no effect upon the exchange of equivalent values. A rise in the price of some commodities (assuming no change in the values) is tantamount to expressing an equivalent fall in the price of others. Hence the total of prices must equal the total of values. In fact, however necessary the expression, it is implicit in the definition of value and the laws of exchange. Rejecting this concept, as Sweezy does, is tantamount to rejecting the law of value.

Sweezy's principal error in this chapter was his failure to relate the anarchy of production—and its indirect consequence: increased exploitation—to the formation of market price. He has turned a socio-economic problem into a mathematical puzzle. In the course of "solving" his puzzle, Sweezy converted the labor theory of value into a price theory. In so doing, he has confounded, rather than clarified, the alleged contradiction between Volumes I and III of *Capital.*

The law of value is indispensable for a comprehension of the deepening class struggles and the "mysteries" of the capitalist system. The law of value is crucial for an understanding of the "mystery" of the falling tendency of the rate of profit.

## THE FALLING TENDENCY OF THE RATE OF PROFIT

The classical economists were aware of the fact that the rate of profit tended to fall, but they were unable to supply a valid explanation. Marx met the challenge with the theory that the rising organic composition of capital is at the root of this phenomenon. Sweezy denies the validity of Marx's demonstration: ". . . It is not possible to demonstrate a falling tendency of the rate of profit by beginning the analysis with the rising organic composition of capital." [17]

Let us see whether or not it is possible by first examining Marx's method.

The proportion in which capital is divided into constant and variable constituents is called "value-composition" by Marx. And he uses the term "technical composition" for the division into physical quantities of means of production on the one hand and living labor-power on the

other. "Between the two," Marx wrote, "there is a strict correlation. To express this, I call the value-composition of capital, in so far as it is determined by its technical composition and mirrors the changes of the latter, the *organic composition* of capital." [18] Elsewhere, Marx reiterates that the change in the technical composition of capital—most rapidly developed since the industrial revolution—"is reflected again in its value-composition, by the increase of the constant constituent of capital at the expense of its variable constituent." [19]

The growth of capital is manifested in a growth of the technical composition reflected by a rise in the organic composition, but not in the same proportions. Thus, while *one* worker may be employed at *ten times* the *quantity* of material following improved techniques, speed-up, better machinery, etc., the *value* of the material employed may have increased only *two or three times* over the amount previously worked with. It is possible for technical composition to change and for organic composition to remain the same, or for the latter to change directly or indirectly with the change in technical composition. All these variations occur in the totality of individual cases. However, the growth of a specific industry and the growth of the total social capital are reflected in a tremendous increase in technical composition—and therefore in an increase in the organic composition, although the latter occurs to a lesser degree.

Sweezy contends that "the general impression of the rapidity of growth of the organic composition of capital seems to be considerably exaggerated." [20] Would Sweezy assert that the organic composition at the Oak Ridge project is not very different from that of a New England munitions shop in 1800? As regards the total social capital, would Sweezy insist that the mass of value of means of production (constant capital) as compared to the variable capital is not much different from that prevailing a "century and a half" ago?

The immediate source of Sweezy's confusion is to be found in his formula for organic composition. Marx called it the "proportion in which capital is divided into constant capital . . . and variable capital. . . ." [21] "By the composition of capital we mean . . . the proportions of its active and passive parts, of variable and constant capital." [22] Sweezy says, surprisingly: "Several ratios would serve to indicate this relation, but the one which seems most convenient is the ratio of constant capital to *total* capital." [23] (My emphasis—A.P.) But it is not just a matter of convenience!

Naturally, Sweezy's formula, c : C (constant to total capital) will not show considerable change even over long periods of time. But this is not the Marxist concept of organic composition—it is Sweezy's. It is not merely that Marx "coined" the term. Marx's expression c : v (constant to variable) shows the real relationship between the means of production and labor power, *between dead and living labor;* Marx's formulation shows a class relationship and is fundamental to an understanding of capitalist

accumulation and the class struggle. Sweezy's expression shows nothing—it is meaningless except as a mathematical, bookkeeping formulation.

Following the procedure employed by Marx, we learn that the higher the organic composition, the lower the rate of profit—all other things being equal. This is most easily seen by using Marx's formula for the rate of profit: $p' = s' \frac{v}{c + v.}$ (The rate of profit is equal to the product of two variables: the rate of surplus value and the proportion of variable to total capital.)

Assume a constant rate of surplus value. A growth of capital is reflected in a higher organic composition—a larger proportion of c as compared to v. The fraction $\frac{v}{c + v}$ becomes smaller. To the degree that this variable changes, so does the rate of profit. E.g.:

$$40\% = 100 \text{ x } \frac{40}{60 + 40}$$

$$20\% = 100 \text{ x } \frac{20}{80 + 20}$$

Sweezy objects:

> Is it justifiable, however, to assume *at the same time* a constant rate of surplus value? . . . In the first place, our whole analysis up to this point leads us to expect a rising rate of surplus value.[24]

As Sweezy notes, Marx was aware of the fact that the rate of surplus value rises along with the development of capitalism. Was Marx, while explaining the tendency of the rate of profit to fall, justified in assuming at the same time a constant rate of surplus value?

The very acts of the capitalists in raising the organic composition of capital are designed to increase the rate of profit, yet they result in a fall in the rate, *if all other conditions remain equal.* The capitalists are constrained to adopt simultaneously measures whose objective is to counteract the tendency of the rate of profit to fall. Basically these counteracting measures revolve around an increasing rate of surplus value. Yet *despite* all the counteracting measures, the rate of profit has fallen considerably since the birth of capitalism. One hundred per cent was not unusual in very early periods. It is unquestioned that the average rate of profit is considerably lower today. Even generous estimates give it as being between 8% and 12% today. The one factor which continuously tends to depress the rate of profit is the rising organic composition of capital, something which is implicit in the nature of capitalist accumulation. The same causes which raise the rate of surplus value "also tend to decrease the labor-power employed by a certain capital, [and] it follows that these same causes also tend to reduce the rate of profit and to check the speed of this fall."[25]

In analyzing a specific capital, Marx shows how its rate of profit falls in the event of a rising organic composition, assuming the rate of surplus value remains constant. In the New England cotton mills of thirty years ago, one girl operated two or three looms. Today one worker operates from 60 to 80! This illustration justifies Marx's assumption; for even if the rate of surplus value had increased, as it must have, and did, it could not possibly have increased twenty to forty times.

In considering the total social capital, Marx did recognize that the rising organic composition of capital is accompanied by a rising rate of surplus value—*but not in such proportions as to check completely the fall in the rate of profit.* A principal point not even mentioned by Sweezy is that since the growth of capital involves a rise in its organic composition, the higher the organic composition in the basic, large-scale and monopolized industries, the higher the *social* organic composition; and the higher the social organic composition, the lower the average rate of profit.

Sweezy formulates a "new" solution to explain the falling rate.

> Behind the rising organic composition of capital lies the process of capital accumulation, and it is here that we should look for forces which tend to depress the rate of profit.
>
> It was explained in the last chapter how the accumulation of capital, taken by itself, operates to increase the demand for labor power and hence to raise wages. Other things remaining equal, such a rise in wages leads to a reduction in the rate of surplus value, and this, in turn, expresses itself in a fall in the rate of profit. Since, as Marx again and again insists, "the capitalist process of production is essentially a process of accumulation," it follows that from this fact alone there arises a persistent tendency for the rate of profit to fall.[26]

A veritable welter of confusion!

Sweezy attacks Marx's demonstration for *not* recognizing a rising rate of surplus value (a false accusation). ". . . Marx was hardly justified, even in terms of his own theoretical system, in assuming a constant rate of surplus value simultaneously with a rising organic composition of capital."[27] Now Sweezy contradicts himself by implying a falling rate of surplus value! He states that it is the increased demand for labor-power leading to a rise in wages which accounts for a reduction in the rate of profit; but a reduction of the rate of profit as a result of higher wages can only mean a reduction in the rate of surplus value.

Marx, always very precise, anticipated just such a confusion.

> The falling tendency of the rate of profit is accompanied by a rising tendency of the rate of surplus value, that is, in the rate of exploitation. *Nothing is more absurd, for this reason, than to explain a fall in the rate of profit by a rise in the rate of wages, although there may be exceptional cases where this may apply. . . . The rate of profit does not fall, because labor becomes less productive, but because it becomes more productive. Both phenomena, the rise in the rate of surplus value and the fall in the rate of profit, are but specific forms through which the productivity of labor seeks a capitalistic expression.*[28] (My emphasis—A.P.)

Together with the development of the productive power grows the higher composition of capital, the relative decrease of the variable as compared to the constant capital.[29]

The accumulation of capital sets labor free and leads to a reserve army of unemployed, creating competition for jobs. This tends to depress wages, not to raise them.

Since the demand for labor is determined not by the amount of capital as a whole, but by its variable constituent alone, that demand falls progressively with the increase of the total capital, instead of as previously assumed, rising in proportion to it. It falls relatively to the magnitude of the total capital, and at an accelerated rate, as this magnitude increases. With the growth of the total capital, its variable constituent or the labor incorporated in it, also does increase, but in a constantly diminishing proportion. . . . In fact, it is capitalistic accumulation itself that constantly produces, and produces in the direct ratio of its own energy and extent, a relatively redundant population of laborers, i.e., a population of greater extent than suffices for the average needs of the self-expansion of capital, and therefore a surplus-population.[30]

Thus, we see that Marx's conclusion is directly opposite to Sweezy's. Sweezy asks:

. . . Is it legitimate to assume that changes in the organic composition of capital will usually be relatively so much larger than changes in the rate of surplus value that the former will dominate movements in the rate of profit? If so, Marx's assumption of a constant rate of surplus value might be considered a useful device for focusing attention on the most important element in the situation, and the treatment of changes in the rate of surplus value as a "counteracting cause" could be justified.[31]

We have seen how Marx answered that question. The rise in the rate of surplus value acts as a check upon the fall in the rate of profit. It does not suspend the general law. "But it causes the law to become more of a tendency, that is, a law whose absolute enforcement is checked, retarded, weakened, by counteracting influences."[32]

Marx's theory is of special import today. The principal counteracting measures available to the capitalists all revolve around increased exploitation of the working class and especially the super-exploitation of the colonial peoples. The inherent contradictions of capitalist production are intensified, making it increasingly difficult for the capitalists to solve their problems. We witness the sharpening of class struggles, imperialist rivalries, and conflicts between the imperialists and the colonial peoples—and the severe deepening of the general crisis of capitalism.

Sweezy's explanation, being one-sided, leads to inferences opposite to those of Marx. Accumulation brings with it an increase in the demand for labor; but it also produces a relative surplus-population. Sweezy one-sidedly sees the increase in the demand for labor as a basic and absolute tendency; the inference is that the class struggle is abating! Marx stresses that the increased demand for labor is relative, that it is counteracted by

the *dominant* tendency of a rising organic composition of capital, and that the latter creates and recreates the industrial reserve army. This rising organic composition also produces a growing absolute and relative impoverishment.

The full significance of the tendency of the rate of profit to fall is most clearly manifest in the periodic economic crisis. Let us turn our attention to Sweezy's treatment of crises.

## THE THEORY OF CRISIS

Sweezy discusses "two types of crises"—those "associated with the falling rate of profit," and two kinds of "realization crises": (a) "crises arising from disproportionality" and (b) "crises arising from underconsumption."

It is appropriate to quote, as has Sweezy, a passage from Marx which Sweezy justly claims has been often misunderstood:

> The last cause of all real crises always remains the poverty and restricted consumption of the masses as compared to the tendency of capitalist production to develop the productive forces in such a way, that only the absolute power of consumption of the entire society would be their limit.[33]

It this passage which has often been used by misinterpreters of Marx and revisionists generally to justify an underconsumption theory of crisis. Marx criticized underconsumption theories very sharply:

> It is purely a tautology to say that crises are caused by the scarcity of solvent consumers, or of a paying consumption. The capitalist system does not know any other modes of consumption but a paying one, except that of the pauper or of the "thief." If any commodities are unsaleable, it means that no solvent purchasers have been found for them, in other words, consumers (whether commodities are bought in the last instance for productive or individual consumption). But if one were to attempt to clothe this tautology with a semblance of a profounder justification by saying that the working class receives too small a portion of their own product, and the evil would be remedied by giving them a larger share of it, or raising their wages, we should reply that crises are precisely always preceded by a period in which wages rise generally and the working class actually get a larger share of the annual product intended for consumption. From the point of view of the advocates of "simple" (!) common sense, such a period should rather remove a crisis. It seems, then, that capitalist production comprises certain conditions which are independent of good or bad will and permit the working class to enjoy that relative prosperity only momentarily, and at that always as a harbinger of a coming crisis.[34]

Underconsumption is not a *tendency:* it is an absolute fact. The contradiction between production and consumption potentials is *always* present in capitalism—in all stages of the periodic cycle. During the period of prosperity, consumption increases, but not in proportion to the increase in production. The economic crisis is a manifestation of the conflict between the two potentials. When the gap has widened to the

point where the declining rate of profit makes continued expanding production for profit at the average rate no longer possible, a violent eruption, or crisis, occurs. It is utterly absurd to imply that Marxists deny underconsumption as an aspect of crisis. What Marxists do deny is that the cyclical crisis is *due to* underconsumption.

Sweezy claims that Marx recognized a type (sic) of crisis which stems from underconsumption! Although he criticizes revisionists of the Marxist theory of crisis, Sweezy undertakes exactly the same fruitless task as they did. He writes:

> If the underconsumption theory is to regain prestige and take a place among the important and accepted principles of Marxian economics, it seems clear that a careful formulation, free of the objections which have been levelled at earlier versions, is needed. In the remainder of this chapter an attempt will be made to provide such a formulation.[35]

Despite Marx's clear and explicit refutation of underconsumption theories, Sweezy is resolute. He writes:

> The real task of an underconsumption theory is to demonstrate that capitalism has an inherent *tendency* to expand the capacity to produce consumption goods more rapidly than the demand for consumption goods.[36]

Despite his valiant effort to prove this thesis, the only valid conclusion that can be drawn from the reality of capitalist development is that the inherent tendency is to expand the production of *producers' goods* much more rapidly than of consumers' goods.

Sweezy assumes, but does not prove, that the ratio of the rate of growth in the output of consumption goods to the rate of growth of means of production remains constant. "This conclusion follows from a consideration of production as an organized and synchronized process of making useful articles for human consumption."[37] Such a "consideration" is astounding! In reality there is an irreconcilable conflict between production for profit and production for human consumption.* *The very nature of the means of production as capital* determines the alienation. This is manifested in the disequilibrium between the rapid development of the means of production as compared to the slower development of the production of consumers' goods. This disproportion is overcome periodically by the crisis. But the crisis performs this function only in such a way as to create the conditions for intensifying the contradiction, thus laying the basis for new and more profound crises.

Sweezy draws upon Lenin to substantiate his thesis on underconsumption crises. "Lenin held that a contradiction between production and consumption, *in other words a tendency to underconsumption,* certainly

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* Sweezy notes this contradiction on pages 172-175—only to deny it on page 182!

does exist in capitalism."[38] (My emphasis—A.P.) But which Marxist denies that contradiction? However, the italicized phrase does not at all correspond to Lenin's view; it is Sweezy's own interpretation—a *non sequitor*—of the preceding clause. In capitalism, underconsumption, as Marx and Lenin made abundantly clear, can exist only side-by-side with overproduction. In slave or feudalist society, underconsumption was a concomitant not of overproduction but of an inability to produce enough. Underconsumption was prevalent, yet these societies produced no periodic crises. What is distinct and typical of the capitalist crisis is poverty and want resulting not from a lack of production and consumption goods, but precisely because there is a relative super-abundance of means of production and means of subsistence. The capitalist crisis is a crisis of relative overproduction.

Underconsumption is an *inevitable* consequence (not just a "special case" as viewed by Sweezy[39]) of the process of capitalist accumulation. Consuming power must always lag behind production power. Marx treats the limited capacity for consumption as a factor *dependent* upon the *independent* variable—the process of accumulation under capitalism.

Sweezy concludes his case for underconsumption as follows:

> It is to be hoped that the exposition of this chapter will serve to remove the doubts and hesitations which have hitherto prevented many Marxist economists from accepting the theory of underconsumption as one aspect—and a very important aspect—of the whole crisis problem.[40]

To repeat: Marxists do not deny underconsumption as an aspect of crisis; but Marxists do maintain that it is not *the cause* of crisis. Nor, as Sweezy tries to show, are there underconsumption "types" of crises. Even the great utopian, Fourier, more than a century ago noted the character of capitalist crisis as a "*crise pléthorique,* a crisis of superabundance."[41]

Pointing to idle money and fixed capital, bourgeois economists are quick to admit the overproduction of capital, but they deny the possibility of general overproduction. What is the essence of the overproduction of capital?

> Overproduction of capital never signifies anything else but overproduction of means of production—means of production and necessities of life—which may serve as capital, that is, serve for the exploitation of labor at a given degree of exploitation; for a fall in the intensity of exploitation below a certain point calls forth disturbances and stagnations in the process of capitalist production, crises, destruction of capital.[42]

It is overproduction in that too much capital is produced to be used *profitably.*

> . . . There is periodically a production of too many means of production and necessities of life to permit of their serving as means for the exploitation of the laborers at a certain rate of profit.[43]

What Marx treats as the *distinguishing character* of crisis, viz., overproduction, Sweezy considers as a *result!* Sweezy says that "it would be absurd to say that the cause of crisis is overproduction (true—A.P.); on the contrary, it is obvious that overproduction is the result of the crisis."[44] This conclusion is patently at odds with Marx's description of the crisis as being one of overproduction. For Marx and Marxists there are not various kinds of crises. *All capitalist crises are crises of relative overproduction.*

The contributing factors, all of them *intricately interconnected* but separately analyzed by Marx, are, to mention some: the rising organic composition of capital; the falling tendency of the rate of profit; disequilibrium between the two production departments; the general law of capitalist accumulation; the restricted consumption of the working people; the use of money as a means of payment and as the medium of exchange credit; and merchant and loan capital.

Let us now turn to another "type" of crisis presented by Sweezy. Are "some" crises caused, as Sweezy claims, by the falling rate of profit?

We have already seen that Sweezy explains the falling tendency of the rate of profit as due to rising real wages. Now, a falling rate of profit tends to discourage expansion and even continued production, thus heralding a crisis. This element of truth is confirmed by Sweezy, who, however, construes the restrictive element to be rising wages. Following Marx, we see that the falling rate of profit is caused by the rising organic composition of capital; and the latter is accompanied by a fall in wages relative to production. (The situation might possibly include rising real wages along with a rising rate of exploitation.) The declining profitability does not result principally—if at all—from rising nominal or real wages. The real barrier to capitalist expansion is not the rise or fall in wages, but capital itself.

> . . . There is periodical overproduction of wealth in its capitalistic and self-contradictory form.
>
> The barrier of the capitalist mode of production becomes apparent . . . in the fact that the development of the productive power of labor creates in the falling rate of profit a law which turns into an antagonism of this mode of production at a certain point and requires for its defeat periodical crises.[45]

It is false, then, to assume, as Sweezy does, that crises are *caused* by a fall in the rate of profit. The question to be answered is: what causes the fall in the rate of profit? —A rising organic composition of capital partially and repeatedly checked by various counteracting measures. What causes a rise in the organic composition? Competition and insatiable greed for more profits. Thus, one is finally compelled to investigate the very foundations of capitalist production and of the process of accumulation. And in the course of such an investigation, one will undoubtedly find, as Marx did, an inherent contradiction in the mode of production which produces a variety of other contradictions, the most catastrophic of which

is CRISIS—*the explosion of all the contradictions together.** Economic crises result from all the contradictions and disproportions of capitalism which flow from the *basic* contradiction, namely, between the social character of production and private capitalist appropriation, which is expressed in the anarchy of production.

This is a fundamental and well-known postulate of Marxism, yet Sweezy substitutes secondary and contributing factors for the main cause and basis of *all* crises. He nowhere comes near the fundamental source of all capitalist contradictions.

American Marxists find in the practical political struggle an area of agreement with those of the underconsumptionist schools who recognize the need for raising wages, for government-sponsored employment projects, and in general for increasing the consuming power of society. Marxists join with all forces struggling to better the existing economic life of the working people. But they recognize and insist upon the *temporary* and *partial* nature of such measures, which, while alleviating working-class misery in part, can never be the cure-alls proclaimed by reformists. These ameliorative measures may mitigate, to an extent, the effects of cyclical crisis, but they cannot eliminate the recurrent crises.

It may be granted that Sweezy did not intend that his theory should lead to erroneous, reformist use. That, however, is the inevitable and inner logic of any underconsumptionist theory of crisis.

The deepening of the general crisis of capitalism throws additional light on a fundamental aspect of Marxist theory—the general law of accumulation and the progressive worsening of the conditions of the working people. Let us therefore turn our attention to Sweezy's treatment of these phenomena.

## THE GENERAL LAW OF ACCUMULATION AND THE TENDENCY TO ABSOLUTE IMPOVERISHMENT

In connection with this and other questions examined by Sweezy, the basis of his errors may be found in a misunderstanding or misapplication of Marx's method.

Sweezy construes Marx's method to be the "abstract-deductive method which was such a marked characteristic of the Ricardian school."[46] While it is true that abstraction-deduction forms an integral part of the dialectic method, it constitutes only a part of the latter. And Ricardo did not employ the dialectic method. Marx was neither the first nor the last to use abstrac-

* The innate contradictions in the mode of production are fundamentally denied by underconsumption theories, which see the origin and source of the crisis in the sphere of circulation. For them, crises are not organic to capitalism but can be eliminated within its framework merely by raising consumption.

tion, for all scientists do. But Marx was the first to recognize that the economic laws of motion of capitalism emanate from the inherent contradictions of the system. The analysis of these inherent contradictions forms the essence of the dialectic method applied to economic life. Abstraction, deduction, and indeed induction, are logical methods which are features of, but do not define, the dialectic method.

The use of abstraction is a necessary implement of any scientist. It permits generalizations unencumbered by secondary or subordinate relations, so that the *essence* of a law under examination, or its general operation, can be most easily and sharply defined. Thus the boiling point of water is established at 100° C. In the real world, this law is constantly being modified by the presence of varying atmospheric pressures. But the law is not negated by the modifications. (Similarly, we have seen how Marx abstracted subordinate relations in examining the falling tendency of the rate of profit.) The legitimacy of an abstraction is established by the degree to which it reflects reality; abstractions or assumptions which are the product of the mind alone and which do not reflect reality are invalid.

Sweezy's interpretation distorts Marx's use of abstraction when he states, for example:

> Volume I [of *Capital*] begins and remains on a high level of abstraction. . . . The tendencies or laws enunciated in Volume I are not to be interpreted as direct predictions about the future. . . . As an example we may cite the famous "law of the increasing misery of the proletariat," which Marx called "the absolute general law of capitalist accumulation." . . . The law in question is derived on a high level of abstraction; the term "absolute" used in describing it is used in the Hegelian sense of "abstract"; it constitutes in no sense a concrete prediction about the future.[47]

Again a multiplicity of confusions! An abstraction is not necessarily divorced from reality, but to the contrary, assuming that the law is scientifically derived, it most accurately and clearly reflects reality. *Sweezy's* abstractions are divorced from reality, as we have seen. (Although this is not a treatise in philosophy, we should like to point out that Marx did not use the term "absolute" in the Hegelian sense of "abstract.")

Marx wrote some seventy pages[48] giving concrete examples of the tendency to growing absolute impoverishment in England from 1846 to 1866. This is not merely a question of predicting the future. In stating the general law of accumulation Marx warned that, like all generalizations, it is modified in the real world by many circumstances which convert the law into a *tendency*. There are checks to the law which explain why absolute impoverishment does not develop progressively but with interruptions.

> . . . The very development of modern industry must progressively turn the scale in favor of the capitalist against the workingman, and . . . consequently the general tendency of capitalistic production is not to raise, but to sink the average standard

of wages, or to push the *value of labor* [power] more or less to its *minimum limit.* Such being the tendency of *things* in this system, is this to say that the working class ought to renounce their resistance against the encroachments of capital, and abandon their attempt at making the best of the occasional chances for their temporary improvement? If they did, they would be degraded to one level mass of broken-down wretches past salvation.[49]

This passage makes matters quite clear. If there were no checks, we would have an absolute law: conditions of the working class would become progressively worse, resulting in complete pauperization. The omnipresence of the tendency, however, compels the working class to resist. Social Democracy points to the checks alone—and disregards, or rather denies, the operation of the law discovered by Marx; particular emphasis is placed on the superior economic conditions of the labor "aristocracy" as proof that there is no law of absolute impoverishment. This labor aristocracy has played a special role in splitting the working class. It has sown illusions about the "innately progressive" character of capitalism and the "progressive improvement" of the social conditions of the working class as capital accumulates.

Consider carefully Marx's formulation of the law:

Accumulation of wealth at one pole, is therefore, at the same time accumulation of misery, agony of toil, slavery, ignorance, brutality, mental degradation, at the opposite pole, i.e., on the side of the class that produces its own product in the form of capital.[50]

It is relatively easy to obtain statistics to show that real wages tend to be depressed below the value of labor-power.* Statistics are obtainable on the increase in technological unemployment, part-time employed, industrial accidents and diseases; reduction of the productive life span of the worker; increasing mental diseases; increasing speed-up; the growth and further deterioration of slums and inadequate housing; the growth of the agricultural proletariat (a most important indicator of growing impoverishment); the increasing oppression of the Negro people and worsening conditions of depressed strata, etc.

But statistics alone cannot completely demonstrate the validity of Marx's law. A statistical approach does not adequately consider such incalculable elements as "agony of toil, . . . ignorance, brutality, and mental degradation." Growing insecurity, universally recognized, is very difficult to demonstrate statistically, as are increasing mental anxiety or cultural decline.

The *irregular* and *periodic* character of the law's operation is *clearly* manifested as a *dominant tendency* in periods of economic crises. Succeed-

* About 70 per cent of the families in this country have incomes below the minimum health and efficiency budget requirements. The standard is the *conservative* estimate of the Heller Committee of the University of California.

ing crises are generally more profound and prolonged, bringing with them the most disastrous deterioration in working class conditions.

Not least important is the fact that a summary of these conditions must include a consideration of the miserable conditions of the semi-colonial and colonial peoples, whose lot is largely determined by the domination of finance capital. Therefore, any analysis of absolute impoverishment must embrace the conditions not only of the working class in advanced capitalist countries but also those of the masses in the undeveloped areas exploited by foreign capital.

The law discovered by Marx is not an abstraction divorced from reality. At best, the working class, through its trade union and political struggles, can modify the operation of the law or somewhat influence its effects. But to *eliminate* the tendency, the working class must come to grips with the *capitalist system* itself.

## SOME COMMENTS ON IMPERIALISM AND FASCISM

Concerning those latter sections of Sweezy's volume which deal with imperialism, fascism, and the character of World War II, other reviews have already indicated major weaknesses of Sweezy's exposition. It is paradoxical, however, that these reviewers[51] praised the book as a whole while criticizing Sweezy's analysis of imperialism and fascism.

Sweezy does not consider at all significant one of the major features of imperialism—the dominance of finance capital. He views fascism as a middle-class movement! Thus: "Both the origins and the mass base of fascism are to be found in the middle classes. . . ."[52] Further: "The infusion of new blood into the ranks of the capitalist class is thus one very significant consequence of the victory of fascism."[53] Sweezy's incorrect political analyses are significant consequences of incorrect economic analyses.

## CONCLUSIONS

As previously indicated, much of Sweezy's confusion arises from his misapplication or misunderstanding of the dialectic method. Marx's works on political economy deal with the laws of motion of capitalist society. All motion is explained by inherent contradictions, antagonisms within the very nature of things. Marx's chief concern, therefore, was the unravelling of the basic contradictions inherent in capitalism, which alone would enable him to discover in what direction this society must move. The principles of dialectics employed by Marx become the science of the laws of motion of nature and of society. Sweezy does state this principle, but he disregards it in his analysis. This is most apparent in his failure to relate economic principles and phenomena to the sharpening and unremitting class struggles under capitalism.

Explicitly, Sweezy acknowledges the gigantic contributions to economic theory made by Marx. Implicitly, he treats the economic laws discovered by Marx as abstractions artificially separated in time and space from the phenomena of the real world. While Sweezy accurately states many Marxist principles, he asserts that they are not applied consistently or accurately by Marx in explaining complex economic phenomena. Apparently Sweezy is concerned with saving Marx from his own "mistakes"!

Despite earnest endeavors, Sweezy fails to depict clearly the dialectic relationships of the several Marxist principles to each other and with the manifold economic phenomena in society. For example: although Sweezy does not deny the existence of class struggle, it is absent from his work—it plays no integrated role in his exposition; and although Sweezy acknowledges an increasing rate of exploitation, he either does not relate this fact at all, or relates it inaccurately, to such problems as the falling tendency of the rate of profit, to his wage theory, and to the process of accumulation.

Sweezy's approach differs from that of classical revisionists. Whereas revisionists deny Marx's conclusions, Sweezy either attacks Marx's method of arriving at conclusions, or, in interpreting what Marx meant, distorts the meaning. By substituting different methods, Sweezy not only rejects dialectics but also arrives at conclusions opposite to Marx's (or so emasculates the latter as to deprive them of major significance).

Sweezy's attempt to present Americans with a "comprehensive analytical study of Marxian Political Economy" falls short of the self-imposed task of "discovering what, if anything, can be learned from Marx."

We sincerely hope that this article will stimulate students to study Marx's *Capital* as well as his interpreters.

FOOTNOTES

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44. Sweezy, *op. cit.*, p. 135
45. Marx, *op. cit.*, Volume III, p. 303
46. Sweezy, *op. cit.*, p. 11
47. *Ibid.*, pp. 18-19
48. Marx, *op. cit.*, Volume I, pp. 711-783.
49. Marx, K: "Value, Price and Profit," Selected Works, Volume I, p. 336
50. Marx, K: *Capital*, Volume I, p. 709
51. Dobb, M: Science and Society, Vol. VII, No. 3, Summer, 1943, pp. 270-275; Winternitz, J: Labour Monthly, Vol. XXIX, No. 6, June 1947, pp. 188-192
52. Sweezy, *op. cit.*, p. 332.
53. *Ibid.*, p. 340.

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JOHN P. DOWLING

## *Jim-Crowed Christ*

Christ came down
And He went to church;
But no one noticed
And no one knew
Christ had come down
And was sitting in church—
Sitting in church
In a Jim-Crow pew.

Christ looked around
At those who prayed,
And His eyes showed hurt
And His heart felt shame
For those who prayed
For blessings and grace,
Yet hated a man
Because of his race.

Christ came down
And He went to church
But no one guessed
And no one dreamed
The black man in the Jim-Crow pew,
The black man with the suffering eyes,
Was Christ, the Lord,
In mortal guise.

**ROBERT FOGEL**

# *Mostly Love Stories*

MRS. HICKS couldn't see Mrs. Perkins from where she was standing in the kitchen, but it was easy to imagine what she was doing. She was probably sitting stiffly in the high-backed chair by the window. Mrs. Hicks was sure Mrs. Perkins would be impressed with the neatness and good taste of her apartment, as were all her visitors the first time they came. So she supposed Mrs. Perkins was examining the table, the lamps, the sofa, the rug, the curtains, and all the rest.

She called, "I'll be with you in a minute, Mrs. Perkins."

All she had to do was peel the potatoes for the stew. When that was done she didn't bother to take off her apron but went right into the parlor. It was no shame, she thought, to let people know you do hard work.

"Do you like that lamp?" she asked, catching Mrs. Perkins unawares.

"Yes, I do."

"That one is Chinese. It wasn't originally a lamp. I bought it as a vase from a second-hand store and had the electric works put in later. It comes straight from China. The label on the bottom says so."

"Yes, it looks Oriental." Mrs. Perkins shifted in the high-backed chair Mrs. Hicks knew she would be occupying. "I like your apartment very much," she went on. "Maybe in a few years ours will be like it. Of course, I don't keep ours nearly as neat as yours. I don't think I've gotten the knack of housekeeping yet. Besides, Bob doesn't care too much. He says the only thing he's interested in is finding me home when he gets done with work." She blushed.

It was a natural feeling, Mrs. Hicks thought, when they're married just a few weeks. She used to feel that way in the beginning, and John did, too.

Mrs. Perkins shifted in the old-fashioned chair again. Mrs. Hicks wondered if she ought to invite her to sit on the sofa even though the cushions would get mussed.

"Yes, your apartment is nice. I hope ours will be like it some day."

"You have the apartment old Mrs. Hames used to live in, don't you? She was a very old lady. It was hard for her to get around. Never spent too much time trying to keep it clean. I remember I found dust behind the

radiators. But it's a good apartment and there's no reason why it couldn't make a nice clean home. All any apartment needs, I always said, is a little hard work."

"Yes, I know," said Mrs. Perkins. "But I find it hard to spend a lot of time on the house." She smiled guiltily. "And Bob doesn't care very much."

"That's the way it was with me in the beginning, too, but it doesn't last. I've been married for fifteen years now, and I know how those things are. A year or two and it all wears off—that romantic business, I mean."

Mrs. Perkins leaned forward, aroused. "Oh, you don't mean that. You don't know Bob. Maybe it happens with some people, but it won't be that way with us. When Bob and I are together everything else goes to pot. You've never seen anyone like him before. He's strong and he works hard, but he's soft and easy with me. He had—"

Mrs. Hicks didn't hear the rest of it. Her mind wandered off, remembering how John used to hold her at first, before the silly fight over having children. He'd rub his nose against her cheek and along the bottom of her neck. John was gentle then; he knew the right things to say. It was real poetry he spoke to her. He said it sweetly and low. It wasn't hard to remember those things. When John ran his hand over her hair and around her neck, her nerves would tingle.

"—understanding, that's what he is. You know what I mean, don't you?"

"I know all that, but it's only at the beginning. It only lasts for the first year or so and then it wears off. I know. I've been married for fifteen years. The love at the beginning is only play stuff. It doesn't last. It isn't real. After a while you find you can't spend all of your time at play. You have children to take care of. You begin to spend more time around the house: you begin to notice how dirty the house looks and you want it to be clean. The work starts piling up. Then all of a sudden, instead of it seeming too long till John comes home, it's too soon. And he looks tired and wants to go straight to sleep. But it isn't strange, it isn't hard to understand. He works hard at the factory all day. Why shouldn't he be tired when he gets home?"

Mrs. Perkins murmured something inaudibly.

"As time passes you begin to realize how important a house is. The things that seemed important at first don't seem so later on. You say to yourself, people will judge you by your house, so you've got to keep it clean. A clean house means a clean family; a happy house means a happy family. Instead of waking up at nine, you get up at seven so that you can do a good job of getting the housework done. Cleaning isn't easy, you'll find. It means scrubbing the floors and woodwork. It means polishing the bathroom tile, the kitchen plumbing and the parlor floor until they are shiny like a mirror. People notice if your house is clean or not. Well, I

don't want anybody saying my house isn't spotless. My house has to be as clean and neat as any in the neighborhood."

The visitor stirred again. Mrs. Hicks asked her if she was comfortable. After thinking, Mrs. Perkins replied, "Yes." She looked around the room, then: "You have a lot of nice books."

"Yes, we do." Mrs. Hicks returned to what she had been saying. "You know the housework isn't the only thing that comes up later on. Wait until you've had your children. It isn't like they say in love books. It's hard —it hurts. I don't envy what you'll have to go through. I don't think I could do it again. It hurts worse than anything I know. I lay there screaming for twelve hours the second time. And it isn't only the twelve hours in the hospital—it's the months that come before it. Whatever you do don't have your baby come in the summer. It's hot and sticky and sweaty then, and you're big and clumsy and there's nothing you can do about it. People stare at you. . . . If you're uncomfortable, Mrs. Perkins, why don't you sit on the sofa? I know how hard the chair is."

"It isn't the chair. I'm alright over here," Mrs. Perkins answered. . . . "Where are your children now?"

"At school, I suppose." Mrs. Hicks pulled at her apron. "My husband was glad when the children came. And why shouldn't he be? It wasn't hard for him. When John came home from work, the first thing he'd do was go in to play with the children. I used to think he spent too much time with them. It got me mad and I told him so. That's the way you spoil children. But after a while I got so busy with the housework that I couldn't keep track of how much time he spent with them."

Mrs. Perkins stood up—it was time she got back to her apartment. The older woman supposed she wanted to wait for her husband. It was always that way at first. They walked to the door.

Mrs. Hicks thought her neighbor was a very small woman—not pretty at all. Her hair was a kind of dirty blonde and it came down past her shoulders. Mrs. Hicks wondered what her husband saw in her—she was skinny even for such a short person, and her legs looked bony. Her clothes weren't very good: that dress was one of those cotton things you wear for housework in the summer. She must be very poor. She acted it, anyway, Mrs. Hicks thought.

"You really have a lot of books," Mrs. Perkins said as she left. "Where did you get them all?"

"John, my husband you know, bought them together with the bookcase at an auction. I never used to read them at first but now I do. They come in handy whenever I can steal the time. I'll lend you some if you want. They're mostly love stories—the mushy kind."

AL GREENBERG

# *Paris Letter*

THE same artists and thinkers who were counted among the leaders of the French Resistance movement during the war are now waging a new struggle to preserve French culture. Men and women like Picasso, Matisse, Vercors, Paul Eluard, Jean Cocteau, Elsa Triolet, Aragon, Jean Louis Barrault, Louis Jouvet, Jean Cassou, Leon Moussinac, Claude Morgan, Jean Freville, Francis Jourdain, Aime Cotton and Marcel Prenant—who dreamed and worked for a renaissance of French culture after the war—are being forced to raise their voices in an effort to *save,* rather than advance, all that is great in the French intellectual tradition.

For the first time in the centuries-old history of the Sorbonne, its professors went out on strike; Existentialist Jean Paul Sartre was banned from the air because he dared to compare De Gaulle to Hitler; numerous intellectuals, many of them union members, have spoken up against the unconstitutional abridgement of the right to strike; a committee headed by Picasso—at the request of Charlie Chaplin—protested the persecution of Hanns Eisler in America.

This does not mean, however, that intellectual and cultural activity has been brought to a halt. Far from it. Rather, the intellectual production is increasing, but it certainly cannot be separated from the day-to-day battles for the defense of French Republican institutions.

A "House of Culture," *La Maison de la Pensee Francaise,* has been established in Paris on the Avenue Gabriel. This building houses the *Union National des Intellectuels,* a grouping of organizations of writers, architects, cine-clubs, theater workers, and so forth. When President of the Republic Vincent Auriol officiated at the building's inauguration last October, an enthusiastic public was on hand to meet the leading cultural figures in the country—despite the Metro strike which tied up the city. But, for all the auspicious ceremonies, and the gorgeous interior decorated with new masterpieces of French tapestry, and the genuinely broad nature of the membership it houses, the building is in danger. The enemy is . . . red-baiting.

It is undeniable that the programs of many of these cultural groups are often "left-oriented" (that is, pointed toward a flourishing people's

culture). It is quite true that a number of the participants are, and quite openly and proudly, Communists. But these Communist intellectuals have *earned* their distinguished position. Their Party is the largest in the country. Their selfless and courageous leadership in freeing France from the occupying Nazis is indisputable. They are fighting to defend and extend the best cultural and democratic traditions of their nation. And they number in their ranks some of the finest artists and thinkers in the world. One can be reminded only of the Nazis, therefore—and possibly of the Un-American Committee back in the States—when an organization like the National Writers Committee (CNE), is branded a "red front." The Committee includes Paul Claudel, Catholic playwright and member of the Academy, and such minds as Vercors, Cassou, Cocteau, and Immanuel —whose membership in the Communist Party is anything but established.

Among the "Communist" projects planned by these organizations was a new Encyclopedist movement to be patterned after France's famed Eighteenth Century Encyclopedists. The aim was to chronicle the Resistance and develop a modern French rationalism. Interestingly enough, the most active groups: the Rationalist Union, the National Center for Scientific Research, and Friends of *La Pensee* (a Rationalist publication), are those which equate modern rationalism with dialectical materialism.

As part of the effort to sum up and revive France's culture, Henry Lefebvre, an able young philosopher, undertook a comprehensive eight-volume study of the Marxist contribution to world thought and the "full valued man"—to be titled *A la lumiere du materialisme dialectique.* The first volume was released last November as *Logique Formelle Logique Dialectique* (Editions Sociales, Paris). This book examines in critical detail the fallacies in classical Aristotelian logic and in the more currently-accepted theories of the logisticians, such as Russell, Whitehead and Reichenbach. On the positive side, it emphasizes the inseparability of a theory of knowledge from the "tools" of logic. This series of works promises to be of tremendous significance on a world-wide scale for clarifying the fundamental principles and theories of scientific socialism.

But the Encyclopedia of the French Renaissance is endangered by Marshall Plan importations which are threatening to replace all aspects of French production by physical and ideological terrorism. American Big Capital does not, of course, have a monopoly on reactionary philosophies—yet. However, the Liberation found the decadent French ruling class so weakened that it was apparent that if left to itself it could never have halted the rebirth of a revolutionary French culture. And it is American "aid" and open interventionist support which is arming and emboldening the French neo-fascists.

Included among the items of American "assistance" for French recovery, for example, were large grants to rebuild the Catholic schools. This pressure has been so heavy that in many areas the "ecoles laiques"—

the public schools so important to France's democracy—have been obliged to shut down.

But even this is minor when compared to the miles of Hollywood film footage and the streams of American books and publications which have been capturing the French markets. The cry of *L'Humanite,* French Communist newspaper, that "America degrades the spirit" was perhaps a little too sweeping, but it is unquestionable that the dollar importations have had a disastrous effect on French artistic standards and morals and on popular taste. The youth have been the special victims in this regard. Although it is not easy to gauge the influence of grade B crime movies and horror "comic" strips, as well as other idealizations of the American gangster hero, on juvenile delinquency, American "culture" must take partial responsibility for the alarming rate of criminality among French adolescents. And when one recalls that the social base of German fascism before Hitler seized power were roving bands of hungry, unemployed and irresponsible youth and veterans, the problem takes on new significance.

The true leaders of the French people are not attacking the American nation, but Wall Street imperialism. They are happy to point out that Americans, also, are in that fight. When the NMU sailors aboard the Henry-Gilbert-Costin recently refused to break the strike of French dockers, Benoit Frachon, Secretary General of the CGT, publicly saluted them on the front page of *L'Humanite.* The same issue of that newspaper which called for a boycott of American books also urged its readers to distribute and read *La Grande Conspiration Contre La Russie* by the American writers, Sayers and Kahn.

Georges Cogniot, a leading French Deputy, touched on some of the more complex issues involved in American encroachment on French culture in the October issue of the publication *Democratie Nouvelle.* He pointed out that the United States houses not only the directors of world capital but also the leading exponents of reactionary philosophies. Mr. Cogniot listed five leading schools of American philosophical thought and demonstrates how they are in the service of Imperialism (as did Lenin in exposing Mach): Personalism (Hocking, Flewelling), Pragmatism (James, Pierce), Instrumentalism (Dewey), Neo-Realism (Pitkin, Spaulding), and Critical Realism (Sellars, Santayana). Moreover he points out that native American philosophy has been "reinforced" by such authorities from across the Rhine as E. Husserl, Richard Kroner, and the Viennese logical positivists, Carnap and Feigl. Capitalists the world over are looking to this concentration of intellectual reaction in the United States to buttress their reasoning, just as they are relying on the Marshall Plan to buttress their political and economic plans.

Now for a brief glance at the students. There is a great interest in Marxism among French students, which is expressed in the large attendance at Marxist lectures given outside the regular University channels. The

Communist students have recently decided to publish an eight-page weekly newspaper, which is tentatively called "Combats Etudiants." There will be critiques of the official instruction methods and courses in the University Faculties and theoretical contributions in specified subjects. The editor of each page is in charge of a working group which carries on research and organizes meetings and discussions among the student body to carry the battle of ideas into practical political expression.

Quite a tempest was aroused when eleven Communist students were expelled from the Cite Universitaire dormitories for alleged "political activities"; their crime was to support striking workers. Those who supported the strikebreakers were of course not considered to have engaged in political activity!

The Latin Quarter has only begun to ring with the poems, songs, protest meetings, leaflets and debates of French students, Communist and non-Communist alike, who have pride in their past and love and confidence in the future. For the intellectuals of France are still in the Resistance . . . and, as in the darkest days of Nazi occupation, they know that they will win.

WE INVITE COMMENT,
communications, and manuscripts from all our readers.

Reaction is on a rampage today in the legislative halls, in the offices of the monopolists, in the decrepit university structure, in all the organs of capitalist communication.

But student America is also on the march against UMT, Jim-Crow, fascism, and war. This growing movement requires ideological clarity and positive, cultural expression.

We feel that NEW FOUDATIONS can become a literal Diogenes lamp in providing such clarity. Our aim is to make this the most significant and vital publication in the student field. We can accomplish this—but only with your cooperation.

So let's hear from you—Now! Write us that letter you've had in mind for so long. Send us your research papers, poetry, short stories, drawings.

Do it now!

THE EDITORS

## BOB NEMIROFF

# *Two Poems*

*Filles de France*

In Le Louvre she stands with soft, chaste stature,
In chiselled stone preserved;
Priceless! timeless! behold this sculpture—
Woman's classic curve:
These the lips that loved all ages,
Hers a form untouched by years,
These the eyes that read the pages
Of the folded long-gone years!
Hers a beauty yet unbattered
(These chaste chisellings spell her trance)
These the breasts that hold unshattered
By time, by years, the milk of France.

On Place Pigalle she stands and beckons—
A burnt-out shadow, painted smile,
A cheated lover who loves by seconds,
A child of life no longer a child:
Here on Place Pigalle were traded
Her lips, her breasts, her cups of love;
Here cowers a helpless chicken spaded
Of warmth and ecstasy of love!
Gone all rapture! Gone all pleasure!
Tender shape that's soil'd by lust—
Tapped is all of Life's best treasure!
Milk of virginity spilt in dust!
From slums, from hunger, market-romance,
Here stalks a maiden . . . also France.

O, France is a Venus de Milo of beauty
Chiselled in timeless stone!
And France is a female shorn of her beauty—
But France is not these alone:
For France is a mother on Jour de Bastille
Who marches while pregnant with life . . .
O, into the struggle, caste of her steel,
A babe of France borne of the strife!
O, these the young hands will shape all ages!
These five fingers Pigalle shall move!
This babe a pow'r to smash the cages—
To bring the Venus from out Le Louvre!
From dust of centuries, this worker's womb
Conceives a France releas'd from its tomb!

*Ripples*

Three laughing children
In La Place de Republique
Mold young bodies
To age-worn marble
And paint ripple-pictures
In the water. . . .

Laugh, mes enfants!
What do you see?
What does the water whisper
With its ripple-tongue?
Do you see
Cherub faces
Giggling in
A shimmer of blue?
Will there be
Big circles or small?

Wooden chairs
In La Place de Republique:
Someone's grandmother,
Age-worn, lame,
Sets out chairs
And limps between chairs
Collecting "deux francs"
From the seated.

Laugh, mes enfants!
What do you see?
What does the water whisper
With its ripple-tongue?
Do you see
Washed-out shadows
In a shimmer of blue?
Touch the water—
Will there be
Big circles or small?

Or will there be
Ripples
That sparkle and
Break?

# *The Art of Frasconi*

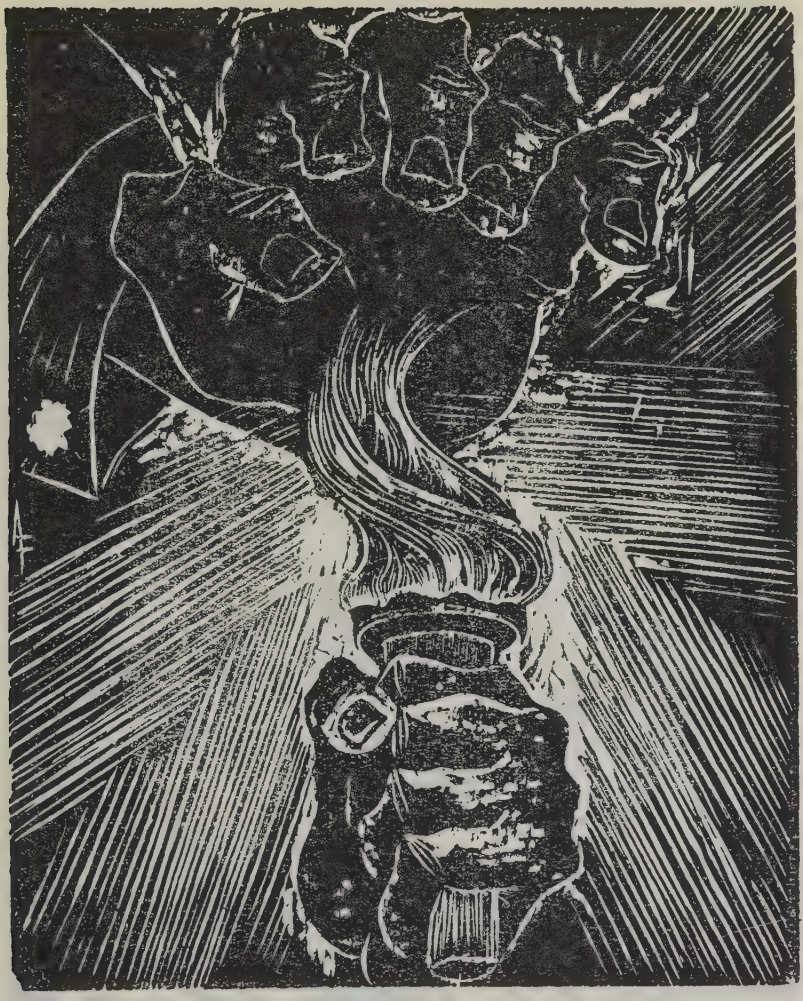
POSADA, Kollwitz, Mendez, Masareel: one thinks of woodcuts and one cannot help but think of their functioning truly as a people's art. Woodcuts are rather like Elizabethan street ballads—powerful, direct, and beautifully "common." Unembellished with precious tints or costly pigments, cut with unpretentious tools on a simple plank, printed by the hundreds on the cheapest grades of paper, the woodcut—unlike the mezzotint, etching and steel engraving—is inherently a popular form.

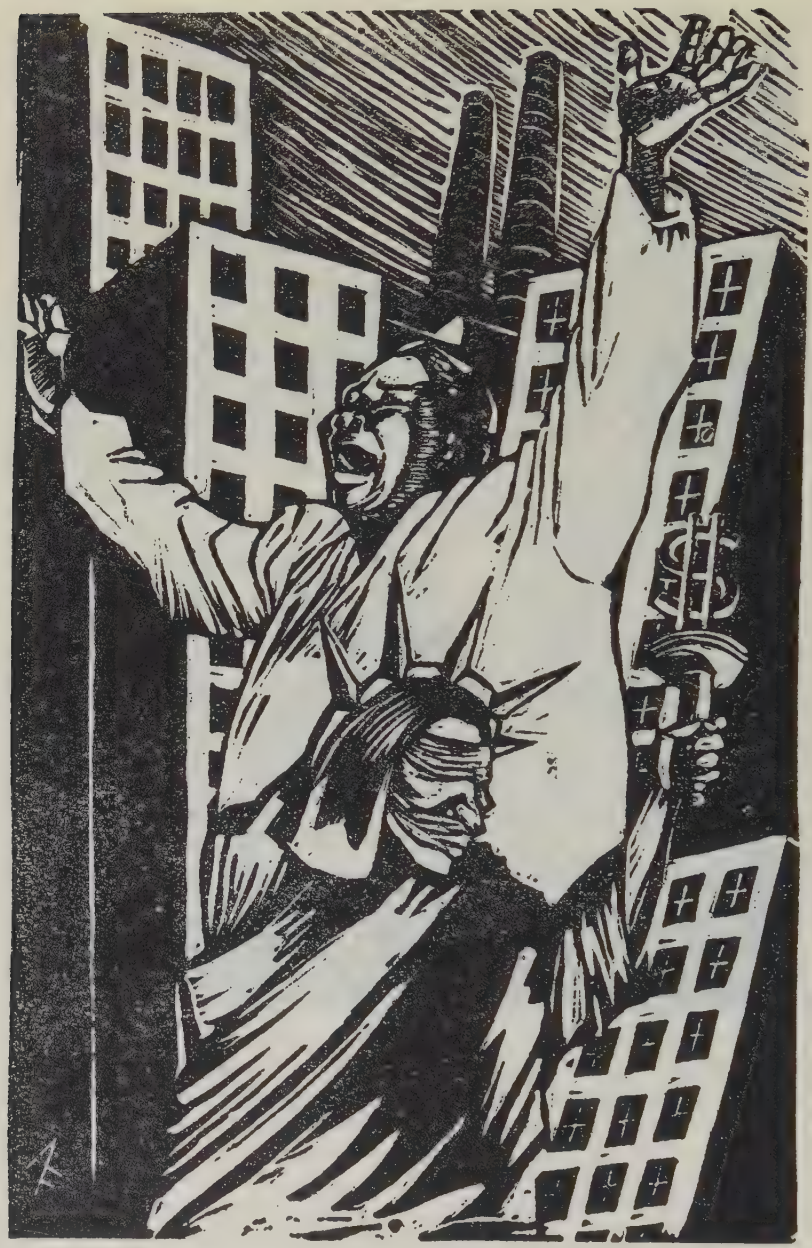
Antonio Frasconi, whose woodcuts follow, does not disguise the medium's rough essence with elegant finesse or besmirch its black and white clarity with idealist configurations. His cuts are compelling in their superb formal design and profound in their expression of reality. Never smug or complacent about his concepts, he searches out telling details and succinctly juxtaposes them to bold masses and simplified areas. Unlike so many of his young contemporaries, Frasconi does not draw sustenance from the grotesque, the deformed or the damned. The arena in which his people struggle is our real world. His men and women are often stark with deprivation, but always their veins are a sluiceway for recuperative power and their minds a holding-place for thought and action.

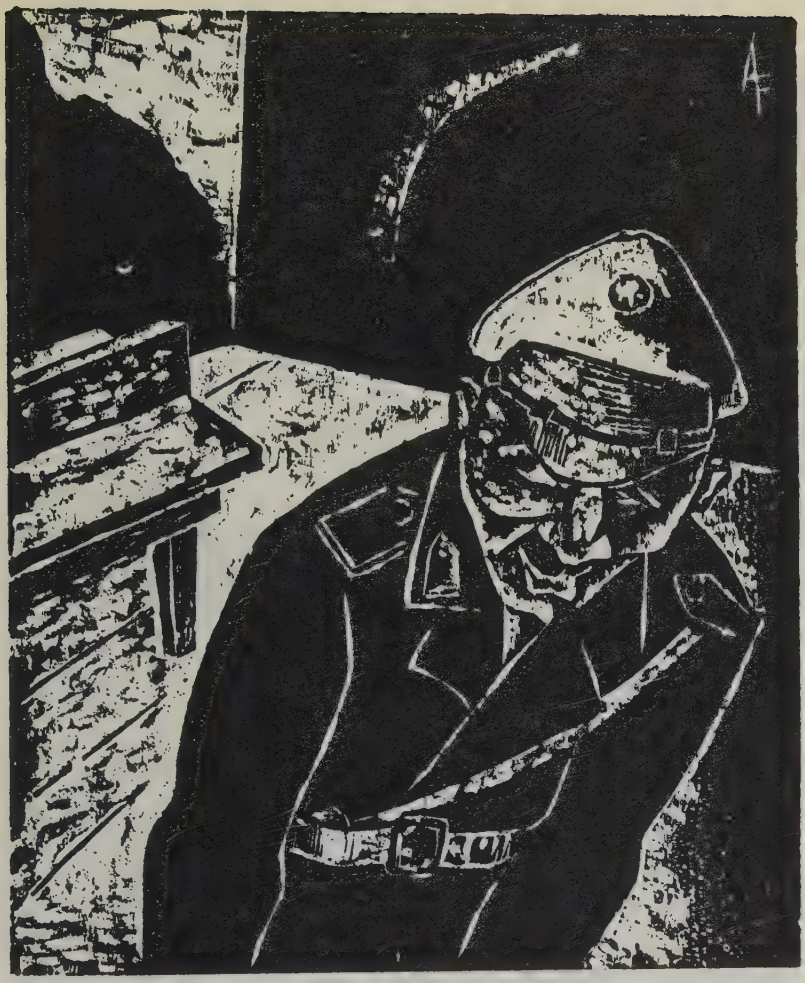
Frasconi, now sojourning in the United States, is a native of Uruguay. In Montevideo he was an active member of the dynamic and progressive A.I.A.P.E. (Agrupacion Intellectuales Artistes, Profesionales y Escritores). He has brought out several books of woodcuts, and has of recent interested himself in fresco painting.

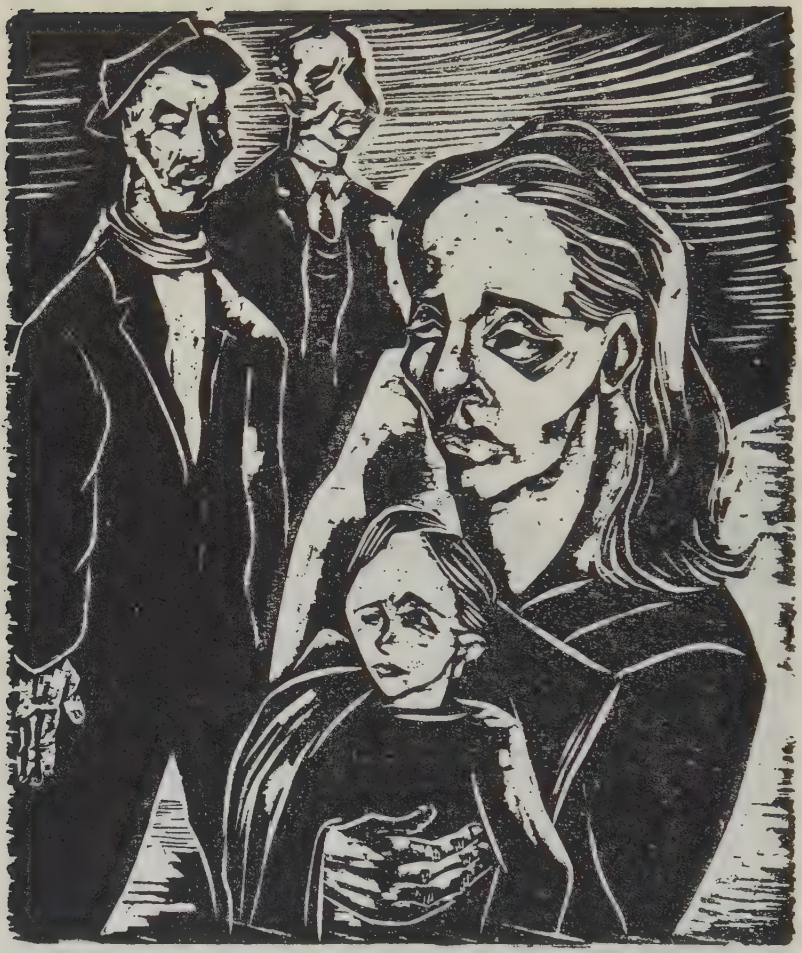
The prints presented here are in the main from a series illuminating "Time Done," the poem by Morris U. Schappes. The Graphic Arts Workshop of which Frasconi is a member plans to publish the entire series shortly. The prints, having been torn from their textual context, are untitled. But these powerful human documents with their integrated content of man in society are readily apprehended and experieced.

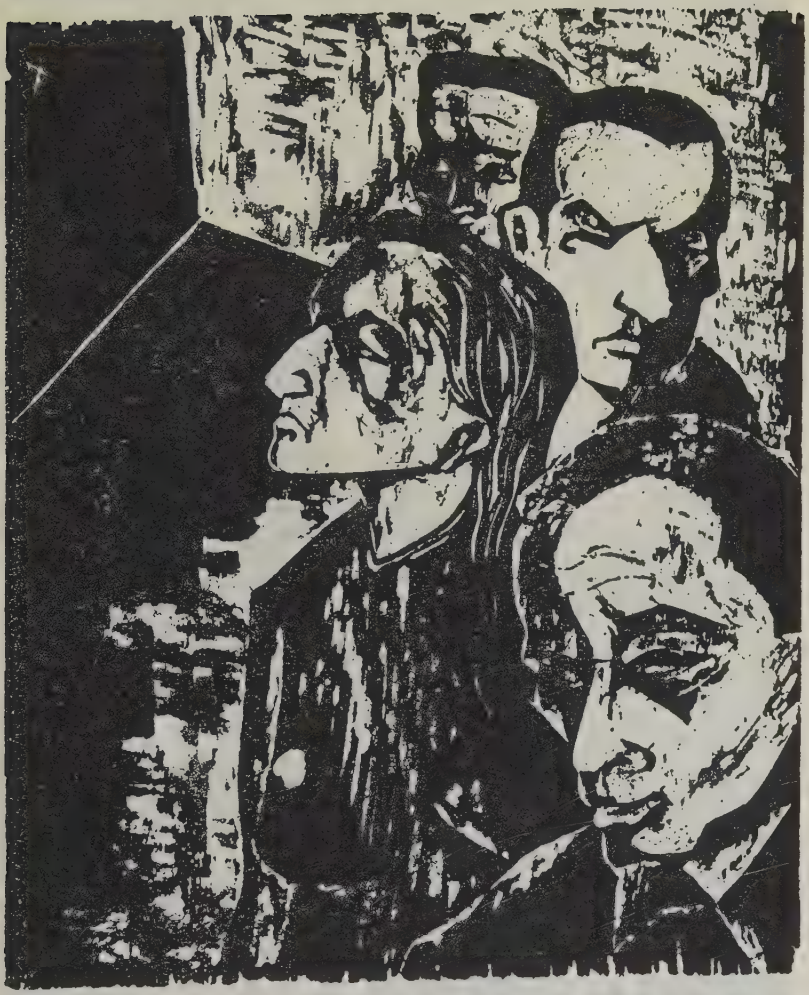
LEONARD BASKIN.

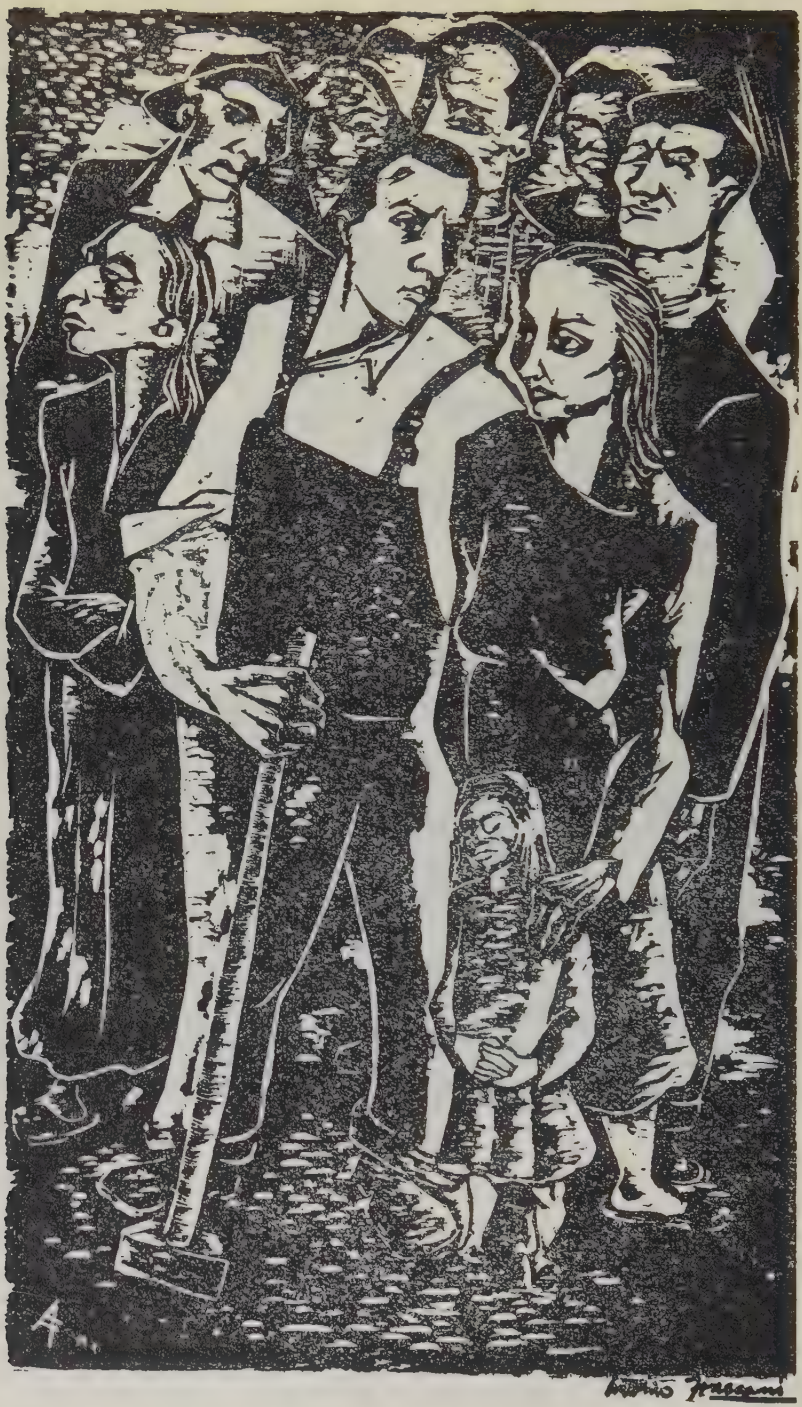


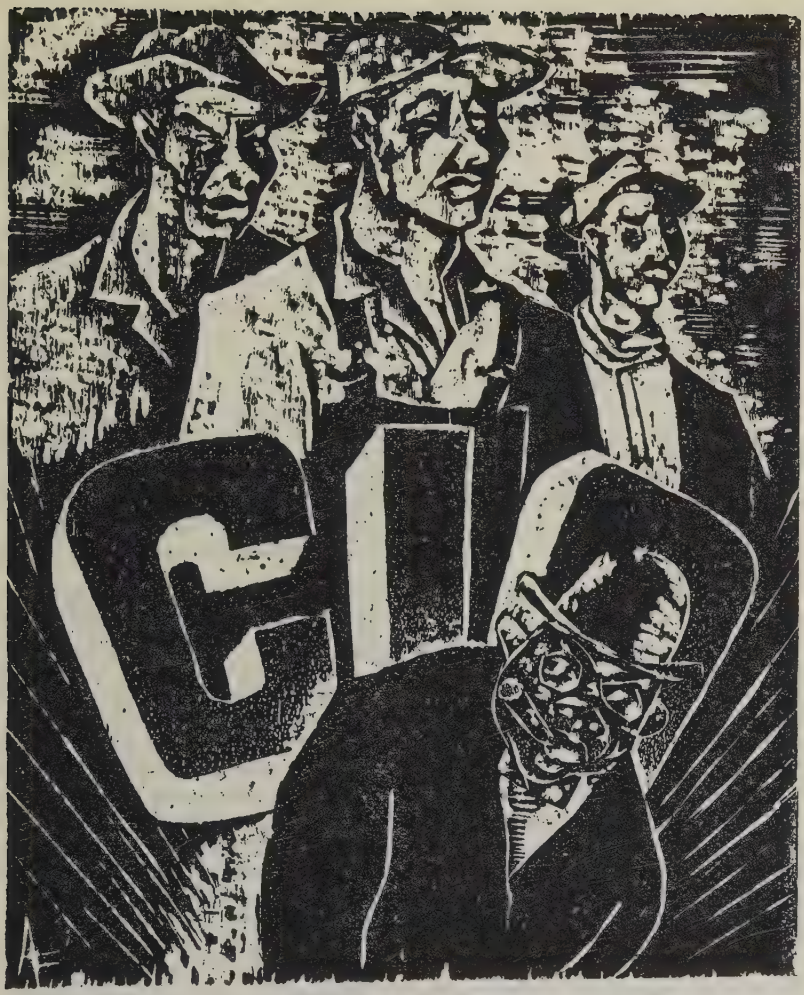











CIO

# *Student Life*

**Edited by MARVIN SHAW**

## THE CAMPUS TURNS TOWARD WALLACE

HENRY WALLACE has spoken to more students during the past few months than any other political leader in American history. At packed meetings on athletic fields, in college auditoriums, and at the gates of universities which refused to permit the former Vice-President to speak on the campus, his challenge to the foreign and domestic policies of American reaction has been greeted with spontaneous enthusiasm.

The comment of the generally conservative *Cornell Daily Sun* was typical: "Henry Wallace made too much sense even for his enemies yesterday. Few of the unprecedented number of Cornellians who packed Bailey Hall for his noontime speech came away unimpressed. When supposed heresy draws that kind of respect, it deserves warm tribute. . . . The people who refuse to consider alternatives to peace and freedom will do well to keep an open mind towards Henry Wallace. He is at least worth listening to. He could prove to be worth following." And the *Western Reserve Tribune,* even before Wallace announced his candidacy, showed him first in a student poll—leading both Democratic and Republican nominees.

Thousands of students began to build the "Wallace for President" movement as long ago as last summer. Today, as the grass-roots organization of a new party gets under way, "Students for Wallace" clubs at nearly every major university and dozens of the smaller colleges are actively participating. Still young, this development already represents the largest political action movement on the campus. In California, a state-wide organization exists. . . . At the University of Michigan, 1,000 members have joined. . . . A New England regional conference had nearly 30 colleges represented. . . . The successful "Wallace Democrats of the University of North Carolina" symbolizes the appeal of the Wallace program in the South.

Perhaps one of the most interesting aspects of the Wallace movement is the campus "ward and precinct" approach by the organization of student "Committees for Wallace" in co-ops, dorms, departments and clubs; all these are part of college-wide clubs.

Throughout the nation there is a crusading enthusiasm, based on the desire of students for a peaceful and secure future, and bred of confidence in the American people. As 200 University of Minnesota students put it at an organizing meeting: "We are determined to contribute our utmost to avert disaster through a positive policy for peace, freedom and security by supporting the policies and working for the election as President of the United States of Henry A. Wallace."

"Gideon's Army" will not lack recruits on the campuses.

## N.S.A. TAKES A STEP BACKWARD

The National Students Association held its first National Executive Committee meeting during Christmas week in Chicago. Reports of the officers, election of a nine-member faculty advisory council, and discussion of organizational problems took much of the time.

Students who remember the excellent "Student Bill of Rights" unanimously and enthusiastically passed at the Constitutional Convention last September—and since then greeted as a major accomplishment of the new organization—will be amazed to learn that the executive committee took no recognition of serious developments in the field of academic freedom. Resolutions calling for implementation of the "Bill of Rights" to fight back against the attacks on student rights which have developed on many campuses during the past few months were voted down. A majority of the "student leaders" present pleaded "lack of information." . . .

A delegation was also elected to begin negotiations for affiliation to the International Union of Students. The fact that this delegation was composed of students who had in the past vigorously opposed the program and activities of the IUS made many students doubt that a really sincere effort was to be made to work out a cooperative relationship. The hasty and ill-considered action of the National Staff of the N.S.A. in breaking off negotiations with the IUS because of events in Czech universities at the end of February bears out this view.

Perhaps the National Staff should be reminded that the indication of an anti-IUS attitude at the Christmas Executive Committee meeting had already been greeted with disapproval on various campuses. At the school with perhaps the most active N.S.A. program in the country, the University of California, the following resolution was passed on January 19, 1948:

"The executive committee of the University of California N.S.A. wishes to express its concern and disappointment with the results of the recent meeting of the National Executive Committee of N.S.A. . . .

"We trust and assume that the recent meeting will not be reflected in any deviation from the program agreed upon by the highest body of the N.S.A., its national convention. In particular, we wish to stress the necessity of implementing the convention's expressed desire for affiliation with the I.U.S. as a means of strengthening international understanding and cooperation among students."

## "OPERATION SUBSISTENCE" AND THE UN-AMERICAN COMMITTEE

Student veterans, who have been trying to get along (without much success) on the $65 and $90 "G.I. Bill of Rights" payments, organized and held a national lobby on January 12-13 to boost subsistence. They met with Senator Taft, Gael Sullivan of the Democratic National Committee, and a score of other Washington big-wigs, and felt that a good deal had been accomplished in the interests of nearly 1,250,000 veterans. The partial increase voted the next week proved them right.

And then the Thomas-Rankin Committee announced that at secret hearings four DePaul University representatives had revealed "Communist domination" of the lobby. According to the *Chicago Tribune* the charges were mainly as follows, that the home in which two of the students were billeted had a picture of Karl Marx . . . and a dachshund named Joe Stalin! It can be reported that the student vets were not thrown into confusion, nor did they retreat in disorder, upon the pub-

lication of such serious charges. The fight for decent GI subsistence continues—despite the Un-American Committee and the four who were frightened by "Joe Stalin."

## *NEW FOUNDATIONS* CONFERENCE CELEBRATES MARXIST ANNIVERSARY

On November 22, 1947 a Student Conference was held in New York City under the joint auspices of *New Foundations* and a number of Marxist campus societies. The gathering, attended by Marxist students on campuses along the East Coast from Harvard to the University of North Carolina, celebrated the Centenary Anniversary of Marxism. Papers were delivered by Professor Dirk Struik of M.I.T. on "Marxism as an Intellectual Force" and by Mr. A. B. Magil, Executive Editor of *New Masses,* on "The Impact of Marxism on American Life." The discussion which followed dealt with problems of Marxist education and plans for improving *New Foundations.*

## A COURAGEOUS AND DEMOCRATIC DECISION

A significant decision by Mr. Lewis A. Wilson, Acting Commissioner of the New York State Department of Education, caused considerable consternation among reactionaries in that state. Mr. Wilson reversed the firing of Francis J. Thompson, formerly an instructor at City College, by the New York City Board of Higher Education; the Board had charged that the appellant was a member of the Communist Party. The Acting Commissioner noted that ex-Lt. Thompson "had an unblemished record" of military service, and that *the Communist Party is a legal and constitutional political organization.* It is interesting to note that Dr. Ordway Tead, chairman of the Board of Higher Education, and a member of the President's Commission (which spoke in such high-sounding terms about the need to defend minority rights, free inquiry and academic freedom), denounced the decision of Mr. Wilson as "astounding" and threatened to appeal to the courts, if necessary.

Coming at a time when each day sees new reactionary measures by the Truman administration ("loyalty" purges, State Department prohibitions against the entry of renowned foreign scholars and scientists who are suspected of ever having been Communists, and fascist-like deportation proceedings against outstanding union and Communist Party leaders), and when assaults on academic freedom are commonplace, Mr. Wilson's democratic decision sets a fine and courageous example.

## "OPERATION HAIRCUT": UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

After 84 per cent of more than 4,300 student voters polled by the Student Legislature had condemned Negro discrimination in 23 out of 26 Ann Arbor barber shops, mass picket lines and boycotts were undertaken by hundreds of students at the University of Michigan. The campus Inter-Racial Association which sponsored and coordinated the activities (beginning December 4th and continuing for several days) was supported by AVC, YPCA, MYDA, the *Michigan Daily,* and many religious, fraternity and dormitory organizations.

The anti-Jim-Crow struggle, which began in May, also drew the support of many faculty members. Legal action under State law was begun against a barber proprietor who refused to serve a Negro customer.

## ACADEMIC FREEDOM: MIDWEST VERSION

In a dedication address given at the University of Wisconsin on December 2, 1947, President Fred stated: "The crowded campuses, the teacher shortage, the need for buildings and for operating funds have clouded the real issue. It is time that someone takes a long and steady look at the goal of education in this country and then does something about it."

But talk is cheap. Just a few hours earlier, President Fred had faced the real and unclouded issue of academic freedom. That afternoon, the university administrative committee composed of the President, Deans and other authorities, passed down a unanimous resolution barring Gerhart Eisler from speaking on the campus. Permission for such a meeting had been requested by the local chapter of the American Youth for Democracy, and the denial has been fought by the AYD, YPCA and Students for Democratic Action.

The AYD appeal from the university's decision quoted the now-famous declaration of academic freedom by President Adams in 1894: "Whatever may be the limitations which trammel inquiry elsewhere we believe the great State University of Wisconsin should ever encourage that continual and fearless sifting and winnowing by which alone the truth can be found."

## THE SIPUEL VICTORY AND STUDENT SENTIMENT AT OKLAHOMA UNIVERSITY

Oklahoma students, more than once, have demonstrated their opposition to Jim Crow in education—as they did while the case of Miss Ada Lois Sipuel for admission to the University of Oklahoma Law School was being argued in the courts. Polls, resolutions, and letters to the editor of the campus paper welcomed Miss Sipuel to the Norman, Oklahoma, campus. A signed column by the editor of *The Oklahoma Daily,* Quinton Peters, spoke out again during the first week in January:

". . . My gripe is the Negro problem. I'm just one student and do not pretend to represent anybody else. And I say that the farce that exists in equal education for Negroes in this state is a superstinker. . . .

"Keeping Ada Lois Sipuel out of Oklahoma University reminds me of another little case of discrimination that any sports fan can recall. Remember when . . . Jesse Owens took a boat to Berlin in 1936 and walked away with a bucketful of Olympic titles?

"And remember when the Chief Discriminator of our times, Cpl. Adolph Schickelgruber, refused to shake hands with the American Negro because Owens was a Negro? . . .

*"Now, that bird made no bones about discriminating. He did it in grand style. But that was Hitler and fascism and we spent a few million lives proving he was wrong."*

Mr. Peters and other clear-thinking students in Oklahoma now have the job of proving that the Supreme Court was right. The State of Oklahoma has seen fit to "obey" the order handed down—to provide Miss Sipuel with equal education without delay—by setting up a Jim Crow, one-woman law school.

The battle for equal and *non-segregated* education must still be fought, and fought hard, in Oklahoma and elsewhere.

# *A Letter from Spain*

## THE STRUGGLE OF THE DEMOCRATIC SPANISH STUDENTS FOR FREEDOM AND CULTURE UNDER THE FRANCO REGIME

*(The following is a communication from a member of the Union Federalista d'Estudiantes Hispanicos; translated from the Spanish.)*

In the midst of the 20th Century, Franco has revived the methods of Torquemada: to destroy ideas by killing all those who think freely. The Dictator has passed like Attila's steed over those intellectuals and Spanish students faithful to democracy and free thought. He has murdered writers, poets, journalists, teachers, professors, artists and students by the hundreds. However, there are still many intellectuals in Spain who have escaped the Falangist extermination. Mostly they are imprisoned, wasting their lives day by day in Franco's prisons, fed like dogs, jammed into barred cells, submitted to tortures, insults and taunts of the Falangist beasts.

Some have "tended freedom," as a result of which the doors of their prisons have been opened so that they might die of hunger and shame in the streets and villages of Spain. How many of Spain's beggars are actually professors, doctors, journalists, writers, or former students!

One thing above all is forbidden them when they are released—to realize their intellectual function. But work as laborers is also prohibited and they are thus condemned to hunger, pauperism, degeneration, tuberculosis, and death. Thus has Franco treated the students and intellectuals; thus has he turned the culturally rich Spain into a desolate waste land.

But in spite of these terrible conditions, a redoubled effort enlivens the spirit of resistance and rebellion against the Franco regime among the anti-Franquist intellectuals and students throughout Spain. In spite of all its efforts, Franquism has failed in its shameless design to make of the Spanish student body an isolated caste within the nation, to turn it into an instrument of fascist politics.

In the Spanish universities of Cataluna, in Euzkadi, the rebellious voices and actions of the students, more strongly and vigorously than ever, rise to the point where the Franquists themselves can no longer hide the clandestine actions of the democratic student organizations. Thus, in one of his speeches, Del Moral, National Head of the SEU—Falange university organization—and Fuehrer of fascist students, proclaimed threateningly:

"And do not forget that if the Falange is deprecated or insulted in the class rooms of the University, a student should face this offense with his fists. . . ."

One sees immediately that under the disguise of "facing the offense with his fists," the Falangist chief calls for violence against all those students who oppose the fascist politics of the SEU. But neither threats nor persecutions can stop the force of the struggle and the actions of the democratic Spanish students. Their deeds become more widespread, their fights are fortified, and their voices join with that of the anonymous student whose poem proclaims:

"Time and time again
Our pain resists
The oppression
Which now agonizes.
Time and time again
Our will for freedom
Is reborn,
Like a virile, inextinguishable flame."

(*From an underground collection of poems of resistance published by the FUE, the Spanish University Federation.*)

Yes, the will of Spanish students, of all the youth and of the people—the will to be free—is reborn each day, and grows with new leaps and bounds till the dawn of liberty. Our struggles and actions become more and more powerful, and our organizations and influence increase.

Students of the Spanish Student Union in Madrid, Valencia, Alicante, Valladolid, Murcia, defying terror, perform brave actions against the SEU and publish their clandestine literature. Many have become the victims of oppression, like the director of the Executive Committee of the UFEH, who was arrested in Madrid. Others are imprisoned, tortured, or deported to Spanish Guinea to die slowly in the Sahara desert. Recently (October 16, 1947) five students, including a woman, were condemned by a Franquist court to imprisonment for two to twenty years. And the sentence of death was meted out to Julio Navas, vigorous director of the UFEH student movement in Spain. But nothing can stop the students' struggles, nothing stops the clandestine publication of the UFEH newspaper in Madrid, "Frente Universitario."

In Cataluna, student patriots gathered together in their national resistance organization, the Frente Universitario de Cataluna, are increasing their energetic anti-Franquist activity.

During the last anniversary of the proclamation of the Republic in Spain, students threw a bomb into the Law School of the University of Barcelona as a protest against the persecutions to which students are subjected.

The voice of the patriotic Catalan students, the clandestine "Orientations," organ of the Frente Universitario de Cataluna, appears regularly in spite of Franquist terror. More than 26 issues have appeared up to the middle of 1947, and copies are distributed by the hundreds in the colleges and schools of the province. This paper denounces Franquist oppression against national Catalan culture and fights for the unification of all Catalan students, of Catalan youth, and of all the peoples of Spain, in a wide anti-Franquist front.

The democratic Basque students, gathered in their national organizations, fight against Franquism and for freedom and the defense of their national culture. In the anti-Franquist action which made the fascists hesitate during the great general strike at Euzkadi, the students of this province contributed to this great episode by supporting actions in Bilbao, San Sebastian, etc.

The actions of Basque students are very important in the Pamplona and Victoria regions. Recently, a certain group of students was arrested in Pamplona because of their underground activities, and in Victoria another group was expelled from a school. The Basque students also have their paper, "Iksale."

Aware of the fact that only a free and democratic Spain can open the doors of the universities to a youth seeking knowledge and progress, the Spanish student body, together with the intellectuals and the whole people, is intensifying its ceaseless struggle to banish the fascist Franco regime from Spanish soil.

## LEONARD BASKIN

# *Three Poems*

*Children's Poem*

Citron trees can bray
when children maimed
bleed down to pray.
Citrons bray
injustice,
when ruined children play.

*Buchenwald*

The whitest birds outlining grey,
living flight, churning the lie
of empty sockets; scented wings flay
dug-up men, blinded to the sky.

Bones of men, the special wonder
of clay and blood, side by side
eyes and brain, a finger's plunder.
Graveless children race to hide.

A lily flowered in half-toothed mouth,
poem rhymed on ribs one by one,
starlings retch, fly home toward south.
I hear my heart and refuse the sun.

*Night of Raziel*

All dreams have ceased
Like empty eyes of dead birds.
Night of Raziel.
Youth lies stretched near doves letting
white blood on silent sands.
Frail thought has ended;
alligators winked, and fear
was new on the tongue of death.
This night of Raziel.
Yellow scents weave webs to catch up
soft meadow-winds, and
red clouds
wash trees where sparrows sing,
moving like dark birds
never singing their song:
song of great nights soothing earth's agony.
Eastern stars thread to birds without
shadows.
Night of Raziel.
Snows of sands, flurries of falling time,
silence,
hollow and green.
The crackling of light in night's
long tresses is red, soon
kissing water ponds, death-wreath
of roses.
Sad, great night,
O heavenless night of terraces of
courage.
Night of Raziel. . . .

Note: Raziel, a young Palestinian, gave his life after killing several Nazi engineers —and saving sources of oil for the Allies.

CARL GERSUNY

# *Seth Luther: American Labor Hero*

OUT of the obscurity of early American labor history steps Seth Luther, a man of whom it can be said that he was born one hundred years too soon, much as certain so-called labor leaders of our time were born one hundred years too late. A vital figure in the working-class movement of the 1830's, a leading agitator and organizer in his day, Luther sets an example for the labor-progressive movement today.

Seth Luther was born in Rhode Island in 1795, the son of a pensioned Revolutionary soldier. His ancestors, it is conjectured, were the Welsh Luthers who settled in Rhode Island in 1650. The influences of his youth were those of the post-Revolution. Rhode Island was then characterized by unsettled political conditions involving anti-Federalist riots and conflicts over the entry into the War of 1812.

Luther received little formal education, and later on he prefaced his speeches with the statement that he was only a "plain, uneducated mechanic." Although he disclaimed any oratorical ability, Luther's writings demonstrated extensive reading in current periodicals and in such classics as Plutarch's *Lives,* and his rhetoric and wit were renowned throughout the labor movement.

The egalitarian colonial traditions and hatred of tyranny and oppression which find expression in the Declaration of Independence constitute the framework of Luther's outlook. A constant theme in his work was the defense of the Revolution against attacks by the new capitalist class.

We hear nothing about Seth Luther until 1817, when, at the age of twenty-two, he left New England and set out for the frontier. He travelled extensively in Ohio, the Indian country, and the South, traversing the slave regions as far as Florida. The ten or more years spent in the West and South undoubtedly did much to prepare him for his later role in the labor movement. The frontier regions were characterized by a democratic spirit derived from the severe common struggle against nature and against

the land companies and their political tools. Luther's later speeches reflect that spirit.

By the time Luther returned to the East he was in his thirties. Things had changed during his absence. The 1820's were characterized by a tremendous industrial expansion. The first woollens factories were established in New England. Cotton mills shut down by British dumping after the War of 1812 were reopened, and new ones were built. Between 1820 and 1830 iron production doubled. Also there was a great development in transportation. Canals and turnpikes had sprung up, and outlying regions could now be supplied more easily with Eastern commodities. And accompanying these was the large growth of the population.

Trade unions had been formed as early as 1790, but they subsequently disappeared. "Conspiracy" trials and unsuccessful strikes eliminated some of them, while the depression of 1819-22 wiped out the remainder. After 1823, however, new unions came into being and engaged in struggles for higher wages, a shorter work-day, against child labor and for free education. In short, there had been a great expansion of capitalism and a sharpening of the class struggle.

Luther was profoundly affected by these developments, which were so markedly in contrast with his frontier experiences. He went to work as a carpenter and discovered that the master carpenters had become capitalists seeking to increase profits at the expense of journeymen like himself. Wages were cut and the work-day was lengthened.

Early in 1832 a strike of ship carpenters in Boston was broken. Luther tells of overhearing some merchants in an inn who boasted that the shipwrights had thrown themselves at the mercy of their employers. Aroused, Luther decided to provide the answer. He travelled far and wide in New England, trying to stir the factory workers and journeymen to organize and fight back. Everywhere the call was the same: united labor action. Defeats served only to drive him to greater efforts in behalf of the New England workers.

It was in this period that Luther delivered his *Address to the Workingmen of New England.* This speech, given in Boston on July 6, 1832, was a call to workers throughout the East—a call to organize and fight back. It contrasted in bold colors the reality of class society and the principle that all men were created equal. Luther recalled the people's sacrifices during the Revolution and warned that the rights won in that struggle were in danger—that in fact some were already being denied the people by "the powerful and inhuman grasp of monopolized wealth."

The speech was highly influential. It stirred the labor movement, and even the capitalist press was obliged to take notice. The *Hampden Whig,* a Springfield, Massachusetts paper, said that the situation Luther described was "not only alarming, but absolutely shocking to the mind of free and patriotic man." Other papers made similar comments.

The vested interests soon took the offensive against Luther and sought to isolate him by the now-familiar techniques of "misrepresentation and slander." In Luther's words, these tactics were "extremely active in endeavors to injure our cause; and persons interested in continuing the present abuses are now and probably will always be determined to crush me. 'Apostle of Sedition,' 'Disorganizer,' 'Disturber of the Peace,' 'Agitator,' 'Spy' . . . are terms freely applied to me by the manufacturers and their minions. . . . I have been told . . . that I was lowering the standard of morality by delivering this address."

Luther stated, however, that it was of little consequence what happened to him personally so long as the workers continued to struggle against oppression. He gave the rest of his life to that struggle.

In 1832, Luther joined the staff of the *New England Artisan,* a weekly labor paper published in Rhode Island under the editorship of Dr. Charles Douglas. As the traveling agent of the paper, Luther canvassed for subscribers. In addition, he wrote for the journal and advertised his New England Address—which went through three editions—in its pages.

When the headquarters of the *New England Artisan* moved from Rhode Island to Boston, Luther went along. In Boston he helped form the Trades' Union of Boston and Vicinity, a central city labor organization similar to those which had been formed in New York and other cities the previous year. These labor organizations consisted of associations of workers in different trades and assured mutual assistance and coordination in the strike movements of the period. In February of 1834 Luther wrote the call addressed to the Mechanics of the City of Boston and Vicinity for a convention to form the Trades' Union. This convention was held during the following month.

A delegate of the house carpenters, Luther was elected secretary of the organization and was voted a member of the committee to draft a constitution. However, this organization lasted only twelve months, probably because in its all-embracing "unity" employers were included.

The following year Luther helped write an important document known as the Boston Circular. Affirming the intention of workingmen to dispose of their free time as they saw fit, this circular described the ten-hour movement as "neither more nor less than a contest between Labor and Money: Capital, which can only be made productive by labor, . . . is endeavoring to crush labor, the only source of its wealth."

The authors reiterated the determination of workers to secure the ten-hour day, warned against the use of scabs, and refuted the then-current myth that increased leisure time would lead to immorality or drunkenness among workers. The capitalists are completely dependent on labor, the circular went on to say, and when "they intend to starve us into submission to their high will we pity their infatuations and have painful apprehension for the safety of the Social Fabric."

Reprinted in Philadelphia, the Circular was the immediate cause of the general strike which won a ten-hour day for the workers of that city. This was the first general strike in the United States, and possibly in the world. A letter to Luther from John Ferral, a Philadelphia labor leader, relates how the cordwainers, weavers and stevedores went on strike after a reprint of the Circular was distributed. The striking groups called for general labor support, and the unity which followed resulted in a complete work stoppage. ". . . Our heartfelt thanks [will] be poured forth to A. Wood, Seth Luther and Levi Abell, for the Circular . . . which called forth the energies of the workingmen of Philadelphia and knit them together in brotherly feelings by which they attained their just object." Elated by this victory, Luther visited Philadelphia after the strike had been won and described the moment as the happiest in his life.

In July of 1835 Luther visited the Newark Trades' Union as part of a tour he was making for the Boston housewrights. The aim was to bring the organization into the ten-hour movement. A few days later, he addressed the New York General Trades' Union. Here he described the problems encountered by the Boston carpenters in their struggle for a shorter work-day, and he requested the support of the New York unionists.

The year before, 1834, had seen the formation of the first national labor organization. This founding convention, however, had been poorly attended, due to the cholera epidemic. The total trade union membership was then only about 26,000: New York and Brooklyn led with 11,500; Philadelphia had 6,000; Boston followed with 4,000; Baltimore counted 3,500; and finally there was Newark with 750 and Washington, 500.

Luther was a corresponding member at the second convention of the National Trades' Union in 1835, and he was appointed to a committee which prepared an appeal to all workers in the United States to affiliate with the National Trades' Union. The appeal showed the necessity of forming Trades' Unions where they did not exist and of expanding the old ones.

At this convention, also, Luther spoke on conditions in manufacturing, particularly in the cotton mills. He called for a detailed study of the progress of the ten-hour movements to ascertain and publicize the influence of unions in improving conditions. And it was he who was responsible for the formation of a speakers' bureau and publications office for the National Trades' Union, to be supported by a per capita assessment of all affiliates.

In addition to his militancy in organizing the workers and leading them in struggles against the 13- and 14-hour day, Luther fought against child labor and for free, public education. The extension of education on a public basis was then of major interest for the labor movement. Some sections of labor became so thoroughly enmeshed in the issue as to become convinced that all the troubles of the oppressed workers would

vanish with the advent of a democratic educational system. The Workingmen's Party of New York even split in two over this question.

Luther's perspective here was well-balanced. The "manufacturing establishments are extinguishing the flame of knowledge," he said, by preventing the workers from obtaining an education. Moreover, in many mills, books, pamphlets and newspapers were absolutely prohibited. He pointed out that in New York there were 10,000 children who received no education whatever. But to him the struggle for free and extended education was only a part of the larger struggle of the workers to win a better life.

A newspaperman himself, he pointed out the venality of the bourgeois press and its anti-working class orientation. The workers must establish their own press not only for self-education, but also to strike fear into the hearts of the monopolists and tyrants:

> The public press has been a powerful agent in the hands of the aristocracy of all parties to deceive us. . . . Workingmen will never accomplish anything they wish, until they cease patronizing mere party papers and establish a press and support it, which shall be conducted on the principle that there are two parties, viz: the producers on the one hand and the consumers and accumulators on the other. . . .

Similarly, Luther exhorted the workers on every occasion to defend the Revolution in which they or their fathers had fought. His Fourth of July address to the workingmen and mechanics of Brooklyn (1836) attacked the pompous orators who presented the Revolution as a past, completed, and static event:

> It has been represented that the actors in the great drama of the revolution had accomplished all that could be done for the advancement of human happiness. Consequently we have nothing else to do but to enjoy the fruit of their labors and celebrate their virtues once a year. . . . Such orators and such orations, have, either from accident or design, deceived the great mass of the people and made them blind and willing dupes of designing men.

The ruling class uses the Independence Day celebrations as the tyrants abroad utilize pageants and parades. The aim is to distract the people and to "prevent them from thinking, reasoning, acting in such a manner as to hurl their oppressors from the positions they occupy."

Luther's view of the American Revolution was that it was a continuous struggle: the rights won in the war—many of which were crystallized in the Constitution and particularly in the Bill of Rights—must be militantly defended and extended by the workers. Thus, Luther's 1832 New England speech, after describing industrial conditions, concludes with a call for action in these terms:

> What must be done? Must we fold our arms and say it was always so and always will be. If we did so, would it not almost rouse from their graves the heroes of our revolution? . . . Let the word be onward! onward! . . . We are the majority!

In his Brooklyn speech, after noting that there was much greater equality among the people before the Revolution than after, Luther continued:

> It is much more difficult now, for a man to be possessed of a house to shelter his family than it was at that period. The difficulty is increasing, in consequence of the rag money system which is placing all the real estate, or nearly all, in the hands of unprincipled speculators and monopolizing aristocrats. . . . Those who build houses these days have none of their own and are dependent on a combination of landlords for shelter. . . . It was not so before the revolution and I expect that another revolution will be necessary before the rights of the people will be respected and the reward of honest industry secured on just and equitable principles. . . .
>
> The workingmen bared their arms and their bosoms in '76 and they are about to do it again in '36. The Workingmen of '76 stood on our battlefields, scorning the mercy and defying the power of foreign tyrants; and we of '36 despise the power of domestic foes to rights purchased with blood and [which] if necessary must be maintained with blood. The minions of domestic tyranny must be made to feel that a people to be free have but to will it. We will try the ballot box first; if that will not effect our righteous purpose, the next and last resort is the cartridge box.

Luther made a sharp break with the two capitalist political parties of the day, the Whigs and the Democrats. He told the New England workers in 1832 that "All parties have deceived workingmen. . . . [For] our cause to prevail we must take our business in our own hands." In 1836, he continued in the same vein:

> The pretended Representatives of the people of *all parties* have been for years pursuing a course of self-aggrandisement and ruinous corruption; while the workingmen have been deceived and juggled out of their rights by the cry of Whigism or Democracy triumphant, as the case might be. The leaders of all the great political parties which have cursed the country for many years past have been engaged in robbing the workingmen by partial and unjust legislation.

It is against this background that one must see Luther's active role in the Rhode Island free suffrage struggles. Ownership of property was still a qualification for voting in that state, as in many others. In 1833, Luther delivered an Address on the *Right of Free Suffrage,* and in the same year he joined the newly-formed Rhode Island Commission for the Extension of Suffrage. In 1840 the Rhode Island Suffrage Association was organized; after Luther became a member, this body sent him out on a speaking tour. Luther's slogan was "Peaceably if we can, forcibly if we must." The middle-class leadership was not too happy about associating with this radical from the working-class, and Luther himself knew that he did not enjoy their confidence.

In 1842 the People's Party was formed in Rhode Island. A manhood suffrage constitution was ratified by obtaining the signatures of a majority of the people in the state without going through the old legislature. Thomas Dorr was elected Governor under this constitution. When Gov-

ernor King, who ruled under the old constitution, called out the militia and pursuaded President Tyler to send federal troops, the middle-class reformers speedily and gladly relinquished their role in the movement. Luther, however, hurried to Providence, where Dorr was organizing his militia to storm the arsenal. Luther was at the cannon during this attack, and he is reputed to have been one of the few who did not run away when the shooting started.

Dorr subsequently attempted to convene the people's legislature at Chepatchet, a small village sixteen miles from Providence. Luther served as organizational secretary of the camp.

Dwindling popular support obliged Dorr to disband his militia late in June of 1842. He and his supporters, including Luther, were arrested immediately and marched all the way to Providence without rest, food, or drink, their hands bound behind their backs. Indicted for rebellion, Luther—at the age of forty-seven—was tried and then convicted on August 25, 1842.

The unspeakable prison conditions had a telling effect on this intense fighter for the liberation of the working-class, and ultimately his mental stability was affected. On one occasion he set fire to his cell and ran away. But he was apprehended and re-arrested for arson after the termination of his original sentence.

When he was finally released, Luther went on a speaking tour to describe and denounce prison conditions. In March 1846 he attended the ten-hour convention in Manchester, New Hampshire, and was appointed to a committee to "put the ten-hour system into effect."

But the long years of incessant struggle and the hardships of prison life had their ultimate effect. A broken man, Luther enlisted to serve in the Mexican War "to get away from it all." He was in fact reputed to have been the first volunteer in New England. But Luther apparently did not get very far, and there is no trace of him in army records. A tragic victim of the class struggle, he died that year (1846) not long after his commitment to an asylum for the mentally deranged.

Seth Luther, as we have seen, was a militant organizer and leader of labor. And it is interesting to note that, like a number of contemporary working-class leaders in Europe, he is really a kind of precursor of Karl Marx and Frederick Engels. His death the year before the *Communist Manifesto* was written and two years before its publication in 1848 is symbolic.

Let us briefly evaluate Luther's theoretical armament. We find, on examination, a kind of groping for theory without a fully conscious realization of its necessity. Too often Luther seemed to be looking backward and thinking, in idealized terms, of the egalitarian spirit of the Revolutionary period. He could not yet see the future of the working-class movement—socialism—and he therefore remains a kind of transitional

pre-socialist revolutionary.

But Luther had already reached a number of important conclusions, most of them probably derived directly from his practical experiences rather than from any reading or deep theoretical work. He knew that he was participating in an uncompromising class struggle. "The rich," he said, "are and ever have been in conspiracy against the poor to keep them in subjection."

The little economic thinking Luther demonstrated is rather crude, but it deals with fundamentals and is pointed in the direction of Marxist political economy. He contrasted

> the producers [workers] on the one part and the consumers and accumulators on the other. The one producing all and consuming but little, the others producing nothing but consuming and accumulating almost all the wealth of the others. The first a vast majority, the last a contemptible band of drones in the social hive.

Luther recognized the "free" character of the modern working-class as compared with previous exploited classes; he showed that, whereas slaves must be cared for by their masters when they can no longer work, the capitalists have no responsibility toward the workers who have "amassed immense wealth not for themselves but for the owners."

The Brooklyn speech describes and denounces the relative impoverishment of the people as a result of currency inflation, with prices outstripping wages. Luther attacked indirect taxes concealed in the price of consumer goods at a time when the Treasury had a $30 million surplus. The workers pay all the taxes, he said, because they are the "real and only producers of wealth."

We have already had occasion to note some of Luther's views on the role of the state (which he did not generalize into any theory, however). On the same subject, he also said:

> I am now prepared to assert without fear of refutation that the producing class, the Workingmen, have been most grossly, wickedly and most abominably deceived. They have supposed that this government was and is a government of the people. It is ostensibly so, we all know. . . . I am referring to the course of legislation throughout the whole country. I assert fearlessly that a spirit of monopolizing avarice, cold, heartless, unfeeling, unsatiable avarice is the real governor, the veritable tyrant, which holds unlimited and uncontrolled sway over every hall of legislation in the United States.

He denounced the class "justice" of the courts ("which would disgrace the court of Mahmud, Sultan of Turkey") in connection with the "conspiracy" trials against a number of journeyman tailors who resisted a wage cut:

> The working men struggle against the wind and tide of what is called national prosperity; at the same time the employers strain every nerve to reduce our wages

still lower. If the workingman complains he finds an indictment for conspiracy thrust in his teeth. . . . It is gravely asserted from the bench of polluted justice, "that employers have the right to combine to reduce wages" while the employed are fined and threatened with imprisonment for resisting oppression. The court which permits the murderer and assassin to pass through the fiery ordeal of the law unscathed, has used every exertion to destroy the unalienable rights of those who are called the backbone of the nation—only on two occasions however are they so termed—once just before an election, the other on the Fourth of July. Is this the *liberty,* is this the *independence* you celebrate this day? If it is, the serfs . . . of Russia may with propriety laugh you to scorn and the wild Arab of the desert may thank God and Mohamet his prophet that he is more free than you are.

Luther's working-class internationalism should also be noted. His interest in workers abroad was expressed in his Brooklyn speech, his description of the exploitation of the British workers being so detailed that one historian concluded that Luther was an English immigrant.

Luther had no false illusions about the blessings of capitalist "prosperity," as is evidenced in the following: "when Wall Street robbers thrive and . . . soldiers starve, then the cry is the country prospers; business is good; the times are prosperous; when these gentry fail in some project to bleed the people, they cry 'the country is ruined.'"

The one serious weakness in Luther's career was his apparent failure to fight for the abolition of Negro slavery at a time when its key importance was becoming ever clearer. His failing on this score is undoubtedly reflected in his decision to fight in the Mexican slave-extension War.

You will not find Luther's name and life in many history books. The heroes and victims of the workers' struggles against exploitation and for democracy rarely appear in our texts. But those who are continuing his fight to defend the Bill of Rights and liberate society from the yoke of capitalist oppression and war can take renewed courage from his example. His activities and speeches demonstrate the deep, traditional roots of the movement for independent political activity by labor and for a third party. His continued and increased efforts, in the face of vicious red-baiting and "spy" scare propaganda, constitute a thorn in the side of our own "Wall Street robbers" and their plans for fascism and world conquest.

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**HERBERT L. SHORE**

**and FREDERICK BOYDEN**

# *Four Contemporary Novelists**

*Clarkton,* by Howard Fast. New York, Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1947, $2.75. *The Gentle Bush,* by Barbara Giles. New York, Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1947, $3.50. *Masters of the Dew,* by Jacques Roumain (translated by Langston Hughes and Mercer Cook). New York, Reynal and Hitchcock, 1947, $2.50. *The Needle's Eye,* by Timothy Pember. New York, Reynal and Hitchcock, 1947, $3.00.

ART is a human, and therefore social, activity. It is the product of the artist's exerience, which is assimilated, judged, and refracted by the prism of his imagination. The artist synthesizes rather than analyzes; he interprets an experience as a whole rather than by breaking it up into its component parts. He uses his "feeling" as he creates, and his appeal is to feeling. Yet this does not place him or his work in some mystical or isolated realm. The artist's subject matter, his criteria of selection, the way in which he uses his craft—his style and kind of imagery—stem from his experience as a human being: a man in society. Through his art, he communicates with other men, and whether or not he will admit it, he is attempting to say *something* to *someone.*

Even those artists who seek escape into "beauty," "form" or what is obscurely called "art for art's sake," have, by their very act of withdrawal, commented on, judged, and spoken to their fellow men. Art is not a soliloquy, an act of mere self-gratification. Recognizing the need for self-expression, there is some justification for describing it as a "hunger" or "obsession." Nevertheless, the artist wants to do more than satisfy a desire contained within himself. He creates paintings that other men see; he writes books that other men read: he has something to say about life that he believes other men should know. If he thinks of this as a soliloquy, at least he hopes it will be overheard.

To recognize the social nature of art is to admit the responsibility of the creator to his audience. Any interaction between men carries with

* The Editorial Board is cognizant of the fact that there are differing opinions on the novels discussed. We invite comment for publication in our next issue.

it responsibilities. The artist is in no way exempt from these. We will suggest what some of them might be.

In literature, the author is responsible to his reader, and not to his "art" in an abstract sense—as if it were a Platonic Idea in heaven; nor to himself in a mystical sense—as if he didn't care whether his work were read; nor to a direct political program in the sense of imposing on a story political judgments and tactics—instead of having politics, as it does in life, grow out of the story. In communicating through language his knowledge and evaluation of reality, the author should render his parallel to life in as broad a context as possible within the limitations of his medium and experience. He is responsible for telling the truth that he knows so that its impact will enlarge the reader's understanding of the forces and conflicts within himself and the world. A work of fiction not only creates an experience for the reader at the moment it is encountered: it influences his judgments, his knowledge and, therefore, his action long after the book has been read. In this way, works of fiction play a social, political and ethical role. The "esthetic experience" reacts, through the reader, upon life—from which it was wrung.

The author is responsible for using his craft so that what he has set out to communicate will be communicated. His form should express his content as completely as possible. This involves fresh exactness in style and a refusal to use devices or sounds for their own sake; it means saying new things, and saying the old true things in a new way. Lubbock has ably defined this responsibility regarding form and its relationship to content: "The best form is that which makes the most of its subject—there is no other definition of the meaning of form in fiction. The well-made book is the book in which the matter is all used up in the form, in which the form expresses all the matter."

It is the author's responsibility to be honest. The social function of communication is debased by lies. Yet, as a human being caught in the motion of society, the author is subject to all kinds of pressures and influences. These help to form the principles or philosophy by which he interprets his experience. But pressures often lead the author to compromise his belief. The attempt to say what one believes is hard today; yet the author must always and consistently evaluate experience according to his formulated (or unformulated) judgments. Some great artists judged what they saw, explicitly; Tolstoy, Dante, Proust and Balzac are a few examples. Others let the story speak for itself.

Of course, the implication here is not that fiction should become pamphleteering. Though some pamphlets are great works of art, they are another medium, insufficient for saying the kind of thing that fiction says. Interest in people, for the novelist, is primary. What he "has to say" must emerge from his characters in action. He cannot begin with a theory and then contrive characters and situations to *prove* that theory. If he does this,

he fails in his responsibility to his reader, whose scope will not be enlarged, whose direction of change will not be significantly affected because he is not convinced.

The novelists discussed below are conscious of their role in the struggle for social progress. They see change as an interaction between man and his environment, between the economic basis of man's life and the "ideological superstructure" growing out of it. They recognize the class nature of society as formulated by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. With their art, these writers hope to influence the actions of men. How do they measure up to the standards of responsibility outlined above?

Sentenced to jail for his defiance of the Un-American Committee, Howard Fast is a sincere and talented writer, working under too great a pressure. His latest novel is a failure, if judged by the suggested criteria. He has not failed, as some critics claim, because he *has* a philosophy of life. (After all, the orientation of the publications for which these bourgeois critics write is centered around a fear of beliefs such as those of Fast.) Indeed, the exposition of this philosophy is perhaps the most interesting thing in *Clarkton.* Rather, his failure lies in the imposition of a set of abstract principles on a story in which neither the situation nor the characters carry conviction. Fast does not seem to have struggled to find the interesting and noble truth of the events which he witnessed. He has not assimilated the reality of the strike situation which is depicted in the novel. Evidently uncertain as to what fiction can do that journalism cannot, his imagination has not selected the dominantly expressive experiences and developed them into an integrated and honest work of art.

This major failure is clear on almost every page in the book. Badly organized and carelessly written, *Clarkton* seems to be a collection of notes or comments on a strike situation, which may or may not bear any relation to reality. Rarely does the reader believe what he reads, bewildered as he is by the arbitrary use of point of view, by the dropping of scenes just as they become interesting, by the scenes given in full which have little relevance to the rest of the story, and by the surface characters developed superficially or not at all.

Some may argue that since there are levels of valuable and influential writing, Fast has made an important contribution by telling a segment of truth about American Communists. But those things which are essential to a truthful knowledge of anyone (Communists included), such as how they got that way and what they deeply believe, cannot be found in *Clarkton.* Here, there seems to be the same misty lack of motive that was present in the hero of Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls.* Fast has inserted moving speeches on Communism—excellent pamphleteering in a pamphlet—but in discussions with antagonists, the Communists give either unconvincing answers or none at all. If these people are unconvincing, why is it presumed that the truth—which Fast must strongly

feel—will reach the American reader, who looks in vain to find what the strike is all about, or why Lowell, the manufacturer, has chosen to force it? How will the reader be given insight into the class struggle when such insight is nowhere present in the book?

Since Fast has little perception into what he has set out to describe, his style suffers accordingly. Though occasionally he is creative in discussing the town or the peculiar quality of New England, in the main, his style seems a curious mixture of Cain and diluted, useless Hemingway. Fatally, he has used the eyes of other men to see the tragedy of *Clarkton,* which could have been communicable only if he had used his own.

In his historical novels, Fast has shown ability. He wrote about things which the reader knows are part of America's heritage. Since they are history, they carry a conviction of their own. Yet there appears to be an organic relationship between the decreasing time intervals that separate the appearance of Fast's novels and the degeneration in the quality of what he has produced. In *Clarkton,* he has, as always, chosen a dramatic situation and a powerful theme; but he has not created literature. He has written a book contrived from beginning to end, in which his view of life is imposed on experience and does not emerge from the characters in action.

Timothy Pember, in *The Needle's Eye,* has told the story of a young man's struggle to find the necessity working in his life and its relationship to social forces. From the English landed gentry, lonely and confused, Pember's protagonist resolves on his course of action after painful years of testing and inner strain. At the book's conclusion, he has begun to solve his problem by identifying himself with an English worker's party (evidently the Communists), knowing that its members have much to give him and hoping that he has something to give them. Threaded through this theme is a simple love story, which fulfills the characters quite movingly.

To a far greater degree than Fast, Pember has recognized his artistic responsibility. The struggle to be honest, to tell the truth however hidden or complex it may be, is striking in *The Needle's Eye.* Pember uses no device, no contrivance; he invents no easily-won solution for his characters. Finding reality complex, he fights to get it down. Perhaps too much, one can feel this in Pember's tense, exact, and difficult style—not difficult to understand, but with difficulty put down. It is as if the style equals in complexity the two main characters—halting, as they are halting, unsure, as they are unsure, and often plodding, just as they. One wishes that a more simple way had been found to render an understanding of these lives and that the period in which the action occurs had been more sharply defined. But such objections are insignificant beside the fact of Pember's integrity: writing what he knows as *he* sees it; substituting hard work for the slick glibness present in so much contemporary writing; and refusing to com-

promise his responsibility to the reader because of the financial and political pressures facing the author today.

Writing about the post-Reconstruction period in Louisiana and a generation which couldn't quite find the answers it sought, Barbara Giles shows a comprehensive understanding of her material. *The Gentle Bush* presents a view of life through the degeneration, growth and interaction of characters whose problems seem relevant to those of any reader.

Michel, born into a Southern planting family which has little of the grace of the former aristocracy and more brutality, is perceptive enough to want to be "different." But he does not understand the nature of the difference he is seeking. His sister has made her escape from the brutality and stupidity of their father and elder brother by dying. But Michel, having once *acted*—though he didn't know why—against his conditioning, feels release and a kind of hope for the future. His inner conflict between his class background and his present insight is most beautifully shown when, for one brief moment, he is juxtaposed with an escaped Negro whom he has helped. Here, Michel tries to find a common ground but cannot, yet, because of his conditioning.

Aware of the disparity between her family's claims to the aristocracy and its true position of genteel poverty, Felicie, too, is looking for answers. She finds some of them in Pierre, the most positive character in the book and, unfortunately, the least successfully portrayed. Motivated from his youth by hatred of the planters, he begins to realize that hatred is not enough, that action (for which he has criticized Michel) is what is needed. Groping to comprehend the exigencies of his situation, he makes what seems to some like a foolish decision. In his belief that somehow a beginning must be made, his predicament symbolizes those moments in life when compromise would be easy and comfortable, but fatal.

These changing human beings are portrayed against a background of conflict between the dying and the growing. Violence against the Negro members of the community beats through the novel. This vein of terror achieves pathos and irony by showing an apparent triumph of the old and corrupt over the forces which one day will destroy them; and those who work for better things seem wholly defeated and have no hope of victory in their lifetime.

Miss Giles' chief failure lies in her uneven use of craft. Capable of beautiful writing, as in the death of Nicole, she seems influenced by the slick writers of today. Rather than find her own way of communicating, she is satisfied, at times, with familiar and glib devices. Yet since she is honest, a sort of dull and reasonable—but not interesting—style and pace are produced. Also, like Fast, she avoids crucial scenes. The point of view and manipulation of the characters may sometimes be challenged as arbitrary (e.g., telling the story from the point of view of Otise, for the first time, at the end of the book). *The Gentle Bush* suffers from repetition,

valueless over-elaboration, and diffusion. If Miss Giles learns the importance of simplicity in literature, there is little doubt that she will write outstanding fiction; for, in spite of these faults, she has written a significant and moving novel.

*Masters of the Dew,* a posthumous novel by Jacques Roumain, Haiti's outstanding author, is the greatest peasant novel of this generation. Roumain, who died in 1944 at the age of thirty-eight, was not only an important literary figure, but also an anthropologist, a leading diplomat, the founder and General Secretary of the Haitian Communist Party. A man involved in the world's change, he thoroughly absorbed his subject matter. He presents his characters against a background of fused African and French cultures. With powerful simplicity, with poetry, Roumain portrays the problems and conflicts, the loves and hates, the effects of acculturation, and the growing awareness of the Caribbean peasantry simultaneously revolutionary and bound by tradition.

In a time of thousands of nameless heroes unmentioned in literature, it's good to read about Manuel, a natural and heroic leader of men. He returns to his home from Cuba to find his community completely impoverished by drought, shackled by a ruling aristocracy and a conniving petty bourgeoisie, and torn by feuds which grow out of Afro-Haitian customs. The theme of the book—the hope and early anguish of collective action—is built around Manuel's search for water, his agitation among his neighbors for the necessity of united action, and his love for the girl, Annaise. In Manuel's success and death, Roumain shows the way of progress and the price of its achievement in a world dominated by greed. Manuel tells the peasants: "You've offered sacrifices to the loas, you've offered the blood of chickens and young goats to make the rain fall. All that has been useless. Because what counts is the sacrifice of man, the blood of man."

The circumstances surrounding Manuel's death create unity among the peasants. Manuel, as a force for progress, reacts through his death on the lives he cared for.

This story is seen against the overtones of its tendencies and future possibilities. The reader is left with an insight and hope that point far beyond the final pages of the novel.

There are no abstracted polemics in *Masters of the Dew.* Speeches emerge naturally from the characters in action, given in words that only they would use. The religious feeling of Manuel's mother becomes beautiful and sad in her lone prayer. The feeling of men together in her son becomes beautiful and sharp as he teaches unity. Speaking of a strike and its meaning, Manuel sounds far different than the artificial characters that stiffly walk through *Clarkton.* To show the power of a strike to the peasants, Manuel describes it as "a NO uttered by a thousand voices speaking as one."

In this cry for freedom, the clear motivation of the characters, the

concentration of language, and the real humor (not the "bright" wise-cracking kind), are other matters for praise. Through his honesty and lyric vision of life, Roumain has given us a fine, compelling novel. And like the old Haitian folk-tale, it seems meant, in its marvellous flow of imagery, to be read or, rather, sung aloud.

Telling the truth in fiction is a complex business, especially difficult today when the powerful fear truth. But this, precisely, is the artist's responsibility. For it is the truth, the knowledge of our changing reality, which gives men the will and the means to act. By helping man to understand the conditions of his existence, the responsible artist can teach humanity along what path its freedom lies.

*Culture in a Changing World, A Marxist Approach,* by V. J. Jerome. New York, New Century Publishers, 1947, $.35.

One does not often have the good fortune, these days, to read an analysis of cultural developments in this country that makes you want to stand up and cheer. That, however, was the reviewer's reaction to Mr. Jerome's 94-page booklet.

The point of departure for Mr. Jerome—who is Editor of *Political Affairs* and the author of previous studies of this kind covering past periods—is simultaneously a deep-seated and heart-warming love of human culture and understanding of the problems of the artist, and a profound desire to defend and advance the arts. He views the cultural scene as part of the total arena of class struggle, in which the forces of the night: the Un-Americans, the monopolists, the racists, are launching an unprecedented offensive against reason, truth and beauty.

One of the most significant contributions of Mr. Jerome's booklet is its portrayal of a new development in capitalist culture today: the passing over from a largely negative and passive position to an *offensive.* The author anatomizes a number of the most significant trends in contemporary American culture: the extension of the web of monopoly, and the development of a number of cults —irrationalism, mysticism and faith . . . the brute and the superman, violence . . . racism. The picture is not a pretty one. We are confronted with decay feeding upon itself.

But there is another side—a healthy, progressive, future strain which has rung up a number of victories since the war, and Mr. Jerome assesses these developments also.

The struggle on the cultural front has only begun; the immense, latent forces and resources among the people are still untapped. Mr. Jerome's study is also *a guide to action*—for the defense of reason, human feeling, and culture, and for the flourishing of a people's art—which no student can afford to overlook.

Our university culture today is subject to, and exhibits many similar, tendencies present in our national culture at large. It is to be hoped that a more specific study of the university culture in America will be stimulated by Mr. Jerome's work.

The value of Mr. Jerome's booklet would have been enhanced by a lengthier treatment of the problems faced by young artists and the student-artist. The inflationary spiral, the growing monopolization and demand for "big names," the renascent get-rich-quick bourgeois morality which undermines serious artistry, and the lack of sufficient social-artistic theoretical (as well as practical) guidance: all these have cast the problem of the young artist and the student-artist in a new and most serious light.

Written in a lively and interest-sustaining style, and treating a number of the outstanding artists of the 20th century, Mr. Jerome's booklet merits deep study and discussion; and in the opinion of the reviewer, his program is the only one possible if we are to defend our progressive cultural heritage from the hob-nailed boot. This work should get a wide audience on the campus.

M. R.

*Soviet Education,* by Dr. Maurice J. Shore. New York, Philosophical Library, $4.75.

Dr. Shore is not a Marxist. He is a liberal endeavoring, in honest fashion, to understand Soviet educational practice and the Marxist philosophy and psychology underlying it. Although Dr. Shore does not attempt to state his viewpoint explicitly, his approach is pragmatic: we can tell what is correct only by further research and experimentation.

Dr. Shore clearly shows that Soviet pedagogues are constantly at work to improve education in accordance with their guiding theory and real conditions. But he discounts their theory when he calls upon Soviet educators to join with their American counterparts—who, he assumes, have his approach—to work together and find the "correct" social theory and practice. The need for cooperation between American and Soviet educational workers is unquestionable. But how many American educators have striven for it, and to what extent are they permitted to? (Is there no Un-American Committee, for one thing?)

Dr. Shore's honest purpose—education "can span distances . . . and create bridges of understanding"— is admirable. But American education can make only restricted progress so long as our social structure and our present foreign and domestic policies continue to turn for the worse.

The opening chapters, which are concerned with Marxist philosophy and psychology, are very confused and unintegrated. One welcomes the honest effort but almost despairs at the mechanical approach and many errors. At least one quotation is incorrect in details, and the author contradicts his own conclusions as to the meaning of Marx and Lenin.

But the second half of this work presents some fine data on Soviet education, largely documented by Soviet source material. The amazing accomplishments in Soviet education are presented in unmistakable fashion, as are the self-criticism, recognition of failings, and plans for improvement. Herein, probably, lies the main value and interest of this volume.

But Dr. Shore does not go far enough. He neglects to relate the education of a once-illiterate nation to the achievement of possibly the highest cultural standards in the world in the various sciences and arts.

Of particular interest to the reviewer is the Soviet criticism of Dewey, Thorndike and Binet. The Binet test was condemned for its reliance on the cultural interests of upper-class children and for ignoring those of working class children. The test therefore produces results correlated with economic status. Soviet educators attacked it years ago for its failure to consider these environmental conditions. It is significant that some of the leading American educators are taking the same position today, and for the same reason.

R. G.

*History of the Labor Movement in the United States,* by Dr. Philip S. Foner. $3.75. *American Trade Unionism,* by William Z. Foster. $2.85. *Labor Fact Book* 8, by Labor Research Association. $2.00. (New York, International Publishers, 1947.)

These three volumes provide the historical background, the Marxist principles, strategy and tactics, and the present conditions of the American working class movement. All of them long-needed studies, they are necessary for an understanding of the present struggles of the labor movement to slow up the developing economic crisis and mitigate

its effects, to unify its ranks, and to enter the political arena via a nation-wide third party.

Dr. Foner's finely detailed study is at bottom a critique of the Commons-Wisconsin school of labor history which arose c. 1910 with the publication of Prof. Commons' *Documentary History of American Industrial Society.* Most literature on the subject subsequent to Commons accepted his criteria for successful union organization—craft unionism, no politics, and collaboration between labor and capital. The policies of the American Federation of Labor—then enjoying a period of ascendancy—became, *ipso facto,* the standards by which all previous labor history was to be measured and on which all future labor organization was to be patterned.

A comprehensive study of the trade union movement and its role in American life from colonial times until the founding of the A. F. of L., Dr. Foner's work incorporates much previously-ignored material which did not fit into the design of "pure and simple" trade unionism. Hence, there is a chapter on the Negro labor organizations of the 1866-72 period, and one finds ample sections on women, the foreign born, and the unskilled workers. The data on the role of unions in politics—the many successes in electing workers to office, the victories in struggles for social and economic reforms—points up valuable lessons for labor and its allies today. (The growth of free primary and secondary education, with the resultant expansion of higher education, is a case in point.)

William Z. Foster, the Chairman of the Communist Party, U.S.A., draws on more recent experiences—many of them personal—in his development of a consistent theory of strategy and tactics for trade union organization. Basing himself on the Marxist position that the union's functions do not end with wages and hours, Mr. Foster presents a many-sided program ranging from internal democracy to international trade-union cooperation. This is not, however, an academic treatise, but rather, as the author puts it, a work written "on the firing line of the working class." These selections from Mr. Foster's writings were written contemporaneously with the specific events covered, and range over half a century of industrial unionism, industry-wide strikes, organizing of the unorganized, the formation of the C.I.O., and the struggle for trade union unity. The rich tradition of militancy and unity which more than once broke through the united front of capital and its agents in the working class stands forth in all its social and human splendor.

*Labor Fact Book* 8, latest in the series of fact-packed manuals on current union developments, provides excellent data on current economic conditions and trends.

Will Hoff.

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# *Marxism and Political Economy*

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Symbols: IP—International Publishers, New York.
S & S—Science and Society.
TMQ—The Modern Quarterly (British); NS—New Series.
T.C.—The Communist.
P.A.—Political Affairs.
n.d.—no date.

## PART I: MARXIST POLITICAL ECONOMY

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