

deduced from concrete conditions and applicable in real programs. Theory should serve to expand the base of the movement, to make it more relevant, militant and effective in actual practice. It should not be formed to score points off someone less "pure." Such internal faction fights can derail the movement and insulate it in a false world.

SDS—all of it: PL and both RYMs—left out any mention of white youth as a revolutionary force *for themselves*. Yet, among whites, that is what is happening. Why should they be only a tail on someone else's movement, a white auxiliary to the Black Panthers? One would think the Panthers would prefer allies who are in it for themselves and not guilt-ridden successors to the civil rights liberals who left when things got hot. Moreover, if I want to suffer for my guilt, I'll join the Catholic Church. Most young people in the movement are in it for themselves; otherwise they wouldn't be risking long jail terms and—as in the People's Park struggle—getting shot.

RYM may have some potential now that it no longer needs to be artificially banded together around a forced ideology in order to defeat PL. There is a chance that a genuine youth movement can be built. It won't be if RYM continues in the direction it recently took in an NYU post-convention battle with PL (rocks thrown, a fire hose used, ten wounded, police called in to restore order). Such actions, if they become the norm in left politics, will only isolate the left in a shell of its own creation, and will never succeed in building a movement whose militancy is directed against the real enemy.

—PAUL GLUSMAN

Paul Glusman is an activist at U.C. Berkeley and was a leader in the recent People's Park struggle.

Hand-Me-Down Marxism and the New Left

THE RAFTERS OF THE CHICAGO COLISEUM had hardly ceased to reverberate with the chants of the rival factions, when the ghost of Karl Marx was being heaped with blame for the SDS debacle. "Alas," mourned establishment pundits in ill-concealed triumph, "the New Left has finally gone the primrose way of the Old. Marxism has at last cursed it with factional wars and historical irrelevance. The apostles of ultra-democratic revolution and 'power to the people' (the most incendiary notion in the modern world) have shown themselves ready, if inept, practitioners of the art of political manipulation. The idol-smashing revolutionary vanguard has again been revealed as a latter-day religious cult prostrating itself before patron saints and overseas meccas, while suppressing the heresy of thought with mind-gluing incantations from holy scriptures. R.I.P."

But the smug obituaries are, to say the least, premature. The "movement" is first of all larger than any of its organizations. The virility of the New Left, the sheer vitality of its actions and the deep, deep roots of its culture of rebellion will surely bypass the martinets of any bible-toting, icon-worshipping elite, should such a group seek to impose its Law—whether from the closeted cells of a Maoist sect or through the once

open forum of SDS. For the time being at least, this is still the revolution that can't be taken over.

Nonetheless, the still unfolding fate of SDS—until now the central organization of (white) student struggle—cannot remain a matter of indifference to the radical movement from which it draws its strength and which it, in turn, inspires. Too much of the tried and tested leadership, too much of the best and most militant energies of the left are caught up in the current enthrallment of SDS for the outcome not to have significance for the movement as a whole.

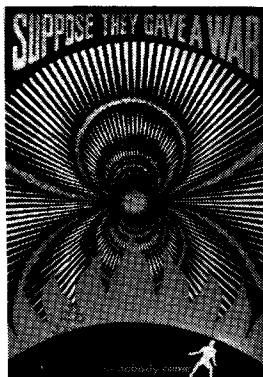
What is at the source of SDS's descent into a politics at once so claustrophobic and incomprehensible as to virtually insure the isolation and defeat of those who adopt it? A politics so antagonistic to the imaginative, open spirit and creative action that has informed and powered the New Left since its emergence from the ashes of the Old a decade ago? (The present vanguard seems to have forgotten that the New Left had to midwife its own birth precisely *because* the old line toeing, Lenin/Stalin/Mao-quoting vanguard had finally encased itself in a sectarian, sterile solitude where it had only its own self-righteousness for company.)

One can readily appreciate why liberals would rush to attribute the difficulties of America's New Left (and the demise of the Old) to "Marxism." Liberalism's Great American Celebration of the Fifties has all but disappeared in the Great American Disintegration of the Sixties. The bankruptcy of the liberal world view has become more and more self-evident with each new stage of the social crisis. Who can still put credence in the basic tenets of the postwar liberal faith: the essential harmony and pluralistic democracy of America's "affluent" society, the alleged solution of the fundamental problems of the industrial revolution, the end of class-based struggle and its revolutionary ideologies? If the new generation has absorbed one lesson, it has been that of the vacuity of liberal analysis, the hypocrisy of liberal preachment and the collusion of liberal practice in the imperialist and racist world system of U.S. corporate capital.

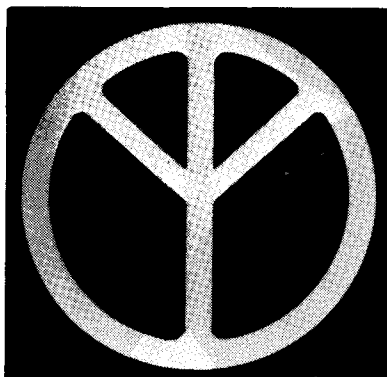
How lucid Marxism—with its focus on the inequities and irrationalities of the status quo—now looks in comparison to the soothing obfuscations of the liberal mind. For what is Marxism but the recognition of the class pivot of history and the class basis of social oppression, coupled with a clear commitment to one side of the social struggle: the side of the oppressed against their oppressors? Far from being a handicap, the discovery of Marxism by the movement has put within its grasp the possibility of becoming a serious revolutionary force for the first time. A long-range perspective on real social forces (not illusory promises, superficial harmonies and surface stabilities) is essential to the development and success of any movement for social change and transformation, and it is Marxism above all other ideologies that has shown itself capable of providing such a perspective for the capitalist era.

But there is Marxism and there is Marxism. A Marxism which is developed in a concrete social context; which is flexible, open, and unafraid to re-think its revolutionary perspectives according to specific conditions; and which fashions its language as a *means of communication*, analysis and mobilization, rather than employing it merely as ritualistic invocation, can be just the powerful instrument that a revolutionary movement requires.

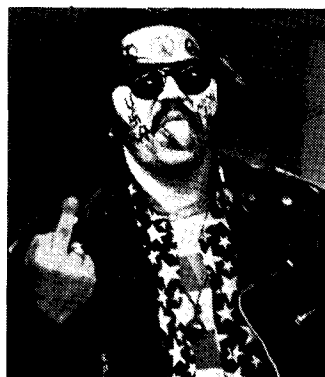
But there is also Marxism of the hand-me-down variety,



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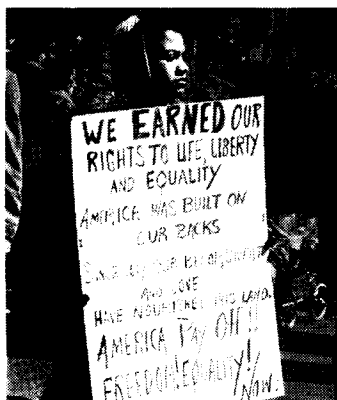
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540 Inauguration
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527 Olympics '68
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499 Equal Rights
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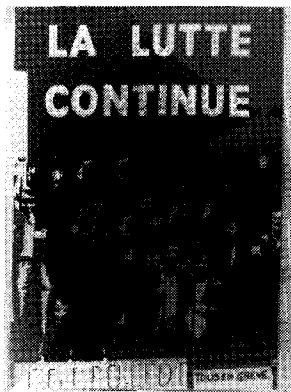
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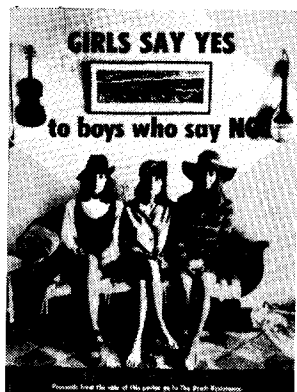
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480 Huey Newton
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466 La Lutte
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where an ideological perspective and vocabulary developed in a different epoch or a different political-cultural environment is transposed whole and adopted as an all-embracing wisdom. This attempt to don the ideological cloth of the victims of imperialism and their vanguard may satisfy many egos and assuage much guilt, but it doesn't help to build radical constituencies and revolutionary forces in the United States. Yet such a direction appears to be developing in SDS, where both major factions at the Chicago convention spoke in the language of Maoism and put forth a Maoist model of the world revolutionary process as their own.

The self-styled Marxist-Leninist-Maoists of SDS would do well to remember that the New Left grew out of two bankruptcies—not just liberalism, but old-line Marxism as well. The failure of Marxist (or Marxist-Leninist, or Marxist-Trotskyist) vanguard parties to build revolutionary movements in the advanced capitalist countries is an historic fact that no revolutionary can afford to ignore. The “Marxist-Leninist” groups which exist in these countries have either isolated themselves as sterile sects, or transformed themselves into basically reformist organizations like the Italian and French Communist parties. A careful analysis of these failures will show that hand-me-down Marxism and overseas mecca-watching played a significant role in each.

CAN MAOISM, THE NEW VOGUE IN SDS ideology, itself provide a reliable guide to the causes of the impasse in Western revolutionary Marxism? There is little reason to think so. According to Maoist theory, the key to all contemporary developments in the international revolutionary movement is Khrushchev's denunciation of Stalin in 1956, which marks the emergence of “modern revisionism” and its doctrines of “peaceful coexistence” and “peaceful transition” to socialism (in certain “favorable” circumstances). But the historical record shows that the reformism of the Western Communist parties (not to mention most of those in the Third World) predates Khrushchev's denunciation of Stalin by at least two and probably three decades, as does the promulgation of the so-called “modern revisionist” doctrine of peaceful coexistence between the systems.

Of course, this is not merely a case of error in historical interpretation on the part of the Chinese. The fact is that the Chinese Communist Party, in order to pursue its ideological struggle with the Kremlin, has deliberately re-written the history of even its own movement to obscure the role of Stalin both in obstructing the Chinese Revolution and in transforming the Communist parties in Europe and elsewhere into reformist organizations.

A theory such as Maoism, in which the answers to key questions are based on the re-writing of history, can hardly provide a sound guide to revolutionary practice in the long run. Sooner or later the manipulation of facts will lead to a gap which cannot be bridged by administrative measures and historical legerdemain. Perhaps the gap will not be as large as that which developed in the Stalin era and which discredited and disoriented a whole revolutionary generation in the West. However, the very existence of the gap will prove crippling to a party which tries to build a revolutionary program across it, for *truth* is a basic weapon in the revolutionary arsenal just as the ability to grasp real social relationships and forces is its greatest strength. A revolutionary movement

thrives on truth just as surely as a ruling class lives by deception.

The penchant for ideological manipulation is not peculiarly Chinese. To some extent, any revolutionary party which achieves power in an underdeveloped country must itself become a ruling stratum. The problems of industrialization, education and democratization (including the liberation of internal nationalities) still lie before it, and it must deal with these problems in the face of encirclement and armed hostility from imperialist forces. Moreover, the urban proletariat in such a country is itself so underdeveloped as to be incapable of providing the leadership prescribed for it in the classic Marxist conception. Historically, therefore, the revolutionary party has tended to substitute itself for the revolutionary classes and, as a consequence, to resort to the techniques of manipulation and deception reminiscent of (but by no means equivalent to) the techniques used by the ruling classes of old. (The practice tends to vary: in some revolutionary countries, like Cuba, the level of revolutionary candor has been extraordinarily high; in others such as Russia, the reverse has been true.) In any event, because of these distortions, the attempt to transplant uncritically such revolutionary ideologies into the revolutionary movement in the United States serves to weaken the movement in a profound way.

A further element of distortion in the official ideologies of underdeveloped revolutionary régimes is introduced by the contradictions arising from the conservative character of the nation-state itself, a factor which has received little attention from Marxist theoreticians to date. Thus China's support for the reactionary military dictatorship in Pakistan (and its silence during the repression of working-class strikes and student demonstrations after the fall of Ayub Khan) may be understandable from the point of view of the state interests of China and the diplomatic support it received from the Ayub regime; but from the point of view of the international revolutionary movement, which Peking aspires to lead, it can only be seen in a very different light.

These are not academic points. The “weatherman” statement of the majority faction in the new SDS leadership (non-PL) is built around the strategic concept of “people's war” as laid down by China's Lin Biao. The concept envisages a united people's front of third world liberation forces encircling the principal metropolis of imperialism—the United States. The concept is derived from China's own revolution, which was fought as a national war of liberation against the Japanese and progressed from its peasant base in the countryside to the towns.

The inadequacy of such a concept for a world characterized by uneven levels of development in which nationalism and its offspring, the nation-state, are still vital historical factors needs no emphasis. One has only to look at the contradiction between China's policy and Pakistan's revolution, or even more obviously at the Sino-Soviet split (neither the Soviet Union nor the Sino-Soviet split receives any mention in the 15,000-word global analysis called “weatherman”) to see how abstract and unrealistic such a projection can be.

No doubt, a consistent perspective in the Maoist vein can still be constructed by ignoring the tensions between revolutionary policy and *raison d'état*, and by assigning the Soviet Union to the imperialist camp (a ploy which makes a mirage both of the arms race between Russia and the U.S. and of their military support for opposing sides in revolutionary

struggles such as in Viet-Nam and Cuba). There are obviously more things on revolutionary earth than are dreamt of in Maoist and "weatherman" philosophy; things, moreover, which a revolutionary movement ignores at its peril.

The main consequence so far of SDS's new-found orientation is its essentially fifth-column mentality and its largely negative vision of revolution in its home environment. It is not surprising that Lin Piao and the Chinese should see the struggle against U.S. imperialism in negative terms (get off our backs), but the transposition of this attitude to the supposed revolutionary vanguard inside the imperialist powers renders it self-defeating, not to say absurd. Thus the "weatherman" program in effect proposes approaching American workers with the argument that everything they possess is plundered from the Third World (a false proposition in any case: it is the imperialists and not the workers who benefit from imperialism), and that a revolution should be made in this country so that they can give it back.

No revolution was ever built on a negative vision. Moreover, there is no reason even to attempt to build the American revolution as a negative act, a program of social demolition. At a time when the industrial engine has reached a point in its development where it opens up a vista of material plenty and free time (i.e., freedom) for all, America's imperialist system saddles its people and all mankind with militarism, war, pollution, deprivation, exploitation, racism and repression. America now possesses the means to a humane, liveable, democratic future for all its citizens, but only if they are ready to seize the means of production and overthrow the system which dominates their lives just as surely as it dominates the lives of those in the Third World who suffer under its aggression and rule. That is the revolutionary foundation and the internationalist bond as well. It is certainly true that the liberation of the Third World will hasten the liberation of the U.S. But it is no less true that the American revolution is the key to the liberation of mankind. This is the insight that was missing in Chicago; let us hope that it returns to SDS before long.

—DAVID HOROWITZ

David Horowitz is the author of Empire and Revolution, Random House, 1969.

Students and Workers

SDS'S INTEREST IN THE WORKING CLASS has not gone unnoticed by the business community. Businessmen view the student radicals as a crew of foreign saboteurs, and every trade journal has carried articles on how to screen summer job applicants and tighten in-plant security systems. In its front-page coverage of the SDS convention, Supermarket News heaved a sigh of relief at what it saw as lessened prospects of industrial disruptions due to the debilitating factional disputes. But before this happened, the National Association of Manufacturers, in cooperation with the Army and the FBI, had held 14 seminars on plant security for 4000 businessmen from 1500 companies.

What justifies all this preparation? The answer lies in a handful of experimental projects through which radicals are seeking a base within the working class, and a mountain of ana-

lytical arguments built for doing so. But there is quite a difference between a class analysis and a working-class program.

The current venture begins with the goal of reaching out to the working-class counterparts of campus radicals in order to construct a revolutionary youth movement. For a number of reasons, the timing is opportune. Only one of these has to do with SDS and its analyses and that is the tremendous change which has been wrought in the thinking of the activist college students (and there are hundreds of thousands of them) about the working stiff who make up the majority of the American people. Once scorned as the most reactionary element of the population, American workers are now seen in a clearer light by students as exploited men and women, working their lives out to meet the payments on the crumbly substance that is the reward for years of classically alienated labor.

For several years a host of commentators have forecast a shake-up in the leadership ranks of the labor movement, the central institution through which working-class interests are defended in our society. Basically they have pointed to the distance between the leaders and their ranks, both in terms of age and aspirations. There has been a deeper recognition of labor's rigid anti-communist foreign policy, the strains between black workers and white leaders, and the recent economic problem of declining buying power in the face of inflation and taxes. The political understanding of many student radicals is generally limited to this conventional wisdom although it is often packaged in the assertion that these are symptoms of the "racist, capitalist, imperialist system."

But if this conventional wisdom can be supplemented with strategic insights, then SDS's commitment to working-class politics in principle may yet yield effective practice. Even before the process of trial-and-error has spelled them out, a few lines of strategy are clear enough right now to suggest avenues for fruitful activity.

For instance, the labor movement should not be a totally unfamiliar political setting to the student activists. Like the universities and like liberal politics, labor does not have a ten-deep rank-and-file leadership committed to a liberal or social-democratic program. At the top there are the outstanding labor leaders from the '20s and '30s, moderate enough to have survived the Cold War period, effective enough to have held together large organizations. But their post-World War II generation of successors was substantially suffocated by Taft-Hartley and the Red scare. In most unions there is no organized opposition, so the loyalists have little reason to mobilize politically. Thus, a tremendous vacuum has developed which is evident in flabby steward systems and is reflected in the remarkable backing which protest candidates have received in election challenges for high union offices (e.g., the case of Emil Narick against I. W. Abel for president of the Steelworkers). Very little about labor is predictable any more. George Meany will favor wage-and-price controls if Nixon demands them, and both Reuther and the AFL-CIO will be loyal to the Democratic Party. However, it is much harder to predict which union will fight a long strike despite government intervention, or which leaders will reopen for criticism practices that have been standard for two decades. Who could have predicted the Black Lung Movement of West Virginia miners or the black Revolutionary Union Movement in Detroit? Certainly no one who has swallowed the myth of the tight, monolithic unions.