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**ABSTRACT**

A comparative analysis is made of the similarities and differences between youthful activists of the 1960's with earlier periods, focusing upon the 1920's and 1930's. The report briefly sketches the political and romantic Student Left during the decade of the sixties; delineates the characteristics of non-campus-based youthful radicalism as exemplified by the action and thought of the Young Communist League between 1922 and 1943; explores the nature of the student movements which emerged during the immediately ensuing period; and specifies resemblances and differences between the past and present in order to better anticipate the future. While much of the data of the study are derived from conventional bibliographical sources, the main historical sections are based on an intensive analysis of all named issues of youth-oriented radical periodicals or newspapers. Findings for both past and present youth groups indicate they were preoccupied with social issues of peace, poverty, civil liberties, and racial discrimination, and with campus issues of corporative control of the university, academic freedom, economic issues, and academic offerings. The greatest divergence between the two groups lies in the recent intrusion of "generation gap," "the counter culture," and "student power" into radical politics.  
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The Political Left On Campus And In Society:  
The Active Decades

Marvin Bressler and Judith Higgins

Princeton University  
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### Summary

The current study is a comparative inquiry into the resemblances and differences between youthful activism in the 1960's and earlier periods with special emphasis on the decades of the twenties and thirties. The major topics are: (1) the foundations of student radicalism in the sixties, (2) the Young Communist League as an illustration of prototypical youthful radicalism, and (3) young communists and student activism.

The chief sources of data, in addition to conventional bibliographical sources, are the following periodicals and newspapers: The Intercollegiate Socialist, Young Worker, Young Spartacus, Student Review, Student Advocate, Clarity, and New Foundations.

The analysis of radical youth groups past and present, both on and off the campus, indicates that despite their separation in time and profound differences in philosophy they were preoccupied with seven principal issues throughout much of the period: in society, (1) peace, (2) poverty, (3) civil liberties, and (4) racial discrimination; and on the campus, (1) corporative control of the university, (2) academic freedom, (3) economic issues, and (4) to a lesser extent the adequacy of academic offerings. The greatest divergence between the earlier and later periods lies in the recent intrusion of "generation gap," "the counter culture," and "student power" into radical politics. The final section includes speculations on the conditions under which latent discontent will be converted into a protest movement.

### Background for the Study

The mood of the campus circa 1972 is often described as "apathetic," "apolitical," and "conformist." Such terms have not been applied to students since the "silent fifties" and they ring strange to anyone familiar with the events in American higher education during the previous decade. We need hardly be reminded that during the 1960's colleges and universities were both a staging area and an arena for all manner of spontaneous and organized protest against the putative sins of the educational establishment and the broader American society. During the period campus militants variously referred to as the "New Left," "activists," "radicals" or by the omnibus term, "The Movement," not only were instrumental in compelling educational reform but also in expanding the American political spectrum, with consequences for electoral behavior, the two-party system, and the tactics of protest, which taken collectively, may transform the basic premises of the polity. They have already moved liberals to the left, have been instrumental in deposing one president, and played an important role in nominating the candidate who challenged his successor.

In view of these remarkable achievements the present tranquility in academe is a puzzle to pundits and scholars. The reasons usually adduced for the "return to normality" emphasize influences external to the campus (e.g. President Nixon's skillful management of the Viet-Nam war issue), the venality of the students (e.g. the return to careerism as a result of a tight job market), or the exhaustion of idealism after a decade of evangelism. Interpretations of this sort are plausible but since they deal only with the present they overlook supplementary modes of explanation which may be discovered in the recent history of student movements.

The script for the early seventies was written in the sixties when student activists discovered that of their two major goals, educational reform and the radical transformation of society, the first was attainable and the second quite beyond their power. The collapse of loco parentis, increased curricular flexibility, new pedagogies, and changing patterns of governance have reduced student discontent and the impulse to action. The invulnerability of war, racism, poverty, and bourgeois morality to the exhortation of young visionaries convinced even the most obtuse that radical social reconstruction could not be achieved by Marxist soldiers who did not stir

from the campus. We may be witnessing not so much the demise of student activism as the decline of hubris and the return to an older radical definition of the scope and limits of student power.

Throughout most of the twentieth century radical theoreticians have regarded student groups as one element of a greater constituency called youth, which in turn could play a limited role as part of a larger social movement. If this is to be the shape of the future we can profit from consulting the chronicles of youthful radicalism between World Wars I and II when the proletariat rather than the affluent young was regarded by many as the chosen instrument of history. It was during this period that the intellectual currency that still sustains the New Left was first released for mass distribution. This is, of course, a considerable methodological advantage since shared ideologies enhance the possibility of fruitful historical comparisons.

The purpose of this report, then, may be summarized as follows:

1. to sketch briefly the major theses advanced by the political and romantic Student Left during the decade of the sixties;
2. to delineate the characteristics of non-campus-based youthful radicalism as exemplified by the action and thought of the Young Communist League between 1922 and 1943;
3. to explore the nature of the student movements which emerged during the immediately ensuing period; and
4. to specify resemblances and differences between past and present in order better to anticipate the future.

#### Methods

Much of the data of the study are derived from conventional bibliographical sources which are treated according to the visual canons of scholarship. The main historical sections are based on an intensive analysis of all issues of the following youth-oriented radical periodicals or newspapers: The Intercollegiate Socialist, Volumes I-IV, 1911-1915; Young Worker, Volumes 1-14/#17, 1922-1936; Young Spartacus, Volumes 1-4/#6, 1931-1935; Student Review, Volumes 1-5/#1, 1931-1935; Student Advocate, Volumes 1-3/#1, 1936-1938; Clarity, Volumes 1-4/#1, 1940-1943; and New Foundations, Volumes

1-7/#2, 1947-1954. All of these except the first are either official organs of Communist controlled or dominated organizations.

The selection of young communists as a prototypical radical group is based on the following considerations:

1. The Communist Party was by far the most influential radical group during the 1930's which like the decade of the sixties was marked by social protest and the prominence of student movements.

2. The strategy of United Front intermittently adopted by communists made them the least narrow of all Marxist groups and stimulated comment on a great number of topics germane to this inquiry.

3. Communists permitted the least deviation from the party line and it is thus possible to assume that every opinion committed to print expressed an official position.

4. Communists issued publications devoted to youth throughout almost all of the period between World Wars I and II. Journals and newspapers circulated by other Marxist groups appeared sporadically and many of these are now inaccessible.

5. The greater number of all the issues addressed by communists are the common property of all Marxists and it is these shared commitments rather than sectarian differences which have the greatest significance for drawing historical parallels and divergences between the old and new Left.

The decision to rely on periodicals and newspapers as the major source of evidence was prompted by the following methodological considerations:

1. Such publications provide a more complete and continuous account of events than are available from any other source.

2. Periodicals and newspapers appear regularly and require their contributors to comment on the passing scene without benefit of the leisure that permits prudent qualifications and dissembling. A weekly publication such as the Young Worker probably presented as spontaneous a series of political reac-



tions as was possible within the rigidities of Marxist orthodoxy.

3. Official publications which are designed for a mass audience are probably the purest distillate of the party line and furnish the least ambiguous presentation of self of any other printed outlet.

These research strategies reduce the hazards of reproducing the past but they are no protection against bias and distortion. In conducting this inquiry we have tried to suppress our own prejudices; we shall rely on others who explore the same terrain to tell us how well or poorly we have succeeded.

#### The Foundations of Student Radicalism in the Sixties

The sources of student radicalism have often been interpreted as wholly a manifestation of generational conflict. This view should be treated with some measure of skepticism if for no other reason than that a constant cannot explain a variable. The sons have ever become the fathers and survived to reproach their children and curse the times. The emergence of industrial society, particularly its American variant, furnished an expanded arena for the reenactment of this ancient drama. A number of general features of contemporary social organization are especially important in defining the transactions between the generations. These include:

1. Accelerated rates of social change;
2. Population expansion and the concentration of vast aggregations in relatively small areas;
3. Intricate division of labor, bureaucratization, and role specialization with a resultant emergence of diverse publics;
4. Subordination of impulse to conditions that encourage work and stable life styles;
5. Relative economic abundance, the development of a consumer economy, and differential patterns of distribution of scarce goods and services;
6. Decline of the family as an autonomous, self-sufficient unit and the transfer of many of its functions to other institutions, especially education;
7. Emphasis on performance rather than qualities as the standard for allocating possessions, prestige, and power;

8. Substitution of personal for collective responsibility in law and in practice; and

9. Replacement of informal devices of social control by formal rules. (See Wilbert D. Moore, *Social Change*, Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1963, Chapter 5.)

These structural characteristics of modern nations tend to balance the generational equation in the direction of the young. In pre-modern societies the institutionalized power of parents rested on moral authority and demonstrably superior competence. Adults could serve as exemplars of proper conduct and penalize deviant behavior because normative expectations were relatively stable, clear, and coherent. Moreover in a static universe, experience is a genuine contribution to the prediction and control of events. In "advanced" civilizations experience has an equivocal value; it may even impede adaptation to novelty and the convulsions of our time and circumstance. The social value of maturity is further diminished by the processes of structural mobility in all industrialized societies where each new generation of parvenus arouses the envy and admiration of their elders.

The same social influences which threaten the status of the old both liberate and injure the young. Since their continuous progress is more visible than their deprivations, it has been more often noted. Each decade celebrates its comparative advantage over its predecessors in essentially similar terms. An introductory essay to a 1937 special issue of the Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science devoted to youth furnishes a typical illustration of a familiar genre.

"The prospective heirs of this American heritage are, despite some vicissitudes, the most intensively nurtured group of comparable size in all recorded time. They are bigger, heavier, stronger, healthier, wealthier, and more colorful than any generation which has gone before them. They are better fed, better housed, better dressed, better educated, and more sophisticated than any of their predecessors, and they are the first adolescent Americans to be called collectively 'Youth'."

(W. Wallace Weaver, "Modern Youth - Retrospect and Prospect," Annals, Vol. 194, November, 1937, p. 1.)

These undeniable gains, nevertheless, entail considerable costs. A substantial period of apprenticeship is required to master the complexity of contemporary social and economic organization. Adolescence is accordingly prolonged with resulting delays in assuming the burdens and privileges of full citizenship, particularly access to career and socially approved sexual relationships. There is thus an inherent strain between biological maturity, intellectual achievement, and social prerogatives; young people are defined as adults for varying purposes at different times. This poor synchronization between age-related roles requires constant accommodation to shifting demands of independence and powerlessness--perhaps for as long as fifteen years. An intellectually capable and psychologically mature candidate for a higher degree in a university or professional school is, nevertheless, at age 30, in many respects still a boy.

These ambiguities of social definition are, of course, related to the problem of "identity," a concern which Erik Erikson originally brought to the forefront of public consciousness. The portrait of the "teen-ager" as marginal participant who must somehow "find himself" in a society in transit from an irrelevant past to an unpredictable future and who is furthermore deprived of confident parental models to emulate or confront, is no less real because it has become a stereotype.

There are a number of recent historical variations on the resonant themes of beleaguered age and perplexed youth. In the last half century periods of economic hardship and prosperity have each been identified as the source of distinctive youth problems. Writing in the waning years of the Great Depression, Wallace Weaver observed that "the seven lean years, the seven blasted years, and the seven emaciated cows of Pharaoh's dream became a reality for America," thereby thwarting "two goals [of youth] against which Depression raised a forbidding obstacle--the search for a job and the initiation of a family. Other ambitions and objectives were urgent, but the most serious emotional tensions arose from these." (Ibid, p. 3.) Weaver notes that young people reacted

by adopting one of several patterns of active or passive adaptation: 1) struggle against discouraging odds, 2) passive resignation, 3) "perverse substitutes" for jobs and marriage--crime, labor racketeering, strike-breaking, sexual promiscuity, violence, and alcoholism, not to mention "extreme but not uncommon forms of conduct by which he expresses his dissatisfaction with the world." For their part, parents resort to "ridicule, rebukes, and exhortations" and "hold up the lethargy of sons and daughters for unfavorable comparisons with their own triumphs." Leaders of public opinion, meanwhile, "circulate diatribes against paternalism and profound specious theories of racial deterioration." (W. Wallace Weaver, "Modern Youth - Retrospect and Prospect," Annals, Vol. 194, November, 1937, p. 4.)

By contrast, social scientists who wrote about youth in the bloated fifties were almost wholly preoccupied with the pathologies of affluence. The young were chided for their "apathy," "conformity," "blandness," "security consciousness" and "other-directed" personalities. Kenneth Kenniston, a sympathetic observer, found American youth curiously withdrawn and docile but also gratifyingly mature. "If they are enthusiastic at all," wrote Kenniston,

it is about their steady girl friend, about their role in the college drama society, about writing poetry, or about a weekend with their buddies. Yet, at the same time, the members of this apparently irresponsible generation are surprisingly sane, realistic, and level-headed. They may not be given to vast enthusiasms, but neither are they given to fanaticism. They have a great, even an excessive, awareness of the complexities of the world around them; they are well-read and well-informed; they are kind and decent and moderate in their personal relations. (Kenneth Kenniston, "Social Change and Youth in America," Daedalus, Winter 1962, p. 155.)

"Restraint" and "moderation" are no longer the terms that come to mind when adults think of youth. The period of the sixties demonstrated that affluence could produce multidirectional responses. A decade that began with the bright hope of the inauguration of the first president born in the twentieth century ended in war, assassinations, racial

strife, riots, and youthful rebellions in the slums and on the campus. There is now widespread doubt about the capacity of the establishment to govern, the resilience of democratic institutions, and the fundamental loyalty of youth to the "American way of life."

Student dissidents may be pardoned the conceit that youthful disillusion and protest is, however, a unique product of the sixties. They have been tacitly encouraged in this belief by their elders. For example, Richard E. Peterson has written:

There has never been a tradition of student politics, radical or otherwise, in American life, and it is in part because of the sharp break with the past that the surge in student political activism during the 1960's has so captured the fancy of observers of the American scene. (Richard E. Peterson, "The Student Life in American Higher Education," Daedalus, Winter, 1968, pp. 293-327.)

This verdict can be sustained only by imposing the most severe restrictions on the term "tradition" and by ignoring altogether the clear meaning of "never."

Lewis Feuer documents the existence of numerous episodes featuring student dissidents throughout the entire nineteenth century. (Lewis S. Feuer, The Conflict of Generations, Basic Books, New York, 1969.) In 1833 to 1834 students at the Lane Theological Center, a Presbyterian center in Cincinnati organized a series of abolitionist meetings and formed a society in behalf of the freedom of slaves through non-violent Christian persuasion. When the board of trustees advised the seminarians that they might better occupy themselves in liberating souls rather than bodies and dissolved all associations except those that were related to the academic program, thirty-nine of the students, nearly half of the total enrollment, resigned and subsequently seceded to Oberlin.

In the post Civil War era there were celebrated campus incidents at Michigan where fraternity members were suspended because they violated a Regents' order against the establishment of secret societies;

at Williams where students boycotted classes for a week in order to effect the "abolishment of marks and prizes;" and at Amherst where Harlan Stone later Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court led a revolt against the theocratic paternalism of the institution's president. Indeed, in a single decade, 1880-1890, presidents at Union, Bowdoin, and Middlebury were deposed as a result of their inability to deal with student disruptions. These continuities in generational conflict have persuaded some that what we are now experiencing is merely a rerun of an old film with a slightly altered sound track.

The disparity between generations is nourished by a number of circumstances that are specific to our own times. These include:

1) The confluence of available ideologies any of which can furnish a rationale for protest and which in combination provide the basis for a comprehensive radical sensibility including:

- a. Marxism which is an explicit revolutionary doctrine;
- b. Menckenisism which assaults the "booboisie;"
- c. Pragmatism which emphasizes action and involvement;
- d. Existentialism which exalts the mood of confrontation with self and others;
- e. Science which provokes skepticism;
- f. Secularism which makes men impatient with deferred gratification;
- g. Psychiatry which creates yearnings for self-realization; and
- h. Sociology which generates sympathy for the disinherited, disenchanting, and dispossessed.

2) The differential memory of archetypical symbols of evil--Hitler for one generation and Nixon for some members of the other--with correspondingly diverse notions of whether "things can get any worse."

3) The reduced salience of the Soviet Union as the storm center of political discussion and an increasing belief in the "convergence" theory of Soviet-American relations; and

4) The greater concern for economic security among the Depression bred than among children of affluence.

The importance of the "generation gap" should, however, not be exaggerated. It is probably correct to refer to a "youth culture" if we mean by this some cultural features that are almost a monopoly of the young. But this is not the same as generational antagonism. The patterns of youth which distinguish them from their elders include:

1. Personal styles of clothing and dress;
2. "Hip" art forms such as rock music, "pop art," surrealist films, etc.;
3. Linguistic innovation;
4. Experiments in communal living;
5. "Consciousness expansion" through "encounters," sexual variety, and drugs; and
6. Radical deviations from conventional political, economic, and social values, especially the beliefs in the capitalist system and the redemptive power of work.

It is by no means certain that with the single exception of musical preferences, any of these patterns are widely diffused throughout the youthful population. Jack D. Douglas, who has written the most recent and comprehensive survey of youth, has distinguished between "cooperative" (e.g. Y.M.C.A., Boy and Girl Scouts) "deviant" (e.g. delinquents, protest groups) and "rebellious" (e.g. "hippies," "yippies") subcultures and has concluded that "most youth subcultures are either directly or indirectly cooperative with adult society." (Jack D. Douglas, Youth in Turmoil, National Institute of Mental Health Center for Studies of Crime and Delinquency, Chevy Chase, Maryland, 1970, p. 103.) This finding is consistent with the earlier research of Bernard, Matza, Elkin and Westley, and Berger.

Similarly, investigation by Samuel Lubell, S.M. Lipset and others have demonstrated that political radicals and activists constitute a small proportion, almost certainly less than ten percent of American college youth, and are even less well represented among non-campus constituencies. Political and counter-cultural movements, nevertheless, have significance that may transcend their numbers. Observers like Jack Newfield and Charles Reich who think of radical youth as the "prophetic generation," imply that they have altered the modern sensibility, and are "forerunners" of a new nation--even if they do not identify their enemies as adults. Moreover,

even small groups who are dedicated need not await the future to shape events.

Surely the importance of "New Left" and its successors and what is now called the counter-culture cannot be understood by referring to the Gallup Poll. Indeed the "New Left" when it first emerged was a genuinely novel departure from sectarian radical politics with real prospects for attracting a mass base. Its history is too familiar and too recent to require extensive documentation. Its origins in the civil rights movement, its commitment to participatory democracy, its curious blend of Marxism and existentialism, its affection for Mao and Fidel, its attraction to the doctrines of Franz Fanon, Herbert Marcuse, C. Wright Mills, Regis Debray, and Paul Goodman, its latent anti-intellectualism, its cult of action, and its militant role in campus disruptions were daily staples in the mass media. The specifically political attitudes that typified this amorphous movement are well summarized by Irving Howe:

- 1) An extreme, sometimes unwarranted, hostility toward liberalism....
- 2) An impatience with the problems that concerned an older generation of radicals....
- 3) A vicarious indulgence in violence, often merely theoretic and thereby all the more irresponsible....
- 4) An unconsidered enmity toward something vaguely called the Establishment....
- 5) An equally unreflective belief in 'the decline of the West'....
- 6) A crude, unqualified anti-Americanism, drawing from every possible source, even if one contradicts another: the aristocratic bias of Eliot and Ortega, Communist propaganda, the speculations of Tocqueville, the resentment of post-war Europe, etc.; and
- 7) An increasing identification with that sector of the 'third world' in which 'radical' nationalism and Communist authoritarianism merge. (Irving Howe, "New Styles in Leftism," in Paul Jacobs and Saul Landau, The New Radicals, Random House, New York, 1966, p. 293.)



The distinctive feature of the New Left was its lack of ideological rigidity. Now that it has splintered into doctrinaire warring factions and reproduced the political continuum of the thirties it is no longer "new" and may be located within an older tradition of dissidence. Youthful radicals now spurn generational politics; they seek alliances or converts among the poor, blacks, workers, women and other "oppressed" groups.

The term "radical" then, which was used somewhat promiscuously during the sixties can now be seen more accurately as applying to two quite distinctive traditions, one, Marxist in spirit and the other informed by philosophical anarchism. (See Marvin Bressler, "The Liberal Synthesis in Higher Education," Annals, 404, November, 1972, pp. 183-194.) They are unified by a shared conviction that the American form of democratic capitalism is wicked beyond redemption and that there can be no humane society without first destroying the present system. But, where the Marxist solution is political and assumes that basic institutional change is a necessary precondition for a world united by compassion and brotherhood, the anarchists call for a revolution in consciousness and lifestyles shared by persons who will establish an ever-expanding number of little pockets of decency which will eventually diffuse throughout the entire society. This fundamental doctrinal dispute has often led to the fierce bickering which characteristically afflicts groups out of power and has yielded diagnoses and prescriptions which have sometimes aligned them more closely to the conservative enemy than to each other.

The Marxist approach to education is characterized by a certain puritan no-nonsense tone, a primary emphasis on a service orientation, and a strong sense of social responsibility. It does not encourage pedagogical razzle-dazzle nor adolescents who are "finding themselves" while there are worlds to be won. Marxists who recognize that a pleasure morality seldom leads to the barricades have been exceptionally stern about sexual dalliance, excessive drinking, and use of drugs.

The first requirement of the socialist professor is that he shall be relevant not in the sense of interesting, or even contemporary, but rather that he

expose the student to a fundamental, that is to say, Marxist, analysis of society. The materials of almost every discipline--law, medicine, literature and the arts, and, of course, the social sciences--may be interpreted not only from the perspective of biography, or according to its own immanent development, but also as a product of a concrete social system at a given point in time. The specific Marxist interpretation is replete with familiar references to contradictions of capitalism, class conflict, imperialist expansion, and all the other weapons of its powerful arsenal. Curiously, since Marxists claim the authority of reason and science for their formulations, these views can be debated according to ordinary scholarly standards and may even be welcomed as a stimulating addition to the pool of available ideas on campus. This capacity of the university to abide dissident views is what Herbert Marcuse means when he refers to "repressive toleration."

The Marxist contribution to student activism cannot be so easily absorbed. It has been primarily directed against the university's social role and its corporate behavior. Political radicals regard business colleges, schools of international relations, and regional studies programs as instruments for developing the "trained cadres that maintain a repressive system." More specifically, campus militants have opposed defense-related research, Reserve Officers Training Corps (ROTC), and alleged unethical investment practices. Institutions said to be so culpable are, from a Marxist view, legitimately subject to all the tactical stratagems that might be used against any other corporate power, including protests, demonstrations, and strikes. Militant action of this sort, while it may be stimulated by specific grievances and manifest injustices, almost always has as part of its hidden agenda the effort to radicalize the student body. As in the world beyond the campus, Marxists reject "vertical loyalty" and the moral authority of "company unions" such as the faculty senate and the student council. The analogies are imprecise as is the proletarian imagery which refers to students in elite colleges as the "people," but during the past several years most campuses have been diverted from their purely educational mission by young revolutionaries who regard the university as still another agent of American capitalism.

Political radicals may establish coalitions with philosophical anarchists, but their alliances tend to be strained. Counter-cultural students who engage in organized dissent often vanish between crises and exhibit neither the inclination nor the capacity for sustained protest. Marxists seek the transfer of power and propose alternative solutions for the organization of industrial society; anarchists traditionally view power, itself, as corrupt and organization as the foe of a human nature that is "intrinsically good." They are no more fond of the democratic centralism of the Soviet Union than of repressive bureaucracies in the United States. In this respect anarchists are distant kinsmen to libertarian conservatives who also seek relief from federal control, red tape, and governmental regulation of corporative enterprise. But the anarchist impulse is not control of the system, but escape, and its utopias are characteristically small, egalitarian, and far from the madding crowd.

Philosophical anarchism can be a serious social theory with important notions about decentralization and symbiotic cooperation, as well as an austere ethical discipline which requires its votaries to lead lives of Christian simplicity and love. Even its frivolous wing, bohemianism, once had a puritan side. Art justified eccentricity, and the writer who promised and sometimes actually produced the great American novel might reasonably claim immunity from mere bourgeois gentility. The second generation beatniks also paid obeisance to creativity, but made it into a game that anyone could play. Coffeehouse poets, bearded and in sandals, could in a single evening call upon their muse for endless verses on the shadow of the bomb, possessive mothers, and lightning rods on churches. The hippies and Yippies of the sixties completed the revolution. The bohemian need no longer pretend to art; his life style is art. To be anti-bourgeois is quite enough. His contempt for the achievement ethic might, by contagious example, ultimately create a society of freedom and joy.

The anarchist critique of contemporary education owes a debt to all of its ancestors. The deschooling movement and the protest against grades, degrees, and other trappings of credentialism reflect the philosophical anarchists' traditional distrust of institutional power over individual lives; the

opposition to large impersonal educational factories expresses a yearning for small communities in the spirit of Charles Fourier and Robert Owen; its anti-technological bias was foreshadowed by Simonde de Sismondi, Thomas Carlyle, and others; and its mass catchword--doing your own thing--is best pronounced in the accents of the Haight-Ashbury and the East Village.

The diffusion of anarchist sentiment has stimulated educational change especially in experimental units. The establishment of cluster colleges, the relaxation of requirements, the widespread adoption of pass-fail grading, the abolition of mandatory class attendance, the increasing provision for independent study, the growth of work-study programs, the emphasis on creative arts, the encouragement of leaves of absence, the shortening of the length of study--all are designed to "loosen up the system," "break the lock-step," and give the student greater control "over the decisions that affect his life." All of this has, of course, been accompanied by a demand for "relevance in the very special sense of contemporary and personal, and has resulted in revised perspectives of the nature of noncognitive goals. The older conception of adjustment to society has been supplanted by the monadic notion of self-realization.

The radical sensibility, then, for all of the internal contradictions arising from the interplay of its Marxist and anarchist variants, has managed to create a profound sense of disquiet about the prevailing conservative orthodoxy in education. They have also enjoyed a modicum of success in the world outside but their achievements have been triumphs of liberal reform rather than of fundamental social change. And even by the more modest standards of gradualistic meliorism the ideals of shared abundance, racial brotherhood, and peace seem as remote now as a decade earlier. As was indicated by the recent presidential election neither Consciousness III nor the brave new socialist world is imminent. The "people" to whom radicals wish to give power have not yet chosen to exert their strength in ways which student radicals find congenial.

Whatever the nature of past illusions it now seems abundantly clear that the revolution, if it comes, will not be won by insurrections against the

Dean. Young radicals who are serious will doubtless be moved to begin the slow patient effort to reach constituencies who have thus far been unmoved by the radical view of the social cosmos. The experience of the young communists between the wars may be instructive in indicating to what extent such exertions are likely to succeed.

The Young Communist League: An Instance  
of Prototypical Youthful Radicalism Between the Wars

Communist periodicals designed for youth interpreted all history in Marxist terms and were tireless in reminding its readers of the basic outline of the theory in its simplest and vulgarized form. Economics determines the course of history and the structure of society; political, legal, intellectual, and religious institutions emerge as the superstructure of a particular economic base. All societies ultimately divide into two classes defined by their relation to the essential means of production: the property-owning ruling class and the property-less working class. Every society develops an ideology-- a set of official religious beliefs or political doctrines to justify the power of the ruling class. Those who accept the rationalizations of the exploiters suffer from "false consciousness" which temporarily renders them obedient and quiescent.

In capitalist society, labor is a commodity; in exchange for his labor power, the laborer receives subsistence wages from the owners of capital (factories, machinery, and working capital). His wage is equivalent to only a small part of his day's work, and only a small percentage of the value of the product. The remainder is free labor, which is appropriated by the capitalist as profit. Thus, "Silk shirts, good cars, fine food, beautiful dwellings, ah yes, these are made by the workers, but they are not for the workers to have" (YW, Oct. 1922, p. 12). Cheated of material rewards, the worker under industrial capitalism is also deprived of the joy of craftsmanship. Capitalist production is organized according to a division of labor which creates stupefying boredom and since he does not consume what he creates, or produce goods for the common weal the worker is alienated from the products of his own labor.

But capitalism bears the seeds of its own destruction. The inherent contradiction between the increasingly concentrated ownership of the means of

production and the widening and ever more miserable body of producers, the proletariat; the unavoidable tendency toward overproduction, leading to sales slumps and lay-offs; the decline of profits relative to total capital outlay, with bankruptcy sure to follow: these are flaws that manifest themselves in periodic business crises and in wars. The mass of society, driven into the proletariat, where it can become conscious of its common plight and organize itself to act, will eventually rise up and overthrow the capitalist class, replacing the old bureaucratic and political hierarchy with a dictatorship of the proletariat. According to the Young Worker:

The only class that is in line with evolution of our economic system, and capable of solving the contradictions eating away the very vitals of capitalist society, is the proletariat, which is thus the revolutionary class. (YW, Feb. 1922, p. 6)

We face the most reactionary of existing imperialist nations, but we are strong in the knowledge that the victory of the workers is as certain as the fall of their oppressors. (YW, March 15, 1924, p. 1)

Capitalism will thus be the last economic era to be torn by class struggle. Private ownership of the means of production will be abolished; and the whole working class will be brought into the administration of industry. The proletarian victory, therefore, unlike previous revolutions, which merely transferred the ownership of the means of production from one class to another, will eliminate the division between ownership and operation of the means of production. Society will then be established on the basis of cooperative production, equality of distribution, and national planning. The workers will produce not commodities for the market but goods for the entire collectivity. The coercive power of the state, which had existed to enforce capitalist exploitation of the propertyless class, will in the course of time wither away and the transitional stage of socialism will then be transformed into "final phase of communism"-- a society without property or class where each will receive according to his needs. The disparity between the haves and the have-nots will at last have come to an end.

### The YCL and the Young Worker

Communist youth movements of the 1920's and 1930's believed that it was their duty to reach all who did not accept this theory of history and convert them into a revolutionary force. One of the least politicized--and most exploited--groups in American in the first half of the twentieth century was working class youth.

Young people are being used as scabs, compelled to work long hours at starvation wages, to substitute [for] their older fellow workers whose physical resistance power is weaker and who need and demand higher wages. (YW, Feb. 1922, p. 5.)

The Young Communist League founded in 1922 was determined to enroll young workers into a "trainingschool for communism." To this end it published first Youth and a year later the Young Worker from 1922 to 1936. Originally a journal and subsequently a newspaper the Young Worker was both among the most durable and richest in reportage of all radical publications. By March 1, 1924, it had a circulation of 5500 and during the same year YCL membership had reached 4000.

The Young Worker claimed to be written both by and for the young worker. It devoted little space to farm youth and until the 1930's even less to students. But the stated intention to make the newspaper "attractive not only to ourselves but to the young workers whom we want to join us" reveals that there were hands other than proletarian in its composition (italics mine; YW, Jan. 1923, p. 15). Indeed whenever the Young Worker complained of the YCL's "poor social composition"--as it did fairly frequently--it meant that workers were too few and students too many. In 1928 (November), only 40% of the League's members were industrial workers, while 36% were students. In fact, the YCL had the highest percentage of students of any organization affiliated with the Communist Youth International, despite the large number of manual workers in the American population (YW, Jan. 1929, p. 7).

The Young Worker began, by its own admission, as a "pocket-edition of The Daily Worker"; differing from other party papers only by "the mechanical in-

jection of the word 'young' before every 'worker'" (YW, April 1930, p. 4). Beginning with the January 1924 issue, however, the journal changed its format from a dry refined semi-literary magazine into an argumentative, vigorous, and graphic newspaper. Its correspondence from young communist movements all over the world, its proletarian fiction and poetry, its photographs, its "On the Job" column reporting specific indignities--all were features designed to appeal to the young worker. The effort to reach the masses was unceasing, so that by May 1930 the paper was offering terse, simply written articles, a short story every issue, a sports page, a weekly cartoon strip, movie and book review sections, and a front page of photos.

Popularization and low price (five cents) were not enough. The paper's continual struggle to stay alive was revealed in sudden threats to suspend publication, in urgent subscription drives, frequent changes in the number of pages and columns, and in variations in its publication schedule--weekly, bi-monthly, or monthly depending on the availability of funds. From time to time the editors confessed their pessimism. "Till now, YWL has had little influence on the broad masses of the working class youth" (YW, April 15, 1924, p. 3). Touring the Pittsburgh, Cleveland, and Chicago district branches in 1931, Max Weiss acknowledged that after nine years of publication The Young Worker had not managed to become a mass paper. He blamed this on the paper's persistent failure "to bring out the youth features of an event," its lack of understanding of the importance of an event "from a youth angle rather than a general class angle;" it was still a miniature Daily Worker (YW, Nov. 2, 1931, p. 4).

The editors exonerated young American workers from blame for their failure to buy more copies of their own proletarian newspaper. "We cannot say that the working youth of America is an almost inert mass" (Sept. 1, 1927, p. 2). American young workers "are not backward but uneducated, [they] have not yet come in conflict with armed forces of the bourgeoisie" (YW, Nov. 1, 1926, p. 2). Moreover, their political apathy was understandable; they were up against the most powerful imperialist state in the world and the most firmly entrenched and reactionary trade union bureaucracy (YW, Nov. 1, 1926, p. 2).



The not unexpected demise of the Young Worker came in 1936. The Young Communist League, as World War II approached, had joined forces with the students and young socialists in a united youth front, its paper, "a battle-scarred veteran among the labor papers of America," could make way for "a new youth paper for the new times--the Champion" (YW, April 28, 1936, pp. 6-7). (The YCL itself came to an end in December 1943, when, subordinating itself to the cause of the broadest possible coalition of the American population in support of the war against Germany and in defense of the Soviet Union, the organization voted to terminate publication.)

In fact, the Champion never came into existence. Rather, Clarity appeared, the theoretical quarterly of the YCL, edited by Max Weiss and published from 1940 to 1943. Reviewing in Clarity the history of the Young Worker, more philosophically than he had eleven years previously, Weiss found that social conditions, not Marxist polemic, had finally stirred the mass of American youth into political activity: "The YCL, more than anyone else, recognized the limited and modest role which it played when compared with the effects of powerful political, social, and economic forces"--namely, the depression and the rise of Hitler. (Clarity, spring 1942, p. 4).

#### General Tactics and Organization

During its more militant years the YCL had emphasized "action" and "struggle." A member of the Young Communist International, making a periodic inspection of the progress of the American branch, warned that young radicals must not "shut themselves up in little debating clubs as 'pure' revolutionists, afraid to lose their 'communist clarity' by coming in contact with the non-communist workers." Instead, young communists must be in daily contact with the workers, at the point of production, so that they can "feel the pulse" of the proletariat (YW, July 1923, p. 4). To attempt to learn communist theory without engaging in the class struggle in shop or factory was like trying to learn to swim on the sand. "Education through active participation in the class struggle" was the slogan adopted by the YWL at its convention in 1924. There was a "political minimum"--a certain amount of theoretical knowledge that every young communist should have, and this was provided, beginning in 1925, by a weekly

lesson in the paper--but the emphasis was on daily participation in the immediate struggle.

League meetings hardly seemed designed for the task. Agendas were uncertain, chairman were frequently inept, and members expressed an inordinate fondness for such phrases as "the socially necessary amount of labor time," "the anarchy of production," and so forth. Worst of all, students unwittingly condescended to their young working class comrades. This sometimes took the form of open discussion--as new recruits from the factories listened--on how best to prepare untutored workers for their role in society. The seam in the audience between student and worker became very visible at such times. Class consciousness, a troubled article suggested, ought rather to be packaged in one act propaganda plays, in songs, or in campfire discussions after a congenial hike (YW, April 1923, p. 11).

The YCL was willing to accommodate the masses not only with pleasant activities but with a show of interest in sports. The communists basically felt that the professional athletic organizations were capitalist enterprises whose purpose was to distract the workers from the misery of their lives (YW, May 1, 1930, p. 16). The workers' susceptibility to the diversion of spectator sports, his great emotion and energy which could have moved a revolution instead exhausted itself in the bleachers, was viewed rather more in sorrow than anger.

We must understand that from early childhood the American worker, poor as he is, is absorbed in athletics and sports, and that a Jack Dempsey or a "Babe" Ruth is as much the object of emulation as is the president of the United States, Charlie Chaplin, or John D. Rockefeller...capitalism plays upon his imagination just as do the big corporations and steamship companies on the imagination of the ignorant foreign peasants in picturing the golden opportunities before them if they will come to American where "gold is found on the streets." (YW, April 1923, p. 13)

Since the enthusiasm for sports among the working masses proved irreducible, it was better that they participate in sports organized by the communists, rather than their employers, and that news of professional athletics should

reach them through a radical newspaper. Accordingly, labor set up its own sports union (the LSU; YW, Aug. 1928, p. 3), published a monthly magazine Sport and Play (YW, Feb. 16, 1931, p. 2), and organized ball teams. The Young Worker, beginning April 2, 1935 (p. 7), offered a sports column, which interspersed predictions on the outcome of the World Series with political commentary--noting, for example, that black players were so far systematically excluded from the big-league ball teams, or calling for agitation against Hitler and for the removal of the 1936 Olympics from Germany or for "equal rights for Negroes not only on the political and economic fields but also on the ball fields" (YW, April 30, 1935, p. 11).

In the beginning the Young Workers Leagues were organized by geographical branches, the young workers in each unit having nothing in common except their locality. In its second year, however, the organization tried to establish shop nuclei, in the Russian manner. A nucleus was "the political organization of the class conscious workers within a certain shop, mill, mine, or factory;" it was the basic unit of the Communist party (YW, March 14, 1925, p. 3). Only one enlightened worker was needed to start a nucleus. United at the point of production by sharing the same daily toil and facing the same problems together, the workers in a nucleus had much more in common than those in a neighborhood branch. The nucleus was the best way to teach the ABC's of Marxism since the factory was an ideal locale for direct instruction on the immediate and general sources of exploitation (July 1923, pp. 4-5).

The organization by shop nuclei could also counteract the tendency of workers to cluster in foreign language groups. The leadership of the YCL had always been torn between allowing such groups to exist or discouraging their formation. Although it reassured foreign-born workers that organizational change would not destroy the language branches, it covertly hoped that the shop nuclei would overcome the centripetal force generated by the nationalism which made centralization and shop agitation nearly impossible (YS, May 1932, p. 4; YW, April 15, 1924, p. 3; April 24, 1934, p. 10). The passage of time, rather than shop nuclei, finally accomplished this purpose. By 1934, the YCL was overwhelmingly native-born and English-speaking (YW, May 1932, p. 4; April 24, 1934, p. 10).

Shop nuclei, for all the hope invested in them, were more formidable in prospect than in practice. By 1930, the YCL conceded that it had "practically no shop nuclei" (YW, May 19, 1930, p. 5). Even when economic and political reality obliged with a war or a panic, even when there were seven million unemployed in the country, the nuclei failed to attract many converts (YW, June 9, 1930, p. 4). By April 1935, there were only 90 shop nuclei--most of these with no more than a handful of members--in all of the United States (April 23, 1935, p. 5). The "poor social composition" of the YCL was again blamed for this failure. Articulate student members presumably preferred to languish in district headquarters while away the long evenings theorizing about the revolution to organizing young workers. The social activities, hikes, lectures, and debates of the branch units continued to take precedence over activities in the factory (YW, Oct. 1923, p. 14; May 19, 1930, p. 5). The YWL never succeeded in establishing the mass base for which it yearned (YW, June 9, 1930, p. 4).

#### The Young Communists and the Unions

The goal of the young communists was to gain leadership of the masses of industrial workers and of poor farmers, in order to establish a government responsive to those who had been the wretched of the earth. Revolutionary tactics required "boring from within" gradualist and reformist groups in order to raise the consciousness of the masses and to enroll them, eventually, in the class struggle.

The labor unions were viewed as one such vehicle that could carry the laboring population toward the classless society. Although such groups as the Knights of Labor and especially the International Workers of the World had been explicitly anti-capitalist, most had been content to achieve immediate economic objectives. The American Federation of Labor, especially was, from the standpoint of the Left, a complacent protector of the skilled crafts, a collaborator of capitalists and the enemy of the unskilled worker (YW, March 14, 1925; Oct. 3, 1925, p. 3). Most of the unskilled were also young workers.

The young occupied a special place in industry: they were the bond between the foreign-born and native American workers, and in industries where they and the

foreign-born constituted the bulk of the labor force they were the most articulate section of the working class. Yet, except for blacks, young workers were the most underprivileged of any group in American labor. The unions favored the older, skilled worker; and established age barriers, high initiation fees, and dues payments that the young found impossible to meet (YW, Nov. 1923, p. 4 ). In the metal and printing trades, apprentices were not admitted to full membership until the age of twenty-one (YW, March 15, 1924, p. 2 ). Moreover, the young were not properly valued in those unions to which they had been admitted. Although they had proved their militance during labor strife, once the strike was over the youthful workers were again relegated to second class status (YW, May 22, 1934, p. 4 ). Unions were also derelict in failing to adopt special measures to overcome the youthful prejudice against unions which resulted from hostile indoctrination by schools, churches, and the press (YW, Feb. 1, 1924, p. 3 ).

Samuel Gompers, first president of the American Federation of Labor, accepted none of the communist theses. He refused to interpret history in terms of class struggle or to accept the necessity for revolution, nor did he believe that youth had any special requirements in the unions. Young communists described the American Federation of Labor as an "institution built up through forty years betrayal of the working class" (YW, April 1923, p. 2 ). Gompers was characterized in the pages of the Young Worker as:

This short, fat, toddling monkey form individual hides himself, and like a hypocritical priest, weeps torrents at the mention of child labor, but does not invoke one ounce of labor's power to end this dastardly practice. (YW, Feb. 15, 1924, p. 1).

Gompers' defense of the Boy Scouts of America (the "baby fascisti" in the eyes of the YCL) and his offer to use the machinery of the A.F. of L. to recruit working class youth for the Citizens Military Training Camps further confirmed his villainy (YW, Feb. 15, 1924, p. 1; Dec. 15, 1924, pp. 1-2). When Gompers had the decency to die, a gloating obituary was headlined "Gompers Kicks the Bucket" (YW, Jan. 1, 1925, p. 4).

In 1925, the National Executive Committee of the Young Communist League declared that two of its fundamental tasks were to work for world trade union unity and to create a left wing in the American labor movement (YW, Nov. 14, 1925, p. 3). The Industrial Workers of the World and the Workers International were two such world-wide unions. The communists also favored stringing the separate trade unions together into the Trade Union Unity League; the organized labor movement must be unified before it could be revolutionized (YW, March 14, 1925, p. 3). They recommended that every YCL member should also be a member of the Trade Union Educational League and of one of the already established trade unions (YW, July 15, 1924, p. 4). They opposed the idea of separate "revolutionary" or dual unions (YW, Oct. 1922, p. 8). Rather, YCL members must "bore from within" the established trade unions in order to convert their members to communism. In an effort to win over the mass of young workers to the revolutionary cause, the YCL should organize "youth sections" which

must pick out factories, employing mainly young workers, must storm these factories, organize shop committees, must present immediate struggle demands to the young workers, and must initiate struggles of the young workers on the basis of these demands. (YW, May 26, 1930, p. 4)

The 55th convention of the A.F. of L., in 1935, did take account of the growing trend of young workers to join trade unions and of the "distinct youth problem in industry," manifested in the necessity for a National Youth Administration and for Civilian Conservation Camps. The government's sponsorship of apprentice training and its hiring of youth on work projects at less than the prevailing wage endangered the older workers. The AFL conceded a little: they pledged to make their locals more hospitable to the young by setting up special youth committees and activities, such as Labor Sports Leagues (YW, Oct. 15, 1935, p. 12).

In the Old Left, if there was any generational conflict, it revealed itself in the prejudice of the old against the young. By either turning away the young workers or ignoring them once they were in the unions, the older union members were forcing the young

workers to scab--to refuse to strike or join the unions or to work for less than union wages. The young communists themselves did not want any such split between young and old--only between classes--and they made this clear in their position on trade unions. The National Youth movement was taken to task for blaming the older generation for the plight of working youth. "The National Youth movement talks about youth versus old age to divide the working youth from their class--the working class" (YW, May 8, 1934, p. 6). The communists were strongly opposed to organizing young workers into their own organizations separate and apart from the adult groups (YW, Feb. 1, 1924, p. 1). The adult workers must learn that to the extent that they improved the conditions of the young workers, to that extent it would be more difficult for employers to exploit them both (YW, July 3, 1934, p. 7). Their interests were identical because they were members of the same class. "What the League does maintain, though, is that a different psychology exists among the young workers which makes necessary a different method of approach" (YW, Feb. 1, 1924, p. 1).

#### The Young Communists and Electoral Politics

The American political system and electoral politics were even more repugnant to the communists than the trade unions, but they were willing to use these mechanisms to achieve revolutionary ends. The public schools, the churches, and the kept press, it was said, instilled a false reverence for the United States Constitution. Actually, that piece of paper was a farce: an instrument of oppression drawn up by the capitalist class in order to keep the proletariat in subjugation; its system of checks and balances was not an outlet for political expression of the American citizen but a device to prevent elected representatives from passing laws that would serve the majority. Revolution must topple a government so conceived, and this could never be accomplished by using Constitutional means.

Nevertheless, in order to achieve some goals, such as child-labor legislation, Communists were willing to use the machinery of bourgeois democracy. They could be pleased when the Shortridge resolution (to limit or prohibit labor of those under eighteen) was before Congress, and they endorsed anti-child labor amendments in the platforms of both the Farmer-Labor party and the Workers party (YW, Feb. 15, 1924, p. 1). Of course they did not lose the opportunity to

draw a Marxist moral:

Although it is necessary to talk of child labor legislation, that tactic is only of value to the extent that it, like all parliamentary demands, exposes the class nature of the government and discredits it before the masses of the young wage slaves. Such work is educational in the highest degree and in the best revolutionary sense. (YW, April 1923, pp. 9-10)

Just as the class-conscious workers in a factory organized into nuclei, so workers who put the interests of their class above all others organize into political parties. In 1924, delegates met in St. Paul to draw up the platform of the Farmer-Labor party and nominate a candidate for the November presidential election. The Farmer-Labor party was not a third capitalist party but one founded for the class interests of workers and farmers. Operating through a national party was not "selling out" if, as the Young Worker assured its readers, "workers are constantly reminded of the inadequacy of reformism and parliamentary struggles" (YW, May 15, 1924, p. 4). The Farmer-Labor party nominated an Illinois coal miner for president and a Washington farmer for vice president (YW, July 15, 1924, p. 4).

Robert La Follette's Progressive Party (the party of "small businessmen, bankers, trade union bureaucracy, labor aristocrats, professional workers, liberals and the more well-to-do farmers") was considered a third capitalist party by the League. When the Progressive Party tried to entice members of the Farmer-Labor party to join its ranks, the Workers Party of America took up the cause of the ransacked Farmer-Labor party and ran candidates in the presidential election (YW, Aug. 1, 1924, p. 1; Dec. 15, 1924, p. 4). In this and subsequent elections, including the campaigns of William Z. Foster and Earl Browder, the YCL supported the Communist party.

The YCL supports the Communist party in the election campaign because, of all parties, it is the only one that really fights for us, for the young workers. It puts the demands of the YCL in its program. Young workers



are placed as candidates on the ticket of the Communist party. The Communist party clearly understands that the working youth is a doubly robbed section of the working class--and therefore needs a special program of its own. (YW, Oct. 9, 1930, p. 4)

The special youth demands in the Congressional election platform of the Communist party in 1934 were:

1. for replacement of CCC and transient semi-military camps;
2. unemployment insurance or jobs at trade union wages for all youths, Negro and white;
3. equal pay for young and old, Negro and white;
4. voting rights for all over age 18;
5. vocational training for all youth between 14 and 18 years of age, under workers control and at full wages;
6. government support at no less than \$3.00 a week for all children under 14 now working;
7. immediate federal appropriations for opening all closed schools and for building new ones, especially in Negro districts;
8. immediate abolition of the national guard and all forms of capitalist militarism. (YW, Nov. 6, 1934, p. 2)

Until the moment when he came to the defense of the Allied powers and therefore of Russia, in World War II, Franklin D. Roosevelt and his programs were an anathema to the YCL. His Civilian Conservation Corps camps were notably primarily for their poor food, shootings, accidents, lack of medical attention, and overwork. While his National Youth Administration (formed in 1935 and paying youth in unemployed families \$15.00 monthly) was considered a device to avoid paying the working youth of America a living wage as well as a threat to union labor. (YW, July 3, 1934, p. 5; Aug. 14, 1934, p. 5; July 9, 1935, p. 12).

FDR, you promised the American youth an American standard of living, you promised recovery. You kept your promise of recovery--FOR THE BOSSES. You increased their profits from 100 to 400% during the N.R.A...the miser-

able minimums [of \$11.00 and \$12.00 a week] we didn't get because you classified us as apprentices, learners, etc....you forced hundreds of us into company unions with attendant wage cuts and increased speedup. You broke hundreds of our strikes, with your promises and national guard. And on top of it, you have forced us to pay 14% more for the things we have to buy. (YW, March 12, 1935, p. 4)

The willingness of the YCL to ally itself with the Socialist party, like its policy toward Roosevelt and the New Deal, shifted with events and circumstance. In 1928 the Socialist party was dismissed in the pages of the Young Worker as a "miserable collection of reactionary trade union bureaucrats, small businessmen, and liberal lawyers and preachers...a third capitalist party" (YW, July 1, 1928, p. 3). But by 1935, sharp internal struggles among the Socialists had split their party into an old guard, who favored gradualist "revisionist" tendencies, and a left-wing faction, who wanted a working class policy based upon militant class struggle (YW, April 2, 1935, p. 4). That same year the YCI was recommending that the communists widen their base to include these left-leaning socialists--as well as the broad trade unions of the A.F. of L., "intellectuals and small business people who are fed up with Roosevelt," along with the workers, farmers, and students. And it was urging students to give more support to their political party if they wanted to achieve peace, free speech, press, and assemblage, racial equality, unionization, education, social and unemployment insurance. After having suffered through the New Deal and police terror against striking workers, these factions ought to realize that "there is some direct line between politics and their bread and butter" (YW, July 9, 1935, p. 7).

#### The Young Communists on Peace and War

The most common impetus for lowered resistance to Roosevelt, to the Socialist party, and to other radical groups was any perceived threat to the Soviet Union. In the pages of the Young Worker, the Soviet Union was exhibited as the best, perhaps only, hope of mankind. Juxtaposed to stories of lynchings, hunger marches, and war preparations in America, its pages featured a photo of smiling Soviet youth at a free summer camp, with the caption "Their carefree

holiday spirit is the result of the fact that they know there is no fear of unemployment, hunger, and boss terror under the dictatorship of the proletariat in the Soviet Union" (YW, April 18, 1932, p. 3). Children in the U.S.S.R. were declared "the happiest in the world," living in modern houses and never knowing hunger or want (YW, May 23, 1932, p. 3); whereas the incident of a young American woman drowning her two-year-old son ("He's better dead than hungry") was "not unusual" in a country where from five million to eight million young people between the ages of 16 and 25 were unemployed (YW, Nov. 5, 1935, p. 7).

Communist journals saw the U.S.S.R. as continually threatened by the imperialist powers. The investigations conducted by Congressman Hamilton Fish on the Russian Armtog trading corporation, and his call to outlaw all militant unions, communists, and their press; the expulsion of two Los Angeles high school students for telling their class about the pleasures of life in the Soviet Union: these were signs that Russia was deeply unpopular with the American capitalist class (YW, July 28, 1930, pp. 1-2; Jan. 26, 1931, pp. 1-2; Feb. 16, 1931, p. 2). Most ominous were the intimations of approaching war, for the imperialist powers would turn any war, no matter how it began, into an opportunity to fire on the Soviet Union, the Workers' Fatherland. Events were read as war omens as early as 1924; the young communists anxiously noted a conference of the auto industry on how to produce war material speedily or the ordering of a new type of war plane (YW, March 30, 1931, p. 7; April 6, 1931, pp. 1-2). The Japanese invasion of Manchuria and attack upon the Chinese Soviets, openly supported by the French and American capitalists, and the German election of 1932, in which Hitler's National Socialist's emerged as the largest party, placed the Soviet Union in grave danger (YW, Nov. 16, 1931, pp. 1-2; Nov. 23, 1931, p. 1; YS, May 1932, pp. 1, 4). The evidence of American complicity was unmistakable:

Under our eyes, the U.S. has set aside over a billion dollars for war purposes. "We" are to construct a navy "second to none." Plans have been made for the building of some 95 new warships, over a thousand bombing plans. In the C.C.C., the youth are being trained to that

discipline required by war. These are preparations--not for peace--but for war! (YS, April, 1934, p. 6)

The young left of the 1920's and 30's heartily opposed their country's militarism. The ROTC, by 1929 compulsory in almost half the schools in the country, had always drawn their ire. So had the Citizens Military Training Camps, by which five years after its founding in 1921 had processed 35,000 recruits (YW, May 1, 1927, p. 3). Both organizations were seen as agents of anti-working class propaganda, bribing the worker-students with free clothing, course credits, summer camps, and sports as they were being transformed into slaves of the American War Department (YW, Sept. 1, 1929, p. 7).

The Young Worker reacted by affirming a communist bill of rights for servicemen. It called for a raise in monthly pay, the abolition of court martial and the death penalty, the right to resign from service at any time after enlistment and the freedom of the soldier to continue his political activities as a young communist. Servicemen must be allowed to form unions, to join political parties, to vote and hold office, and to organize social, sports, and study clubs. There must be no racial discrimination or segregation (YW, May 1, 1930, p. 11).

The communists were not pacifists. The road to peace they believed, lay through war--class war. Capitalists were the real enemy in all wars and there could be no peace until the workers in the countries involved turned the war into a class war and vanquished their warring imperialist bosses (YW, June 15, 1924, p. 2; YS, Feb. 1932, p. 2). Despite the identity of the author communists never retreated from Trotsky's dictum that "in the wars of the capitalists, we are pacifists, but in the wars of the working class we fight unto the death" (quoted in YW, June 15, 1924, p. 2). They distinguished between just and unjust wars. The former was exemplified by the Spanish Civil War, in which a people struggled for national freedom and independence from capitalist or fascist enslavement; a prime example of the latter was World War II in its pre-Soviet phase.

At various times during the 1930's communists advocated "popular" or "united" fronts against war

and fascism. Fascism was "the open dictatorship of the most reactionary, most chauvinistic, and most imperialist elements of finance capital" (YW, March 27, 1934, P. 2A). Fifteen thousand young "workers" met in New York in August 1931 "to fight war preparations and to defend the Soviet Union against the attack of the bosses" (YW, Aug. 3, 1931, p. 2). The American Youth Congress played a key role in mobilizing a united front. Formed in September, 1934, the AYC drew in previously incompatible groups--the YCL, the Students League for Industrial Democracy, the National Student Federation of America, the National Students League, high school students, the American League Against War and Fascism, and even the YMCA (YW, Spt. 11, 1934, pp. 1, 5). All in all, 79 organizations participated, having in common their youth and their aversion to an "imperialist war." On May 30, 1935, the A.Y.C. mobilized United Youth Day demonstrations in 40 cities across the country, under the banner "Down with the Bosses' War and Fascism!"

Never before was there such unity of action of church youth, youth of the Y's, youth of the trade unions, Socialist and Communist youth. (YW, June 4, 1935, p. 2)

In April 1936, an estimated 500,000 people participated in a nationwide strike for peace which was also said to include 50,000 New York high school students (YW, April 28, 1936, pp. 3-4).

One of the anti-war groups drawn into the front was the American League Against War and Fascism. Organized in 1934, the American League hoped to broaden the youth anti-war movement by appealing to the middle class and the intellectuals as well as to working class youth (YW, March 27, 1934, p. 1). It held rallies across the country and was able to attract youth from the YCL, the YPSL, the Socialist party, the trade unions--and from the Boy Scouts and the churches (YW, April 10, 1934, p. 1). The members of the Trotskyite youth movement, however, rejected the American League Against War and Fascism. This more militant group, who were true to the goal of world-wide revolution, felt that a united front against fascism ought to be composed of existing working class organizations; an anti-fascist organization that in-

cluded the bourgeoisie consented to the oppression of workers (YS, Oct. 1934, p. 4). It is during wartime that the imperialists most fear the uprising of the slaves. The working class has nothing to gain by the victory of either capitalist power. They must turn the imperialist war into a class war. The organ of the Trotskyites, Young Spartacus, spelled out how this was to be done: by anti-war strikes and demonstrations at home, by fraternization with the workers in the enemies' trenches, by refusing to ship munitions, soldiers, and sailors (YS, March 1934, p. 3; April 1934, p. 6).

The young communists continued to oppose the war after the Soviet-Nazi Entente in August 1939 and remained loyal to the Soviet Union after her annexation of parts of Eastern Europe, and the invasion of Finland in November 1939.

The Soviet Union defends peace not only in the interests of its people but also in the interests of the peoples throughout the world...now, after the victory of the glorious and mighty Red Army over the Finnish white guards, after the liberation of the peoples of Bessarabia, North Bukovina, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia there are 16 fraternal and equal republics based on the Stalinist Constitution...the future belongs to those who are fighting under the banner of Lenin-Stalin. (Clarity, Fall 1940, p. 8)

The German invasion of the USSR in June 1941 changed the character of the war in the eyes of the young communists and, in an abrupt about-face, mobilized another united front, this time pro-war. What had been an imperialist war was now a just war.

He who fights my enemy is my friend, regardless of his motives, regardless of how temporary that friendship... the just war against Nazi fascism is a war for national liberation, for national freedom from fascist enslavement. (Clarity, Summer 1941, p. 24)

The young Left now entered the war effort wholeheartedly, supported Roosevelt and reversed its position on the ROTC.

The youth places its talents and energies at the disposal of the nation for the speeding up and expansion of production for national defense, to create such an abundance of arms that will overwhelm and crush Hitler...We are anxious to be trained in the methods of modern warfare and we are ready and willing to accept the discipline of the armed forces, and to be used and sent in whatever manner and wherever the defense of our nation against Hitlerism dictates. We favor the full mobilization and coordination of America's youth with the defense program. We favor participation in the ROTC, the junior naval reserves, etc., participation in the civilian defense program, the collection of aluminum and so on. We favor physical culture and sports programs on a democratic basis to help put youth in shape. (Clarity, Summer 1941, p. 61)

The Young Communists and the Poor, Black, Women and the Young

Communist journals expressed continuing concern for the poverty they saw everywhere in America, the great contrasts in living conditions between the rich and the poor.

There is a constant army of two million unemployed in the United States during normal periods. So there is a constant army of acutely poverty-stricken workers. The normal figure is 14 million; and for a longer or shorter time every member of the working class helps to make up this gigantic figure of 14 million who live worse than the beasts of the field and whose children are wrinkled and dwarfed in body and mind. (YW, Jan. 1, 1925, p. 2)

The pages of the Young Worker carried numerous examples of destitution and effects on human beings. At a Pennsylvania plant which manufactured horse-shoes, children ranging from 9 to 16 years were paid an average of 15 cents an hour for a ten-hour day (YW, Jan. 15, 1924, p. 3). A girl offered to sell herself to anyone who would give \$9,000.00 to her debt-ridden father (YW, Jan. 1, 1928, p. 2). An unemployed young communist who could not support himself and his widowed mother threw himself under a train (YW, Feb. 1, 1924, p.2).

The Left of the 1930's and the Left of the 60's also shared a concern for three minority groups-- blacks, women, and the young. Despite the fact that blacks were particularly disadvantaged members of the proletariat, in its early years, the YCL showed a theoretical, rather perfunctory concern for their welfare, although it periodically reproached itself in the pages of the Young Worker for this neglect (YW, Dec. 15, 1924, p. 3; March 21, 1925, p. 1; March 1929, p. 2).

The suffering of black and of white workers in the depression and the coming of war, which threatened them both, raised the plight of the black worker to a higher place on the League's agenda. Dividing the blacks into three groups--first, the radicals, already class conscious; second, the highly race conscious blacks; and finally, the bourgeois conservatives, highly resistant to radicalization--the League vowed to penetrate

all Negro youth organizations....  
efforts must be made to break down  
this individualist psychology and  
to bring about the merging of their  
race consciousness with the general  
class struggle. (YW, March 1929, p. 2)

In 1930 the YCL set up a parallel youth organization for blacks, called the Young Liberators, with branches across the country. Functioning YCL fractions operating inside each branch would lead the struggles against discrimination and lynching and for employment and equal working conditions with whites. "We must develop new methods, pour more energy into our work, try harder," was a common theme (YW, Nov. 17, 1930, p. 7). By the following year, however, the League was discovering that the problem



of white lethargy toward the black cause had not changed: the Young Liberators organization had become jim-crow in composition, having failed to attract young white workers. The sixth convention of the YCL adopted the slogan "Every League member a fighter for Negro rights" and in the interests of racial solidarity they were prepared to align themselves with the blacks even in behalf of limited demands (YW, Oct. 19, 1931, p. 4).

The 1930's brought constant reports of atrocities to the pages of the Young Worker: a photo of unemployed blacks trying to keep warm ("They realize they are part of our class"); a photo of a hanged black youth ("Lynchings are a class weapon"); (YW, March 1930, p. 8; May 19, 1930, p. 2). The oppression of the black man was seen as the desperate attempt of the capitalist class to prevent the white and the black workers from joining hands against a common oppressor (YW, May 19, 1930, p. 4):

Who profits from this oppression?  
Big business. More specifically  
the Morgan interest who controls the  
huge steel plants of the Tennessee  
Coal, Iron and Railroad Company in  
Birmingham, Alabama; Dupont interests  
who control the Allied Chemical and  
Dye Company, Union Carbide and Carbon  
Company and the Celanese Corporation  
of America; Standard Oil (Rockefeller)  
.... (NF, Spring 1952)

Accused blacks became martyrs, and their cause was taken up in every issue of the Young Worker, Young Spartacus, and New Foundations. One of the martyrs was Angelo Herndon, a young black communist organizer sentenced by an Atlanta court to 18 to 20 years on the chain gang for his political beliefs and activities (YW, Feb. 1, 1933, p. 1). The most notorious and long enduring case was that of the Scottsboro boys--nine black workers arrested in Scottsboro, Alabama, in 1931, charged with the attempted rape of two white girls. The radical journals saw the case in its Marxist light: nine people who were unemployed, young, of the working class, and black--were being "railroaded to death" in an attempt by the bosses "to terrorize the working class" (YW, March 30, 1931, p. 1; April 27, 1931, p. 8).

The recession of the mid 1930's, which worsened the economic plight of black workers was viewed as an opportunity to strengthen the black-white working class alliance (Clarity, April-May 1940, pp. 22-35). Blacks were urged to join in a coalition against all social evils including imperialist war.

...the interest of the white working class, poor farmers, middle class and professionals is identical with that of the masses of Negro people....there is an imperative need for a common struggle of both Negro and white masses against the imperialist war and imperialist slavery which exploit and oppresses them both....(Clarity, April-May 1940, p. 24)

Women were treated rather cavalierly in the pages of the Young Worker. A regular column featuring the problems of women when finally established in 1935 seldom addressed them as radicals, workers or students but rather as girlfriends of young Communists.

I have heard fellows who are sympathetic, claim that since their girlfriends became Communists they don't dress as well as they used to...listen, girls, we are always in a fashion and in a beauty contest with the boys we come in contact with as daily judges....  
(YW, Nov. 12, 1935, p. 10)

Women were warned that male comrades might resent "taking orders from skirts" (YW, Dec. 17, 1935, p. 9); and were advised on how to make inexpensive Christmas gifts, how to maintain a youthful figure, and what suits to wear for Easter (YW, Nov. 19, 1935, p. 9; Jan. 14, 1936, p. 9; March 1936, p. 9).

The radical party line was not always consistent. The Student Advocate, for example, published a satirical piece on young women who will do, say, or feign conviction about anything to please men.

He was awfully radical but I swear he looked at me all the

time and he was so adorably tough. Afterwards, I went up to him--that was just after I'd cut my bangs--and asked him how we could fix up unemployment. No, really, you have to have an intelligent approach to men. It's the only way. (SA, Dec. 1936, p. 11)

The college sorority girl thinking only of becoming a wife and mother was given a darker cast in a poem in the Student Review, who saw these "tall blonde maidens, strong and fair" almost as Nazi Brunnhildes,

Whose clothes have been sewn  
with sweat, Forced out drop by  
drop by the bosses' clocks....  
I have seen the hardness in their  
settled stare I have watched the  
corpses, beyond the yellow hair....  
(SR, Summer 1934, p. 14)

The war, however, would help to do away with the bourgeois ideal of woman. An article in Clarity foresaw that in serving with civilian defense, the Red Cross, in the munitions industries, women would drop their self-limitations and come into "their full stature;" after the war, things would never be the same:

The great influx of young women into industry, the accompanying growing political education of young women and the growth of young women's organizations will also find its reflections in the ranks of the YCL...[which] should pay the greatest attention to the training and advancement of the girls and young women in its ranks....  
(Clarity, Winter 1942, p. 62)

To the communists of the 1920's and 30's, youth was crucial to the revolution. They were precious among other reasons because they were soldiers who could turn on their masters. Lenin assigned great importance to efforts for recruiting youthful revolutionaries and urged that distinctive methods be used to attract young workers. "Youth must come to

socialism in a different way, by other paths, in other forms, in other circumstances than their fathers." Therefore the YCL must be organizationally independent of the Communist Party (Clarity, April-May 1940, pp. 59-74).

Independently organized, the Communist youth journals and groups in America were, at the same time, completely subordinate to the parent organization in all matters of policy. They believed that the Communist party was the only national political party that offered a satisfactory youth program; the parties of the capitalists promptly forgot young voters immediately after each election (YW, Sept. 11, 1934, p. 5). The young communists had no wish to establish a rival party devoted to youth. Those who conceived of politics in generational terms, were described as either foolish students or enemies of the left, who would use an independent YCL to destroy the Communist party (YW, May 1922, pp. 7, 17).

When at their best, American youth were credited with energy, enthusiasm, and a fighting spirit (YW, Feb. 1922, p. 2); they had the optimism and vitality necessary for success and should be assigned important roles in union activities (YW, April 1923, p. 8). However, attendance in capitalist schools and churches, and participation in organizations such as the Boy Scouts, rendered American youth vulnerable to capitalist brainwashing; as a result, many of them were politically inert, immune to the class struggle. An unflattering portrait of youth appeared in an early issue of the Young Worker:

I have no illusions on the subject of the predominant element of our American youth. I know that they were for the most part immune to an original thought, vaccinated against an idea of any sort, and like butterflies they skim from one flower to another in a perpetual, futile search for new sensations.... (Max Shachtman, YW, April 1923, p. 21)

All in the old left agreed that, whether zombies or powerhouses, the young were the most exploited segment of the American working class. As soldiers they were "cannon fodder" in imperialist wars. As workers,

they were used by the employers to depress the wage scales of adults. It was easy to underpay and to dismiss them. In order to get jobs at all, the young workers had to acquiesce to the open shop, which left them even more vulnerable. Child laborers were cruelly victimized. In 1922, a year in which 1,500,000 girls and boys, 10 to 15 years of age were in the work force, the average wage was \$4.30 per week (YW, Nov. 1922, p. 5). Medical examinations for military service revealed how "the flower of the nation" had prospered under capitalism. Of five million young conscripts, thirty-six percent were found not sufficiently fit to undergo basic training. The greatest number of diseased and maimed came from the industrial and mining districts. Psychological tests revealed that the mental level of the average young soldier was that of a ten-year-old child (YW, Jan. 1, 1925, p. 2).

The plight of working class youth was considered by the Communist Left almost wholly in economic terms. Youth itself was not conceived as a form of suffering, and they did not constitute a group which was in anyway antagonistic to what they referred respectfully as the "maturer proletarians" in the factories and in the unions. The struggles of the past had taught the young workers that

individually we are impotent against the terrific power of the manufacturers and landlords; united and joined together under a brave and prudent leadership we are strong and will conquer. (YW, Feb. 1922, p. 11)

#### The Young Communists and Civil Liberties

Enough has been said to indicate that young communists of the 1920's and 30's despaired for justice in capitalist society; they regularly predicted the imminent triumph of fascism. They placed no trust in parliamentary democracy or constitutional guarantees. All of the communists' campaigns, their conferences, their strikes, their journalism were part of an effort to extend the Bill of Rights to groups that did not seem to possess them: to soldiers, blacks, the young, the working class, and teachers. And of course the young communists were compelled periodically to defend themselves against what they regarded as vin-

dictive and unmerited assaults on their organizations and persons.

#### The Young Communists and Education and Culture

The old left, which had the Soviet Union as the blueprint of the future and Marxism as its guide, believed that one of the main functions of the party was to educate its members as to what was inevitable anyway--the overthrow of capitalism and government by the workers (YW, Feb. 29, 1932, p. 5).

The manifesto of the Young Workers' League of 1922 committed it to educating both its own members (through study classes, educational columns in the Young Worker, and lecturers) and young workers outside the organization (through demonstrations in industrial centers, distribution of the Young Worker and other literature, and special agitation among farm youth and students) (YW, March-April 1922, p. 12).

In 1932, the Young Worker published a series of Study Guides for the benefit of its branches. These elementary materials dealt with capitalist exploitation, proletarian dictatorship and the building of socialism, the tasks and aims of the YCL, its organizational principles and relation to the Labor party--as well as with such practical matters as how to prepare a leaflet or shop bulletin (YW, Feb. 29, 1932, p. 5).

There was a good deal of controversy within the YCL over whether it ought to confine itself to propaganda and issues of immediate concern to workers, or broaden its educational activities to include the natural sciences and the arts. The suggestion that the League ought to teach more than the class conflict was strongly opposed by the YCL secretary Martin Abern. In the first place, Abern argued, what workers required was not "culture" but freedom which could be gained only through emancipation from the capitalist class. Teaching the ways of revolution was task enough, since the working class youth in America, preoccupied with baseball, football, and dancing, had not yet grasped the most elementary principles of the class struggle. Secondly, paintings, music, literature and other products of contemporary culture were in any event necessarily second-rate tributes to a dying society. "There can be no real culture, no real education, no real sciences until man is freed from exploitation."

Finally, the man with a Marxist education had learned to think dialectically, to see things in their inter-relatedness, and was thus equipped "to invade all fields, including the natural sciences" (YW, Aug.-Sept. 1922, pp. 5-6).

Not surprisingly, the young communists resented educational influences other than their own, particularly any exerted upon the very young. They viewed the church, movies, and the press as extensions of a vast educational system that was designed to persuade young minds to acquiesce in the prevailing system of exploitation (YW, May 9, 1925, p. 3). The YMCA, the Salvation Army, and the Boy Scouts, were thought to be especially pernicious. They existed to train working class youth to become "cannon fodder" in the wars of the Wall Street imperialists who financed their activities (YW, April 1, 1924, p. 3). The Young Worker compared the Boy Scouts to young Nazis, in their creed of obedience, to an adult, no matter how corrupt:

...they are screwed up to patriotic feverheat and are told whatever they do under the command of their leaders is for "their" country, for "their" home and "their" flag. (YW, March 1923, p. 4)

The First World War demonstrated that the Boy Scouts could be "one of the most efficient military machines available." In peacetime, they were just as sinister: then they worked as scabs and propagandists against the working class (YW, May 15, 1924, p. 4).

Children were not the only vulnerable targets. Anyone exposed to American books and films was in danger of becoming corrupt. The Young Worker found American culture inferior when compared with the art of the Soviet Union. A reviewer conceded that a Marx brothers' film "Animal Crackers" had made him laugh but called its cleverness the crazy decadence of a society coming apart. "It's worthwhile seeing, fellow worker, if only to realize, by contrast, how incomparably better a "Potemkin" or "End of St. Petersburg" is" (YW, Oct. 9, 1930, p. 5).

A review of the Soviet novel Cement was far too sober to have intended the pun on "concrete:"

The hero Gleb is not one of those melodramatic heroes of the American novel and movie. He is only a poor uneducated worker, willing to sacrifice his all for the success of the Revolution. In his simple concrete fashion, he seems to grasp all the fundamentals, and without philosophizing goes out carrying on the work of reconstruction. It is this, that contrasts him with the intellectuals who theoretically seem to know everything but fail to accomplish anything. (YW, May 12, 1930, p. 5)

The opinion of the American educational system voiced in the Young Worker, border on paranoid:

The bourgeoisie, realizing the revolutionary nature of the sciences and culture in general...has made learning a tool serving their own class interests...they subsidized all institutions of learning, bought off the writers of text-books, twisted and distorted the study of history and all social sciences beyond recognition. They have organized and bought off the teaching faculties, body and soul...the more independent spirits among them are trammelled or expelled. A well-organized spy system has been instituted in all colleges. Every professor spies upon the students and every other professor. The nature of teaching itself is obviously a travesty upon education. Having the textbooks prepared and the words put into their mouths by the bloody imperialist interests which he serves, the moss-backed old fogies or intellectual prostitutes, mouth stupid nonsensical platitudes, and hide the revolutionary spark and import of life behind a barrage of smoke, of the praises of capital and the respect due to private property. (YW, Feb. 1922, p. 6)

When this invidious system, American education, enjoyed a week of self-veneration called "American Education Week" each year, beginning in 1925, the young



radicals were incensed. They saw the celebration, which was sponsored by the "bitterly anti-labor NEA, the Bureau of Education, and the "scab herding, strike-breaking" American Legion, as a week's propaganda drive against the workers and the Communist Party. "Constitution Day," "Patriotism Day," "God and Country Day" were ironies--the workers' child did not know equality, the miners of West Virginia knew bullets, not ballots, the last war "for God and country" had been followed by a bitter purge of communists (YW, Oct. 24, 1925, p. 3; Nov. 15, 1924, pp. 1, 4). In fact, the base motives of the entire American educational system were epitomized in Education Week: to poison the minds of the young workers against their own class, to turn them into patriots ready to go forth to fight blindly for their masters and against their own class (YW, Oct. 24, 1925, p. 3).

#### The Young Communists and Student Activism

The Young Worker was aware of students in its early days but put no great faith in them. A few could empathize with the working class position, but the majority of students were petit-bourgeois, inherently reactionary.

The interest of students in the working class is dilettante rather than vital....Such an element never can nor will understand the nature of the class conflict--nor can it lead the proletariat. Academicians that they are, steeped in the ideas of the class culture....(YW, May 1922, pp. 7, 17).

Yet as the future technical experts of their generation, the college students represented an economic force that could scarcely be discounted. The YCL determined to think of them not as white-collared superior beings but, rather, as highly skilled workers who might eventually be won over to the cause of the manual workers (YW, Aug. 1923, pp. 1-3): Once enlisted, however, students must serve as subalterns, not generals for only workers could lead the revolution (YW, Sept. 1923, p. 1). Nor must the students be allowed to prevail by sheer force of numbers. Too great a preponderance of students, a species given to speech rather than action, could not be relied on to perform

the humble tasks of organization.

Students were variously criticized or lauded for their approach to labor, but the Young Worker in its early days, rarely expressed an abiding interest in collegians in their role as students. It noted a growing student involvement in labor's problems, when students from the newly formed National Student League sent a delegation to Bell and Harlan counties, Kentucky, to express their solidarity with striking miners (YW, April 11, 1932, p. 7). Recording an early protest against academic conditions, when students demonstrated before City Hall in Detroit against tuition hikes and cut salaries, the Young Worker credited the working class with having taught the students their tactics (YW, April 18, 1932, p. 3).

Students did not become identified as a genuine political force until the period of the United Front when the calls to action by the YCL addressed workers, farmers, and students, in both college and high school: "Warmakers look upon you as cannon fodder--united action against fascism, hunger, and war!" (YW, April 26, 1933, p. 8). During its last year of publication, the Young Worker introduced a student page which appeared in each issue. Called "Student Voice," the page included articles on abolishing ROTC, peace strikes, the progress of the American Student Union, academic liberties, protests against school budget cuts, and exposes of conditions in the schools, especially in the South (YW, Feb. 18, 1936 p. 4, and following issues).

Some students were quite ready to answer the YCL's call for a united front. The economic crises of 1929, which left five million youth unemployed and the rise of Nazism in 1933, stirred American students from their accustomed political lethargy. The first effective communist oriented student organization, the National Student League, was formed in 1931; its organ was the Student Review (December 1931-October 1935). The NSL, while acknowledging that the main occupation of students was their studies, also affirmed that students had a revolutionary role in their college years: to study the causes of the disintegration of the old social order and to prepare themselves for the building of the new (SR, Dec. 1931, p. 2). They endorsed the YCL view that the young intellectuals were properly an auxiliary to workers the major revolutionary social class (SR, Jan.--Feb. 1932, p. 8).

The Student Review nevertheless specifically concerned itself with the plight of students. In addition to NSL's expressed solidarity with the working class, its promises to expose the sham of democracy and to defend the Soviet Union, to fight racial discrimination and imperialist war, it now issued specific "student demands." These included unemployment insurance, free student employment agencies, state funds to assist needy students, equal educational and professional opportunities for women, academic freedom, abolition of compulsory chapel and of admission requirements that discriminate on the basis of race, color, or nationality, and intramural sports to replace the star sports system (SR, Jan.-Feb. 1932, pp. 3-4).

The Student Review first appeared during the period when the Communist International was impatient with gradualism and contemptuous of socialists as "social fascists." The Student Review, reflecting the hard line of the period, continually exalted "struggle," such as the near explosive demonstrations against the president of the City College of New York. Yet the Student Review did not recommend individual acts of violence. It condemned the terrorism of Cuban students against the Machado regime and predicted that such acts would only serve to bring forth retaliatory attacks on the trade unions, peasants, the party, and their own persons. Mass action was far wiser, with the workers leading and students supporting strikes and demonstrations (SR, April 1933, pp. 19-21).

In addition to its polemical purposes, the Student Review also conceived of itself as a "training school" for young revolutionary writers (SR, Jan.-Feb. 1932, p. 6). The journal was an advocate of the "proletarian" approach to literature and affirmed the essential unity of writers and workers (SR, Jan.-Feb. 1932, p. 6). It featured book reviews of Russian novels, of such American social criticism as Schools and Crisis, by Rex David, or Georgia Nigger by John Spivack and works that were archetypal emanations from hated enemies such as The Challenge to Liberty by Herbert Hoover. The Student Review published revolutionary poetry and reviews of radical theatre, and one issue included an entire scene from the anti-war play "Peace on Earth." Some well-known writers appeared in its pages. Isaac Babel contributed a story (SR,

July 1932, pp. 15-17); Muriel Rukeyser had a long poem on the Scottsboro boys (SR, Jan. 1934, p. 20); John Dos Passos described the plight of the Kentucky miners (SR, Jan.-Feb. 1932, pp. 5-6); Sherwood Anderson wrote on "The Challenge of American Life:"

The time for the American writer to be merely an entertainer is, I believe, gone....The real job of the American writer is...the job of making every reader...acquainted with other Americans they did not know before...I think we writers should go more and more to the American workers, live with them, be part of their lives. (SR, Oct. 1932, p. 10)

The NSL had started out condemning the socialists--those "defenders of each national bourgeoisie" (SR, March 1932, p. 5). But as the "United Front" became the prevailing communist slogan and NSL students and their counterparts from the Student League for Industrial Democracy worked side by side in many activities, particularly in the growing number of anti-war protests, the National Student League lost some of its animus toward its rival organization. In December 1933, the NSL first suggested a merger of the two groups and a unification of the militant student movement. By late 1934, the communist and social-democratic groups were developing into a united front against fascism. In June 1935, the National Student League was expressing its regret that the two groups were still separate:

Is it not tragic that these two bodies--the spearheads of the April 12 (1934) peace demonstrations--must remain organizationally apart? ...At a time when NSL and LID, their joint achievements unmistakable, their programs so closely correlated, have this greatest battle on their hands, is it not unforgivable that they remain single entities--appearing to work against each other? (SR, June 1935, p. 4)

The actual merger between these old adversaries was to be delayed yet several months.

It was to prove the most influential student group of any that had preceded it. The first student organization, the Intercollegiate Socialist Society did not emerge until midway into the first decade of the twentieth century. Founded in 1905 by Upton Sinclair and Jack London, this organization was both radical in perspective and restrained in its tactics. The Society was essentially a loose collegium of intellectuals whose routine business was conducted between annual conferences by its part-time secretary Harry W. Laidler who later was to achieve considerable eminence as an historian of left-wing movements. Its announced purpose was to "promote an intelligent interest in socialism among college men and women" to which end it sponsored campus debates on such propositions as "Resolved: that only under socialism can the ethics and morals of society be advanced." The Intercollegiate Socialist Society was nothing if not genteel. The President of its Yale chapter reported that in 1916 "a radical young girl from Syracuse once asked me why we didn't throw bombs at Yale. I replied that bomb-throwing was not a Yale tradition, that we have a Battalion here with orders to use guns against such violence, and finally it wouldn't be tactful." (Robert W. Dunn, "Public Lecture at Yale," The Intercollegiate Socialist, V, 2, December-January 1916, 1917, p. 15) This ineffectual band of pacific revolutionaries could not resolve its first policy crisis, the issue of America's participation in World War I and dissolved shortly thereafter.

After the demise of the Intercollegiate Socialist Society a succession of campus-based organizations representing a wide spectrum of political convictions engaged in organized dissent and sometimes "resistance" in the name of competing theories of higher education and social justice. The most famous of these was the Student League for Industrial Democracy, which unlike the Communist organizations was committed to gradualism and democracy. The impact of such groups in their own times and ours has been too little studied but it is certain that some of them helped furnish the ideological capital on which much student activism still depends. The Students for a Democratic Society, for example, for all its appearance of intellectual virginity, employed a conceptual apparatus which was in all essential characteristics fashioned during the course of Marxist, anarchist, and existentialist polemics over a period of

several generations. To heighten the irony the current radical critique is often directed against an "establishment" which includes among its members many who were themselves once campus activists. An astonishing number of participants in student politics later achieved substantial reputations among them: Upton Sinclair, Jack London, John Haynes Holmes, Randolph Bourne, Norman Thomas, William F. DuBois, Walter Lippmann, Freda Kirchway, George Sokolsky, Alexander Trachtenburg, Walter Rauschenbusch, Ordway Tead, Harry W. Laidler, Harry Overstreet, Ad Reinhardt, Richard Rovere, Budd Schulberg, Robert Lane, James Wechsler--and the list could be extended.

Nevertheless student radicalism has thrived during only two decades, the Depression years of the thirties and the era of the affluent sixties. Numerous commentators have testified in print that the American campus during the Harding-Coolidge era of "normalcy" and unprecedented prosperity was extraordinarily hospitable to unorthodox proposals for social reforms but it is not recorded that students were unduly active in support of their cherished ideals. The primary impression derived from reminiscences of undergraduate intellectuals is the image of life as a perpetual salon--civilized, permissive, and aloof. Granville Hicks, for instance, whose commitment and subsequent renunciation of communism occurred when he was a mature writer, remembers the days of his unpledged youth as exhilarating.

"In 1922, as a junior in college. I was a member of the Harvard Liberal Club, which had a series of luncheon speakers. I remember a single taxer, an anarchist, a vegetarian, a disciple of Gandhi, a Communist, several varieties of socialists, a representative of the British Labor party, an authority on adult education, an advocate of birth control, and so forth and so on, lunch after lunch. We would listen to anyone who was against the government. Needless to say, we did not agree with all of the speakers; we could not have, for often they were at one another's throats. We

were quite aware that some of them were crackpots. But still we felt that in some sense they were all on our side." (Granville Hicks, "Writers in the Thirties," in Rita James Simon (Ed.), As We Saw the Thirties, Urbana: University of Illinois, 1967, p. 82)

Despite this heady atmosphere students did not often cast their eyes on the political landscape beyond the Gothic towers. To be sure there were campaigns against compulsory R.O.T.C. in a number of colleges; at the City College of New York the president ordered the student editor to refrain from publishing any further editorials against the military thus provoking a temporary cause celebre. But in the main students were obligingly quiescent. The Sacco-Vanzetti case which still haunts the American conscience was placed on the agenda for discussion by only three of the 23 affiliates of the Student League for Industrial Democracy.

Not until the Great Depression, the rise of European Fascism, and wars and rumors of wars did there develop a genuinely radical movement which questioned the viability and moral authority of the system and proposed collective action to accomplish its destruction. The American Student Union was the first full alliance of "progressive," liberal, and radical sects in American life. Supporting both the unity of the Soviet Union with the Western Allies against fascism and the New Deal, the ASU's aim, above all, was a united front against war (SA, May 1936, pp. 3-5, 21). Eleanor Roosevelt took up the cause of the ASU and ASU officers, especially Joseph Lash, were guests at the White House and served as consultants on youth problems.

The ASU's monthly magazine, The Student Advocate, (February 1936-March 1938), succeeded The Student Review and the Student Outlook (the SLID paper). Its editor was the former editor of the Columbia Spectator, James A. Wechsler, assisted by Joseph P. Lash, from the SLID. The Student Advocate was livelier than the Student Review. Wechsler wrote well. Beginning with the May issue in its first year, the periodical included stories, poems, and short plays

and each issue included discussion of educational and often personal problems. The Student Advocate, for example, featured a lengthy column on sex and the college student containing detailed advice on hygiene and anatomy and gently discouraging pre-marital sex. For unrelieved sexual tension, the student was advised to try dancing and hiking and in extremis "triple bromide pills" twice a day. These concessions for existential despair were, of course, secondary to more weighty analyses of society and education.

### Student Activism and Education

The student journals, like their non campus-based predecessors, believed that the American educational system was operated by the "giant industrial-financial combines" of capitalism and that it perpetuated itself at the expense of the working classes (NF, Oct. 1952). Student Review cited statistics: in 1932, one child in seven, or 14.2%, did not reach seventh grade; more than one child in five, or 23.2%, failed to reach eighth grade. Only one child in four, or 26%, completed high school (U.S. Bureau of Education, cited in SR, Nov. 1932, p. 19). Furthermore, the system victimized its own employees: American teachers were suffering wage cuts and from the elimination of social insurance (SR, Nov. 1932, p. 20).

The students of the old left took up the cause of their teachers--an act of solidarity that would seldom be repeated during the 1960's. In April 1933, nearly 20,000 high school students marched in Chicago in support of demands by high school and elementary school teachers who sought \$28,000,000 in back pay (SR, May 1933, pp. 12-14).

Today, as never before, both instructor and student...are learning that the only way they can fight against encroachments on the educational system is side by side. (SR, April 1933, p. 3)

In the early issues of the Student Review and The Student Advocate, the young writers championed the cause of the teachers as workers, demanding that faculty be fairly paid, have job security, and decent



working conditions. Later on the students' primary concern was to defend the intellectual liberty of their teachers. The issue of academic freedom was correlated with the increasing war threat, which the students saw as having a repressive effect on their educational institutions:

The new factor today [1941] is that the ruling class must tighten its daily censorship, supervising and control over every action, every word, every thought within the educational community. Every move on the part of students or teachers to defend their own interests or aspirations, to defend the schools against the militarization program becomes a direct challenge to the warmaking ruling circles. (Clarity, Spring 1941, p. 56)

As early as 1936, The Student Advocate was suggesting a Board of Review be set up at each college to hear cases involving punishment of a teacher or student for expressing dissident views. This appellate body was to be composed of a representative from the administration, the local AAUP, and the teachers union--with the majority to be student representatives (of ASU, the school paper, student council, and student body)--the Board would have the final decision in each case it heard (SA, Dec. 1936, pp. 15, 30).

In 1932, Dr. Oakley Johnson was dismissed from the CCNY evening session for sponsoring the students' Liberal Club, which participated in the NSL investigation of the Harlan miners' situation, and for supporting the Communist party. Placing himself on a long list of "disinherited fighting professors of America" (who had been dismissed for supporting strikes or the Soviet Union; for opposing military training or capitalist control of college policy; for expressing Marxist political or economic views), Johnson interpreted the fight for academic freedom as part of one great fight for freedom on all fronts--freedom for blacks, for oppressed nationalities, for the unemployed, for aliens--and as a sign of the political awakening of the American campus (SR, Nov. 1932, p. 5).

Although the Teachers Oath Bill was denounced as gag legislation, a step toward fascism, when the Bill

had a hearing in Massachusetts in 1936 it created more laughter than fear. Representative McDermott of Medford, consulting the Who's Who Among American Radicals, denounced all who opposed the Bill as communists. Cross-examining President Neilson of Smith, who had supported Sacco and Vanzetti, McDermott hoped to uncover ties with the University of Moscow but came up with nothing more foreign than that Smith had received a degree from the University of Edinburgh. The response of the professors and students attending this fiasco was hoots of laughter and jeers (YW, March 17, 1936, p. 4).

The solidarity with the professoriat did not prevent the students from echoing the earlier complaint by Jack London about what would now be described as curricular "irrelevance." London found the Yale of 1904 dedicated to the "passionless pursuit of passionless intelligence--clean and noble, I grant you, but not alive enough...." (Quoted in Harry W. Laidler, "Ten Years of I.S.S. Progress," IS, IV, 2, 1915, p.20). Three decades later a series of fictitious profiles of professors appearing in The Student Advocate exposed the sterility of much college teaching. One such piece was dedicated to Dr. Phineas R. Broadbent, "Dean of American Dramatic Historians."

Dr. Broadbent invariably paused when making a particularly shrewd observation. Like the time he distinguished between Dramatic Laws and Theatrical Rules. Like the time he showed why drunkenness on the stage was only justified when the character would say something he wouldn't say when he was sober. Like the time he proved Eugene O'Neill was not a pessimist but a disillusioned optimist...

If circumstances conquer Fate, that's comedy; if Fate conquers circumstances, that's tragedy. A Fool could see that. (Silence?) On the stage it makes for suspense. (Historical drama?) Only worth treating when the historical character is great enough. (Mountain plays?) Written in America since 1840.

(Alice Brady?) Became a great actress as Lavinia. (Soliloquies?) Only justifiable if characters seem to say it, except Shakespeare. (Man-Woman?) Man remembers what happened; woman remembers how it happened." (Jack Pollock, "Dr. Broadbent," SA, Feb. 1937, p. 18)

### Student Activism and Social Policy

The student journals issued the familiar radical call for a working class alliance and elaborated the theoretical reasons for the merger:

Students with a knowledge of history and economics can supply criticism of strategy, economic and legal advice, and statistical information in crises of industrial conflict. By their position students are enabled to act as liaison between workers and the so-called middle class....On the other hand, what the students typically lack, direct experience of the exigencies of life, they can find to some extent by association with workers....There are two evils of the present day in regard to which cooperation of students and workers is especially logical and necessary--war and fascism....the young of both classes fight the battles and give their lives; in the case of fascism because fascism is a means of freezing the present social order in the interest of a privileged, possessing, exploiting ruling class which limits opportunity for those who will do its bidding, either as obedient wage slaves or complacent clerks and salesmen. (SR, Nov. 1934, pp. 9-10)

The precise nature of the proposed alliance caused some students and their mentors writing in the journals to experience considerable anxiety. They worried about their attitude; solidarity with the working class must not, they warned, be considered "an exciting excursion

among the depressed classes;" it must not be "slumming" (SR, April 1934, p. 3). They were concerned that their revolutionary activities seemed to have no real connection with their academic lives. On working class issues, the leftist students tended to be radical and sectarian, thereby cutting themselves off from the rest of the student body, while on student issues they were willing to submit to reformism and accommodation (SR, Dec. 1932, p. 6). Perhaps, certain misconceptions commonly held by students were contributing to the gulf between classroom and factory: the illusion that students simply because they were in college, were therefore more intelligent than working class young people; the myth that the capitalist and working classes could collaborate, whereas they were hopelessly at odds; and the impression that students need not worry about the working classes because students would be entering business or the professions.

The radical student movement did, in fact, make a serious effort to support workers. In 1932 when it was still possible to grieve for the entire proletariat instead of only blacks, its most deprived sector (about one-fifth of the labor force was unemployed and a significant proportion of the remainder were approaching Marxist predictions of bare subsistence), eighty members of the Communist dominated National Student League in New York colleges and several other campuses organized what would now be termed a freedom ride in order to express their solidarity with the exploited miners in the Kentucky coal fields. The bus never reached its intended destination. The Student Review, the official organ of the NSL, later reported that "We never got to see the miners whose conditions we had prepared to study; they were concealed from us by an army of deputy thugs, who ejected us from Kentucky." The article in which this repressive action was reported was significantly entitled "Kentucky Makes Radicals." (SR, May 1932, p. 7)

If Harlan was the Alamo, the Maine, and Pearl Harbor of the student movement of the thirties, the symbol of anguished martyrdom and ultimate revenge the "peace strikes" (one hour boycotts of classes in 1934, 1935, and 1936) provided youthful radicalism with its finest hours. In 1935 there was some measure

of participation in over 130 colleges including nearly twenty in the South. The high point of these anti-war rallies was the recitation of a revised version of a resolution adopted by the Oxford Union reading "I will not support the United State government in any war it may conduct." By 1938 interventionist sentiment on behalf of loyalist Spain, ambivalence about the relative menace of war and fascism, and the adoption of the "Popular Front" strategy by the Communist Party resulted in the rejection of the Oxford Pledge by the American Students Union. Three years later many of the signatories to a pact expressing revolutionary and pacifist disobedience were manning the garrisons and inhabiting foxholes.

The Harlan caravan and the Oxford Pledge were perhaps the most memorable events of the student movement in the thirties but they did not, of course, exhaust its activities. Hal Draper, himself a participant in the politics of the period and who reappeared during the Berkeley Free Speech Movement in the sixties cast as an over-age guru bearing ancient wisdom, identifies a rank order of six prominent issues which occupied the attention of student radicals during this period.

- "(1) Anti-war activity and opposition to compulsory ROTC.
- (2) Violations of academic freedom and student rights on campus.
- (3) Issues involving economic aid to students (tuition fees, free textbooks, etc.).
- (4) Reform of college administrations, particularly changes in the boards of trustees who ruled the campuses.
- (5) Aid to the labor movement.
- (6) Anti-fascist activity--which could be concretized only now and then, as when a delegation of Italian Fascist Student leaders were welcomed at CCNY by the administration in one way and by the student body in another."

This list makes no specific reference to the most salient of all issues bedeviling the radicals of the thirties--the pressure to define a "correct

Marxist position" especially with regard to the "historical role" of the Soviet Union. The colloquy among social democrats, Trotskyists, and communists was conducted with the sectarian fury of true believers who bore the awful burdens of prophecy and salvation. The theology of the Left did not, however, rely on the illumination of an Inner Light; it was passion codified, the Talmud translated into Marxist Dogma; the shade of St. Thomas in secular dress.

Robert Bendiner offers a good natured account of the perils of disregarding the Communist catechism.

"He might prime himself against infantile leftism only to fall victim to the dread opposite of rightist deviationism. How was he to know where a healthy Popular Frontism merged into petty-bourgeois romanticism or even capitalist degeneracy? Intellectually he had to watch out for Dilettantism but with too much theorizing he might contract some terrible disorder like neo-Kantian Banditism. Similarly, to avoid sectarian super-simplicity (the state of not knowing your friends from your enemies) one might make a poor guess and come down with incipient Trotzkyism, for which there was no known cure." (Robert Bendiner, Just Around the Corner, New York: Harper and Row, 1967, p. 105)

The internecine conflict among parent Marxist groups was precisely reflected in the organization and ideology of their student auxiliaries. The socialist Student League for Industrial Democracy was relatively loosely governed, relied on electoral politics and democratic procedures, deplored Russian totalitarianism, and conducted a consistent Marxist critique of capitalist society without compulsion to find moral vindication for the expediencies of Soviet foreign policy. The communist National Students League adhered to the principle of democratic centralism, indulged in the muscular rhetoric of revolution, found the Soviet Union wholly good and aligned its tactics with that of the Comintern.

When the Third International decreed during the "Third Period" that all those who had serious reservations about the Stalin regime were fascists, it included socialists among this company and made cooperation between rival student groups impossible. Not until the Spanish Civil War, and Stalin's increased apprehension of Nazi power did communists discover the doctrine of a United Front against Fascism, "collective security," and "twentieth century Americanism" and as part of the new spirit of rapprochement permit its student groups to enter into an alliance with the traditional socialist enemy. The American Students Union forebore any criticism of the Soviet Union but was otherwise virtually indistinguishable from the left wing of the Democratic Party. Later after the Stalin-Hitler Pact communists professed that they were unable to distinguish between democratic capitalism and fascism and rallied to the banner of "The Yanks Are Not Coming." Later still when German troops marched towards the East the slogans of pacifism were revised to read "Second Front Now."

World War II destroyed the student movement not only for the obvious reason that total mobilization emptied the campuses of young men but also because, with rare exceptions, every sector of American politics was committed to an Allied victory. As the symbol of civilization engaged in a contest against barbarism American society seemed infinitely precious and quite immune to fundamental criticism or dissent. As its contribution to national unity the Communist Party actually dissolved and transformed itself into an educational association. It was never again to exert so much influence.

#### Conclusions

The preceding analyses of radical youth groups past and present, both on and off the campus indicates that despite their separation in time and profound differences in philosophy they were preoccupied with seven principal issues throughout much of the period: in society, (1) peace, (2) poverty, (3) civil liberties, and (4) racial discrimination; and on the campus, (1) corporative control of the university, (2) academic freedom, (3) economic issues, and to a lesser extent (4) the adequacy of academic offerings.

Thus, for example, the morality of the Spanish Civil War, World War II and the Arab-Israel six-day war were debated in essentially similar terms by their respective generations. Is absolute pacifism a categorical imperative or is it possible to speak of a "just" war? Should capitalist democracies be perceived as capitalist, that is to say depraved, or as democracies and therefore worth saving? The inability to resolve these dilemmas first split, and then caused the demise of the Intercollegiate Socialist Society, the Young Communist League, the American Students Union and now threatens the stability of the Radical Left.

The greatest divergence between past and present lies in the recent intrusion of "generation gap," "the counter-culture," and "student power" into radical politics. These may be the ultimate irrelevancies. The prospects for radical causes are in any event not promising; from a purely tactical view the Old Left understood better than their successors that egocentric excursions do not lead to social re-construction. Members of a revolutionary stratum should have a sense of collective identity, experience severe deprivation, perceive themselves as victims of an identifiable enemy, command the stamina to engage in protracted struggle, maintain confidence in their ultimate victory, and possess the will and the ability to organize the new order. Lacking any of these characteristics even the most sullen and embittered groups pose no genuine threat to the status quo. Orthodox Marxists for all their failings have always understood these things and hence the desperate, if largely unsuccessful efforts to establish connections with the wretched of the earth.

Apparently much that has just recently become apparent to a new generation of campus activists was common currency to American Leftists during much of the twentieth century. It is conceivable that both the issues that confront radicals and the ways in which they respond to them are finite and determinate and that it may be possible to distinguish durable from merely transient concerns.

In any event the differences between radical movements in various historical periods cannot be explained adequately by their formal ideologies. We



are led to conclude that latent discontent will be converted into a protest movement only when all of the following general conditions are satisfied:

1. The availability of converging ideologies that encourage the perception, condemnation, and rectification of disparities between ideal norms and the actual performance of the social system.
2. The emergence of protracted crises that call into question the will and capacity of men in power to act on behalf of the master values of the liberal and radical tradition--peace, freedom, equality, justice, stability, and abundance.
3. The adherence to a theory of society which identifies oppressors and oppressed and promises the latter that it is a class of destiny whose victory is inevitable, or at least highly probable.
4. The transformation of the power equilibrium owing to altered conditions of social conflict which impose constraints on the strong and release the inhibitions of the weak.
5. The existence of contemporary illustrations of other nations whose social systems more nearly correspond to a prophetic vision of the future; or as a minimum condition the absence of a clear threat to the status quo from nations or groups who pursue "retrogressive, "immoral," and inhumane goals.

All of the conditions cited above were present during the militant thirties and sixties. Obviously even if we have established the necessary conditions for the emergence of radical student movements we have not identified the sufficient causes of youthful radicalism or the diverse forms it takes in various periods. Numerous variations of a common pattern remain to be explained. Why, for example, were militants of the thirties even more beguiled with ideology than their counterparts of the sixties? Why did the depression generation pay comparatively less heed to intergenerational conflict than their radical heirs three decades later? What explains the elevation of "confrontation" once scorned as "infantile leftism" into an honored strategy?

We do not now know the answers to these queries and it behooves us to understand. The radical student movement may transform society and alter the shape of our lives. But even if campus activists should succumb to the dreaded process of "cooptation" we may expect their influence to endure. As Hal Draper observes in referring to the last militant generation:

For the next couple of decades at least, wherever anything was stirring in the labor movement or in liberal campaigns, wherever there was action for progressive causes or voices were raised in dissent from the Establishment, there one was sure to find alumni of this student movement, who had gotten their political education and organizational training and experience in the American Student Union or the Student League for Industrial Democracy or the National Student League. The history we have sketched is that of one of the most important educational institutions of twentieth-century America. (Draper, in Simon, op.cit. p. 176)

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