

Paths to Failure: The Dialectics of Organization and Ideology in the New Left

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CULTURE AND POLITICS

Introduction

The new left and the civil rights movement had at first an undeniably heroic character. In the name of the unrealized democratic ideals of American society, tiny groups of white students and blacks confronted bureaucratic intransigence and police brutality North and South. These struggles had a quality of righteousness and courage that captured the imagination of the world.

However, this phase of the history of the left could only last so long as radicals were naive enough to confound testimony to a universal moral law with an effective, instrumental strategy for implementing that law in the society around them. At first miracles happened, and their confidence was justified by the broad, sympathetic reaction of the American people; but miracles ceased as the 1960s faded and the 1970s began. Gradually the apparent failure of moral protest to bring about racial progress in the North and to end the war in Vietnam demoralized the movement.

For a time it was possible to believe that a "cultural revolution" in lifestyles would prove an inexhaustible source of renewal. However, it too was swept up in the debacle and became increasingly apolitical, irrationalist, and, finally, strictly commercial. To avoid this depoliticization, it would have been necessary to return to the roots of the social

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crisis of American society in this period, of which the existing movements were merely particular expressions, in order to devise a politics capable of vehiculating the spread of opposition to new groups in forms appropriate to their needs.

Inspired by China and Vietnam, new communist movements attempted to play precisely this role for a time, arguing with a certain plausibility that they could break out of the growing cultural sectarianism of the new left. This attempted relay, however, failed as the revolutionaries were systematically marginalized in the much weakened social movements of the 1970s. The Marxist ideology of those activists served less to overcome the limits of the new left subculture than to create a still narrower subculture of Marxists.

For a few years in the early 1970s, the left faced a crisis from which it could only have emerged through radical changes in its assumptions and methods. It had either to become a relatively structured political movement, capable of maintaining itself for a long dry spell without many spontaneous mass struggles to sustain it, or to sink into obscurity as these struggles faltered. In fact, it is the second of these alternatives which prevailed.

As this became discouragingly apparent, the heroic qualities of the early years turned into their opposites: spontaneity became disorganization, courage became provocation, moral opposition sectarianism, solidarity factionalism, and nonconformity a mere conformity to the latest fad. This transformation proceeded with startling rapidity during the early 1970s, repelling millions of individuals drawn to the movement at one time or another. Eventually, no demonstration of intelligence, sensitivity, or sincerity by those activists still seriously pursuing the original aims of the movement could overcome the handicap of association with these decomposition products of defeated radicalism.

Why did the movement fail to create durable organizations in this period? I believe the answer lies in large part in the very strengths of the new left, which was a profoundly innovative movement blocked by its own early discoveries and successes from solving the problems history posed for it as it grew and changed the world around it.

The new left was unique as a political movement in its emphasis on cultural action and cultural change. Where earlier left movements focused primarily on the distribution of political power or wealth, the new left was truly "new" in struggling first and foremost to alter the culture of the society it challenged.

The cultural focus of the new left was a direct response to the emergence of systematic cultural manipulation by government and business in the mass-mediated world of the postwar period. The oppressive but brittle political consensus and social conformity of the 1950s testified to the power of the new techniques of persuasion. It was the "integra-

tion" of this "one dimensional" society that the new left chiefly resisted, and in that it was remarkably successful.¹

Subjected to new forms of control from above, the American people, or at least a significant fraction of them, innovated new forms of resistance and subversion based on cultural action from below. These new forms of action had the paradoxical property of enhancing the influence and support of the new left for several years while disorganizing it internally to such an extent that it soon disappeared from the scene.

My purpose here is to explain this dialectic. Why was such an exciting and innovative movement so vulnerable to internal disruption, so chaotic, and so oppressive to those who participated in it that it failed to sustain and reproduce itself? I believe that through addressing this question we can learn a great deal about the specific weaknesses of movements based on cultural action from below. Perhaps if we can gain a better understanding of the problems of the new left, we will not be condemned to repeat its errors in the future.²

Cultural Action in the New Left

The new left took America by surprise, arising as it did in the midst of an era of prosperity and general societal consensus on everything from sexual morality to foreign policy. Naturally, there were dissenting voices, but even dissent validated the consensus by its elitist tone and its hopelessness. The critics often shared the assumption that America was a success by its own standards, even if they dissented from those standards in the name of a more humane or spiritually satisfying way of life.

Nevertheless, beneath the smooth surface of the society, many problems simmered, problems that could not be articulated politically as they might have been in an earlier period because of the liquidation of the left in the 1950s. Without traditional left organizations and ideologies to represent them, the discontented generated spontaneous movements and new ways of experiencing opposition to the dominant society, independent of the socialist and Marxist heritage of the past.

As the 1960s brought disillusionment after disillusionment, it finally became clear that American society was not at an apogee of peace and prosperity but in the midst of a vast social crisis affecting it in almost every sphere. (The major exception was the economy.) This crisis resulted in the emergence of opposition on a mass scale for the first time since the Second World War, especially among blacks and students.

However, the opposition took unexpected forms. The minorities of the 1960s not only demanded political reform, but also rejected many of the dominant norms that governed the conduct of daily life, proposing an alternative "counterculture" characterized by new sexual prac-

tices, drugs, styles of dress, attitudes toward authority and work, and so on.

These cultural innovations reflected levels of discontent that could not find a political outlet because the public sphere had been radically narrowed in scope in the formation of the great American consensus of the day. Thus sexual issues and the family were too "shameful" or too "sacred" to be subjected to rational analysis; the enforcement of stylistic conformity drew extraordinary rigor from the unpatriotic associations of beards, drugs, and other deviations from the norm. Political authority, property relations, bureaucratic expertise, and administrative practices were all placed beyond criticism and cloaked in self-evidence.

Here were precisely the strongest underpinnings of the so-called "consensus" on which the American system was said to rest. To challenge these underpinnings of the system was subversive without being political; it was "cultural."

It is in this context that one must explain the revival of interest in African culture among blacks, the emergence of radical feminism among women, and "lifestyle" politics among young whites. In each case, ideological disagreements with official policy opened the way to a cultural alternative that appeared to provide a framework for personal self-transformation, beyond the oppressive restrictions of the dominant society. As time went on, the role of culture grew relative to ideology in the broadest sectors of the movement.

The political goal of the movement was, to be sure, the creation of a new and more humane social order, but the means to this end was increasingly thought to be not so much political power as the creation of a new human type in the movement itself. Revolution, it was argued, would not create the "new man," but rather the contrary.

The new left also innovated culturally at those decisive pressure points where the social crisis of the 1960s provoked intense political opposition. It was not so much the new left's political demands that were new as its political style. Its practice was a spontaneous adaptation to political struggle in a society dominated by cultural manipulation from above. The new left's great achievement was to find a way to counter such manipulation by acting directly on widely held assumptions governing the framework of public discussion.

In each of the great debates in which it engaged—discrimination, sexual politics, Vietnam—the essence of the new left's political practice consisted in finding persuasive symbols and gestures for signaling its refusal of the accepted terms in which the issues had hitherto been discussed. New left politics shattered the official consensus from the very outset by redefining the issues according to very different assumptions and frames of reference.³

So, for example, the black movements sought first and foremost to redefine what it meant to be black in America, as a necessary precondition for accomplishing specific legal or social changes. In the civil rights movement blacks worked to demonstrate their equality by the dignity of their claim to it. Later in the Black Power period, they attempted to manifest themselves as a threat worthy of the respect implied in the recognition of equality, however grudging. In both phases of their movement, the immediate object of blacks' political action was not so much specific laws and institutions as the official social definition of blacks as kowtowing Jim Crows, undeserving of respectful treatment and legal rights by reason of self-imposed dependency.

The new left generalized such challenges to well-established assumptions built into American political culture, and it is this which marked its originality as a movement. It was, in fact, the first modern left movement to employ cultural action from below as its principal form of practice. In this respect the new left resembled many previous major social movements which not only imposed new political demands, but also innovated in the very definition of politics and the public sphere.⁴

There is yet another aspect to the cultural strategy of the new left, and this is the transformation of political identity at the individual level in the context of small "consciousness-raising" groups. This approach, largely but not exclusively identified with the women's movement, involved bringing unconscious cultural assumptions to awareness in order to free the individual from oppression in personal life. Social roles were particular targets of attack, on the assumption that the domination introjected along with the roles could only be fought when the roles themselves were consciously contested.

The strategy of consciousness-raising was based on intrinsic potentialities of modern forms of individuality, the political implications of which had never before been systematically explored. Modern individuals possess what has been called an "accidental" form of individuality, accidental because the individual chooses his or her role, under objective constraints to be sure, but nevertheless with a certain degree of consciousness and responsibility.⁵ Precisely because individuals are involved in the choice of their own social destiny, they can distinguish themselves from their roles and sometimes change them. The goal of the consciousness-raising group is to enhance awareness of the gap between the aspirations and potentialities of its members and the possibilities offered them in the roles they have accepted. It provides a social space in which they can become aware of the accidental relation between their own individuality and their social existence.

Consciousness-raising shifted the boundaries between the private and public spheres in ways favorable to emancipatory action. By identifying the oppressive elements in supposedly "private" roles, the left was

able to transpose modes of action and resistance customarily associated with the public political sphere into the private sphere, where the dominant practice of civility effectively reproduced subtle forms of oppression and made struggle against them impossible.

The three forms of cultural action described above have in common what I will call a "reflexive" focus on the subject of the action. In each case, the actors are primarily engaged in a self-transformation or self-definition by which they hope to alter their position in the world and their relation to other social groups. It is generally characteristic of cultural action from below that in it the actors begin by taking themselves as the object of their own action. This is, for example, essentially what is meant in Marxist theory by the formation of a "class for itself." Later writings on racial and sexual politics confirm the point that reflexivity is the basis of revolutionary consciousness.⁶

However, we will see that reflexive cultural action in the new left posed problems as well as opened possibilities. The most serious of these problems was exemplified in the total self-absorption of sectarian groups.

A SECTARIAN MOVEMENT

The Politics of Self-Definition

The new left had a contradictory impact on its potential audience. It did accomplish an incredible amount of political work with an enormous variety of people, weakening the hold of the dominant ideology if not overthrowing it. At the same time, the left itself became the chief obstacle to the consolidation of a new political force representing its views on a lasting basis. The objective obstacles to success were of course very great, but all too often the way the left went about overcoming its difficulties demoralized and disorganized its own potential base. In this it proved to be more effective than all the police repression and conservative propaganda arrayed against it. Its own sectarianism and ultra-leftism sustained its energies for several decisive years while dispersing its audience.

Sectarianism in the movement was based on a sense of moral superiority that was effective in motivating an in-group but incompatible with its expansion among those sympathetic to its program. Moral heroism mobilized the troops, but it was accompanied by a characteristic romantic elitism rooted in a sense of differentness, of sacrifice and oppression. A feeling of "alienation" from the supposedly passive and ignorant masses corresponded to this romantic sense of self. Contempt

for these masses expressed itself in some movements by identifying them with the enemy; in others this same contempt was veiled in the philanthropic concept of "service to the people." On this basis groups with the most various programs isolated themselves while acquiring internal cohesion and the passion to act.

New left sectarianism was often conjoined to ultra-leftism, the systematic failure to employ strategies realistically adapted to the situation at hand. Instead, many new left groups preferred to substitute individual morality for politics and became obsessively concerned with establishing the revolutionary personal identity of their members at the expense of effective action on the real world. Ultra-leftists became adept at driving a wedge between principle and practice in every kind of situation, blocking the employment of even the most elementary instrumental intelligence in political work.

Both sectarian and ultra-left tendencies in the new left can best be understood as specific disorders of a movement based on cultural action. They are ways in which the reflexive actions of a culturally conscious movement can become disconnected from political and social struggle and transformed into means of personal self-definition.

For many in the movement, its ostensible goal of social change was never a primary preoccupation in any case: the movement was so weak, the prospect of real revolution so dim, the actual achievements of political activism so difficult to compass that the mere existence of the movement became more important to many of its members than any political objective. The scene of the revolution shifted from society at large to the movement itself, where individuals could have an immediate effect on their surroundings through grasping and manipulating the movement's own codes of behavior. These codes made the pursuit of revolutionary purity a respected role through which personal desires for accomplishment and status frustrated in the larger society could be fulfilled.

In the course of making endlessly involuted revolutions within revolutions, the movement's perceptions of the political as an autonomous sphere of social reality grew increasingly dim. Activists tended less and less to measure their actions by their real effects, and more and more sought to conform to symbolic archetypes drawn from the history of revolutions, which came to signify power magically through association with it in theory or in other times and places. Internal movement struggle over the choice of archetypes replaced politically oriented social struggle.

Finally, the most compelling contest in which the movement was engaged placed it not in conflict with the state or the ruling groups but with itself. It was in such an environment that cultural action turned

inward and destroyed the movement. Through sectarianism and ultra-leftism the individuals could transform their own personal self-definition, if not the world around them.

The Loss of a Mass Audience

The gradual narrowing of the constituency of the new left was hidden for many by the fact that its numbers constantly increased in the late 1960s and early 1970s even as it lost its most important allies in the society at large. The hope of new allies replaced the real ones whose defection left the movement isolated and exposed to repression.

The new left acquired its significance and identity in the middle-1960s through a style of politics adapted to liberal middle-class allies. At first small groups of radicals, usually students, sought a common ground with oppositional liberal forces outside the movement. This was the case with the civil rights movement, insofar as it involved whites, and at a later date with a large segment of the women's liberation movement. The antiwar movement followed a similar strategy for several important years. The mechanism of these movements consisted in bringing injustices to the attention of the media and then riding the crest of the wave of liberal discontent fomented around the issues in the early phases of the process of cooptation.

This type of movement had a characteristic life history. At first the alliance between radicals and liberals generated a great deal of optimism and activity. It seemed, during this period, that important reforms were about to be made. Everyone concerned got the exhilarating feeling that something new was occurring in the history of politics.

Then everything would go sour, however, and the coalition of radicals and liberals would fall apart. Frustration, impatience, and repression would drive the radicals toward ultra-left strategies while interest, fear, conformism, and common sense would drive the liberals to the right in the face of the increasing militancy of the movement. The situation was "polarized," the middle class "alienated." Isolated and discouraged, the radicals would seek a new issue on which to base the "new politics."

The collapse of the movement on campus was usually an effect of sectarianism. The familiar division of the student leaders of the late 1960s into an "action faction" and a "praxis axis," the one dedicated to militant activity, the other to political propaganda, veiled the common sectarianism that united them. The split between the most ideologically sophisticated or committed students and the mass constantly widened because the former made little effort to meet the latter halfway.

As the generation gap on campus widened, the movement became an ever more artificial replay of earlier occasions, refracted for the mass

of participants through the media image of the left. In the worst cases, the search for allies gave way to the striking of impressive poses before the omnipresent cameras that alone made real the objects at which they aimed. The reproduction of the movement was arrested, and the expected relay from one generation of students to the next was interrupted. The four-year cycle of the universities quickly purged them of leaders, and soon the left appeared to most students to be little more than a particularly unsavory form of campus posturing. Similar disasters later struck the movement in each of the other constituencies in which it briefly found a place.

These disappointments did not stimulate much self-criticism, but instead gave rise to a theory justifying sectarian ultra-leftism as a high-road to revolution. This theory was in fact merely the rationalization of an obsessive fear of cooptation. Cooptation meant the loss of independent identity as a movement, absorption into the orbit of liberal democratic reform, a process thought to be far easier than it actually proved to be. Cooptation also meant the integration of entire social strata, such as blacks, through reforms that, it was feared, would remove their motives for revolt; this too has proven more difficult than was assumed.

Cooptation was a threat to be resisted at all costs by asserting the independent identity of the movement through uncooptable demands and gestures and through the development of revolutionary lifestyles. Sometimes political victories were actually feared as contributing to integration and betrayal.

The point is not that the new left should have endorsed Hubert Humphrey as the lesser of two evils; the movement was right to resist assimilation into the official party system where it could only have accomplished institutional and legal reforms at the expense of its capacity to act on the dominant political culture that sustained the evils against which it fought. However, the obsessive fear of cooptation went well beyond the rejection of party politics and ultimately extended to any and all effective political action.

The fear of cooptation testified to a moral rather than a political sense of the struggle. The movement was in fact hostile to politics per se and felt safe only in an atmosphere of pure cultural struggle that posed no threat of compromise. Implicit in the ideology of uncooptability was the categorical imperative that difference must be maintained, that the left must preserve its ostracism and unpopularity as its claim to virtue in an evil world. The imaginative leap from virtue to victory was easier to make in that era than it is today.

The bad faith involved in this obsession is now obvious. In fact the movement thrived on cooptation, which legitimated its attack on the society by conceding the gravity of the problems and the need for reforms. Given its weakness and lack of a mass base, this was the only

way it could have achieved an audience at all. The search for the uncooptable movement as a quasi-magical route to power completely inverted the actual state of affairs. In reality the power of the movement depended directly on its cooptability or, rather, on its ability to spread radical consciousness among some of the enormous masses it artfully involved in movements so just and right that even the authorities had to concede reforms.

The idea that power was a mere function of the counterplay of strategies of demand and cooptation and not an independent reality rooted in institutions, organizations, and the strategic application of force reflected the endemic political weakness of the new left, its overriding concern with self-definition, and its inability to combine cultural action with more conventional instrumental strategies. Eventually, the increasing radicalization of the new left, which was supposed to bring it closer to real power by making its cooptation impossible, forced the entire movement back into narrow political subcultures where it grew in numbers for a time among those predisposed by their position in society to share the illusions of its organizers; simultaneously, it lost most of its support in the larger society.

The Sectarian Dynamic

It would not be fair to attribute the problems of the new left to the personal or political failings of its members. There was no "typical" new leftist whose aggregated defects were writ large in the movement as a whole, nor can the problems be explained as "mistakes" due to bad political decisions. The existence of self-destructive behavioral and ideological styles in the new left is obvious, but the real question is why and how they prevailed against all competing alternatives. The answer to this question lies in the organizational dynamics of the movement. Sectarianism and ultra-leftism were not representative phenomena, but rather triumphed through a specific dynamic that offered bad leaders means for capturing status for themselves and motivating commitment in their followers while discrediting more tolerant and sensible leaders and approaches.

The sectarian dynamic was often initiated by individuals claiming "vanguard" status in the movement by reason of the particularly advanced line of the group to which they belonged or the daring action they proposed, or for reasons of sex or race. Belief without accomplishment, courage, or inherited status now entitled one to power in the movement in place of such customary qualifications for leadership as deeds done, risks run, decisions wisely made. In this way whole social and political categories acquired status in the movement in a hierarchy that mirrored that of the dominant society.

In the student movement, such vanguardism often took the form of claiming that only workers were truly revolutionary. This position demoralized the student movement by telling it that politics was none of its business. Naturally, those who proposed this view were, like their fellows, rarely "proletarians" but most often ordinary "middle class" students who had merely chosen an ideology in which workers held a certain imaginary place.

Those who initiated sectarian struggle could always count on some support from others in the group who accepted what was called the "guilt-trip" "laid on" them by the perpetrators. These happy victims would borrow status in the movement from those who claimed it by reason of race, sex, class, daring, or ideology, and use this borrowed status to dominate others or to survive psychologically in the increasingly hostile environment of their political group. Frequently sectarian minorities would win out through sheer persistence, as the majority of the group they attacked fell away in frustration and self-doubt. A successful sectarian offensive would shatter whatever bonds of solidarity and sense of reality individuals had initially brought to their political work, irreversibly substituting entirely new orientations.

Organizations gripped by the sectarian dynamic often went through a typical cycle. Strong leaders attempted to "raise the level of ideological struggle" by harsh denunciation of political co-workers and potential allies. Within the organization, all those who stood for other policies were stigmatized as "petit bourgeois," "opportunist," "racist," or "sexist," and life was made so miserable for them that they quit. The remaining in-group then began to make fantastic demands on its members in terms of both personal style and labor. Members were encouraged to withdraw from all "bourgeois" institutions in which they worked or organized, and the group abandoned whatever institutional positions of strength it might have acquired before its sectarian mutation.

The developed sectarian group usually behaved in a systematically self-destructive way, making unsuccessful "mass" appeals over the heads of potential allies it had rejected and finding itself ever more isolated. Painful personal conflicts often exploded as everyone sought to shift the blame for difficulties onto others. Frustrations built up which might lead to splits, new attempts, and failures with diminishing numbers. Sometimes the individuals would respond to what they interpreted as the passivity of the masses with the useless sacrifice of terrorism. More often the organization would dissolve as its members "burnt out."

Sectarianism was thus unable to create anything lasting, and yet the unhappy experiment was begun again and again in one group after another all over the country throughout the late 1960s and early 1970s. The movement was so vulnerable to this kind of takeover because sectarian offensives applied typical new left forms of practice within the

movement and against it. The legitimacy of these forms of practice was taken for granted, so when "authority" was challenged, "oppression" denounced, meetings "disrupted," or symbolic protests made against the movement itself and in the name of its goals, the movement was disarmed and unable to resist.

The new left was based on challenging the exclusions that formed the negative counterpart of the American consensus. Ideas and groups that did not agree with the consensus and had therefore been denied a voice spoke loud and clear in the movement's protest marches. The new left appealed to a very fundamental assumption about public communication in choosing symbolic protest rather than violence or practical politics as its primary means of action. This is the assumption of reciprocity according to which all participants in public dialogue share an equal right to speak and be heard. If this is true, however, then any participant who is excluded may interrupt the dialogue in order to challenge the fairness of the premises on which it is based.⁷

The new left devised specific rhetorics through which to make such reflexive challenges to the conditions of public communication in American society. The ad hominem regression to racial, sexual, or social status was one of the chief of these rhetorical devices. It was this device that typically was used within the movement to enforce a sectarian turning. The challenger would claim that he or she was subtly suppressed in group discussion by those with white male status or class advantages such as education and, on that basis, would demand a larger share of attention and power. The charge of "elitism" was a sort of generalized rhetorical figure available for use against anyone who seemed to have acquired influence.

The ability of sectarians to impose their views was further enhanced by the new left's challenge to the boundaries of public and private life. To grasp the connection between the "personal and the political" meant identifying and criticizing introjected domination present in the everyday social relations of the races, sexes, and classes of American society. However, in bringing the personal into the political domain, the new left exposed individuals to forms of personal abuse and manipulation they were poorly equipped to resist. The customary protection of the privacy of personal life fell away, and individuals had great difficulty discriminating between acceptable and unacceptable comment on personal behavior and attitudes.

These problems were particularly apparent wherever techniques of consciousness-raising or "criticism/self-criticism" were employed. From a method of emancipatory critique and role distancing, these techniques would be transformed into authoritarian exercises in "re-education" of the "less advanced" by the "more advanced" members of

the group. Skill in manipulating the unfamiliar communication system of the consciousness-raising group and the sheer nerve to go for the jugular vein were often effective and rewarded.

In this way, the politics of personal life entered the movement as a means of establishing the ground rules for discussion and decision-making. The prestige of this means as a guarantee of justice often eclipsed conventional democratic appeals to the views of the majority, especially where leftist groups placed a high premium on consensus in decision-making.

Sometimes this procedure had the salutary effect of calling the group's attention to its own hypocrisy in perpetuating hierarchies and exclusions typical of the society at large. However, the left was not armored against the abuse of these rhetorical devices and possessed no well-understood code for countering them. All differences inside the movement, and especially those on the basis of which leadership emerged, were thus exposed to a form of attack against which there was no defense. In the absence of rhetorical equipment for dealing with these problems, and once given the rejection of the customary means of protecting personal privacy, participants in the movement had either to adapt to an environment of high-stakes psychic struggle or to withdraw altogether from the left. Most chose to withdraw.

THE ORGANIZATIONAL DILEMMA

Split!

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, ideology became the subject of endless, agonizing debate in the new left. A split was in the air; the will to unity that had held the new left together through its early years was broken. Thousands of local organizations fractioned along ideological lines between 1969, when the SDS exploded nationally, and the 1970 student strike against the invasion of Cambodia which marked the apogee of the movement. In this section I will consider some of the causes and consequences of the split in the movement.

The polarizing issue at this time was whether or not the left should attempt to build a base in the working class. Ideally, the movement could have encouraged the development of working-class organizing alongside other approaches. In practice, the organizational preconditions for getting in touch with workers were not compatible with those required to develop the movement in its already established constituencies. Not only did the organizational methods appropriate for approaching these two constituencies differ, they were experienced by all

concerned as mutually exclusive. Ideology intervened in these splits less as a cause than as a rationalization and an exacerbation of conflicting organizational styles.

As the new left entered this critical period, the majority of radicals abandoned the failing liberal-radical alliances for a more militant politics modeled on the antiimperialist struggles of the late 1960s. These radicals sought above all else to continue this new style of politics, which they saw as alone truly revolutionary. Alliance strategy and organizational methods were therefore subordinated to this prior stylistic commitment.

Central to this new model was a spontaneism hostile to all durable organization and to the attempt to devise instrumental strategies. This spontaneism blocked efforts to build bridges to the small radical minorities emerging in new constituencies in this period. In fact, there was no way to adapt the tried-and-true methods of student organizing and antiimperialist struggle in the streets to the task of contacting radical workers, soldiers, the unemployed, and others scattered among the conservative or indifferent mass of the population, and awaiting the initiative of the left with curiosity and interest.

At this point two routes opened. One could argue that the difficulty of bridging the gap between radicals and these new groups demonstrated the need for organizations employing new methods to bring them together. Left ideas could only be spread among the population at large through abandoning the symbols of the hippie lifestyle and finding new ways of meeting and cultivating isolated radicals or potential radicals in the new constituencies. Partisans of this position generally argued that the habit of reliance on spontaneity formed in the past had to be unlearned if the movement was to deal with its new tasks.

However, it was also possible to argue the opposite position: that the impossibility of spontaneously bridging the gap between the established constituencies of the left and these new ones demonstrated that it was premature or inappropriate to attempt to do so at all. Workers, it was said, would only be radicalized in the wake of the gradual spread of the hippie lifestyle into the factory. Sometimes workers were even dismissed as the "Enemy" and all attempts to appeal to them rejected out of hand.

It is easier now to see the bad faith and self-deception involved in the splits which resulted from this organizational dilemma. On the side of youth revolt, what must frankly be acknowledged as subcultural chauvinism and class prejudice made it difficult even to discuss the need for new styles of organizing. The dismissal of working-class politics was made especially easy by the foolishness of its advocates. They did not confine themselves to pointing out the usefulness of reaching

new constituencies, but, rather, they denounced youth politics as positively counterrevolutionary, raised utterly unrealistic expectations, and offered a whole program swathed in an unctuous rhetoric of service and a stilted old-left style.

Given the disastrous results of the splits of this period, it is tempting to blame them for the downfall of the movement, but it was not so much the splits that destroyed the movement as the mark they left on those who went through them. The dialectic of their enmity determined all their later positions. Locked in a bizarre reciprocal sectarianism, each succeeded in excluding the other only at the expense of excluding the entire society as well.

The majority of the movement, committed to the dying youth subculture, lost itself in wild schemes, terrorism, and hopeless "Third World" alliances against the American people, and eventually succumbed to mysticism and the banalization of lifestyle. Meanwhile, the minority that went out "to the people" tried to use the ideology that had justified its break with the mainstream of the movement as a basis for organizing the masses. In fact, the "working-class politics" that motivated the split bore no relation at all to the needs and expectations of the new constituencies to which these radicals appealed for support. Instead of building a base in the working class, they built many "vanguards" and disappeared from view in ideological hairsplitting.

The Mirage of Revolutionary Youth

The debate over organization within the movement was usually formulated in terms of the probable "agent of revolution." Organizational choices were felt by many to depend on the answer to the question, "Who will make the revolution?" However, this formulation was at least partially misleading and usually hid prior ideological and organizational choices.

In fact, the discussion of revolutionary agency was futile since most of the participants had chosen their respective "agents" more on the basis of the kind of political work in which they wished to engage and the kind of revolution they wished to support than on the basis of a serious understanding of the society. To argue that youth or workers were the true agent of revolution was usually to justify an exclusive concentration of tactical energies on the preferred social group and often implied that other groups should accept its leadership.

The predominant spontaneist option was formulated in terms of the concept of "youth" as a new revolutionary agent, displacing the working class in advanced capitalist society. This orientation resulted in the most important misadventure of the left in this critical period, the at-

tempt to rebuild something exactly like the old student movement in the society at large on the basis of the still-spreading cultural revolution.

Radicals who argued that youth culture would be the basis of the revolution usually claimed to be "undogmatic" and offered as proof their rejection of the outdated concept of a working-class movement. They were, in fact, dogmatic in another way: they only recognized as revolutionary those actions which were spontaneous and even violent, actions which created a sense of "community" through struggle and which manifested the revolutionary self-definition of the actors.

The ideological background to this spontaneist orientation is to be found in the attempt of the early new left to found radical politics on opposition to authority rather than on the traditional socialist demand for a change in property relations. Strangely enough, much of the new left shared with the ideologues of the most powerful capitalist society in history the conviction that relations of status and authority could be understood in abstraction from property relations. This made sense in the ideological environment in which the new left arose, which was characterized by total disillusionment with official communist ideology and the absence of any competing form of socialist ideology.

The antiauthoritarian movement was deeply rooted in the crisis of bureaucratic domination in America, in the rebellion against technocratic manipulation in both political and social institutions. As such it was a progressive force and made a lasting contribution to the left by engendering mass awareness of authoritarianism and alienation in both capitalist and communist societies.

The exclusive focus on these themes, however, also helps to explain why the emergence of short-lived spontaneous communities of struggle at peak moments of conflict took on a special pathos and, indeed, for many in the movement, became its essence. Berkeley gave the signal. The 800 students in Sproul Hall seemed to be living an anarchist's dream, demonstrating in practice the possibility of nonauthoritarian forms of social organization freely created and accepted by all in terms of the needs of the moment.

This became so important a revelation to many radicals that they struggled less for the ostensible goals of the movement than for a renewal of the experience of revolutionary community. Around this experience a fetishism of spontaneity developed, counterposing instant and total release from societal repression to the dominant technocracy and the communist alternative as well. From this standpoint, only the spontaneous struggle prefigured the ideal of liberation; hence, only groups available for or engaged in this sort of struggle were truly revolutionary.

The eventual consequences of systematic spontaneism were cata-

strophic. The struggle against bureaucracy and elitism in the left quickly became a prime mechanism of the sectarian dynamic, disorganizing the groups it was supposed to save. Democratic decision-making was frequently rejected as coercive for the minority under the influence of this spontaneist ideology, but of course charismatic leaders quickly filled the vacuum with their own unacknowledged authority. Often all specialization of political skills was rejected, and any movement requiring technical knowledge or information, such as the environmental movement, was considered ipso facto "coopted" or elitist. Views like these confined the movement to established constituencies that already understood the significance of its codes and symbols.

The movement fared little better in the constituencies off campus. It did succeed in spreading hippie lifestyles and the social freedom they represented, and it created an "underground" press in every major city in the country. However, the youth subculture soon lost its critical thrust, and serious drug abuse and intense competition from religious fanaticism eventually isolated and demoralized the left within it.

The Failure of Socialist Organizing

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, a significant minority of leftists believed the situation in America resembled that which lay at the origin of the great socialist parties. The objective contradictions of the society had produced reform movements in the middle class, at the extreme left wing of which socialist minorities had emerged. Simultaneously, these same contradictions had provoked lower-class opposition, sparking movements of blacks, welfare recipients, soldiers, chicanos, Puerto Ricans, Indians, prisoners, and others. These new movements, however, still lacked socialist political leadership for the most part.

The organizational task was clear: to draw together middle-class socialists and workers' opposition, theory and practice, in the creation of a revolutionary socialist party. Lost allies in the reformist middle class would then be replaced by the traditional union of a left-wing intelligentsia and plebeian social movements.

Implausible as this scenario may sound today, many of its elements taken individually were correctly observed, and the rediscovery of the history of the Russian and Chinese communist movements provided a framework within which many phenomena of American society could be interpreted as steps on the way to the formation of a new revolutionary movement. Most importantly, those who offered this analysis had seen the real need for the movement to overcome its social isolation by reaching out to new constituencies, and they were right to conclude that socialists needed to achieve organizational autonomy within the larger radical movement in order to accomplish this.

Unfortunately, the Progressive Labor Party dominated discussion of the working class in the movement from very early on, and soon other "communist" organizations added their sectarian notes to the chorus. Progressive Labor figures prominently in many histories of the new left, usually as a nemesis. Kirkpatrick Sale, among others, sees it as a subversive force on the left, so totally external to the "real" movement that its victory is inexplicable.⁸ This is an inaccurate image of the pro-working-class wing of the movement. While PL and the other "vanguard parties" had a decisive impact on the SDS, it is essential not to confuse these old-left political sects with the tendency of the movement they succeeded in capturing.

This tendency consisted in small local "collectives" or circles of activists formed around tasks associated with labor projects, underground newspapers, socialist bookstores, military organizing, union work, and other community struggles. These were the local groups in which the national "communist" parties fished for members, but the parties did not create the local circles; rather, the circles grew out of the movement and responded to populist beliefs that had always been present in it.

For a time these circles were fairly effective at enabling the socialist minority of the radical movement to unite around new tasks. Despite the bad press this wing of the movement received later, it did serve for a while to support the political development of workers, soldiers, and others attracted to the left, and to spread socialist ideas to constituencies not informed of the activities of the movement by the sympathetic "radical chic" journalism read by better-educated groups. As a result, the left gained a brief presence in the broadening crisis of the army, the ghettos, and, to a lesser extent, the world of work.

However, these socialist circles were abundantly contradictory phenomena, stretched between their hatred of the larger movement they had left behind and mythic representations of the new one they were attempting to create. These contradictions haunted them from the start, permanently wracked them, and frequently destroyed them. They were like whirlpools on the surface of the society, drawing in large numbers of individuals on one side and thrusting them out on the other. In their passage through these circles, some few people solidified their convictions, gained experience and competences, and went on to seek new activities, but most gave up in discouragement and confusion.

The fatal flaw of these groups lay in their origin, in their harsh rejection of the movement of which they formed a contradictory pole. These groups emerged through the working of the sectarian dynamic, usually on the basis of a poorly digested Maoism. To succeed, the circles would have had to transcend these origins, to forget not only long hair and dope—as they often did—but also the confused ideologies that had originally rationalized their break with the mainstream of the move-

ment. This they usually failed to do, and so they rarely found a new ideological basis for their activities better suited to the task of rooting themselves in the real contradictions and concerns of the constituencies they hoped to influence. Instead, they attempted to involve millions of ordinary people in the internal movement squabbles that had motivated their formation. They were in fact engaged in a typical sectarian maneuver, which consisted in redefining themselves through a reflexive action that they confused with and substituted for effective instrumental action.

The sectarian dynamic through which the circles split off as a minority reinforced their sense of forming an advanced "party," a role they seemed to be fulfilling in breaking with the mainstream of the movement on the basis of socialist principles. This made them extremely vulnerable to the overtures of the national "vanguard parties," which promised to validate this status from above. So long as the circles were involved with fairly significant social movements, the demands of their activities preserved them from the worst consequences of their illusions, but as these movements declined, the independent socialist groups declined with them, became ever more ideologically involuted and divided, and finally the "vanguard parties" recruited the debris.

What was inadvertence, incompetence, and occasionally ill will in the small circles became a matter of principle and a basis for organizing these parties. Thus, as the circles slowly gravitated into the orbit of the parties, whatever openness and effectiveness they had was quickly lost. The parties seemed to believe that their antagonistic relation to the real social movement was the proof of their doctrinal purity. This purity, in turn, confirmed in their own eyes their right to lead the movement they had spurned. The "correct" programs all these parties pushed, however, were unrelated to contemporary American conditions and reflected instead clumsy attempts to impose models drawn from the utterly different conditions of semifeudal societies like prerevolutionary China. Pointing out the discrepancy usually brought on a severe regression to "principle."⁹

The situation of these parties, in direct conflict and competition with the spontaneous movements generated by the social crisis, had disastrous consequences for their self-image and behavior. Relative isolation, pseudo-revolutionary rhetoric, political ineptness, compensatory attachment to foreign models, all combined to produce astonishingly sectarian attitudes and methods of work. It is now clear that the essence of this whole trend in the left was the negation not of the existing society but of the movement. Around this negation there grew up a specific political subculture, as obsessed with self-definition as the hippies, as isolated from the society as the campus, and equally impotent to change it.

THE SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

A Fragmented Movement

Much of what has been described above becomes clearer when viewed in the light of the experience of the most militant new leftists in the major social movement of the time. Their failure to work out reasonable relations with and between the mass movements of blacks and women was decisive. The youth movement was doubtless condemned by its cultural narrowness to remain aloof, and at best working-class organizing would have begun very slowly to alter the ideological environment in the factory. However, the movements of blacks and women were, on the contrary, really powerful and had almost infinite potential.

The new left was betrayed by all its instincts and prejudices in its work within these movements, in particular by its reluctance to admit the need for a "material" level of motivation in the struggle and its demand for ideological and stylistic purity (which was not incompatible with a certain pragmatism that allowed for frequent revision of the principles to which dogmatic adherence was required). These attitudes led the left ever further from the realities of the movements and their actual potentialities toward mythic projections of their vanguard role, unrealistic expectations of the tiny socialist minorities within them, or outright contempt for their "nonproletarian" character.

The traditional socialist movement was always structured around a distinction between "primary" and "secondary" areas of struggle. The party was based on the primary contradiction of labor and capital. The party also helped form and support mass movements based on the various secondary contradictions, such as age, race, sex, and national oppression. Traditional strategy attempted to link up the various arenas of conflict by showing the dependence of the secondary contradictions on the primary one.

The new left was "new" in substituting for this traditional class politics a "radical" politics which rejected the old Marxist emphasis on class struggle in favor of a nearly exclusive emphasis on the secondary contradictions. The new left based its assault on the system not on the struggle of labor and capital but on other contradictions that had always been judged less important in previous left movements. "Radical" social theory in the 1960s and 1970s was characterized by the belief that class struggle had been permanently superseded in advanced capitalist society by struggle around these other issues.

Organizationally, the new left rejected the traditional subordination of the movements around the secondary contradictions to a party rooted in the primary contradiction. Separate and specialized organizations were built on the basis of the various sources of conflict in the society, with-

out a centralizing socialist party to link them together. Organizational separatism freed each radical movement to develop its own leadership and its own self-interpretation without having to depend on traditional socialist parties and codes; but separatism also posed difficult strategic problems. The new left was never able to construct a strategy by which the movements that made it up could be united to attack the sources of power in American society.

What was its strategy in these movements? This is not an easy question to answer: there were many, too many strategies. To the extent that one can identify some main emphases, the following seem to me to be the guiding threads: first, a constant orientation toward cultural action in view of effecting attitudinal change, or change in "consciousness" specific to the secondary contradiction on which each movement was based; second, the pursuit of "equality" through legal reforms and civil rights; and, third, the attempt to combine the strength of the various organizations struggling around the secondary contradictions through a political alliance capable of projecting the power of the left as a whole.

Laid out in this way, the strategy looks more coherent than it proved to be in practice. While organizational separatism did make it possible for each movement to give a high priority to its concerns, it also proved an insuperable obstacle to alliance. Often the separate movements claimed the right to provide leadership for the entire left, in competition with each other. Theories became popular less by explaining than by justifying and perpetuating the divisions in the movement. When the "generation gap" was in vogue, radicals were not supposed to trust anyone over thirty. Radical feminists sometimes argued for the permanent division of the movement by sex. Nationalist theories ratified the separation of the races within the movement.

These fragmenting tendencies were supercharged with emotional content by the overemphasis on personal morality characteristic of the new left. Each movement tended to demand that individual attitudes of potential allies toward race, sex, and authority be fully transformed before the revolution, as a condition for common action. As a result, contacts between groups often contributed to intensifying antagonisms between radicals who claimed to be oppressed in different ways, not only by the "system," but also by each other. Ultimately the new left relied so heavily on attitudinal change that it did not realize until very late that divided it lacked the power to make equally important institutional changes.

The Dialectics of Ideological Development

The fragmentation of the movement was a consequence of its profoundly social character, its rootedness in the problems of everyday

life. Where new constituencies emerged, sensitive to new issues, they had to find their own way of understanding the social problems that concerned them, often in isolation from and even against the will of others in the movement. Questions of politics and power came later, more as a way of encoding and articulating social opposition than as a central preoccupation of the new movements.

The initial radicalization of the new constituencies involved a slow subversion of the dominant ideology from within and did not take the form of a clear and sharp ideological break with capitalism. In the absence of a powerful socialist movement, or even of a minor socialist strain in the prevailing political culture, the various movements had no common organization and code through which to unite and communicate. The organizational ideal of the old left, a class-based movement controlling fronts based on other secondary issues, was never a realistic possibility, although one of the political side effects of these new left movements was to provoke widespread interest in socialism as an alternative way of organizing social life.

The resulting "radicalism" was based on what I will call "transitional ideologies," because of their role in mediating between the dominant ideology and the development of a socialist standpoint. Transitional ideologies motivated and rationalized opposition to society by contrasting its most progressive ideological claims with its actual achievements. The participants in these new movements at first reacted against their oppression in terms of the internal contradictions in the dominant ideology they had discovered through their struggles, rather than by reference to a socialist critique of capitalism. Usually transitional ideologies also played a crucial role in articulating the cultural changes and changes in personal self-definition furthered by the movements.

At first transitional ideologies had an unquestionably progressive function because of their ability to rationalize oppositional activity and to articulate new cultural conceptions. At some point, however, these ideologies began to play an ambiguous role. On the one hand, individuals who were exposed to the idea of social criticism and struggle in the more accessible transitional forms soon began to be interested in socialism. On the other hand, whole movements were by this time based on transitional ideologies and demands, and these movements and their leaders were threatened by the rising influence of socialist ideas. At this point, some leadership groups, for example in certain black movements, became consciously and openly hostile to socialism in an effort to fixate the evolving consciousness of their followers at the transitional level. Socialism was no longer perceived as an alien and vaguely daring concept but as a competitor for hegemony.¹⁰

At one level, the level of practical politics, the moderate leaders were surely correct in identifying the actual limits of the movements they

led. At another level, in terms of the growth of an independent movement of the poor and oppressed, these leaders were engaged in a kind of betrayal. Their political realism rationalized the existing relations of force in the society and, in fact, strengthened and conserved these very relations. For this they were legitimately criticized by socialists in ideological struggles that had as their goal making the leap from the transitional to the socialist stage of ideological development. It was in the course of such ideological confrontations that the socialist left was defeated in the social movements.

Unfavorable objective conditions undoubtedly set the stage for defeat, but these conditions probably did not condemn the left as badly as it condemned itself through its inability to adjust to them. A realistic view of the situation would have shown the socialists ways of achieving modest long-term gains. Unfortunately, they were incapable of realism in the exciting atmosphere of the period.

Their experience with the dialectics of ideological development had been lived out on campus and in small radical communities where the passage from pacifism to solidarity with world revolution had been made in a few years' time. This experience continued to shape their implicit expectations, fostering illusions about the effectiveness of ideological confrontationism and about the ideological flexibility of those in society at large. Socialists were quickly marginalized because they did not appreciate the enormous difference between linking the student movement to socialism and performing the corresponding task with social movements such as those of women and blacks.

Two approaches to this task were commonly taken, both of which led straight to defeat. The "proletarian revolutionary" approach was based on the immediate rejections of the transitional ideological basis of the reform movements, of their goals and leaders, and, most importantly, of the new cultural identity the participants had defined for themselves through these movements. For this identity, socialists attempted to substitute a proletarian label that would not stick. Marxism, which might have helped socialists to understand the poor, had been so clumsily assimilated that it merely provided the rhetoric of sectarian polemics, serving rather as an alibi than as a critique of class, sex, and race prejudice.

Simultaneously, other socialists adopted a contrary approach which had a different sort of sectarian outcome. These socialists accepted the cultural innovations of the reform movements and attempted to combine these immediately with certain aspects of socialist ideology. They insisted that the women's and black movements were in fact new revolutionary vanguards, substitutes for the missing revolutionary agency of the politically passive American proletariat. Expectations traditionally associated with the working class were transferred to the new

groups, and their revolutionary candidacy for power was proposed. This position led to active involvement with the social movements, but usually on the basis of positions that were so extreme the socialists had to form their own separate groups in the shadow of, and often in polemic opposition to, the larger mass reform organizations they failed to seize and influence.

The most serious example of the first form of sectarianism occurred in relation to the movements of the racially oppressed. Newly Marxified students and ex-students sometimes found it inexplicable that blacks supported reformism and nationalism instead of revolutionary socialism. However, reformism and nationalism were precisely the transitional ideologies blacks needed to free themselves from the dominant racist cultural assumptions under which they labored. No doubt a time would have come when ideological confrontation with reformist and nationalist leaders could have inaugurated a new, socialist phase in the history of black protest in America; but the open and permanent warfare by certain white groups against most black ones in the name of a nonexistent revolutionary proletariat was profoundly offensive to those who daily experienced the reality of racism from all segments of the white population.

Meanwhile, other white radicals attempted to cast the Black Panther Party in the role of vanguard of a revolutionary movement of Third World peoples within the boundaries of the United States, as a replacement for the failed agency of the old proletariat. In fact, blacks could not assume the role of a revolutionary leadership by themselves, with support from insignificant white groups, but had to find some sort of acceptable *modus vivendi* with American capitalism to survive. Only a great progressive movement capable of altering the real relations of force in society could have freed blacks to pursue massively a more adventurous strategy. The Panthers proved the reality of these limits by the example of the repression they suffered.

The attempt to substitute a female agent of revolution for the old working class was popular among leftists in the women's movement for a time. The most committed discovered a revolutionary vocation as women and tried to organize an autonomous radical feminist movement that would be able to right not only the wrongs done to women, but all the injustices of American society.

In the period under consideration, the women's movement was growing rapidly in an atmosphere of surprising good will. Mass reform organizations arose to which these more radical women had access, and for a time their version of feminism escaped the blistering ideological counterattack of the media and the police to which the rest of the left was exposed. At a later stage, the sectarian dynamic caught hold in the women's groups too and led to the isolation of an important

fraction of the radical wing of this movement from the reformist mainstream of feminism and the rest of the left. The women's movement as a whole survived these splits better than did the other social movements of the time but not without paying a high and quite unnecessary price.

CONCLUSIONS

The wisdom of the weak is to advance wherever possible, not at the strongest point of enemy resistance. The new left simply failed to appreciate its own weakness and the weakness of the social movements with which it worked. At the turning point in its development, the left needed to elaborate the basis for its long-term participation in the social movements. However, this would have meant abandoning the ambition to take them over in the short run and to convert them into mass revolutionary movements.

What was possible, and this was after all quite a lot, was to contribute to growth of these movements, to unity of action between them, and to the gradual spread of socialist ideas within them. For this, a prolonged period of political subordination was necessary, but the search for the revolutionary identity so characteristic of the new left precluded this solution and tempted leftists to isolate themselves from the only mass forces active in the society.

The new left contributed new methods of cultural action and dramatically changed our conception of sexual and racial politics. It revived concern with the problem of authority and freedom on the left, which for too long had been indifferent to this whole dimension of its heritage. As a result, it is now possible to reconceptualize progressive struggle in advanced capitalist society. As the left gradually reemerges in the United States, it will be able to draw on these achievements and will find elements of continuity with the past so lacking in the 1960s. Perhaps the left will someday succeed in playing an oppositional role while resisting the sectarian temptation. A future movement may find a way of combining cultural and instrumental action, responding to the need for a politics of self-definition that became apparent in the new left not through sectarianism but as a by-product of the growth of solidarity.

NOTES

1. Herbert Marcuse's *One-Dimensional Man* (Boston, 1964) is essential reading for anyone who wants to understand the atmosphere in which the new left arose.

2. The analysis which follows is abstracted from many cases, some studied

in books, others personally experienced. The interested reader may wish to consult some of the immense secondary literature on the new left for examples. Some starting points: M. Teodori, ed., *The New Left: A Documentary History* (New York, 1969); M. Cohen and D. Hale, eds., *The New Student Left* (Boston, 1967); L. Hamalian and F. Karl, eds., *The Radical Vision* (New York, 1970); Hal Draper, *Berkeley: The New Student Revolt* (New York, 1965); R. Morgan, ed., *Sisterhood Is Powerful* (New York, 1970).

3. For an important study of the strategy and impact of the new left in relation to the media, see Todd Gitlin, *The Whole World is Watching* (Berkeley, 1980). For the background to my approach to consensus here, see Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, R. Nice, trans. (New York, 1977). Bourdieu writes:

In class societies, in which the definition of the social world is at stake in overt or latent class struggle, the drawing of the line between the field of opinion, of that which is explicitly questioned and the field of doxa, of that which is beyond question and which each agent tacitly accords by the mere fact of acting in accord with social convention, is itself a fundamental objective at stake in that form of class struggle which is the struggle for the imposition of the dominant system of classification. . . . It is only when the dominated have the material and symbolic means of rejecting the definition of the real that is imposed on them through logical structures reproducing the social structures, . . . i.e., when social classifications become the object and instrument of class struggle, that the arbitrary principles of the prevailing classification can appear as such. (p. 84)

4. Important and very different analyses of the ways in which new social movements alter the definition of the public sphere are contained in Jürgen Habermas, *Strukturwandel des Öffentlichkeit* (Neuwied und Berlin, 1962), and Francois Furet. *Penser la Revolution Francaise* (Paris, 1978).

5. The concept of "accidental" individuality is suggested by a passage in *The German Ideology*. See L. Easton and K. Guddat, eds., *Writing of the Young Marx on Philosophy and Society* (New York, 1967), pp. 458-459.

6. For further discussion of the Marxian concept of class consciousness, and the relation of that concept to the new left, see Andrew Feenberg, *Lukács, Marx and the Sources of Critical Theory* (Totowa, 1981), ch. 5, and Feenberg, "Culture and Practice in the Early Work of Lukács," *The Berkeley Journal of Sociology* (1981).

7. For more on these problems, see Jürgen Habermas, "Some Difficulties in the Attempt to Link Theory and Practice," *Theory and Practice* (Boston, 1973).

8. Kirkpatrick Sale, *SDS* (New York, 1974).

9. As Lenin himself is reported to have said: "Principles are invoked by many revolutionary-minded but confused people whenever there is a lack of understanding, i.e., whenever the mind refuses to grasp the obvious facts that ought to be heeded," R. Tucker, ed., *The Lenin Anthology* (New York, 1972), p. 696.

10. In the movements of blacks there were occasions on which this competition led to the assassination of members of the Black Panther Party by members of other organizations.

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