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THE POLITICAL AND SOCIAL THOUGHT OF LEWIS COREY

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate School of The Ohio State University

By

David Evan Brown, B.A.

* * * * * *

The Ohio State University

1969

Approved by

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On December 23, 1952, Lewis Corey was served with a warrant for his arrest by officers of the U. S. Department of Justice. He was, so the warrant read, subject to deportation under the "Act of October 16, 1918, as amended, for the reason that you have been prior to entry a member of the following class: an alien who is a member of an organization which was the direct predecessor of the Communist Party of the United States, to wit The Communist Party of America." A hearing, originally arranged for April 7, 1953, but delayed until July 27 because of Corey's poor health, was held; but a ruling was not handed down at that time. The Special Inquiry Officer in charge of the case adjourned the hearing pending the receipt of a full report of Corey's activities during the previous ten years. [The testimony during the hearing had focused primarily on Corey's early writings and political activities.] The hearing was not reconvened, and the question of the defendant's guilt or innocence, as charged, was never formally settled. Corey died on September 16.


2Ibid., p. 87.
His death, under these circumstances, was indeed a "final irony," as one commentator has stated. It came "at the point when he had begun to write a testament of political faith in America," but had to divert his energies in order to fight an injustice, the source of which was the very government whose virtues he was currently celebrating. The celebrations were not without qualifications, nor were they lacking in designs for change. But they did express hope, and faith, in the possibilities of progress within the framework of the existing system. Clearly, the liberal democratic, pluralistic and reformist proposals of this man under a McCarran-Walter Act indictment contrasted sharply with the burning revolutionary sentiments he had expressed as Louis Fraina some thirty-five years earlier. Thus, if one assumes that the threat of deportation was inspired by something more than the Justice Department's meticulous concern for the letter of the immigration law, it would seem that the government had indicted the wrong man. If it was a communist

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4Fraina had re-entered the United States in 1923, using an alias. He was, at that time, both an alien and still technically a member of the (or, more accurately, one of the) Communist Party(ies). He was also an agent of the Communist International. But that was thirty years prior to the date of the hearing. Besides, Lewis Corey, by 1953, was widely known for his anti-communist sentiments and activities. Yet, he had once been a communist. By his own standards, he was a liberal, a civil libertarian, a reformer; at times, a non-Marxian democratic socialist. Thus, taking into account the climate of opinion during the period when this charge was brought against him (McCarthyism remained a potent force), it is very likely that in spite of his current anti-communism Corey was being tried as much for having been a communist at one time and remaining a radical much of his life as for apparently having committed an infraction of the immigration law.
subversive the government sought, then Louis Fraina, who had returned
to the United States in 1923 from months of revolutionary activities
abroad, was a likely choice. Not so Lewis Corey. Corey had dis-
associated himself from the Party in 1923, renounced communism during
the 1930's, "reconsidered" and rejected tactical Marxism and Marxian
socialism by 1940 and published two books during the next ten years
which argued forcefully that communism constituted a threat to the
principles of freedom and democracy with which he now identified him-
self.  

The irony deepens as one considers some other aspects of this case.
For example, the Justice Department proceedings against Corey could be
seen as a mere footnote in a volume of harassments recounting how
Corey's ex-comrades and their progeny attempted to anathematize him in
liberal and left-wing circles, at the same time reminding his non- or
anti-communist employers of his communist past. And, further, one can
readily understand Corey's disappointment and bitterness in being
forced to resign his position as educational director of the Butcher
Workmen's union upon public disclosure of the charges against him. He
had been, after all, an eloquent and vociferous spokesman of free and
potent unions; and his opposition to communism was well known in the

5Lewis Corey, "Marxism Reconsidered," Nation, CL, No. 7 (February
17, 1940); No. 8 (February 24, 1940); No. 9 (March 2, 1940). The next
issue of Nation (March 9, 1940) contained replies to Corey's articles
by Norman Thomas, Earl Browder, Bertram D. Wolfe, and Algernon Lee.

6The Unfinished Task: Economic Reconstruction for Democracy (New
York: Viking Press, 1942); Meat and Man: A Study of Monopoly, Unionism
the labor movement. Yet no sooner had his indictment become known
than pressure for his resignation began to mount. The leadership felt
that the bargaining position of the union would suffer were they to
continue their association with such a highly publicized ex-communist.

Only two years before, Corey had published *Meat and Man,* in which he
was as unstinting in his anti-communism as he was in his praise of the
union. Small wonder that he felt betrayed and abandoned. A final
note in this connection, although many more could be cited: the illegal
entry into the United States which was charged in the indictment
occurred in 1923. Corey recalls that his decision to leave the Party
took place in 1922, prior to his return to the United States. Shortly
after his arrival, he announced that decision. It is, then, an
especially bitter irony that the government should choose this particu­
lar transgression as the keystone of their attack on Corey's communist
affiliations.

This final dramatic incident in Corey's life suggests more than
simply irony, however. Here, at a glance, one confronts an outline of
a man's life: a life apparently at once active and contemplative,
tragic and triumphant, boldly experimental and cautious. Most of all,
it suggests a life constantly involved in the process of change,

7 *Corey, Meat and Man,* pp. 281-312.

8 Letter, Lewis Corey to Patrick E. Gorman, The Lewis Corey Collec­
tion, Nicholas Murray Butler Library, Columbia University (hereafter
to be referred to as The Corey Collection).

1953, pp. 6-7 (unpublished notes in the Corey Collection).
personal as well as social. A catalogue of the changes which took place in Corey's political or economic views during his lifetime would easily fill a separate volume. Even so, as change always implies continuity, there are discernable threads which run through Corey's career of thought and action. For while it is true that the gap separating Fraina's revolutionary communism and Corey's liberal pluralism must be measured in more than mere years, it is also true that the youthful flamboyant agitator and organizer and the mature, dynamic writer and educator shared a great many characteristics. Doubtless, it was the same concern for social justice and the alleviation of human suffering which moved Fraina to encourage class warfare and Corey to promote the reconciliation and cooperation of all functional social groups.

This brief look at the deportation proceedings, and the circumstances surrounding them, serves not only to introduce the reader to the subject of this study but also to indicate the many dimensions which such a study must necessarily take into account.

Corey's personal life will be dealt with only insofar as it sheds light on the central problem of this undertaking: a statement and analysis of Corey's social and political ideas. But this hardly constitutes a limitation on the multi-dimensionality of the study. We are considering here a body of ideas which underwent a complicated evolutionary process of development. Hence, if only the critical junctures in that transformational process are treated, the task remains a large and complex one. Corey's own words, quoted here from the deportation proceedings transcript, illustrate this point:
Question (Examining Officer): Did you still believe in Marxism after you terminated your membership in the Communist organization in 1922?

Answer (Corey): Yes and No. I mean that . . . complications arose. I became a Marxist very early. I read Marx, which most of the others didn't do incidentally, and so that when I quit the CPA in 1922 and the Communist International I did not at once completely throw my Marxism overboard. It took me years to replace my Marxist ideas until finally in 1940 I came out definitely . . . against both Marxism and Communism. . . .

Question: And you remained a believer of the Marxist philosophy and theories until about 1940 . . .?

Answer: No. In 1940 I wrote a series of three articles in the Nation . . . in which I repudiated both Marxism and Communism. Now, obviously, my process of thinking must have been going on for quite a number of years before that, so that I had already begun to . . . question Marxism but I did not finally make up my . . . mind until I wrote these articles. . . . [The] articles were preceded by years and years of rethinking . . . the principles of Marxism. 10

Throughout the period of "rethinking" and questioning, Corey was not in the habit of reserving judgment. He continually applied his current stock of analytical equipment to a broad range of issues, from economics to literature. There were times, of course, when his changed views, having matured, were stated boldly and succinctly. The publication of the Nation series just mentioned was one of those times. On the other hand, some of his ideas emerged over the course of many years and were expressed, with subtle alterations along the way, in numerous journal articles and books. His conception of the nature and mission of the middle class is a case in point. Thus, even if one were to minimize the personal dimension, tracing the development of Corey's thought would involve several types of considerations, several "angles of

vision."

Major shifts in outlook occur: from communism to anti-communism; from revolution to reform as the means of social transformation; from a belief in the industrial proletariat to a belief in "useful functional groups" as the appropriate agencies of change. Each of the former views requires separate statement and analysis; and all of them were significantly related. Similarly, the latter views require independent treatment, individually and as they bear significantly on one another.

Then, of course, there is the question of how these shifts were accomplished. As noted earlier, they were not characterized by sudden breaks or dramatic revelations. The growth of a coherent body of thought always describes an intricate pattern of interrelationships among ideas and events, false starts and settled courses, acquired understanding and inherited belief. The pattern is all the more intricate when that body of thought emerges not unilinearly, from the simple to the complex, but out of an already highly developed intellectual and ethical corpus. It is not always possible, moreover, to label what seems to be a new or radically changed idea as simply a fresh insight or a new point of departure.
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Studies in Sociological Theory. Professor Kurt H. Wolff

Studies in Political Parties. Professor E. Allen Helms

Studies in Comparative Government. Professor James Christoph.
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CHAPTER I

BIOGRAPHY

Lewis Corey was born in Galdo, Italy on October 13, 1892. He was christened Luigi Carlo Fraina. In 1954, Corey's daughter, Olga, wrote to her mother from Forte dei Marmi that the Italian postal guide listed two Galdos:

1. . . . (Province of Salerno) . . . a 'commune' with a population of 1,248, at 325 meters . . . from sea level; as late as 1928, it had no telephone and no railroad.
2. . . . (Province of Salerno also) . . . a 'frazione' . . . smaller than a 'commune' . . . population of 209 . . . part of the Commune of Pollica, . . . Naturally, no telephone, no railroad . . . Salerno and particularly the small towns around it are among the poorest in Italy; illiteracy is very high, sanitary conditions practically non-existent and the people are completely out of touch with the outside world.¹

Luigi's father, Antonio, was not so "out of touch" as to be unaware of the possibilities for a better life in America. And it was not merely the prospect of unrelenting poverty that drove him, finally, to emigrate. As a republican in a predominantly anti-republican area, Antonio also found the political climate inhospitable. A "republican exile," he left Italy for America in 1894.² The following year, he sent

¹Letter, Olga Corey to Esther Corey, July 12, 1954, The Corey Collection.

²Corey, "One Rebel's Years," p. 2.
for his wife and children. Whichever Galdo they had fled, the Frainas, doubtless, were hopeful that the future would be brighter than the past.

It was not the golden boulevards of the immigrants' dreams which greeted them, however. It was the slums of New York. The Frainas settled in the East Side, a desperately poor neighborhood. It was here that Luigi Carlo (soon changed to Louis C., in keeping with the usual pattern of Americanization) grew up. He sold newspapers when he was six years old, shined shoes, helped his mother in a tobacco factory after school. The routine of survival in an urban slum near the turn of the century has been analysed and fictionalized so often that it has become practically a cliché. Nevertheless, his experiences in that now familiar environment set their mark upon all that young Fraina would ever do or think. Many years later, recalling his years in the slums, he said:

It was a hard life. . . . It is not, however, the material sufferings of the slums that stay in my memory, although God knows they were bad enough, but the indignity to personality, the stifling or at least the impairment of the preciousness . . . of every individual human being that slum living brings. 3

Numerous incidents could be cited to illustrate Fraina's poverty-stricken early years. As we are concerned primarily with his intellectual development, however, it would be more instructive to quote at length from autobiographical reminiscences of the literary influences

which worked upon him as a boy, and which broadened and deepened his sensitivity to human suffering:

At 12 I began to read Dickens and Victor Hugo, the literature of human moral affirmation and of social protest. From there I went on to Zola and . . . Frank Norris . . . Sinclair, Jack London and the Dreiser of *Sister Carrie*. Then came the Russians, especially Dostoyevsky and the proletarian short stories of Maxim Gorky. And the incorruptible individualism of Romain Roland's *Jean Christophe*. And . . . Bernard Shaw. There was poetry, too. The warm songs of simple human joys that uplifts one; Robert Burns—no fanatic ideologist there, but a man for whom living meant simple joys and human decency, and the honesty which alone makes man human. The rebel Shelley, who urged us "To defy power which seemed omnipotent, to love and bear; to hope till hope creates from its own right the thing it contemplates." Whittier . . . Whitman . . . Robert Frost whose words "with nothing to look backward to with pride and nothing to look forward to with hope" sums up the lives of millions of workers and farmers. And Swinbourne [sic] too, who . . . sent forth flaming diatribes against tyranny and reaction. . . .

Fraina graduated from public school in 1908. Having transferred from parochial to public school, he had done quite well; failing as an athlete, he acquired a taste for studies and literature. His father died shortly after his graduation and, instead of going to high school, he was soon working, helping to support himself and his family. His first job was with the Edison Company. Within a year, he had begun the career of writing and political activism he was to follow for the rest of his life. In 1909, he began writing for *The Truth Seeker*, a journal of "free thought." His articles were read by Arthur Brisbane, a columnist for the Hearst papers; and it was Brisbane who got him his job with the *New York Journal*. He was a cub reporter for the *Journal*
from 1912 to 1915. By then, however, he was already a seasoned socialist.

Fraina joined the Socialist Party "while not quite 17" years old. Within six months, he accompanied some other dissident members out of the SP and into the SLP. The Socialist Labor Party, guided by the rigid Marxist doctrines of Daniel De Leon, was Fraina's political home until 1914. He was an organizer for the SLP, wrote for and helped to edit its organ, The Daily People, and in 1912 reported the Lawrence, Massachusetts textile strike. The "Wobblies" (Industrial Workers of the World), who led the strikers to victory, captivated Fraina. He became a member of the I.W.W. and remained in the organization for six months. It is likely that the "revolutionary unionism" which he advocated five years later was based, at least in part, on his experiences with the I.W.W.


6In addition to his reports on the strike which appeared in The Daily People, February 16-25, 1912, Fraina wrote a detailed theoretical study, reflecting the influence of the I.W.W. on his thinking: "Syndicalism and Industrial Unionism," International Socialist Review, July, 1913.

7A discussion of Fraina's advocacy of "revolutionary unionism," and the larger question of the role of "mass action" in left-wing socialist policy, appears in Theodore Draper, The Roots of American Communism (New York: The Viking Press, 1957), pp. 88-91. Draper recognizes that the source of "mass action" was syndicalism; but he writes of Fraina's exposure to and apparent acceptance of the I.W.W. version of syndicalism and "revolutionary unionism" five years before.
Fraima "resigned from the Socialist Labor Party early in 1914, [and] in the fall of this year became an editor of the New Review, a theoretical socialist monthly on whose editorial board were Walter Lippmann, William English Walling, J. G. Phelps Stokes, Ernest Poole . . . Charles Steinmetz . . . Robert Lowie . . . Max Eastman and Floyd Dell.  He began writing for the New Review in 1913, before his appointment to the editorial board, and before his resignation from the SLP. "Soon he also became a member of the board of directors, secretary of the publishing company, business manager, and chief contributor. Increasingly, the policy and tone of the magazine took on his personal coloration. The twenty or so articles that Fraima wrote for the New Review afford by far the best insight into the mind of the Left Wing before and after the outbreak of the war." The content and significance of his contributions are discussed at length below. He remained with the magazine until it ceased publication in 1916, and then took a job as editor of Modern Dance Magazine. This gave Fraima access to a fascinating world far removed from the one he had become accustomed to. This is not to say that he had completely lost touch with the arts and literature while becoming involved in radical politics. He continued to write articles on such topics as poetry and painting. These will be examined in a later chapter.


9Draper, Roots of American Communism, p. 63.

10See Chapter III.
of the leading figures in the Left Wing Socialist movement which would eventually spawn the Communist Party—in spite of his having just re-joined the Socialist Party in 1917, having been away from the Party for eight years (and a member initially for less than one year).

In addition to his activities as a Left Wing propagandist, Fraina spent a good deal of time in 1917 opposing the war. "Although not a pacifist; [he] became active in the Conscientious Objector movement because of its anti-war character."

At one public meeting, protesting America's involvement in the war and advocating non-cooperation with the draft, Fraina and Ralph Cheyney were arrested, indicted, and later convicted "of conspiring to commit an offense against the United States by aiding and abetting, etc., unknown persons unlawfully to evade the requirements of the Selective Service Act. . . ." The case was appealed, but the conviction was upheld; and Fraina and Cheyney served thirty days at the Essex County, New Jersey Penitentiary early in 1919.

It was not his anti-war efforts, however, which led Fraina to become "the man who did more than anyone else to make possible the formation of the American Communist movement in 1919." Draper argues that

13Corey, "One Rebel's Years," p. 3.


15Corey, "One Rebel's Years," p. 3.

16Draper, Roots of American Communism, p. 7.
Fraina's association with the dance magazine lasted "for about one year.\textsuperscript{11} He did not suspend his political activity during this time, however. In fact, it was early in 1917 that Fraina helped to crystallize the ideas around which the Left Wing of the Socialist Party was to organize. Draper reports the Brooklyn meeting, held on January 14, 1917, which thrust Fraina into the leadership of the Left Wing. At the meeting, Fraina aligned himself with Trotsky and against Bukharin, taking the position that the Left Wing should remain within the Socialist Party and begin the publication of a new organ devoted entirely to the propagation of Left Wing views. Bukharin agreed with the latter but not with the former proposal. Trotsky prevailed. Not long after that meeting, Fraina was asked to take over \textit{The Internationalist}, a Boston-based Left Wing paper. He agreed, on condition that the paper would receive a new name and he would be relatively unhindered in setting editorial policy. The first issue of \textit{The New International} came out on April 22, 1917, with Fraina as editor. The theoretical journal suggested at the January meeting materialized shortly thereafter, and Fraina assumed editorial responsibilities along with Louis Boudin and Ludwig Lore. It was a bi-monthly called \textit{The Class Struggle}, and, with \textit{The New International}, formed the core of Left Wing propaganda.\textsuperscript{12} Thus, by the end of 1917, Fraina was one

\textsuperscript{11}Corey, "One Rebel's Years," p. 3.

\textsuperscript{12}Draper, \textit{Roots of American Communism}, pp. 80-87.
American Communism came increasingly under the domination of the Soviet Union. It is equally true that the Russian Revolution served as the greatest spur to the founding of the American movement, and Fraina stood out among all the American socialists who sought to emulate the Russians' theoretical justification of revolutionary action. From the outset Fraina seized on the Russian Revolution as a source of revolutionary inspiration. He derived significance from it insofar as it contributed to his own peculiar brand of revolutionary doctrine. But as time went on, it was not so much Fraina's eclectic analysis of American society which formed the basis of his tactical proposals as Lenin's views of Europe's (and particularly Russia's) revolutionary potential. The increasing influence of Lenin can be found in the three major sources of Fraina's literary output during this period: The New International, a book entitled Revolutionary Socialism, and the successor to The New International called Revolutionary Age.

The Left Wing of the Socialist Party was exceptionally weak in the early part of 1917. The Socialist Propaganda League, the organization which housed the Left Wing faction of the Boston local of the Socialist Party, could barely support its own propaganda organ. It had sponsored The Internationalist and then The New International, but both of these publications were short-lived. The New International suspended publication after putting out ten issues.

\footnote{Tbid., pp. 66-72.}
The status of the Left Wing within the Party began to change in 1918. By spring, it controlled the Boston local. Fraina was called to Boston to "take charge of . . . educational work." In November, the first issue of Revolutionary Age was published, under Fraina's editorship. By the following spring, "it was clear that the Left Wing had won a distinct majority of the [national] party membership." In February, 1919, an "organizing center" of the Left Wing had been formed in New York (which included Fraina), and it soon became apparent that the Left Wing would either capture the Socialist Party structure entirely or wreck it and form their own, more militant, party. The new organization, which was actually the Left Wing faction of the New York Socialist Party local, adopted a manifesto--drafted by John Reed and Bertram Wolfe and later revised by Fraina. It was a fiercely combative document. The stage was set for the rending of the party and the emergence of the communist movement.

18 Ibid., p. 131.


20 Draper, Roots of American Communism, p. 145.

21 The first three items listed in program were: "1. We stand for a uniform declaration of principles in all party platforms both local and national and the abolition of all social reform planks now contained in them. 2. The party must teach, propagate and agitate exclusively for the overthrow of Capitalism, and the establishment of Socialism through a Proletarian Dictatorship. 3. The Socialist candidates elected to office shall adhere strictly to the above provisions." "Manifesto and Program of the Left Wing of the American Socialist movement," Revolutionary Age, I, No. 17 (Feb. 8, 1919), p. 6.
The front page of the April 26, 1919 issue of Revolutionary Age carried a call for a national Left Wing conference. The Right Wing of the Party had already suffered losses to the Left in two referenda, and was in process of purging the Party of Left Wing elements. There was no possibility of reconciling the differences between the two wings. Thus, when the Left Wing Conference was held on June 21, the only controversy centered on the question of when the new party—the Communist Party—would be formed. Fraina supported the group which wanted to wait until August 30, and attempt to take over the emergency convention of the Socialist Party that had been called for that date. Others, mainly the foreign language federations within the Left Wing, preferred to ignore the emergency convention and proceed to the business at hand. Fraina's group won a temporary victory. The foreign language federations and their allies bolted the Left Wing Conference and announced plans to form a Communist Party in Chicago on September 1. A delegation from Fraina's group was sent to a meeting of the dissidents, but they remained adamant. The leadership of the Left Wing then decided to capitulate, but there were some members of their group who refused, in turn, to tolerate the capitulation. This group, led by John Reed and Benjamin Gitlow, planned to follow the original Left Wing strategy. Their plan was frustrated, however, as they were refused admission to the regular Party emergency convention. Once defeated, they chose not to return to the Left Wing fold. Instead, on September 2 they formed their own communist party—the Communist Labor Party. On the previous day, Fraina's faction had founded the Communist Party of America. After two years of moving steadily leftward, in hopes of transforming the
American Socialist movement into a revolutionary vehicle patterned after and supporting the Bolshevik model, the Left Wing of the Socialist Party of America found themselves in the unlikely position of claiming two communist parties where a week before there had been none.22

Failing in their attempt to unify the two groups, the Communist Party of America went about creating a permanent organizational structure. Fraina, who had been temporary chairman and keynote speaker at the organizing convention, assumed a leading role.23 Next to Charles Ruthenberg, he was, in fact, the most important member of the new party. Ruthenberg's availability stemmed as much from his being native born as from his organizational ability. Fraina was a propagandist, not an organizer; and he was foreign born. This latter trait put him at a disadvantage in a party dominated by foreign language groups but desirous of relating successfully to the domestic scene and attracting local support. Draper's assessment of the relative merits of the two men deserves to be quoted at length.

Faina had done more for the pro-Communist Left Wing in the lean years, but he was almost exclusively a propagandist. Once the party was born, an organizer was needed, and Fraina totally lacked the taste and talent for organization. Unfortunately for Fraina, when his dream came true, the organizer became more important than the propagandist, and he had to accept what was at best the number two position in the Communist Party. In later years, a legend spread that Ruthenberg was the 'outstanding founder and leader' of the

22Draper, Roots of American Communism, pp. 148-84. Draper's account of these extraordinarily complex events is a model of clarity.

23Ibid., p. 184; Corey, "One Rebel's Years," p. 4.
American Communist movement. Until 1919, this was far from true. If we look at the foundation of the Communist movement as a process which lasted much longer than a few months, Ruthenberg's 'outstanding' role came at the very last stage. There is no need to detract from Ruthenberg's importance, but the legend arose to serve factional purposes and incidentally enabled the later Communist leadership to blot out Fraina's outstanding role.\footnote{Stenographic Report of the "Trial" of Louis C. Fraina, issued by the Central Executive Committee of the Communist Party of America, 1920. A copy of the report can be found in the Corey Collection.}

As second in command, Fraina's responsibilities were extensive. He was appointed International Secretary, placed on the fifteen-man Central Executive Committee, and made editor of the party's publications, which included the official party organ (successor to Revolutionary Age), The Communist.\footnote{Ibid., p. 184.} The duties which were to occupy most of his time until he broke with the Party were those of International Secretary, a position for which he was not particularly well suited.

Fraina was chosen to go to Moscow to represent the American party. Ruthenberg resisted the choice, realizing and wishing to capitalize on Fraina's value as an English-speaking propagandist; but Fraina, as International Secretary, was the obvious candidate, and Ruthenberg relented.\footnote{Ibid., p. 211.} Prior to his departure in December, 1919, Fraina was accused by some fellow Party members of being a Justice Department agent. A "trial" was held and he was exonerated.\footnote{Ibid., p. 195-96.} The "trial" had
all the elements of a spy thriller. Fraina's accuser, Peterson, was a confessed agent of the Justice Department, but of a very low order. The man who succeeded in discrediting Peterson and successfully defending Fraina was, it was later revealed, himself a Justice Department agent. The latter, Nosovitsky, apparently was interested in maintaining his contacts with the newly formed Communist Party, and assumed that his relationship with the International Secretary would prove fruitful. When Fraina left the country, he had to do so secretly and illegally. Nosovitsky's contacts with the Justice Department assured Fraina an uncomplicated exit. 28

Fraina went to Amsterdam, via London, to attend the West European Conference of the Comintern in February, 1920. He then travelled to Berlin and arrived, finally, in Moscow in June. The Second Congress of the Comintern was held from July 17 to August 7. Fraina was one of four American delegates: two representing the Communist Party of America and two the Communist Labor Party. John Reed, representing the CLP, had arrived before Fraina. ("Actually, the Communist Labor Party no longer existed, having been merged into the United Communist Party in May, but the news had not reached Moscow, and neither Reed nor Fraina knew of the reshuffle back home." 29) In the course of his stay in Moscow, Fraina was appointed to an "American Agency," whose tasks included unifying the faction-ridden American communist movement

28 Draper, Roots of American Communism, pp. 227-32; Corey, "One Rebel's Years," pp. 5-6.
29 Draper, Roots of American Communism, p. 254.
and promoting communism in Latin America.

The creation of a United Communist Party had not, however, eliminated dissension among the American communists. The CLP had indeed merged with the Communist Party of America; but the Communist Party of America had itself split over the issue of the merger! Only the pro-Ruthenberg faction of the CPA had agreed to combine with the CLP. The Comintern was displeased with this lack of unity, and insisted that all wounds be healed as soon as possible. Because Fraina had been abroad during the CPA-CLP merger negotiations, he had not been a party to the final arrangements. Besides, the faction of the CPA which held out, and continued to call itself the Communist Party, was the foreign language group—the strongly pro-Russian group with which Fraina had earlier identified on several occasions. Therefore, when word finally arrived in Moscow that a United Communist Party had been formed but a group, still calling itself the Communist Party, remained outside the new party, Fraina was linked with hold-outs and became their delegate. As a representative of the recalcitrant CP, he was joined on the American Agency by representatives of the UCP and of the Comintern itself, and instructed to effect yet another merger. The Comintern-inspired unity convention was held, shepherded by the American Agency, at Woodstock, New York in May, 1921.30 By this time, Fraina's disenchantment with organized communism, which would soon

30 Ibid., p. 270.
result in his leaving the party, had already begun.\textsuperscript{31}

In the fall of 1920 he had met and, within a few weeks, married Esther Newishskaya. Esther was working in the secretariat of the Comintern and living in the hotel where Fraina was staying. Not long after they were married, Fraina prepared to leave Moscow in order to carry out his assignment with the American Agency. Michael Borodin, who had become a good friend of the newlyweds, returned from one of his frequent trips to Berlin and accompanied Fraina back to Germany. Fraina then set out for Italy on his way to Mexico, leaving his bride in Moscow. Sick and unhappy at having to leave Esther behind, Fraina returned to Berlin and wrote to Lenin, requesting that his wife be allowed to accompany him. The request granted, they met in Berlin but parted soon afterwards, as Fraina left for New York in January or February. He stayed long enough to arrange the unity convention at Woodstock in May and returned once again to Berlin. Things had not gone well for Fraina in the United States. He had taken what turned out to be unpopular positions while representing the party in Moscow, and his efforts at unifying the American comrades were resented. The Frainas then travelled to Mexico, arriving in June in Mexico City.

\textsuperscript{31}Esther Corey, "Passage To Russia, II," Survey (London), no. 55 (April, 1965), p. 110. Mrs. Corey recalls: "Before going to Mexico, Fraina was to go to New York to promote unity, which was resented by the communist factions which were to be united. He returned from New York discouraged. When he spoke about this to Borodin, describing the 'power politics and intrigues galore,' he added that he was glad to be going to Mexico." p. 110. (This is taken from the second of a two-part article. The first part is entitled "Passage To Russia, A Personal Reminiscence," Survey (London), no. 53 (October, 1964), pp. 23-32.
For the next six months, Fraina carried on a rather fruitless campaign to establish a communist party in Mexico. Frustrated by his failure, he moved on to South America, where he was to carry out another Comintern assignment. Esther returned to Germany. It was then December, 1921 or January, 1922. She took a job in Berlin, and was not to see her husband until early in the fall. The Frainas were reunited in Frankfurt. Louis announced that he had decided to leave the party, and, after spending a few weeks in Germany, took his wife back again to

Mrs. Corey writes that "after six months we left Mexico, Fraina for the United States, and I for Germany. In the States Fraina was given a new assignment in South America. I was to remain in Germany." "Passage to Russia, II," p. 110. This had to be very late in 1921 or early 1922; and there is no record of Fraina's having gone back to the United States at this time. Corey makes no mention of such a trip anywhere in his autobiographical notations, the F.B.I. interrogation, or as part of his testimony at the deportation proceedings. Furthermore, the Immigration and Naturalization Service has no record of Fraina having made the trip under any of his aliases—and they had been quite thorough in tracing his many illegal entries and exits. Mrs. Corey also made a casual reference to Fraina's trip to South America in a conversation with this author. One must conclude, therefore, that he made the trip to South America, and probably went directly there from Mexico.

The chronology of events covered in this paragraph is derived from a variety of sources. Since there is a considerable lack of agreement among them as to Fraina's itinerary during this period, it has been necessary to deduce an account which eliminates the inconsistencies. The sources used are as follows:

1. Deportation Hearings (supra, p. 11, n. 1).
2. Esther Corey, "Passage to Russia, II" (supra, p. 15, n. 31).
3. Lewis Corey, "One Rebel's Years" (supra, p. v, n. 9).
5. F.B.I. Interrogation, (Yellow Springs, Ohio: 1949-50), A Stenographic Report in the Corey Collection. (This is a transcript of an interrogation of Lewis Corey by two agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Corey cooperated with the agents, and consequently the report contains a great deal of valuable material.)
Mexico. Shortly thereafter, Esther had a baby and Louis had to begin looking for work in order to support his enlarged family. He was not terribly successful. He tried to write and that went badly as well. In the spring of 1923, he ventured alone to New York, got a job as a laborer, moved into a tenement, and saved his money. Several months later, Fraina sent for his family; and, as Joseph Skala (the name on his fraudulent Czech passport), he began a new life.

During the years from 1923 to 1929, Fraina lived a relatively peaceful and obscure existence. He became a proofreader for the New York Times and then for a magazine publishing house. In 1926, while continuing to work as a proofreader, he began writing for publication. He submitted an article to the New Republic under the name of Lewis Corey, and it appeared in the May 5 issue. The article was entitled "How is Ownership Distributed?" and dealt with the "mythology . . . of corporate ownership." Corey argued that while more people than ever before owned stock, "the multiplication of stockholders is not equivalent to the democratization of corporate ownership. . . . In fact, a superconcentration of corporate control is accompanying the multiplication of stockholders." Lewis Corey was no longer a propagandist. He began to gain status as a serious economic critic; but, as the titles of his articles in the New Republic indicate (six were published between


34 Lewis Corey, "How is Ownership Distributed?" New Republic, XLVI, no. 596 (May 5, 1926), p. 322.

35 Ibid., p. 323.
1926 and 1930), his views were by no means neutral.36

By 1929, Corey was on sufficiently solid ground as an economist to qualify for a fellowship at the Brookings Institution. About the same time, he contracted to write a study of the Morgan financial empire, which was published in 1931. The year that The House of Morgan appeared, Corey became an editor of the projected Encyclopedia of Social Sciences. Meanwhile, some of his articles were accepted by several other journals, and two were included in scholarly collections along with pieces by Harold Lasswell, Sumner Slichter and others.37 For a while, he had sought anonymity by keeping his private life as Joseph Skala and his professional life as Lewis Corey quite separate. As his work became more well-known and economic insecurity no longer plagued him as before, Lewis Corey, political economist and writer, assumed prominence while Joseph Skala gradually disappeared.

Corey was not then a member of the Communist Party. He recalled, years later, having been asked by Earl Browder in 1933 to rejoin. However, he not only remained outside the party for the rest of his life

36 The titles of the other New Republic articles in question are as follows: "Is Income More Equally Distributed." (January 26, 1927); "Employee Stock Ownership" (May 11, 1927); "Who Owns the Nation's Wealth?" (August 10, 1927); "The Concentration of Income" (May 2, 1928); and "Who Gains by Speculation?" (April 17, 1929).

37 The Collections referred to here are: Samuel D. Schmalhausen, ed., Behold America! (New York: Farrar and Rinehart, 1930) and J.B.S. Hardman, ed., American Labor Dynamics (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1928). Slichter and the others appear in the latter volume. For the other articles which Corey wrote during this period, see the chronological bibliography in the appendix following this study.
but steadily moved farther away from its doctrines and overall political orientation. In spite of his irreparable break with the party, Corey nevertheless continued to bear the imprint of his Marxist and communist background. This was particularly true during the 1920's and early 1930's. All of his writings throughout this period testified to his remaining a self-styled Marxist and communist. The fact that he was not a member of the party did not prevent his readers, and particularly his critics, from placing him, appropriately, in the Marxist-communist camp. His published work was serious and scholarly, and he gained a reputation as being among the foremost intellectuals in that camp. Even before his two major studies, The Decline of American Capitalism and The Crisis of the Middle Class, came out, the Communist Party leadership was sufficiently concerned over the prospect of a respected Marxist economist remaining outside the party fold, that they made considerable efforts to have him return. Corey's willingness to play a leading role in the "professional workers'" campaign for Foster and Ford (the party's 1932 presidential and vice-presidential candidates), served to encourage those efforts. When it became clear that

38 Deportation Proceedings, pp. 40-47. Corey denies having sought readmission, and recounts his meeting with Browder.

39 Ibid. See also Draper, Roots of American Communism, p. 299.

Corey was not about to rejoin, however, the party attacked him. Later, it made one last attempt at a reconciliation, for Corey was, by then, influential enough to cause the Party some concern.

Corey's articles appeared in Nation, the New Republic, V. F. Calverton's Modern Quarterly and Modern Monthly, The Annals, and several other journals. His books were reviewed in such places as Current History and the American Economic Review. His literary output was as impressive as his audience was extensive. And all of his writing, through 1936, could be classified as Marxist-communist. At the deportation proceedings in 1953, Corey said that in "1934 . . . when my Decline of American Capitalism appeared, I was still a theoretical Marxist and still, in a sense, a theoretical communist. . . ." Explaining these allegiances, he said: "When I left the communist movement I did not immediately and completely abandon communism. It would be a lie on my part . . . to say so; and it would [have been] . . . psychologically unnatural because, having believed in Marxism for . . . twelve or fifteen years, it naturally would take me some time to rethink the whole process of what I believe or do not believe." Until 1937, he evidently believed in communist solutions and built on Marxist assumptions and analytical categories. The aggressiveness of his earlier writing was not as apparent; and he had the satisfaction of knowing that his work was altogether his own, and not a reflection of the current tactical

41 Bittelman and Jerome, Leninism . . . 
42 Deportation Proceedings, pp. 75-76.
demands of the party. For all that, one of his reviewers could understandably (if not altogether accurately) characterize The Decline of American Capitalism as "Marx applied to the U.S.A. in the first worthwhile book by an American communist."43

Corey's final sympathetic gesture toward the communists occurred in 1936. He agreed to edit an issue of the communist New Masses. Ultimately, he was only chairman of an editorial board; but he did honor his commitment. The issue was called "Challenge to the Middle Class," and Corey contributed an article entitled "The Mind of the Middle Class." That he had not totally abandoned his communism by April, when the issue came out, is amply demonstrated by a representative passage from Corey's article. "No social revolution is possible," he insisted,

without revolutionary consciousness. There are many minds in the middle class: some must be rejected, others transformed by revolutionary consciousness. That is the answer to fascism and the capitalist decline and decay out of which it arises. That prepares the unity of the working class of manual and mental workers in the common struggle for liberation.

And what happens to the minds of the middle class after the communist conquest of power? Socialism liberates all that is progressive and worth retaining in the minds and activity of the middle class, as all its useful functional groups are absorbed in the community of free workers. The

antagonism within the minds of the middle class is destroyed.\textsuperscript{44}

This is a curious mixture of cliché-ridden party-line prose and deep concern for the progressive potentialities of the functional segments of the middle class. The latter, of course, was to characterize all of Corey's later works. Within a year, Stalin had initiated the Great Purge, and Corey joined many other communist sympathizers in casting adrift from domestic communism and experiencing disenchantment with the Soviet Union as the model and inspiration for social revolution.\textsuperscript{45}

By 1937, Corey was on the way to becoming a Marxist anti-communist. His role in the brief life of the \textit{Marxist Quarterly} is indicative of his political posture at this time.

Late in 1935, Corey was asked to take part in the founding of a Marxist journal. The inquiries came from a group in Cambridge, Massachusetts, which included Louis Harap, of the Philosophical Library,

\textsuperscript{44}Lewis Corey, "The Minds of the Middle Class," \textit{New Masses}, XIX, no. 2, (April 7, 1936), p. 16. Other members of the editorial board were Joseph Freeman, Michael Gold, Russell T. Limbach, Bruce Minton and Isidor Schneider. The contributing editors were Granville Hicks, Joshua Kunitz and Loren Miller. Corey's motives for undertaking the task of editing this issue of \textit{New Masses} were mixed. They appear to be something less than scholarly or political; since, in retrospect, Corey explained that at that time and for years before and subsequently, the Communist Party had been circulating all kinds of stories that I was a spy and a thief. . . . Despite the fact that the CPA and the . . . CLP and the Communist International had exonerated me of that charge, they kept repeating that [charge, and also that] . . . I had stolen hundreds of thousands of dollars of Comintern money, and . . . my calculation at the time [was] that if I edited this issue it would stop their mouths. . . . Deportation Proceedings, pp. 84-85.

\textsuperscript{45}F.B.I. Interrogation, p. 113.
and Kenneth Howard. About the same time, Corey, Louis Hacker and some others began to consider the possibility of starting their own journal. The Cambridge group suggested a joint project, but objected to the inclusion of certain individuals on the editorial board. The individuals in question, whom Corey had suggested as prospective editors, were Sterling Spero and Bertram Wolfe, both of whom were persona non grata with the Communist Party. "We believe that the whole board should be congenial from the start," Howard wrote to Corey, "[and] that no part of the board should look upon any individual member with distrust. We do not believe that we will be able to work with Bertram Wolfe. Furthermore, there will be little hope of gaining the cooperation of the Communist Party on the editorial board or in distribution so long as Wolfe is included among the editors." Spero was later included in the category with Wolfe.

Corey and Hacker agreed to meet with the Cambridge group, despite the reservations of the latter, in the interest of unity and cooperation among Marxist scholars. Negotiations proceeded. The projected American Marxian Review was on the way to becoming a reality. At some juncture, however, it became apparent that the Cambridge group was incompatible with Corey and his colleagues from New York. (One is led to speculate that the reason for this incompatibility lay in the AMR's having an insurmountable primary commitment to cooperation with the Communist Party; whereas Corey, Wolfe, Spero, Hacker and the others

found their common ground in some shared attitudes or, perhaps, personal loyalties. In any event, the American Marxian Review later became the party-dominated journal, Science and Society. This provides some basis for the speculation.) In 1936, Corey's group pulled out of the venture, and found adequate backing for their own journal. They brought out the first issue of the Marxist Quarterly in January, 1937.

In addition to its being a highly respectable academic journal, the Marxist Quarterly was a very handsome publication. It was amply financed by the wealthy and radical Corliss Lamont. After three numbers of the journal had appeared, Lamont decided to switch loyalties.

Lamont wrote to Corey, explaining his decision, and sent copies of the letter to the other editors. At one point in the letter he said:

Because during these days association with any group publishing Marxist material has such immediate and far-reaching implications, I prefer to throw what weight I have with a board generally sympathetic towards the Soviet Government, the Spanish Government, and the Communist Party. The majority of the Marxist Quarterly board was and still is, I fear, extremely hostile to these three organizations and is motivated by a degree of bitterness towards them which I did not quite realize at the start. A critical attitude, of which I myself am in favor, is one thing; but an attitude of complete enmity is a very different matter and most repugnant to me.

The "board . . . sympathetic towards the Soviet Government . . . ."

47 The Marxist Quarterly came out three times in 1937: I, no. 1 (Jan.-Mar.); I, no. 2 (April-June); I, no. 3 (July-Sept.). The board of editors included Corey, Louis M. Hacker, Sidney Hook, Meyer Schapiro, Sterling D. Spero and Bertram D. Wolfe. Among the contributors, in addition to the editors themselves, were Delmore Schwartz, Franz Mehring and Eliseo Vivas.

to which he referred was, of course, the editorial board of *Science and Society*.

Further comment on Corey's political views in 1937 would be unnecessary now were it not for Lamont's personal note to Corey at the end of the letter: to wit:

> These remarks do not of course apply to you personally. And I feel that throughout the whole stormy course of the Quarterly you have acted with full honesty, good faith and impartiality, on the basis agreed, towards the various political groupings.49

This seems to indicate that, although he tended to oppose the policies of the Communist Party by virtue of his position on the journal, Corey was not as actively hostile to American and Soviet communism as were some of his colleagues. This could suggest either a residual attachment to the "theoretical communism" of his early 1930's writings, or, simply, an editorial-executive judiciousness. The content of his contributions to the journal offers a clue only insofar as it showed similarities to the formal analyses contained in his earlier works. Corey's articles in the *Marxist Quarterly* were notable, on the other hand, for their lack of programmatic aggressiveness.50 Draper notes that Corey's outright anti-communism may not have begun until after the Hitler-Stalin Pact of 1939.51 The precise location in time of his change of heart is

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50 In 1953, Corey testified that he was "instrumental in starting the *Marxist Quarterly*, which, while in a general theoretical way was Marxist, specifically . . . was anti-communist and anti-Soviet Union . . . ." *Deportation Proceedings*, p. 77.

51 Draper, *Roots of American Communism*, p. 441, n. 40.
not so important, in any case, as is the fact of Corey's progress
toward one approach and away from another.

Following the demise of the Marxist Quarterly, Corey took a job
with the WPA in Washington, and, after six months, became educational
director of the ILGWU. He stayed with the dressmakers' union until the
summer of 1939. Up to this time, he had opposed United States involve­
ment in the impending European war, and had joined the Keep America Out
of War Committee. His antipathy to fascism finally overcame his deep­
seated anti-war feelings, however; and he quit the Committee about the
time he came out against the Hitler-Stalin pact.\(^52\) In February, 1940,
the first of his three articles entitled "Marxism Reconsidered" appeared
in the Nation magazine. The first dramatic change in Corey's views
since his withdrawal from party activism (and in many ways, a much more
profound change) was expressed in this series.

He began by arguing that Marxism had engendered socialism but had
failed to produce democracy—a crucial shortcoming, since "socialism
without democracy is a monstrosity."\(^53\) What is more, "there is a
totalitarian potential in the socialist economic system." (Italics
his.)\(^54\) The crisis of capitalism continues, he maintained, but it can­
not be dealt with successfully by using the "traditional socialist and

\(^{52}\) Corey, "One Rebel's Years," p. 8.

\(^{53}\) Corey, "Marxism Reconsidered, I," p. 245.

\(^{54}\) Ibid., p. 247.
"communist" approaches. The standard class-economic analysis of Marxism required the concentration of responsibility for social change in the industrial proletariat. But, says Corey, "the danger cannot be overcome by 'revolutionary' struggle against the new middle class [by the proletariat]; that would surely mean fascism." The new middle class simply has too much power. To oppose them would cause a violent (and probably successful) fascist reaction. Besides, there is no reason why the new middle class cannot become a part of the struggle for democracy and prosperity. The answer lies in the progressive transformation of capitalism toward democratic socialism. (Italics his.) "The popular unity that a people's functional socialism might create would make possible a democratic transition to a new order." "A system of pluralism in government and industry which permits the largest measure of self-government and freedom of expression and action to the community's economic and cultural interests is the final assurance of a democratic collectivism, a functional democracy." (Twenty-one years before, Corey [fraina] had helped draft a resolution which proclaimed the necessity to "teach, propagate and agitate exclusively for the overthrow of Capitalism and the establishment of Socialism

55Corey, "Marxism Reconsidered, II," p. 274

56 Ibid.


58 Ibid.

59 Ibid., p. 307.
through a Proletarian Dictatorship."

Shortly after the Nation series was completed, Corey helped to found the Union for Democratic Action. "The idea for the formation of the UDA was my own," he later recalled.

It was my idea at the time to get a conference going, a concentration of anti-communist liberals to work for intervention [of the United States in the war in Europe] . . . and among the active members . . . were Reinhold Neibuhr, George M. Counts, Murray Gross of the Dressmakers' Union, and a number of other people. The organization was . . . definitely anti-communist. The declaration of principles, which I wrote, has passage after passage of a definite anti-communist and anti-Russian, Soviet-Russian, character."

He was appointed research director of the UDA, and remained with the organization until January, 1942. Some years later, the UDA became the ADA—Americans for Democratic Action; but, typically, Corey's association with the group had terminated prior to its emergence as a prominent and influential liberal force.

The next phase of Corey's life began with his accepting an offer to teach at Antioch College. In spite of his having had merely an elementary school education, he was appointed a professor of political economy, and began teaching in February, 1942. Two months later The Unfinished Task was published. By and large, it was an expansion of

60 "Manifesto and Program," Revolutionary Age, Feb. 8, 1919, p. 6 (see supra, p. 9, n. 21).

61 Deportation Proceedings, pp. 62-63. See also Draper, Roots of American Communism, pp. 301, 441, n. 42.

62 Draper, Roots of American Communism, p. 301.

63 See supra, p. iv, n. 6.
the ideas expressed earlier in the Nation series, and Corey's last
major political testament. It served to inform the ideological orienta-
tion of much that he taught during his stay at Antioch. Furthermore,
most of the ideas which he developed over the next ten years were re-
finements of the basic positions articulated in The Unfinished Task.

Corey's career at Antioch was not an academic idyll. Within a few
weeks of his arrival at Yellow Springs, he was subjected to attacks from
anonymous sources in regard to his communist past. These continued in-
termittently for years. Along with many others, his past radicalism
and current liberalism also attracted the critical attention of super-
patriotic groups. Ironically, the pressure from the Left was, at times,
as intense as it was from the Right. Corey's vocal anti-communism often
drew accusations of "red-baiting." Far from silencing him, these varied
attacks simply intensified his desire to clarify and disseminate his
views. Consequently, until his death, he continued to be plagued by
the champions of groups from both ends of the political spectrum. 64

His teaching duties included offering a wide range of courses in

64. Esther Corey, "Lewis Corey . . . A Bibliography," pp. 120-21,
124-25. See also the extensive file of correspondence and newspaper
clippings concerning the attacks on Corey from pro- and anti-communist
sources in the Corey Collection; e.g., Fred A. Woodress, "The Record
Interviews Lewis Corey," Antioch Record, Dec. 6, 1946, p. 5; Letter,
Carl Dreher to the Editors of the Antioch Review, January 26, 1943
(attackeing Corey's anti-Soviet Union position); and typescript of a
speech delivered by Corey at an Antioch "town-gown" meeting in 1943
(after which Corey was accused by one of his colleagues of "red-baiting").
economics, history, government and social thought. In addition to
the usual classroom duties, he initiated and participated in numerous
conferences and institutes, delivered many extra-curricular lectures,
and continued to produce articles and book reviews for publication at
an impressive rate. Corey joined the editorial board of the Antioch
Review and contributed a substantial number of articles in the course
of his association with the journal.

From 1944 to 1947, Corey continued to teach, but also became in­
volved in the National Education Committee's efforts to arouse interest
in a new political party. He helped to write its declaration of prin­
ciples, which was published as a pamphlet and contained a foreword by John
Dewey. The committee's general outlook was a kind of cooperative
voluntarism. It created a good deal of discussion and correspondence

65 In "One Rebel's Years," Corey lists the courses he taught as:
1) American Civilization; 2) Principles of Economics; 3) World Recon­
struction, 1944-46; 4) Labor Relations; 5) Technology and Civilization;
6) Business and Government; and 7) Social Movements Since the Renaissance,
p. 9. The Corey Collection contains recordings of his lectures (see
infra, p. 32, n. 72), transcripts of lectures, note cards, and outlines
for prospective courses.

66 To name but a few of his extra-curricular activities, Corey was
instrumental in arranging the Antioch Student Conferences on Labor­
Management Relations; he delivered an address at the Conference of
People's Lobby, Inc. in Washington, D.C. in January, 1945 (the speech
was entitled "Conversion of Government War Plants to Peace Production");
and he wrote a widely circulated pamphlet for the Post War Council called
"Let's Keep the Tools of Plenty." All of the above in the Corey Collection.

67 See bibliography for Corey's articles in the Antioch Review.

68 Ideas for a New Party: Provisional Declaration of Principles,
National Education Committee for a New Party, with a foreword by John
amongst its members, but was unable to broaden the base of its support sufficiently to actually establish a political organization.69

Perhaps the most important, and certainly the most far-reaching, accomplishment which can be credited to Corey while at Antioch was his teaching. The letters which he received from his students over the years testify to the lasting impression Corey had made on them. On those occasions when they felt called upon to come to his defense, in connection with the frequent political attacks directed against him, their personal letters of support to him were often no less adulatory than those sent to local newspapers or college administrators.70 In an article on Corey's philosophy, published some hours after his death, one of his former students notes that "his final role was so fitting, the role of teacher." The author goes on to explain:

A typographer, a journalist, an intellectual, a writer, a professional revolutionary, a moralist and a reformer, he wound up by bringing all these roles to their fruition in his teaching. He tried to convey to his students not only the diversity of the world and its interests, but also the excitement of progress if controlled by decency and intelligence. He tried to annihilate that Platonism of the social reformer which led to carelessness with people, and he tried to teach that human life was the priceless gift which gave to the world its diversity, and its failings, but also its promise.71

Listening to the recordings of some of his lectures, one can easily

69 Correspondence (Box #4), the Corey Collection.

70 Correspondence (Boxes #3, #17, #19), the Corey Collection.

sense the excitement which was often generated in his classes. This is not to say that there were not "those days" when he was hard-pressed to evoke a response to some point which he wished to emphasize. On the other hand, the vast majority of his lectures seemed to reflect, if for no other reason than the not infrequent interruptions by inquisitive or agitated students, a genuine involvement in the subject on the part of both students and teacher. Although most of the classes were conducted in an orthodox fashion and the lectures were usually well-organized factual and analytical presentations, Corey was not averse to using extraordinary techniques under extraordinary circumstances. For one class, Corey dramatically illustrated the horror of fascist totalitarianism by simply reading from Vercors' *Night and Fog*. One of his students had argued that fascism, understood as decadent capitalism, was a stage in the evolution of communism, and was, therefore, a necessary step toward the achievement of human betterment. Obviously, the student was a communist sympathizer. Corey entered the class, read the passage, closed the book and left. Quite shaken, the student reconsidered his views and was thereafter more susceptible to Corey's usual rational

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72 Included in the Corey Collection are a number of recordings. Entire courses were recorded as well as occasional speeches, class discussions and conference proceedings. Some of these have been transcribed. Most have not. In many cases, the order of the records has been disturbed; and some of the recordings are barely audible. This author arranged the recordings, where that was necessary, in what he felt was a reasonable order, and put many of them on tapes. The tapes are now in the author's possession. The original recordings and the typed transcripts remain in the Corey Collection.
When Corey left Antioch, it was with some regrets and a considerable amount of bitterness. He felt that he had been treated unfairly with regard to promotion; and, after a protracted battle with the college administration, he resigned. He severed his connections with Antioch in June, 1951. Actually, he had not taught during the year prior to his resignation, as he was on sabbatical leave. Almost immediately after leaving Antioch, Corey became educational director of the Butcher Workmen's Union. Three years previously, he had worked with some of the union members at a summer institute in Wisconsin, and, shortly thereafter had been asked if he would write a history of the union. He did write the book, but it was concerned as much with the meat industry as with the union. Nevertheless, the leaders of the union were sufficiently impressed with the book that they invited Corey to join their staff. He wrote and lectured extensively for the union. At first, the work was stimulating; but it soon resolved itself into routine. It is questionable whether Corey would have stayed with the union for very long. The choice was not his, however, as he was fired shortly after the deportation order with which he was served became

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73 Recording of lecture, The Corey Collection. The circumstances surrounding this particular incident was told to the author in a private conversation with Mrs. Lewis Corey in August, 1966.


75 Lewis Corey, Meat and Man (see supra, p. iv, n. 6).
public information. His work with the union came to an end in January, 1953.\textsuperscript{76}

Corey had been living in Chicago while working for the union. He now moved to New York City, and tried to continue with his writing. Much of his time was consumed by preparations for the deportation hearings, but he did manage to outline two projected volumes and add to the research which he had been doing on the feminist leader, Frances Wright.\textsuperscript{77} The hearings took place in July. Although he had received encouragement and support from large numbers of friends and colleagues, he was, doubtless, weakened by the ordeal.\textsuperscript{78} On September 15, he suffered a cerebral hemorrhage and died the next day.


\textsuperscript{77}Esther Corey, "Lewis Corey . . . A Bibliography," pp. 124-25. Lewis Corey, "Toward and Understanding of America," (7,500 word outline for a book), the Corey Collection. Corey also wrote "One Rebel's Years" in 1953. The Frances Wright materials—including works by and about her as well as drafts of chapters and notes by Corey—fill boxes \#5, \#6, \#7, and part of \#8 in the Corey Collection.

\textsuperscript{78}Letters of support from friends, ex-students, colleagues, and people who knew Corey only through his writings can be found in the Corey Collection. Affirmations and affidavits of Corey's "good moral character" as well as of the non-communist character of his writings were submitted as evidence in his behalf at the deportation hearings and can be found in the Deportation Proceedings.
CHAPTER II

THE LEFT WING

Recently, G. D. H. Cole complained that "American Socialism is ... peculiarly difficult to write about because it is so largely an imported doctrine, though there were always in it native elements as well." It was imported from Europe, mainly from Germany; and the native elements which ultimately gave it its special coloration arose, in the main, as a consequence of American socialists having to reconcile these foreign ideas with local conditions in the process of building what they hoped would be an effective organization. Specifically, writes Daniel Bell, "the impetus to socialist political organization in the United States came from three European sources: the International Workingmen's Association (the First International) dominated by Marx; the political ideas of Ferdinand Lassalle, the founder of German social democracy; and the volatile anarchism of Mikhail Bakunin."

The European immigrants who brought these ideas with them to America


were often better schooled in the art of socialist exegesis than in practical political analysis. Moreover, the early American socialist and radical labor press seldom gave the impression that political conditions on both sides of the Atlantic were appreciably different. The adaptation of European socialism to America, then, was a long time in coming. When it did come, it remained in the shadow of European doctrinal and political controversies; and the unique sources of native radicalism were only grudgingly admitted. Thus, when the "Americanization" of socialism did begin to occupy a prominent place in radical discussion, the inherited terms of the discussion were ineradicable. Marx, Lassalle, and Bakunin indeed served as inspirations and informants of American socialism; but the impress of their ideas went further, and continued to affect the form and the content of domestic socialist doctrines and organizations.

American Lassalleans inherited from Europe not only their resistance to orthodox Marxism, but, more important, a commitment to political organization and action. Lassalle had rejected any notion of social or economic meliorism for the working classes. For him, the lot of the workers was fixed at subsistence due to the operation of the "iron law of wages." Reformism was out of the question. Cooperation between laborers and other segments of bourgeois society could lead only to further exploitation of the workers. One road was open to the betterment of conditions for the workers, or the "Fourth class:" namely, "the
dominion of the fourth class in the State."\(^3\) Although he "derived [his] doctrines of economic determinism, of the class struggle, [and] of the inevitability of exploitation in capitalist society" from Marx, Lassalle's ideas on the State represented his own version of Hegelianism.\(^4\) Since Lassalle, like Hegel, thought of the State as "an agency for properly expressing the will of the whole people," he set the workers the task of first acquiring suffrage and then using it to capture the State and emancipate themselves as a class.\(^5\) A working class political party could succeed in improving the economic position of the workers, whereas economic association (trade unions) were appropriate instruments of social organization only after the State had been made subservient to their desires.\(^6\) The ultimate end of the Lassallean program, however, was the setting aright of the State (which had been perverted as a result of its being used as a means of class rule) in the interest of the "whole people"—not merely the proletariat. Thus, Lassalle's theory of the State was as un-Marxian as his tactics.

Marx considered the State an instrument of class rule and nothing more, actually or potentially. It was his desire to abolish the State


\(^5\)Cole, Socialist Thought, p. 83.

\(^6\)Ibid., p. 79.
entirely, once it had served the purposes of the revolution. He recognized, of course, the enormous power concentrated in the State; and he realized that it would have to be captured and exploited before it could be destroyed. But the State, and political activity generally, were, after all, merely reflections of much more fundamental economic interests. It was as much his current political outlook as his deep-seated theoretical anti-statism which led Marx finally to give precedence to economic over political organization of the working class, however. Trade unions and cooperative societies "must precede the political seizure of government by labour. Then, when the workingmen's party should achieve control, it would be able to build up successfully the socialist state on the foundation of a sufficient number of [these economic associations]." "In short, the distinction between the ideas of the International [i.e., of Marx] and of Lassalle consisted in the fact that the former advocated economic organization prior to and underlying political organization, while the latter considered a political victory as the basis of economic organization." The Working Men's party of the United States was able to submerge these differences briefly in 1876. One year later, the Lassalleans took


9Ibid., p. 206.
over the party and changed its name to the Socialist Labor Party. In 1890, Daniel De Leon gained control of the party; and, once again, an attempt was made to find a common ground for Marxists and Lassalleans. This time, De Leon sought a theoretical as well as an organizational reconciliation. He did not succeed in building a strong party. Yet, even as the currency of the Socialist Labor Party declined in value within the mainstream of American socialism, De Leon's ideas became one of the chief sources of revolutionary Left-Wing doctrine. Any residual Lassalleanism which found its way into Louis Fraina's works, during his Communist Party period, could be traced, at least in part, to De Leon.

The victory of the Lassallean Social Democrats over their Marxist opponents in the Socialist Labor Party by no means eliminated all sources of strife and schism within the organization. The rift between Marx and Bakunin helped to sustain the internal struggles of the American party. While Marx had come under attack from Lassalle for the former's refusal to recognize the importance of the State and the primary role of political action, he was besieged from the opposite direction by Bakunin. Whereas Marx saw the subtle interconnection between political and economic institutions and chose to mount his attack on the bourgeois State by occasionally using established political institutions against themselves, Bakunin condemned every concession to work

within the political system as authoritarianism or state-cultism. In one essay on Marx, Bakunin went so far as to draw parallels between Marx and Bismarck, arguing that their mutual admiration of the State system put them in the same theoretical camp. As the antagonism between these two men caused the fatal split in the First International, so the ideas associated with them carried over to America and inspired the revolutionary wing of the Socialist Labor Party to bolt, affiliating itself with the anarchist London-based "Black International." The extreme individualist, conspiratorial, and violent revolutionary anarchists found fertile soil in America; and they cultivated their ideas and their tactics with some success, under the leadership of the German Bakuninist, Johann Most. The French counterpart of this form of revolutionary ideology, syndicalism [from syndicat, meaning trade union], also took root firmly in the United States, especially in the West. Revolutionary syndicalism differs from anarchism only in its emphasis on the formation of nation-wide industrial unions to be used both as a means of social revolution.


and as the basis of post-revolutionary society.\textsuperscript{14} The best example of native American revolutionary (or anarcho-) syndicalism is, of course, the I.W.W.

American trade unionism has long been characterized by its craft orientation and, consequently, its conservatism. In the latter part of the nineteenth century, when the percentage of organized workers within the labor force was even smaller than it is today, the resentment of the unorganized and unskilled workers toward the "aristocracy of labor" was considerable. To "the vast mass of the unskilled, unorganized working class, the AF of L seemed to be just an organization for the preservation of the position of a minority of skilled workers, by means of a series of deals with the employers, to the disadvantage of the less skilled or more recently arrived workers."\textsuperscript{15} In 1905, a variety of dissident (especially anti-AFL) elements within the labor movement joined with Socialist Party and Socialist Labor Party representatives to form the Industrial Workers of the World. Although the doctrinal commitments of the new organization were unclear at the outset, they became increasingly anarcho-syndicalist as time passed.\textsuperscript{16}


\textsuperscript{16}Paul F. Brissenden, \textit{The I.W.W., A Study of American Syndicalism} (New York: Russell & Russell, 1919, 1957), pp. 57-82, 213-42. The author cites the I.W.W. leader Vincent St. John's categories of those present at the organization's founding convention: "(1) Parliamentary Socialists—two types, impossibilist (Marxian) and opportunist (reformist); (2) Anarchists; (3) Industrial Unionists; and (4) the 'labor union fakir.'" Commenting on this illuminating, if less than scholarly, characterization, Brissenden says with simple eloquence: "This classification is ambiguous." P. 77.
The relationship between the new labor organization and the socialist movement is, not surprisingly, rather confused. In 1901, an anti-De Leonite rebellion in the SLP ended in the formation of the Socialist Party of America. The SLP rebels, along with a variety of other socialist elements who sought a more moderate policy toward the AFL as well as the prospect of electoral victories, might then be expected to have established a basis for Right-Wing socialism. The SP, however, was not to be denied the endless excursions into sectarianism so typical of radical politics. Apparently, the flight from the SLP had been inspired as much by a refusal to accept De Leon's personal and strong-willed leadership as a dispute over doctrine and political tactics. Consequently, the heterodoxy which characterized the socialist movement generally became a part of the Socialist Party; and instead of becoming the center of Right-Wing socialism, the party was itself to split into wings. The Left Wing sought to identify with the I.W.W. The Right Wing eventually succeeded in severing all connections with the syndicalist group, even though some members of the SP were present at the founding of the I.W.W. Many of the Left Wingers who continued to support the "Wobblies" personally, or, at least, harbored a sympathy for revolutionary syndicalism (though disagreeing with the particular form it took in the


18Brissenden, The I.W.W., p. 79.
I.W.W.), eventually went on to organize the Left Wing, transforming it from an amorphous tendency into a structurally coherent faction. The SLP continued to support the I.W.W. until 1908, when the De Leonite version of revolutionary unionism became too tame for the I.W.W. leadership. By that time, I.W.W. sentiment had become so direct-actionist that any concession to political action, however revolutionary, was disavowed. But in spite of the formal break between the two socialist parties and the Wobblies, revolutionary unionism and syndicalism had permanently worked their way into the socialist movement. Thus, when the various tendencies which distinguished the Left from the Right Wing of the SP began to coalesce after the outbreak of World War I, much of the theoretical groundwork had already been laid; and the issues which had been involved in the romance between the socialists and the Wobblies played the largest role in deciding on which side of the factional fence the participants belonged.

In discussing further the Left Wing of the socialist movement, it becomes necessary to expand (or, more accurately, refine) the categories, provided by Bell, used above to describe the European influences on American socialist political organization. This has been done admirably in Theodore Draper's *Roots of American Communism*. Draper differentiates between the "historic Left" of the American labor movement and the "new Left Wing" which "led directly to the organization of the American Communist movement." Like Bell, Draper notes the importance of Marx,


20Draper, *Roots of American Communism*, p. 50.
Lassalle and Bakunin; but rather than attaching significance to them solely in relation to their impact on socialist political organization, Draper shows them to be among the sources of Leftward tendencies in the labor movement as a whole. He comments further on the division of loyalties within the historic Left among the SP, SLP, and I.W.W., but adds that the "elusive and yet indispensable term—the Left Wing—cannot be fully understood organizationally."21 It is more a matter of ideas and attitudes concerning certain crucial issues.22 On the other hand, the "new Left Wing," which emerged in 1914, was organizationally a part of the Socialist party. At the same time, it can be seen as having been a receptacle for many of the tendencies which developed out of the "historic Left Wing."

The various radical, anti-capitalist movements which contributed to the composition of the historic Left were all directed in some fashion toward the emancipation of the working class and involved some form of fundamental social change. Draper illustrates the great variety of these movements with references to Marxians, Lassalleans, and Bakuninist (and other) anarchists—as noted earlier—and goes on to enumerate some of the

21 Ibid., p. 17.

22 It is true that Draper is addressing himself to a somewhat different problem than Bell's. He is seeking the diverse roots of the American Communist movement, and he finds them not only in socialism but in the more inclusive historical phenomenon: the labor movement. Bell's focus is American Marxian socialism generally, and, specifically, the reasons for its failure. Therefore, while the subject matter of both authors overlap, Draper's categories are, simply, more useful at this juncture. They are designed to deal specifically with the Left Wing; and they allow for a more clear-cut introduction to those aspects of American anti-capitalist organizations and doctrines of which Louis Fraina was an integral part and to which he contributed extensively.
even more exotic forms of protest against the status quo. Single-taxers, tuopians, Christian Socialists, and social evangelists shared the radical stage with more conventional socialists and industrial unionists. The first issue Draper mentions, by means of which this collection of movements was able to produce a distinctive Left Wing, revolved around the question: "politics versus economics." The Marxian Lassallean split, and the attempted De Leonite reconciliation, have already been discussed. As the Right Wing gravitated toward "pure-and-simple" trade union reformism, "the Left Wing tradition leaned over in the direction of the I.W.W." Since the Right Wing saw the electoral activities of socialist parties as their primary concern, they had no quarrel with the desire on the part of some trade unionists to act entirely within the economic field in pursuit of immediate economic gains. The Left Wing viewed this approach to the socialist revolution as "anemic."

The dispute over the interpretation of the proper function of unions was itself a cause for division between Left and Right. The Left Wing held that the primary responsibility of the unions lay in their capacity to promote revolution. According to the SLPers and Left-Wing Spers, this meant that they were to work along with revolutionary parties. Under no circumstances were the "bread and butter" activities of the AFL to be condoned. And as it then became necessary to build revolutionary unions alongside the AFL craft unions, the Left adopted the policy of "dual unionism." These revolutionary unions were, of course, to be

23Draper, Roots of American Communism, p. 18.
organized along industrial rather than craft lines.\textsuperscript{24}

The question of the use of violence not only divided the Left from the Right, but the Left from the extreme Left. The violence advocated by philosophical anarchists—largely an imported doctrine—was not so much at issue as the violence which became part of the "direct action" creed of the I.W.W.. Supporters of revolutionary industrial unionism, such as Debs and De Leon, were forced to recoil at the Wobblies' advocacy of violence and the much talked about, but always unclear, tactic of "sabotage."\textsuperscript{25}

The definition of goals was yet another source of controversy. "To the Left Wing, the proponents of immediate demands were 'bourgeois reformers.' The latter preferred to call themselves 'constructive Socialists.' To the Right Wing, the opponents of immediate demands were 'impossibilists.' The latter preferred to call themselves 'scientific Socialists.'"\textsuperscript{26} The Left tended to accept De Leon's notion that concessions to immediate demands would inhibit the accomplishment of the ultimate goal: the overthrow of capitalism. At the same time, they kept faith with the I.W.W., whose strike activities were based almost exclusively on the specific grievances of a given group of workers. This ambivalent attitude of the Left was, in fact, never resolved.

Draper's discussion of the struggle between "orthodox Marxism" and

\textsuperscript{24}Ibid., pp. 19-20.
\textsuperscript{25}Ibid., pp. 21-22.
\textsuperscript{26}Ibid., p. 23.
"revisionism" is especially valuable in that it expresses the content of the Left-Right split so thoroughly. Having established that Marx himself paid very little attention to American conditions, Draper points out that Engels' analyses of "the American problem" resulted in a counsel of doctrinal flexibility. Thus, "it would be hard to establish a dogmatic Marxist orthodoxy as applied to American conditions on anything that Engels [or, for that matter, Marx]... wrote." Nevertheless, "the American Socialist movement continued to suffer from dogmatism."28 Daniel De Leon became the defender of Marxian doctrinal purity in America. "The rebellion against De Leon and the organization of the Socialist Party at the turn of the century coincided with a doctrinal crisis in the international Socialist movement."29 As European Marxists lined up behind the revisionist doctrines of Eduard Bernstein or the orthodoxy of Karl Kautsky, so their American counterparts became identified with the Right and Left Wings of the socialist movement. Bernstein had "developed a view that was remarkably similar to the practice of the Right Wing Socialists in the United States."30 They conceived of a socialist party as a party of reform; and, like Bernstein, saw the value of socialism in the movement rather than in the final goal. As previously mentioned, the revolt against De Leon and the formation

28Ibid.
29Ibid.
30Ibid.
of the Socialist Party did not succeed in polarizing the American socialists. A discernible Right Wing developed in the SP, centering on the views and person of Victor Berger. But, no sooner had the party declared its independence from De Leon than a Left Wing, with views strikingly similar to those of De Leon, arose within its ranks. Draper's description of this group deserves to be quoted at length.

The Left Wing in the Socialist Party [says Draper,] was identified with orthodox Marxism, the class struggle, the revolution, the supremacy of the proletariat. It rejected immediate demands, reforms, middle-class adulteration. Sometimes the same words could be used by both the Left and Right Wing to mean different things. To the Right Wing, a 'revolution' was merely a fundamental, deep-rooted change in the social system. It was not incompatible with the theory of piecemeal reforms, which could be interpreted to mean such a change eventually. For the Left Wing, 'revolution' signified the road to power as well as the objective result; the enemy was personalized; his violent resistance to any fundamental change was taken for granted; and the 'final conflict' was envisioned literally in more or less violent terms.  

Under the heading of "Chosen People," Draper comments on the role of the proletariat, considered conceptually and practically, in separating Left from Right Wing socialists. All Left-Wingers, says Draper, accepted "the revolutionary nature of the proletariat and the counter-revolutionary nature of the middle class."  

This, in spite of the frequent reluctance of portions of the proletariat to behave in a revolutionary manner and in spite of Gompers having captured a significant segment of the proletariat for his much-maligned class-collaborationist AFL, remained a Left Wing "article of faith." The fact that the proletariat often acted like the

31 Ibid., pp. 27-28.
32 Ibid., p. 28.
bourgeoisie and the fact that both the AFL and middle class reformist parties often succeeded in providing tangible improvements in the condition of the proletariat, while the increasingly isolated and politically ineffectual Left-Wingers refused to alter their rigid class analysis, caused the Left Wing much difficulty. Their faith in the proletariat did not prevent them from making one important face-saving distinction, however. The defection of the "bourgeoisified" portion of the proletariat was explained in terms of their "false consciousness," of their inability to resist the middle class temptations engendered by their membership in the group of workers referred to by De Leon as the "aristocracy of labor." Thus, the Left Wing commitment to the proletariat was refined so as to include only the unorganized, unskilled and most exploited segments. If this did not help the Left to gain the ascendancy among the various protest movements, it did at least enable it to focus its own theoretical and tactical sights more precisely. The enemy was clearly defined, even if he remained, for all practical purposes, unassailable.33

These, then, were the issues and the resulting positions which divided the historic Left and Right Wings of the American labor movement. It was in this environment that the Socialist Party spawned the New Left Wing, out of which the Communist movement grew. This is not to say that the New Left Wing, prior to 1915, represented, like its predecessor, anything more than a collection of tendencies.34 Indeed, such tendencies

33Ibid.
34Howe and Coser, Communist Party, p. 17.
enable one to distinguish generally this group from the historic Left Wing as well as from the rest of the socialist movement; but, as Draper points out, as one attempts to grasp the content of the New Left Wing, "more can be learned from looking at individuals than at the group." 35 One issue in particular bound these individuals in a loose confederation of the Left: opposition to the war. On the other hand, the differences among them were sufficient to compel some to press, at that critical juncture in 1919, for the formation of a Communist party, while others, having travelled to the brink of secession, were unwilling to make the break.

One of the dissidents, willing to go beyond a continued posture of Left opposition within the Socialist Party, was Louis C. Fraina. In his position as editor of and frequent contributor to several Left Wing journals, Fraina was a major force in crystallizing the attitudes of the pro-Communist Left. It is not the purpose of this study, however, to relate Fraina's views to all of the others which were directed at the founding of the Communist Party in order to measure his particular contribution. A detailed investigation of Fraina's ideas, as he moved closer to communism, will certainly shed additional light on the intellectual content of the movement. (He was, after all, in the forefront among that small group which helped to develop, and to publicize, the analytical and tactical weaponry of the American Communist Party. But a catalog and comparative analysis of the various components of that arsenal has been

35 Draper, Roots of American Communism, p. 57.
done elsewhere. Furthermore, the background information provided above is not intended to introduce another discussion of the formation of the Communist Party. It is designed, rather, to place Louis Fraina within the context of a unique phenomenon known as American Left Wing, and to indicate, by reference to his membership in the New Left Wing, the direction in which he was moving as well as the intellectual and political circle in which he moved. Thus having established several convenient points of reference, the exposition and analysis of Fraina's ideas which follows stands out in somewhat bolder relief.

36Draper, Roots of American Communism. See also Howe and Coser, Communist Party, a valuable but much less detailed and thorough work than Draper's—especially with respect to the formative years of the party. The Official Party history is William Z. Foster's History of the Communist Party of the United States (New York: International Publishers, 1952). It is so biased and inaccurate as to be useful only as a source of examples of partisan interpretation.
CHAPTER III

THE ROAD TO COMMUNISM

I

Louis Fraina's pre-World War I writings, regardless of the subject, were Marxist analyses laced, to a greater or lesser degree, with revolutionary exhortations. Often they were wordy, even tiresome. In some cases, their advocacy of revolutionary action was more implicit than explicit. All of them evidenced Fraina's profound ethical commitment to a humanism now associated with the "young Marx," author of the

1The phrase "Marxist analysis" is used here to signify Marx's strategies; i.e., the application of his central ideas to whatever questions are under consideration. These ideas concern how societies come to be, their structure and operation, how they change, and in what way social phenomena are significant (meaningful) according to Marx's conception of how things are known and evaluated in contrast to how they can and should be known and evaluated. A summary of these central ideas appears in C. Wright Mills, The Marxists (New York: Dell, 1962), pp. 81-95. Included in Mills' "inventory of Ideas" are the following: "1. The economic basis of a society determines its social structure as a whole, as well as the psychology of the people within it. . . . 2. The dynamic of historical change is the conflict between the forces of production and the relations of production. . . . 10. The wage-workers—a class-in-itself—will be transformed into the proletariat—a class-for-itself. . . ." Ibid., pp. 82, 83, 87. In other words, "Marxist analysis" is not being used in any special or esoteric sense.
Looking back on those early years, Lewis Corey recalled:

... I became active in the labor union and socialist movement. I read Marx and in time became a thorough Marxist; but Marx did not give me my socialism, he gave me its theory and its justification. ... Socialism was animated by a passionate humanitarianism, a fraternal democratic spirit, the aspiration to free the whole of man. The liberation of the workers as a class was merely a prelude to the liberation of all men as human beings. Socialism emphasized the dignity and freedom of the individual and the integrity of human personality; it meant to bring the values of liberal democracy and humanism to all the people.

These words were written in 1945, by a man, about himself, thirty-five years after the event he is describing. He had altered his politics considerably in the interim, had achieved what he himself might have referred to earlier as "bourgeois respectability." It might be tempting, then, to dismiss the account as an attempt to cast some youthful indiscretions in the most favorable light. On the contrary, a close reading of his published writings demonstrates the accuracy of that account. If anything, Corey seems to have erred in the opposite direction. As indicated more fully below, in seeking out some of the flaws in his previously

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2 T. B. Bottomore, trans. and ed., Karl Marx, Early Writings (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964), pp. 61-219. In his introduction, Bottomore explains that the "doctrine, which Marx calls 'humanism,' formulates the ideal of a community of men who are able to develop freely, and in harmony with each other, all their personal qualities. ... Whether he emphasizes more strongly the sphere of work, or that of leisure, Marx presents the same ideal conception of man as the fully developed individual who expresses his nature freely in his activity." Pp. ix-x.

This view of Marxist humanism is explained further in Alfred G. Meyer, Marxism: The Unity of Theory and Practice (Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 1963), pp. 74-76; and Erich Fromm, Marx's Concept of Man (New York: Frederick Ungar, 1961), pp. 1-33.

Corey, "Rediscovery," p. 5.
held views, Corey claimed that his early Marxism gave short shrift to democratic values and procedures. This does not appear to have been entirely true. Fraina made frequent positive references to the legitimacy and desirability of democracy; and below the surface of his vituperative attacks on parliamentarism, lay a bitterness, not toward the institution itself but toward the hypocrisy which characterized its abuse.

II

Fraina's humanism was radical; that is, it assumed the necessity of drastic social change prior to the emancipation of the masses of exploited humanity, and the construction of a new (socialist) society prior to the liberation of man's creative potential. His belief in the value of human life was amply expressed in his literary criticism. "Poetry is more interesting even than war," Fraina declared. "Each bends to its ends the finer and deeper things of life. But the one is transitory, the other permanent. War will one day cease; poetry begins and ends with man." In a critical review of poems by Frost, Oppenheim, Edgar Lee Masters and Vachel Lindsay, Fraina infuses a rather standard Marxist analysis with the excitement and vitality which characterized his peculiar brand of humanism. "Poetry," he says, "expresses a certain life and attitude toward life; and as these change, the form and

spirit of poetry change, should change."\(^5\) His acceptance of the Marxist analytical framework and his own agitational objectives, however, do not cloud his humanistic aesthetic sense. Politics and art may be related, but they are not identical. Fraina criticized Oppenheim's book of poems as "perhaps the least vital of the four, and that because it is so definitely radical, so overtly revolutionary. It loses itself in theories and attitudes, in criticism and affirmation. The essential touch of life, in all its simplicity and sincerity, eludes him. His poems are very fine in their lyrical and exultant quality. But they are wordy and literary. Oppenheim talks too much, and rebels too much."\(^6\)

Fraina then goes on to contrast the didacticism of Oppenheim's poems with the clearly non-political and unrevolutionary lines from Frost's "The Death of the Hired Man": "And nothing to look backward to with pride, / And nothing to look forward to with hope."

It is this simplicity of phrase, this starkly vivid expression of the tragedy of life, which is the power and the beauty of Robert Frost. Tragedy, and sympathy with tragic things, are the animating traits of his poetry, a sympathy

\(^5\)Ibid. This is even more clearly set out by Fraina in another essay where he writes: "Art reflects life: it is social and not individualistic. Therein lies the value of art and literature to the student of history. Vital art expresses the vital urge of its age. Aspirations continually change with changing social conditions; art changes in harmony therewith, not only in spirit but also in methods." "The social significance of Futurism," New Review I, no. 2 (December, 1913), p. 965.

He makes the same point, substantially, in his criticism of J. A. Macy's The Spirit of American Literature. Fraina objects to the book in that "the importance of the social factor is not sufficiently emphasized." (no title), New Review II, no. 4 (April, 1914), p. 245.

and tragedy which flow out of the humanness of his material.
(italics mine.)\(^7\)

Fraina appreciated the good poet's ability to cut through to the essential nature of life. To do so successfully, to reveal life as it is—harsh, lovely, tragic, ironic—is to create something beautiful.

There is this in common between Frost and Masters, that both deal with humanity locally and in the raw. But where Frost restricts himself largely to the feelings of sympathy and tragedy, Masters flashes life in all its varying aspects. Frost sees life poignantly, Masters ironically. And the irony is the irony of life itself, not the irony of his outlook upon life. Life is ironical. (italics his.)\(^8\)

Much the same point is made in Fraina's review of Gorky's *Tales of Two Countries*.\(^9\) The Russian tales, Fraina writes, "are propaganda, simplified and vitalized by Gorky's genius. Around these tales life surges and sings, but the singing and the surging is not in the tales. They are serious, morose, and a trifle dull."\(^10\) The Italian tales were written by "the new, the humanist" Gorky. "The tales of Italy give us a picture of a softened, mellowed Gorky, critical without being a propagandist, artistic as life itself in its simplicity. They sing their story into your imagination . . . making you one with the beauty and the power of it all."\(^11\) It is noteworthy that Fraina, the professional

\(^7\)Ibid.
\(^8\)Ibid.
\(^10\)Ibid.
\(^11\)Ibid.
propagandist, saw so clearly the damage which propaganda could do to art. It is likely that his ability to alternate between art and literary criticism and social analytical-agitational writing derived largely from an acute awareness of and commitment to humanistic values.\(^\text{12}\)

### III

Fraina’s view of the utility of psychology for socialist analysis was quite consistent with his humanism. In an article written in 1915, he repudiated the “doctrinaire Socialists [who] act on the belief that the movement has to deal chiefly if not solely with social forces, the

\(^{12}\)Fraina wrote two articles on the Futurist movement which illustrate yet another aspect of his critical views on art. In both, he was much more the social than the art critic. Having admitted that individual artists make unique contributions to the art of a particular age, Fraina differentiated between a specific work of art and an artistic movement. If a number of artists share a given “form of expression,” thus initiating an artistic movement, “it is because they express a cultural urge conditioned by the social milieu.” (“The Social Significance of Futurism,” p. 964.) So it was with Futurism. While Cubism was the expression of “capitalism dominant,” Futurism expressed “capitalism ascending.” “This accounts,” Fraina said, “for the Cubists having a definite technique, while the Futurists are vague and indefinite.” (Ibid., p. 965.) Fraina did not ignore the aesthetic dimension of Futurism entirely, although his position in this connection remained ambiguous. “Capitalism,” he said, “is brutal, raw, grotesque. It ostracizes harmony... Yet it forges disharmony and ugliness into Power, producing the Beauty of Power Incarnate.” (“Futurism in Italy,” The Mirror, XXII, no. 12 [May 16, 1913], p. 6.) According to Fraina, the Futurist art, displayed at the New York Armory Show in 1913, captured this “compelling spirit of Power,” thus accurately reflecting its source. Fraina could not, therefore, dispute the artistic validity of Futurism, inasmuch as it faithfully portrayed the essential nature of “Capitalism ascending.” At the same time, he was limited by his critical-analytic apparatus, and he was unable to make a clearly defined artistic judgment. To recognize the “Beauty of Power Incarnate” in art which reflects and expresses ugliness and inhumanity is certainly not to declare it good art or beautiful art. It is to say, rather, that it is a sociologically valid statement. But, one may well ask, is it art?
individual being of only slight importance.\(^\text{13}\) Illustrating his argument with several quotations, he invoked the "philosophic system of Marx [which] recognizes the immense power of psychological factors in history. Marx stressed the importance of human effort and the human factor. [But] . . . in spite of Marx's appreciation of the importance of the individual, Socialist propaganda has developed a rigid determinism which minimizes and often totally suppresses the psychological factor.\(^\text{14}\) Fraina saw psychology as a bridge between the social and economic analyses, normally employed by socialists, and the study of human behavior which could facilitate the mobilization of revolutionary forces in bringing down the old society while providing valid insights into the psychological problems of building the new.

The value of psychology is greater than the simple analysis of social problems. As social conditions are transformed, men are transformed; and the supreme utility of psychology lies in the analysis of transformations in the nature of man. Out of this analysis emerges the potential culture of the new society in which the chief concern of man is man himself. . . . Economics has given us a vision of the new society; psychology will give us a vision of the new humanity.\(^\text{15}\)

Thus, what began as an admonition, directed at socialists, to regard psychology as "indispensable for the adequate analysis of social problems," ended as an ethical pronouncement. Fraina's initial argument rested on the observation that "individual psychology and the psychology


\(^{14}\)\textit{Ibid.}, pp. 10-11.

\(^{15}\)\textit{Ibid.}, pp. 11-12.
of the mass become an independent factor in the social process as a whole, possessing laws and motives of their own: laws and motives which men dealing with human forces must comprehend if they desire success." (Italics his.) The final case for psychology was couched more in the form of an appeal than an argument, however; for the "value of psychology" was based at least as much on what it could add to our "vision of the new humanity" as on how it could contribute to the "success" of the revolution. The "positive" significance of psychology for socialism, then, lies in its emphasis on the importance of the individual and its capacity to serve as a guide in directing the new society toward satisfying the needs of the new man.

IV

Shortly after the death of Daniel De Leon, Fraina wrote a long critical analysis of De Leon's personal brand of socialism. Among the few negative criticisms, Fraina remarked that "men mattered little to him: ideas were the chief thing. This emphasis on ideas and neglect of men was a serious flaw in De Leon's make-up." He went on to complain that "De Leon was sometimes dishonest in his methods of attack. He was temperamentally a Jesuit, consistently acting on the principle that the end justifies means." Earlier in the article, Fraina had

16 Ibid., p. 11.
18 Ibid.
identified himself with an uncompromising revolutionary socialism, and
had praised De Leon for his refusal to "deal in reform." Overall, the
analysis was severe in tone and rather self-consciously strident (as if
to imply that maudlin eulogies had no place in the revolution). Thus,
the comments on De Leon's "neglect of men" and his deplorable Jesuitical
tactics may seem strangely out of place; all the more so, if one were
to reflect on Fraina's future role in the development of domestic and
international communism. Yet, they are not out of place if one sees
them as part of the larger pattern of Fraina's thought.

From the beginning of his political career, Fraina was a revolu­
tionary. The first written expressions of his discipleship under Daniel
De Leon appear in the SLP organ, The Daily People. There is little doubt
that the revolutionary socialism he espoused therein placed him solidly
within the Left Wing of the socialist movement. It is certainly true
that the term "revolution" held a number of meanings and served a variety
of purposes for those who, for one reason or another, chose to call them­selves socialists. Although some socialists might better have appro­priated a less volatile term (their conception of revolution being more
consistent with the idea of evolutionary, if total, change), Fraina
affirmed the necessity, if not the desirability, of violence. Cast
early in the role of revolutionary propagandist and tough-minded tactical
analyst, moreover, he was increasingly loath to admit any sentimentality
into his writings. This is clearly seen in his eloquent denigrations
of all forms of bourgeois institutions and values as well as his bitter
attacks on non-revolutionary or "dominant" socialists. But, like so
many other socialist propagandists, he did not apply the same standard
in his invocation of certain shibboleths; e.g., workers, mass action, class struggle, (or later) Rosa Luxemburg and Russian Revolution. These terms were often treated with an almost devotional respect. For Fraina, as for the others, these lapses are largely attributable to the widespread assumption that such references were evocative, moving reminders of the struggles which lay ahead, of the need for class solidarity, and so forth. This peculiar type of "inconsistency"—reminiscent of the calls to arms amidst high-powered social theory in The Communist Manifesto—is explainable in terms of the socialist writer's dual task of analysis and agitation. However, our inquiry into that particular inconsistency referred to in the previous paragraph cannot be advanced by seeing it simply as an expression of Fraina's attempt to perform such a task. His criticism of De Leon's "neglect of men" appears to clash with Fraina's own professional revolutionary's image. But Fraina, in that instance, was not worshiping at some revolutionary altar. Neither was he attempting to arouse his readers to action. He was simply expressing concern over the denial of human dignity implicit in De Leon's polemics.

The same spirit, so evident in his literary essays, was powerfully expressed in an article on the Catholic Jubilee. The celebration was intended to commemorate the edict of religious toleration issued by Emperor Constantine. Fraina began his attack on the Roman Church by claiming that "what the jubilee actually commemorates is not religious toleration, but the acquisition of political power by the Church and
immediate religious intolerance." The central thrust of the piece, however, was its apotheosis of Paganism. Having argued the duplicity and brutality of the Roman Church, Fraina condemned Christianity for its philosophy of humility and contempt for worldly things. He praised Paganism for its vitality and strength, its refusal to embrace suffering as a principle. And in a burst of inverted Klopstockian romanticism, Fraina concluded:

The Pagan spirit is abroad in the world to-day. Its manifestations are manifold. And no amount of Roman Catholic jubilees can stem the rising tide that shall carry the race into a world where religious and political tyrants are no more, and humanity shall live for the Joy of Life.

Fraina was twenty-one years old when he wrote this. He had been active in the socialist movement for four years and had written a considerable amount for various socialist and non-socialist publications; but he was young. As time went on, his writing became less florid; but the sentiments which underlay his appreciation of Paganism were firmly grounded and remained intact over the years. Fraina was attracted by every expression of the case for Life, against the counsels of despair. He was appalled by human oppression and constantly moved to action by the prospect of human liberation.

19 The Roman Catholic Jubilee," New Review, I, no. 18 (July, 1913), p. 657. Other religions did not escape his criticism, for later in the piece Fraina noted "a universal peculiarity: The Puritans, Calvin and Protestants generally fought and fled from religious intolerance only to establish a religious despotism of their own." P. 659.

20 Ibid., p. 661.
VI

In July, 1913, Fraina wrote a tightly argued analysis of Syndicalism and industrial unionism. He demonstrated an impressive grasp of Marxist analytical techniques, the related literature, and developments within the labor movement. In December of the same year, he published the second of his articles on Futurism, a heady critique in which he exhibited an almost fatal attraction for a variety of admittedly "decadent" art forms and movements. A brief look at the difference in the mood and content of these two pieces, written within six months of each other, reveals additional facets of Fraina's revolutionary socialist humanism. It also opens up another area in this consideration of Fraina's early basic ideas.

In the study of Futurism, he defended Byronic Romanticism, Strauss, Wagner, and "the New Art" against simplistic interpretations ("even among Socialists") which grouped all of these under the heading of "pathologic degeneracy." "Even if we assume that 'decadent' manifestations in art are pathologic," Fraina asked rhetorically, "does this account for their form of expression, for the movement itself? . . . 'Degenerate' artists never cease; if at a given moment they produce movements, it is because they express a cultural urge conditioned by the cultural milieu." Fraina did not go on, simply, to tie these decadent


22 "Futurism," New Review, (see supra, p. 55 n. 5); the first article appeared in May of the same year in a non-socialist magazine and was an only slightly different version of the piece published later by the New Review, (see supra, p. 57, n. 12).
artists and movements to degenerate bourgeois cultures, as one might expect. He could not admit, within his Marxist frame of reference, their validity; but neither could he deny their vitality. Thus, he explained (returning to the theme of Paganism):

The music of Richard Strauss is generally considered decadent. Yet Strauss' music expresses the Pagan spirit now transforming our moribund culture. That Strauss does not express the Greek spirit full-orbed is due to the Pagan spirit being immature and corrupted by contact with capitalist degeneracy --a bourgeois and not a proletarian manifestation. Whosoever mentions pathology in this connection must consider pathologic the vital, universal Pagan urge of our generation.23

The form of the art is condemnable, for it is "immature," "corrupted," or, as in the case of the Futurists, the reflection of a misplaced faith in the regenerative power of capitalism. The moving spirit of the art is laudable, however:

The [Futurists's] demand is for a new culture, based on a new civilization. It is a fight against mental sloth and corrosive romanticism, against the dolce far niente spirit. Action! Motion! Progress!24

If the Futurist movement is decadent, "imperialistic," and holds "no inspiration . . . for the socialist," it is because it is the "product of peculiar and transitory political and economic conditions" which ultimately led the Futurists to express "the material facts of capitalist necessity as abstract truth." But its ideological misdirectedness did not prevent Freina from expressing, however grudgingly, his fascination with its vitality, its contribution to the revolt against the past. The

23Ibid., p. 964.

24Ibid., pp. 967-68.
Italian Futurists are to be congratulated for their rejection of
residual feudal conditions and of the detestible practice of "feeding
on tourists and making cash out of the 'grandeur that was Rome'."

"Virile Italians are in revolt at this social degeneracy," he said.

Instead of worshipping the past and exploiting its grandeur, Futurists demand overthrow of the past, the forging ahead of industrial progress. Their slogan is, "Down with the grandeur of the past! Up with the grandeur of the present and the future!" Futurism is the apotheosis of industrialism.25

In the end, of course, Fraina finds abhorrent this artistic movement which is so "thoroughly and superbly capitalist . . . [and] which, while it expresses the power of capitalism, likewise expresses all that is evil and degrading." Had he been a less subtle or less humane thinker, Fraina might have limited the grounds of his final rejection of Futurism. Contained in his analysis are two arguments which could have served that end quite nicely, to the satisfaction of the most critical Marxist eye, without involving him in the rather sticky task of castigating Futurism while showing, at the same time, where it is both progressive and vital.

In the first place, "the aggressive, brutal power of . . . Futurism is identical with the power and audacity of capitalism, of our machine civilization," Fraina argued. As such, it clearly conflicts with the values of a projected society "in which the chief concern of man is man himself." Furthermore, as "Futurism . . . emphasizes all that is distinctively capitalist against that which is feudal or semi-feudal," its utility as a "revolutionary" doctrine is severely limited. Therefore, as

25Ibid., p. 966.
a Marxist, Fraina could not accept the conservatism inherent in Futurist art, its identification with capitalist means and ends. But as a humanist, he was compelled to recognize those elements in Futurism which advanced the cause of human freedom and sought to liberate men from the dead hand of the past.

For Fraina, there was, of course, no conflict between these two views. They were reconciled easily within the framework of his Marxist humanism. He had praised Frost and Gorky for their humanity—in spite of Frost's unrevolutionary posture and precisely because Gorky had chosen not to allow politics to intrude upon his direct and powerful renderings of human experience. So it was with his treatment of all the other subjects covered thus far in this chapter. Fraina had managed to acquire an outlook which combined humanist values and Marxist analytical techniques; and, thus, he did not find it necessary to sacrifice an appreciation for genuine, if non-revolutionary, expressions of humanity in order to demonstrate his fidelity to the revolution. In none of his early writings did he evidence the slightest lack of confidence that these two elements were altogether compatible. Had he been less confident, or had he seen himself as nothing more than a propagandist—aggressively defending the revolution against enemies from without and deviationists from within—it is unlikely that he would have proved so flexible a critic.

Many years later, Fraina (then Corey) was to discover, first, that his conception of humanism was incompatible with certain interpretations of Marxism (he ceased being a communist), and finally, that it was incompatible with Marxism itself (he renounced Marxism). During these early years, however, if any tensions did exist between his Marxism and his
humanism, they remained imperceptible. For the time being, humanism supplied Fraina with his standard of value and a point of departure for his vision of the good society. Marxism gave him a means of understanding contemporary society and a theory of revolution which promised to translate that vision into a reality. Fraina's writings on art, literature and history thus illustrate the manner in which the former served to inform the latter and testify to his versatility as a socialist critic. His writings on syndicalism and related topics show how Marxism was used as vehicle of humanism and suggest that if Fraina was not simply a socialist propagandist, he was certainly a professional socialist and revolutionary.

VII

Written in 1913, perhaps before Fraina was altogether aware of the extent to which his course had been set, "Syndicalism and Industrial Unionism" clearly marked the direction his career as a socialist activist was to take. It is representative of much of his work during these early years in that it is a technical analysis, directed primarily at a Left-Wing audience. It assumes a rather high degree of political sophistication on the part of its readers. Its objectives are theoretical and tactical. By bringing a correct theoretical understanding of the dynamics of economic and political organization to the socialist movement, Fraina seeks to guide it toward proper goals and actions. Furthermore, inasmuch as it deals with some of the central questions with which socialist theoreticians were concerned at the time, it not only provides a convenient starting point from which to begin tracing the development of Fraina's
ideas, but also helps to locate him with reference to some of the most prominent polemical guideposts within the intricate and often confusing patterns of socialist controversy.

The main problem in the article is stated as follows:

The healthy discussion of Unionism now on in the Socialist Movement has a decidedly regrettable feature—the virtually general rejection of Industrial Unionism, and the adoption of Syndicalism as a synonym for Revolutionary Unionism. It is regrettable because:

1. Theoretically, Syndicalist philosophy is opposed to the Socialist philosophy. Industrial Unionism is the application of Socialist principles to economic organization, whereas Syndicalism is Anarchy unionized.

2. Tactically, the structure and goal of Industrial Unionism and Syndicalism differ materially, a difference which I consider should be emphasized rather than minimized.

Deploring the attempted reconciliation of anarchism and socialism in syndicalism by one of his colleagues, Fraina points out that syndicalism, unlike socialism, is anti-political. Inspired by the Anarchists, the Syndicalists eschew political organization and action in favor of "violence, the General Strike, and Revolt." Thus, as "Industrial Unionism . . . was inspired by Socialism," and not by anarchism, any attempt to establish the identity of syndicalism and industrial unionism would be a mistake.

Faina quotes from the organ of the American Labor Union, widely acknowledged spokesman for industrial unionism:

The economic organization of the proletariat is the heart and soul of the Socialist Movement, of which the political party is simply the public expression at the ballot box. The purpose of Industrial Unionism is to organize the working class on approximately the same departments of

production and distribution as those which will obtain in the Co-operative Commonwealth [an often-used synonym for the future Socialist society].

He also notes that the I.W.W. recognized "political action as an indispensable weapon." thus distinguishing itself from European anarchistic syndicalism. It was particularly important to establish that he had no unalterable disagreement with the I.W.W. as the Left Wing supported the Wobblies, in spite of their often unorthodox behavior. Fraina was not alone, moreover, in his appreciation for the Wobblies' enthusiasm and spontaneity, characteristics which proved to be mixed blessings for many socialist organizers and tacticians in their dealings with the I.W.W.

Faina's claims for the legitimacy of political action do not rest merely on arguments from authority, however. He explains that the Syndicalists' deeply rooted anti-political bias is one among several manifestations of a basic theoretical misconception.

"Syndicalists and Industrial Unionists agree," he says, "in aiming at the overthrow of the State:

but while Industrial Unionism seeks to supplant political government with industrial government—Engels' 'administration of things'—Syndicalism has no use for government of any sort . . ., [holding] to the old Proudhonian idea of independent communal groups . . . [and to] craft autonomy as a theory on which it bases its conception of present organization and future society. . . . (Italics his.)

Contrary to syndicalist claims regarding "present organization," Fraina insists that decentralization does not figure into current trends of


28Ibid.
economic organization. He remains unconvinced by the few meager gestures in that direction on the part of certain giant railroad systems and oil corporations (under pressure of government anti-trust investigations). Furthermore, he goes on to generalize, "centralization is an economic necessity."

Civilization presupposes maximum production with minimum labor; this requires large-scale production; which, in turn, demands highly centralized production, consequently also Industrial Government.29

Faina sympathizes with the Syndicalists' aversion to the obnoxious consequences of centralization; but their analysis places the blame where it does not belong. "The evils in centralization flow from autocratic or oligarchic control, but are not inherent." By applying the socialist theory of American federalism, such evils can be avoided. That autocracy and oligarchy manifest themselves in present-day capitalist economic organization is no reason to believe that this must be so in a socialist industrial democracy.

Faithful to the Marxist theory of revolution, Faina condemns syndicalism for failing to tie its structure and its goals to inevitable developments in the relationship between the forces and relations of production. Technology demands centralization of productive resources. The structure of social relations, whether pre- or post-revolutionary, must reflect this development. Just as the bourgeoisie will experience their demise as they become superfluous to the productive process, so the proletariat, as they rise and overthrow the bourgeoisie, are no less

29 Ibid., p. 28.
bound by the requirements of technology. The functionally dominant proletariat must recognize that their dominance is dependent upon the logical development of industrial technology. The political and economic organization of society accommodates, and must continue to accommodate, to the demands of an advanced, centralized, industrial system. The syndicalist goal of "independent, communal groups, producing and exchanging commodities on an independent basis," without any centralized coordinating and regulating body, conflicts with this Marxian prescription.

Furthermore, in so far as syndicalism "opposes centralization, carrying the principle of federated autonomy to its logical limit," it is also opposed to the immediate aim of One Big Union. This is clearly wrong if the present task of socialists is, indeed, to "organize the working class on approximately the same departments as those which will obtain in the Co-operative Commonwealth." If the current organization of the workers must enable them to project themselves directly into the post-revolutionary "Co-operative Commonwealth," and if the structure of that future society, bound by the requirements of technology, must be centralized, then the pre-revolutionary union movement must accept the principle of centralization accordingly. Thus, the syndicalists' proposals for the current organization of the working class are seen to be as poorly conceived as their final goals. Fraina concedes that syndicalism might be temporarily appropriate in France, where capitalism has not yet fully developed. However, as "Industrial Unionism ... is the expression of the highest development of Capitalism ... why ... should [it] adopt the nomenclature, structure and tactics of Syndicalism,
a product of inferior Capitalism?"  \(^{30}\)

Although Syndicalist and Socialist share an antipathy toward the capitalist power structure, the Syndicalist's aversion to centralization and authority of any kind leads him, as has just been shown, into theoretical errors which the Socialist manages to avoid. And these theoretical errors, Fraina points out, have important immediate and practical implications. In the first place, centralized unions are needed to deal effectively with centralized industry. As mentioned earlier, the Syndicalists tried to show that a trend toward industrial decentralization could be discerned. If this was the case, they argued, then decentralized, autonomous unions were a suitable means of organizing the working class. Fraina replied that the "reorganization schemes submitted [by some giant corporations to the government] virtually maintain centralization, under a form, however, which would throttle anti-trust laws."  \(^{31}\) Centralized industrial unions, therefore, remain the proper organizational form for labor in its day-to-day struggles with capital. What is more, autonomous, revolutionary unions can [only] with difficulty act spontaneously and effectively, [especially] as . . . strikes assume gigantic proportions. Considered tactically, the structure of Industrial Unionism is [therefore] a necessity for the preliminary struggles of the Revolution.  \(^{32}\)

Faina was equally opposed to the Syndicalists' elevation of the use of violence to a "creative principle." Violence, he said, "is a

\(^{30}\)Ibid.

\(^{31}\)Ibid., p. 27.

\(^{32}\)Ibid., p. 28.
method, a matter of expediency." (Italics his.) "Industrial Unionism...
apotheosizes neither violence nor legality." It will employ
"either or both as conditions may demand." Consequently, unlike syndicalism, it avoids "slavery to means." In any case, "violence is in no sense creative."33

Fraina had no objections to the Syndicalists' intense anti-capitalism, and certainly none to the fact that they "arose primarily as a protest against [the] political inefficiency and cowardice" of the French non-revolutionary socialists. Rather, he objected to their not having progressed beyond impulsive protest. He abhorred their substitution of emotional response for rational analysis. It was not in order to praise him that Fraina quoted Sorel:

The Anarchists who became Syndicalists [Sorel remarked in Reflections on Violence] were men of true originality and did not apply theories which had been manufactured by cloistered philosophers. Above everything else, they taught the workers that it was not necessary to blush over violent actions.34

These attacks and admonitions were not altogether one-sided. Fraina was as eager for the Socialists to "modify their extremist pro-political attitude" as he was for the Anarchists and Syndicalists to "drop their hostility to political action." In this way, a fruitful unity of revolutionary forces could be achieved. However, the contribution of the Anarchists and Syndicalists to such a merger would be limited,

33 Ibid., p. 29. See also Fraina, "Book Review" (a review of Emile Pouget's Sabotage), New Review II, no. 2 (Feb., 1914), p. 114.

apparently, to the uncompromising revolutionary enthusiasm which they could bring to it. To his thinking, their lack of theoretical and tactical sophistication (that is, their ignorance of De Leonite-Marxist analytical categories) and their irrationalism (as in the passage by Sorel) was appalling. They were perfectly capable of doing the movement irreparable harm, in spite of their good intentions.

It is notable, then, that Fraina, and in this he typified the entire Left Wing, became increasingly identified with what came to be generally understood as the essential component of American Syndicalism: revolutionary unionism. Throughout 1913 and 1914, the debate over the relationship between socialism and syndicalism raged among Left Wing propagandists and theoreticians. Hardly an issue of the International Socialist Review or the New Review appeared without at least one article devoted to this question. In almost every case, the writer rejected syndicalism, usually because of the narrowness with which it perceived the problem of revolution. On the other hand, there was general agreement on the appropriateness of "Mass Action," a tactic, closely associated with revolutionary unionism, which had emerged out of syndicalist activity. The Left Wing was further confounded in that syndicalist groups were almost alone among labor organizations in their espousal and, albeit limited, practice of revolutionary unionism and mass action. The Left Wing was often put in the position of having to

35 David Herreshoff, American Disciples of Marx (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1967), pp. 148-66. Daniel De Leon had expounded the theory of revolutionary unionism some years earlier. Fraina and others helped to refine the theory, adding ingredients and shaping it to meet their needs.
equivocate: remaining ambivalent in their attitude toward the Syndicalists, or trying to show that they were doing some of the right things but for the wrong reasons. Thus, the Left Wing flirted with, scorned and borrowed from the Syndicalists; and, in spite of his attack on syndicalism, Fraina was eventually numbered among those who contributed most to its partial incorporation into the peculiar, if not altogether original, position of the Left Wing.

An inquiry into the nature of this apparent ambivalence is needed here. It will reveal much that is crucial to a thorough understanding of the character of the thought and actions of Fraina and the Left Wing during this period.

VIII

To begin with, one might consider the absence of a clear-cut and universally accepted definition of the term syndicalism. Yet, were such a definition available, considerable confusion would have resulted from the multiplicity of emphases and interpretations which would have been brought to bear on it. Syndicalism was, after all, an essentially European term being applied to an American phenomenon. The critics who applied it were European as well as American. They differed in their positions within and toward the international socialist movement. They differed, particularly, with respect to the vantage points from which they viewed and appraised the American movement.

To make matters worse, the I.W.W., with which most people (then as now) associated syndicalism, was racked with internal dissension. The Wobbly leaders were by no means agreed on questions of the union's
structure or objectives; and the factions were designated syndicalist, anarchist, anarcho-syndicalist, among other labels, by participants and outside observers who rarely agreed on the exact meaning of the designations.36 There were non- and anti-syndicalists in the I.W.W. There were the members of the Syndicalist League of North America who were organized outside of and were opposed to the I.W.W.37

In spite of the fact that Brissenden rarely mentions the term syndicalism, he subtitled his book on the I.W.W. "A Study of American Syndicalism." For him, and doubtless for many others, syndicalism meant the organization of the proletariat into militant and anti-reformist industrial unions. It was a convenient term, but it was not intended to suggest that the I.W.W. had any organizational or direct doctrinal ties to the French or any other of the European syndicalist movements. According to Brissenden, the I.W.W. was primarily, and most importantly, an American labor organization. It was not immune to European influences.


syndicalism among them; but it was, basically, the product of peculiarly American experiences. It had arrived at its own form of working-man’s organization, with attendant strategy and tactics. Nevertheless, it came to bear, in many respects, a significant resemblance to European syndicalism. Inevitably, both the similarities and the differences were employed or exploited according to the purposes and points of view of the commentators, academic or partisan political. Some confusion was bound to result.

It is quite possible that Fraina’s brief but highly critical article on syndicalism added to the confusion. Fraina’s writings were never intentionally obscure. On the contrary, he attempted to distinguish between European and American events and theories, in the manner of De Leon in order to avoid the misapplication of Marxism to the problems at hand. However, also in the manner of De Leon, he sometimes appears to have been more adept at displaying his Marxist analytical virtuosity than achieving

38 The main ideas of I.W.W.-ism—certainly the I.W.W.-ism of the first few years after 1905—were of American origin, not French, as is commonly supposed. These sentiments were brewing in France, it is true, in the early nineties, but they were brewing also in this country and the American brew was essentially different from the French. It was only after 1908 that the syndicalisme révolutionaire of France had any direct influence on the revolutionary industrial unionist movement here. Even then it was largely a matter of borrowing such phrases as sabotage, la grève perlée, etc.” Ibid., p. 53. Renshaw, on the other hand, viewed the I.W.W. within a larger context. The "Wobblies were more than an American phenomenon. Both in name and in fact, the I.W.W. was an international organization. It flourished at a time of great labor unrest, when anarchist and syndicalist ideas were making their most determined challenge to the conventional wisdom of the day. . . . The Wobblies made an impact not only in English speaking countries . . . but in Mexico and other South American states as well as Norway and Sweden.” Patrick Renshaw, The Wobblies: The Story of Syndicalism in the United States (Garden City: Doubleday, 1967), p. 25.
the sought-after clarification of issues. The deficiencies in his analysis of syndicalism are a case in point.

Fraina tried to show, it will be recalled, that syndicalism was the product of an "inferior Capitalism," and was, therefore, inappropriate to the highly developed capitalism of the United States. However, he neglected to consider the possibility of different sorts of syndicalism emerging in response to different sets of circumstances. For him, syndicalism, theory and movement, was an analytical category. As such, it should be applied, according to the terms of the definition, as any formula is applied. In point of fact, the term American syndicalism was, and is, most often employed to describe the actions and bases of actions of the I.W.W. Admittedly, Fraina was not alone among socialist critics in his desire for terminological purity. Nevertheless, as American syndicalism was generally understood to mean "I.W.W.-ism," Fraina's efforts to discredit syndicalism, as such, by relegating it to economically underdeveloped Europe, were largely misdirected.

He compounded this error by insufficiently distinguishing between the American expressions of anarchism and syndicalism. "Syndicalism," he says, "is Anarchy unionized." It is not necessary to pursue the theoretical implications of this statement. What is important is the fact that once again Fraina became trapped in the rigidity of his own argument. That is, by refusing to allow syndicalism a place in the vocabulary of the American labor movement, he naturally ignored its domestic peculiarities and, consequently, obscured an important dispute within the

I.W.W. between the centralizers and the decentralizers. In order to understand the nature of the dispute, it is necessary to distinguish between anarchism and syndicalism.

Fraína based much of his argument on the claim that syndicalist theories of a decentralized labor organization and a decentralized post-revolutionary society were unrealistic, while in America the decentralizers were not simply syndicalists. They were known as anarchists, anarcho-syndicalists, or the anarchist wing of the I.W.W. Their opponents within the organization were variously known as "plain" syndicalists, centralists, etc. There were, of course, those who considered the term syndicalist to be so important as to insist that anyone disagreeing with them, regardless of the position taken, was un-syndicalist and therefore a threat to the movement. For the most part, however, the above-mentioned distinction was employed by disputants and observers alike, and it proved to be a useful one. Many domestic syndicalists substantially agreed with Fraína's critique of decentralization. But Fraína continued to read syndicalist to mean decentralist and, therefore, appears to have disregarded the centralist tendencies within American syndicalism. In his eagerness to avoid the mistakes of those socialist critics who failed to Americanize their socialism, he narrowly applied his interpretation of European syndicalism to a distinctively American movement which also came to be regarded as syndicalist. His article could be seen as having the

40Brissenden, The I.W.W., p. 308.

41Ibid., pp. 299-319; see also Renshaw, The Wobblies, pp. 159-84.
rather curious objective of attempting to divest American syndicalism of its syndicalism.

It is highly unlikely that Fraina would have been unable to counter these criticisms with reasonable success through further elaboration or clarification of his text. The flaws in his argument are not of major proportions. It could be argued, moreover, that these flaws are important not so much because they prove their author wrong, but because of what they tell by indirection about the man and the movement. Nevertheless, one need not demean the subject matter by minimizing its shortcomings, in order to point out that it may have significance beyond its truth or falsity. The remainder of the discussion of Fraina, syndicalism and the Left Wing will, hopefully, bear this out. However, the problem of achieving the proper perspective on the relationship between content and context will continue to play a major role in this study. Therefore, it may be helpful to preface this part of the discussion with some additional remarks on the question of perspective.

It is possible to achieve an acceptable balance between textual and socio-historical analysis, and it is not necessary to finally resolve "Mannheim's paradox" in order to do so. Textual analysis presents the greatest difficulties when the analyst subjects his text to tests for

ultimate validity. All of the problems related to epistemology and the 
sociology of knowledge are brought into play. If, however, as in this 
study, questions of ultimate validity are replaced by questions of rela­
tive significance, those problems may be avoided. Comments on or criti­
cisms of the text are significant, then, with reference to something; 
and, as the referent is defined in each case, no claims are being made 
beyond this limited significance. Thus, Fraina's writings on syndi­
calism are to be seen as significant with reference to 1) their contri­
bution to political theory; 2) the overall development of his thought; 
3) their influence on the course of radical politics; 4) their in­
fluence on radical thought; 5) the influence of other thinkers on 
Fraina; 6) their ability to provide insights into the nature of the 
context in which they were conceived.

To ignore the interdependency of all these referents would con­
stitute a distortion of the material. Yet, to fuse these points of 
reference so as to create a unified and immediately perceivable picture 
of reality would require the transformation of scholarship into art. 
Just as questions of the relative significance of Fraina's statements 
have been substituted for the question of their ultimate validity, so 
a kaleidoscopic juxtaposition of areas of significance must serve in­
stead of a direct apprehension of the subject's total reality.

This is not to say that some comments or criticisms are not to be 
regarded as more important than others. But it is just as necessary to 
define these priorities as it is to delineate the referents of signifi­
cance. The content of Fraina's writings is herein considered more im­
portant than its context. The ultimate defense of such a choice of
emphasis could rest simply on the principle of humanistic scholarship. It is important because it represents the life work of a man who tried to understand his environment and act accordingly. Then, of course, Fraina contributed to man's store of political knowledge. A study of his writings needs no further justification. With this as the focus of such a study, all of the other above-mentioned categories of analysis (or referents) can be used to facilitate the clarification of meaning. That is, as meaning, broadly conceived, connotes significance (meaningfulness, or meaning with reference to something), we are once again directed to explore the subject with reference to specified areas of concern. And we are not asserting thereby, as indicated previously, that the meaning conveyed in this manner contains either a final verdict on the validity of the material or an organically unified view of it. Understanding is cumulatively comprehensive and evaluation is relative. Thus, as referents and priorities are made explicit, rather than submerged in implicit assumptions, the discussion can move easily and comprehensibly from content to context and back.

With this perspective in mind, one may find in Fraina's analysis a prime illustration of the mood and style of a typical member of the pre-war Left Wing. It is a curious blend of penetrating Marxist analysis and self-consciously defensive polemic. It suggests, first, the extent to which Left Wingers disagreed among themselves on subtle points of tactics as well as theory. It is a matter of speculation whether they were more susceptible to this than other factions within the socialist and labor movements. Fraina's analysis also serves to exemplify the intense dissatisfaction which the Left Wing felt toward
the current status of those movements. The Left Wing was alienated from the dominant strand of labor unionism: A.F. of L. craft unionism. They fought bitterly against the emphasis on electoral politics and reformism which they found in the SPA. Yet, they were too disciplined to approve of the free-wheeling activities of the anarchists and anarcho-syndicalists in the I.W.W. They saw too clearly the revolutionary possibilities in the crises of contemporary society. At the same time, they were frustrated in the realization that although they alone held the key to adequate preparations for the revolution, they were isolated from the most highly organized elements within the socialist and labor movements, and were, therefore, largely restricted to the role of critics or propagandists.43

One might well consider whether America's inhospitality to revolutionary aspirations was responsible for socialist sectarianism. Did the absence and continued unlikelihood of a revolution provide the opportunity and the impetus for these seemingly endless refinements in the protracted debates over theory, strategy and tactics? Or, did the protestors' penchant for controversy keep the movement so disorganized as to prevent a successful revolution? It would seem that both questions could be answered in the affirmative, for they describe what were apparently mutually reinforcing, rather than mutually exclusive, conditions. More to the point, however, is the fact that the questions raised in these debates and the answers and arguments provided took the form they did. Thus far, Fraina's and the Left Wing's appropriation

and adaptation of certain syndicalist concepts and practices have been discussed in terms of contradiction, ambivalence, confusion and error. Doubtless, these things figured into the development of the Left Wing's relationship with syndicalism and the emergence of a unique Left Wing position. At the same time, both the process and the position made considerable sense. The theoretical and tactical analyses were often quite cogent; the steps by which they were arrived at by no means appear to have been bizarre or even unreasonable responses to the demands then being made on militant critics of American society.

Fraina and his colleagues on the Left shared a hostility to capitalism, a desire for the redistribution of property and power, and, consequently, for the liberation of the oppressed. They shared a Marxist analytical framework, although many of its components were open to interpretation. Mainly, they shared a belief in the necessity of revolutionary change. They did not agree, however, on the meaning of revolution; and just as they argued the necessity of revolution, persuasively with their allies in the labor movement and acrimoniously with their enemies in the capitalist camp, so they argued the subtle theoretical and tactical implications of revolution among themselves.

It is not unreasonable that this should have been so. The revolution, no matter how broadly conceived, is the immediate task of the revolutionary. It is the first order of business. The Marxist revolutionary assumes that the revolution should and, eventually, will occur; and it is his responsibility to make it happen as soon as possible. It is equally his responsibility to prevent premature revolutionary gestures. He is constantly at work evaluating, guiding and manipulating
available revolutionary forces. The importance of debate on the various
daspects of revolution among those who have thus assumed responsibility
for its success cannot, then, be overestimated. Marxist revolution­
aries are committed, moreover, to the unity and coherence of the theory
underlying their ideas concerning revolution. They are extremely sensi­
tive to the relationship between theory and practice. Because of the
interdependence of all parts of the theory, and this intimate relation­
ship between theory and practice, subtle variations in revolutionary
tactics may well have, or seem to have, major theoretical as well as
practical implications.

Seen in this light, the Left Wing’s response to syndicalism was
not merely a case of understandable though ultimately condemnable short­
sightedness. Neither was it simply an exercise in analytical pyro­
technics. They moved through a period when hope and despair constantly
collided, when revolution, reform, accommodation, and regression were
generally conceded to be equal possibilities. It was in such an en­
vironment that they sought to refine their theory and maintain the
relevance of their tactics, thus fulfilling their responsibilities as
Marxist revolutionaries. It was in such an atmosphere that many Left
Wingers pursued the subtle variations in the principles of mass action
and revolutionary unionism which led them to develop what we now see as
having been a changing but only superficially ambivalent or contradic­
tory relationship with syndicalism.

If mass action and revolutionary unionism constituted the primary
links between Syndicalism and Left Wing Socialism, it was mass action in
particular which served alternately to widen and narrow the gap between
them. Left Wing theoreticians subjected mass action to continual re-
interpretation. Thus we are provided with a running account of the
evolution both of that relationship and the character of the Left's
critique. As we trace the course of these interpretations, we also
become aware of the movement of the Left Wing toward a position of in-
creasing militancy, away from existing socialist parties and ever
closer to communism.

As noted earlier, mass action figured prominently in the Left Wing
debates over syndicalism during 1913-1914. It was to receive even more
attention, and acquire a slightly different meaning, as it became the
watchword of the Left Wing in 1917 and 1918. Nevertheless, the term
mass action was never to be thoroughly explicated. No single meaning
was ever to be agreed upon by all its proponents, although a prelimi-
nary working definition was provided by Anton Pannekoek in 1912:

When we speak of mass-action we mean an extra-parliamentary
political act of the organized working class, by which it
operates directly and not through the medium of political
delegates. The organized labor fights in which the masses
have hitherto engaged, as soon as they come to have political
significance, develop into political mass-action. In the
question of mass-action there is, therefore, also involved
simply a broadening of the field of action of the proletarian
organization.44

Pannekoek did not advocate promoting mass action at the expense of
all other types of revolutionary or pre-revolutionary activities. Main-
ly, it was seen as a counterweight to the tendency among some socialist

44Anton Pannekoek (no title given), Neue Zeit, November 22, 1912;
quoted in Austin Lewis, "Syndicalism and Mass Action," New Review I,
no. 17 (June, 1913), p. 568.
parties to become too heavily committed to "pure and simple parliamentarism." The parliamentarists, so Pannekoek and like-minded Left Wingers claimed, believed that the capitalist system could be overthrown simply by being voted out of power. This left the unions the task of winning immediate reforms, while the really important work was going on at the electoral level. In this respect, the German Social Democrats were seen as the worst sinners; and the American as well as all other genuinely revolutionary socialists should seek to avoid the path of German socialism at all costs. Otherwise the revolutionary struggle would be prolonged unnecessarily and the strength and ardor of the working class needlessly sapped. Thus, these Left Wingers sought to alter the relationship between socialist political parties and the unions, urging employment of mass action while continuing to press for electoral victories.

The real revolutionary significance of parliamentarism [Pannekoek wrote] consists in the fact that it constantly increases the power of the proletariat—namely, its class consciousness, its knowledge, its unity—and hence creates the conditions prerequisite to the revolution... The labor union has just as great a revolutionary significance as the political party, for it contributes just as much to the social power of the proletariat. (Italics his.)

He regarded the labor union as "the great school of organization and discipline." But this "only holds true where the labor union is actually fighting against the capitalists, and not where, as in the old conservative trade unionism, peaceable agreements are the goal, and

harmony between capital and labor is the guiding rule of a narrow trade egoism. What is being called for, then, is a disciplined mass action, consciously tied in with the larger revolutionary movement.

Furthermore, since "the unions have great revolutionary value for the overthrow of the political supremacy of the capitalists," Pannekoek admitted, with reservations, that syndicalism should be considered a vital force. Syndicalism, he explained:

derides pure and simple parliamentarism, which believes itself capable of effecting the social revolution by means of the ballot. Every man can understand that the yoke which has burdened humanity for thousands of years cannot be so easily and painlessly cast off. In order for the workers to emancipate themselves they must first become entirely new men, capable of conquering the hard-fought battles, in which they stake their very existence. Hence the activity of the labor unions is a sort of revolutionary gymnastics, the exercise of power and capabilities which are necessary to the revolution. Syndicalism emphasizes the fact that the workers themselves must act, that only the direct struggle against the capitalists, only the direct action of the workers themselves can make them strong and capable of the conquest of power. The defect of Syndicalism consists in this that it regards the entire parliamentary action of the Socialist party as no more than pure and simple parliamentarism. (Italics mine.)

To moderate Left Wingers like Pannekoek, this was a significant defect. In their view, the role of the Socialist party should be that of "director of the revolution." That is, the party should continue its parliamentary activities; but, more important, it should concentrate on propagandizing the labor unions, directing their tactics where possible

46 Ibid., p. 623.
and countering conservative trade unionism where necessary. Under no circumstances should the party inhibit the union's special function: the struggle for better working conditions. Just as the unions must allow the Socialist Party to advance the revolution through parliamentary work, so the party must realize that by organizing the workers and leading them in the fight for immediate gains, the unions are performing an essential preparatory task.

The party, then, should not attempt to transform the unions into revolutionary organizations, designed to take power from the capitalists. To the extent that the unions were so directed and organized, they would inhibit the revolution. It was their responsibility to lead the unorganized and unschooled workers from trade unionism to revolution. By setting out to become revolutionary instruments at the outset, the unions would fail in their function of attracting and educating the underdeveloped masses. Premature revolutionary activity on the part of the unions could only result in failure, which would aid the cause of the capitalists by further discouraging the unorganized masses from taking their first step. In that the Syndicalists saw the unions as the sole component of the revolution, they were in error. In that the party normally engaged in dual unionism, attempting to establish self-consciously revolutionary unions, it was in error.

It is only when they neglect their own duty, when misled by bourgeois dreams of harmony, they avoid the struggle, so that the workers suffer constant defeats due to false union tactics and are thrust down ever lower, it is only then that [there] can be good grounds for replacing the old unions by better organizations.

48 Ibid., p. 628.
Thus, it was proper that the AFL should be opposed; but, normally, labor organizations should not be destroyed by splits. Rather, they should, with the help of the Socialist Party, be "broadened into a general class solidarity." Syndicalism, on the other hand, proposes to attract the workers initially by offering them revolutionary programs; and this, as Pannekoek pointed out:

> presupposes in the workers an intelligence and an insight which can only be the result of a prolonged participation in the class struggle; hence, its watchwords repel rather than attract the undeveloped masses.⁴⁹

Like Pannekoek, Austin Lewis was a Left Winger and a frequent contributor to the New Review. Also like Pannekoek, Lewis felt that the Socialist Party, as it was then constituted, was incapable of mobilizing the proletariat. "To contemplate the Socialist Party, with its diverse views and its mutually antagonistic philosophies, carrying out a successful piece of mass organization or mass action is to indulge in vain and idle speculation," he wrote.⁵⁰ Lewis identified himself with the "revolutionary Socialist wing of the labor movement," espoused industrial unionism, and enthusiastically promoted mass action. He also supported the view that the advocacy of mass action was not necessarily synonymous with abandoning political action altogether. Yet, by expanding the concept of the political, he carried the Left Wing critique a step further:

> Real mass action is outside the sphere of parliamentary action. It has nothing to do with the election of men to political

⁴⁹ ibid., p. 626.

positions and yet it is in the highest degree political.

The psychology of the workers, produced by the conditions of employment, becomes expressed in mass action directed towards a concrete and determined economic end. This action must of necessity result in political expression or, as the phrase runs, in a political reflex of the actual economic fact.\textsuperscript{51}

This "political reflex" takes the form of economic action because the worker has achieved a new and higher level of awareness.

The modern industrial proletarian seldom troubles his head about government. The real Marxian idea of the government as being the mirror of the actual power, the economic and industrial control, has completely entered into his consciousness and he knows that he has nothing to do with government until he has possession of the material power which lies at the base of all government.\textsuperscript{52}

Criticizing Kautsky's refusal to accept mass action as a legitimate and desirable form of revolutionary action, Lewis explained that, once the masses have come to understand this,

the field of industrial conflict is transferred at once from the streets, where it has no place, to the shop, the natural and unavoidable battlefield. Hence the fact that modern mass-action is neither tumultuous nor inclined to anti-governmental outbreaks.\textsuperscript{53}

"Mass action is not," Lewis insisted, "'action of the streets' [as Kautsky had claimed it was], nor is it the turbulence of political mobs directed against established government and marked by rioting. It is the action of the organized working class."\textsuperscript{54} Thus new economic

\textsuperscript{51}\textit{Ibid.}

\textsuperscript{52}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 576.

\textsuperscript{53}\textit{Ibid.}

\textsuperscript{54}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 579.
conditions have produced a new "psychology" among the proletariat which, in turn, is expressed as a "political reflex" directed at the heart of the capitalist power structure: the productive process.

While Lewis's attitude toward socialist parliamentarism was considerably less conciliatory than Pannekoek's, his feelings toward syndicalism were friendlier. This in spite of Lewis's having cited Pannekoek as an authority in building his case for mass action and revolutionary socialism. Lewis applauded the successes of British and French proletarians who "showed the world an example of solidarity and daring militancy beyond all former experience."55 Their mass actions during the strikes of 1912 and 1913 were contrasted to the dismal failures of "the great organizations," referring primarily to the German and Austrian trade unions. For Lewis, the spontaneous and dramatic actions of the French Syndicalists and British mining and transportation workers reflected a new level of consciousness among the workers, of which these mass actions were the expression.

Between 1913 and 1915, there was a discernable shift in emphasis in Fraina's writings. He moved from Pannekoek's qualified criticism of electoral politics and parliamentarism closer to Lewis's assertion that henceforth politics should be regarded as meaningful only as "political reflexes to economic facts." Fraina did not accept Lewis's timetable, however. That is, Fraina recognized Lewis's ideas as having potential applicability, but saw that the time was not quite ripe for

55 Ibid., p. 572.
them. This is to be seen most clearly in the critique of De Leon's work which Fraina wrote in 1914. Here, Fraina evidences his total commitment to revolutionary industrial unionism, but argues that the final stage of the revolution has not yet been reached. Although he is now more sympathetic to syndicalist-type mass actions and less tolerant of the self-seeking activities of socialist parties than he was the previous year, he is more than ever aware of the economic developments which must take place before the revolution can be fully realized.

Fraina had quit De Leon's SLP in 1914, shortly before he had written the article on De Leon and almost a year after the publication of his piece on syndicalism. Recalling what he had written in the syndicalism article, it seems that Fraina was projecting an awareness of his own earlier deficiencies onto De Leon and the SLP. In 1913, still a member of the SLP, Fraina agreed with Pannekoek that the function of a socialist party was to act as "director of the revolution." His comments on De Leon and the SLP show just where and how his views had changed in the interim.

Fraina began by praising De Leon as the "first American Socialist to insist that the American movement adapt itself to the conditions of American life . . . in a spirit dictated by Marxism, that is, [by]


57 One of Fraina's comments is particularly notable in this respect: "[The SLP's] propaganda was couched in abstract formulas; just as its sectarian spirit developed a sort of sub-conscious idea that revolutionary activity consisted in enunciating formulas. This sectarian spirit produced dogmas, intemperate assertions, and a general tendency toward caricature-ideas and caricature action. . . ." Ibid., p. 398.
economic and political necessity." To Americanize itself meant to reject the tactics of German Social Democracy and emphasize the class struggle and the need for revolutionary unionism. Clearly revealing his new outlook, Fraina then reported that during

the S.T. & L.A. [De Leon's Socialist Trade & Labor Alliance] period, De Leon's conception of revolutionary unionism was pro-political. He still had the old Socialist theory that the political movement must dominate the unions, as in Germany. (Later De Leon reversed himself [Fraina continued] and correctly conceived the political movement as pro-industrial; that is to say, revolutionary unionism must dominate the political movement.) At this period De Leon projected revolutionary unionism as an auxiliary of the political party... (Italics mine.)

Having matured, De Leon also "correctly" conceived of the political movement as "not a political party alone" but, rather, as "the political phase of the revolutionary movement as a whole." This notion of "the revolutionary movement as a whole," the revolution as process, was to receive increasing attention in Fraina's writings in the years after his departure from the SLP and before his rejoining the SPA. During this time, he was not concerned with justifying the leadership functions of the party. Quite the contrary, he stressed the interrelationship of the parts within the movement, and, in fact, relegated the party to a subordinate role.

There is certainly evidence of an altered tone in Fraina's remark that "De Leon's espousal of Industrial Unionism and the I.W.W., and his development of an industrialist philosophy of action, constitute his

58 Ibid., p. 391
59 Ibid., p. 393.
60 Ibid., p. 394.
crowning contribution to American Socialism." It was De Leon's "industrialist philosophy" which Fraina found praiseworthy, not his leadership of the party. Fraina had always been more Marxian than Lassallean, more industrial than political, in his general orientation. At this stage of his development, however, the balance was weighted even more heavily in favor of an industrial outlook. He did not feel, like Lewis, that the time had come for industrial unions to rise up in revolt; but neither did he feel that the party was justified in dominating the revolutionary movement. Increased industrial activity was necessary to prepare adequately for the revolution. In the meantime, the party should serve the purposes of industrial unions. Thus, although Fraina applauded De Leon for having "correctly conceived the political movement as pro-industrial," he complained that De Leon's efforts to build a disciplined revolutionary party were premature. His earlier criticism of syndicalist anti-political biases suggested that the independent role of the socialist political party was being underrated. Now, he felt that if an effective revolutionary party was to be built, it would have to be broadly based, rising on a foundation of disciplined industrial unions. The party's first responsibility was the construction of that foundation:

De Leon's uncompromising conception of the revolutionary movement was an obstacle to a large party being organized. The many non-proletarian economic groups in revolt slowly gravitating toward Socialism, and the immaturity of the proletariat, have made impossible as yet a revolutionary party as conceived by De Leon. Accordingly, revolutionary

61 Ibid.
ideas at this stage are potent only within a large and broad movement, as an educational force; not as the basis of an independent movement. (Italics his.)

The specific reasons for his regarding the counsels of both Lewis and De Leon as premature were spelled out in detail six months later in an important article which Fraina wrote for the New Review. It was important for several reasons. First, it presents a clear statement of Fraina's views on the current status of capitalist economic, social and political development (or underdevelopment). Secondly, it contains a lengthy discussion of nationalism. Then, it explains the implications of these conditions for, as the title indicates, "The Future of Socialism." Finally, it provides a mirror image of the book Fraina was to write three years later. The book attempts to show that all of the conditions necessary for revolution, which the article argued did not obtain in 1915, are present in 1918. In 1915, however, Fraina was, if optimistic, still cautious.

"The Great War," Fraina admitted, "is making for Socialism in the sense that its consequences mean a new and better basis for the Socialist struggle against Capitalism. The war has unloosed ... forces which are bound to revolutionize bourgeois society ... and this should mean Socialist progress." (Italics his.) At the same time, "we shall see a new era of Capitalist development, of industrial expansion—not 'the collapse of the profit system'; the rise of a new and mightier

62 Ibid.

Capitalism. . . .

Fraina went on to explain that chief among the aspects of Capitalism neglected by Socialists are its economic elasticity, the new vigor yielded Capitalism by the tremendous untapped resources of pre-capitalistic countries. . . .

Under the circumstances, the particular brand of revolutionary zealousness of men such as Lewis and De Leon would have to be curbed for the time being. ("Marx repeatedly called upon Socialists to assist the political and economic development of Capitalism. . . .")

The war would speed the economic development of all European nations. ("An industrialized Russia," Fraina predicted, "with Capitalism making gigantic progress, will achieve what the social-revolutionary martyrs did not. . . .")

With this clearing out of pre-capitalistic conditions, and the emergence of a higher and more definite Capitalism in Europe and other sections of the world, class groupings and class antagonisms become simplified and intensified; and clarity of social divisions makes easier the task of revolutionary Socialism. . . . All of which means a clear-cut revolutionary movement and Socialist progress, providing Socialists do not assume fatalistically that the process will go on . . . of itself to the desired end.

On the contrary, Fraina insisted that socialists would have to adapt their theory and tactics to these new conditions. Unfortunately, they were being hampered by the perpetuation of a number of common "illusions."

Closely related to the illusion of capitalism's imminent collapse, was

64 Ibid., p. 8.
65 Ibid., p. 9.
66 Ibid., p. 8.
67 Ibid., p. 9.
the "pervasive . . . concept that proletarian interests are now determinant in social progress." Fraina assured his readers that they are not, although they would in time become, dominant. Non-proletarian, bourgeois, republican interests were still dominant; and the groups with which these interests were identified had separate tasks to perform.

Failure to make these distinctions had already led German Social Democracy to abandon its proper socialist revolutionary commitments. It had "identified non-proletarian [reformist] interests with the interests of the proletariat itself," and was subsequently involved almost entirely in "finishing the work left undone by the bourgeois revolution." The party became bourgeoisified: reformist, nationalistic, increasingly committed to working within the existing political structure. Furthermore, as it continued to use socialist rhetoric, "many people who desired reform were frightened away by the Socialist phrases; a clear-cut bourgeois Republican movement would have accomplished the reforms infinitely easier." However, as the party came to include these non-proletarian elements, "being more dominant, [they] assumed dominance in the . . . movement." Ultimately, the party could claim success neither in the area of bourgeois reform nor in adequately preparing the proletariat for revolution.

Another notion is here labeled an illusion which, three years later, will be considered fact: "the illusion that Capitalism is actually international." It is an illusion to conceive now of fully-developed

68 Ibid., pp. 9-10.
69 Ibid., p. 11.
Capitalism. Capitalism still has to complete its cycle of development.

...70 Apparently, for capitalism to be fully developed, it would have to become international; but Fraina does not specify what international capitalism would entail. We can infer from his comments on nationalism that it would follow after and as a consequence of the growth of state capitalism and state socialism, both of which would be intensely nationalistic. Quoting from William English Walling, Fraina explains that

when private industrial enterprise and competition have become insignificant, and the privileged classes include a majority of the population, a large part of the energies of the nation will be thrown into the competition of the governmental industries with those of other nations. There will be competition of nations instead of competition of individuals.71

The intensification of this process will produce on an international scale what has already occurred domestically, signalling the end of capitalism's "cycle of development" and the beginning of an all-out

70Ibid., p. 14.
71Ibid. Fraina cites only "William English Walling, Progressivism and After, p. 293." A graduate of the University of Chicago and a man of independent means, Walling (b.1877; d. 1936) devoted his life to the labor movement. He worked as a factory inspector in Illinois and then at the University Settlement in New York City. Along with Jane Addams and others, he founded the National Women's Trade Union League in 1903. He was also instrumental in founding the NAACP. In 1910, Walling joined and became very active in the Socialist Party, abandoning his earlier reformism in favor of the radicalism of the party's Left Wing. Later, he broke with the party over its anti-war position; and, disillusioned with the results of the Bolshevik Revolution, he returned to his former reformism. Throughout, he worked with the AFL. In addition to his writing for various journals, he wrote six books, including the anti-Soviet Out of Their Mouths (1921) on which he collaborated with Samuel Gompers. Progressivism and After was published in 1914.
socialist revolutionary offensive. Fraina mentions neither imperialism nor Lenin at this juncture. We must await the publication of Revolutionary Socialism for a detailed analysis of international capitalism. The fact that, at this point, he is almost exclusively concerned with the impending growth of nationalism, provides a most accurate index of Fraina's current attitude toward the prospects for revolution.\textsuperscript{72}

This is not to say that Fraina regarded the presence of nationalism as an indication of immature capitalism, or that nationalism would disappear when capitalism became truly international. Rather, he saw it as a force in the social process which would act as a catalyst in the development of national capitalism and also serve to intensify the antagonisms between capitalistic nations, thus helping to bring about and remaining a characteristic of international capitalism. Fraina's discussion of the nature and significance of nationalism deserves to be quoted at length. It shows how he conceived of the intimate relationship between nationalism and capitalism. It provides the necessary groundwork for his remarks on the implications of nationalism for socialism. It is also an interesting example of how Fraina was able to handle an obviously potent but non-economic factor of social change within the framework of Marxian economic analysis.

The history of Western Europe since the close of the Middle Ages is intimately identified with the history of Nationalism.

\textsuperscript{72} Fraina does claim that "Socialism must prepare itself for the revolutionary task of the \textit{immediate} future." He qualified "immediate," however, by predicting that the "new nationalist developments"—so necessary in preparing capitalism for its demise—"will perform their functions \ldots \textit{within our own generation}." (Italics mine.) "The Future of Socialism," p. 15.
Ascending Capitalism develops the nation-state, which plays a vital part in the overthrow of feudalism and the establishment of Capitalism. Ascending Capitalism requires freedom of trade within as large a territorial unit as possible, national markets exclusively for national capital, a common system of coinage, weights and measures, a strong central government to protect capital, the development of a sentiment of solidarity among the people of a particular national group. The nation-state develops the illusion of common interests among its people, awakens a sense of solidarity, produces national institutions and national culture, and provides the necessary conditions for Capitalist progress. The mercantile city-state evolves into the Nation-State. [However] the unit of the Nation-State is determined racially, not economically; Capitalism not being powerful enough to make the unit economic, yet sufficiently powerful to arouse and transform the sense of racial solidarity into national unity. The sense of racial solidarity alone does not create national unity—economic interests assume a racial character; in spite of an intense racial consciousness, Turkey never became a real nation because there was no ascending Capitalism in Turkey to provide the necessary economic stimulus. As a consequence, Turkey decayed, as Italy decayed when the City-States that were creating a necessity and sentiment for national unity in the thirteenth century waned in power with the shifting of the center of commercial gravity to northwestern Europe. While an expression of Capitalist development, Nationalism may become an independent factor in the social process, much more dynamic and dominating in a particular situation than its economic basis.  

Applying this analysis first to the Balkans, Fraina explains that the assertion of Nationalism [by the Balkan states] meant a struggle of liberty against the feudal tyranny of Turkey and Austria-Hungary. Servia, Bulgaria, Rumania sought to include within their national states territory and people still under foreign domination; this would have meant greater freedom of trade and larger national markets—an impetus to ascending Capitalism.

"Still partly feudal and ... agricultural, Italy," he goes on.

72 Ibid., pp. 11-12.
73 Ibid., p. 12.
is economically divided against itself, without organic economic and national cohesion; North and South are economically hostile, and each seeks the control of the government. This antagonism retards economic growth—much as the antagonism between North and South prior to the American Civil War retarded our own economic growth.\textsuperscript{74}

There is some irony in his observation that "Nationalism has a tremendous role to play in Russia."

Indications are many that one of the war's consequences in Russia is a new Nationalism, not temporary and jingoistic, but the expression of the interests of the Russian bourgeoisie.\textsuperscript{75}

Fraina makes related observations concerning Latin America, Egypt, India, and Persia, and concludes by showing how nationalism will help speed the growth of China and Mexico.

The problems of China and Mexico are identical, national: creating a free peasantry, shaking off the clutch of foreign Capitalism, developing a homogeneous national bourgeois class which shall establish bourgeois institutions and bourgeois democracy; that is, national Capitalism.\textsuperscript{76}

The proper socialist response to these conditions is summarized succinctly:

A new series of nationalist developments being inevitable in the social process, Socialism cannot set itself in opposition. But we must assume no responsibility for [them]. Nationalism will perform its function without us. We must concern ourselves with other and more revolutionary things.\textsuperscript{77}

Similarly, "social reform being an integral part of the new Nationalism,

\textsuperscript{74}Ibid., p. 13.

\textsuperscript{75}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{76}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{77}Ibid., p. 15.
the temptation will be strong to many Socialists to participate therein. However, Fraina admonishes,

our is a deeper cause than that of social reform; and all the more we must avoid reformism considering that social reform is being organized by progressive Capitalism. While the new Socialism recognizes the social process as a whole, it cannot express all phases of that process; it can express only a particular phase, that which is most potent of the Socialist revolution. (Italics his.)

Socialists should concentrate on organizing the unskilled proletariat, the "pariahs of the new Capitalism," since they express "those final class interests the triumph of which means the end of all class rule, and in this sense becomes the instrument of revolutionary Socialism." An even more immediate task after the war "will be an uncompromising fight against Nationalistic Socialism," since nationalistic socialism, allied with bourgeois progressivism, can lead only to state socialism. Revolutionary socialists aim at the destruction of the state and not merely at the broadening of its base.

Socialism must also oppose militarism if it is to become genuinely international. It must obliterate all obstacles in the way of building international proletarian solidarity. And in the same spirit, a new International must be organized: anti-militaristic, anti-nationalistic, anti-reformist, thoroughly revolutionary. The members must be willing to forego some national autonomy in order to coordinate and further the interests of the movement as a whole. "Socialism," moreover,

78Ibid.
79Ibid., p. 16.
"cannot tolerate race prejudice and anti-immigration. Its internationalism must be real." It is noteworthy that this last directive was argued equally on humanitarian and analytical grounds.80

Returning to a now familiar theme, Fraina reminds his readers that Parliament-political government—is essentially a bourgeois institution, developed by the bourgeoisie in their fight against feudalism, and expressing bourgeois requirements of supremacy. Socialism... cannot ignore political government; it is an expression of class war in capitalist society, and political action becomes a necessary form of action. But the proletariat must develop its own fighting expression, its own organ of government—the revolutionary union. Socialism seeks not the control of the State, but the destruction of the State. The revolutionary union alone is capable of dynamic, creative action. Economic action assumes dominance in our tactics as the Socialist movement becomes more definite and aggressive; political action becomes auxiliary.81

"These are the larger outlines visible," he concluded, "in the future of Socialism." He did not believe at the time, however, that the future which he had envisioned would be close at hand. "The Great War," Fraina wrote, "will simply produce new conditions for new Socialist action—not the Revolution." These "larger outlines" would remain the defining categories of his militant socialism for some years, but, as stated earlier, he was soon to revise his expectations regarding the imminence of revolution.

Thus, by 1915 Fraina was no longer berating the Syndicalists for their unenlightened anti-political prejudices. Instead, he concentrated on spelling out the distinctions between industrial unionism and

80 Ibid., pp. 17-19.
81 Ibid., p. 19.
conventional socialist politics. His disenchantment with socialist party politics and "laborism" had progressed so far that, having left the Socialist Labor Party, he could not identify with any of the existing socialist or labor organizations; and he rejoined the Socialist Party in 1917 only in order to change it. In the interim, his commitment to revolutionary industrial unionism and mass action had hardened into an uncompromising revolutionary posture.

The outline and most of the basic components of that posture had been established as early as 1909. There had been some rearrangements, some shifts in emphasis along the way. But, significantly, the pattern which emerged in 1917, and which informed Freina's later efforts to split the Left Wing from the Socialist Party and establish an autonomous Communist Party, revealed the specific content of a revolutionary tendency within the socialist movement with clearly identifiable roots in the pre-1914 period.

IX

Between 1913 and 1915, Freina had become more sympathetic to the Syndicalists' preference for an almost exclusive reliance on revolutionary trade unions. His defense of mass action challenged the conservatism of socialist electoral politics and trade union gradualism. He believed that a socialist revolution could not be voted into existence, and neither would it develop cumulatively out of reform. (This implacable revolutionary stance of the Left Wing had alienated it from the mainstream of the socialist and labor movements, but did not cause it to become totally submerged. It remained an insistent voice,
becoming increasingly effective within the socialist movement in the years from 1912 to 1917. More important, in terms of what drew the Left together, was the view that revolution was not merely a metaphor. And it was this which introduced a major difficulty into Fraina's and the Left's position.

The intensity of the Left's commitment to revolution, the high seriousness with which they addressed themselves to the problem, meant that casual compromises were out of the question. Revolution was necessary and desirable: necessary historically or, in Marxian parlance, scientifically; desirable ethically, morally, psychologically and even, it sometimes seems, aesthetically. Fraina's humanistic values, discussed earlier in connection with his views on art and literature, were widely shared by the Left Wingers with whom he identified. And to be a committed socialist revolutionary, dedicated to bringing about a humane society, meant for this group to be constantly torn between practical political considerations and an outraged and often incapacitating idealism. On the one hand, for example, Fraina praised De Leon for his attempts to "Americanize" the socialist movement while he himself sought to effect a realistic application of Marxian principles to the American scene. On the other, he was always aware that the end of the movement was revolution and the end of revolution was human liberation and social justice. Thus, he often felt compelled to include, amidst an otherwise

82 "Left' activity and influence in the party increased in the years after 1912. . . . By the time of the emergency convention in 1917, the various Left tendencies were clearly in the ascendancy." James Weinstein, The Decline of Socialism in America (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1967), p. 28. Here Weinstein argues against contrary claims of Ira Kipnis.
practical and hardheaded analysis, what could only be considered a vague
and awkwardly moralistic expression of sentiment; e.g., "The Socialist
movement must become humanised, concern itself more with human emo-
tions and the spiritual reality of life."  

What this meant or what it implied for socialist action is a sub-
ject for speculation. It was not explained in context. But it is not
the mere appearance of stylistic discordancies that concerns us so much
as the phenomena of which those discordancies were symptomatic. Fraina
had an unbounded faith in a set of humanistic ethical principles the
vehicle for whose realization, he assumed, was Marxism. And the strength
of his conviction that Marxism could perform this task was, it appears,
as intense as his initial ethical commitments. As the two are identi-
fied, there seems to be a tendency to become as uncompromising in pur-
suit of theoretical purity as of ethical purpose. In socialist debate,
an attack on an author's theoretical proficiency is easily translated
into a slur on his moral adequacy. As theory takes on a moral dimen-
sion, the job of interpretation and application cannot be morally
neutral.

This is not to say that either interpretation or application
(political action) becomes an end in itself. Rather, they become
fraught with moral implications. Theoretical inaccuracy or political
inopportunity redound in moral or ethical culpability, but only because
these means are so bound up with the ends. These are the only means

which can produce the desired ends; and, as the ends are unquestionable, the guardianship of the means entails a supreme ethical, and consequently moral, responsibility. Hence, the curious combinations of moods and postures expressed in Fraina's and many other Left Wing writings: at once exhortative and coldly analytical, assured in the knowledge of their ethical propriety and aggressive in defense of a specific tactical maneuver, subtly manipulating the intricate components of their theoretical apparatus while rigidly insisting on absolute compliance with current theoretical interpretations and tactical recommendations. In addition, this heightened sense of responsibility led to a process of constant self-examination and self-evaluation, testing each judgment and each action against the accepted theory. It is easily seen how this could constitute an excessive burden for the socialist legions in their struggle against the bourgeois foe; but there is little doubt that Fraina and his Left Wing colleagues considered the ends sufficiently important to justify their carrying it.

One might object that the inclusion of the moral dimension, in an explanation of the Left's practice of obsessive theorizing and self-justification, unnecessarily complicates the matter. It is quite true that these men saw themselves as scientific Marxists. Scientific Marxism, with De Leonite or other variations, required that broad analyses of society as well as the determination of tactical maneuvers be subjected to the most demanding standards of (Marxist) objectivity. But it is not merely the fact of the theorizing which concerns us so much as its character and consequences. We are obliged, then, to notice the passion expressed in the exchanges between these men, the frequency
with which political analysis is laced with moral or ethical exhortation, the quite apparent intensity of their desire to be right. And the focus of all this was, of course, the idea of the revolution: its present status, its prospects in relation to current political and economic configurations. It was the central point of convergence of theory and practice. It served to inspire and, when correctly understood, to justify. It was the embodiment of that confluence of means and ends, of Marxism and humanism, described above.

One can thus begin to understand the manner in which Frainais unshakable sense of revolutionary mission, combining as it did theory and value, imposed a constant and palpable restraint on any tendencies to submit to the lure of short-run, and consequently short-sighted, success. This did not mean, however, that opportunities for advancing the revolution, regardless of the personal inconveniences, or the superficially apparent unlikelihood of success, should ever be left unexploited. The tension which this produced has been discussed thus far mainly in terms of its consequences for the character of debate and action within the movement. It did have external consequences as well, as suggested earlier: it contributed to the failure of socialism. This subject can now be taken up.84

84 The reasons for its having been sidetracked previously should be kept in mind. This is a study of the thought of one man who was for a time a socialist. It is then, in part, a study of socialist thought. It is not a history of the socialist movement. Daniel Bell seeks to find in socialist thought a reason for the failure of the socialist movement. Unlike Bell's, the emphasis of this study is such that the failure of socialism will continue to be regarded as valuable primarily in that it provides insight into socialist thought, rather than vice versa.
Commenting in somewhat different terms on what has been discussed above concerning the tension between revolutionary zeal and theoretical meticulousness, Bell notes that

Socialism is an eschatological movement; it is sure of its destiny, because "history" leads it to its goal. But though sure of its final ends, there is never a standard of testing the immediate ends. The result is a constant fractiousness in socialist life. Each position taken is ... open to challenge by those who feel that it would only swerve the movement from its final goal. ... And because it is an ideological movement, embracing all the realm of the human polity, [it] is always challenged to take a stand on every problem. ... And, since for every two socialists there are always three political opinions, the consequence has been that in its inner life, the Socialist Party has never ... been without some issue which threatened to split the party and which forced it to spend much of its time on the problem of reconciliation or rupture. In this fact lies the chief clue to the impotence of American socialism as a political movement. ...

Bell either overlooks or tacitly dismisses as an inadequate standard the Marxian theoretical framework against which socialists were constantly testing immediate ends. Doubtless, the "constant formation of sectarian splinter groups" was related to the proliferation of socialist opinions. But, as it has been demonstrated, it was not the case that there was "never a standard of testing immediate ends." And certainly among Left Wing writers the multiplication of opinions and, consequently, the multiplication of splits, was due not to the absence of standards but rather to the complexity of the existing ones and the overabundant attention paid to them.

More directly relevant to the present discussion is Professor Bell's contention that "Socialism is an eschatological movement," "sure
of its destiny," "chiliastic," "messianic." As such, it has been incapable of being politically effective.

The failure of the socialist movement in the United States is rooted in its inability to resolve a basic dilemma of ethics and politics. The socialist movement, by its very statement of goal and in its rejection of the capitalist order as a whole, could not relate itself to the specific problems of social action in the here-and-now . . . political world. It was trapped by the . . . problem of living "in but not of the world," so it could only act . . . as the moral, but not political, man in immoral society.

"In social action there is an irreconcilable tension between ethics and politics," Bell explains. Society "is an organized system for the distribution of . . . rewards . . . and duties. . . . Ethics deals with the ought of distribution. . . . Politics is the concrete mode of distribution. . . ." Within such an arrangement, ethics may be conceived as either a purpose or a limit. Weber distinguished the former, as the "ethics of conscience (or the dedication to absolute ends)," from the latter, as the "ethics of responsibility (or the acceptance of limits)." Armed with the latter, one pursues political solutions involving minimum risks and dangers to all participants. "But in that fateful commitment to politics, an ethical goal, stated as 'purpose rather than limit,' becomes a far-arching goal before which lies a yawning abyss that can be spanned only by a 'leap.' . . . [A] pragmatic compromise rather than dedication to an absolute . . . is possible, however, only when there is a basic consensus among contending groups about the rules of the game. But this consensus the socialist movement, because of its

\[86\textit{Ibid.}, p. 217.\]
original rejection of society, while operating within it, could never fully accept.\textsuperscript{87}

The Socialist Party indeed did not "fully accept" the rules of the game; it did so only partially. And this was the problem. It did so insofar as it sought to "show results." It had to take stands on issues, make its influence felt, even win elections. But it did not enter fully into politics and took no responsibility for what went on in the larger political arena. The majority of socialists accepted neither the "ethics of responsibility" nor the "ethics of conscience."\textsuperscript{88}

But such a straddle is impossible for a political movement. It was as if it consented to a duel, with no choice of weapons, place, amount of preparation, etc. Politically, the consequences were disastrous. Each issue could only be met by an ambiguous political formula which would satisfy neither the purist, nor the activist who lived with the daily problem of choice.\textsuperscript{88}

And this leads to, what is for this discussion, the crucial observation: the fact that some of these "purists" and "activists" refused to accept the party's non-solution to its problem. The Socialist Party "could never resolve but only straddle the basic issue of either accepting capitalist society, and seeking to transform it from within as the labor movement did [a debatable assertion], or becoming the sworn enemy of that society, like the communists." Perhaps the Socialist Party could not; but such men as Fraina finally did. And because of the particular nature and intensity of their opposition to capitalism, they chose to

\textsuperscript{87}Ibid., pp. 217-8.
\textsuperscript{88}Ibid., p. 221.
resolve it through communism rather than through labor unionism.

It would simplify matters greatly if one could see the Left Wing's intransigence, and their "leap" into communism, as simply an outgrowth of the Left's finally opting for the "ethics of conscience." Their preference for an ethic stated as purpose rather than limit does go a long way toward explaining Fraina's and the Left's views within the framework set out by Bell. The idea that the Left Wing may have been more intensely chiliastic, more committed to the "final conflict," than other factions of the socialist movement, does add to our understanding of their "oppositionism" within the movement. And we can now better appreciate the strain on the Left Wing which led them from internal criticism to a frontal assault on the movement. But there are the contextual elements of the Left's position without an understanding of which none of their actions would make sense.

Furthermore, the characterizations of society and politics, as well as the ethical polarities, which Bell employs, make it difficult to regard the revolutionary as much more than an historical curiosity. We have been careful thus far not to cast revolutionary doctrine in such a light as to preclude dispassionate analysis of its theoretical content and implications. In this spirit we now turn to an examination of Fraina's most important, and certainly most ambitious, pre-communist work. It bridges the gap between his pre-communist and communist ideas. It brings together all of his most significant thoughts to date, and is therefore a fruitful source of theoretical analysis.
Revolutionary Socialism is a highly polemical work. Its purpose is to effect a "reconstruction of Socialist policy and tactics." Many of the supporting arguments are those which Freina had used previously in presenting the case for the Left Wing. The major differences between this and his earlier works consists mainly in the immediacy of the appeal to action in Revolutionary Socialism and the extent to which it reflects Freina's acceptance of the Russian revolutionary model (according to his reading of Lenin) for use in the United States.

The world war signalized the collapse of the dominant Socialism [and] the advent of the proletarian revolution in Russia. [The latter] marks the entry of the proletariat into a new revolutionary epoch. Revolution is no longer simply an aspiration, but a dynamic process of immediate revolutionary struggles. It means the preparation of the proletariat for the final struggle against Capitalism.

The material basis of these assertions is located in the fact that the "old competitive Capitalism, the Capitalism of laissez-faire, of democracy and liberal ideas, has emerged definitely into a new epoch, the epoch of Imperialism.

Quoting Lenin extensively, Freina attempts to show, as imperialism is "the final stage of Capitalism," the immediate applicability of the Left Wing position and the historically demonstrable irrelevancy of "dominant" or moderate socialism.

89 Revolutionary Socialism, pp. i-ii.

90 Ibid., p. 3.
Like most socialists, Fraina believed that "a collapse of Capitalism, in one form or another, is inevitable;" but, he insisted, "the coming of Socialism is not equally inevitable. It may become a collapse of all civilization."\(^91\) It was his job to persuade all those who would listen, especially those who believed generally in the Marxian theory of history, that the way to avoid the "coming of the new barbarism" was to follow his plan for the "reconstruction of socialism." He noted "a dangerous tendency latent in pseudo-Marxian thought," which he referred to as the "historical imagination," a tendency to "view contemporary phenomena . . . in scholarly retrospection," and thus to accept the inevitable. But, he added, "Of what practical value is this insight [which we possess into the processes of history] if it is not used in an attempt, at very least, to direct the course of history?"\(^92\) Therefore, Fraina rejected the notion that imperialism was a "necessary transitional stage to Socialism," and, instead, counseled action:

Capitalism is fully developed; the proletariat must develop the revolutionary consciousness and action for its historic mission of overthrowing class rule. Socialism cannot "grow into" Capitalism. . . . Socialism must overthrow Capitalism.\(^93\)

The manner in which he chose to "direct the course of history" was based on the accuracy of these claims; and, although he indirectly admitted the possibility of making an "error in the judgment of history," much of the book is devoted to the insistent, if confident, presentation.

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\(^91\)Ibid., p. 209.
\(^92\)Ibid., p. 111.
\(^93\)Ibid., p. 117.
of proof of his historical interpretations. However, as the evidence functioned on a secondary level of validity, these "proofs" comprised the greatest weakness as well as the greatest strength of Fraina's analysis.

The "collapse of Capitalism," for example, may be characterized either by the intensification of present trends (capitalism behaving as capitalism: continued exploitation of the workers, monopolization of industry, more imperialistic adventures, etc.) or by the system's functional incapacities (increased numbers and intensity of strikes, harmful fluctuations in the business cycle, depressions, etc.). Either category of characteristics "proves" the point, since "collapse" is actually an historical concept. Capitalism will fail eventually according to the Marxian historical formula and, therefore, almost anything (especially any form of crisis) will serve as evidence. The collapse is a predetermined certainty.

In order to locate oneself at a point far along the historical continuum, where the collapse of the system is not merely a distant goal but an immediate possibility, the observer of these characteristics must show that they represent the exhaustion of the system's alternatives and the readiness of the revolutionary forces to act; or, more accurately, that although the system may survive by becoming increasingly barbaric, it has reached the point where it can not resist the properly directed efforts of an historically mature revolutionary force. For Fraina, the theory of imperialism provided the explanatory justification for regarding the capitalistic system as being not merely doomed to inevitable destruction but properly disposed for its immediate downfall.
Within the framework of this theory, various evidences of the "collapse" of capitalism took on a new meaning, a new urgency. Each one was used to illustrate the contention that capitalism had indeed reached its "final stage." But Fraina was well aware that "in history only the large, general developments can be considered inevitable—the broad tendencies of social evolution." Therefore, although he was now able to argue persuasively the urgency of his call to militancy, he recognized (implicitly) that even the theory of imperialism could not "prove" that the moment of revolution had arrived. The Marxian theory of historical development had proved to his satisfaction that capitalism would collapse eventually, but the rest was a matter of interpretive sensitivity. His flexibility enabled him to manipulate his data effectively, as polemicist or propagandist: he could proceed confidently, knowing that his audience also believed in the inevitability of capitalism's demise, gradually building his case for a more aggressive socialist policy. At the same time, he was compelled to rely on the Marxian theory of action in order to guarantee the translation of tendencies into realities. That is to say, ultimately man makes his own history. Marx provides the broad outlines of history; Lenin refines these so as to provide guidelines for appropriate action. But, again, "of what practical value [are these insights if they are] not used in an attempt ... to direct the course of history?" The ultimate proof or disproof of his social analyses and his policy recommendations could only be demonstrated after the necessary action had been taken. Thus,  

although analyses and recommendations often had to take on more the appearance of admonition than science, the socialist was hard pressed not to heed them. To do otherwise, Fraina hoped to convince his readers, would constitute a betrayal not only of the socialist vision but also of Marxism and the incontrovertible wisdom of the leaders of the Russian revolution. What he offered, then, was a flawed but, within the framework of standard socialist commitments, powerful argument: powerful precisely because of the way it combined descriptive and prescriptive analysis.

In the very first chapter, Fraina asserts that the "proletariat is dominant, economically." They are capable of rising up and overthrowing capitalism. Evidence for these assertions can be found, in the first instance, in the critical role played by production workers during the war, and, in the second, in the fact that the proletariat was mobilized in revolt against the Czar. But the economic dominance of the proletariat is currently offset by the fact that, outside of Russia, they have been "seduced by Imperialism." And since "the dominant unionism and Socialism are betrayers of proletarian interests" ("Socialism has been definitely split"), "the proletariat must repudiate moderate Socialism and accept revolutionary Socialism, or Imperialism will become impregnable." What socialist would deny the evidence, identify with the "betrayers," and, through inaction, risk the prolongation of imperialism? And so it is throughout the text: the extension of "is" to "must," which, in turn, cannot be read other-

95Ibid., p. 5.
wise than "ought."

The first substantial piece of analysis deals with the causes and character of imperialism. Making frequent references to Lenin's works, Fraina traces the growth of capitalism and its transformation into imperialism. Then, repudiating the claims which he had made three years earlier, he states that "capitalist economy . . . is now dependent upon the facts of international production." This signifies, of course, that capitalism has indeed entered its final stage. Political changes go hand in hand with economic changes, and it is next shown how government serves the interests of imperialism. The export of capital, the development of sources of raw material and protected markets all require the benevolent intervention of governmental authority; and, since many nations are simultaneously seeking similar advantages, imperialistic competition and wars are inevitable. These developments are accompanied by an increasing exploitation of the workers and an intensification of the class struggle. Clearly, the system is on the verge of collapse. But, as the system may appear, to the untrained eye, to be manifesting certain strengths, Fraina, in the manner discussed above, converts these strengths into weaknesses. The following passage is the best example of this technique in the entire work:

A social system is often deceptive in its strength. The War, apparently, marks a strengthening of Capitalism. . . . And yet, historically, the war is an expression of the weakness of Capitalism, of its stagnant condition, of the fact that the situation of Capitalism is so desperate as to invoke the use of the most desperate, dangerous means to preserve itself. Imperialism, equally, marks an apparent renewal of the might of Capitalism . . . but it is a form of renewal . . . worse than the disease; [this implies] now and more desperate struggles, acuter antagonisms, a multiplication of the factors that produce Imperialism. A still more decrepit Capitalism, an
unavoidable limiting of the opportunity for its preservation,—these are the inevitable consequences of the tendency of Imperialism. (First italics mine. Second italics his.)

Fraina now turns to a discussion of class divisions under imperialism. The concentration of industry and the centralization of capital result in the "decay of the industrial middle class." A "new middle class" appears, its "upper layers" represented by share owners in concentrated industry and its "lower layers" by managers, superintendents, engineers, and technicians. Both groups are "thoroughly reactionary" because they are dependent upon the largesse of "concentrated industry and its imperialistic manifestations." Skilled labor is also brought into the service of imperialism, as it is an "adjunct of the new middle class."97

The monopolistic practices, resulting from concentrated industry and centralized financial control, have forced this "radical alteration of class relations." The "governmental form of expression of this development," however, "is State Capitalism." The state "becomes an actual factor in industry through control, regulation and direction. . . . [It] may not actually own any industry, but exercises drastic and despotic control over the general industrial process." The state further intensifies the class struggle in two ways, speeding the process of its own destruction. First, by favoring skilled labor, it intensifies the antagonism between skilled and unskilled labor. Con-

96 Ibid., p. 36.

97 Ibid., pp. 38-50.
comitantly, it suppresses unskilled labor, which "awakens to a con-
sciousness of its misery and its strength. The revolts of the unskilled
become more numerous and more general. It becomes the immediate and
potential revolutionary force against Capitalism. ..." Secondly, as
the state fosters the spread of imperialism, it "increases the prole-
tariat by bringing new regions and its human raw material within the
circle of capitalist exploitation." In these newly developed areas, the
favored skilled labor, largely imported, then comes into conflict with
the badly exploited unskilled. The repetition of this familiar strug-
gle overseas thus creates an international revolutionary proletariat.98

The emergence of imperialism also affects the ideology and insti-
tutions of democracy

The democracy of the bourgeoisie, historically, consists of
political freedom and the recognition of the rights of the
individual,—the ideology of the era of free competition.
... Freedom of action is a cardinal social principle. ... But as industry concentrates and annihilates free competition,
the ideology of democracy is displaced by the ideology of
domination. ... Capitalism liberates itself from the ide-
ology of democracy in the measure that it realizes autocracy
may more effectively promote its interests. The state,
accordingly, acquires new and widening powers. ... But
this transformation in the state is not comprised simply in
the widening of its functions, but in the radical alteration
of its procedures.99

Fraîna then describes the growth of what he calls autocratic govern-
mental procedures: the power of the state "centralized in its adminis-
trative, and not its legislative, department. ..."100 Necessarily

98 Ibid., pp. 50-55.
99 Ibid., pp. 56-59.
100 Ibid., pp. 59-60.
accompanying the disappearance of democracy are a number of related developments. "There is a lessening of the individuality of the worker in industry. . . . Concentrated industry . . . deadens their . . . intelligence." Their rights are disregarded. Their education is ignored; or worse, it is designed to more easily accommodate them to modern industry. The system does provide for the education of some "workers of the brain," or "intellectuals." But rather than allying themselves with the proletariat, these few identify with the petty bourgeoisie and become a "corrupt and corrupting social force."\textsuperscript{101}

Like all other historical developments, the causes of this one are economic:

The early democracy of America, the ideology of Jeffersonian democracy, was the expression of the interests and commodity relations of the small farmers, traders and pioneers. . . . In the Civil War the early democracy was immediately victorious, but the conditions produced by its victory swiftly brought its own defeat. . . . The expansion westward was no longer independently agrarian, but industrial; it did not produce the conditions of an agrarian democracy, but of an industrial autocracy. . . . The new West played the role of colonies and undeveloped regions. . . .\textsuperscript{102}

Of course, any attempt to revive the "old bourgeois democracy" would be futile. Like imperialism, it must succumb to inexorable historical pressures—historical pressures assisted by socialism.

Just how and why socialism should undertake this task is the subject of the remainder of the book. Fraina begins with a brief discus-

\textsuperscript{101} Revolutionary Socialism, pp. 56-63.

\textsuperscript{102} Ibid., pp. 69-70.
sion of the "fundamentals of socialism," turns his attention to the shortcomings of moderate socialism, and, with one or two interruptions, completes his analysis of what socialism is and what it must do.

First, socialism is aggressive. In the interest of the only true revolutionary class—the class of unskilled labor—socialism engages in the class struggle. It rejects the possibility of "a gradual pacific penetration of Capitalism by Socialism." It is "particularly concerned with the moral, intellectual and class consciousness of the proletariat, of furthering its aggressive action, and of developing in its ideology and action the concept of Social Revolution." For, although the "development of Capitalism is indispensable as providing the objective, material conditions for Socialism, and important in its influence upon the consciousness of the proletariat... this subjective development supplements the objective conditions, and it alone can bring Socialism." Material conditions are "indispensable," but "the consciousness of the proletariat is the determining consideration" in preparing the way of socialism.103

Great emphasis is placed on the notion that socialism is not the conquest of the state by a political party; it is the conquest of society by the proletariat through industrial and political action. . . . [It] is not government ownership or control of industry. . . . Socialism struggles for the transformation of the state, not the enlarging of its functions.104

103 Ibid., pp. 74-77.
104 Ibid., p. 81.
Ultimately, socialism aims to "place the management and control of industry directly in the workers. . . ."

The state . . . disappears; in its place rises the communism of the organized producers, functioning through local initiative centralized in the administrative process of determining the facts of production and distribution. . . .

Fraina related the refusal of dominant, moderate socialism to adopt these goals to the failure of the major socialist parties in Europe and America. By failure, for the European parties, he meant reformism, parliamentarism or ministerialism; failure for the SPA referred to their having succeeded neither in penetrating the labor movement, which was its main objective, nor in mobilizing the genuine proletarian interests. In both cases, the difficulty could be traced to socialists' not accommodating to changes in material conditions. They failed to recognize that capitalism had advanced to the point where large masses of unskilled workers had become the dominant force in the productive process; and, thus, they failed to alter their ideology and tactics accordingly.

The Americans were the worst offenders. In Germany, at least, "Social-Democracy had a material basis and an ideology of its own, compounded of the liberal aspirations of the Bismarck era and skilled labor, which because of historical conditions lined up with the Social-Democracy. But in this country . . . the party had no material basis and ideology of its own. It imported these from Europe. Skilled labor . . . had determined upon its policy prior to the time it might have been influenced by Socialism . . . [and] the party did not sense the task of expressing the unskilled . . ."

105Ibid., pp. 81-82.
which were largely dominant in the United States.\textsuperscript{106}

In both cases, however, revolutionary socialism was ignored in favor of electoral victories, reformism, and parliamentarism. Hence, Fraina condemned them for shoring up the capitalist political structure, rather than threatening it.\textsuperscript{107}

In a long chapter, entitled "The Great Collapse," Fraina assigned the same causes to the non-revolutionary behavior of dominant socialism during the war. At best, "instead of a revolutionary attack upon Imperialism and militarism and preparations to prevent war or convert it into a civil war of the oppressed against the oppressors . . . there was scheme after scheme to evade war." (Italics his.)\textsuperscript{108} At worst, particularly in Austria and Germany, "it used all its efforts to make an imperialistic war popular with the workers. . . ."\textsuperscript{109} Socialism "suspended the class struggle" for the duration. All this because these socialist parties did not see that capitalism was "fully developed," and the time for final revolutionary preparations, expressed through an unequivocal identification with the interests of the unskilled, had arrived.

The formation of a new revolutionary socialist International would

\textsuperscript{106} Ibid., pp. 89-90.

\textsuperscript{107} In a long footnote, Fraina attacks the revisionism of Kautsky, Plekhanov, and Guesde, calling their policies reactionary. Once again, he quotes Lenin for authoritative support. \textit{Ibid.}, p. 87, n. 2.

\textsuperscript{108} Ibid., p. 97.

\textsuperscript{109} Ibid., p. 105.
require the reorganization of its constituent groups, and, of course, the abandonment of their moderate postures. The new alliance would have to reject the possibility of a "growing into Socialism" and "adjust itself" to the needs of the most revolutionary class, abandoning its concern for skilled labor and "laborism." As Fraina repeatedly insisted, current facts of production demanded such adjustments; and foremost among those facts was, again, the appearance of an unskilled or "machine proletariat."

As Capitalism develops, the industrial process is standardized, the labor specialized. The perfection of machinery expropriates the skilled worker of his skill. . . . The worker becomes an appendage of the machine. . . . The machine subjects the worker to its process.

As the numbers and significance of the conventional skilled workers decrease, "a new skilled labor is created." It is concerned with the efficiency of production workers and identifies entirely with capital: the "lower layers of the new middle class" mentioned earlier.

Most important in this process is the fact that the concentration of capital and the machine process operate jointly to unify the industrial system, in which common labor controls the working activity. Thus, while the machine process strips the worker of all his skill, it simultaneously creates and places in his hands an immense

110 The aim of laborism is to "conserve the status of unions as a caste [thus guaranteeing them] a place in the governing system of things. . . . The policy of laborism results from the concept that the interests of labor depend upon the interests of capital. . . . Unions are careful that their struggles shall in no way menace Capitalism itself." Fraina was especially critical of the British, New Zealand and Australian Labor parties because of their espousal of these views. Ibid., pp. 127, 129.

111 Ibid., p. 131.
power, the power of at any moment dislocating the process of production through mass action of any considerable group of proletarians. (Italics mine.)

This is what is meant by the proletariat's achieving a functional dominance.\textsuperscript{113}

Furthermore, industrial concentration and standardization imposes upon the proletariat a solidarity, making a "homogeneous mass out of the heterogeneous racial and religious elements" within it, and helping to create "a new ideology among the workers." Whereas the "skilled worker thinks in terms of craft, of the individual and his property, the unskilled proletariat thinks in terms of the mass, of power, and of the control of the machine process." (Italics his.)\textsuperscript{114} In other words, he becomes ideologically aware of his own revolutionary potential.

Fraina makes a subtle and important distinction between the economic and the ideological antagonism of the workers to the existing order. They are driven to express various forms of opposition by virtue of the desperation of their plight. The machine process has forced them to engage in revolutionary activity. They eventually develop a revolutionary consciousness, an ideological antagonism, which allows them to comprehend the significance of their plight, "without which a revolutionary class cannot fulfill its historic mission." "Material

\textsuperscript{112}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 134.

\textsuperscript{113}The notion of functional dominance continued to play a major role in Fraina's analyses. Later, as Lewis Corey, he assigned that role to the "new middle class" of managers and technicians.

\textsuperscript{114}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 136.
conditions of the machine process are producing a proletariat with a sense of class solidarity without which there cannot be a Social Revolution;" but, and this is the point of Fraina's remarks, that "sense" remains undeveloped. The proletariat "must be awakened to a consciousness and independence of action." To that end, socialists must direct all of their energies. Thus, socialism must be informed by the interests of the machine proletariat, while, at the same time, informing them of the larger significance of those interests. "The class struggle is a struggle for power." The unskilled workers, because of their functional dominance, have that power. They must be helped in becoming aware of how and why to use it.\textsuperscript{115}

That they should not use it to support "state ownership or management of industry" is made patently clear in a chapter entitled "Problems of State Capitalism." The state is an "agency of the ruling class. . . . State and capitalist industry, government and the ruling class become one and indivisible." And "Socialism is not state ownership or management of industry. . . . Socialism annihilates the state." Similarly, neither is socialism "a struggle for democracy; it is a struggle for proletarian power." Expanding on a theme which he had touched on previously, Fraina rejects the notion that politics, much less democratic politics, is a process of mutual adjustment of conflicting interests. Politics is the struggle for power. Thus, as the "class struggle is a struggle for power . . . all class struggles are political struggles." Bourgeois ideologists may attempt to mask this

\textsuperscript{115}Ibid., pp. 139-44.
fact by trying to show that the extension of democratic procedures, which they must ultimately regard as ends in themselves, can eliminate the abuses of power by privileged groups. But insofar as democratic politics rests on a base of a capitalistic economy, it can be nothing other than a means of moderating the internal conflicts of a capitalist-dominated social system and a vehicle for avoiding the fundamental struggle for power between the necessarily antagonistic classes—the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. Democratic politics is a means of maintaining the status quo with regard to existing class relations, and is, therefore, an instrument used by the politically dominant classes to continue their subjugation of the dominated. There is no possibility of eliminating the abuses of power as long as existing class relations remain intact. Under those conditions, the abuse of power is a permanent characteristic of the exercise of power. Hence, Fraina tries to demonstrate, first, that as all proletarian revolutionary action is directed at capturing the power of capitalist society (both industry and the state), it is political action; and second, that insofar as democratic politics functions where the means of production are privately owned, it is unavoidably abusive.116 Later on, Fraina says,

all democracy is relative, is class democracy. As an historical category, democracy is a form of authority of one class over another: bourgeois democracy is the form of expression of the authority and tyranny of Capitalism.

The democracy of Socialism, the self-government of the proletarian masses, discards the democracy of Capitalism. .....

116 Ibid., pp. 163-77.

117 Ibid., p. 215.
At this point in his career, Fraina felt that only the elimination of politics—as a mode of decision-making—could eliminate the abuses of power. Socialist democracy would involve administration (the administration of things), not politics (the struggle for social dominance).

The low esteem in which Fraina held bourgeois democratic procedures was amply demonstrated in the final sections of *Revolutionary Socialism*. Having explained once more the appropriateness of industrial unionism, he turns to mass action, "the method of the proletarian revolution." Throughout this discussion, he makes it quite clear that, for the revolutionary socialist, the struggle against capitalism must not be hindered by sentimental attachments to majoritarianism, representation, or any of the "'ethical concepts' of bourgeois democracy." There is a hint of Leninism in Fraina's remark that it would be "inconceivable" for a "majority of the proletariat, or an overwhelming minority, [to] become organized into industrial unions under Capitalism... The conditions of Capitalism, its violent upheavals and stress of struggle, exclude the probability of an all-inclusive proletarian organization." It is "fantastic... to consider," he continues,

that the proletariat under Capitalism can through industrialism organize the structure of the new society. The structure of industrialism, the form of the new communist society, can be organized only during the transition period from Capitalism to Socialism acting through the dictatorship of the proletariat; all that can be done in the meanwhile is to develop a measure of industrial organization... which may constitute the starting point for a proletarian dictatorship in its task of introducing the industrial...
state of communist Socialism. 118

Socialism will come only "through the determined and revolutionary mass action of a proletarian minority. . . .

The fetish of democracy is a fetter upon the proletarian revolution; mass action smashes the fetish, emphasizing that the proletariat recognizes no limits to its action except the limits of its own power. . . . [Mass action] compels the proletariat to act uncompromisingly and reject the "rights" of any other class. 119

The acceptance of the dictatorship of the proletariat as a necessary transition between capitalism and communism is itself a "recognition of the fact that the proletariat alone counts, and no other class has any 'rights.' . . . [It] places all power in the control of the proletariat . . ., frankly . . . introduces the government of one class . . ., refuses political 'rights' and recognition to any section of the bourgeois class . . .," and so on. (Italics his.) 120 Fraina repeatedly reminds the reader that "Capitalism hypocritically insists upon a government of all the classes. . . ." However, capitalistic parliamentarism, "presumably representing all classes, actually represents and promotes the requirements of the ruling class alone." (Italics his.) 121 It is this "hypocritical" bourgeois democracy which Fraina thus seeks to eliminate. And what of the specific character of the proletarian dictatorship with which he hopes to replace it?

In place of the army, the armed proletarian militia, until

118 Ibid., pp. 193-94.
119 Ibid., p. 201.
120 Ibid., pp. 214-17.
121 Ibid., pp. 214-15.
unnecessary; in place of the police, disciplinary measures of the masses themselves; in place of the judiciary, tribunals of workmen. The bureaucratic machinery of the state disappears. 122

[The] proletariat organizes itself as the ruling class... The basis of the new "state" is not territorial, but industrial; its constituents are the organized producers. The other elements of the people function in this proletarian government in the measure that they are absorbed in the new industrial scheme of things, become useful producers. 123

The central problem of the proletarian dictatorship will be that of "economic reconstruction," and the solution will depend largely upon the degree of industrial development encountered at its inception. The proletariat will have to "centralize all instruments of production in the hands of the state—that is, the proletariat organized as the ruling class; and to increase the total productive force as rapidly as possible." This would demand "despotic inroads on the rights of property..." Although the dictatorship of the proletariat does not "necessarily dispose all at once of the capitalist" (he may prove useful in the process of economic reconstruction), it does dispose immediately of "the prerogatives of the capitalist as a capitalist." 124

Eventually, "proletarian control is transformed into proletarian administration," or "communist administration of the industrial process." Fraina's detailed description of this process deserves to be quoted at length, as one rarely finds such statements in pre-communist American socialist literature.

122 Ibid., p. 214.
123 Ibid., p. 217.
The proletariat's dictatorial control of production develops ... the forces of production and ... the communist industrial process. At first the administration of control functions through general organizations, Councils of Workers. These organizations are gradually integrated, adapted to industrial divisions; and it is ... at this point that industrial unionism ... functions in the construction of the new society. Industry as a whole is divisible into constituent units. ... Each industry will constitute a department of the industrial state; the workers in each industry will organize in Local Councils and these unite into General Industrial Councils co-ordinated with other General Industrial Councils into a central administration of the whole productive process. Industrial unionism ... becomes the vital basis of the new communist society. ... The industrial administration of communist Socialism institutes all the centralization necessary and compatible with autonomy. ... The central administration is directive, and not repressive; it co-ordinates the whole industrial process as the General Industrial Council co-ordinates each phase of its particular industry; its functions are comprised in the statistical regulation and directive control of the forces of production. The division of the product is ultimately determined on a communistic basis: from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs. The dictatorship of the proletariat is temporary, its necessity ceasing as the task of destroying the old order and organizing the new is accomplished. The rapidity of this development depends upon the maturity of the proletarian consciousness and class power, upon the reactions of social forces within the nation and upon the general international situation. The ... proletarian revolution lets loose violent antagonisms [nationally and internationally].... It may find itself compelled to wage civil ... and revolutionary wars. It may even, temporarily, meet defeat: the process consists of a series of revolutionary struggles. But the proletarian revolution ... is determined in a course of action against which nothing but betrayals can prevail.125

Such were Louis Fraina's views throughout the years until the early 1920's. The only minor revision which appeared in the latter part of this period was not a theoretical but a tactical one: the role of the party in the process of bringing about the revolution became

125 Ibid., pp. 219-21.
more prominent. The party was still intended to take its cues from the actions and theoretically verifiable interests of the unskilled and unorganized. Its function was to organize them on an industrial basis, promote the development of their revolutionary consciousness, and lead them in revolt against the capitalist state. It simply had to become more active in pursuit of these goals since the collapse of the system was imminent. It would also direct, but not dominate, the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Raina's eagerness to form a party dedicated to these views, led him first to engage in the winning of control of the Socialist Party. When it became evident that this was not to be, he joined others in splitting the party, forming one of the several communist parties to emerge out of this period, and establishing a link with the Bolsheviks and the Third International. A large proportion of the enormous quantity of analytical-agitational literature which he produced at this time was devoted to showing "objective material conditions" on an international level which provided what he affirmed to be undeniable proof not only that the time of the final struggle had arrived, but that America was inextricably linked with Europe; its revolution, therefore, would have to proceed apace. Furthermore, his conceptual framework was not strained by the necessity of becoming part of an international organization which functioned, if indeed it was not so designed, to defend the gains of the most advanced sector of the international revolutionary proletariat, the Russians.

He applauded, and arranged for the translation and reprinting of, the works of those in the movement who impressed him as being most
militant, most uncompromisingly revolutionary: Lenin, Luxemburg, Liebknecht, et al. The differences among them, which would play such a large part in the future socialist revolutionary debates, were ignored. No longer did he counsel temperance, that the revolution would come "during our generation."

And as hopeful as Fraina was when he entered this extremely important and formative period of his life, so disheartened was he when he left it. How he accommodated to the failure of communism to fulfill his expectations, how he gradually and inexorably revised first his tactical demands and then his entire theoretical apparatus, will be the subject of the remainder of this study—as it was the subject of the remainder of his intellectual life. Fraina's values, his humanism, his conception of what should be, have been described. His analyses of the contemporary social order have been set out in detail, as have his views on how to achieve the transition from the old to the new order and what problems might be anticipated in the process. Did any of these ideas change over the years? If so, how? Most importantly, how did he respond to an increasing awareness of the potentially corrupting influences of highly concentrated power, be it capitalist or socialist power?
CHAPTER IV

THE MIDDLE YEARS

I

From 1917 through 1919, Fraina concerned himself primarily with the revolutions in Germany and Russia and with the formation and organization of a communist party at home. His literary output during this time was impressive. In addition to editorials and articles in Class Struggle, New International and Revolutionary Age, he wrote Revolutionary Socialism and edited The Proletarian Revolution in Russia and The Social Revolution in Germany. The latter was a pamphlet containing articles he had written for Revolutionary Age, reprints of articles by Karl Liebknecht and Franz Mehring, and an introduction written by him specifically for the pamphlet.¹ The book on Russia was a collection of articles and releases by Lenin and Trotsky, only some of which had appeared previously in English. For this volume, Fraina wrote an introduction, explanatory notes preceding each section, and a

¹Louis C. Fraina, The Social Revolution in Germany (Boston: Revolutionary Age, 1919). The latest date to appear on any of the articles reprinted was January 4, 1919. Although Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht were killed on January 15, no mention of their deaths is made anywhere in the pamphlet. As it is unlikely that such an event would have passed unnoticed by Fraina, the pamphlet was probably published only days after the original appearance of its latest selection.
chapter praising the Bolsheviks and condemning the Constituent Assembly.  

According to his writings, Fraina regarded himself as a participant in an ongoing international proletarian upheaval. His allegiance was to the revolution rather than to the Communist Party of America or any other national party. When the time came for the newly formed Communist Party of America to join the Third International, there was for Fraina no question of subordinating the interests of the American party to the Russians, who clearly dominated the organization. The issue was not one of subordination but of function. To consider the direction of the revolution by the Russians anything other than functionally necessary, reflecting the unavoidable priorities of a truly international movement, could only be regarded as petty chauvinism. There is no written record of Fraina's having altered this view at any time during his affiliation with the communist movement. Furthermore, there is no indication that he had changed any of his basic ideas since the publication of Revolutionary Socialism. However, when he left the party, the very act of disaffiliation indicated major differences with the official representatives of the movement on questions of organization and tactics. The theoretical views expressed in Revolutionary Socialism, moreover, underwent a very gradual but noticeable change during the next several years. We now turn our attention to the nature and consequences of that gradual change.

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Fraina adopted the name Joseph Skala when he left the party in 1923 and wrote nothing for publication until 1926. Then, he wrote an article for the *New Republic*. It appeared on May 2, was entitled "How Is Ownership Distributed?" and signed Lewis Corey. Like all of the articles Corey was to write during the next several years, this one was a statistical analysis of concentrated wealth and income, accompanied by conclusions which, compared to their highly agitational predecessors, were markedly restrained. Clearly, Lewis Corey was a pro-labor critic of capitalism.

Stockholders are multiplying [he wrote] but corporate ownership is not being democratized. . . . The working class has slightly increased its stockholdings, but this gain is absolute and not relative. The real gains have been scored by the middle class. . . . Class concentration of corporate ownership is not being broken, nor are there any indications of its being broken. [And, finally,] we are not approaching, either immediately or potentially, working class ownership and management of corporate industry.3

That "working class ownership and management of corporate industry" is desirable is strongly implied, but not stated. That some change is necessary or anticipated is also merely hinted at. Suggestions of the changes which should take place are buried in analyses of the causes of the problem. Means of effecting changes are ignored.

Corey ends one article with the mysterious warning that "there is an awakening coming."4 Months after the stockmarket crash, moreover,


he wrote that the crash has . . . intensified the prevailing depression, but it is useless to make scapegoats of the stock market and the speculators. The recession started before the crash and its cause must be sought in the interacting relations of production, consumption and purchasing power, in the factors disturbing the equilibrium between production and consumption which produce recession and depression. The causes and the cure of business depression are not in the depression itself, but in the previous period of prosperity and boom. It is a problem in the social control of industry.9

Who is "awakening" and to what end? The reader can only guess. How industry is to be controlled and by whom, Corey does not say. He is concerned primarily with the structural faults in the capitalist economy, pointing out that capitalism is simply incapable of coping with such problems as technological unemployment or a more equitable distribution of wealth.6 He comes close to revealing the Marxian basis of his criticism in the final section of a long article which he contributed to a symposium edited by labor economist J. B. S. Hardman. Arguing against the claim that capitalism is reforming itself, Corey explains that

the transformation of capitalism is interwoven with the distribution of income, corporate ownership and capital resources. But these are not things apart. They are products of the whole economic and social system, of the forms, means and purposes of production, of property and government, of class relations and class power. Only a change in these fundamentals can transform capitalism.7


6This can be seen also in his article "An Estimate of Unemployment: Cyclical Idleness Added to Technological," Annalist (March 9, 1928), pp. 443-44.

Quite obviously, Corey is interested in income redistribution and some form of industrial democracy: an end to the oligarchical control of government and the economy by the "comparatively small class" of industrialists and financiers. As he sees it, however, the immediate trend is in precisely the opposite direction, toward increasing monopolization of finance and industry. He notes the "transformation of competitive capitalism into monopoly, and of monopolistic capitalism into imperialism... The final concentration of control is in the great banks and investment houses, finance capital exercising an ultimate and very real dictatorship." (Italics mine.)

Thus, Corey, with the aid of impressive quantities of statistical data, pronounces capitalism fundamentally dysfunctional and unjust. There is a class struggle. The workers continue to be exploited. And on a chiliastic note, reminiscent of his earlier writings, he suggests the coming "awakening" and the "final concentration" of capitalistic control. For the most part, however, his writings through 1930-31 are cautious. He writes in the Nation that compulsory unemployment insurance (hardly a revolutionary measure) should be adopted; and then he adds that it will "moreover, establish an important principle of social control over industry which may broaden and deepen ultimately into complete socialization." But, again, this suggestion comes at

8Ibid., p. 71.


the end of a detailed analysis of wage and dividend policies, and is not accompanied by any further explanatory remarks.

Only once during this period did Corey begin to bring together and develop those themes which are germane to this study. In a brief book review, appearing in the *New Freeman* in 1930, Corey states his conception of the "new economic and ideological order." It would consist of "self-government in industry, abolition of privilege and profiteering, [and] the organization of our social *mores* on the basis of labor."\(^{11}\) Not only is labor to be the object of the new order, but it is also the means by which the new order can be realized. It is "the force capable of unifying [all diverse reforms and trends towards social control of industry] . . . into a dynamic movement for social transformation." It is the only viable agency for social change "for only labor challenges the prevailing order . . . [since] . . . challenge of the prevailing order is implicit in its very existence."\(^{12}\) Thus, Corey posits the class struggle in terms of a fundamental and unavoidable antagonism between bourgeoisie and proletariat. And through this struggle for power, social change occurs: "progress moves through perpetual redistributions of social power."

Labor's triumph will depend, then, upon its capacity to seize and utilize social power in its own interests. The "process of labor's accumulation of power, [moreover, will eventuate] in control by labor

\(^{11}\)"Labor and the New Order," *New Freeman* (June 11, 1930), p. 308. The book being reviewed was *A New Economic Order*, a symposium edited by Kirby Page.

\(^{12}\)Ibid.
of the power of the State. "13 Since the state is a major vehicle for
the exercise of social power, labor can not effect a transformation of
society without control of state power. At this juncture, Corey sug-
gests that the state might be "used to facilitate experimental, scienc-
tific social change" as it is in Soviet Russia and "partially" in
Britain. The process of social change might proceed, thus, devoid of
"violent struggles and contradictions." Whether this constitutes a
significant revision or simply a rephrasing of Corey's earlier concep-
tion of the function of a dictatorship of the proletariat, there is no
way to tell. Can a bourgeois state be taken over intact by labor and
used to facilitate a revolution? Does this mean that the instrument-
talities of the bourgeois state need not be destroyed, but merely
transferred to the control of the workers? Is this, then, the begin-
nning of a basic shift in Corey's earlier views of the nature and func-
tions of the state? Answers to these and other crucial questions con-
cerning Corey's ideas on power, the state, and social change are pro-
vided in works which Corey produced during the years 1931-1937. At
this time, Lewis Corey was primarily an economic analyst holding some
rather provocative but undeveloped views about politics and society.
So it would appear to anyone following his career.

III

Louis Hacker, writing in 1935, announced that Lewis Corey was
"undoubtedly the most important Marxist writer in the United States

13 Ibid., p. 309.
Hacker went on to say that Corey's was a "unique role: free of political commitments and therefore not compelled to trim his sails to this or that changing wind of doctrine, he is in a position to pursue his line of thought wherever it may lead him." In fact, it led him precisely to the point he had reached some fifteen years earlier. It became quite clear by the mid-1930's that he was a Marxist, and although not affiliated with the Communist Party, a communist. He believed fervently in the decline and collapse of the capitalist system. He favored proletarian revolution and, subsequently, a dictatorship of the proletariat. The differences between his and the official Communist Party's approach to major social, economic and political questions were, at least according to CP commentators, sometimes serious; but, for all intents and purposes, by the middle of the 1930's Lewis Corey was widely and justifiably recognized as a pro-Bolshevik, Marxist-Leninist revolutionary communist.

During the years 1931-33, Corey wrote three articles for Modern Quarterly and an essay for an anthology on revolution, all of which

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15 Ibid.

16 Early in this period, Corey wrote The House of Morgan, A Social Biography of the Masters of Money (New York: L. G. H. Watt, 1930). It reveals the radical predispositions of its author, but does not provide information directly relevant to this study. Corey also wrote several articles during the early 1930's for the New Republic, New Freeman, and the Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, all of which, like The House of Morgan, show the author's interests and political orientation but contribute only indirectly to our understanding of his theoretical framework.
were finally incorporated into The Decline of American Capitalism. Decline is a massive study in which Corey "weaves the recent statistical and institutional history of this country into a coherent Marxist pattern. . . . [The book] is scholarly and thorough, [employing] . . . accepted statistics and theories [to link] this observed phenomena with the Marxist theories of capitalist accumulation and surplus value." One reviewer, who considered the book "a serious, well documented study," explained that "the author believes the capitalist system has entered upon an inevitable decline, and in spite of what he considers palliatives in the form of government aid, is soon to collapse and will be succeeded eventually by Communism." Corey argued that "unlike former experience, this depression cannot end in any real upswing of prosperity, because cyclical recovery and prosperity are


Lewis Corey, Decline of American Capitalism (New York: Covici-Friede, 1934).


19(no author or title given), Booklist XXXI, no. 2 (Oct., 1934), p. 51.
now necessarily limited by the pressure of capitalist decline, which involves exhaustion of long-time factors of economic expansion."  

The first third of the book is devoted to an explanation of the nature of these "long-time factors," and an analysis of the American economy designed to show why they can no longer operate. The effects of the decline may be seen in such things as permanent technological unemployment. "Where formerly technological changes meant only a relative displacement of labor, now they mean an absolute displacement." This, as well as the myriad other indices of capitalist decline, can be traced to the dysfunctional consequences of the basic antagonism inherent in capitalism: the coexistence of collectivist production and private ownership of the means of production.

Updating with recent data the observations and insights he had expressed fifteen years earlier, Corey returns to the familiar themes of financial concentration, income maldistribution, monopolization of industry and the political outcome of these developments: the policy of imperialism. The verdict remains the same. Only the type of evidence which he chose to use in support of his conclusions had changed.

The final section of *Decline of American Capitalism*, comprising four chapters, is entitled "The Struggle for Power." Here, Corey shifts his general approach from statistical-economic to class-sociological. He tacitly assumes that having demonstrated the economic unfeasibility of capitalism, he can now concentrate on the broader social


21 Ibid., p. 299.
and political implications.

Economic forces—hstitutions and their ideology—are interlocked with the class relations of society. In any society based on private property the relations of production mean the domination of a particular class ruling over other classes. Economic contradictions and antagonisms, and economic development in general, are expressed in class interests and class struggles. The focal point of the class struggle is the state, for its force is necessary to realize class interests. Thus the class struggle is a struggle for power: to maintain or secure control of the state to decide the issues created by class-economic contradictions and antagonism. Neither economics nor politics are intelligible without reference to class relations and the balance of class power. (Italics his.)

With this as the basis of his analysis, Corey attempts to show that while "in 'normal' times the class struggle is comparatively peaceful and the struggle for power mainly potential," capitalism has passed beyond "normalcy" and can expect to be plagued by the "revolutionary struggle of the working class to conquer power." When capitalism is "on the upswing," the ruling class "still represents at least the possibility of economic progress and ... still 'delivers the goods;' its concessions blunt the edge of opposition and strengthen its institutional and ideological supports, and the ruled classes are neither desperate enough nor conscious enough to initiate a revolutionary struggle for power." But with capitalism "on the decline," all that has changed. Recovery is impossible. Crises worsen. Conditions become intolerable. And (once again) the proletarian revolution is imminent.

22 Ibid., p. 457.

23 Ibid., pp. 457, 459.
Corey emphasizes the inability of private appropriation of socially produced wealth to solve the basic economic problem:

Capitalism and its class representatives will not release the forces of abundance [of which it was the historical creator] and abolish profit. They can be released only by socialism . . . mobilizing . . . for the overthrow of capitalism. So capitalism resorts to the "planned limitation" of output to preserve some measure of profit.2^ But the problem is simply exacerbated thereby. Prosperity may reappear temporarily, but it will be on a lower level. Eventually, the "tendency toward increasing misery resumes its full force."2^ Then, dominant institutional and ideological relations break down. The class-economic crisis becomes a class-ideological crisis. . . . Depressions are now a revolutionary force. . . . Thrust into action for elemental rights and on elemental issues, the proletariat and their allies broaden their action. . . . Into the arena of social war is thrown the ideological influence of the Soviet Union, where socialism is being built up while the capitalist world sinks deeper in the mire of economic and cultural decline and decay. As the crisis sharpens in all its aspects the struggle for power becomes sharper: evasions and compromises avail not, it is either communism and progress or fascism and reaction.2^
The ruling class responds to the sharpening crisis by resorting to state capitalism, defensive planning and fascism.

Corey reminds the reader that the "struggle for power aims to get control of the state. . . . No class gives up control of the state: it must be forcibly dispossessed." But the ruling class will not, does not, sit idly by. "Capitalism . . . enlarges the scope and use of state power."28

In the United States, which started with the most limited of governments and is still . . . considered free of the "statism" of benighted Europe, the reality is expressed in the defeat of the Jeffersonian idea of government by the Hamiltonian.29

Of course, the various forms of government intervention in economic activity which comprise state capitalism are designed partially to "aid capitalism to overcome [its internal] contradictions and antagonisms . . . to . . . 'compensate' the anarchy of production." Capitalism engages in planning in order to "prevent the capitalist system from completely breaking down." But it may act more aggressively in defense of the old order. That is to say, although the government may erect tariff barriers, subsidize certain industries, and regulate relations among industries in an attempt to "stabilize the disintegration of the old order," it also acts directly against the class enemies of

27Ibid., p. 491.
28Ibid.
29Ibid., p. 492.
30Ibid., p. 493.
31Ibid., p. 496.
capitalism, adopting various policies which "institutionalize" the subjection of labor.\textsuperscript{32}

State capitalism may make minor concessions to labor... But the aim is increasingly to limit the concrete democratic rights of the workers: the right to organize and strike, to act as an independent class, to struggle for a new social order. This is done by government control of labor, creating a whole network of institutional arrangements (as in pre-Hitler Germany) for the compulsory settlement of industrial disputes and the limitation of independent labor action. The labor policy of state capitalism is an expression of the capitalist struggle to retain power—to prevent labor developing its own struggle to seize power. (Italics his.)\textsuperscript{33}

Planning under capitalism consists in the "planned limitation of output," as capitalism cannot cope with modern industry's potential for abundance. "Planning is proposed to prevent cyclical depressions; but these are inherent in the relations of capitalist production."\textsuperscript{34}

A genuinely planned economy, which would "release . . . the collective forms and forces of production from their capitalist fetters, would involve "production for use, not profit."\textsuperscript{35} But, more importantly, a planned economy is possible only after the state power is forcibly wrested from the dominant bourgeois class, only after the dictatorship of the proletariat has destroyed the old social relations of production and set in motion the creation of the new. Liberals insist "we should learn" from the planned economy of the Soviet Union, but they separate it from its class-political accompaniments: they want "democracy" and peaceful change, they object to dictatorship. But planned economy functions in the Soviet Union only because of the dictatorship of the

\textsuperscript{32}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 495.

\textsuperscript{33}\textit{Ibid.}, pp. 496-97.

\textsuperscript{34}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 500.

\textsuperscript{35}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 503, 504.
proletariat, only because the dictatorship has overthrown capitalism [and thus] ... permits socialization of all economic activity.\footnote{Ibid., p. 504.}

Thus, half-way measures are ruled out; reformism is condemned. Far from being simply inevitable, socialism may be indefinitely postponed as capitalism experiments with bourgeois planning. "Only the revolutionary consciousness and action of the proletariat and the understanding, strategy, and tactics of its communist party make socialism inevitable." (Italics his.)\footnote{Ibid., p. 506.} As he argued in Revolutionary Socialism, Corey sees the key to desirable social change in a proletarian revolution, led by a communist party and resulting in the dictatorship of the proletariat. Genuine economic progress is impossible while private ownership of the means of production prevents the solution of major economic problems and inhibits modern industry's potential for creating abundance. And private ownership will remain until it is forced out of existence.

Having cited Daniel De Leon in support of his interpretation of the inevitability of socialism, Corey turns to Lenin to explain his conception of the party.\footnote{Corey quotes from Daniel De Leon, Two Pages From Roman History (1902), pp. 5, 54, 58-60, 88-9, and from V. I. Lenin, "Left" Wing Communism: An Infantile Disorder (1920), p. 31. Ibid., pp. 506-07.} Corey sees the necessity of an inflexibly revolutionary and disciplined party of the most conscious and militant workers, a communist party which, precisely because it is inflexibly agreed on fundamental purposes and means, can flexibly
approach the complex conditions under which the proletariat operates. . . .

Here, Corey differs with his earlier position in one significant respect. Although his view of the function of the party has, if anything, hardened, his choice of comrades is much less exclusive. No longer does Corey expend his energies vilifying the "aristocracy of labor."

The "conservative worker of to-day may become the revolutionary worker of to-morrow. [As] capitalism destroys all labor organizations . . . and . . . attempts to deprive the working class of all possibility of initiative and independent action," so a united labor struggle becomes both necessary and possible. (Italics his.)

Furthermore, the "immediate form of this struggle against the capitalist reaction . . . is a struggle to protect the concrete democratic rights of the workers. . . ." It is especially important that all segments of the working class form a united front against fascism.

In this way, fascism can be defeated; for it is not a necessary stage following capitalism or preceding socialism. It is not a new economic system. "The resort to fascism is an expression of capitalist desperation. . . . The 'corporate state' is merely a disguise for reactionary state capitalism. . . . It is capitalism brutal, . . . predatory . . . clinging to power by revival of political forms and

39 Ibid., p. 510.

40 Ibid., p. 511.

41 Ibid.
ideals which it once opposed with revolutionary vigor. And since fascism is a manifestation of declining capitalism, it cannot provide for the well-being of the citizens. It must lose its mass support and transform itself into a military dictatorship. Like capitalism, fascism must crumble and be replaced by socialism... eventually. But it is an avoidable interlude, the result of a failing capitalism and an unnecessarily inactive proletariat.

As additional evidence of the decline of capitalism, Corey cites the "crisis of faith in the old order," a crisis of faith in the ideals of the American dream. His aim is to demonstrate the irremediable discrepancy between the ideal and reality: irremediable, that is, while capitalism persists. This discussion is particularly helpful in that he not only sets out, for the first time, a rather detailed description of his conception of the ideals in question, but accepts them, with reservations, as valid principles which should be incorporated into the future socialist society.

Ten ideals are listed and defined. Each is discussed according to a convenient formula. There follows a brief statement, comparing their grim fate under capitalism with bright prospects for their realization under communism. The ten constituent ideals of the American dream are:

1. **Liberty**: The right of the individual to live his own life in his own way (of which an earlier expression was freedom of conscience); tolerance as a way of life...
2. **Democracy**: The right of the people to decide their

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own destiny in their own interests and in their own way; faith in the creative initiative and action of free men and women. . . .

3. Equality: The right of all to an equal share in the fruits of progress regardless of origins; differences of racial or biological inheritance do not justify social inequality and class oppression or exclude any people from the highest forms of civilization. . . .

4. Mass well-being: The right of all to the good things of life, particularly the right of the mass of the people to share, and share increasingly, in the conquests of industry and civilization; the abolition of poverty. . . .

5. Opportunity: The right to an equal share in economic and political opportunity, whose perpetual rebirth was assumed, unrestricted by origins; in its more subtle forms, an aspiration after higher things. . . .

6. Education: The right to an education and faith in education as the means for personal improvement and progressive solution of social problems; the creator of new and finer ways of life. . . .

7. No class stratification: The right to move freely from one class to another, including a disregard of class distinctions which colored American life and made it impatient of traditional restraint. . . .

8. Limited government: The right to minimum interference by the state and faith in the creative action of the people; opposition to bureaucracy as a heritage of monarchy. . . .

9. Peace: The right to peace and the peaceful settlement of disputes; monarchical tyranny means war, while democracy moves toward universal peace. . . .

10. Progress: The right and possibility of unlimited progress, the synthesis of all the preceding ideals; a steady, inevitable upward movement to new and finer fulfillments. . . .

With one exception, all of these ideals were originally expressions of the bourgeois revolt against feudalism. The exception, "mass well-being," was not "of bourgeois origin; it was created primarily by the upthrust of the masses and the ideology of the labor movement

43 Ibid., pp. 520, 521, 523, 525, 526, 528, 532, 533 (numbers 8 and 9), 535 respectively. All the definitions were italicized in the text but have been left unitalicized for the sake of visual clarity.
arising out of the conditions of capitalist development." All of the ideals were necessarily limited in their conception or their realization (or both) because of the limitations inherent in capitalism and those which emerged in the course of the development of capitalist society. Liberty, for example, was limited initially because it was "identified with the possession of property." Nevertheless, it was, as an ideal, a "great achievement of civilization." In addition to its expression of "the right to move freely in an economic and social sense," it acquired "its own loftier meaning: the right to doubt . . . to revolt, to create new forms of living in preference to the old." As capitalism declined, however, "the earlier relations of liberty and individualism based upon the possession of independent property or the ease of acquiring it" were destroyed. And in the final stages of capitalism's collapse, as state capitalism and fascism arise, liberty is actively suppressed in the course of their stifling discontent and increasing authoritarian or totalitarian controls.

To a great extent, Corey explains, the popular conception of these ideals becomes progressively restricted. To a greater extent, the ideals themselves become increasingly "unrealizable in practice." Yet, they linger on "primarily as a cultural lag: for ideals may persist and affect social action after the material conditions of their origin are no more." As the gap between the ideal and the real becomes

44 Ibid., p. 525.
more blatantly demonstrated, however, the "faith of the million-masses begins to crumble." Hence, the "Crisis of the American Dream." The crisis is significant primarily in that it prepares the subjective conditions of fundamental social change. For the objective clash between the old and the new order must become a conscious class struggle, which transforms the quantity of accumulated social-economic changes into the quality of revolutionary action. A class, in this case the proletariat, cannot become revolutionary and perform its historic task until it has broken the ideological fetters of the old order [and replaced] the old faith with its own consciousness and ideals.

This done, capitalism may be overthrown and the dictatorship of the proletariat established, as "only the dictatorship of the proletariat can uproot capitalist relations, suppress any upsurge of reactionary elements, and set in motion an uninterrupted movement toward the new social order of socialism." Corey hurriedly adds the reassurance that "communism considers the dictatorship of the proletariat as wholly temporary and functional, necessary only to consolidate the revolutionary power and create the relations of the new social order." He sees no incompatibility, as he will at a later date, in the two objectives: the establishment of a proletarian dictatorship and the realization of the ideals of the American dream. This is explained partially insofar as he envisions a communist proletariat which "wants to transform and

46 Ibid., p. 515.
47 Ibid., p. 538.
48 Ibid., p. 539.
49 Ibid.
realize [these ideals] in the new and finer fulfillments of socialism.  

The realization of these ideals is ultimately dependent upon, and therefore their new meaning must be couched in terms of, the elimination of all "elements and limitations identified with class exploitation and property."51 Thus revised, the ideals are defined as follows:

Liberty and individualism are deprived of all meaning in terms of economic individualism and the liberty of one class to exploit another. . . . Democracy is proletarian democracy, embracing the immense majority of the people [and] made complete and habitual by socialism. . . . The abolition of classes makes possible the abolition of social inequality: first the . . . inequality of capitalism, and then the lesser inequality of the socialist transition period. Differences of individual endowment do not give the right or the power to exploit others, but are merely the source of variations in the human and cultural symphony of society. . . .

Mass well-being: it is the primary objective, no longer limited by class rule and profit. . . . Opportunity ceases to be identified with rising over the masses or the acquisition of property: it is a mass opportunity to share in life fully. . . . Education, its class fetters broken, is creative mass preparation for a way of life, the union of labor and culture. Its scope grows . . . with abundance and leisure mass participation in higher learning moves on until it is universal. Socialism is mastery of the world and life; hence the emphasis on education. . . . There is no class stratification, as classes are abolished. . . . Where capitalism starts with the "ideal" of limited government and ends with the all-devouring "totalitarian" state of fascism, socialism starts with the dictatorship of the proletariat and ends with the dissolution of the state into the community of integrally organized producers, manual and mental. For socialism needs a state only so long as there is capitalist reaction to suppress, national and international. . . . Peace ceases being merely an aspiration; it is fully realizable when class-economic antagonisms are wiped out on a world scale. . . . Progress, freed of its class limitations and

50 Ibid., p. 538.
51 Ibid., p. 539.
antagonisms, acquires a new spirit, becomes the object of deliberate aspiration, planning, and fulfillment. Culture, always limited and exclusive and now threatened by capitalism decline, experiences an immense quantitative and qualitative upsurge.52

"That," says Corey, "is the promise of the proletarian revolution and communism."53 It is a promise which can be realized since its "elements already exist, alongside their reactionary opposites, within capitalist society. . . . They need only to be released."54

That they can be released is the central argument of the final chapter. Corey formulates a theory of revolution in which he contradicts those who "insist that revolution is alien to the traditions of the American people."55 Not only do we have a revolutionary tradition, but, more important, all the factors necessary for a revolution are present in American society. He devotes a large part of the discussion to a refutation of the contention that because "the American labor movement has no Marxist or revolutionary traditions," it could not be favorably disposed to revolutionary action. Even "if it were true [that such a tradition does not exist, it] is not particularly relevant. Revolutions do not arise because of revolutionary traditions

52 Ibid., pp. 539-40.
53 Ibid., p. 540.
54 Ibid.
55 Ibid., p. 541.
... they may arise without any traditions."^56 Corey considers a
number of factors which seem to belie the possibility of revolution
(all quite "explicable in terms of concrete application of the Marxist
conception") as well as those which clearly presage capitalism's de-
cline and fall. Denying neither the absolute desirability nor the
imminence of a communist victory, he does, finally, list some "specific
'special' problems" which must be solved before communism can triumph.
These are mentioned in the last two pages of the book. Quite obvious­
ly, Corey does not regard them as sufficiently serious obstacles to
warrant the slightest inhibition of his enthusiasm or optimism.

The actions of the Colonial immigrants, the Puritans, "the revolu­
tional American bourgeoisie," the participants in Shay's Rebellion,
and even the Civil War itself, all testify to the fact that "revolu­tion
has played a decisive part in American development."^57 Corey ob­
jects to the "bourgeois student of revolution [who] portrays their
characteristics in meaningless social-psychological terms" such as
"pious" (the Puritan revolution), "mild" (the American revolution), or
"ferocious" (the French revolution). Rather, he says, "in terms of
history and sociology the 'natural history' of revolutions must include:

don: George Allen and Unwin, 1949), pp. 200-63. Laski argues along
similar lines, but in behalf of an American labor party rather than a
proletarian revolution. That is, he discounts the various interpre­
tations of American labor which attempt to demonstrate the fundamental
conservatism of the labor movement, its middle rather than genuinely
working class orientation, and the general uncongeniality of America
to class politics.

57Corey, Decline, pp. 541-42.
1. the general character of revolutions, the aspects which determine their unity in cause, purpose and means . . . [and] 2. the specific character of revolutions, the aspects which determine their diversity in cause, purpose, and means." (Italics his.)

Thus, while revolutions "are an historical series, one revolution arising and succeeding another out of the same general conditions . . . [there are] differences distinguishing one revolution from another in class make-up, purposes, and operating conditions."b

"The general unity of revolutions appears in the fact that they are a completion of fundamental social-economic changes," the basis of which is the clash between new and old forms of production. The clash between antagonistic technologies has economic, cultural and political repercussions, however: "old and new forms and relations of production clash; . . . the dominant culture and ideology [of] the older relations of production, class interests and class rule . . . [confront] the cultural and ideological revolt of the class representing the new relations of production; [and finally, the two opposing classes struggle for] . . . retention or conquest of political power." There are "long-time" and "short-time" factors which operate within the revolutionary process, the former creating and the latter aggravating the "contradictions and antagonisms arising out of . . . [the] clash between the old and new forms and relations of production."c

58 Ibid., p. 543.

59 Ibid.

60 Ibid., pp. 543-44.
Diversity is found "in the means adopted to accomplish the purpose and in the forms of the new order." Class alignments, their general character and techniques of opposition change with changes in the society's technical-economic foundations. In that the "bourgeois revolution meant the rise to power of another propertied, exploiting class," it is distinguished from the proletarian revolution which eliminates private property, exploitation and, therefore, class rule: the forms of the "new orders" are fundamentally different. "One of the most important aspects of the diversity of revolution is an acceleration of the revolutionary process, progressively shortening the intervals between one revolution and another." (Italics his.)^61 The tempo of the revolutionary process has quickened over the centuries, objectively (the accelerating pace of technical-economic changes) and subjectively (the increasingly conscious and purposive nature of the class in revolt).

There was no awareness of the purposes and means of revolution in the ancient world. Awareness appears in the bourgeois revolutions, if incompletely and mainly in the later phases. The conscious and purposive factors appear completely only in the proletarian revolution, for Marxism-Leninism, which is communism, is scientifically aware of the laws of social development . . . [and] acts upon class-economic forces to accomplish its purposes. It is no longer . . . a case of the impact of social forces upon revolutionary purposes and means, but of the impact as well of purposes and means upon social forces. Awareness becomes itself a social force. . . . Bolshevik awareness, [for example, managed] to accelerate the revolutionary process. . . . Marxism is a form of social engineering. Man, the worker,

^61 Ibid., pp. 544-45.
As suggested earlier, Corey's analysis of the American labor movement is designed to prove that, although labor has been distinguished by its conservatism, it is nevertheless a potentially revolutionary force. The strong tendency toward craft or "exclusive unionism and the backward character of the labor movement were perpetuated by hangovers of an older ideology which had become institutionalized and bureaucratized . . .;"); but these hangovers are being negated by the pressures of a declining capitalism. Socialism must increase, however, as labor is increasingly mistreated by a desperate ruling class. Agrarian and petty-bourgeois radicalism can no longer dilute the revolutionary impulses of the working class as monopoly capitalism matures: agriculture is industrialized and the middle class is transformed. Agrarian radicalism is dead. The middle class has been divided into upper and lower strata. The lower middle class, composed of technical, managerial and supervisory employees as well as small producers and storekeepers, "has not the strength" to

62 Ibid., p. 547.
63 Ibid., p. 557
64 Ibid., p. 556.
revolt against trustified capitalism;^65 the upper middle class "has not the desire." The working class, on the other hand, "is now the largest and economically most important class. . . ." Furthermore, although

once it could be said: revolutionary movements are not possible in the United States because there is no class stratification, as in Europe, American class stratification is now definite and final. The new class relations and balance of class power permit the working class to separate itself ideologically from all other classes in conformity with its objective separation.^66

And now,

under the conditions of economic decline, intensified class struggle, and an influx of new members, the unions are becoming stronger, more militant, moving toward industrial unionism, responding to new conditions and new tasks.^67

The "American working class repeatedly demonstrated its capacity for militant struggle" in the past. ^68 "Militant struggles will break loose again . . . [and] the working class will increasingly accept the program of its conscious representatives, the communists."^69

Here, the reader catches a glimpse of the class analysis which is to be the subject of Corey's next book, The Crisis of the Middle Class. Although he rejects the possibility of an independent revolutionary role for the lower middle class, Corey does claim that "the functional groups in the lower bourgeoisie--the technicians, teachers, professionals--can be approached on the basis of their functional interests; they are increasingly unemployed and only socialism can re-release their craft function for social service." ^Ibid., p. 562.

^65 Ibid., p. 564.
^66 Ibid., p. 567.
^67 Ibid., p. 568.
^68 Ibid., p. 567.
^69 Ibid., p. 570.
The awakening of the working class to the necessity of independent political action "may at first mean a labor party." But a labor party would be inappropriate. It presents infinitely more problems than it solves. Organization of a labor party means simply that the masses are in motion, that they accept independent political action, and are prepared for larger objectives. These larger objectives must inevitably become a revolutionary struggle for the overthrow of capitalism, which laborism has proven itself incapable of waging. That is the task of the communist party and its Marxist program, disciplined organization, and awareness of purposes and means, unifying all phases of the proletarian struggle.

This is not to deny the presence of many "special problems," with which the communist party would have to deal. Among others, Corey lists the necessity of an intensive and variegated ideological struggle to overcome the lingering cultural lag in the consciousness of the American workers . . . [; the] limited minority character of American unions as essentially organs of the aristocracy of labor, the unusual [sic] petty-bourgeois spirit and corruption of their bureaucracy, the necessity . . . of revolutionizing these unions . . . [; the need to unify] the struggle of the Negro in its racial and class aspects . . . [; the problem of] mobilizing the farmers . . . [; the] belated development of radical social consciousness among the American intellectuals, their relation to various class groupings, particularly the new middle class, clarification of their function in the movement . . . [; and the] creation of an American Marxist literature, the inadequacy of which more than anything else creates the illusion that communism is "alien" to the American scene.

Corey concludes his study on a positive note:

The American revolution is necessary. . . . It is the

70 Ibid., p. 567.
71 Ibid.
72 Ibid., pp. 573-74.
fulfillment of history, of its progressive struggles and aspirations. American civilization depends upon communist revolution, and, given the dominant economic position of the United States, the victory of the American working class will make a mighty contribution to the building of world socialism and a new world civilization.73

One might well assume that the conclusion, like the study as a whole, would meet the most rigorous standards of the most militant communist critic. Such an assumption would be mistaken. Very soon after the publication of Decline of American Capitalism, the Communist Party issued its official evaluation of the book in the form of Alex Bittelman's and V. J. Jerome's sixty-four page pamphlet, Leninism—The Only Marxism Today.74 The position of the authors is summed up early in the review:

we have in the book both Marxism-Leninism and—something which is not that. But the two do not blend; for Leninism, as Stalin characterized it with epigrammatic force, is the only Marxism of the imperialist era. The result is: wherever Mr. Corey adheres to Leninism (as, on the question of the N.R.A.), he handles the factual material correctly and reaches correct conclusions, confirming the Communist Party position. But, as he departs from Leninism by adding to it elements of other theories, he brings about confusion and weakens his proposition that American capitalism is in decline.75

The fact that Corey espoused an abstract communism was, apparently, insufficient compensation for his not declaring allegiance to, and recognizing the infallibility of, the Communist Party of America. The

73 Ibid., p. 574.


75 Ibid., pp. 6-7.
overall impression which one gets from the Bittelman-Jerome critique is that they were bound and determined to show the inadequacy of an analysis which, in spite of its being intended to "corroborate the Communist Party position," does not subscribe precisely to official party policies and, thus, cannot bear the official party imprimatur.

It is understandable, if not altogether justified, that the authors of the review should criticize Corey for his imprecision regarding the course of revolution in America. Similarly, they object to his emphasis on the necessity of an exhaustion of capitalist resources preceding a proletarian upheaval. Characterizing his notion as "Leninism with traces of Luxemburgism," they argue against the theory of capitalist accumulation which permits "bourgeois critics" to agree with his analysis of economic expansion while rejecting his revolutionary conclusions. Such critics, they claim, may simply insist that capitalism still has many economic worlds to conquer; therefore, economic exhaustion is remote and revolution is both unnecessary and unlikely.  

On the other hand, Bittelman and Jerome are plainly wrong when they say that Corey "falls into the confusion of seeing in the factors making for a rising standard of living, factors that check progressive misery." Corey does not confuse "the law of increasing misery with the question of higher or lower wages." It is true that he associ-

76 Ibid., pp. 7-11.
78 Ibid.
ates misery with lower wages; but he also associates it with the general incapacity of capitalism to provide for the distribution of goods and services according to function. He repeatedly condemns capitalism for its inability to resolve the antagonism between private appropriation and collective production; i.e., its inability to do without exploitation.\(^7^9\)

\(^7^9\) Corey, *Decline*, pp. 460-88. That Corey was amply aware of this problem is borne out by his having dealt with it earlier in *Revolutionary Socialism*. It is worth quoting at length from that work, as the same point is made only by implication in *Decline*. He did not change his view in the years between the writing of the two books.

"Many a vulgar bourgeois economist, and here and there a Socialist, has maintained that the 'theory of increasing misery' was an essential doctrine of Marxian Socialism. It is not. [Increasing misery] is a tendency of Capitalism ... [but] it is not in any sense a necessary condition for the ... Revolution. Moreover, there is not any sufficiency of material to decide whether poverty is lessening or not. ... Who will deny, however, that a society which produces such a holocaust as the war does, even should it better conditions of living, intensify the mass of misery, oppression, [etc.]? On the general problem, L. B. Boudin's *The Theoretical System of Karl Marx* has an interesting passage: 'Marx does not speak of the growth of the poverty of the working class. The omission of any reference to poverty is very significant in so careful a writer as Marx. This growing poverty of the working class is a necessary result of the evolution of Capitalism.... The lot of the laborer, his general condition as a member of society, must grow worse with the accumulation of capital, no matter whether his wages are high or low. His poverty, in the ordinary sense of that word, depends upon the amount of wages he gets, but not his social condition. And for two reasons. In the first place, because the social condition of any man or class can only be determined by a comparison with the rest of the members or classes of that society. It is not an absolute but a relative quantity. Even the question of poverty is a relative one, and changes from time to time with the change of circumstances. But the question of social condition can never be determined except by a reference to the other class of society. This is decided not by the absolute amount of worldly goods which they receive in all the worldly goods possessed by society. Thus considered, it will be found that the gulf between the capitalists and the working man is constantly growing wider. This is admitted by all as an empirical fact." *Revolutionary Socialism*, p. 78.
At one juncture, Corey is accused of faint-heartedness on the basis of his having changed the first letters of "communist party" from capitals to lower case! He had used capitals when some of the material for the book first appeared in the Modern Quarterly.

Can it be that the whole matter is chargeable to the printer's devil, or perhaps, in these days of modernism, to orthographic reform? How then shall we explain the... modification... to be noted in comparing two identical passages, one in the magazine referred to, the other in the book?

Corey's guilt is certified when it is noted that he also changed "Communist International" to "international communism."

No longer mere orthographic reform. We have here a reform not of the letter, but of the spirit of the thing—a reform that amounts to a change of heart! What has occurred since 1932 to engender in Mr. Corey a pluralistic concept of the Communist Party and to cause him to dismiss the Communist International as unifier, by its strategy and tactics, of all forms of the revolutionary struggle?

It is difficult to take seriously the accusation of orthographic deviationism; but Corey's critics may have been on to something nevertheless. His shying away from publicizing Communist Party causes (there were many available and he had many opportunities to do so in the course of the book), and his subtle but evidently purposeful disassociation from existing communist organizations suggest several things. Perhaps Corey felt that he would be more effective if he was not regarded as an official spokesman of the party. Perhaps he was demonstrating

80 Bittelman and Jerome, Leninism, p. 63.
81 Ibid.
his displeasure with communism as it was then constituted. Yet, it was not Corey, but representatives of the party, who pointed out the differences between them. This may simply have been a case of two conflicting conceptions of communism: the party's emerging out of organizational and political necessity; Corey's arising out of abstract formulations and consequently, because of its not having to conform to the requirements of bureaucratic and political practices, ultimately evidencing its incompatibility with the official version.\textsuperscript{82} If the party's communism was, in fact, the only one possible, Corey had, in The Decline of American Capitalism, effectively demonstrated his unacceptability as a communist. Certainly, his next book did not improve his status in that regard; but neither did it detract. The Crisis of the Middle Class followed, in almost every major respect, from the arguments contained in Decline. If the two communisms in question were incompatible, this book merely made the incompatibility somewhat more apparent.

IV

The crisis of the middle class is due primarily to the "constant decrease in the ownership of independent small property, which was its

\textsuperscript{82}There is another possibility: the party would have been constrained to find fault with Corey's work regardless of its content because to have accepted "independent" communist opinion would have constituted a politically unsound and theoretically dangerous admission that analytical and tactical truths could exist outside the vanguard party.
economic basis as a class. 83 In other words, it is a crisis of survival. For generations, the middle class had engaged in a struggle for power, against feudalism and the remnants of feudalism, against monopoly, and for a democracy of small property. Its actions embodied the ideals of "liberty and equality of men owning their independent means of livelihood."84 With industrialization, however, came monopolization and increasingly limited opportunities for small enterprisers.

There arose agrarian and middle class radical opposition to monopoly capitalism, but

the anti-monopoly movement was self-destructive . . . for it was entangled in irreconcilable contradictions: only by stifling technical-economic progress which drove on to large-scale production, was it possible to realize the aims of the . . . radicals. A society of small producers meant a low level of economic efficiency and low standards of living. While small producers opposed the new forms of capitalism, they accepted its essential relations: production for profit and the market, freedom of enterprise and competition. Out of these relations arose big property of the old merchant capitalists and the still bigger property of the new industrial capitalists. Middle class democracy, identified with freedom of enterprise and competition, created its own doom. . . .

There occurred a "fundamental structural change in capitalism: . . . from personal enterprise to institutional enterprise, to collective


84 Corey, Crisis, p. 114.

85 Ibid., pp. 117-18.
forms of economic activity." By 1929, "concentration and trustification were overwhelming." Wilson's New Freedom had been the "final expression of the revolt of the middle class." The struggle of the middle class was ultimately "hopeless because monopoly arose out of underlying economic conditions."

Structural changes in the middle class itself "made the struggle against monopoly still more futile." By the 1900's, the "society of independent producers was almost completely destroyed. . . . Formerly minority elements in the middle class became its majority. Dependent salaried employees now greatly outnumbered the independent enterprisers." This signalled the defeat of the middle class as it had been previously constituted. In response, the old middle class "abandons the struggle against monopoly and strives merely for survival. . . . Eager for security . . . within a 'controlled' capitalism, [it] becomes the defender of a new authoritarianism." The new middle class, on the other hand, contains elements which are not thoroughly reactionary. To be sure, among the salaried employees and professionals, representing the "dominant system of economic collectivism," there are those "upper layers," close to the big bourgeoisie, who "assimilate

86 Ibid., pp. 132.
87 Ibid., p. 135.
88 Ibid.
89 Ibid., p. 137.
91 Ibid., pp. 146-47.
the authoritarianism of the monopolist" class. But the "lower layers . . . waver between democracy and reaction," and it is to them that Corey directs his appeal,92

If and when their economic interests drive the masses of lower salaried employees (and professionals) to struggle for a new social order, they must necessarily unite with the larger class of proletariat. The struggle for a new social order proceeds outside the circle of the middle class, whether old or new, [Thus, if they are to be effective,] . . . the lower salaried employees must split off consciously from the middle class, as they are already split off economically, . . . accept the implications of collectivism* and unite with the workers and the poorer farmers.

. . . 93

Corey goes on to explain the "increasingly social character of labor, . . . [the] complex network of cooperative institutional relations [which is modern industry, and] the drive of industry toward the more efficient collective forms of economic activity [which have caused] the extinction of independent small enterprisers."94 This

92Ibid., pp. 147, 165.

93Ibid., pp. 165, 170.

94Ibid., pp. 174, 178-79. Corey employs many of the same arguments concerning decentralization which he used more than twenty years before in his dispute with the syndicalists: "It is often argued that large-scale industry may exceed the optimum size capable of yielding the greatest efficiency. That is very often true, but the optimum is always beyond the limit of small-scale enterprise. Another argument is that electric power permits a decentralization of industry. That is true, but it would not mean a restoration of petty industry. Moreover, decentralization is impossible under capitalism because of its predatory vested interests and its inability planfully to unite industry and agriculture. A new social order would realize a large measure of decentralization, within, however, the flexible and creative collectivism of the unity of all industry and labor. And it would destroy the network of dependent relations which merely serves the exploiting needs of monopoly capitalism." Ibid., p. 179.
collectivism should not, indeed it cannot, be destroyed. It is "capable of liberating mankind." It has, however, "become the basis of predatory capitalism under the control of a small oligarchy of great capitalists." But "collective forms of economic activity are not in accord with the relations of private ownership and appropriation." Fortunately, for the future of civilization, "... a change is needed simply in the capitalist relations of collectivism to transform it into socialism."

That transformation is being accelerated by the decline of capitalism. Corey summarizes the major points included in his previously published study of American capitalism and then adds some remarks on the "increasing misery [which now] affects large groups of the middle class." Small manufacturers, shopkeepers, lower salaried employees, clerical employees, technicians, teachers, intellectuals, and farmers are all suffering as a result of the decline of capitalism. Some are caught in the hopeless struggle merely "to survive and protect the property which they may still own." This is one component of the crisis of the middle class. The other, the crisis of employment, involves the lower salaried employees and professionals; and, "in all its

95 Ibid., p. 187.
96 Ibid., p. 190.
97 Ibid., p. 192.
98 Ibid., p. 222.
99 Ibid., p. 228.
fundamentals, is identical with the crisis of the workers."

As things stand, "ownership of all forms of productive property is extraordinarily limited. . . . [It will be] impossible to prevent the annihilation of independent small property." Thus, the interests of the propertiless dependents of capitalism, including the proletariat and the masses of lower salaried employees and professionals, are bound up with the conversion of social property now privately owned into social property owned by the community of labor. Socialization of productive property, by liberating economic forces, means a multiplication of personal property for the exclusive use of the individual.

But before these "lower layers" of the middle class can become aware of the implications of their plight, they must become conscious of its fundamental character. In fact, they have been proletarianized: poorly paid, insecure, they are exposed to "all the rigors of depression." Being propertyless, they cannot, economically or logically, be included in the new middle class. The masses of lower salaried employees and professionals are "economically and functionally a part of the working class: a 'new' proletariat . . . [whereas] the 'new' middle class can include only the higher salaried employees, . . . managerial and supervisory, who perform the capitalist functions of exploiting the workers, have incomes substantially above the proletarian level and are owners of property." Corey refers to a category of "useful

100 Ibid., p. 229.
101 Ibid., pp. 236, 239.
102 Ibid., p. 241.
103 Ibid., p. 259.
functional groups within the new middle class." Evidently, the "new proletariat" is drawn only from the lower economic levels of this group.

The new proletariat, including the intellectuals, "may absorb, against its own economic interests, the middle class sense of superiority and caste . . . [and can thus be] exploited by fascism." Although the "intermediate functional groups are overwhelmingly proletarian in their economic conditions, . . . there is still an ideological barrier" between them and the working class. But, if these groups are to free themselves, they "must recognize their identity with labor." Ultimately, the "only answer to the increasing misery of capitalist decline and the menace of fascism is the communist struggle for the overthrow of capitalism and the transformation of collectivism into socialism." The new proletariat must come to see that this is their struggle, but they can join it "only as they recognize that they are part of the working class."

Corey finds the "menace of fascism" and its appeal to disaffected elements of the middle class sufficiently important to warrant extensive analysis and commentary. Fascism, he begins, is a response to capitalist decline.

104 Ibid., pp. 262-63.
105 Ibid., p. 276.
106 Ibid., p. 269.
107 Ibid., p. 271. Corey also notes that even Veblen, who originated the idea of a "revolution by engineers," made it "conditional on the support of the workers. . . ." Ibid.
The old democratic methods of rule break down: new methods are necessary. . . . Out of breakdown, popular discontent and revolt, the big bourgeoisie must create new sanctions for itself and its rule. . . . Fascism, using radical phrases and middle class action, provides the ideological justification, the "popular" sanctions and the mass support to suppress violently all progressive forces and prevent the transformation of collectivism into socialism. . . . Fascism exploits the social pathology of declining capitalism. . . . Underlying [its] growth is the declining faith in capitalism of the petty-bourgeois masses and the revolt against their misery. . . .

The task of fascism, Corey continues is
to recreate the faith and transform the revolt into a support of monopoly capitalism. . . . [It] must clothe itself in plebeian garb to gain popular following . . . [but] the concrete purposes of fascism are all acceptable and necessary to monopoly capitalism. . . . Behind the anti-capitalist demagogy lies the reality of capitalist objectives and control. . . . Fascism comes to power with the consent of the bureaucratic capitalist state.\textsuperscript{109}

Fascism may delay the overthrow of capitalism, but it cannot prevent its decline, decay and eventual demise. It "offers nothing new economically. Its policy is merely old state capitalism, only more of it."\textsuperscript{110} In spite of this, the "middle class rallies to fascism to defend the 'natural right' to property [but] is then increasingly deprived of that right. Again, the fatal contradiction: the rights of property include the right of big property to trample upon the smaller."\textsuperscript{111}

As fascism "fails to solve the economic problem, [it] must increasingly resort to suppression . . . to 'organize' the disintegration

\begin{footnotes}
\item[108] Ibid., pp. 285, 287.
\item[109] Ibid., pp. 287-93.
\item[110] Ibid., p. 295.
\item[111] Ibid., p. 300.
\end{footnotes}
and decay of capitalist decline."¹¹² Eventually, "the fascist dictatorship and its bureaucracy . . . determine policy in their own interests and become independent of all responsibility to other social factors. . . . What happens under fascism to the middle class [as well as to the workers and farmers] is a continuation of what happens in democratic nations under the conditions of capitalist decline, only worse."¹¹³

Corey next compares fascist and Jacobin "use of petty-bourgeois masses to fight for the interests of the whole bourgeoisie and of capitalism."¹¹⁴ The significant difference between them is that fascism is reactionary, whereas Jacobinism was progressive. Capitalism itself was progressive. It helped to build civilization. But, "civilizations do decay; they may relapse into barbarism. . . . The decline of capitalism means a reaction against its contributions to civilization, against its own values and achievements."¹¹⁵ Of course, capitalism's "real contribution to progress is the development of economic and cultural conditions out of which a new social order may arise."¹¹⁶ Underlying capitalist progress "was the multiplication of . . . productive forces [which] held the promise of abundance . . . and higher cultural

¹¹² Ibid., pp. 307-08.
¹¹³ Ibid., p. 309.
¹¹⁴ Ibid., p. 310.
¹¹⁵ Ibid., p. 318.
¹¹⁶ Ibid., p. 322.
levels. But as capitalism declines, capitalists resort to defensive limitations on production, "which means the deliberate destruction of that promise." Economic progress is repressed. Technology and science are stifled. But "more important . . . is the disastrous impact on the spirit of culture . . . . The limited [existing] forms of liberty, equality and democracy are limited still more . . . . Education is increasingly restricted . . . . The final result is the revolt against rationalism . . . . Capitalism now revolts against its own creation, the idea of progress," against which it must revolt if it is to survive. Corey explains:

The liberals meant by progress a steady upward movement, uninterrupted and irresistible, and insisted that capitalism was moving of its own momentum to higher things. But capitalism itself destroyed that illusion. The early socialist, Fourier, argued that every social order moves downward as well as upward; Marxism, moreover, made progress conditional on the purposive revolutionary action of the class in society embodying the forms of a new social order: the proletariat. Liberals rejected the arguments, but they are now proven by the decline of capitalism and the dependence of progress on class action to transform capitalist collectivism into socialism. Hence capitalism must revolt against progress to survive. Reactionary intellectuals justify that revolt by damming progress as "wishful thinking" and the romantic legacy of Rousseau. American sociologists reject the term progress and prefer "social change" because it is "free from dogmatic or moral implications." But there is progress in social change: not mechanical, but an expression of the dialectic movement of social forces. The decline of capitalism is not a disproval of progress: it merely means that capitalism has exhausted its progressive drive. Within capitalism are all the elements of progress, created by capitalism itself: collectivism and its class-cultural

117 Ibid., pp. 322-23.

118 Ibid., p. 324.
accompaniments. Progress is now dependent on the struggle for a new social order. (Italics his.)\textsuperscript{119}

The "exhaustion of capitalism's progressive drive" now takes the form of fascism which, as the expression of a declining social system, offers a "striking parallel to the decline of Roman civilization."\textsuperscript{120} Corey describes fascism as "the new Caesarism," a phrase which he borrows from Spengler. Corey regards it as the antithesis of the Enlightenment tradition, a threat to the very existence of civilization; but he rejects the "meretriciously magnificent resignation of Spenglerism." The death of civilization is not inevitable. He reiterates the notion that capitalism's decline is "a dialectic process," adding a paean to the future and its chief harbinger:

It is because [the] new order is increasingly emergent that capitalism resorts to fascism. But life revolts against death. The forces of life rally to the revolutionary struggle for the new order: life is already triumphant over death in the developing socialism of the Soviet Union. Man, the worker, will progress and fights for it.\textsuperscript{121}

The final chapter, "The Middle Class and Socialism," begins with a restatement of what is obviously Corey's fundamental concern:

Socialism, in its simplest terms, is the liberation of the capacity to produce abundance by transforming capitalist collective into socialist collectivism.\textsuperscript{122}


\textsuperscript{120}\textit{Tbid.}, p. 326.

\textsuperscript{121}\textit{Tbid.}, p. 331.

\textsuperscript{122}\textit{Tbid.}, pp. 333-34.
But the coming of socialism, he continues, "is not automatic; it meets with unrelenting resistance." Nevertheless, it will come, because of the nature of existing classes: their individual characteristics, structural configuration, and peculiar interrelationships. The actions of classes will bring about socialism; and having described them, Corey then predicts how they will act in the course of meeting their historic obligation.

1. There is a class struggle, a struggle for social dominance between "the two great antagonists: the proletariat and the big bourgeoisie."  

2. "The working class grows as collectivism grows," and comes to include the "'new' proletariat of lower salaried employees and professionals, the useful functional groups in the middle class." The struggle of the proletariat also represents the interests of the smaller enterprisers. In fact, the "struggle of the proletariat includes the interests and [seeks] the liberation of all oppressed elements in the middle class." Corey distinguishes between "petty enterprisers and independent small farmers" on the one hand, and the "masses of lower salaried employees and professionals" on the other: the latter "are part of the working class . . . because of their economically

123 Ibid., p. 335.
124 Ibid., p. 339.
125 Ibid., p. 336.
126 Ibid., p. 341.
127 Ibid., p. 342.
proletarian condition, their identification with collectivism, and the necessity of their labor under socialism [ whereas the former are considered merely] allies of the working class [ since their] condition is not economically proletarian and [ they] are not wholly identified with collectivism, but [ their] oppression identifies their immediate and final interests with the struggle of the working class and socialism. 128

3. There is competition for support of the lower layers of the middle class. The "new" proletariat may "rally, at first, to . . . the old middle class. But they are drawn to the issues and forms of action of the working class under pressure of unemployment, lower salaries and speed-up. . . . As they break loose from the ideological influence of the middle class, [ the lower salaried employees and professionals] are forced to adopt proletarian forms of action: unions, strikes, [ etc.], all moving toward the communist struggle for power and socialism—the final logic of their proletarianization and identification with collectivism. 129

4. The struggle of the proletariat becomes a struggle for political power, for control of the state. Reforms are too costly. . . . Capitalist violence is used to prevent the gradual construction of socialism. . . . The institutional weight of capitalism acts against the workers unless its political power is destroyed. . . . Communism drives toward the conquest of political power. . . . This is the indispensable beginning of the construction of socialism. 130

128 Ibid., p. 344.
129 Ibid.
130 Ibid., p. 339.
The final uncompromisable issue . . . is fascism or communism, the fascist dictatorship or the communist dictatorship of the proletariat . . . . The transfer of political power from the capitalist class to the working class, a sharp revolutionary break, is the culmination of previously gradual class-economic change and makes possible the gradual building of socialism. 131

"What becomes of the middle class under socialism?" The old middle class disappears, their functions absorbed in the fuller collectivisation and socialization of industry, while the useful functional groups in the "new" middle class—economically and socially the "new" proletariat—are absorbed in the community of labor. . . . [Socialism] needs increasingly larger numbers of clerical . . . managerial and supervisory workers. As economic activity more fully realizes the promise of technology, completely automatic production, it becomes more and more an activity of organization, management and supervision. But when managerial and supervisory functions are stripped of their exploiting capitalist relations, their performance becomes wholly a form of productive social labor. 132

What is more, as workers are "increasingly converted into technicians," they are required to be more alert, intelligent, technically literate and technologically flexible. "This is of the utmost cultural significance, for it breaks down the distinction between manual and mental labor." 133 Corey cites Engels' assertion that a "communistically organized society will be able to provide opportunities for the cultivation of all-around capacities." 134 This would constitute a virtual

132 Ibid., pp. 351-53.
133 Ibid., p. 353.
"cultural revolution . . . a liberation of human personality and individuality beside which the capitalist individualism of the market is a monstrosity." Socialism "offers the useful functional groups . . . the liberation of their craft function and the multiplication of the opportunities for its performance . . . [while capitalism stifles] productive forces to save profit, which makes inexorably necessary the limitation of technology, education and science, the degradation of culture, and the denial of all democratic rights to wage-workers, lower salaried employees and professionals. . . . Liberation of the productive forces means the creation of a new world: the multiplication of plenty and leisure, the resurgence of education and culture."

Corey had paid very little attention to the role of the middle class prior to his disaffection from the communist apparatus. As a revolutionary Left-Wing socialist and as a communist, he was primarily concerned with the mobilization of existing proletarian revolutionary forces. By 1935, however, his interests had apparently shifted sufficiently to warrant his writing *The Crisis of the Middle Class*. But the middle class did not replace the proletariat in Corey's hierarchy of priorities. His belief that the proletariat was the primary agency of social and historic change remained unaltered, although his conception of the composition of the proletariat had undergone significant changes. Having devoted almost one third of *Crisis* to chronicling the growth of

135Cory, *Crisis*, p. 355.
136Ibid., p. 361.
the "new" middle class, he was aware of its social, economic and political significance; yet, he was unwilling to assign it an independent role in the coming transformation of society. At this juncture, he could only foresee the steady decline of capitalism, the increasing proletarianization of the middle class (accompanied, hopefully, by a heightened awareness on the part of "useful functional groups" within the middle class that their "objective" interests coincided with those of the proletariat) and the inevitable emergence of socialism. "The middle class, incapable of an independent class policy, must align itself with one or the other of the great antagonists. . . ."

Furthermore, unlike many earlier Marxists, Corey did not prophesy a simple bipolarization of capitalists and the masses of workers, a concentration of wealth among a diminishing number of bourgeoisie accompanied by the increasing immiseration of the industrial proletariat. His analysis was more refined. It was, moreover, "revisionist" in that he took into account that very important segment of society occupying a critical position midway between those two groups. But his views differed from those of revisionists such as Eduard Bernstein in at least two major respects. In the first place, whereas Bernstein sought to apply Marxism to a capitalistic system whose short run prospects appeared to him quite good, Corey's prescriptions for the middle class were actually an extension of his grim analysis of

137Ibid., p. 340.
declining capitalism. Corey viewed the crisis of the middle class as an on-going process, progressing apace with the rise of fascism and, most important, with the intensification of the Great Depression. Secondly, Bernstein's social democratic (parliamentary and lawful) tactics are incompatible with the course of action which Corey urged: "The policy of moving 'gradually' toward socialism by means of democracy and reforms is disastrous, as democracy and reforms must both be destroyed under the conditions of capitalist decline." Drawing again on the lesson of Germany in 1918, Corey argued against gradualism, "piecemeal change and a . . . 'working into' socialism." In much the same way that Harold Laski, writing in 1943, considered the possibility of having to defend post-war British socialism against a violent conservative reaction, Corey believed that the political power of the capitalists would have to be smashed.

As the limitations of reformism appear . . . communism becomes increasingly ascendant . . . drives toward the conquest of political power . . . the control of the state and the destruction of capitalist property and power. . . . The transfer of political power from the capitalist class to the working class, a sharp revolutionary break, is the culmination of previously gradual class-economic changes and makes possible the gradual building of socialism. (Italics mine.)

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139 Corey, Crisis, p. 346.


141 Corey, Crisis, pp. 339, 346.
Naturally, the "gradual building of socialism" can take place only after a communist seizure of political power. And the sooner the better.

The revisionist and other elements in his analysis which suggest Corey's moving away from communism do not obscure its apocalyptic communist character. Its emphasis on the "useful functional groups" within the "new" middle class is, admittedly, atypical of the literature being written by most communists at the time; but its polemical style and revolutionary content were not. Thirteen years after his departure from the ranks of communist activists, Corey was still a self-styled, though non-affiliated, communist. He continued to consider himself a communist in 1935, despite the vicious attacks levelled against him by the communist press the year before. Again, as was the case in Decline of American Capitalism, the only indications which this book offered that Corey would soon disassociate himself from communism were contained in his choices of subjects and emphases (e.g., his idea that there were segments of the middle class which were "salvageable"), the type of evidence which he chose to use in the course of his analyses, and his refusal to make specific reference to existing communist organizations.

Whatever the specific character of his political alignment, whether Communist, communist, or something else, Corey assumed the role of tactician and propagandist as well as social scientist. His role was not a passive one. He did not see himself as merely a disinterested observer; and this may explain the presence of what some of his reviewers regarded as a blind spot in his analysis: his apparent
misreading of American working class and lower middle class psychology. Comparing The Crisis of the Middle Class to Alfred Bingham's Insurgent America in separate reviews, both John Chamberlain and Louis Hacker note the disparity in the two books' approaches to the question of class allegiances. Hacker remarks on Bingham's seeing the lower middle class as propertyless, but not revolutionary, and the trade unions' being job-security conscious and therefore increasingly conservative and opposed to revolution. Hacker agrees with Corey's prescription for the political organization of the lower middle class for a profitless economy; but he does not attempt to refute Bingham's analysis of class tendencies. Chamberlain notes that Bingham, unlike Corey, sees the workers as having become "bourgeoisified" and hostile to communism; that when unions become powerful enough to bargain with employers, they develop a vested interest in the capitalist structure. Chamberlain agrees with Bingham that there is a possibility of a third party in America: something comparable to the British Labour Party; but, he feels, there is no possibility of an American proletarian revolution, much less a proletarian revolution supported by segments of the middle class.

Doubtless, Hacker sympathized with and understood what Corey was trying to do. (Hacker, himself a Marxist at the time, was soon to be a colleague of Corey's on the editorial board of the Marxist Quarterly.)


Nevertheless, Hacker leaves the reader with the impression that Corey miscalculated in his appraisal of the chances of a lower middle class-proletarian alliance. Chamberlain simply refuses to accept what he understands to be Corey’s insistence on the imminence of a lower middle class-proletarian alliance and, subsequently, a working class revolution. In fact, although Corey might have distinguished more clearly between his descriptive and prescriptive analyses, he was by no means unaware of the difficulties involved in effecting either the alliance or the revolution. The problem derived from the fact that he was, at the same time, supremely confident in the efficacy of his analytical categories and intensely committed both to the solubility of the current social malaise and his particular solution to it. Once again, he expresses a tendency to confuse what is and, thus, what can be, with what should and, thus, what must be: combining the roles of analyst and propagandist perhaps too well. This was certainly the case in his discussion of class attitudes, or "psychology," in The Crisis of the Middle Class. It can be seen, even more clearly, in an article which Corey wrote for New Masses entitled "The Minds of the Middle Class."144

V

Having long before rejected any kind of psychological or attitudinal categorization of classes, Corey again insists that "the masses of lower salaried employees and professionals are not economically part of

144 New Masses (April 7, 1936), pp. 15-16.
the middle class, although they may think so because of tradition."
The "mind" of the lower middle class is "dominated, within the limits
of the old middle class ideals, by their propertiless, dependent con-
dition, their job-consciousness and their performance of functional
services." They are, functionally and economically, proletarians; but
they continue to think about their problems in middle class terms. It
is urgent that "the old ideological lumber in their minds . . . be
thrown out, for it was used to build a house in which they no longer
live."

It is at this point in the argument that the crucial transition
takes place. Here, Corey points out that capitalism itself has under-
gone a radical change: it has become collectivized. The old middle
class ideals of small independent property no longer apply; but they
are used, nevertheless, to support a system of private ownership domi-
nated by an elite of monopoly capitalists. The middle class has come
to accept collectivized industry—the upper bourgeoisie because it is
in their interest to do so, the lower middle class because they have
been deceived into thinking that it is somehow compatible with their
traditional belief in private ownership. Of course, it is not. It is,
however, "wholly congenial to socialism." As the trend toward collec-
tivization continues and the crises of capitalism multiply, it will be-
come increasingly apparent to the lower middle class that individual
enterprise, including all its social relations, is an anachronism. They
will become aware because the lower middle class is composed of "func-
tional groups and their minds are functional minds." Although sig-
nificantly different, this is reminiscent of Corey's earlier interpre-
tations of Marx's conception of emerging proletarian consciousness. Corey notes, but does not stress, the proletarianization and hence immiseration of the lower middle class. Mainly, he discusses the disparity between capitalist limitations on production and the functional proclivities of the "new" proletariat. This disparity results in the alienation of the lower middle class from capitalism and from the ideals of the old middle class and, eventually, in their identification with socialism. What is more, alone among all political parties, "communism makes a functional appeal to the middle class. It appeals to the functional minds in the class against the exploiting minds . . . and accepts the progressive functional traits. . . ."^145 It is quite

145 Corey's notion of "mind" corresponds generally to the term ideology insofar as ideology refers to a loose framework of ideas which functions so that information can be received, sifted and organized in such a way as to allow a person to make a particular sort of sense of the world, thus making predictions and judgements possible. At one point, Corey describes these "minds" as reflecting the relationship between a given segment of society and the means of production: There is . . . in the sense of general ideas, a middle class mind. But the concrete forces underlying those ideas create at least three "minds" in the middle class. There is the "mind" of the surviving independent enterprisers; they are, because of their relationship to production, dominated by the idea of restoring, or at least preserving, the ownership of small productive property. There is the "mind" of the upper layers of salaried employes, mainly managerial: they are dependent on monopoly capitalism and accept and defend all its relations. And there is the "mind" of the masses of the lower-salaried employes and professionals: it is dominated within the limits of the old middle class ideals, by their propertiless, dependent conditions, their job-consciousness, and the performance of functional services. (Ibid., p. 15.) But if the "mind" of the "lower-salaried employes and professionals" is functional, why is it (i.e., how can it be) at the same time bound by tradition and reflecting non-functional interests? How can it also be what it is not? Corey confuses actual and potential "minds." He does not discuss the problem of false consciousness, however. Therefore, one is never quite sure whether Corey is using "functional mind" to
possible to read into this argument the idea that since the mind of
the lower middle class is so functional, it cannot but respond posi­
tively to the communist appeal.

For the most part, Corey explains and proposes. Predictions are
either implied, as in the example above, or stated conditionally, de­
pending on the continuation of observed trends, as in the case of the
fall of capitalism. The intermittent use of analytical and propaga­
distic stylistic devices often makes it difficult, but by no means
impossible, for the reader to distinguish between explanatory analy­
sis, admonition, and prediction. Corey was too much of a partisan not
to propagandize his readers, but he did so, not infrequently, at the
expense of precision.

No social revolution is possible without revolutionary
consciousness. There are many minds in the middle class;
some must be rejected, others transformed by revolu­tion-
ary consciousness. That is the answer to fascism and

mean the "mind" or ideology of the lower-salaried employes and profes­
sionals as it is or as it could and should be.

Corey does not specify the attributes of functionality in this
article. Some years later, however, he wrote:
The progressive potential in the relation of technical-managerial
and professional employes to industry arises out of their con­
structive functional characteristics. Among the major charac­
teristics are:
1. A functional approach that considers profit as the source of
new production, not as a source of financial-social power.
2. An urge for technical-economic efficiency and an abhorrence
of waste. . . .
3. The instinct of craftsmanship which an earlier capitalism largely
uprooted but which reappears in new and more fruitful forms. . . .
5. A rational scientific approach that has grown out of the nature
of modern industry, which is the technological application of
science. . . . The functional approach drives progressive practi­
tioners of management to struggle for a creative mastery of techni­
cal-economic forces. (The Unfinished Task, p. 200.)
the capitalist decline and decay out of which it arises. That prepares the unity of the working class of manual and mental workers in the common struggle for liberation. And what happens to the minds of the middle class after the communist conquest of power? Socialism liberates all that is progressive and worth retaining in the minds and activity of the middle class, as all its useful functional groups are absorbed in the community of free workers. The antagonism within the minds of middle class is destroyed.\textsuperscript{146}

VI

Corey used the Soviet Union as an example of successful socialism for the last time in January, 1936.\textsuperscript{147} For years, he had made a practice of concluding articles with a positive reference to some facet of Soviet life; and in both \textit{Decline of American Capitalism} and \textit{Crisis of the Middle Class}, the Soviet Union is regularly cited as proof of the efficacy of socialist institutions. Later, Corey recalled that "the final jolt that . . . made me see that even this general faith and hope that . . . Soviet Communism would still move in the right direction had to be abandoned, were the purges of 1936-1937." Then he added, "I had to face the fact that I had to make a complete re-evaluation of ideas and . . . it takes time."\textsuperscript{148} In none of his writings, prior to the series of articles which appeared in the \textit{Nation} in 1940, was there more than a hint that this re-evaluation was in process. One could reasonably calculate the time it took, then, as three to four years.

\textsuperscript{146}Ibid., p. 16.


\textsuperscript{148}F.B.I. Interrogation, p. 113.
Nevertheless, those hints were present. During the late 1930's, Corey's most prominent writings appeared in the *Marxist Quarterly*. Although the major articles which Corey wrote for that journal did not indicate an alteration of his basic analytic approach either to class relations or the economics of capitalism, his review of a collection of Veblen's essays does contain some provocative material.\(^{149}\) It suggests, for the first time, that he may have had some other than tactical disagreements with communism. Of course, those who were acquainted with the political differences among radical writers of that era would have been able to, and doubtless did, make significant inferences from Corey's staying with the *Marxist Quarterly* after Corliss Lamont's resignation from the editorial board. But the Veblen review contained the only tangible evidence that the suggested re-evaluation was taking place.

At one point in the review, Corey dismisses the notion that Veblen was an "American Marx," that his ideas could become the basis of an American socialism. "But," he continues, "neither are Veblen's ideas, as one communist argues, 'garbled Marxism' and 'premonitions of fascist strategy.'" The confusion," he concludes, "makes a Marxist selection and evaluation [of Veblen's writings] all the more necessary."\(^{150}\)


\(^{150}\) "Veblen and Marxism," p. 163.
This passage is significant only in that it shows Corey considering the possibility of a discrepancy between Marxism and at least one variety of communism. It is, admittedly, merely a passing comment; but it is the first time Corey voices the idea that communism (in any of its forms) may be at odds with Marxism. If he was beginning to doubt the validity of communist solutions, Corey still regarded himself a Marxist. Hence the significance of the passage. Later in the article, Corey raises an issue which is important not simply because it expresses certain doubts concerning the "Soviet experiment." It has intrinsic theoretical significance and provides some clues in explaining Corey's intellectual development. It will be discussed, accordingly, before turning to the final phase of Corey's career.

In the concluding paragraph, Corey notes two final aspects of Veblen's significance. While class interests are dominant, there are minor interests. The concept of vested interests is a fruitful approach to many problems, among them the problem of antagonisms within the working class and labor movement. While socialism abolishes classes, a large number of varying interests will exist for years to come; their recognition and free play are a social and cultural necessity. Still more important to socialist construction, perhaps, is Veblen's analysis of the cultural traits of the leisure class. Lenin considered bureaucracy a major problem of socialist construction; it is more or less dominant, according to the economic and cultural heritage, in the earlier stages of socialism. The tendency is for a bureaucracy and its allies, including the socialist variety, to acquire vested interests and the general cultural traits of a "leisure" class—e.g., invidious distinctions and conspicuous consumption. Veblen may be of the utmost value in the struggle against the reversionary aspects of socialist bureaucracy, a struggle that involves the "withering away" of the state. There is no wholly direct or mechanical connection between socialization of industry and a peculiar new cultural expression, which may retain
many objectionable reactionary features because of cultural lag and other factors.151

This is a thinly veiled criticism of the Soviet Union. More important, although Corey had mentioned the problem of bureaucracy in some of his earlier writings, never before did he entertain the possibility of a socialist bureaucracy retaining "objectionable reactionary features."

In 1932, Corey wrote briefly of the "danger ... in the growth of bureaucracy" under the dictatorship of the proletariat. He did not mention the growth of a socialist bureaucracy. In fact, he was concerned with the "struggle against bureaucracy [per se, which] according to Lenin, is one of the major problems of the transition period."152 By 1935, he recognized that bureaucracy was a "problem in the earlier stages of socialism [because it] tends to acquire vested interests."153 At the same time, he went on to say that "being an aspect of socialist construction, the bureaucracy must develop the economic and cultural conditions that eventually make bureaucracy unnecessary and impossible."154 This is quite different from his later claim that there is no "mechanical connection between socialization of

151Ibid., pp. 167-68.

152"The Role of the Intellectuals," Modern Quarterly, VI, no. 3 (Autumn, 1932), p. 12. One year later, Corey criticized Joseph Freeman, author of The Soviet Worker, for ignoring the question of "the relations between labor and the bureaucracy, which Lenin considered the most important problem of the transition period from capitalism to socialism." (no title), Modern Monthly, VII, no. 3 (April, 1933), p. 190. Corey went no further in explaining his or Lenin's conception of the problem of bureaucracy.

153Corey, Crisis, p. 362.

154Ibid.
industry and a peculiar new cultural expression;" i.e., a socialist bureaucracy's "being an aspect of socialist construction" does not preclude its developing and retaining "objectionable reactionary features."

He was now able to discuss the "tendency . . . for a bureaucracy . . ., including the socialist variety, to acquire vested interests and the general cultural traits of a 'leisure' class. . . ."

The idea of a "cultural lag," which might prevent potentially revolutionary classes from realizing their true interests, was nothing new to Corey. He had been writing about the problem of "false consciousness" of cultural holdovers, in one form or another, since his earliest days as a Left Wing publicist. But he had always assumed that, although "false consciousness" would have to be fought against, it would disappear along with the development of objective conditions leading to the decline of capitalism, the proletarian revolution and the emergence of communism. Similarly, he had often noted the objectionable characteristics of collectivized industry; but he had always regarded them as the result of capitalist relations, of private ownership and appropriation.\(^\text{155}\) They would, likewise, disappear with the advent of communism; and collectivization, under communism, would operate to the benefit of mankind. The idea that vested interests

\(^\text{155}\)Collectivism, capable of liberating mankind, may become the destroyer of mankind. . . . A simple change in the relations of ownership can transform [capitalist] collectivism into socialism and release the now repressed forces of production and consumption. . . . But the . . . capitalist interests resist the transformation. . . . The results are economic decline and decay . . . wars, reaction against democracy and civilization itself." (Italics his.) Corey, "The Middle Class Under Capitalism," Nation (Aug. 14, 1935), p. 178.
would not merely persist but initiate under a peculiarly socialist bureaucracy (a means of regulating socialist collectivism) was, then, wholly new in Corey's analytical scheme. Although he did not elaborate on this idea at this time, it was only a short step to the full blown criticism of collectivism and centralized administration, capitalist or socialist, which he was to formulate within a very few years.
CHAPTER V

MARXISM RECONSIDERED

I

The critical posture to which Corey held during the final phase of his intellectual career is summed up in these words:

The decisive aspect of the liberal economic democracy or liberal democratic socialism (call it what you will) that I propose is this: it consciously, deliberately proposes new economic arrangements of a kind calculated to retain and strengthen liberal [political] democracy. The state must be used to set up the new economic institutions; and these proposed arrangements give government more functions than were envisaged in earlier liberal theory. But the state remains a limited-power state with all the self-corrective procedures of liberal democracy to promote liberty and security. Liberty, in the final analysis, is a complex of freedoms that depend on the nature of the state. The politics of liberty are as important as its economics: they are interdependent. One truth must never be forgotten. Absolute state power is the enemy of free moral man. Yet many liberals dismiss this danger as lightly as the Communists do. (First italics mine. Second italics his.)

Written in 1948, these views are identical to those expressed in the first major revision of his ideas which had appeared in the Nation series in 1940. From time to time, he shifted his emphasis, but the framework of his thought remained essentially unchanged from 1940 until his last writings in the early 1950's.

During this period, Corey devoted almost as much energy to criti-
cizing and attempting to refute Marxism and communism as he did to set-
ting out the details of his new formulations; and, given the nature of
his previous commitments, these criticisms might easily be interpreted
as primarily the results of recent self-examination and reappraisal.
The student of his thought might be tempted, then, to seek the bases of
Corey's new ideas solely in the character of his current rejection of
the old. Certainly Corey did not discourage such a temptation. In
many cases, however, the concepts of Marxism, socialism, or communism
which he constructed for purposes of criticism (and ultimately rejec-
tion) were quite different from the understandings he had previously
held of those concepts. Furthermore, several of the ideas which he now
attacked, and used as reasons for condemning Marxism, he had criticized
earlier in the course of his own socialist revolutionary analysis.

Corey's latest characterization of Marxism was not simply a straw
man which he built in order to justify a change of heart. Even while
a Marxist revolutionary, Corey had criticized those Marxists and social-
ists with whom he had disagreed, identifying what he considered to be
flaws in their theories or tactics. When he abandoned Marxism, he con-
tinued to criticize his ex-colleagues, often using the same arguments
he had used before. But now he revised some of his own ideas, attacked
some previously held positions, and included these revisions, along with
other ideas, in a broad critique. He did not distinguish those ideas
which he had always opposed from those which he only recently found at
fault, however. There were, moreover, a number of positive elements in
his earlier positions which he carried over intact into his "revised"
view. Thus, one must look closely at Corey's writings in this final period in order to determine what had really changed.

II

At the center of Corey's revisions is an insight which contains, characteristically, both new and old components:

While collective ownership may result in socialism [he asserted], the evidence now is overwhelming that it may also result in totalitarianism. . . . We cannot . . . easily dispose of the disturbing conclusion that collective ownership is compatible with totalitarianism. The situation becomes still more disturbing if we draw, as I now think we must, another conclusion: there is a totalitarian potential in a socialist economic system. Russian communism exploits the potential but did not create it. (Italics his.)

The phrases "the evidence now is overwhelming" and "as I now think we must," suggest to the reader that these are conclusions which have been recently and dramatically arrived at. To an extent, this is true. Corey had never before written specifically about the totalitarian potential of socialist collectivism; but he had mentioned the dangers inherent in socialist bureaucracy. And, more important, he had long since established that collectivism per se should not be considered a socialist panacea. As far back as 1918 he had discussed the bourgeois collectivization of industry—the concentration, centralization and, hence, oligarchical control of industry—as a condemnable if necessary consequence of modern technology under capitalism. Socialism, he said, "is a revolutionary force that disrupts capitalist collectivism . . . [and, furthermore,] its purposes are not expressed in a pseudo-Socialism

of the state, but in the supremacy of the proletariat through industrial communism."³ At another point he insisted that "Socialism is not collectivism . . . [neither is it] government ownership or control of industry, two things that are purely a capitalist expression . . . a means of protecting and promoting capitalist interests and more easily oppressing the proletariat. . . ."⁴ He had, even then, regarded collectivism as potentially oppressive. Capitalist collectivism was clearly noxious and socialist collectivism was acceptable only insofar as it took the form of "the communism of the organized producers, functioning through local initiative. . . ."⁵ Socialist centralization of authority would be found only in the "administrative process of determining the facts of production and distribution. . . ."⁶

In 1918, Corey (then Fraina) had equated state capitalism with state socialism, excoriating both. He considered socialist collectivism defensible only if accompanied by a system of local initiative with minimum centralized authority. In 1940, he was arguing that

if the system of collective ownership may be the basis of totalitarianism, then the system itself is not socialism. Collective ownership is socialist only if it promotes greater democracy and freedom.⁷

He says, further, that

³Fraina, Revolutionary Socialism, p. 123.
⁴Ibid., p. 81.
⁵Ibid., p. 82.
⁶Ibid.
to argue the contrary is vulgar economic determinism, which distorts history... by overemphasis on the economic factor, for any particular economic organization of society is capable of many superstructural variations.  

Here, he claims that the "totalitarian potential in the socialist economic system... is a problem [of] which traditional socialism and Marxism were never fully aware, if they were aware of it at all." Yet, as a "traditional" Marxist and socialist, Corey had apparently been quite aware of the problem, although, perhaps, not of every facet of it. Corey's own early writings serve to deny his later contention that traditional socialism has always insisted that collective ownership of the means of production and distribution is economic democracy.  

There are a number of other points in the first of the Nation series with which Corey would have had little disagreement twenty years earlier, although he was now insisting that "all variants of Marxism are a failure." For example, in his later analysis of the "historical forces that make for democracy," he notes that capitalism fought against the feudal combination of political and economic power. It promoted the "widespread ownership of productive property," and developed "the free market and free competition, the spirit of which spread from the economic to the political and intellectual spheres." He goes on to say that democracy was always limited, and is now everywhere
endangered by structural changes in capitalism. . . .
For the specific historical forces that gave life to capitalist democracy are passing away. They are not bound up with capitalism in general but with the specific competitive capitalism which had been replaced by monopoly capitalism.\textsuperscript{11}

His further comments on the effects of monopoly capitalism also could have been written in 1918 or 1934, as could (with slight alterations) his final discussion of collectivism:

Totalitarian dictatorships did not create the collectivism which is their economic basis. Collectivism is the product of modern industry. With its need for far-flung organization, bureaucracy, and planning, collectivism has a definite totalitarian potential. . . . From collectivism stem the increasing economic powers of government. . . . There are totalitarian dangers in the situation. They lie in an indiscriminate multiplication of state powers, without democratic safeguards. . . . The real radical job, as it now shapes up, is to democratize an economic collectivism that is inescapable and that may become the basis of a new totalitarianism.\textsuperscript{12}

His warning against "the combination of economic and political power in an all-powerful state, under a bureaucracy with a monopoly control of the sources of livelihood"\textsuperscript{13} might well have followed his assertion in \textit{Revolutionary Socialism} that "Socialism struggles for the transformation of the state, not the enlarging of its functions."\textsuperscript{14}

What was new, then, in his conclusion concerning the "totalitarian potential of the socialist economic system" was not contained in his

\textsuperscript{11}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{12}Ibid., p. 248.

\textsuperscript{13}Ibid., p. 247.

\textsuperscript{14}\textit{Revolutionary Socialism}, p. 81.
comments on the dangers of collectivism or monopolization of industry. Rather, by 1940, Corey had changed his position on the proper role of the proletariat in socialist theory and practice and particularly on the utility of the dictatorship of the proletariat. He criticized both Marx and Lenin for having believed that "the tactics of proletarian dictatorship meant 'completion' of the democratic revolution in a socialist democracy." On the contrary, he now argued, the proletarian dictatorship institutionalizes the "temporary suppression of democracy ... and creates vested interests opposed to democracy." The workers' state is still a state; and instead of withering away, it becomes permanent. The historical forces of democracy under capitalism were partially suppressed by monopolization of industry and the process may be completed by socialist collectivism. "New forces must be set in motion to insure democracy under socialism," but the proletarian dictatorship fails to do this. Having combined "economic and political power in an all-powerful state, under a bureaucracy with a monopoly control of the sources of livelihood," it subverts the "democratic potential of socialism."

Corey lays great stress on the fact that capitalism had successfully separated economic and political power in its struggle with feudalism, thus stimulating the growth of democracy; and now the trend toward re-combination, begun by monopoly, may conceivably be completed by

16Ibid.
socialism. To be sure, the "democratic potential of socialism ... may broaden and deepen democracy by destroying oligarchical economic controls, [but this potential] can be released only if the appropriate institutional arrangements are created to make the new collective controls democratic."17 The "institutional arrangements" which Corey had recommended in Revolutionary Socialism were now considered inadequate; i.e., "Councils of Workers," General Industrial Councils," etc.18 The Soviet experience had caused Corey to fear the "indiscriminate multiplication of state powers [which,] without democratic safeguards, ... inflate bureaucracy and provide it with the means of becoming totalitarianism."19 Corey regards this as a criticism of Marx's "revolutionary tactics in relation to democracy," (Italics mine.)20 These tactics, "worked out in the backward Europe of the 1840's and 50's ... were Jacobinism with a proletarian twist: Communists must use the bourgeois democratic revolution to seize power and set up a dictatorship of the proletariat."21 He does assert that Marx's "creative originality was congealed into a system ... which was unjust to Marx himself because [it] denied his emphasis on the historical relativity of ideas."22 He

17Ibid., p. 247.
18Revolutionary Socialism, pp. 219-21.
20Ibid., p. 246.
21Ibid.
22Ibid., p. 245.
also says that Marxism is used as "an opiate for the masses in Russia," and reminds the reader that "systematic Marxism was always largely and ideology, and . . . it is now nothing but ideology for the authoritarian masters of Marxism, who use it to justify whatever they want to do."\(^3\) Corey does not explain, however, what he means by or what specifically is wrong in systematic Marxism. Consequently, at least in this first article of the series, he attempted to circumvent an extensive discussion of Marxist theory and to minimize the theoretical implications of his criticism of Marx, basing his judgment of Marxism instead on the inadequacy of certain "specific ideas" and "tactics."

The second article in the Nation series begins by noting that capitalism is being transformed. Corey asks, "What . . . do we need for the job of directing that transformation toward a desirable social order?"\(^4\) Instead of turning directly to this problem, however, he returns to a discussion of the proletariat by way of an "examination of the failure of Marxist radicalism" which will provide "an aid to the understanding of those needs." The failure, he says,

must be blamed upon two fundamental limitations in the traditional socialist and Marxist conceptions of the transition from capitalism to socialism—misunderstanding of democracy, and emphasis on the proletariat as the "carrier" of socialism; from these flow other limitations of theory and practice.\(^5\)

\(^23\)Ibid., p. 246.


\(^25\) Ibid.
He refers once again briefly to Marx's conceiving of the democratic struggle as "simply a means for proletarian seizure of power and dictatorship . . . which, as we have seen in Russia, crushes the developing forces of democracy and leads to totalitarianism." He next discusses the reformist theory wherein "democracy was misunderstood in another sense." "The new creed," he explains, "was that democracy, a fully democratic capitalism, with gradually increasing government ownership and control would 'inevitably' move toward socialism." Repeating a judgment which he had maintained consistently over the years, he then condemns the German Social Democrats and their fellow reformists for contributing to the defeat of democracy in Germany. They were able neither to "democratize collectivism [nor] to solve the economic crisis that fed the devouring flames of fascism."26

Turning his attention to the second of the "two fundamental limitations" mentioned earlier, Corey once again attacks the reformist German Social Democrats in that they were "immobilized by failure to get the support of the non-proletarian groups necessary for a democratic majority." By over-emphasizing the proletariat, they "alienated the middle classes and peasants." Realizing that they needed these groups, they "watered down" their socialism; but instead of broadening their conception of socialism to include the peasantry and the middle class, they continued to identify socialism with the proletariat alone. This led to "trade union radicalism" and, ultimately, defeat. More important,

26 Ibid., pp. 272-73.
Corey says, the "emphasis on the proletariat is bound up with the failure of socialism to clarify its relation to other classes."

Socialism, Corey maintains, "never [had] a clear picture of where non-proletarian groups fit into socialism and the struggle for socialism. It seems an elementary conclusion to draw, [he goes on to say,] that socialism must express and realize the interests of all useful functional groups within society." (Italics his.) But it drew no such conclusion, "except... abstractly as 'the liberation of all humanity.'" There follows a brief summary of the same analysis of the new middle class which appeared in The Crisis of the Middle Class. He deviates in one respect from the earlier statement, however, in that here he notes that "the traditional socialist and communist approach to this class is much too simple: that its members are proletarians or will become proletarians."

That is true of the majority, in an objective sense, but not of all. Moreover, whether or not they are "proletarians," members of the new middle class remain members of a class other than the proletariat, a class which performs different functions. . . . [Furthermore,] this class . . . must be addressed on the basis of the services it can contribute to a socialist society and the benefits it can derive from one.28

In any case, the new middle class must be courted, not opposed. Certainly, a revolutionary struggle against the middle classes "would be fatal"—for two reasons. The middle class is "large and can dispose of

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27 Ibid., p. 274.
28 Ibid.
more of today's specialized violence than the proletariat." That is, the proletariat would lose. Secondly, were they to lose, a fascist reaction would set in, making matters worse than before.

Corey later expanded this discussion of the new middle class and included it in the *Unfinished Task*. There, he responded to James Burnham’s claims concerning the imminence of a "managerial revolution" with a counter-claim: "technical-managerial and professional dominance in the organization and direction of industry is not only compatible with democracy but it can, under appropriate institutional arrangements, promote greater democracy and freedom."29 And, as if addressing himself to what he had written seven years earlier, Corey amplified the charge he had made in the *Nation*:

The traditional Marxist attitude toward the new middle class was much too simple: the majority of its members in the lower levels are proletarians or they will become proletarians while the upper levels are capitalist bourgeois who must be fought. Those are dangerous half-truths. The lower levels of clerical and similar salaried employees are wage workers in an objective economic sense, but they are profoundly different in social origins, psychology, and status. The upper levels of technical-managerial and administrative employees are capitalist bourgeois only in a limited and altogether misleading sense. For, since they perform the constructive functional job of organizing and managing industry, which was the capitalists’ job before the corporate collectivization of large-scale industry separated ownership from management, they can displace the capitalist bourgeois owners who are now for the most part merely absentee stockholders. (Italics his.)30

Again, "members of the new middle class are not proletarians nor are

29 *Unfinished Task*, p. 191.
they becoming proletarians; they constitute a new class that must be understood in terms of its functional significance and interest.\textsuperscript{31}

Corey also felt that although there are dangers inherent in both the means to and the final form of the new order, there are forces operating and institutional arrangements available which can mitigate those dangers.

Members of the new middle class will occupy positions of privilege and power in democratic socialism, as in any conceivable new order of the immediate future. So be it. It is not dangerous if the larger capitalist privileges and power are destroyed and if there is democracy which permits freedom of discussion and action to limit what privileges remain and to prevent abuses of power.\textsuperscript{32}

In spite of the sharp reversal of Corey's prescriptive approach to the new middle class implied in these remarks, he continued to depend on certain analytical techniques and ideas concerning the middle class which he had developed and used previously. What has changed is not his conception of the nature of the new middle class or how it came to be. There is virtually no change in the methodology underlying Corey's notion that its critical relation to technology provides a basis for the new middle class's "functional dominance" of the industrial system. Neither is there any change in his view that "their [the members of the new middle class] functional interests are opposed to monopoly capitalism."\textsuperscript{33} What is new, first, is the desirability and the prospect of

\textsuperscript{31}\textit{Tibid.}, p. 138.

\textsuperscript{32}"Marxism Reconsidered--II," p. 275.

\textsuperscript{33}Unfinished Task, p. 172.
their having an independent role in bringing about Corey's "free economic order," and the possibility of their operating independently, yet cooperatively (along with other "useful functional groups"), within it. Secondly, Corey is no longer interested in totally eliminating capitalism: only the "larger" capitalist powers and privileges are to be destroyed. He would make some changes in economic and political relationships, but he is primarily concerned with preventing "abuses of power" within a less oppressive framework. Collectivism is inevitable. It is, in its socialist, fascist or capitalist forms, a potential basis of totalitarianism. Communism ignores democratic safeguards. Fascism abhors them; it seeks totalitarian rule. Capitalism, on the other hand, may be saved from total destruction by being gradually transformed into liberal democratic socialism, if it submits to progressive reforms while retaining those of its characteristics which have encouraged and supported democracy.

At the crux of his positive approach to the new middle class, then, lies Corey's "strategy of democracy" which

must include . . . an unlimited faith in democratic procedures and values and only the kind of new institutional arrangements that retain all the economic and political elements in the old capitalist order that still promote democracy.34

Corey no longer sees the struggle for progressive social change as a class struggle between "two great antagonists" with one of whom the new middle class would be forced to align. It was now a struggle against

34 Ibid., p. 67.
monopoly capitalism, but within a framework of liberal democratic, parliamentary assumptions and institutions. The economic crises of capitalism, brought on by monopolistic practices, must be checked while, at the same time, avoiding the dangers of "statism." The solution to the problem of monopoly is to be found, essentially, in "democratizing" monopolistic holdings; that is, by transforming them into non-profit public corporations, controlled by boards with labor, government, and management representation. Beyond that, "freedom is promoted by an economic pluralism that comprises a diversity of economic institutions and interests."35 The economic pluralism described here not only provides the new middle class with an independent role, but it outlines discrete functions to be performed by each of the various levels of the middle class. The old middle class is to be revived by the elimination of monopoly corporations. "Small and medium business, all forms of independent enterprise, gain new meaning and strength in the new order."36 And, as indicated earlier, the upper and lower layers of the new middle class have their separate contributions to make.

III

As he developed his argument for democratic pluralism, Corey continued to express a particular interest in the new middle class. In fact, he assigned it an importance and, in certain respects, a role in society very much like those which Marx had assigned the proletariat.

36 Ibid.
On occasion, his remarks took on such a pronounced (middle class) messianic flavor (reminiscent of the Marxian proletarian messianism of which he was so critical), that they seemed to run counter to his central thesis (i.e., pluralism).

On the one hand, we are reminded of his assurance that "freedom is promoted by an economic pluralism that comprises a diversity of economic institutions and interests;" that in the new free economic order, all manner of interests (save monopoly) will play a part and all groups (including labor unions and all levels of the middle class) will participate. On the other hand, Corey is adamant in his defense of the "progressive potential . . . of technical-managerial and professional employees [which] arises out of their constructive functional characteristics." This crucial segment of the middle class can, as noted, "promote greater democracy and freedom." But, more than that, "it is impossible to deduce the totalitarianism of a corporate state from the constructive functional characteristics of the technical-managerial and professional groups in the new middle class. On the contrary, these characteristics clash with the totalitarian spirit." (Italics his.)

There is, in fact, a "liberating social significance in management" which manifests itself increasingly. The "progressive groups in the

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37 Ibid.
38 Ibid., p. 200.
40 Ibid., p. 199.
new middle class have shaped the ideas, functional techniques, and aspirations for a new free world in which man may be a truly human, decent and moral being. . . . The progressive future of the new middle class is the future of democracy."41

Under the heading, "The Socialist Failure," Corey remarked that the "final error of Marxism that sums up all its errors [was] the theory that the proletariat is next in the succession of ruling classes. . . ."42 He did not go on to offer the new middle class as simply a substitute for the proletariat. And yet, while he disagreed with James Burnham's prediction of a "managerial revolution," Corey did believe that "if there is to be a new ruling-class it will be the new middle class whose functional groups perform strategic services in industry and government."43

Corey did not have an unlimited or unqualified faith in the "liberating social significance" of the new middle class. There are [he wrote] totalitarian elements in this class . . . traditional prejudices and passions: the authoritarianism of industrial and scientific experts who imagine that socially, too, there is only "one right way" of doing things . . . ; attitudes of contempt for the mass of people, consciousness of class and racial superiority, and the hunger for invidious distinctions and privileges.44

But qualified or not, he did have faith—faith in the progressive

41 Ibid., pp. 203-04.
42 Ibid., p. 140.
43 Ibid., pp. 140-41.
44 "Marxism Reconsidered—II," p. 274.
potentialities of the new middle class; and in many ways the qualifications which he placed on it were no more stringent than those which Marxists, such as Louis Fraîna, had imposed on their belief in the proletariat. Marx had been urgently concerned with the condition of "false consciousness" among the workers. Fraîna complained repeatedly of the betrayals of proletarian class interests by the misled and misleading organizations of skilled workers.

There are other noteworthy similarities between Marx's treatment of the proletariat and Corey's approach to the new middle class. One may recall that the Marxian conception of the historic mission of the proletariat derives from Marx's historical materialism. As history is impelled by material, or, more accurately, technological forces, so the proletariat is driven to fulfill its revolutionary role. Marx held that technological improvements in capitalist forces of production made the capitalists increasingly irrelevant to the productive process while the proletariat became increasingly self-sufficient. Accordingly, as the exploitative capitalist relations of production continued to frustrate the functional (productive) role of the workers, the "objective" conflict between the proletariat and the capitalists intensified. Corey explains, in similar fashion, that

as corporate industry, with its multiplication of absentee shareholders, separates management from ownership, the technical-managerial and administrative groups come to functional dominance. They organize and direct industry. . . . [But whereas the] chief interest and problems of administrative management are financial . . . [because] it is still enmeshed in the capitalist relations of profit, . . . the technical-managerial groups . . . are not driven by the profit motive but by the need to perform functional
tasks. [Hence,] technical-managerial employees are in objective conflict with capitalist profit relations.  

Later, Corey cites the "antagonism between technical-managerial and administrative groups ... [which] is not always recognized, but smolders and may burst into flame." He quotes Veblen's observation that "these technologists have begun to become uneasily 'class conscious' and to reflect that they together constitute the indispensable General Staff of the industrial system."  

This is not to suggest that Corey's rejection of Marxism involved merely his switching allegiances from the proletariat to the new middle class, or that he had altered only superficial aspects of his earlier analyses. It is true that after Corey had refuted Marxism and "traditional" socialism to his satisfaction, he had retained some of the style, if not the content, of Marxian socialist messianism. He continued to believe, with fluctuating intensity, in the crisis of capitalism; he envisioned a possible and desirable change in society; and he identified, qualifiedly but hopefully, the chief agency of that change: the new middle class. Nevertheless, the substance of his new social analysis was, as will be shown, no longer Marxist. At the same time, one cannot avoid noticing the abovementioned, albeit incomplete, parallel. Furthermore, Corey's attack on socialist proletarian messianism which he used as the primary illustration of his current  

45 Unfinished Task, pp. 170-71.  
46 Ibid., p. 172.  
47 Ibid. Corey's reference is to The Engineers and the Price System (1921), pp. 60, 70-1, 75.
rejection of Marxism, did not succeed in raising all the issues or resolv- ing all the significant differences which a thorough refutation would have necessitated.

Corey believed that proletarian messianism was a tactical error resulting from the degeneration of Marxism into "mere ideology;" but he ignored the fact that this ideology was tied in with a theory which measured the significance and revolutionary potential of the proletariat by more than merely its susceptibility to either socialist or democratic appeals. Marx's admonition of the workers to accept their role as "carriers" of socialism was grounded in a theory of value which justified his preferential treatment of the proletariat as well as a sociological analysis and a theory of history which explained their role in past and present society and their function in the transition to a future one. When Corey argued against Marxian proletarian exclusiveness, he cited the inability or unwillingness of socialists to recognize the sociological and historical changes which had occurred since Marx had formulated his theory and, consequently, their failure to abandon their singular commitment to the proletariat. He tried to show how they were forced into basic inconsistencies between theory and practice; i.e., how their theory remained pristine while their practice was prostituted by a desire to win electoral victories. He maintained that, whereas the driving force behind socialism was a legitimate and admirable desire for the achievement of genuine democracy, since "Marxism [exemplified by the theory of the proletariat] misunderstood the relation of democracy to progressive social change and a new order," its failure was inevitable and, therefore, had to be discarded.
Thus, instead of disputing the function of the concept of the proletariat in Marx's historical and social theories, or challenging the validity of the theories themselves, Corey sought only to discredit their practical application. Had Corey been more aware of the similarities between his and Marx's schemes, he might have recognized the necessity to account for them; i.e., to establish which among them were important and which casual or insignificant, and to designate, by way of a more penetrating critique of Marx, the specific nature of their differences. Corey denounced and dismissed "systematic" Marxism, which necessarily includes Marx's theory of the proletariat, without himself offering a systematic criticism of that system. He did not examine the interrelationships among the components which made it a system, or consider why those components were included—what purpose they served, whether or not they were logically necessary but empirically unverifiable, etc. But more important than Corey's failure to analyse Marxism adequately was his not applying the critical categories which such an analysis would have required to his own work. (How did the concept of the new middle class figure into Corey's theoretical framework in the sense that the concept of the proletariat figured into Marx's?)

Marx's proletarian messianism was based on a theory of the proletariat which was, if disputable, internally consistent and logically coherent. Corey's conception of the new middle class, although similar in several respects to Marx's conception of the proletariat, did not receive the benefit of such treatment. To be sure, Corey did not intend the new middle class to play the same role as Marx's proletariat;
but neither did he define precisely the role which he did intend the new middle class to play, nor did he investigate the theoretical implications of his assigning as much importance to this class as he did. The discussion which follows is intended to amplify these points while setting forth the remaining components of Corey's democratic pluralism.

IV

Goals and Values

Despite a disclaimer on the penultimate page of Unfinished Task that "functional democracy is no millenium . . . always in this world there will be problems," Corey is less cautious and more prophetic elsewhere in the book. "History is at another great divide," the first chapter begins. "Beyond the divide looms a new world. We catch glimpses of a world of plenty . . . peace . . . freedom and beauty, of greater human moral worth. This world is now in our grasp, for we have the means to create it." He fully realizes that these means are being used, and may continue to be used, as tools of war and barbarism. Nevertheless, later on in the book Corey repeats the claim that "a new free world is in our grasp."

The material means and the moral values for its creation are all around us . . . the old dreams of the abolition of poverty can easily come true. Much more can be done: we can shape a human environment of unbelievable welfare and beauty, of freedom, fraternity, and justice."

48 Ibid., p. 307.
49 Ibid., p. 3.
50 Ibid., p. 211.
These millenarian sentiments in Corey's thought constitute more than affirmations of his faith in the long-range potential of mankind, more than indications of his optimism. They begin to explain, in an indirect way, the ambiguous relationship between the two central characteristics of the political and economic systems which he proposes; that is, their open-endedness, their pragmatic and experimental character on the one hand, and their systematic, planful and closely regulated character on the other. In this respect, Corey resembles others, such as Karl Mannheim, who have wrestled with the problem of reconciling planning with freedom.

For Corey, the millenarian impulse provides a preliminary blueprint for a bridge between planning and freedom. It supplies some rough answers to the questions "planning for what?" and "freedom for what?" beyond the often sterile "order" or "stability." As the substantive content of that impulse was informed by Corey's version of socialist humanism, when he proposed economic pluralism and functional democracy, emphasizing both economic and political diversity and freedom, he did not intend to suggest merely an orderly and balanced laissez-faire society. His pluralistic "free economic order" aspires to a "new economic morality [with an emphasis on production for use rather than for

51 The term millenarian is being used rather loosely here to mean simply a strong belief in the possibility of society's experiencing a great salutary change. It occupies, by necessity, an important position in all revolutionary movements. Its role in Marxist and communist theoretical and polemical literature is well known.

profit] and a new sense of loyal service. . . ."\(^{53}\) Similarly, "func-
tional democracy calls for and promotes the use of rational intelli-
gence to shape man's activities and values."\(^{54}\) Through it, Corey hopes
to institute justice, encourage morality, and provide the means to
achieve "finer ways of living." Further investigation of these goals
reveals two problems, however. In the first place, some of the values
which underlie these goals, as well as some of the goals themselves,
are ill-defined. Secondly, and more importantly, there are some serious
gaps between the values and goals on the one hand, and the means which
Corey designs for their achievement on the other.

It would be helpful to quote at length those passages in which
Corey attempts to establish his value orientation. He cites humanism
as the "moral basis" for a "new freedom in a greater democracy."

Humanism makes man the creator of all values: a being of
dignity, integrity and independence, with a will to under-
stand and aspire that urges him toward truth, justice and
freedom. Man is precious in the sight of men. All men are
equal in their capacity for desiring the good life and in
their need for justice and freedom. Neither man or God, nor
their institutions, must violate the free spirit of man. It
is the spirit that makes man truly human, the spirit that
drives him to fulfill himself in a world he endeavors to
make a fairer place to live in.\(^{55}\)

Corey then relates democracy and humanism in that
only democracy gives the humanist values universal scope in
everyday lives. The democratic emphasis is on the value of
every man whether lowly or great. It gives every man a

\(^{53}\)Unfinished Task, p. 278.
\(^{54}\)Ibid., p. 307.
\(^{55}\)Ibid., p. 5.
chance to live freely and fully, the right not to be shoved about by the rich, the well born, or the mighty, the freedom to ask justice and to get it. Democracy broadens the areas of popular rights and power: a right to express oneself and the power to make good the expression. Only as democracy lives and grows can the truly human values live and grow.

The vision of the good life for all is the creation of democracy. The vision is the answer to democratic shortcomings and an affirmation of democratic strength. If science, technology, and industry are the material promise of a new free world, the democratic human values are its moral promise. Their combination affords the means to make the world what we want to make it.  

Although limited by circumstance and never fully realized in practice, the following achievements and values of democracy have emerged over the past several centuries:

1. **Reconstruction of the Technical-Economic Basis of Society.**
   
   A. Productive forces developed to unheard-of-heights with potential plenty now available for all.
   
   B. An immense addition to man's mastery over nature; the purposive utilization of natural forces to serve man's ends, among them the means for creating a fairer environment in which to live.
   
   C. Increasing mass well-being as a condition and an ideal that were largely unknown in earlier social orders; an increasing share (if still unequal) of all lowly people, including the workers and farmers, in the conquests of civilization as their just democratic right.

2. **Reconstruction of the Cultural and Moral Basis of Society.**
   
   A. Against the moral indifference of pagan civilization to the lowly, an ideal of welfare for all who live and labor; a democratic secularization of the Christian human values of fraternity, of every man's individual worth, of justice for men who are equal in the eyes of other men since they are equal in the eyes of God.
   
   B. Against the other-worldliness of medieval culture, an emphasis on this-worldliness as the expression of man's

56 Ibid., p. 6.
needs, on the rational and scientific, the appeal to reason as the dynamic of truly human relations.

C. The ideals and practice of democracy, freedom and equality against the caste oppression of arbitrary power; the right of the people to share freely and fully in progress, in all forms of social activity, in the decisions that determine their interests and future; the right to cherish one's own personality because it is one's own.

D. A larger educational ideal and practice as product of the emphasis on science, industrial technology, and reason, with an increasing participation of the people in education, not only to serve the practical purposes of a complex economic order, but to create greater cultural forces for the understanding and improvement of the world in which man lives.

3. The Creative Idea of Progress, of a Movement to Higher Levels of Being.

The idea of progress frees mankind from traditional limitations; it brings a release of the full energy of intellectual and moral forces, allows man to aspire after perfection, makes freedom of thought and action a social and human necessity. The progressive attitude is never satisfied with what is merely because it is. What is must justify itself in terms of human needs and of what might be that could more fully promote those needs. 57

Of course, democracy is defined in terms of procedures as well as values. Nevertheless, Corey stresses the view that "democracy broadens from a form of government to a way of life." a man-centered way of life wherein the "right to live is inseparable from the right to work under conditions of democratic opportunity and independence. . . ."58

No institution is superior to man. Man serves the community to serve himself by means of democratic cooperation and freedom, not by subjection to compulsion and force. 59

57 Ibid., pp. 8-9.
58 Ibid., p. 46.
59 Ibid.
The democratic way of life is contrasted to tyranny and totalitarianism which "thrive on metaphysical ideas that make man the object of history, institutions, and power instead of making him their master." This remark suggests one of the problems mentioned earlier. The democratic values and way of life to which Corey commits himself have venerable histories. They have been discussed voluminously in the past. But they are not self-evidently true. Corey states them, but makes no attempt to demonstrate their validity, either empirically or metaphysically. Several problems follow from this one.

Corey's inclusion of values and aspirations, based on a particular conception of human nature, in his definition of democracy, raises a question which is implicit in his criticism of Marx. The question is: is man a political animal? Marx says no; man's nature is not fulfilled even within the framework of democracy, as democracy is a form of rule alien to man's nature. The state, including the democratic state, is the embodiment of the political and, therefore, anathema. Corey attacks Marx's theory of the state but, as in the case of his criticism of Marx's theory of the proletariat, does not deal with the fundamental issue. Consequently, in the manner of the previous comparison of Corey's and Marx's class analyses, Corey's position on this question can be discerned; but, because he did not deal directly with the question on its most fundamental level, some major gaps appear in Corey's discourse.

60 Ibid.

Basically, the problem is that Corey does not satisfactorily reconcile his view of the (democratic) state with his conception of the proper (most desirable because most appropriate) goals of man.

As Henri Lefebvre observes, "the theory of the state is the core or, if you will, the culmination of Marxian thought." He then proceeds to demonstrate, quite correctly, that "Marxian thought is fundamentally anti-state." The argument which he offers is essentially this:

Marx began to formulate his ideas about the state in his earliest critical essays on the Hegelian philosophy of right and the state. Against Hegel, Marx maintains that the essence of man is not political but social. Man is not a political animal. The social forces that blindly seek a way out of their conflicts become subject to the political power, the state. Social relations, including contradictions that give rise to class struggles, account for the state, not the other way round, as it seemed to Hegel. This fundamental criticism is aimed by Marx at every political form in turn. The very existence of the state presupposes that men make their history without knowing how or why, implies a certain lack of consciousness, of rationality, of organization in society. Moreover, the modern state is founded upon the fact that human reality is split into public life and private life, into citizens and individuals. The split accounts for the political alienation and must be abolished.

After expanding on these points, Lefebvre explains that "Marx developed the thesis according to which democracy is to other forms of the state as Christianity is to other religions." Christianity, he says,

places man at the summit, but this man is alienated. Similarly, democracy places man at the summit, but this man is alienated too, not the real fully developed man. Why? Because democracy is a political state.  

According to Corey's interpretation, Marx saw no further, in his considerations of state power, than the necessity for the destruction of the bourgeois state and its replacement by a proletarian dictatorship. He criticizes Marx for not seeing the dangers inherent in socialist bureaucracy, pointing out that "the bureaucratic caste under socialism . . . may, in fact, become a new ruling class with vested interests entrenched indirectly in the political control of economic power instead of directly, as under capitalism, in economic power itself."  

All states, Corey notes, "develop their own self-interests, which can be made to serve society only through greater democracy." However, Corey says, Marx ignores the fact that state powers "necessarily increase during the transition from capitalism to socialism." Marx "dismissed the dangers of statism."  

Corey repeated his claim that the "Marxist justification for the abolition [of the state] is the millenial notion that destruction of capitalism means an end of all class distinctions and of all conflicts of economic interests; [whereas, in fact,] all sorts of distinctions and conflicts remain. New forms of exploitation may arise and the bureaucracy may become a new .

66 Ibid.  
68 Ibid.  
69 Ibid.  
70 Unfinished Task, p. 135.
ruling class. Only an all-inclusive democracy can overcome the danger."\textsuperscript{71}

Corey explains that the dangers of statism were dismissed by Marx "largely because the Marxist theory assumes that as socialism abolishes classes the need for the state disappears and it 'withers away.'\textsuperscript{72}"

The reason for this assumption, according to Corey, was that Marx's "theory was shaped too much by the nature of the capitalist state."

Marx is portrayed, thus, as being a careless and naive social theorist, because of his failure to see beyond the traits of the capitalist state (which allowed him to project the disappearance of the state with the elimination of classes). The Marxist explanation of the means for the projected abolition of the state does depend heavily on Marx's understanding of the relationship between class structure and the state. However, Marx's justification for the elimination of the state is, as Lefebvre has shown, an entirely different matter.

Marx sees democracy as a form of political power and, consequently, as both a cause and a symptom of man's inability to achieve the good, that is, the essentially human, society. Corey does not address himself to, much less counter, Marx's criticism of democracy; and this is reflected in Corey's conception of democracy. Corey rejected Marx's notion that a proletarian revolution would eliminate the necessity for a state. He felt, first, that an exclusively proletarian revolution

\textsuperscript{71}Ibid., p. 134.

\textsuperscript{72}"Marxism Reconsidered--III," p. 307.
would fail; but even if it did succeed, conflict would not disappear and decisions would still have to be made. Most important, a bureaucracy would emerge which would accumulate power; and, in the absence of adequate controls, a new ruling class would arise. Ruling classes abuse their power. The answer to abuses of power, be they socialist bureaucratic or capitalistic, is democracy—a term Corey uses primarily to denote a means of preventing abuses of power. As indicated, Corey also uses democracy to mean the institutional preconditions for the achievement of the good life; and sometimes he equates democracy and the good life itself. In any case, all of these meanings involve the maintenance of political relationships; and although Corey does offer an historical explanation for his belief in the necessity of a state, he does not deal with Marx's contention concerning the ultimate incompatibility of politics and the achievement of human potentialities.

Corey asserts, furthermore, that "the state is power: Power is needed to keep society together; the state is the final arbiter of social conflicts." He explains that the "state is a creation of men's needs and wills; its forms, powers, and ends are determined in earthly, pragmatic fashion by the interests of the class or group that shapes the state—whether it is the absolute-power state of tyranny or the limited-power state of democracy." History has shown the state to be an inextricable part of man's fate. "Throughout history [, moreover,] political power . . . has been the great source of exploitation,

73 *Unfinished Task*, p. 302.
tyranny, and crime. . . . It is unhistorical to expect a different outcome if centralization of economic and political power brings a new absolute state."\textsuperscript{75} Corey's demand for a pluralistic, "limited-power state of democracy" is presented as being not "unhistorical"; his demand is thus justified on the grounds that he is working within history rather than against it, but the problem mentioned in the previous paragraph remains unresolved.

Corey offers what he regards as an historical explanation of the need for the state in general and for the democratic state in particular. Although he does not address himself directly to Marx's attack on democracy, a criticism of Marx's position is implicit in Corey's opposition to any unhistorical refusal to accept the need for democratic state controls over centralized economic and political power. However, this implied criticism stands on rather shaky ground since Corey's own defense of democracy does not depend, as noted earlier, entirely on historical arguments. He accepts the humanist conceptions of human nature and human values: "Humanism makes man the creator of all values: a being of dignity, integrity and independence, with a will to understand and aspire that urges him toward truth, justice and freedom."\textsuperscript{76}

He goes on to explain and defend democracy on the grounds that it alone can prevent abuses of power (abuses defined in terms of his humanist assumptions) and that it alone can implement humanist values. Humanism is an ethical proposition which history can neither prove nor disprove.

\textsuperscript{75}Tbid., pp. 302-03.
\textsuperscript{76}Tbid., p. 5.
This did not prevent it from playing a major part in the development of Corey's case for democracy. Thus, we are unable to find in Corey's position a consistent methodological or other substantial objection to Marx's theory of the state, to his view of democracy, or to his proposition that man is not political.

Once again, more important than Corey's failure to analyze Marxism adequately was his failure to apply the critical categories which such an analysis would have required to his own work. In this case, the comparison to Marx (a comparison which Corey insisted on making) illustrates the character of the most serious discontinuities in Corey's argument for democratic pluralism. Those discontinuities appear in Corey's failure either to satisfactorily arrange for the implementation of his value commitments or to justify those instances wherein they had to be compromised. Limiting the exercise of power, preventing the concentration and combination of power is not synonymous with the realization of the values which call for those controls. Close scrutiny of Corey's proposals reveals that in several respects he either does not go to the root of the problem which he is attempting to solve or, having gone to the root and discovering that the problem is only partially soluble, he fails either to comment on the consequences of that discovery for his values or to adjust the goals of his scheme accordingly. Corey's criticism of Marx did not raise those kinds of questions which would have required that he confront these discontinuities and that might have resulted in his remedying them. Conversely, the way in which Corey chose to criticize Marx is symptomatic of his not having adequately dealt with the problem of the relationship between means
and ends, as the following line of argument will demonstrate.

Ends and Means: the implementation of values and goals.

Corey states that man not only needs the state, he wills it. One might ask, however, why man rarely wills or succeeds in creating the kind of state (i.e., democracy) which is, according to Corey, most suitable to his nature. Corey answers this by noting the diversity of men's interests:

In any community, organization or group—in government—the majority is absorbed in the performance of functional services. [Functional by whose standards? Functionality to serve what ends?] There is always, however, a minority of men who are absorbed in the struggle for power, who want and get power although it may mean neglect and distortion of functional services.77

Why is there this distinction? What are its causes? Is there any way to eliminate it? Marx finds private ownership of the means of production at its root, manifesting itself in an exploitative class structure which is maintained by the state. He seeks to eliminate it through revolution. Corey does not address himself directly to the first two questions. He is concerned, rather, with the major abuses which result from the distinction, abuses caused by the unregulated concentration of economic and political power. And he seeks not so much to eliminate as to control and ameliorate it.

In a democratic set-up the men of power may work their evil, but it is a limited evil because the power is neither single nor absolute, there are checks and balances and

77Ibid., p. 302.
alternatives which allow people to choose. [Choose what or whom? Choose among the evil men who seek power?] ²⁸

This would not present a problem were it not for the fact that Corey's vision of the good society, toward which his analyses and proposals seem to be directed, derives from his conception of the basic nature and potentialities of man. That is, his proposals appear to be designed to realize, and his analyses to contribute to the realization of, a society based on ethical principles which supposedly correspond, in turn, to the true nature of man. However, those ethical principles are diminished in significance, in a "democratic set-up [where] men may work their . . . limited evil. . . ." If man needs and wills the state [that is, if man is truly a political animal], and the best form of the state is democracy, and democracy can succeed merely in limiting evil practices by preventing absolutism [or, conversely, in institutionalizing petty "neglect and distortion of functional services"], then the function which the vision performs is severely limited. As noted above, there is a great difference controlling corruption and implementing good.

Corey equated "functional democracy" with a combination of liberalism and democracy wherein liberalism meant personal freedom, and democracy, in this case, meant popularly based state power. A genuine synthesis of these two elements requires, however vaguely or tacitly stated, the imposition of limits on individual freedom and on the exercise of governmental authority. One would anticipate that the content

²⁸ ibid.
of these limits could be, and apparently were intended to be, extrapolated from Corey's statements on the ethical and moral bases of democracy, considering the elaborate lengths to which he went in presenting them. Instead, the limits reflect Corey's primary concerns, first, as has been indicated, for the elimination of the major abuses which result from the "recombination of political and economic power," and, second, for the release of frustrated functional talents and the unused and potential productive resources of society. In short, the values, the ethical and moral standards included in his scheme, may be regarded as admonitions directed at policy-makers or political actors. They indicate Corey's personal preferences or values; but they are not structurally related to (i.e., they do not directly inform) the institutions and practices which Corey includes in his "functional democracy" or in his "free economic order." Corey recommends an approach to the "positive" state which

emphasizes what kind of strong and positive government we want, and for what; an approach that calls for democratic safeguards on growing governmental authority in the form of a recombination of economic and political power in the state. (Italics his.)

Yet, no explanation of the "what kind" and "for what" is offered beyond restrictions on the use of power. Corey then says that

if our analysis of the nature of economic reconstruction for democracy is measurably right, then the fundamental need is this: to make the minimum changes necessary to bring a new economic balance and freedom, and to make the changes in forms that will not permanently aggrandize state
power but will bring a progressive limitation of that power after its initial use to make the changes. (Italics his.)

It is true that the more visionary individual components (values) of Corey's humanistic democracy play a decreasingly prominent role in his discussions as he becomes more precise in his description of the new economic and political orders under consideration. But even such relatively mild positive attributes as cooperation, compromise, and the use of rational intelligence in decision-making are almost totally overshadowed by his concern for the "specification, localization, and limitation" of power. This, then, is the basic inconsistency in Unfinished Task (and it is not remedied in any of Corey's future works): he appears to be quite aware of the importance of giving substance to his "new order"; and by explicitly stating his humanistic value commitments as well as his vision of the good society, Corey gives the impression that the economic and political systems which he is proposing are designed to realize these ends. In fact, they are not. Once again, this is not to say that the ends which they are designed to serve are invalid. The limitation of state power and the liberation of untapped productivity are in themselves certainly defensible goals; and Corey's attempt to arrange institutional means for the accomplishment of those ends is, therefore, equally defensible. However, these are not the ends or means implied in Corey's initial discussion of values and goals.

Corey believes in the strengthening of parliamentary government; and parliamentary government "assumes a balance of interests within

80 Ibid.
which conflicts are adjusted by agreement and compromise. A balance of interests requires a diversity of interests, and conflict presupposes opposition.

Opposition is fundamental to democracy. There can be no opposition if there are no social bases for it in the measurable independence and autonomy of functional groups, interests, and institutions. [And, fortunately,] within our economic world are all the social-economic elements with which to create the independence and autonomy needed for a new free order. The elements are: 1. The public corporations. 2. Independent business enterprise. 3. Free farmers. 4. Consumer and producer cooperatives. 5. Finally, free labor unions that are independent of management and the state. A sixth element may be added: measurable political autonomy in a limited-power state. (Italics his.)

How these interests are to be made relatively equal in their pursuit of the benefits bestowed by government is not specified. Corey insists that their existence be guaranteed, but he does not show how their mutual conflict will be "adjusted by agreement and compromise," how a "balance" will be established, why one or a combination of interests will not be able to exert and sustain unequal influence. Major harmful combinations are to be prevented by maintaining a distinction between the state and society (by limiting the powers of the state, decentralizing political power, prohibiting the state from exercising monopoly control over the economy) and preventing the private monopolization of economic power (by "transforming monopoly into public corporations" and maintaining the diversity of the economic groups mentioned above). Corey goes into considerable detail in describing the

81 Ibid., p. 293.
82 Ibid., pp. 303-04.
limitations he would place on a governmental administrative bureaucracy responsible for the government's economic activities; e.g., "operation of the agencies under mandates that definitely specify their functional rights and powers, with the agencies granted a large measure of independence within the provisions of the mandates." But, again, these provisions are aimed at controlling the exercise of power rather than directing its use toward the realization of predetermined positive goals.

The freedom which Corey sees as part of his functional democracy is also treated almost entirely in negative terms; that is, as freedom from rather than freedom to. The obvious exception to this is the freedom to live more comfortably, and, hopefully, more creatively, as a result of the operation of the new "free economic order" which alone can release the full productive potential of modern industry. However, an examination of the objectives and provisions of this "free economic order" will show that Corey regarded it primarily as a vehicle for the achievement of positive goals only insofar as it succeeded in freeing some types of economic activity (i.e., functional, productive) and restricting others (i.e., non-productive, monopolistic, etc.). The positive potentialities of men and institutions, their capacity for realizing humanist values, would be released if their relationships were properly arranged. Here, again, Corey is confronted with the task of giving substance to his goal of planning for freedom; and the

83 Ibid., p. 295
function of providing freedom with positive attributes is performed by
this process of release or liberation. Men will be able to act, in-
stitutions will be able to operate, society will be able to achieve
ends according to Corey's ideas of right action and the good life once
the inhibitions to such action have been removed. (Knowing what Corey
means by right actions is especially important, then, since, in
addition to deciding on their acceptability as values, it must be
determined whether the relationships which he promotes and those which
he prohibits are truly conducive to their performance; i.e., whether
the behavior which is made possible by these arrangements is consistent
with his values.) The following combination of paraphrase and quota-
tion is the most direct means of presenting an account of Corey's con-
ception of a free, democratic, constitutional economic order. Its most
notable feature is Corey's special use of freedom, as noted above.

Our problem, says Corey,

is to prevent a coalescence of the three institutional
forces of capitalist transformation into one unopposed
and unopposable power in the state. The answer to the
problem is a constitutional economic order in large-scale
industry, in which management, labor unions, and the state
are assigned definite but limited rights and powers that
check and balance one another in democratic functional co-
operation. (Italics his.)

He explains further that a

constitutional economic order prevents the recombination
of economic and political power in the state, yet it makes
enough economic changes and gives government enough eco-
nomic authority to free the productive forces for the pro-
duction of abundance. Transformation of monopoly into

public corporations, operating in a constitutional order, breaks the financial oligarchy within democracy that now bars the way to economic progress. Democratic self-government within the cooperative balance of management, labor unions, and the state restores economic freedom in the domain of monopoly industry. (Italics mine.)

Clearly, the rationale for the elimination of monopolies does not lie in Corey's opposition to private property. Private property is justified "functionally," in that it "promotes economic freedom, production, and democracy." Monopoly property is, however, the enemy of independent [functional] property and of economic freedom. Thus, economic reconstruction for democracy calls neither for absolute abolition of property nor for its absolute retention. It calls for abolition of monopoly property, whose ownership is no longer functional and no longer serves production and democracy. Functional property and ownership are let alone in a new constitutional order of free enterprise.

As important as the creation of public corporations, however, is the system under which the public corporations will operate: whether it brings a bureaucratic centralization of control that recombines economic and political power in the state or whether they operate in a free economic order. As monopoly corporations are wrested from finance capital they must come under direct control of management and other functional groups—not of the state. The difference is that between democracy and totalitarianism.

More than a "limitation of governmental administrative controls over enterprise . . . democracy requires that the ownership and management

85 Ibid., p. 211.
86 Ibid., p. 265.
87 Ibid., p. 266.
88 Ibid., p. 262.
of public corporations be separated from government. 89  What is more, ownership in the conventional sense is replaced by "a sort of mutualization of ownership" by functional groups wherein ownership actually "gives way to management."

The basic change is in overall direction and policy: boards of directors no longer represent ownership [in the old sense] or financial interests but management and other functional groups actuated by a new economic morality of management for production and welfare. . . . These changes are not difficult to make, for they simply mean bringing to functional dominance the constructive elements of technical-professional management that already exist within monopoly corporations. (Italics his.) 90

Of course, "government must plan and initiate the new economic arrangements within which public corporations are to operate. [However,] those arrangements are set forth in a constitution which provides for the separation of economic from political power." 91

In a crucial passage, Corey explains that objectives and means, rights and powers are given concrete definition in the economic constitution. It must define what public corporations are for, their relation to one another and to independent enterprise, the rights and powers of management, labor unions, and state, as well as the rights and powers of consumers or any other functional groups for whom representation may be considered necessary. The constitution may . . . include one or another aspect of independent enterprise, mainly to safeguard it against the public corporations or government. . . . A structure of constitutional checks and balances . . . limits government's rights and powers to general policy and supervision, investigation

89 Ibid., pp. 266-67.
90 Ibid., p. 268.
91 Ibid.
to prevent abuses, and initiation of changes in the economic constitution.\footnote{Ibid., p. 269.}

The remainder of the discussion concerns the manner in which the principle of checks and balances finds expression in the new free economic order.

For example, Corey asks: "what monopoly corporations shall be transformed into public corporations?" The answer, he says, "depends upon the needs of economic balance. . . ."\footnote{Ibid., p. 270.} Conditions vary from industry to industry.

Agriculture must be left to private and cooperative enterprise; timber, however, calls for enterprises of a mixed type. It may be decided that no public corporations are needed in trade and service . . . [whereas, it is clear that they are badly needed] in the fields of manufacture, public utilities and mining.\footnote{Ibid., pp. 270-71.}

Corey estimates that the "transformation of from 1000 to 1500 monopoly corporations is enough to bring economic balance and democratization of monopoly."\footnote{Ibid., p. 270.}

Public corporations, moreover, "must be independent of one another and compete in their fields. . . . Exceptions are indicated, however, in the field of what is called 'natural monopoly'—railroads, telephone and telegraph, electric power."\footnote{Ibid., p. 272.} Here again, the object is the
avoidance of centralization of economic power. Thus, it is necessary to "recognize the claims of regional and economic decentralization and diversification." Likewise, administrative centralization "brings the bureaucratic arrogance that stifles initiative, independence and human moral values. [Centralized] administration may become a hierarchy of petty tyrants. . . . Just as centralization of political power endangers civil rights, so a centralization of administrative economic power endangers economic rights."

In keeping with his principle of separation of political and economic power, Corey points out that the boards of directors of public corporations should not be appointees of the state but of the functional groups whose constitutional right it is to appoint directors. . . . The directors, moreover, owe no allegiance to ownership or financial control; they owe allegiance to the constitutional objectives of their enterprise and to the functional groups they represent. (Italics his.)

Three major groups are represented on the boards: management, labor, and consumers. Although exceptions may be made, government "need not have direct representation on the boards. . . . Its representation is indirect . . . [; e.g.,] the power of Congress to investigate, formulate general policy, and initiate constitutional changes. [While consumer representation may be] most important . . . since production is . . . geared directly to consumption, . . . management gets a preponderant

97 Ibid., pp. 272-73.
98 Ibid., pp. 274-75.
99 Ibid., pp. 275-76.
representation on the boards . . . because it is management's job to manage [and it] must have the freedom and power to do its job." (Italics his.)

Corey envisions a "new economic morality" and a new sense of loyal service . . . as enterprise is freed from monopoly controls and management is given the freedom to express fully its technical-professional art." This freedom is "promoted by an economic pluralism that comprises a diversity of economic institutions and interests" and manifests itself in a system characterized by free competition and a free market. This is not the old free market of competitive capitalism . . . [as] we cannot restore the widespread ownership of small independent property that was its economic basis. Nor is it a retention of the market "as is," for the market of monopoly capitalism is largely unfree. And monopoly arose out of the free market. The market can only be free if the "freedom" of monopoly is ended, only if there are checks and balances that prevent unfair competition and interference with free enterprise . . . . The new order "manages" through democratic economic institutions to promote free enterprise and competition. The alternative is monopoly management of the market that moves toward the totalitarian management of a corporate state.

The supreme merit of the free market is its objective economic controls that reduce to a minimum the direct administrative controls which endanger freedom and personality. A free market . . . promotes a sense of equality. Enterprises are equal where they meet on free terms in the market; consumers are equal where they are free to buy the same things or not to buy. The . . . free market creates the social relations and a climate of opinion that drive toward greater freedom and equality.

100 Ibid., pp. 276-77.
101 Ibid., p. 278.
102 Ibid., p. 285.
This does not deny the necessity of planning, for planning "helps to maintain economic balance." This it can do if it "is of a limited strategic nature and a part of economic self-government." It "thus becomes a force that promotes economic freedom."\textsuperscript{103} Corey explains that limited strategic planning proceeds on different functional levels and in different functional forms. It is as specific, localized, and limited as other economic institutions. The public corporations plan and independent enterprises have their own cooperative planning organs; they meet in industry and regional planning boards. The boards have specified functions and powers. . . . A national planning-board that is essentially a statistical agency keeps track of production and consumption, calls attention to unbalances that are developing or that may develop, and makes recommendations. . . . National regulation, planning, and control are largely indirect [although] government will carry on direct planning . . . for specific ends [such as housing programs or foreign trade]. All these activities can be carried on without absolute over-all planning. . . .\textsuperscript{104}

We are now at a crucial juncture in our attempt to understand both Corey's conception of democracy and the nature of his disagreement with Marx. Corey found "nothing wrong with the political procedures and moral values of democracy; all they need is greater strength and wider application:" i.e., application to the economic system.\textsuperscript{105} "The politics of freedom need a material basis in economic freedom."\textsuperscript{106} Economic freedom, both in the sense of material welfare and freedom of

\textsuperscript{103}\textit{Ibid.}, pp. 286-87.
\textsuperscript{104}\textit{Ibid.}, pp. 287-88.
\textsuperscript{105}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 67.
\textsuperscript{106}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 298.
economic activity, is inhibited by monopolistic practices. Monopolistic practices can be eliminated only by the application of democratic procedures to economic activity. Furthermore, "the crisis of the economic relations within democracy brought a crisis of the democratic political system. The system worked as long as capitalism operated to create a balance of economic interests that allowed all social groups to make gains."\(^{107}\) The threatened democratic political system itself can be saved, once again, only by the democratization of the economy. "Only use of state authority can break reactionary resistance to progressive social change," however.\(^{108}\) And since "a government bureaucracy that wields all economic and political power would be further from popular control than a multitude of capitalists subject to competitive democratic pressures," we are brought full circle, now facing what appears to be a dilemma. The most effective way to prevent the aggrandizement of state power is through the separation of the state from society, the proliferation of competing groups, the maintenance of an economy as free as possible from bureaucratic control by the government. There is, then, a "reciprocal relation between economics and politics," or, more appropriately, between economic democracy and political democracy. Economic democracy depends upon the application of democratic political principles to the economy; the strength of political democracy depends on the democratization of the economy. The

\(^{107}\text{Ibid.}, \text{p. 66.}\)

\(^{108}\text{Ibid.}, \text{p. 71.}\)
one limits and is limited by the other.

Since the theory and practice of political democracy have been quite adequately worked out, at least to his satisfaction, Corey set himself the job of formulating an "economic reconstruction for democracy which is the unfinished task of our generation." In doing so, however, he had to balance the limitations to be placed on the use of economic power with those to be placed on governmental authority. Restrictions on economic activity would have to be stringent enough to check possible abuses of economic power without impairing the freedom of the economy to the extent that it would lose its effectiveness in checking possible abuses of political power. He was able to call upon standard devices for limiting governmental power: separation of powers, checks and balances, etc.. But in providing the details of a new free economic order, he was obliged to be more original and much more specific. More important, his originality and specificity had to be directed primarily at the contrivance of the aforementioned balance of limitations. This almost exclusive preoccupation with the negative aspects of democracy resulted in his not paying adequate attention to the implementation of those humanistic values which he so eloquently declaimed.

Corey does not refute Marx's claim that politics is alien to man's nature; nevertheless, he asserts that the state is a necessary component of a society in which power is minimally abused. And he does not

109 Ibid., p. 22.
merely concede that the state is a necessary evil by suggesting that it is man's tragic fate to be condemned to a life in political society. Rather, in spite of the abovementioned preoccupation with its negative aspects, Corey continues to regard democracy (economic and political) ultimately in positive terms:

As it learns from the mistakes of others to shape social change in its democratic image, American democracy—with its liberating traditions and immense technical-economic resources—can lead mankind in moving toward a new free world of greater democracy and welfare, of greater fraternity and peace, of greater human moral worth.\footnote{Ibid., p. 308.}

However, neither the expression of this attitude toward democracy nor his explanation of the restrictive functions of state power fulfills Corey's obligation to explain how the state (or the state and the economy combined) will advance the causes of "fraternity," "peace," and "human moral worth." He implies that the "free economic order" and "functional democracy" will generate "higher forms" of personal and social life; but he provides only for a "functional" society, its members making "functional" contributions to its operations, and the possibility of greater material comfort. In what sense is "functional" the equivalent of "higher," or in what sense does a "functional" society provide a "higher form" of social life?

One could read into Corey's notion of functionality many of the elements in his humanistic value system, thus providing a kind of elevated functionalism as the key to man's essential nature. But it would then be very difficult to justify many of the elements in Corey's
projected political and economic systems; e.g., unequal distribution of property (and, therefore, of opportunities for realization of latent functional talents), continued production for profit, recognition of the necessity of elites, etc.. On the other hand, if functionalism was equated merely with efficiency, thus doing away with the humanistic definition, we would be forced to inquire, once again, into the means to the good life.

We have noted the similarities between Marx's and Corey's functionalism; yet, there are important differences. The Marxian equivalent of Corey's notion of functional dominance explains that the proletariat have the capacity to operate the productive system; it explains why the bourgeoisie are superfluous, why theirs is a dominance of power rather than function. More than that, Marx argues that it is not merely the functionality of the proletariat which justifies their liberation (which would release the frustrated productive capacity of society). A functionally rational productive system would also mean the return to a natural relationship between men and their world.

On the other hand, Corey's functional millenium, in which the new middle class would play such an important part, signifies limitations on the use of power, the release of productive forces, increased possibilities for the expression of the instinct of workmanship. His "limited strategic planning" notwithstanding, Corey makes no provision for the specific direction of society according to the values which he himself feels are legitimate. His scheme devolves upon the elimination of scarcity and the creation of abundance. In the sense that ends
are values, or goals which derive directly from values, Corey maintains the necessity of separating ends from means.

The institutionalization of conflict, intended by Corey to establish an equilibrium among competing interests, and the various means of preventing the recombination of political and economic power, are ultimately designed to remove the barriers to economic prosperity. Of course, limitations on the distribution and exercise of power are also designed to protect men against the evil intentions of some power wielders. Nevertheless, the main thrust of the argument appears to be that abundance will remove the obstacles which prevent men from acting toward one another in accordance with the principles implicit in their true, moral worth. Furthermore, while Corey mistrusts and consciously avoids the imposition of a particular set of values on the institutions of society, he does claim that "man became a moral human being as he used his hands and brain to make natural forces serve him," and that the elimination of scarcity permits men to "infuse the results of work with moral value." Now, it would appear that man, insofar as he is a "moral human being," must stand in a very special relationship to his work and "the results of work." And although such a relationship would have myriad manifestations in society, it would have to become characteristic of and institutionalized in a truly "moral order." Corey simply does not pursue the problem far enough. The opportunity for establishing such a relationship through the elimination of scarcity

Ibid., p. 226.
is not identical with the relationship itself. Corey insists that he is aiming at the creation of a moral order, but he provides only a preliminary inquiry in the bases of one, and attends only to the problems of what appear to him to be its primary obstacles: scarcity and unregulated concentrated power.

In addition, Corey insufficiently attends to the question of a transition to the new order. As mentioned earlier, his opposition to revolution stemmed from a conviction that it would degenerate into either a fascist or communist totalitarian dictatorship. But, even assuming the validity of his analysis, other methods of transition are at least open to consideration.
CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSIONS

One set of conclusions concerns Corey's long-term debate with Marxism and the fact that he had no argument with Marxism insofar as he could identify it with his version of democratic and humanist goals. His objections were directed against those aspects of Marxism which either proved incapable of assisting in the struggle for those goals or, worse, contributed to the growth of totalitarianism in spite of their formal commitment to freedom (i.e., the recombination of economic and political power under the state). Nevertheless, residual elements of Marxian socialism, such as the concept of a "functionally dominant" class, subtly worked their way into the fabric of his work. And although they remained unexamined, they were undeniably present, if often changed from their original form and combined with new elements or put to different uses.

Thus, it was not so much the messianism in the idea of proletarian messianism which disturbed Corey; it was the proletarian. He seemed quite willing to accept the utility of class-economic analysis; but he was unwilling to accept the proletariat's having a monopoly on "functional dominance" of the system. Like Marx, he sought to identify a single group in society whose interests coincided with his conception of the actual direction of social change. Both he and Marx believed
in progress, as a humanist goal and as the possible consequence of the
evolution of existing social forces. And both of them attempted to
understand the composition and direction of those forces using ana-
lytical techniques which emphasized the importance of economic factors.

Corey's rejection of Marx's proletarian exclusiveness in favor of
a more inclusive democratic pluralism can be seen as a measure of
Corey's fidelity to his version of socialist humanism. For that
humanism to be achieved, Corey felt, he had to go beyond what he con-
sidered Marx's essentially nineteenth century perspective at the same
time employing many Marxian analytical tools to understand his environ-
ment. Having gone beyond, Corey found that the proletariat was mis-
cast in the role of chief agency of social change. Technological ad-
vances had altered all that. He also found that changed conditions
denied the validity of two other Marxist claims: that class revolu-
tion and class dictatorship were the only means of securing the new
order, and that a classless society must underlie the perpetual ful-
fillment of socialism's humane ends. Given present conditions, it was
not the proletariat but the technical-managerial groups which occupied
the position of functional dominance. And, given present conditions,
it was precisely because Corey remained faithful to what he regarded
as Marx's goals that the new dominant group could not be directed to
perform the same revolutionary role which Marx had assigned the prole-
tariat. Although it may have been possible at one time, it was no
longer the case that a single class could monopolize economic and
political power and avoid totalitarianism, its previous commitments
and expectations notwithstanding. The bureaucratic and authoritarian
potentialities of the modern state are simply too powerful; and, in order to administer its power, that class would have to create a massive state apparatus which would eventually distort and subsume all goals, regardless of how humane they might be, save its own. Therefore, the logical inconsistencies in his formulations aside, in spite of his having identified a new "functionally dominant" group, but precisely because he had retained a humanist commitment, Corey felt that he had to reject not only proletarian exclusiveness, but also any program which elevated one class at the expense of others. Although the technical-managerial groups were justified in laying special claim to the title of harbinger of the new functional society, they were not justified in claiming social or political superiority.

Another set of conclusions also emerge from Corey's debate with Marxism. The point at issue now, however, is that although Corey had no argument with Marxism (insofar as he could identify it with his version of democratic and humanist goals), he should have had an argument. A thorough investigation of the role of values in Marxism might have indicated to Corey the need to remedy the flaws and inconsistencies in his own system of ideas, since the major flaws and inconsistencies appear in the relationships between analysis and values (descriptive and prescriptive).

Corey began with certain ethical presuppositions. He stated his values and the goals which he felt were appropriate to a new moral order. He identified the main obstacle and the main threat to the realization and maintenance of the new order as scarcity and the recombination of political and economic power. As both were related, he
sought to eliminate scarcity and prevent the recombination of political and economic power through a system of economic and political checks and balances, a system of democratic pluralism. But neither the balanced exercise of power nor abundance assures the realization of the aforementioned goals. These remain necessary but not sufficient preconditions for the new moral order. Once the danger of recombination is eliminated, how shall power be used? What is to guarantee that power, thus tamed, or abundance will be used in accordance with Corey's values or directed toward the realization of his long-term goals? It could be argued that Corey did not anticipate the full realization of those goals, that he intended them to be used as guides for the long-range direction of society or as standards for the evaluation of individual actions or proposals for action. If that is the case, however, Corey should have made this clear and adjusted both the goals and the part they played in his scheme accordingly.

Apparently Corey did not recognize the importance of a careful reconciliation of values, techniques of analysis, and recommendations for change. If this was true during his early years as a Marxist revolutionary socialist, it did not express itself in his writings. There was at that time no lack of correspondence among these elements. The outrage that he felt against the injustices of capitalist society, based on a humanistic conception of the nature of man, logically found its way into his analysis of society and his revolutionary and post-revolutionary aspirations. A case could be made for his having significantly altered his approach during the late 1920's and 1930's. At that time, Corey's main concern was the unviability of the capitalist
system. He held that it was economically unsound. But he also called for the uprooting of capitalist institutions and their replacement with those congenial to the true needs of man—man for himself. Consequently, although it could be argued that he placed an undue emphasis on the malfunctions of the capitalist economic system, there were no major discontinuities in his system of thought. Corey carried with him into his final period his humanist values and his concern for economic productivity and efficiency; but the changes in his work during this period constituted more than a mere shift of emphasis. He located the root of society's problem not in private ownership of the means of production, but in the centralization of political and economic power. The problem of the legitimacy and prerogatives of ownership was subordinated to the problem of the proper distribution and exercise of power, regardless of its source. This change required concomitant adjustments in Corey's methodology and in the character and analytical role of his values and goals. To the extent that these adjustments were not forthcoming, the impact of his analysis was diminished. Clearly implied is that this judgement throws into serious question the democratic pluralist approach insofar as Corey is representative of this approach and insofar as its advocates claim to share Corey's basic values and long-range goals. If those goals and values are accepted, either the entire approach must be abandoned or the necessary changes in descriptive and especially prescriptive analysis must be undertaken.

Given the bulk of criticism of Corey's work in the preceding pages, an elaborate appreciation of his ideas at this juncture might not ring true. The fact is, however, he raised many important questions,
and focused on many of the most crucial deficiencies of and serious threats to modern society. For example, he inquired into the failure of contemporary capitalism to adequately produce and equitably distribute potentially available wealth. He examined current social, economic and political structures in order to understand the causes of and possible remedies for tendencies toward centralized bureaucratic authoritarianism. He asked whether and how it might be possible to replace conflict with cooperation and consensus in the pursuit of group desiderata. If analysis of Corey's ideas reveals certain gaps and inconsistencies it also provides an introduction to new directions of inquiry into the problems with which he dealt—either by remedying the errors in his approach or proceeding beyond the unnecessary limitations which he placed on it.

One final consideration: does Corey's experience contribute to the understanding of men who alter their positions over time? It is doubtful that any meaningful generalizations can be drawn from his experience. There is a theme which runs through Corey's career, both as a political activist and as a writer. He sought to eliminate or control the unjust exercise of power. Combinations of experience, insight and intellectual conviction caused him to alter his perspective and, ultimately, his entire analytical framework: from the proletariat to the new middle class as the preeminent agency of social change, from revolution to parliamentary democracy as the best means for instituting change, from private property to centralized bureaucratic power as the primary source of social injustice, and, consequently, from Marxian socialism to democratic pluralism as the systematic framework in which
his experiences, insights and convictions are organized. Among the most obvious influences on the formation of his various perspectives were his early poverty, his experiences with socialism and communism, the rise of fascist and communist totalitarianism, and his contact with scholars and scholarship. How much weight should be assigned to each of these is difficult to say. Yet, each can be seen as a factor in the building of perspectives on the problem of power and, eventually, in the systematic formulation of "positions." Since this has been the subject of the present study, any attempt at further elaboration would be superfluous.
I. Documentary Sources

The Lewis Corey Collection, housed in the Special Collections section of the Nicholas Murray Butler Library at Columbia University, contains letters to and from Lewis Corey (Louis C. Fraina), outlines of speeches and articles, newspaper clippings of articles by and about Corey, recordings and transcripts of speeches and lectures by Corey, as well as research materials, notes, and drafts of articles and chapters of books never completed. All of this material was consulted by the author for this study. The following unpublished items were especially useful:

"Toward an Understanding of America." 7,500 word outline for a book. No date.


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