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The Needle Trades Workers Industrial Union: The Theory and Practice of Building a Red Industrial Union during Third Period Communism, 1928–1934

Victor G. Devinatz

A major focus of the trade-union activities of the Communist Party USA (CPUSA) during “Third Period Communism” (1928–1934) centered on the building of independent “revolutionary,” or “red,” industrial unions in opposition to the craft-oriented American Federation of Labor (AFL) unions. The transformation in 1929 of the CPUSA’s trade-union arm, the Trade Union Educational League (TUEL), organized in 1921, to the Trade Union Unity League (TUUL), with the explicit purpose of establishing Communist-led “dual unions” in industries where AFL unions already represented workers, appeared to be a dramatic shift in policy from the strategy of “boring from within” the AFL that the Party had utilized for most of the 1920s (Johanningsmeier 2001).

While much has been written concerning the CPUSA’s role within the Congress of Industrial Organizations, surprisingly little has been written about the TUUL’s activities as a whole. Although there have been two volumes solely devoted to analyzing the history of the TUUL’s predecessor organization, the TUEL (Foner 1991, 1994), no single book has so far been written dedicated only to the TUUL. However, several monographs, limited to one or

two chapters, have discussed the trade-union federation within the context of broader treatments of U.S. Communism (Klehr 1984; Cochran 1977; Ottanelli 1991; Levenstein 1981). The roles and activities of individual TUUL-affiliated unions, such as the Marine Workers Industrial Union (Nelson 1988; Kimeldorf 1988), the Auto Workers Union (AWU) (Keeran 1980), the National Miners Union (NMU) (Meyerhuber 1987; Nyden 1977; Draper 1972) and the Cannery and Agricultural Workers Industrial Union (Daniels 1981), have been covered to a greater extent than the TUUL as a whole in the scholarly literature.

Although the Needle Trades Workers Industrial Union (NTWIU) was probably the most successful, as well as being the largest TUUL union and having the most organizational stability, there have been no articles or significant portions of books devoted to this union. This paper's purpose is to debunk the popular misconceptions and to demonstrate the achievements, through the use of archival evidence and the secondary literature, concerning the NTWIU as a TUUL affiliate.

First, although the common belief is that the formation of the NTWIU occurred because of the sectarian policy of the Red International of Labour Unions [RILU] Profintern due to the implementation of the "class vs. class" program during Third Period Communism, in actuality, the NTWIU was created because of the expulsion of the left wing from independent and AFL needle trades unions. Second, one can see that while the Party formally adhered to Moscow's formula during Third Period Communism, there was much discussion and consideration within the Party about the correct strategy to pursue, as evidenced by the flexible tactics used in building the NTWIU with respect to the reformist needle trades unions. Third, contra the standard historical view (Cochran 1977; Klehr 1984) that the TUUL unions' major purpose was to propagandize for the defense of the Soviet Union and to launch strikes primarily for promoting a frontal assault on capitalism, the NTWIU emphasized the achievement of economic and trade-union demands, wage increases, reduction in work hours, recognition of shop committees, etc., to improve the lot of the workers in the here and now. Fourth, while it is undoubtedly true that some TUUL unions led

some large and disastrous work stoppages (for example, the AWU and the NMU), the NTWIU experienced moderate success in leading strikes in many of its sections in the needle trades industry, and much success in the fur industry, becoming larger and more powerful than the AFL-affiliated International Fur Workers Union.

Finally, although not entirely successful in achieving these objectives, the NTWIU offered an alternative to the AFL needle trades unions by attempting to promote a democratic and activist structure through shop committees encouraging the participation of women, African American, and young workers within its organization.

Background to the NTWIU's formation

While the TUUL was formally launched at an August 1929 conference of CPUSA and other radical trade unionists in Cleveland, four dual unions led by the Party had already been established—the NMU, the National Textile Workers Union (NTWU), the NTWIU, and the AWU—prior to the organization of the red industrial union federation. Both the NMU and the NTWU had been created nearly a year earlier in September 1928, while the NTWIU was born on 1 January 1929. The AWU traversed a different path before arriving as a TUUL affiliate. Organized as an industrial union that had its origins as a Knights of Labor affiliate, the AWU (then called the Carriage Workers Union) had joined the AFL in 1891, but became independent of the federation in 1918. Communist influence in the AWU continued to grow throughout the 1920s and by 1927, the Communists had wrested control of the union away from their political rival, the Socialists (Levenstein 1981, 17; Keeran 1980, 32).

The origin of the NTWIU had its roots in the left wing of three AFL needle trades unions—the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union (ILGWU), the International Fur Workers' Union (IFWU), and the United Cloth Hat, Cap and Millinery Workers International Union—and the independent Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America (ACW). With the formation of a Needle Trades' Section of the TUEL on 22 November 1922 by representatives from the ILGWU, the millinery workers, the capmakers,

the journeymen tailors, and the fur workers, the left wing determined that it would work within the AFL needle trades unions as opposed to organizing rival unions to replace the existing ones (Foner 1991, 276). In response to the formation of this left-wing group, the conservative administrations of the AFL needle trades unions, and the ACW as well, engaged in attacks and expulsions of TUEL members throughout the 1920s (Foner 1991, 1994).

Sketching the TUEL's history in the ILGWU in some detail is crucial for two reasons: it provides an understanding of the eventual emergence of the NTWIU, and it also illustrates the difficulty that the league faced in "boring from within" all of the needle trades unions, except for the fur workers' union, where the strategy was successful throughout the 1920s.

Shortly after its formation, the TUEL section experienced much success in attracting garment workers within the ILGWU to its program, as evidenced by winning "a majority of the seats" on Local 22's Executive Board (New York) and the Philadelphia Joint Board. It also obtained a "dominant influence" on Local 1's and Local 9's Executive Board (New York), as well as the Executive Board of Local 15 in Philadelphia. Finally, it acquired a sizable following in the Chicago locals and endangered the administration's control of the Chicago Joint Board (Foner 1991, 277).

In response to the TUEL's increasing strength in the ILGWU, the union's administration in the summer of 1923 took the offensive by expelling TUEL members who refused to abandon their league activities within the union (Foner 1991, 278–80). At the 1924 ILGWU convention, the left wing mounted a challenge for control of the union, but due to "the inequitable representation system," the right wing remained in charge (Foner 1991, 284–85). However, in local ILGWU elections in the autumn of 1924 and spring of 1925, running on a platform that advocated militancy and calling for the "reinstatement of expelled members, and the end of barring candidates from the ballot," the TUEL obtained control of "the executive boards of Locals 2, 9, and 22" (New York), which contained 70 percent of the union's membership and made significant advances in Boston, Chicago, and Philadelphia (Foner 1994, 46).

When the ILGWU administration called for the 1925 May Day demonstrations to be used to criticize the Soviet Union, Locals 2, 9, and 22 refused, which led to the suspension of 77 Executive Board members from these three locals (Foner 1994, 47). In response, the three locals established a Joint Action Committee (JAC) in order to fight for the reinstatement of the expelled members. After the trial committee upheld the expulsions, the JAC organized its first demonstration on 9 July 1925 and a two-hour work stoppage on 20 August 1925, resulting in 20,000 to 30,000 garment workers walking off the job. This latter action led to the rescinding by the administration of these expulsions (Foner 1994, 48–49).

With the left wing in control of the New York Joint Board, a strike of 40,000 cloakmakers was launched on 1 July 1926 in order to obtain a new collective-bargaining agreement. While striker militancy remained high and small manufacturers settled with the union early in the walkout, a less-than-satisfactory agreement with the manufacturers' Protective Association, which covered about one-third of the workers, was reached on 13 November 1926, with the shop chairmen backing the agreement by a four-to-one margin. After the strike's conclusion, the right wing blamed the left wing for both the strike's failure and the submanufacturers' lockout of the workers on 9 December 1926, demanding the same terms achieved by the Protective Association. With the conservative leadership agreeing to settle the lockout, the left wing fought back, leading to the purge of the left wing in New York and "all other cities where the ILGWU had branches." The only city where these expulsions did not occur was Chicago, where the left wing was in charge of the Joint Board and too firmly ingrained to be eliminated at the time (Foner 1994, 52–58).

In order to fight the ILGWU's leadership, the Tolerance Group, composed of rank-and-file members of conservative locals, and the Committee of Fifty, made up of moderate and left-wing shop chairmen, were formed in early 1927. The goal of these groups was to fight for the readmission of expelled Communists as well as other workers. It failed to achieve these objectives after fighting for these goals for well over a year. In May 1928 at the ILGWU's convention, a left-wing National Organization Committee (NOC)

was formed for rebuilding the union. After the resignation of ILGWU President Morris Sigman on 25 October 1928, the new president, Benjamin Schlesinger, offered an amnesty plan for reinstating expelled members of the union that was rejected by the NOC as being fundamentally flawed at a mass meeting on 13 December 1928. Within three weeks of this meeting, the NTWIU was formed out of the remains of the ILGWU left wing, approximately 2,500 workers, and the left-led Fur Workers' Union (Foner 1994, 62–71). One can thus see that even before the official line of dual unionism was put forth at the 1928 Profintern Congress, the cadres in the reformist needle trades unions were moving toward establishing the NTWIU because of difficulties experienced “*bor-ing from within*” these unions and because they had a real follow-ing among needle trades workers.

According to Foner, the establishment of the NTWIU “*marked an important advance in democratic trade unionism*” (1950, 319). As opposed to the conservative AFL needle trades unions, the new industrial union would be based on the rule of proportional representation and the union’s officials would be elected by referendum with the right of members to recall the officers. The NTWIU’s foundation was the shop delegate system with the shop representing its basic unit; this was designed to encourage the participation of as many rank-and-file members as possible in union affairs (Foner 1950, 319–20).

Even the opposition Trotskyists who had recently been expelled from the CPUSA in late October 1928 supported the establishment of the NTWIU in January 1929. The Trotskyists argued that the CPUSA’s tactics of establishing dual unions had the greatest chance of achieving success in the needle trades because “*the party and the left wing have the broadest and most conscious support of the working masses*” in this industry as opposed to other industries. In addition, they contended that the leadership of the AFL needle trades unions—“*the old-line reactionaries*” and “*the so-called “socialist” labor leaders*”—was treasonous and bankrupt and with the destruction of the Furriers Union and the ILGWU, the organizing of the NTWIU was placed on the historical agenda (“*The New Needle Trades Workers’ Union,*” January 15, 1929).

The situation was different, however, for the Lovestoneites, who were still leaders and members of the CPUSA at the time the NTWIU was formed. When the Profintern declared that the organization of Communist-led dual unions should be the new policy to pursue in the trade-union arena at its congress early in 1928, the Lovestoneites, who made up the majority of the U.S. delegation, opposed the formation of these red unions. However, when the strategy was adopted by the Comintern as the official policy, according to Alexander (1981, 43) the Lovestoneites “at first tended to go along with it.” Even after their expulsion from the CPUSA beginning in June 1929, the Lovestoneites helped to establish the TUUL at its founding conference on 1 September 1929 and continued to work within the NTWIU until the end of 1930 (Howe and Coser, 1957, 173; Alexander, 1981, 43, 45). However, shortly after the Lovestoneites formed their opposition group to the CPUSA, the Communist Party (Majority Group), in October 1929, they began to criticize the NTWIU, as well as the other TUUL unions, for promoting sectarianism (Alexander 1981, 28, 43).

The leading Lovestoneite’s criticisms of the NTWIU

The most significant Lovestoneite active in the NTWIU was Charles S. Zimmerman, and, according to Alexander (1981, 45), he also was “the most important Lovestoneite in the labor movement.” Zimmerman, a leading Communist in the ILGWU who had served as a Local 22 Executive Board member and the strike committee secretary during the ILGWU’s 1926 general strike, had been expelled from the union with other Communists because of the Communist strategy pursued during the strike (Zimmerman interview, 21 September 1976). While still a CPUSA member, Zimmerman helped to set up the NTWIU and served as a union vice-president until he was expelled from the NTWIU some time after the holding of the union’s second convention in June 1930 (Alexander 1981, 45).

After his expulsion from the NTWIU, Zimmerman went back to work in a garment shop and rejoined the ILGWU Local 22 in early 1931. Shortly thereafter, he became active in organizing new shops and rebuilding the local union; he was elected to the local’s

Executive Board in 1932, beginning his 40-year career as a staff member within the union. From the early 1930s until the union's demise in 1934, the Lovestoneites were a major left-wing force that battled the NTWIU by establishing a base in both the ILGWU and the Furriers Union, eventually obtaining control of ILGWU Locals 22 and 155 (Zimmerman interview, September 21, 1976; Alexander 1981, 45–51).

From the time of its formation in January 1929 until the holding of the August 1929 TUUL founding conference in Cleveland, the NTWIU failed to achieve its initial lofty objectives. Formal membership in the organization numbered between 8,000 and 10,000 members with 95 percent of the members being Jewish immigrants (Bulletin No. 4 [40], Organisation Department, RILU, March 1933). This represented only a small portion of the left-wing membership that the Party had previously led in the AFL needle trades unions and the ACW and it was acknowledged that the union's control in the shops was extremely weak. The recent dress, fur, and cloak strikes were deemed failures and the union was unsuccessful in convincing the mass of needle trades workers to participate in the work stoppages. Furthermore, after these strikes, sections of the NTWIU went back to the established needle trades unions and the NTWIU was unable to prevent the deterioration of wages and working conditions in the industry (Needle Trades Resolution, n.d.).

In late 1929, Zimmerman claimed in an article in the Lovestoneites' newspaper, *Revolutionary Age*, that the NTWIU was in a state of serious crisis. He argued that the CPUSA was using the union to battle factional opponents and concluded:

The splitting activities of the party leadership will be stopped and with united forces we will march forward to defeat the bosses and the company union, and to reestablish the only union of the workers of the needle trades—the Needle Trades Workers Industrial Union. (*Revolutionary Age*, November 1, 1929, 14)

NTWIU growing pains, January 1930–Fall 1931

By the beginning of 1930, the situation within the NTWIU had not improved. Membership continued to decline and the union

identified a number of problems to be rectified that interfered with the union's functioning. For example, concerning the NTWIU's organizational structure, the union felt that its "maintenance of the old craft ideology and structure" had to be eliminated and replaced with a shop committee and shop delegate system. With respect to strike strategy, the NTWIU partially blamed its lack of success on utilizing arbitration under "impartial" chairmen to achieve settlements and its policy of negotiating collective bargaining agreements in individual shops during the holding of general strikes (Draft Letter to the TUUL on the Needle Trades Situation, January 31, 1930).

The other problem at that time causing debate within the union was the NTWIU's unwillingness to build left-wing opposition movements within the AFL needle trades unions and the ACW. In a statement prepared on behalf of the minority of the NTWIU's General Executive Board (GEB) for the union's second convention in June 1930, the minority pointed out that "an extremely serious mistake" of the union leadership was its lack of any attempt to win over the 175,000 workers in the AFL needle trades unions and the ACW. Thus, while the GEB minority argued that the first goal of the NTWIU should be the organizing of the unorganized needle trades workers, the second goal should be "the building of a powerful left wing in the reactionary unions to win these masses of needle trades workers for our program and to drive the Schlesingers, Hillmans, Dubinskys, Kaufmans, etc. out of the ranks of the needle workers" (Statement by C.S. Zimmerman, n.d., 4).

The GEB minority also contended that the NTWIU was severely harmed and "being converted into a propaganda sect" by being whittled down to include only CPUSA members and Party sympathizers "who agree or fully support the policies of the present official Communist Party leadership." Furthermore, the minority claimed that democracy within the union was being eliminated. Any "constructive self-criticism" that members raised was being used as "a factional weapon of abuse and slander against any worker who raises a question of disagreement with or criticism of the present wrong line" (Statement by C.S. Zimmerman, n.d., 5).

The issue of working within the reformist needle trades unions was a topic of continuing discussion within the NTWIU for the next

ten months. Writing to Profintern leader Lozovsky in April 1931, the CPUSA reported on a recent NTWIU Executive Board meeting discussion concerning the red industrial union working within the reformist needle trades unions. The union's Executive Board admitted that the NTWIU "has failed to develop any real minority organization" among the reformist needle trades workers and that the industrial union's success depended on working within these unions (General Secretary Letter to Comrade Lozovsky, May 10, 1932). In particular, the Board stated:

While we have always insisted in a general way that we had to work inside of these old organisations we have not successfully concretized our general slogans in this respect. For the most part the question of work inside the old unions was understood simply as working inside shops controlled by the old unions. As for the work inside the local unions themselves, this was neglected almost altogether. (General Secretary Letter, May 10, 1932)

According to the CPUSA, the rationale for constructing left-wing minority movements in the reformist needle trades unions was to organize a "struggle around a program of economic demands" and to create "united front movements between the minorities and the NTWIU" in order to achieve, in due course, "mass affiliation of these workers to the NTWIU." In the report's conclusion, the Party informed Lozovsky that working within the AFL unions was emerging as a crucial issue not only for the NTWIU, but for all TUUL unions (General Secretary Letter, May 10, 1932).

At the time of the June 1930 NTWIU convention, fur and dress were clearly the strongest sections in the union. And while the union might have been upset that its membership was considerably lower than it hoped it would or should be, compared to the other TUUL unions, the NTWIU was thriving. An internal CPUSA document summarizing membership figures of TUUL affiliates (excluding the NMU) in August 1930 indicates the problem the TUUL unions confronted in enrolling members. Although the Party reported a TUUL membership of between 45,000 to 50,000 at this time, membership ranged from a low of 400 members in the Agricultural Workers Industrial League (AWIL), later

to be renamed the CAWIU, to a high of 7,050 members in the NTWIU. In addition to the NTWIU, only three TUUL unions – the Food Workers Industrial League, the Marine Workers Industrial League, and the National Textile Workers Union – registered more than 2,000 members at this time (John Schmies Report on TUUL, August 4, 1930).

The NTWIU spent much of the fall of 1930 planning for a dressmakers' strike to be called in New York City in February 1931, at which the union intended to implement the united front from below. By the end of October 1930, the NTWIU controlled 75 shops in the New York City dress trade, and at a conference in preparation for the strike, 60 industrial union shops had representation along with contacts attending from seven reformist union shops and 59 open shops. At a second dress conference held on 16 January 1931, the total number of shops represented increased to 188—14 for the reformist unions and 121 for the open shops—although the industrial union shops in attendance declined to 53. While the shops represented at the conference employed 4,000 workers, the NTWIU only controlled 56 shops in dress (Meeting of TUUL National Bureau, January 22, 1931).

Although preparatory activities for the strike were in full swing by the end of January 1931, not all TUUL National Bureau members were in favor of calling the work stoppage at this time. For example, Hyman argued that it would be difficult to get more than 10,000 to 12,000 workers to strike, in essence meaning, “then the strike will be over.” In addition, Hyman stated that since the NTWIU controlled only 60 to 70 cutters, who were “the key men in the industry,” the work stoppage would “not prevent the jobbers from hav(ing) the dresses made” (Meeting of TUUL National Bureau, January 22, 1931).

At the time the NTWIU finally called the walkout in February, the union was down to 4,000 members (Bulletin No. 4 [40], Organisation Department, RILU, March, 1933). The strike demands centered on the implementation of week work, the 8 hour/5 day workweek, and unemployment insurance. At the time of the strike, out of 35,000 workers in the New York City dress industry, 5,000 were members of the ILGWU and 2,000

were members of the NTWIU. However, the work stoppage was a dismal failure, with only 2,000 workers heeding the NTWIU's strike call. In addition, there was "no united front approach to the workers" and the strike committee was too narrowly constituted. Although in some shops, "the workers gained a few cents more in the piece-work rates," the strike's defeat put the potential liquidation of the NTWIU on the agenda (Report of the Structure, Activities and Tactics of the Needle Trades Workers' Industrial Union of the USA, March 2, 1933).

While the NTWIU's strike in the dress section was an unmitigated disaster, the union's walkout in fur in July 1931 was much more successful. Two days after the union called the walkout on 28 June, 100 fur shops struck with 236 dog-skin shops joining the strike on 10 July (Foner 1950, 347–48). The furriers emerged totally victorious in their work stoppage, a victory that the CPUSA ascribed to the NTWIU's "correct application" of the united front from below tactics employed with the AFL Furriers Union. By working methodically within the International Fur Workers Union (IFWU), the NTWIU was able to win their rival union's workers over to its programmatic demands and lead a successful strike resulting in weekly wage increases from \$5 to \$15 for 3,000 furriers (Economic Situation in the U.S.A.; Bulletin No. 4 [40], March 1933; Report of the Structure, March 2, 1933).

After winning the strike, the NTWIU continued to be successful working within the IFWU. With the decision in April 1931 to build left-wing opposition movements within the reformist needle trades unions, the NTWIU had "succeeded in building up opposition groups in some of the old unions." The most successful oppositional work was in the Furriers Union, where the NTWIU led a strike, held "meetings of the size we have not had since 1926," and developed plans for building a united front for fighting the employers. In addition, the left-wing opposition called a walkout in the dog-skin section of the fur industry that received an excellent response from the workers, leading to the negotiation of many settlements with wage increases ranging from \$10 to \$25 per week. Because of these successful activities, during a six-week period in July and August 1931, 1700 workers from the Furriers Union joined the NTWIU (Hyman, 1931, 2).

This success continued into the fall of 1931. After holding joint discussions with the union, the NTWIU organized a mass meeting attended by several thousand furriers that resulted in the adoption of the NTWIU's "programme of action." Upon the meeting's conclusion, shop committees were established in 500 New York City fur shops and in September and October 1931, the NTWIU "report(ed) a great influx of new members" (*Economic Situation in the U.S.A.*).

However, besides the dramatic success in fur, the TUUL's National Executive Board was heartened by additional developments within the reformist needle trades unions during the spring and summer of 1931. In ILGWU Local 1, the left-wing opposition elected NTWIU activists "to a committee to investigate the activities of the administration." The union also noted that it had been contacted by the managers of Locals 1 and 9, who wanted to work with the NTWIU in building an independent union in opposition to the ILGWU. However, the union noted that it had not been successful, at this time, in building an opposition movement within the ACW (Hyman, 1931).

Membership figures for April 1931 reveal the continuing problematic status of the vast majority of the TUUL unions. Compared with the August 1930 figures, only the NTWIU and the AWIL were in the process of acquiring more members, largely through leading at least some successful strikes. The most robust of the TUUL unions remained the NTWIU, which had enlarged its membership base through its united-front tactics and the holding of successful strikes in the first few months of 1931 (*Economic Situation in the U.S.A.*). In addition, the NTWIU continued to expand its membership through the recruitment of new members from the reformist needle trades unions. While only 32 new members enrolled from March through May 1931, 119 signed up in June, 130 affiliated in July, and 376 joined during the first two weeks of August 1931 (*Economic Situation in the U.S.A.*).

Nevertheless, the CPUSA acknowledged that one of the union's primary limitations was its inability to establish itself on a national scale. The greater part of the union's membership was based in New York City with union locals in other industrial

centers, such as Chicago, Philadelphia, and Boston, consisting of, at most, only a few hundred members each. Another weakness that the Party admitted was the NTWIU's failure to penetrate the most influential independent union in the industry, the ACW, and to establish a united front from below with its membership (Economic Situation in the U.S.A.).

In the summer of 1931, the strength of the NTWIU still remained in fur and dress with the other sections languishing. The union had increased its membership from 4,000 to 6,000 within seven months (Bulletin No. 4 [40], March 1933) and of the 518 needle trades shops controlled by the union, 426 were in fur, 47 were in dress with the remaining 45 shops distributed among the millinery (16), bathrobe (14), knitgoods (5), fur dressing (6), pleating (3), and cloak (1) sections (Report of All Departments of the Needle Trades Workers Industrial Union for July 1, 1931 to September 31, 1931).

***The NTWIU's general upward trajectory,
Fall 1931 to June 1933***

By the fall of 1931, the NTWIU felt that the union was experiencing an upward trajectory. Because of the strength of the NTWIU's fur section, when it threatened a strike among "very influential manufacturers," the employers virtually agreed to forgo the signing of a new agreement with the AFL's Furriers Union. They even indicated that they would be open to negotiating an agreement with an independent union of furriers, even if it was under the NTWIU's control. Due to these developments in its fur section, the NTWIU noted that "our union is THE union among the furriers" (Meeting of the TUUL Bureau, November 9, 1931, 2).

Besides the progress within the union's fur section, the NTWIU was encouraged by recent developments among the dressmakers. In spite of the unsuccessful February 1931 dress strike, leading members in the NTWIU noted that in the fall of 1931 the dressmakers were optimistic and ready to organize another work stoppage themselves. Because of this sentiment, ILGWU Local 22 was also discussing the organization of such a strike at this time. In preparation

for this walkout, the NTWIU developed a plan for organizing a united front for the strike to be held under rank-and-file leadership. An official committee of twenty-five workers from the NTWIU visited a meeting held by ILGWU Local 22 to present its strike plan, although the committee was not allowed inside, forcing the left-wing opposition within Local 22 to take up this fight. However, the meeting broke up without a decision being reached on this issue (Meeting of the TUUL Bureau, November 9, 1931, 2).

In other sections of the union, the NTWIU felt that the progress being made was respectable. In cloak, the left-wing opposition had developed a policy for conducting a strike on a united-front basis under rank-and-file leadership and was beginning to build shop groups in order to mobilize the workers for the work stoppage. The NTWIU also was pleased with the recent developments in millinery (Meeting of the TUUL Bureau, November 9, 1931, 2).

With a national membership of 8,000 to 9,000 by the fall of 1931, the NTWIU observed the increasing militancy of workers in their shops as demonstrated by the holding of between 10 and 25 shop strikes each week. For example, in October 1931, the union noted that 74 shop strikes were held with 63 of them settled by shop committees successfully achieving the workers' demands. In addition, the NTWIU commented that the union's "organizers are recognized in all the shops" and noted its success in obtaining \$1500 in back pay for workers (Meeting of the TUUL Bureau, November 9, 1931, 2). This strategy of shop strikes indicated that the NTWIU had a decentralized, democratic structure giving shop committees the authority and power to determine how and when to call a work stoppage.

Although the union recognized that "full democracy" had not yet been achieved in the union, it acknowledged that important steps had been taken to achieve this objective. According to the NTWIU, the "shop committees (were) functioning pretty well," open forums were held four to five times a week among unemployed workers in the industry, and building committees had been established. Attendance at general meetings of the whole union, which were held periodically, drew approximately 1,000 members (Meeting of the TUUL Bureau, November 9, 1931, 2).

By January 1932, the NTWIU felt that significant progress had been made in the last six months with 3,000 new members joining the union, largely because the union had moved “from agitation and propaganda to action” through establishing opposition groups within the reformist unions and the promotion of its united-front policy. This turn to action was evidenced by the NTWIU leading 507 shop strikes, primarily in New York, and principally in the fur industry. Additionally, during this time period, over 30 shop strikes were led in the New York dress, knitgoods, and white-goods industries. Furthermore, this militancy in the needle trades was not only found in New York City, but throughout the nation; the NTWIU led shop strikes in Philadelphia, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Boston, Kansas City, and Paterson, New Jersey (To the District Party Committee, Polburo of the Central Committee, & Fraction of the T.U.U.L., January 12, 1932, 1).

In spite of these steps forward, the NTWIU believed that the situation remained unsatisfactory because the union and the opposition groups had only tenuous connections with the large shops. In addition, the union bemoaned the fact that “new methods to penetrate into the big factories” were not being developed and that “connections in new open shops” were not being created. The union argued that its major focus was “still towards the older, skilled workers who are better paid” as opposed to the newer workers entering the industry who were “unskilled, lower paid workers, Negro, Spanish, (and) Italian.” Finally, the union acknowledged that it had only 11,000 members although 8,000 were found in New York City. In other large cities, the union pointed out that the NTWIU only consisted of “small weak organizations of from 15 to 150 members” (To the District Party Committee, January 12, 1932, 1).

With respect to the construction of united fronts with workers from the reformist unions, the NTWIU felt that the implementation of this policy was not being carried out within the entire needle trades industry. The union felt that such a policy only recently had been put into effect in the fur, dress, and millinery trades with some degree of success (To the District Party Committee, January 12, 1932, 7).

The union also expressed disappointment, at this time, that its “daily work is not based on real inner democracy” with only a small portion of the membership involved in “the active work of the union.” Related to this lack of democracy within the union, the NTWIU noted that the organizational department did not engage in active work to invigorate or build up either the shop committees or shop branches of the union (To the District Party Committee, January 12, 1932, 3).

With regard to other departments within the union, the NTWIU acknowledged that the Women’s Department was not functioning and that both the Negro Department and Youth Department were extremely weak and were not promoting mass activities within the union. One major problem that the NTWIU leadership felt weakened the Negro Department was the presence of “white chauvinism in some shops” that the leadership claimed was not dealt with adequately on the shop floor by attempting “to mobilize the membership against white chauvinism” (To the District Party Committee, January 12, 1932, 3).

Finally, the NTWIU was distressed that the union’s leadership was dominated by CPUSA members and that an “insufficient number of non-Party workers” were involved in the leadership of the union. The union also expressed concern that there was not one non-Party worker among all of the “full time functionaries.” Finally, the union lamented the fact that even among CPUSA members, there was a low rate of participation within the union; only one-third of the Party members in the needle trades were active in the union and actually “attending fraction meetings” (To the District Party Committee, January 12, 1932, 8).

Exactly one year after leading the unsuccessful February 1931 dressmakers’ strike, the NTWIU called another walkout on 8 February 1932 with the demands being the 5 day/40 hour work-week, a 25-percent wage increase, equal pay for equal work for African American workers, the creation of an unemployment insurance fund based on employer contributions and managed by the workers, both union and shop committee recognition, and the elimination of discharges after a worker’s one-week trial period. Since early November 1931, the union had been building a united-front

committee through the election of members at mass shop conferences organized by the committee. In addition, the committee built support for united-front action by sending speakers to the reformist unions where sentiment for the strike appeared to be strong (*The DressMakers' Strike in New York City, 1932*).

Because of the strong support among the dressmakers for strike action, the ILGWU also began to organize for a work stoppage in November 1931. The ILGWU, with the aid of AFL president William Green, "organized mass meetings of 5,000 workers" and selected representatives for negotiating a joint strike with the NTWIU united-front committee. When negotiations between the two groups broke down, two walkouts were held. The NTWIU felt that there was sufficient sentiment among the ILGWU's rank-and-file workers for a single united strike but that this was undermined by the ILGWU leadership. Evidence for this, according to the NTWIU, was that when the NTWIU and the ILGWU led separate demonstrations in preparation for the strike, "when these two demonstrations came close the strikers spontaneously united into militant united demonstrations in spite (sic) of the resistance of the reformist leaders" (*The DressMakers' Strike, 1932*).

During the first week of the NTWIU's strike, it was difficult to mobilize workers, but once the ILGWU called its work stoppage the following week, the NTWIU's walkout became energized. By 22 February, 6,000 workers in 511 shops were out on strike, although the NTWIU had settled approximately 70 shops, involving 1200 to 1300 dressmakers, by that time. According to the NTWIU's estimates, 15,000 workers participated under the ILGWU's leadership and 7,000 workers were led by the NTWIU (*Minutes of the TUUL Bureau, 2/22/32, 1; The DressMakers' Strike, 1932, 42*).

Although the NTWIU had hoped to gain 3,000 new members from its strike, the union acknowledged that it did not pick up many members during this work stoppage, and that the ILGWU, under the leadership of Schlesinger and the Lovestoneites, still maintained control of the vast majority of the dressmakers and the largest shops in the industry. Nevertheless, the NTWIU was able to retain union wages in 400 small shops with the 7,000 workers

under the union's leadership, and was able to obtain increases of pay between \$1 and \$3 per week (Minutes of the TUUL Bureau, February 22, 1932, 2; The DressMakers' Strike, 1932, 42; Report of the Structure Activities and Tactics of the Needle Trades Workers' Industrial Union of the USA, March 2, 1933, 70).

At the same time as the New York City dressmakers' strike, the NTWIU conducted a dress strike in Boston in February 1932 that involved significantly fewer workers than the work stoppage in New York. The industrial union's walkout was called on the same day that the ILGWU called its strike. Although there were 400 workers who struck under the united-front committee's leadership, while 800 struck under the ILGWU's leadership, a majority of the workers in the industry did not participate in the work stoppage. While the ILGWU leaders tried to prevent the strikers of the two unions from "march(ing) arm in arm," they were unsuccessful. Even though it appears that no gains were achieved from this strike, at approximately the same time, the NTWIU in Boston conducted a successful organizing campaign among the leather sheepskin workers resulting in the addition of 400 members to the union, union recognition, increased pay, and reduced hours (Report of the Structure, March 2, 1933, 11).

On the heels of the February 1932 dress strike, the NTWIU was confronted with a situation in the Millinery Union in the middle of March 1932 that revealed divisions within the TUUL Buro concerning the NTWIU's strategy of working within the reformist unions. The Millinery Union scheduled a walkout for 15 March and Party members had come to the Buro inquiring what they should do in this situation. The problem was that the NTWIU controlled only five shops and had 300 trimmers in its groups compared with 3,000 to 4,000 workers in Local 24. Furthermore, no preparations were being made so the NTWIU activists informed the Buro that they would not strike because "every strike we have had was lost, with the result that our best comrades are out of the union and practically out of the industry" (Minutes of TUUL Buro, 3/14/32).

On a split vote, the Buro decided that the trimmers organized in the industrial union should strike with the other workers present

and fight for the NTWIU's program during the shop and section meetings, and go back to work with the other workers after the conclusion of the work stoppage, with the understanding that they have the right to be members of the industrial union. However, if they could not keep their jobs without joining Local 24, then they would be permitted to join the reformist union (Minutes of TUUL Buro, March 14, 1932).

Speaking for the minority position on this issue, Zack argued that the Buro's decision would lead to a liquidation of the NTWIU in sections of the needle trades in which the union was not strong. He stated that this decision

yields to the tendency prevalent amongst the leadership of our Needle Trades Union to treat lightly the question of building up the TUUL in those parts of the industry where our strength has not yet been developed to the extent of the Furriers and Dressmakers, which is a liquidatory (sic) tendency. If the policy as contained in Stachel's motions, is correct then the independent unions in the process of growth in a number of industries will be liquidated the moment they will come into serious clash with the AFL. (Minutes of TUUL Buro, March 14, 1932)

By the end of June 1932, the situation in the dress industry had deteriorated. Gains achieved by the NTWIU in the last strike were eroding with wage cuts being implemented in the 200 dress shops that the industrial union controlled. Things were worse in the ILGWU; complete demoralization among the workers had set in. Because of this situation, right-wing workers and the Lovestoneites approached the NTWIU's opposition group about developing a plan for dealing with the deplorable situation in the dress trade. In response, the left-wing opposition proposed the calling of a conference among all active workers of the dress trade in order to launch a joint organization drive. This proposal "met with a good response" from the right-wing workers and the Lovestoneites in the ILGWU (Minutes of TUUL Buro Meeting, June 20, 1932, 2).

In spite of the problems in the dress industry, an analysis of the union's activities six weeks prior to the NTWIU's third

convention in August 1932 indicated that the union was generally on the upswing. A report issued by NTWIU leader Ben Gold pointed out that the union had been on the offensive for the past twelve to thirteen months, a period of time in which the NTWIU had led and won struggles, achieved wage increases of \$3 to \$25 per week, increased membership, and improved the union's finances. Although Gold acknowledged that there was still some difficulty in implementing the united-front policy among needle trades Party members and that the oppositional work in the reformist unions was problematic, another significant union achievement in the past year included the establishment of unemployed funds, financed by the employers and administered by the NTWIU, in a couple of branches of the needle trades industry (Gold 1932).

Nevertheless, things were proceeding well in the fur section. The NTWIU commenced a second wave of walkouts in fur in July 1932, which began with shop strikes for wage increases. By the end of the month, 150 shops had been on strike with the industrial union obtaining wage increases in the vast majority of them between \$5 and \$10 a week. In addition, many shops were forced to jettison piece work in favor of the adoption of week work and to abandon their inside subcontracting (Foner 1950, 373).

One thousand militant dog-skin workers struck on 27 July 1932 demanding, among other things, wage raises, recognition of the NTWIU, and an employer-sponsored unemployment insurance fund managed by the workers. Three days later, the work stoppage expanded to include the trimming and coat shops, leading to 225 shops on strike by the beginning of August. The number of struck shops continually increased, with 360 shops out by 12 August. Although 117 shops had settled with the NTWIU by 17 August, the Fur Trimming Association requested that the industrial union meet with it to resolve the walkouts. When an agreement was reached, 4,000 strikers from 400 shops had obtained increases from \$4 to \$15 a week, the creation of an unemployment insurance fund as well as the achievement of many of their other demands (Foner 1950, 373, 375, 377–78).

While the bulk of the NTWIU's membership was located in New York City in April 1931, this had not changed as of the

summer of 1932—hardly surprising given that the TUUL’s geographic base of strength was in New York City. By the beginning of July 1932, the New York City TUUL, named the Trade Union Unity Council (TUUC), had a total membership of approximately 20,000 with 10,000 affiliated to the NTWIU. With half of the TUUC’s membership found in the needle trades, the NTWIU experienced continual growth even though development was far from uniform among the union’s sections. For example, significant progress occurred among the furriers while in the dress section, which had 3,500 members, the NTWIU was more powerful than ever after the February 1932 strike, although it was still “fighting to become [the] union in the trade and get influence over [the] decisive section of workers.” The union’s strength was also on an upward trajectory in the knitgoods section, with 1,200 members, due primarily to successful shop work carried out inside the plants within the last few months. Nevertheless, the union remained particularly weak in the cloakmakers’ section. The CPUSA still believed, in spite of the progress achieved in a number of the union’s trade sections, that the NTWIU as a whole lacked organizational stability (Zack 1932).

By the time of the NTWIU’s third convention in August 1932, the union admitted that there was a general crisis confronting the needle trades industry but “that the pessimism and defeatism of the last convention had actually disappeared.” Discussion of the use of the united-front tactic at the convention indicated that there was “a better understanding of its importance and how to apply it.” The same was true of opposition work within the reformist unions. Although there had been some continuing resistance to this type of work as late as the spring of 1932, opposition to this policy was not expressed at the convention (Minutes of TUUL Buro, November 9, 1932, 1).

One thing that the 1932 convention revealed was the amazingly high level of activity conducted by the NTWIU in New York City during the past two years. During this time period, the organization reported that it had led 1,978 shop strikes (with some shops striking more than once) involving 20,737 workers, visited 4,469 shops, handled 2,122 complaints, and conducted 3,200

shop meetings (Bulletin No. 4 [40], March, 1933; Report of the Structure, March 2, 1933).

In spite of these achievements, however, the NTWIU noted continuing problems within some of the departments within the union. Although the union felt that some progress had been made in the Negro Department's work, it was still disappointed that more headway had not been achieved. Estimating that 600 African Americans had participated in various union actions in the dress and fur sections during the past two years, the union was dissatisfied that only 300 to 400 African Americans had actually joined the NTWIU. In spite of this number, the union acknowledged that only a small proportion of these workers were involved in the leadership of the union, although the situation was somewhat better in the dress trade where African American workers had been elected to trade committees and as shop delegates. The NTWIU felt that it had obtained some success in combating "white chauvinism" and noted that it had conducted "a mass trial of white chauvinism" in New York City (Discussion Material for the Third Convention of the Needle Trades Workers Industrial Union, August 1932).

With respect to the Women's Department, no progress had been made, although the union argued that it was important to establish such a department in every local union because of the increasing number of women workers entering the needle trades. The NTWIU claimed that there had been "partial improvement" in the Youth Department's work although the union admitted that it had to put much more effort into reaching the thousands of young workers employed in the needle trades (Discussion Material, August 1932).

By January 1933, the NTWIU had grown to 14,000 members, with the vast majority—approximately 12,000—located in New York City. Of all the TUUL unions, it was the only one that had achieved some degree of organizational stability (Bulletin No. 4 [40], March 1933). With respect to the NTWIU's membership in the various sections in New York City, there were 6,000 to 7,000 in the furriers, 3,000 in the ladies tailors' branch, 1,500 in knitted goods, 400 in the ladies garment workers, 350 in men's clothing, 200 in millinery, and 150 in white goods. Union

membership outside New York City included 600 in Boston, 500 in Philadelphia, 300 in Chicago, 300 in Los Angeles, 150 in San Francisco, 150 in Connecticut, and 75 in New Jersey (Bulletin No. 4 [40], March 1933, 5). In addition, due to the union holding recent strikes, the ethnic composition of the union had changed markedly from being virtually entirely Jewish immigrants until December 1931 to 55 percent “real Americans or naturalised (sic) Americans” by March 1933 (Bulletin No. 4 [40], March 1933).

In addition, the NTWIU’s work within the reformist trade unions was bearing significant fruit. By March 1933, the most successful and advanced oppositional work of any TUUL union was the NTWIU’s work within the six AFL needle trades unions. The largest of these unions was the 30,000 member ILGWU, with the NTWIU concentrating its oppositional work within seven New York City ILGWU local unions (Nos. 1, 9, 20, 22, 35, 38, and 62) although opposition groups also were present in Chicago, Cleveland, and Los Angeles. In Local 1, the NTWIU had attained substantial majorities in electing 12 members to the local’s Executive Board; in Local 9, the NTWIU exerted significant power through its 800-member left-wing opposition and its control of the Executive Board. Furthermore, in this local, two of its members were elected to the positions of board chairman and board secretary. Finally, in Local 22, the 150 member opposition group was strong enough to elect several NTWIU members to the local’s executive board (Bulletin No.4 [40], March, 1933).

Besides the ILGWU, successful oppositional work continued within the AFL fur workers union. After the NTWIU’s successful furrier strike in New York City, virtually the whole New York City branch of the IFWU joined the NTWIU. The victorious strike also resulted in the affiliation of the IFWU’s Philadelphia local with the red union (Bulletin No. 4 [40], March 1933). In addition, a powerful opposition group was active in the Chicago local and in two Canadian locals, Toronto and Montreal, left-wing oppositions from the Workers’ Unity League, the Canadian equivalent of the TUUL, was present (Report of the Structure, March 2, 1933). However, by October 1933, the IFWU was virtually dead, paying per capita to the AFL on a paltry 455 members (Foner 1950, 423).

In the ACW, undoubtedly the strongest union in the needle trades industry, the NTWIU had an organized opposition of between 300 and 500 in New York working in a number of shop groups. In Chicago, 150 were organized in a left-wing opposition on both a shop and departmental basis. In Rochester, there was an opposition group of 75, and in the Italian local, deemed the most important in Rochester, the left-wing opposition won a majority of seats on the Executive Board and succeeded in obtaining control of the local. Finally, in Milwaukee, an opposition group of 15 was present in the union although it was largely inactive (Report of the Structure, March 2, 1933).

Within the Cloth, Hat, Cap and Millinery Workers' International Union, the NTWIU's most significant oppositional work occurred within the New York City Locals 24 and 42, where the red industrial union had active opposition groups of between 200 and 300 members. An oppositional group carried on effective work within the Tailor's Union and had retained control of the Chicago local through the end of 1932 until the expulsion of two of this group's leaders. In addition, as of March 1933, the NTWIU opposition group was controlling the Pittsburgh local (Bulletin No.4 [40], March 1933; Report of the Structure, March 2, 1933).

In the United Hatters, oppositions existed in New York, Chicago, and Danbury, Connecticut. In New York, during the 1931 elections, the NTWIU opposition group received a respectable 200 votes out of a total of 500 cast. The small left-wing opposition in Chicago had elected two members to the Executive Board's local. However, the most successful opposition work in this union occurred in Danbury where three shop groups, with a total of 33 members, had led several strikes against the implementation of wage cuts. Finally, there were several CPUSA members in the United Garment Workers' Union, although they were not members of the opposition that was active within this labor organization (Bulletin No. 4 [40], March 1933; Report of the Structure, March 2, 1933).

The NTWIU's opposition work within the reformist needle trades unions continued to expand throughout 1933. By the end of November, this oppositional movement, within the various AFL needle trades unions and the ACW, included a total of

2,000 workers and had spread to most of the nation's largest cities (Opposition Work, November 27, 1933).

The NTWIU in the National Industrial Recovery Act Era, June 1933 to 1935

Although the NTWIU was acquiring new members and gaining more strength in the reformist needle trades unions through its activities, the passage of the National Industrial Recovery Act in June 1933 was an external factor that led to a dramatic increase in the NTWIU's membership as well as for the TUUL and the AFL as a whole. The TUUL claimed a total of 50,000 to 60,000 members by July 1933, with NTWIU membership expanding to 18,000 to 20,000 workers (Approximate Members of the TUUL at Present, July 1933). By the end of August 1933, the TUUL's gains were even more substantial with the CPUSA estimating a total between 65,000 and 70,000 members (Some Statistics Regarding Strikes in 1933 and the Role of the TUUL, August 31, 1933). Two months later, by the end of October 1933, the TUUL had nearly doubled in size with the organization calculating a membership between 125,000 and 130,000 with 30,000 in the NTWIU (Total Recruited to TUUL Unions Since July 1st, October 31, 1933; Membership in TUUL, October 31, 1933).

The passage of the NIRA led not only to a growth in union membership but to increased strike activity. The percentage of TUUL-led walkouts that were won on the national level after the implementation of the act is uncertain. In New York City, by the end of October 1933, however, the 45,000 TUUL members prospered under the TUUC's direction (Membership in TUUL, October 31, 1933; TUUL Unions in the New York District, [1933?]). In the four months since the NIRA's passage until the beginning of October 1933, 177,100 workers engaged in strikes in New York City with the AFL unions leading work stoppages encompassing 112,700 workers and the TUUL unions leading walkouts of 64,400 workers. In nearly all of these strikes, workers struck to obtain economic and trade-union demands such as wage increases to establish minimum wage scales, reduced hours, an "equal division of work during the slow period in seasonal

trades,” and union recognition (Report on TUUL Activities, October 4, 1933).

The TUUC unions won the majority of their work stoppages during this period with more than half of the TUUC strikers (35,000) led by the NTWIU. In a fur workers strike involving 600 shops under the leadership of the industrial union in August 1933, the NTWIU achieved the historic demand of a 35-hour workweek with no reduction in pay. In addition to the fur workers, successful walkouts occurred also among bathrobe workers, custom tailors, and knitgood workers. The 2,500 knitgood strikers and the 2,000 bathrobe strikers attained significant wage increases ranging from 20 percent to 35 percent. In addition, in knitgood, the implementation of the 35-hour workweek was achieved while in bathrobe, union recognition was also obtained. However, not all NTWIU-led walkouts, such as the dressmakers’ and the white good workers’ strikes, resulted in victories. The CPUSA acknowledged that the NTWIU failed to accomplish “any organizational gains” through the holding of these two work stoppages (Foner 1950, 422; Report on TUUL Activities, October 4, 1933; Report of the Trade Union Unity Council for the Past Six Months, [1933]).

However, the NTWIU also was leading successful struggles in areas outside of New York City in the latter half of 1933 and 1934. In Philadelphia, a general strike held in early September 1933 resulted in the establishment of a 35-hour workweek and an unemployment insurance fund. In Detroit, San Francisco, Los Angeles, and Cleveland, the furriers obtained the 35-hour workweek and, except in Cleveland, significant raises, amounting from 30 to 60 percent in Detroit. Furthermore, in Chicago, under the guidance of Abe Feinglass in the summer of 1934, the NTWIU organized the Evans Fur Company, and after a militant strike, achieved the 35-hour workweek and wages comparable to those obtained by furriers in New York (Foner 1950, 437–38, 443).

With the TUUL unions experiencing more success in their oppositional work within the AFL unions during the second half of 1933, TUUL oppositions also were more likely to play leading roles in AFL strikes at this time. In many of these work stoppages, the TUUL oppositions compelled the AFL leaderships to agree to

the election of rank-and-file strike committees, provided picket line leaders and fought against the union agreeing to what they considered as “a sellout settlement.” In their strike support work, the TUUL activists circulated leaflets among strikers, presented their programs at both shop and mass meetings, and continued to propagandize and agitate through their day-to-day contact among the strikers (Some Statistics Regarding Strikes in 1933, August 31, 1933; Report on TUUL Activities, October 4, 1933).

In walkouts specifically conducted by the New York City AFL needle trades unions, which encompassed 75,000 workers in the summer and fall of 1933, the NTWIU oppositions played a crucial role (Report on TUUL Activities, October 4, 1933). In these walkouts, the opposition aided in the defeat of the leadership’s “sellout settlement” and encouraged many of the shops to remain out in the white-goods strike. During the cloakmakers’ strike, the NTWIU comrades organized a successful vote, by a two-to-one margin, in opposition to the implementation of piecework and forced the AFL officials and the National Recovery Administration to award the cloakmakers “a code that is perhaps the best in the country.” Finally, during the hatters’ work stoppage, the NTWIU opposition successfully compelled the AFL leaders to modify their initial demands and to accept the creation of a rank-and-file strike committee. With respect to the final resolution of this dispute, the opposition was primarily responsible for achieving a wage increase 15 percent higher than the union officials were originally willing to accept (Report on TUUL Activities, October 4, 1933).

In spite of the NTWIU’s success in leading strikes in the latter half of 1933 in New York City, the organization admitted that there were still significant problems with respect to its African American work. Because of the union’s neglect of addressing the special issues of concern among these workers, many active African Americans left the union. In response to this development, the NTWIU organized “a club in Harlem” and was starting to perform “systematic work” among the African American workers in Harlem and shops under the control of the industrial union (Report of the Trade Union Unity Council, [1933]).

Problems also remained with respect to the NTWIU's youth work and its work among women. Even though there were many young dressmakers who participated in recent strikes, the NTWIU failed to develop "specific youth demands," to hold meetings among young workers to talk about their concerns, and to incorporate them into the strike leadership. Furthermore, in some situations, the union even ignored organizing certain groups of young workers such as the floor boys in the needle trades. Only after the floor boys approached the AFL did the NTWIU make an attempt to organize these workers and by the end of 1933 was "making considerable headway" in this project (Report of the Trade Union Unity Council, [1933]).

The NTWIU acknowledged while an increasing number of women workers were entering the needle trades, "no special work was developed among them." The union felt that a positive step in beginning to address this deficiency was being taken through the TUUC's initiative in organizing a "women's demonstration for jobs or relief" on 28 December 1933 (Report of the Trade Union Unity Council, [1933]).

In 1934, class militancy decisively shifted toward the AFL with three of the four major work stoppages that year won by federation affiliates even though they were led or backed by leftists of various ideological persuasions—the Musteite-led Toledo Auto-Lite Strike, the Trotskyist-led Teamsters strike in Minneapolis, and the CPUSA-led strike in San Francisco of the ILA. In evaluating this upsurge of strike activity in September 1934, the CPUSA Central Committee decided that it was essential for the Party to strengthen its work in the AFL while concurrently bolstering its efforts in the TUUL unions (Klehr, 1984, 132).

Nevertheless, while the CPUSA was preparing to execute its plans, Moscow was in the process of jettisoning its "class vs. class" formula in favor of the Popular Front, which called for returning to the reformist unions. This resulted in the TUUL's abolition in two stages. According to Jack Stachel's report in November 1934, the NMU had been disestablished in late spring of 1934, while the NTWU had crumpled during the September

1934 textile strike. Stachel ordered the steel union and the AWU to terminate their activities and join the AFL. Even though he declared that the Party's primary strategy was to affiliate with and construct oppositions within the craft unions, he maintained that those TUUL unions that had acquired a mass base in industries where no reformist union was extant or the union was weak would remain unless the AFL took in these labor organizations "with their leadership and organizations intact." Based on this policy, Stachel stated that, "the metal, marine, fur, food, and furniture unions" would survive as red industrial unions (Cochran, 1977, 75; Klehr, 1984, 132).

Nevertheless, even this latter group of affiliates soon was disbanded. In December 1934, the Comintern Executive Committee ordered that the red industrial unions be folded, resulting in the CPUSA Central Committee instructing the remaining TUUL unions to affiliate with their respective AFL unions. In February 1935, the MWIU went out of business and its members joined the International Seaman's Union; that same month, the NTWIU's fur workers started negotiations with the IFWU and merged with the AFL affiliate that summer. The Metal Workers Industrial Union (without its steel section, which had united with the Amalgamated Association of Iron, Steel and Tin Workers in autumn 1934) joined the International Association of Machinists in the spring of 1935 (Cochran 1977, 75; Klehr 1984, 132–33).

Conclusion: A reevaluation of the NTWIU

In conclusion, one can see that the NTWIU remained flexible in its approach with respect to building the red industrial union and its left-wing opposition movements within the reformist needle trades unions. Initially, it appears that the NTWIU made a serious mistake in not constructing these oppositions within the first two years of its existence but it rectified this problem by early 1931. And although the NTWIU was much smaller than the vast majority of AFL needle trades unions, it exerted an influence in promoting its program and leading strikes well above and beyond its membership size. While it did not win all of the struggles and walkouts with which it was involved, it did

experience considerable success within a number of its sections, particularly in fur and dress. After the passage of the NIRA in June 1933, the NTWIU not only achieved victories success in leading its own work stoppages, but took a more prominent leadership role in AFL needle trades strikes as well.

Contrary to the positions of Cochran (1977) and Klehr (1984), all of the NTWIU's struggles and strikes that it led focused on improving the wages, obtaining things such as employer-sponsored unemployment insurance and union and shop committee recognition, as well as improving working conditions at the point of production for both the members of the NTWIU and the AFL reformist needle trades unions. Within the internal reports and the TUUL Buro meeting minutes contained in the CPUSA Archives, there is no discussion of utilizing the NTWIU as an organization to launch a frontal assault on capitalism or to use the union as an instrument in furthering the Soviet Union's interests.

This is not to say that the NTWIU experienced no problems during its relatively short existence. Certainly, a major concern of the organization was its small membership and limited influence outside of New York City. In addition, the union acknowledged the continuing problem of involving Harmonizing, women, young and non-Party workers in the activities and leadership of the union. And although the NTWIU's fur section became the foundation of the reconstituted Furriers Union when it reentered the AFL union in 1935 after a shift in the Comintern's policy, with the tremendous growth that the AFL needle trades unions and the ACW experienced after the passage of the NIRA, it appears unlikely that the NTWIU could have even maintained its modest position within the remaining sections of the needle trades industry.

In spite of these problems, the NTWIU at its best obtained some modest achievements and functioned as a far-sighted industrial union that attempted to build, if somewhat imperfectly, a democratic labor organization that promoted the interests of all workers, including young, women, and Harmonizing workers. As a union that appears to have been more successful than the

vast majority of TUUL unions, the NTWIU was an organization that other TUUL affiliates operating in light industries with many small shops could use as a prototype in building effective industrial unions.

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The Enlightenment, Philosophy of Nature, and History: The Case of Joseph Priestley (1733–1804)

Yannis Plangesis

The objective of this paper is to investigate the concepts of nature and history in the framework of the European Enlightenment.¹ To do so, I shall consider above all the views set forth by the English philosopher of the Enlightenment Joseph Priestley with regard to scientific investigation of nature and consideration of the historical process.²

Priestley, one could say, appears not only as a pioneer thinker in fields such as biblical criticism and political theory, but also as a pioneer philosopher and natural scientist who renewed and promoted through his work radical directions in philosophical thought and scientific research. In his thought, philosophy of history, history and methodology of science, philosophical anthropology, philosophy of religion, and political theory are intertwined. In Priestley, I would argue, we find a theoretical practice that is determined by the practice and methodology of the natural scientist and the activity of the philosopher. As a philosopher he attempts to redetermine the relationships between matter and spirit, and between science and religion, as well as between philosophy and religion, and between philosophy and politics.³

Priestley, perhaps the most important representative of the spirit of the Enlightenment in the second half of the eighteenth century in England, protean researcher in science, philosophy, and theology, but also in other fields of the social sciences, with a consciousness oriented toward praxis, will formulate a cohesive theory of science and scientific practice, as well as a theory of history, in which the basic directions of the Enlightenment are imprinted. One could place Priestley in the vanguard of the European Enlightenment.⁴

In dealing with Priestley's views on science and history, I shall discuss the following topics: First, I shall refer to his general philosophical outlook: I shall raise the question of the possibility of a materialist interpretation of reality, as well as of the possibility of a naturalistic, and in the final analysis, materialist interpretation of human nature. Second, I shall discuss his model of science, as can be reconstructed through his theoretical and practical scientific engagement. Third, I shall examine the consequences that follow from his theoretical work in relation to his consideration of history. I shall establish that Priestley, sharing with the other philosophers of the Enlightenment the belief in human reason and their more or less optimistic attitude toward the development of the human mind, and consequently of history, will develop a view for the direction of history that is focused on the most fundamental conception of the Enlightenment for history—that is, the concept of progress. Priestley could be considered, in my view, one of the first thinkers of modernity who, by making the concept of progress an issue of philosophical investigation, raised it to a basic historical category.⁵

As far as his philosophical interests are concerned, we could contend that with Priestley we have perhaps the first philosophical attempt to formulate a materialist basis for the interpretation of reality, which partly questions the framework of the mechanistic conception of the world, mechanistic materialism—that is, Newtonian natural philosophy.⁶ Furthermore, Priestley, utilizing new scientific facts and based on his own scientific activity, will attempt to formulate a more realistic and cohesive theory of science. As we shall see, however, his consideration of science,

as well as of history, is intertwined with his broader theological views.⁷

With his purely scientific interests as his starting point, Priestley will attempt to confront certain difficulties of modern philosophical thought, such as problems posed by Cartesian philosophy, as well as the problems related to the conflict of science with religion or to the adaptation of Christian metaphysics to the new scientific facts. Priestley, in fact, attempts to conflate and express in a unified conception Christian metaphysics and the modern atheistic materialism that was mainly represented by the French materialist philosophers of the Enlightenment. In particular, Priestley attempts to respond to the task that had already been put forward in the seventeenth century for the intellectual representatives of the rising social and political forces of the period—that is, the task of harmonizing science with religion.⁸ I would say that a form of rationality that combines scientific rationality and a rationalized version of the Christian religion determines Priestley's overall approach. That is to say, for Priestley, scientific knowledge is founded on a rationality that is not necessarily in conflict with religion. On the contrary, this rationality constitutes the foundation for religious faith. As one of the students of Priestley's work sagaciously observes, for Priestley "the way to obtain religious knowledge is through a rational analysis of nature and scripture, and not by abandoning reason to dogma and mystery" (McEvoy 1987, 55).

Priestley set forth his philosophical views mainly in his chief philosophical treatise, *Disquisitions Relating to Matter and Spirit*, which was first published in London in 1777. In this work Priestley tackles, as I have already stressed, the problem of a dualistic conception of reality, as determined by the philosophical work of René Descartes and the relevant discussion that had been developed among certain philosophers and scientists of the period. This problem, as is well known, drew the attention of thinkers such as Locke, the Cambridge Platonists, and Berkeley, but also of scientists such as Newton, Harvey, and Boscovich. Priestley tackles the problem of Cartesian dualism in the direction of an attempt to supersede mechanical materialism through

the adoption of a form of materialism that is impregnated by the thought of Boscovich.⁹ This attempt certainly does not refute the broader methodological orientation of Newtonian natural philosophy. Priestley, however, is going to juxtapose to the Newtonian concept of matter a dynamic concept where matter is virtually reduced to forces and where the issue of the structure of matter remains open to scientific investigation.

In the introduction to the *Disquisitions*, Priestley explicitly states that his primary objective is

to prove the uniform composition of man, or that what we call mind, or the principle of perception and thought, is not a substance different from the body, but the result of corporeal organization. . . . [He also believes that, whatever matter might be, as far as its nature is concerned, he has] sufficiently proved, that the human mind is nothing more than a modification of it. (1782, iv)

Thus, for Priestley, matter constitutes the ontological *a priori* both for the interpretation of nature and our conception of human nature. But what is matter for Priestley? His answer to the question about the *nature of matter* is characteristic of his scientifically oriented thought and his strictly rationalistic approach to philosophical issues. He clearly expresses his view about matter in the following:

It will be said, that if matter be not a solid, or impenetrable substance, *what is it?* In answer, with respect to this, as I should with respect to any other substance, that it is possessed of such properties, and such only, as the actual well-examined *appearances* prove to be possessed of. That it is possessed of power of attraction and repulsion. . . . I know; because appearances cannot be explained without supposing them; but that there is any thing in, or belonging to matter, capable of resistance, besides those powers of repulsion, does not appear from any phenomena that we are yet acquainted with; and, therefore, as a philosopher, I am not authorized to conclude that any such a thing exists. On the contrary, I am obliged to deny that matter has such a property. (21)

Priestley, by refusing to give a dogmatic or metaphysical answer to the question about the nature of matter and in accordance with his empiricism, tries to bypass the issue of matter as substance. In fact, he rejects the logic of subject and predicate, the logic of substance and its qualities, and also the distinction between primary and secondary qualities at the level of appearances (see Heimann and McGuire 1971, 270, 273–74). Substance as a substratum, as the bearer of qualities, is outside his logic. A consequence of this rejection is his view that nature is a unitary dynamic totality whose essence consists in being material. The traditional idea of substance is for him nothing but a way of expression. In fact, we do not have an adequate idea about the essence of things. We do not possess an adequate idea of what the *essence* of matter is. The idea of a primary matter is nothing else than speculation. As he put it:

Our ascribing impenetrability to matter might make us imagine, that we had some kind of idea of *its* substance, though this was fallacious; but now that, by rigid attention to the phenomena, and a strict adherence to the law of philosophising, we have been obliged to deny that matter has any such property, but besides extension, merely *powers* of attraction and repulsion, it will hardly be pretended, that we have any proper idea of the substance even of matter, considered as divested of all its properties. The term substance, or essence, therefore, is, in fact, nothing more than a help to *expression*, as we may say, but not at all to conception. (1782, 139)

The rejection of the concept of substance by Priestley opens up, in reality, the way for the supersession of the traditional mechanistic concept of matter. Priestley will reject not only the Lockean distinction between primary and secondary qualities, but also the concept of *solidity* or *impenetrability*, which constituted the basic characteristic of the traditional theory of matter.

Matter, for him, is not “that *inert* substance that it has been supposed to be; that *powers of attraction or repulsion* are necessary to its very being, and that no part of it appears to be *impenetrable*

to other parts (ii). Furthermore, and despite his having difficulties in accepting the self-existence of matter and the world—this would force him to question the existence of the transcendental, and, consequently, of the God-creator—he considers the powers of attraction and repulsion as defining the essence of matter, as the principle of its activity. The concept of matter becomes identical with that of powers. If this were not the case, the powers of attraction and repulsion are essential for the being of matter:

I by no means suppose that these powers, which I make to be essential to the being of matter, and without which it cannot exist as a material substance at all, are *self-existent* in it. All that my argument amounts to, is, that from whatever source these powers are derived, or by whatever being they are communicated, matter cannot exist without them. (13)¹⁰

But, in the end, his dynamic concept of matter forces him to accept these powers as inherent in matter whatever its status in the hierarchy of being. As he observes in another place of the *Disquisitions*,

I confined myself to the exclusion of the property of *impenetrability*, which is generally considered as essential to all matter, and to the claim of the property of *attraction* or *repulsion*, as appearing to me not to be properly what is *imparted* to matter, but what really *makes it to be what it is*, in so much that, without it, it would be nothing at all. (35)

Matter, for Priestley, is the unifying principle of nature. This means that Cartesian dualism cannot be accepted. The old idea that matter was something

possessed of the property of *extension* . . . and also of *solidity* or *impenetrability*, but it is said to . . . be naturally destitute of all powers whatever” and that spirit was defined as “a substance entirely *destitute of all extension, or relation to space*, so as to have no property in common with matter; and therefore to be properly *immaterial*, but to be possessed of the powers of *perception, intelligence, and self-motion*” has to be abandoned. The idea that two substances, which

have nothing in common and yet “are capable of *intimate connection* and *mutual action*” is an absurdity. (i–ii)¹¹

A way out of the impasse of Cartesian dualism is to accept a dynamic concept of matter. Such a move restores the unity of reality as an all-inclusive totality in which matter and spirit are not two ontologically different entities. Thus, according to Priestley, we can define matter in such a way that we can get rid of dualism and embrace a philosophical monism, which could be a certain form of materialism beyond mechanical materialism and in accord with the new modern scientific results.¹² Priestley’s position is stated as follows:

I therefore, define it [matter] to be a substance possessed of the property of *extension*, and of *powers of attraction or repulsion*. And since it has never yet been asserted, that the powers of sensation and thought are incompatible with these (solidity, or impenetrability only, having been thought to be repugnant to them) I therefore maintain, that we have no reason to suppose that there are in man two substances so distinct from each other, as have been represented. (ii)¹³

In fact, as I mentioned above, Priestley thinks that thought has to be considered as a modification of matter. His position about the relation of matter and thought is set forth in the following extract:

Since the only reason why the principle of thought, or sensation, has been imagined to be incompatible with matter, goes upon the supposition of impenetrability being the essential property of it, and consequently that *solid extent* is the foundation of all the properties that it can possibly sustain, the whole argument for an immaterial thinking principle in man, on this supposition, falls to the ground; matter, destitute of what has hitherto been called *solidity*, being no more incompatible with sensation and thought, than that substance, which, without knowing any thing farther about it, we have been used to call *immaterial*. (23)

Priestley, it is obvious, holds that natural reality is material and that the principle of its activity is inherent in it—that is, he

thinks that motion is the principle of its unity and the forms of its existence. He is quite aware that his conception of matter is an advance in comparison with the Newtonian mechanical philosophy and in this respect he, somehow, is following the position of his fellow freethinker John Toland, who first set forward in his *Letters to Serena* (1704/1964) the idea that “motion is essential to matter” and that objective reality is an all-inclusive and dynamic material totality. In the fourth section of his major philosophical treatise, Priestley makes clear his position. He writes:

In the preceding sections I have endeavoured to rectify the notions, which we have been taught to entertain concerning matter, as not being that impenetrable, inert substance that we had imagined to be. This, being admitted, will greatly facilitate our farther progress in these disquisitions; as I hope we shall not consider matter with that contempt and disgust, with which it has generally been treated; there being nothing in its real nature that can justify such sentiments respecting it. (1782, 44)¹⁴

In my view, Priestley subscribes unconditionally, in his interpretation of nature and human nature, to the radical philosophical materialist monism of Spinoza and Toland. Nevertheless, he continues to hang on to the religious idea of a transcendental God.

On the basis of this concept of matter, Priestley proceeds to a general interpretation of reality. He not only considers that natural reality can be explained on the basis of this concept of matter—the essence of the world consists in its *materiality*—but also that thought itself can be explained on the basis of materiality. Furthermore, Priestley does not only reject the Cartesian dualism of body and mind, but also the idea of an immaterial substance (the soul) separate from the body. Priestley’s analysis, one could say, set forward a general interpretation of reality on the basis of materiality. In his opinion, the materialist interpretation of reality does not, however, put aside the postulate of a transcendental principle as an explanatory first cause. Priestley, after all, in the context of a theological approach to reality, does not believe that his materialism is incompatible with the idea of the God-creator and, particularly, with genuine Christian dogma. Moreover, the idea of

God, as we shall see later on, also constitutes the guiding principle for the consideration of the historical process in his thought.¹⁵

Before we embark on a discussion of Priestley's philosophy of history, let us look at his conception of science in the framework of philosophical materialism. It should be stressed that his interest in natural reality is not exhausted by his purely philosophical inquiries. Along with his philosophical and theological interests, Priestley also developed an interest in the scientific investigation of natural reality in the direction of the Newtonian conception of science. He developed a steady interest in natural philosophy and, particularly, in chemistry and the history of science. This interest is not limited either to the experimental investigation of nature and the systematic observation of natural phenomena or to the theoretical treatment of the facts of observation. Although he succeeds in developing an approach to scientific inquiry and the logical structure of scientific theories, his interest in science is intertwined with his broader conception of human society and further with history as an expression of progress. Priestley approaches science from the perspective of utility. He sees it as a possibility of domination over nature and as the main agent of social progress (Plangesis 1991, 28–45; Schaberg 1979, 325–34; Fitzpatrick 1998, 192–96).

Before discussing this part of Priestley's conception of science, let us try to reconstruct his model of science on the basis of the views expressed in his scientific work. First, I should stress the fact that the way in which he treats science is related to his conception of nature. Nature, according to him, is not only a reality independent of consciousness, the essence of the latter being in its immateriality, but nature is also a law-abiding reality, the basic principle of which is the principle of causality. Priestley, as a chief exponent of the principle of determinism in the second half of the eighteenth century, understands the reality of nature in the context of mechanical materialism, as a necessary chain of cause and effect. As he puts it:

Nature presents to our view particular effects, in connection with their separate causes, by which we are often puzzled, till philosophy steps in to our assistance, pointing out a

similarity in these effects, and the probability of such similar effects arising from the same cause. (1774/1818, 25; see also McEvoy 1975, 135)

In fact, Priestley's explanatory model presupposes a substantive view of causation, according to which natural phenomena are produced by concrete causes. But Priestley does not ignore the fact that "appearances" can be the outcome of a variety of different "circumstances," or that they can be explained with reference to the activity or a combination of a series of different "circumstances," that the causal relationship could be expressed in a relational language. Thus, "to define the complex of events to which an appearance belongs is to subsume it under a law." However, Priestley seems to believe that the explanation of a certain appearance presupposes, after all, its reduction to a concrete cause or principle: the same causes are responsible for the production of the same effects. This belief of his is virtually the outcome of what he considers to be a "perfect theory"—that is, "a system of propositions accurately defining all the circumstances of every appearance, the separate effect of each circumstance, and the manner of its operation." In other words, Priestley attempts to explain appearances in terms of their reduction to a level of circumstances that produces them causally (McEvoy 1975, 136–37)¹⁶

In his explanation of natural phenomena, Priestley refers to the "principles" or the forces operating in nature for their production. Thus, for him, the purpose of science is nothing but the search for causal relationships in natural reality. The search for causes that follows a procedure of inductive generalization, a generalization starting from empirical data, can result in a formulation of a series of hypotheses that constitutes the scientific theory, or ideally in the formulation of a "perfect theory," according to which the laws or the principles of reality could be determined (McEvoy 1975, 145–58). It seems that Priestley is interested not only in the causal explanation of natural phenomena, but also in a general explanation of reality. His interest, one could say, not only embraces natural philosophy, but also includes religion, metaphysics, and political philosophy, fields to which he devoted a great deal of his activity. Specifically, in regard to natural philosophy, Priestley points out:

Hitherto philosophy has been chiefly conversant about the more sensible properties of bodies; electricity, together with chemistry, and the doctrine of light and colors, seems to be giving us an inlet into their internal structure, on which all their sensible properties depend. By pursuing this new light, therefore, the bounds of natural science may possibly be extended, beyond what we can now form an idea of. New worlds may open to our view, and the glory of the great Sir Isaac Newton himself, and all his contemporaries, be eclipsed, by a new set of philosophers, in quite a new field of speculation. (1962, 200; see also Schaberg 1979, 332)

In general, Priestley was interested in the search, through the scientific investigation of nature, of the general laws on the basis of which nature functions, and this interest of his is connected to the Baconian conception of science, according to which humans can obtain a greater control over nature.

Science helps us not only to explain natural phenomena, but also to control nature for human purposes. For Priestley, science, as I have already emphasized, is the main agent of progress, and its social utility constitutes the basic reason for our occupation with it. In regard to both the methods of scientific research and the utility of science, Priestley is following Bacon. Like Bacon, he particularly stresses the importance of the collection of facts and the performance of experiments, and sees in this process the key for any real progress in natural philosophy. At the same time, like Bacon, he sees as a critical function of science the enforcement of human power over nature. The control of nature constitutes for him the presupposition of human happiness. Priestley formulates clearly his Baconian conception of science when he observes:

By this means, the true philosopher, knowing what will be the result of putting every thing, which the present system exhibits, into a variety of circumstances, is master of all the powers of nature, and can apply them to all the useful purposes of life. Thus does *knowledge*, as Lord Bacon observes, become power, and thus is the philosopher capable of providing, in a more effectual manner, both for his own happiness and for that of others; and thereby of approving

himself a good citizen, and an useful member of society. (1767/1775, 2:12–13; quoted in Schaberg 1979, 326)¹⁷

Scientific knowledge not only gives us the possibility to dominate nature and use it for our purposes, but it is also necessary for human progress. Science, as I have pointed out, is the main agent of progress, the main means of social development. Priestley, commenting on this issue, observes:

From natural philosophy have flowed all those great inventions, by means of which mankind in general are able to subsist with more ease, and in greater numbers upon the face of the earth. Hence arise the capital advantage of men above brutes, and of civilization above barbarity. And by these sciences also it is, that the views of the human mind itself are enlarged, and our common nature improved and ennobled. It is for the honor of the species, therefore, that these sciences should be cultivated with the utmost attention. (1962, 205; see also Schaberg 1979, 323)

But the cultivation of science is not only the agent of civilization and a precondition for the broadening of human mind, it is also important for the future of humankind. Priestley expresses a deep optimism for human progress:

In like manner, science advancing, as it does, with an accelerated progress, it may be taken for granted that mankind, some centuries hence, will be as much superior to us in knowledge and improvements in the arts of life, as we are now to the Hottentots, though we cannot have any conception what that knowledge or what those improvements will be (1775; quoted in Schaberg 1979, 323–24)¹⁸

Priestley's optimism is not limited simply to human progress; it also applies to the possibility of knowledge of reality. We cannot set limits to knowledge, since reality is by its nature inexhaustible. He declares:

To those who consider the world as having now arrived at its state of perfect manhood with respect to science, two thousand years must appear a very disproportionate term of

infancy. But he who considers that no bounds can be set to our advances in this kind of knowledge (since the works of God are, like their author, infinite) that every new discovery is but an opening to several more, and, consequently, that the progress of real knowledge may be expected to go on, not merely in an uniform manner, but to be constantly accelerated; and who shall reflect upon the astonishing improvements that have been made in this branch, and, indeed, in all the branches of real knowledge, in little more than two centuries that have elapsed since the expiration of that long period of darkness, cannot help forming the most glorious expectations. (1772, 30; quoted in Schaberg 1979, 324)

As McEvoy put it, Priestley “placed science in the vanguard of the Enlightenment, where it served the general interests of human progress and emancipation” (1983, 51).

The concept of progress, however, and its meaning for humanity do not only concern science. For Priestley, the concept of progress also embraces religion and politics, economics and history. It is a concept that, after all, makes clear the plans of God in historical perspective. But before we embark on a more general discussion of the concept of progress in Priestley’s thought, we must comment further on his view of science.

Because he was approaching science through the Baconian perspective, and because he had also developed a continuing interest in education, Priestley believed that special emphasis should be given not only to scientific practice, but also to the history of science. Furthermore, science, in his opinion, should be incorporated in the curriculum of basic and higher education. In this direction, Priestley could be considered as one of the pioneers in the renewal of the modern educational process. It should be emphasized that his interests covered both the historiography of science and the construction of a modern educational curriculum oriented towards science and industry (Watts 1983; Brooke 1987; Plangesis 1994; see also Rössner 1986). Priestley, it should be added, approached science not only from the perspective of its social utility but also from the perspective of its promoting a certain political ideology. In his view, historiography and the teaching of science could

contribute to the advancement of knowledge and the formation of the appropriate social and political consciousness for the achievement of human happiness.

The emphasis that Priestley adds to the teaching of science is closely connected with his broader conception of science as a means of knowledge and domination over nature and society. The new society that Priestley envisaged was an enlightened and disciplined society in which the middle class would prevail and in which scientific minds would run social institutions such as factories, jails, schools, and hospitals, and scientific legislators would teach order and manage people in order to achieve the social discipline necessary for the security and effectiveness of work and the well-being of society. Science, in Priestley's conception, is intertwined with politics and the economy, and scientific progress is not independent of them, since it is not independent of liberal religious and political ideology. Freedom of thought and the democratic form of government, economic progress, and religious toleration constitute the basic components of his thought.¹⁹

As I have previously pointed out, the concept of progress is not referred simply to scientific and social practice; for Priestley the concept of progress reveals and makes clear the plans of Divine Providence. History as an imprint of human activity in time takes its meaning, according to Priestley, in the broader context or the perspective of a divine plan and finally of an eschatological consideration of the world.²⁰ Fitzpatrick is quite correct when he emphasizes this fact (1998, 195–96). In his philosophy of history, Priestley does not seem to give particular emphasis to the social structure or to the mechanisms of social change, but he does emphasize the direction of the historical process. If we do not find in him a coherent theory of social structure or of social change, we find, nevertheless, a relatively advanced theory of the direction of history—that is, a theory of progress.

Yet one could say that in Priestley's analysis a distinction between feudal and bourgeois social structure is presupposed. But this distinction does not seem to work toward a construction of a general theory of history. One could also hold that in Priestley a certain reference to the process of social change is made, insofar

as he understands the conflicting social relations or the revolutionary ruptures as a motive force for social and political developments. Even here, however, the reference to this kind of phenomena is not incorporated into an overall consideration of history. In reality, what we find in him is nothing but an opinion about the direction of history of a teleological type; a view that is located within and forms a part of the conception of the Enlightenment in regard to history. Of course, Priestley's view of history diverges from that of the philosophers of the Enlightenment in two main points: first, in relation to the role of Divine Providence in history, and second, in relation to the emphasis that he puts on social and political development.

Priestley shares the conception of the Enlightenment that the idea of progress concerns mainly the development of the human mind, particularly the development of science and technology. For him, however, this concept of progress obtains its meaning in the context of the ends set by Divine Providence. Nevertheless, deity does not determine the details, the intensity, and the rhythm of historical progress. It does determine the general aim and guarantees the overall direction and advance of the historical process. Thus the process of history cannot be annulled either by the operation of repressive forces or by the existence of evil in history. Priestley is quite explicit about this:

Such is my belief in the doctrine of an over-ruling providence, that I have no doubt, but that every thing in the whole system of nature, how noxious soever it may be in some respects, has real, though unknown uses; and also that every thing, even the grossest abuses in the civil or ecclesiastical constitutions of particular states, is subservient to the wise and gracious designs of him, who, notwithstanding these appearances, still *rules in the kingdoms of men*. (Priestley 1771/1993, 6; see also Fruchtman 1983, 21 and Plangesis 1994, 17)

Divine Providence can of course guarantee the direction of the historical process, but that does not necessarily guarantee human happiness as a historical achievement. For Priestley, the gracious deity created a dynamic and developing world in

which it is possible for human beings to achieve happiness. The achievement of happiness is exclusively a human affair. But, since history is the outcome of human activity, and since in it the human purposes are materialized, happiness can be achieved only insofar as humans turn against all those forms of social consciousness and social and political organization that withhold progress. In Priestley's conception, the struggle for scientific progress; for the advancement of new, bourgeois forms of social organization and political practice; the struggle for democracy, freedom and toleration, in the direction shown by the American and the French revolutions; the struggle for the predominance of reason in history and the permanent peace in the relationships between nations and people—means by which human happiness is advanced—is closely connected with the struggle against prejudices and superstition, religious obscurantism and intolerance; the struggle against the feudal institutions and authoritarian politics; and the struggle against aggressive wars, colonialism, and the slave trade.²¹

Priestley could, of course, in the context of his optimistic conception of history, particularly emphasize the achievements of the moderns and consider the civilization of modern times and of the age of Enlightenment as incomparably superior to Antiquity and the Middle Ages; he could explicitly side with the moderns in the dispute between ancients and moderns. In his *Lectures on History*, he writes:

That the state of the world at present, and particularly the state of Europe, is vastly preferable to what it was in any former period is evident from the very first view of things. A thousand circumstances show how inferior the *ancients* were to the *moderns* in religious knowledge, in science in general, in government, in laws, both the laws of nations, and those of particular states, in arts, in commerce, in the conveniences of life in manners, and in consequence of all these, in happiness. (1793, 2:242; quoted in Thomas 1987, 74)²²

The achievement of *common happiness*, the achievement of *public good*, the *general good of society* is the main object of politics and the standard of justice. In an organized society,

the government, as “the great instrument in the hand of divine providence for the progress of the human species towards perfection” must work for the common good, the “administration of justice” and “the preservation of peace” (Priestley 1768/1828, 8, 12–13, 166–73). After the events of the American and the French Revolutions, “these great events, in many respects unparalleled in all history,” which are making “a totally new, a most wonderful and important area in the history of mankind,” we can move from the old-fashioned governments, “the combination of *the few* against *the many*” toward a popular government (Priestley 1791/1828, 236–44; see also Thomas 1987 and Schwartz 1990, 123). We can envisage a government actually working for the common good. Priestley, with great enthusiasm exclaims:

How glorious . . . is the prospect, the reverse of all the past, which is now opening upon us, and upon the world! Government, we may now expect to see, not only in theory and in books, but in actual practice, calculated for the general good, and taking no more upon it than the general good requires; leaving all men the enjoyment of as many of their *natural rights* as possible, and no more interfering with matters of religion, with men’s notions concerning God and a future state, than with philosophy or medicine. (1791/1828, 237)

It seems that Priestley believed that a radical reform of the political system was possible. He was against aggressive, civil, and imperialistic wars and colonialism and believed that soon “the very idea of distant possessions will be even ridiculed” and slavery will be abolished (238).²³ He envisages a future world where peace and reason will prevail. He writes:

Together with the prevalence of the true principles of civil government, we may expect to see the extinction of all *national prejudice* and enmity, and the establishment of *universal peace* and good-will among all nations. . . . Thus will *reason* be the umpire in all disputes, and extinguish civil wars as well as foreign ones. *The empire of reason will ever be the reign of peace.* (238, 240; emphasis mine)²⁴

Priestley's optimism and his belief in progress, however, do not lead him to a romantic utopianism. He does not consider progress as self-evident. Although he was an exponent of the most democratic ideas and a supporter of unconditional toleration in the second half of the eighteenth century, Priestley became conscious of the need not only of social and political reform but also of social and political change, and if necessary by violent means. Priestley, a fervent supporter of the American and French revolutions, did not hesitate to adopt the perspective of a revolutionary rupture and practice to turn against the social, political, and ecclesiastical establishment and to propagandize revolutionary praxis as a force of liberation and as an agent of progress.

On the basis that "*all civil power is ultimately derived from the people*" (1993, 19), Priestley advocates people's right of revolution; the right to turn against a corrupt political system, unjust laws, and tyranny; the right to overthrow the constitution and establish a more democratic and just political system. No principles exist that would restrain the people "from changing or even punishing their governors. that is, their *servants*, who had abused their trust; or from altering the whole form of their government, if it appear to be of a structure so liable to abuse" (1771/1993, 18). Those who talk about the crime of *rebellion* and the threat of *revolution*, in fact confuse the terms *rebellion* and *revolution*, *lawful* and *legal*. Even if we admit that by the term *rebellion* we mean "an attempt to subvert a lawful government," says Priestley, the question is whether a suppressive government can be a lawful one; "or, to cut off all dispute about words, if lawful, legal, and constitutional, be maintained to be the same thing, whether the lawful, legal, and constitutional government be a good government, or one in which sufficient provision is made for the happiness of the subjects of it" (1993, 22). For Priestley, people have the right to change the laws, and, if they think it necessary, they can even change the constitution. As he puts it, "Laws . . . not coming down from heaven, but being made by men, may also be changed by them; and what is a *constitution of government*, but the *greater laws* of the state?" (1828, 173).

Despite his radical republicanism, Priestley's liberal vision for the future society does not go beyond the horizon of the French

Revolution. Although he formally supported bourgeois equal rights and condemned slavery and aristocracy openly, he was, in practice, not against inequality in general or against property. On the contrary, he was justifying social inequality on the basis that it was morally useful by promoting moral progress among rich and poor. Poverty was the excuse for Christian philanthropy. Inequality promoted the Christian virtues of discipline, charity, generosity, gratitude, and benevolence. The following extracts are revealing in regard to his social and political views:

At the same time that we justly think that every man is a great and exalted being (that is, capable of becoming such); we consider all distinctions among men as temporary, calculated for the ultimate benefit of all; and consequently, that it is for the interest of the lower orders as well as of the highest that such a subordination should subsist. (1788/1831, 366; quoted in Canovan 1983, 28)

[Charity is] agreeable to the excellent plan of Divine Providence, which has wisely appointed this life to be a state of discipline to us all, and which, with equal wisdom, makes the greatest use of men, as the instruments of this discipline for the improvement of men. For this reason it is that some are rich and others poor; some knowing and others ignorant; some powerful and others weak. . . . [Thus], the rich reflecting on the wise institutions of Providence, should not suppose that they have an absolute exclusive right to their superfluity. . . . Our common parent had far other and more extensive views in appointing this inequality. It was no less than to bind all the parts of this great whole, more strictly together, to make the one more dependent upon the other, and . . . give scope to the increase of generosity on the one side, of gratitude on the other, and benevolence on both. (1797/1820, 501; quoted in Canovan 1983, 29)²⁵

Conclusions

What conclusions can be drawn from this analysis? First, we should stress the fact that Priestley, as a philosopher, scientist, and theorist of the idea of progress, is generally moving in the spirit of

the Enlightenment. With his materialist theory of human nature and the world, he contributes a great deal to the formation of the spirit of modernity. In particular, we can contend that his materialism constitutes an important step toward a more coherent materialist interpretation of reality. At the same time, with his scientific work as a historian and theorist of science and as an active scientist, he contributes to the development of science in the context of the Newtonian conception of science. As a theorist of the concept of progress, he contributes effectively to the formation of perhaps the most crucial idea of modernity. Of course, Priestley could be criticized, like the main representatives of the Enlightenment, for his extremely optimistic belief in the progressive character of historical development, particularly insofar as this is understood as a development of the scientific spirit. The questioning of the idea of progress in our age reveals the one-sidedness of this belief.²⁶ Although we can accept the position of the Enlightenment on historical progress, we should raise the issue of the meaning of progress in relation to the different social classes and strata, the actions of which activate social evolution. But the crucial question is whether the process of history is determined by a logic of history that, in reality, is set *a priori*.²⁷

Furthermore, we should underline the fact that the Enlightenment conception of history, and for that reason Priestley's, is a historically determined conception. It is a conception that essentially responds to the postulate of the rising bourgeoisie for social and political domination. The Enlightenment, and, of course, Priestley, evaluate the historical past and envisage the future from the perspective of the achievements of the eighteenth century. The Enlightenment, however, as an intellectual movement, was not adequate for the promotion of the interests of the bourgeoisie. Resort to revolutionary praxis was also necessary. History, as is well known, does not limit itself to the enlightening of the human mind, but uses other means as well, when necessary. Priestley knew this, of course, but, apart from a general recourse to revolutionary praxis, he did not and could not see the role of the motive forces of historical evolution. The reason for this was the fact that the question of the

motive forces of history is not a theoretical question nor can it be answered *a priori*, as Priestley tried to do with reference to Divine Providence. The question of the motive forces of history must and ought to be answered empirically, through historical practice. Consequently Priestley is not, after all, able to propose a coherent theory of historical evolution. Priestley, like other philosophers of the Enlightenment, cannot go beyond a metaphysical consideration of history.²⁸

I would like to raise the following question: How, in our present circumstances, through a creative transcendence of the spirit of the Enlightenment, can we put forward the postulate for the development and the use of science in favor of humanity? How, through a critical consideration of historical process and the idea of progress, can we put forward the postulate for the construction of a coherent theory of history; a theory that would orient human praxis toward social and political emancipation, toward a construction of a society that would allow the creative expression of the human personality and the realization of freedom and equality, of freedom and justice?

I do not intend to attempt to develop here in detail this kind of problematic. Yet I would like to note that in my view the postulate for a consideration of history in the context of the Enlightenment and toward human emancipation not only continues to be meaningful for us today, but also appears to be the only way out of the impasse of the present. But what can human emancipation mean today? In my view, it means nothing more and nothing less than a combination of the postulate of freedom with the postulate of equality in a radical direction. I can say, quoting Habermas, that today “there is no cure for the wounds of the Enlightenment other than the radicalised Enlightenment itself” (1992, 155). In other words, today we must create the preconditions of emancipation in a radical direction. We must create the preconditions not only for the emancipation of humanity from all the different forms of social and political oppression—economic exploitation as well as sexual, racial, and ethnic oppression—but also for the transcendence of the class structure of society. That is, we should proceed to the construction of the subject or the agent of

social emancipation.²⁹ Such an attempt, however, demands the utilization of historical experience as well as the utilization of theoretical investigations, particularly those related to Marxian thought and the left-wing socialist movement.³⁰

More concretely, human emancipation today cannot simply mean to “radicalize the Enlightenment” in the bourgeois frame of reference; neither can it mean the acceptance of the bourgeois concept of freedom impregnated with some form of equality, let us say with the Platonic-Aristotelian geometrical [proportional] equality, or with a moderate Rawlsian economic inequality.³¹ To radicalize the Enlightenment can only mean to transcend capitalist society, which is based on extreme inequality and class exploitation and which advocates the market economy and profit as the ideal of social coexistence. It also means that we must work toward the creation of the conditions for a society of human cooperation and solidarity, a classless society in which not only formal political equality but also socioeconomic equality will apply, a society in which all forms of discrimination and oppression will be eradicated. Thus, to radicalize the Enlightenment means to emancipate labor; it means social emancipation. As Marx put it, referring to the Paris Commune, the *Commune* is nothing else but “*the political form of the social emancipation, of the liberation of labour.*” It also means to supersede the Enlightenment, to go beyond it, to adopt historical materialism as a theoretical instrument of analyzing and understanding social and political phenomena (1986, 490–91).³²

Emancipation, however, cannot be achieved in a deeply divided society, where selfish and greedy individuals compete for profit and power, and where class exploitation and domination are intertwined with ethnic, racial, and sexual oppression. Real, genuine emancipation, human emancipation, involves, as Marx put it in “On the Jewish Question,” the abolition of the distinction between *bourgeois* and *citoyen*, or the dialectical unity of the private and the public, between the egoistic, independent individual and the citizen:

Only when the real individual man re-absorbs in himself the abstract citizen, and as an individual human being has

become a *species-being* in his everyday life, in his particular work, and in his particular situation, only when man has recognised and organised his “*forces propres*” as *social* forces, and consequently no longer separates social power from himself in the shape of *political* power, only then will human emancipation have been accomplished. (1975b, 168)

The combination of freedom (intellectual and political) with equality (socioeconomic and political) in a just, classless society requires as a necessary condition, as its foundation, the principle: “From each according to his abilities, to each according to his needs.” In a word, the combination of freedom and equality entails the existence of an advanced socialist society, a communist society. It is only there that humankind can realize its authentic nature as a species being. As Marx put it:

[Communism] is the *genuine* resolution of the conflict between man and nature and between man and man—the true resolution of the strife between existence and essence, between objectification and self-confirmation, between freedom and necessity, between the individual and the species. Communism is the riddle of history solved, and it knows itself to be this solution. (1975a, 296–97)

At the present conjuncture, in the conditions of the new imperialism, and of neocolonial domination and exploitation, it is also necessary to think anew about how to conceive science, how to confront and supersede the bourgeois philosophy of nature and society, and how to move toward the formation and development of a proletarian philosophy that could lay the foundations of the urgently needed emancipatory social and political practice. To do this is not an easy task at all. However, it is necessary, as I have already said, to utilize the theoretical investigations already available to us—that is, Marxian theoretical work, and the historical experience, the revolutionary inheritance of humanity.

It is necessary to conceive science in the framework of a dynamic totality, of an objective material reality, an all-inclusive

evolutionary and developmental material process. I would say that a dialectical conception of material reality³³ is the condition of possibility, the *conditio sine qua non*, of science as an effective theoretical activity, an activity involving not only the community of scientists but also society as a whole. Science, after all, has to be considered as a social human activity, an activity involving and affecting the organization of science itself.³⁴ Science as a dialectical process is itself historically conditioned and developing in dynamic interaction with the objective material world. Yet science, in order to pursue its object, in order to function properly, presupposes intellectual freedom, a framework of relative autonomy. Science as an inquiry into truth, as an investigation into the essence of things, into the underlying structure of the natural and social world, must function in conditions of relative freedom.

Nevertheless, as is generally accepted today, science, as a historically conditioned social activity, is somehow influenced by ideology and determined by class interests.³⁵ Science and politics are interconnected. Science is conceived not only as a means of knowledge but also as a means of control over nature and human beings. It is used as a means of domination in order to satisfy selfish class interests, often with disastrous consequences. This means that the development and use of science today must move away from the narrow interests of the selfish ruling elites of global capitalism, and toward a direction conditioned by the expectations of the exploited and the oppressed. Marx, in *The Civil War in France*, sees science as part of the revolutionary struggle for the construction of a new society, putting forward the idea that science has to be freed from class prejudice and political control and converted “from an instrument of class rule into a popular force” (1986, 496).³⁶

Thus human emancipation and the radical conception of science raise the issue of the need of a new construction of the agency of social and political hegemony.³⁷ It is necessary to rethink seriously the possibility of a new formation, a new combination of social forces: the working class and the other exploited classes and social strata—some would say the *multitude*—that will conduct the class struggle, the struggle against global capitalism. The postulate of a leap into the future, the claim for a *revolutionary rupture* with

the system of exploitation and domination, continues to be as meaningful and topical today as ever.³⁸ It is so, in particular, for the conscious and politically active men and women, and their social and political movements, who question the present human condition and envisage a better world, a better social organization in which they would feel as free and equal as everybody else. This vision can also be a cure for the wounds of the Enlightenment and a remedy for our suffering world.

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NOTES

1. An earlier version of this paper was presented at the conference “Enlightenment and Scientific Thought,” at the University of Patras, 29–30 May 1998, in honor of professor August Bayonas, who died in 2006.

2. From Priestley’s corpus, which includes philosophical, scientific, theological, and political works, we should particularly mention the following: *Disquisitions Relating to Matter and Spirit* (London, 1777); *The Doctrine of Philosophical Necessity Illustrated* (London, 1777, second edition 1782); *Experiments and Observations on Different Kinds of Air* (London, 1774–77); *The History and Present State of Electricity* (London, 1767); *Lectures on History and General Policy: To Which is Prefixed an Essay on a Course of Liberal Education for Civil and Active Life* (Birmingham, 1788); and *An Essay on the First Principles of Government; and on the Nature of Political, Civil and Religious Liberty* (London, 1768).

3. A more detailed analysis and appraisal of Priestley’s work can be found in my books *Hyle kai Pneuma. Sie Philosophike Skepse tou Joseph Priestley* [Matter and Spirit in Joseph Priestley’s Philosophical Thought] (1991) and *Liberalism and Democratic Theory: The Concept of Liberty in Joseph Priestley’s Political Thought* (1994). See Rees 1992 and 1995 for reviews of these publications.

4. For Priestley’s scientific work, see, among others, Gibbs 1965, McEvoy 1975, and McEvoy and McGuire 1975.

5. Stephen F. Mason, in his survey of the history of scientific thought examining the idea of progress, observes that “Priestley in his book, *The First Principles of Government*, . . . offered an idea of human progress similar to that put forward by Condorcet twenty years later” (1962, 328).

6. See chap. 3 (“Priestley’s Theory of Matter”) in my study *Matter and Spirit* (1991, 46–52).

7. For the interconnection of Priestley's theological and scientific ideas, see, among others, Fruchtman 1983 and Schwartz 1990.

8. For the issue of the harmonizing science with religion, see the interesting study by Westfall (1973).

9. For a discussion of the concept of matter in eighteenth-century thought and its relationship to mechanical materialism and Priestley, see McGuire and Heimann 1978 and Schofield 1983. See also Boscovich 1773/1966.

10. See also Heimann and McGuire 1971, 273.

11. See also Heimann and McGuire 1971, 272.

12. For a critical discussion of mechanical materialism, apart from the article of Heimann and McGuire (1971), see Schofield 1970 and Einstein and Infeld 1966. When Priestley refers to modern scientific results, he has in mind the work of Boscovich (1773/1966) and Michell (1750). Cf. Priestley 1772, 10 and Yolton 1983, 112.

13. See also Heimann and McGuire 1971, 272; McGuire and Heimann 1978, 112; Schwartz 1990, 115–18; and Plangesis 1991, 46–52.

14. Cf. Toland 1704/1964. For Toland's materialism and other philosophical views, see Plangesis 1985 and Sullivan 1982. In relation to Priestley's passage quoted above, Oizerman observes: "Priestley was well aware of the significance of his propositions for refuting the theological and idealist notions dominant in his day. . . . The subsequent development of science, and in particular of physics, chemistry, and biology, enriched the materialist understanding of nature by such discoveries and arguments as neither Priestley nor other scientists of the eighteenth century had even the foggiest notions about. Much in the mechanistic conception of the *self-motion of matter* now appears naïve, but its basic materialist idea has become ever weightier and more convincing in our day" (1984, 242).

15. For Priestley's views about the existence of God and his theory of the soul and its immortality, see Plangesis 1991, esp. 69–83.

16. All quotations cited by McEvoy are from Priestley's *The History and Present State of Electricity*, 2nd ed. in one volume (London, 1769).

17. See also Fitzpatrick 1998, 178–79. McEvoy, quite correctly, holds that Priestley's conception of the organization of science is also Baconian. According to McEvoy, Priestley, in his writings, hoped that by adopting the analytic and historical method, he would be encouraging other researchers to enter the adventure of experimental philosophy. This attitude of his, McEvoy contends, extended also to the organization of science, and was in harmony with the Baconian conception of natural philosophy. According to the Baconian view, science is progressing through a division of labor among the organized community of scientists, and this is the view followed by Priestley. Priestley understood scientific research as a collective enterprise, and underlined the need for the exchange of information among scientists (McEvoy 1975, 161–64). It was for this reason that Priestley emphasized the need for freedom of thought and expression and the need for freedom in scientific research. I should add here that Priestley's contribution to the formation of scientific research groups in support of industry and enterprise activity,

and to the expansion of independent scientific institutes and the Academies in England was also important.

Bacon's views on the organization of science are set forward in his *New Atlantis*. See Quinton 1980, 66–69. For the role that the Academies played in the development of science, see Bernal 1965, 529–30.

18. Priestley's reference to Hottentots is quite revealing from an ideological point of view. He is using the term *Hottentots* to refer to indigenous people of South Africa, the Khoikhoi, who were living in the broader area of the Cape. The Khoikhoi, whose only means of subsistence were hunting and herding, could not survive in the conditions of colonialism, because of the devastating policies of the Dutch, who usurped the Khoikhoi's land, depleted their herds, and treated them inhumanely, and because of the epidemics caused by the Dutch arrival in the Cape. The Dutch colonists treated the Khoikhoi as inferior beings, had a very contemptuous attitude toward them, and described them as dangerous savages. The Dutch colonists referred to the Khoikhoi by the most vulgar expressions: "unreasonable beasts"; "brutal people"; "dull, stupid, and odorous"; "black stinking dogs"; and other such expressions. The use of the name *Hottentots* in the language of the Europeans had clearly a derogatory meaning and constituted a linguistic stereotype with which reference was made to individuals of a lower intelligence or culture. This stereotype is also reproduced in Priestley's usage of language. For the Khoikhoi, see Sparks 1990, 7, 29–30, 82–88, and 91–93.

19. For Priestley's view of the relationship of science to the economy and politics, see Kramnick 1990, chap. 3, esp. 76–86; Schaffer 1987, 39–53; and Brooke 1987, 18.

20. See Fruchtman 1983, 21 and Plangesis 1994, 17. For a thorough discussion of Priestley's views on history and the idea of progress, see Schaberg 1979, 443–59; McEvoy 1979; Hoecker 1987, 220–32; Fitzpatrick 1987; and Thomas 1987. For the broader context of the idea of progress in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, see Sampson 1956; Becker 1965; and Spadafora 1990.

21. For an analysis of the relevant views of Priestley, see Plangesis 1994, 18–38. See also Brooke 1987, 17 and Schwartz 1990, 123.

22. For the dispute of the ancients with the moderns, see, among others, Bury 1960 and Jones 1961.

23. For Priestley's views about social inequality and slavery, see Canovan 1983 and Plangesis 1994, 29–38. Margaret Canovan refers to Priestley's anti-slavery sermon and provides the information that "he was a member of the Birmingham Committee of Correspondence of the anti-slavery movement" (1983, 27). For slavery and the abolitionist movement, see, among others, Howse 1953; Davidson 1988; Davis 1975; Blackburn 1988; and Thomas 1999.

24. As is well known, a few years later, in 1795, Kant expressed the same postulate for universal peace in his essay on perpetual peace (1970).

25. For Priestley's social and political ideas, see Robbins 1982; Lincoln 1971; Dickinson 1977; Kramnick 1990; Graham 1989–1990; and Plangesis 1994.

26. For a critique, in contemporary thought, of the Enlightenment and the idea of progress, see Callinicos 1989, 1995. See also Eagleton 1996.

27. For a theoretical discussion of this issue, see chap. 3 of Callinicos 1995, 95–109.

28. For a discussion of the motive forces of history and the mechanisms of historical change, see Callinicos 1995, 100–102.

29. For the connection between the Enlightenment and emancipation, see Kant 1970, 54–55. For the question of human emancipation as it can be raised today, see Callinicos 1995, 190–203.

30. In this regard, see P. Anderson's observations in "The Ends of History" (1992, 278–375, esp. 357–75).

31. I am referring to the work of John Rawls, especially *A Theory of Justice* (1999) and *Political Liberalism* (1996).

32. Marxism, as heir to the spirit of the Enlightenment, shares with it its rationalist critique of religious prejudices and superstitions and the modern scientific approach to natural and social phenomena. In fact, one can say that Marxism is nothing but the supersession, the sublation of the Enlightenment itself. Marxism is the continuation and development of the radical side of the Enlightenment. It developed a more consistent materialist approach to reality and radicalized further in a revolutionary way the social critique of the Radical Enlightenment. For the Radical Enlightenment, see Israel 2001.

33. For materialist dialectics and the realist and Marxist conceptions of science, see, among others, Bhaskar 1978; Hörz, Pöltz, Parthey, Röseberg, and Wessel 1980; Norman and Sayers 1980; Young 1990; Olwell 1996; Baxter 1997; Gasper 1998; and Bitsakis 1997, 2001. See also Plangesis 2004, 2005.

34. For the organization of science in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Europe, see Emerson 1990.

35. For the relation between science and ideology, see Outram 1990. For the relation of science with ideology and politics in general, see Gould 1997; Jacob 1994; Levins and Lewontin 1985; Lewontin 1991; Lewontin, Rose, and Kamin 1984; Silvers 1998; and Rose 1997.

36. See also York and Clark 2006 and Mészáros 1995.

37. I use the term *hegemony* in the Gramscian sense of the word. See Antonio Gramsci's *Prison Notebooks*, (1971). See also Simon 1982 for a succinct discussion of the concept of hegemony. I use the term *multitude* in the sense in which Hardt and Negri (2000) use this word. Needless to say, I fully disagree with their way of arguing. It seems to me that the issue at stake for them and many others is not the struggle against capitalism but how to play down the leading role of the working class in this struggle.

38. By *revolutionary rapture*, I do not mean any kind of rebellion, but rather a structural societal change that radically transforms the existing social order—that is, the transformation of a capitalist society into a socialist one. The way this is accomplished is determined by concrete empirical facts and can vary according to the variables of space and time.

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***NST* Conference/Study Tours:
Vietnam January 2006
China June 2007 and May 2008
Vietnam and Laos October 2008**

The previous two issues of *Nature, Society, and Thought*, vol. 19, nos. 1 and 2, contained papers from the conference “Consequences of the Changing World Economy for Class Relations, Ideology, and Culture,” cosponsored by this journal and the Ho Chi Minh National Political Academy. The conference, in Hanoi 9–11 January 2006, was embedded in a two-week study tour that included visits to various parts of Vietnam. Publication of papers from this conference will be complete with the papers in the following section of this issue of *NST*.

On 2–3 June 2007, a conference cosponsored by *Nature, Society, and Thought*; the Central Compilation and Translation Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China; and the Academy of Marxism of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences on the theme “The Socialist Market Economy and Other Theoretical Issues” was held in Beijing. The conference was embedded in a two-week study tour to Beijing, Shanghai, and the western province of Yunnan. Publication of papers presented at the conference will begin with the next issue of this journal.

Another conference/study tour in China, this time cosponsored by *Nature, Society, and Thought*; the Academy of Marxism of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences; and Tsinghua University, will take place on 22 May to 5 June 2008. The conference theme

is “Marxism and Scientific Sustainable Development.” See pages 364–65 of this issue for details.

On 5–8 October 2008, *Nature, Society, and Thought* will hold its third conference in cosponsorship with the Ho Chi Minh National Political Academy. The theme of the conference is “Contemporary Problems of Socioeconomic Theory.” Following the successful format of the last conference, this one will also be embedded in a two-week study tour. This time, however, the tour will include one week in Vietnam and one week in neighboring Laos.

Laos lies along the western border of Vietnam. After centuries of colonial rule and puppet regimes under Thai, French, and U.S. domination, the Pathet Lao guerrilla movement led by the Lao People’s Revolutionary Party unified the country; it completed the national liberation of Laos and proclaimed the Laos People’s Democratic Republic in 1975.

Information about the 2008 Vietnam-Laos study tour and a call for participation in the conference will appear in the next issue of *NST*.

Revolution in Vietnam, Cuba, and Nicaragua: Cultural Contradictions of Peripheral Capitalism in the Age of Globalization

Jeffery M. Paige

In the middle and late twentieth century, Vietnam, Cuba, and Nicaragua each experienced a major social revolution led by a vanguard Marxist-Leninist party. Each revolution faced determined military and paramilitary efforts by the United States to destroy it. Yet the course of these revolutions has been very different. After initiating a series of market-oriented economic reforms, Vietnam has emerged in the twenty-first century as the second-fastest growing economy in the world (after China). In the immediate aftermath of the reforms, however, medical, educational, and social services to the poor majority virtually collapsed. Although immediately after the collapse of the Soviet Union, it appeared that Cuba too might undertake a market opening, a decade and a half later it is clear that Cuba is returning to a state-directed command economy with economic growth rates less than half those of Vietnam. Yet despite straitened economic circumstances, Cuba has made enormous efforts to preserve the health and educational programs that are seen as the very heart of the revolutionary process.

Nicaragua has seen the worst of both worlds. Sandinista economic mismanagement combined with U.S. military and economic

pressure had reduced the economy to chaos by the waning years of the Sandinista period. The Sandinista electoral defeat saw the emergence of a radical version of neoliberalism that gutted the remaining Sandinista social programs, while failing to generate an economic revival. Neoliberal Nicaragua has become simultaneously one of the poorest and most expensive countries in Latin America. These differences can easily be exaggerated, however. Vietnam is now making substantial efforts to restore social-welfare services lost in the immediate aftermath of market reform. Cuba could introduce some elements of the Chinese/Vietnamese model at some point in the future. The Sandinista party is still a factor in Nicaraguan politics and may return to power in next year's presidential elections.

Still, the existing differences in course of the three revolutions are significant. What accounts for these differences? Why did the three revolutions follow such different trajectories? Why did the Vietnamese and Cuban revolutions withstand enormous American pressure while the Nicaraguan revolution collapsed under (relatively) less pressure? I attempt here to provide some preliminary answers to these questions as well as to reflect on the meaning of these twentieth-century revolutions for a revolutionary politics in the twenty-first century. Despite the common commitment to a Marxist-Leninist party, the three revolutions were very different. Indeed, the collapse of Marxist-Leninist orthodoxy provides an opportunity to reexamine the revolutionary process and locate it within the history, culture, and social structure of the Third World and the particular national trajectories of each society. It also provides an opportunity to reflect on the nature of twentieth-century Third World revolutions themselves and their implications for the current century.

Rethinking revolution in the Third World

Although Marxist orthodoxy reduced Third World revolution to class struggle, it is clear from an outpouring of recent scholarship that the Vietnamese, Cuban, and Nicaraguan revolutions were much more deeply rooted in the distinct colonial and imperial history and culture of these societies than they were in any

transhistorical class struggle. Indeed, it is my contention that these revolutions can best be understood as a product of what might be called the “cultural contradictions of peripheral capitalism.” These contradictions create an existentially untenable life situation for people in Third World societies that is a profound threat to their personal, societal, and national identities. Vast numbers of people in revolutionary societies in the Third World find no reasonable social framework in which they can conduct meaningful and productive lives. These contradictions can lead to a profound rejection of the current social arrangements and a search for alternatives that are often radical and utopian in nature.

These contradictions play themselves out in different ways for the leadership and the popular support of revolutions. In Vietnam, Cuba, and Nicaragua, revolutions were led by remarkably small groups of students and intellectuals. Substantial portions of the intellectual and political leadership in these societies found themselves in personal and professional dilemmas that could not be resolved within the existing structure. These leadership crises were accompanied by a deep-seated and widespread crisis in the lives of ordinary people that at times reached near apocalyptic proportions. The ideological, social, and material structures of ordinary life in each of these countries had to a large extent been destroyed by the corrosive force of peripheral capitalism, but most people had not been incorporated into the social and ideological structures of capitalism itself. The ways in which each nation’s revolutionary leadership resolved these crises and the way in which ordinary people responded to their solutions have much to do with the different directions the three revolutions have taken.

Cultural contradictions and national history

What sets prerevolutionary Vietnam, Cuba, and Nicaragua apart from the vast majority of Third World societies that have not had socialist revolutions is (1) the degree to which revolutionary leaders were caught between a closed colonial or neocolonial regime and a Western-oriented educational system, and (2) the extent to which the social and economic life of ordinary people was pulverized by peripheral capitalism. The intellectual and

political leadership in Vietnam, Cuba, and Nicaragua also faced the contradiction of a double colonialism—Chinese and French in Vietnam, Spanish and American in Cuba and Nicaragua. At the popular level, Cuban rural social relations were more thoroughly transformed by peripheral capitalism than any other society in Latin America. Vietnam's peasantry was more thoroughly pulverized by colonial capitalism than any other country in Southeast Asia. Pacific (but, significantly, not North Central) Nicaragua was reduced to an immense floating semiproletariat by agro-export capitalism. In none of the three countries was anything other than a small minority ever incorporated into modern capitalist wage or property relations.

The resolution of these contradictions took on particular national characteristics. In Vietnam, as David Marr has persuasively argued, the anticolonial movement faced a dilemma reflected in the anti-imperialism of Phan Boi Chau on the one hand and the antifeudal and pro-Western ideas of Phan Chu Trinh on the other (1971, 276). It was Nguyen Ai Quoc (Ho Chi Minh) who hit upon the resolution of this dilemma in the doctrines of the Communist International in general and Lenin's "Theses on the National and the Colonial Questions" in particular. As Marr notes, "Where else could a sensitive engaged Vietnamese citizen of that time both openly proclaim his abhorrence of a particular France, a colonial France, and advance revolutionary social doctrines on which France in large part still held a monopoly?" Lenin's "Theses" advocated anti-imperial and antifeudal movements for national liberation. These would become the central themes of the Vietnamese revolution for the next half century. At the core of the revolution was an idea that might be called "developmental socialism"—the construction of a strong and independent modern nation-state that would benefit all the people of Vietnam.

The central contradiction for Cuba was between an American-dominated culture of consumer capitalism on the one hand and an agro-export economy based on the part-time labor of half a million cane cutters. A century of struggle, beginning when Carlos Manuel de Céspedes freed his slaves and declared himself in rebellion against the Spanish empire, had forged a tradition

of social solidarity that found its expression in the anti-imperial populism of José Martí in 1895 and the humanistic socialism of Julio Antonio Mella in 1933 and of Fidel Castro and Che Guevara in 1959. As Louis A. Perez Jr. has persuasively argued, during the revolution of 1959 the very definition of civilization itself was in transition. “We are,” contended Fidel Castro in 1959, “a barbaric country, an uncivilized country, for any country that is thinking of the luxury of radios, refrigerators, televisions, etc., with thousands of children affected with tuberculosis, in a nation with unpaved streets, with cities lacking water supplies, with a high rate of parasitism, anemia, and unemployed is a barbaric country” (cited in Pérez 1991, 481–82) The very definition of the nation and the revolution includes the health and welfare of ordinary people.

The Vietnamese revolutionary leadership enjoyed enormous success in mobilizing the Vietnamese peasantry in the name of national liberation, antifeudalism, and scientific progress. Similarly, Fidel’s humanistic socialism emphasizing the social welfare of ordinary people enjoyed enormous popular support in Cuba. And what of Nicaragua? The Cuban-style humanistic socialism of the Sandinistas never had the slightest success in mobilizing the small-holding and middling capitalist farmers of North Central Nicaragua. Their base of support always remained the urban poor of Pacific Coastal Nicaragua. The result was half a revolution, half a counterrevolution, and the ultimate collapse of the entire revolutionary project. Nicaragua shows the importance of linking the crisis of the intellectual leadership to mass mobilization.

***Significance of twentieth-century revolutions
for the twenty-first century***

What were these three revolutions about and why did they go in such different directions? To sum up with desperate brevity, the Vietnamese and Cuban revolutions emphasized different dimensions of the crisis of peripheral capitalism. The Vietnamese anti-colonial movement and its revolutionary successors have always been determined to build a strong, scientifically based modern society that would reject both Confucian (Chinese) “feudalism”

and Western (French and American) imperialism. This movement was always about “a rich people and a strong society.” In Cuba, contemporary concerns with public health and social welfare reflect a long revolutionary tradition, extending back to José Martí, of defining the Cuban nation according to the welfare of its poorest inhabitants. In Nicaragua, of course, the message of Cuban-style humanistic socialism resonated only with the urban population, not the rural—leading to revolutionary failure.

What, then, is the relevance of these midtwentieth-century revolutions to the crisis of globalization in the twenty-first century? Throughout the Third World, neoliberal globalization is shredding social guarantees, increasing inequalities, and destroying national economies in the name of discredited nineteenth-century economic doctrines. Ironically, globalization is recreating precisely those contradictions of peripheral capitalism that gave rise to the Vietnamese, Cuban, and Nicaraguan revolutions in the first place. An alternative socialist model combining Vietnam’s developmental and Cuba’s social-welfare success could become increasingly attractive to Third World countries like Nicaragua devastated by neoliberal globalization. The visions of the great Third World revolutionaries of the twentieth century may yet offer solutions to the unsustainable contradictions of twenty-first century globalization.

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Toward Fair, Equal, and Democratic Policies in International Relations

Pham Hong Chuong

I would like to discuss the values of fairness, equality, and democracy among people and consider them in the framework of the present world.

The reasons why these are discussed are that in the evolution of society, fairness, equality, and democracy are the common values that human beings in every nation aspire to realize in theory and practice. Again, as values common to all peoples, fairness, equality, and democracy should be institutionalized in international relations. Fairness, equality, and democracy have not been realized either in international relations or among the people in all countries.

I

Perhaps the issue of fairness, equality, and democracy has never been more discussed in all human history than it has been in the first decade of the twenty-first century, which UNESCO calls “the decade of peace culture,” meaning by that the desire and the goal to strive for international peaceful behavior among nations and peoples. This is because of the unfair and unequal international relations prevalent in an undemocratic world with wars instead of peaceful negotiation.

Fairness, equality, and democracy are still a sealed book to the countries of the South due to the countercultural imposition

of what are labeled “values” by the nations in the North. Pursuing unfair, unequal, and undemocratic international practices, some rich countries have been inventing and exporting a variety of unfair and unequal conditions that developing countries cannot meet. After centuries of suffering cruel and debilitating exploitation of their labor forces and resources by the rich countries, whose colonial policies produced a “civilization” marked by irreparable pollution, these fully exploited countries are only accorded the right to import “standards” and “values” from their exploiters in the interests of global integration.

Consequently, the poor countries still develop more slowly, and the gap between the rich countries and the poor ones grows bigger and bigger. The poor countries are unable to meet the Northern standards of economy, politics, and “human values” that the rich countries have so generously invented for them. Growing lists of standards and other things called values are continually imposed by the big rich countries so that the poor countries, especially those with different ideologies and social systems, will have increasing difficulty in meeting them. The so-called “free trade policy”—protected, however, by subsidies in the Northern countries—has strangled the major production industries of the Southern countries. The Southern countries receive preferential treatment only to import standards and values that sow division among their peoples, creating social instability leading to political crisis.

History is witness to the use of genocidal embargoes against individual countries that resist the imposition of such standards and values. *Such embargoes must be considered to be a form of genocide against human beings, far more serious than the use of weapons of mass destruction in war, since they are a form of imprisonment and gradual destruction forced on a whole nation.*

Poor countries are never able to threaten the security and interests of big countries. The greatest threat to the big countries is their demand for the international recognition of fairness, equality, and democracy. This demand is directed against the ignobility of the old colonialism and its reappearance in neocolonialism. Today, although the old colonialism has been abandoned, some

big countries, in the name of their version of fairness, equality, and democracy, and threats of embargo and war, are plotting to prevent nations from the realization of actual fairness, equality, democracy, and peace.

The war that the present leaders of some big countries claim to be fully justified is the imposition of the will of a strong country on a weak country. Naturally, it is contrary to the values of fairness, equality, and democracy. How can fairness, equality, and democracy exist within the context of a war of aggression?

It is essential for progressive people to prevent the crime of embargo and conspiracy to destroy other nations in the name of "civilized values."

II

Sixty years ago, in 1945, Ho Chi Minh based the Declaration of Independence of Vietnam on the universally recognized principle of human rights that "all the peoples on the earth are equal from birth, all the peoples have a right to live, to be happy and free." Ho Chi Minh spoke about human aspirations to "establish a peaceful bloc of peoples of many nations who mutually consider each other as friends and brothers, to unite and help each other, live together in harmony and friendship, and together attempt to maintain international peace."

He emphasized the criterion of "peace—a real peace." According to him, real peace "must be based on (1) fairness; (2) the democratic ideal, essentially replacing war, and (3) freedom, equality, and humanity, . . . in all countries without regard to skin color and without racial discrimination."

Thus, besides affirming the inalienable basic legal principle that is the right of all people "to enjoy life, happiness, and freedom," President Ho Chi Minh presented the principles for a new world order and his view on international behavior based on the principles of "harmony and friendship" and equality among nations in a "fair, democratic world system" that aims to build a real peace on our planet.

Following the logic here, President Ho Chi Minh pointed out that the struggle for basic national rights, for fairness, and for real

equality among nations is also a struggle for a new international peaceful world order, since “real peace cannot be separated from real independence. Therefore, he regards the struggle and support of national independence movements and the struggles for fairness, equality, and democracy in international relations as support for world peace and the establishment of a peaceful world order, since these struggles not only weaken the causes of wars and inequality among nations, but also, in the long term, contribute to building a foundation for peace among nations and world security.

Ho Chi Minh’s theoretical points also clearly indicate that democratic fairness must replace war, that every nation should participate on an equal basis in the resolution of international problems; that world peace must be determined by all the nations and not be dependent on a leading group of certain powers. Fairness, equality, and democracy ensure that each nation determines its own future on the basis of its national cultural values, and that other nations respect its chosen way of national development and do not interfere in its internal problems. Attempts by any nation to impose its so-called values on other nations are deemed to violate basic national rights unfairly and undemocratically and provoke national animosity, sowing the seeds of war. Such attempts are contrary to the concept of a fair, democratic, and peaceful world.

These theoretical points denote Ho Chi Minh’s formula:

Basic national rights
+ fair, equal, and democratic international relations
= world peace.

This is the legal basis for a new world order that can bring about a peaceful culture for humankind, the principle for nations to live together peacefully, and the foundation for determining the behavior among nations so as to establish a peaceful culture for humanity in our millennium.

A new world order marked by peaceful relations among nations based on these principles put forth by Ho Chi Minh becomes more profoundly meaningful for humankind in these early years of the new millennium. The array of global problems such as environmental destruction, poverty, disease, nuclear war, and terrorism

cannot be solved by any nation without international cooperation. As a result of vast developments in technology, the earth has grown smaller and more fragile; the scope of “war” extends well beyond the army. Ho Chi Minh’s words have taken on ever more relevance for humanity’s survival and national development.

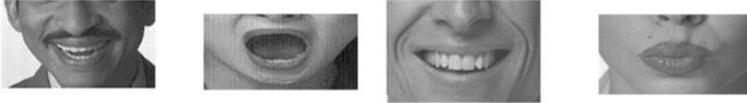
It is clear that the establishment of a new fair, equal, and democratic world order committed to peaceful policies respecting basic national rights should have the highest priority among all nations in order to deal successfully with the common problems facing the existence and development of humankind. War threatens humankind’s existence. Warlike forces and activities must be brought under control to prevent destructive war. Practical steps against warlike forces must be undertaken in order to realize the hopes of the peoples of the world for a fair, equal, democratic, peaceful world.

Therefore, Ho Chi Minh’s theoretical proposals for fair, equal, democratic, peaceful policies in international relations are guiding principles in Vietnam’s external affairs. This is viewed as a very great and everlasting contribution of President Ho Chi Minh to the peoples of the world, to world peace, humankind’s culture, and principles of international law.

Humankind must try its best to establish fair, equal, democratic policies in international relations so that the individual nations can choose their own way of peaceful development to build a fair, equal, and democratic society. This will enable humanity to direct all its efforts to saving our green planet from the destruction of modern war.

Editor, Magazine of the Party’s History
Hanoi

When talk is a science . . .



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Marketplace Multiculturalism: Packaging and Selling Vietnamese America

Karin Aguilar-San Juan

Introduction

This essay focuses on the efforts of Vietnamese-American leaders to package and sell Vietnamese-ness so that their communities can take advantage of state-sponsored discourses and practices of “marketplace multiculturalism” in order to build economic and political clout. These multicultural discourses and practices serve as conduits between global processes—including the migration and subsequent place-making of refugees as well as the normalization of United States–Vietnam relations—and the shifting sociospatial terrain of U.S. metropolitan regions as evidenced in the emergence and growth of Vietnamese-American places such as Orange County’s Little Saigon. The integral role of Chinese-Vietnamese as entrepreneurs in the Vietnamese-American ethnic economy poses some important challenges to the production and construction of Vietnamese-ness in the U.S. context.¹

Marketplace multiculturalism: Linking global to local

Multiculturalism is a heavily contested concept in the United States: for the current purposes, however, multiculturalism is best understood as a state-sponsored agenda that regulates the policies and practices associated with racial and ethnic differences as they are manifest in schools, the media, workplaces, and the corporate

boardroom. In their interdisciplinary collection of essays, Avery Gordon and Christopher Newbury remark on multiculturalism's "potential to reform racial inequalities within existing institutions" and underscore multiculturalism as one of the "baseline conditions necessary for the establishment of multicultural democracy in the United States" (1996, 77). There is not room here to identify the specific social spheres or institutions that would have to be deeply transformed so that a true multicultural democracy might actually come to life in this country. For now it is important only to note that during the past twenty years, neoconservatives have rendered the political agenda of multiculturalism nearly toothless by reducing the objective of racial justice from the civil rights era to the much more benign act of putting a few brown faces "at the table" while whites remain in charge.²

Within U.S. metropolitan regions, multiculturalism has become a hot ticket to economic growth and development, as well as a necessary feature of tourist and heritage districts often constructed around ethnic enclaves such as Chinatown. In other words, multiculturalism as it actually exists today in the United States is more of a strategy for selling culture—linking global changes to local development—than a road to political and social justice.

The consequences of this marketplace version of multiculturalism for the economic and political empowerment of racialized ethnic groups such as Vietnamese Americans are mixed. On the one hand, Vietnamese business districts such as Little Saigon in Orange County provide jobs, services, resources, and a "sense of home" to a population that is otherwise marginalized from white, middle-class society. On the other hand, the growth of these districts depends upon the reification and commodification of Vietnamese culture, which leads in turn to complex problems of authenticity and misrepresentation. While these problems are inherent in marketplace multiculturalism, they manifest in unique ways within Vietnamese-American communities and places that deserve their own telling.

Shopping in a "Communist-free zone"

Efforts to revitalize central Orange County by celebrating and supporting business growth in Little Saigon have been

boldly interlaced with a neoconservative ideological agenda.³ By meshing their community-building and place-making demands carefully and closely with the structural and ideological requirements of Westminster's city officials, Vietnamese Americans have been able to advance their own business and political projects. In a climate that racializes Vietnamese Americans but does not openly acknowledge the meaning and impact of racism and white supremacy, marketplace multiculturalism demands that Vietnamese-American leaders promote a post-Cold War culture of anti-Communism and obtain positive recognition for their role as U.S. allies during the war in Vietnam.

Marketplace multiculturalism took hold of the city of Westminster most definitively in the 1990s. In 1992, the city created a steering committee to address long-term planning. The idea of the "Bolsa Corridor Specific Plan" was to bring more tourism into Westminster by improving parking, auto and pedestrian traffic flow, and the aesthetic appearance of Little Saigon. The Specific Plan was never adopted; instead, the city's General Plan incorporates some guidelines for future commercial and residential development. The General Plan contains a simple statement with regard to development in Little Saigon: "Little Saigon is the only recognized CPA [community plan area] at this time. Westminster desires to establish a regional tourist destination commercial, social, and institutional attraction [sic] based on an Asian ethnic theme in this area." By the late 1990s, Little Saigon had become an essential part of Westminster's self-marketing lexicon. In the 1996 Business Directory of the Vietnamese Chamber of Commerce, the Westminster Redevelopment Agency occupied a two-page spread with this announcement:

Westminster: A great place to shop, live, play, or visit! With all that Orange County has to offer, visitors and residents alike will find Westminster centrally located, with a wide variety of shopping and one of Southern California's more unusual ethnic shopping districts—Little Saigon!

Mr. Le Pham, a respected elder and one of the first to set up his newspaper business in Little Saigon, shared with me an idea

that Little Saigon could become part of a big tourist triangle in southern California. The following excerpt came from my first interview with him in 1996.

Mr. Le: The most important business in Little Saigon in the future should be eating.

KASJ: Eating? You mean like Chinatown?

Mr. Le: Yeah, eating. Because the basic tourist concession is a triangle of Disneyland in Anaheim, Knott's Berry Farm, and Little Saigon.

KASJ: Huh.

Mr. Le: With, very far away, the Queen Mary in Long Beach.

KASJ: Yes. Uh-hm.

Mr. Le: Let me tell you. In the three other place, the eating was very bad. . . . I think in 5 years, or around 2000, along Bolsa will be a good place for a hundred of eating places. It's look like Waikiki.

Mr. Le's comments suggest that one of the prerogatives of marketplace multiculturalism could be to turn Little Saigon into Orange County's Asian ethnic kitchen. The notion of Bolsa Avenue converting itself into a giant wok for hungry tourists may boggle the minds of some readers, but other business leaders seem to think this dream is plausible.

At certain times, marketplace multiculturalism requires an even more pronounced political collaboration on the part of both City Hall and Vietnamese-American leaders, whether in business or community issues. Thus, in 2004, both the cities of Westminster and Garden Grove proposed and then passed resolutions that were commonly understood to establish Little Saigon as a "Communist-Free Zone."³ In fact, these resolutions suggest that Westminster and Garden Grove are really more worried about the budgetary implications of managing political conflict in Little Saigon than about preventing visits by Communists. The sheer size of the Vietnamese-American population in Westminster and

Garden Grove, and their growing economic and political clout—both have elected Vietnamese Americans onto their city councils—make it financially advisable for both cities to take seriously the cultural and political claims of the Vietnamese Americans in their midst.

The “collapse” of Harmony Bridge in 1996 illustrates the tensions among the potential uses of culture and ethnicity in Little Saigon, and the tendency of marketplace multiculturalism to exacerbate those tensions. On one side, Orange County’s premier developer, the Chinese-Vietnamese rags-to-riches entrepreneur Frank Jao, thought that building a minimall on a footbridge would be good for his business—and, therefore, good for the Vietnamese-American community. In Jao’s eyes, using Chinese architectural references would enhance the bridge’s aesthetic appeal to tourists. On the other side, Jao’s detractors saw in his scheme a hidden plot to transform Little Saigon into a Chinatown, thinly disguised under the label “Asian Village.”

Blissfully unmoved by the controversy over whether or not Jao’s project was too Chinese and therefore an illegitimate addition to Little Saigon, Westminster’s city officials simply returned to the trusty theme of the free-market economy and anti-Communism. Referring to Little Saigon as “the cultural and economic capital of the Vietnamese free world,” Westminster Mayor Charles Smith confirmed that the political-economic and the symbolic/cultural dimensions of globalization are indeed intertwined, and that the rise of Little Saigon fuels both the city’s economic growth and its neoconservative ideological agenda (*Los Angeles Times*, 3 July 1996).

Questions and implications

These brief glimpses of events in Orange County’s Little Saigon indicate that marketplace multiculturalism is wrapped up with an ideology of diversity that meshes happily with the region’s famously conservative and anti-Communist leanings. As Vietnamese-American leaders seek to build their communities and establish places that contain, anchor, and symbolize those communities, they must attend to the demands of marketplace

multiculturalism. One of the first demands is to produce and construct a version of Vietnamese-ness that can explain and justify the presence of Vietnamese in the United States and also generate and sustain commerce in the Vietnamese-American business districts. In other words, Vietnamese culture and identity must be transformed into something that is *saleable* in the United States—and preferably be tasty and digestible in a literal sense.

Consequently, at least in Orange County, Vietnamese-ness is construed to be a “theme” just like any other ethnic or cultural theme that has shaped America’s tourist and recreational spaces: the obvious example is, of course, Disneyland. The success of Little Saigon will be measured, then, in terms of the number of tourists it can attract and, equivalently, the amount of revenue it can generate not necessarily for its ethnic entrepreneurs but more importantly for the local and regional economies.

Along the way, Vietnamese culture is transformed into an object that is divorced from its true historical context; that is, to put Vietnamese-ness on par with other cultural commodities, certain key elements of the past, specifically the role of U.S. neocolonialism and imperialism in Vietnam, must be erased. Turning Vietnamese refugees into America’s “heroic allies”—and Vietnamese-American business districts into symbols of “freedom” and “democracy”—is part and parcel of marketplace multiculturalism. For that reason, recent resolutions to declare the cities of Westminster and Garden Grove to be “Communist-Free Zones” may be read as enhancing the Vietnamese aspect of those cities, because the resolutions represent the growing political clout of Vietnamese Americans in Orange County and throughout other U.S. metropolitan regions as well.

Meanwhile, the day-to-day work of running small businesses in Little Saigon is primarily left to ethnic Chinese Vietnamese whose cultural contributions to Vietnamese America have been, and will continue to be, disputed. When Frank Jao came under attack for his proposal to build Harmony Bridge, his Chinese-ness and the purportedly Chinese aspects of the architect’s blueprint—not Jao’s potential misuse of public funds—were the target. The growth of the ethnic Chinese Vietnamese economy exacerbates a

“crisis” of authenticity in Vietnamese America. This crisis is an inherent part of marketplace multiculturalism; that is, distortions of culture cannot be avoided. But in a racialized situation in which Vietnamese refugees and immigrants are lumped together with other Asian ethnic groups, and in which some Vietnamese places have to compete with much older and more established Chinatowns for recognition and resources, the centuries-old overlap of Vietnamese and Chinese culture in Vietnam presents a specific and peculiar dilemma here and now in the United States.

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NOTES

1. This essay is derived from a chapter of my forthcoming book entitled *Staying Vietnamese: Community and Place in Orange County and Boston*. In this book I compare Vietnamese-American community-building and place-making in Orange County, California, and Boston, Massachusetts. The main point of the book is that in both regions, place is a central and persistent component of Vietnamese-American community, and that place-making allows assimilated and suburbanized refugees and immigrants, as well as their U.S.-born children, to sustain certain ways of being Vietnamese in America. The book makes an intervention into the scholarly discussion of Vietnamese refugees that has ignored the theoretical impact of place on Vietnamese-American identity and community-building. In the book I also explore race and racialization (turning Vietnamese refugees into Asian Americans), and memory (commemorating the U.S. war in Vietnam from a Vietnamese refugee perspective).

2. Michael Omi and Howard Winant describe neoconservatism as a political project based on individualism, market-based opportunity, and the curtailment of excessive state intervention; and as a racial project that refuses the legitimacy of “group rights” (1994, 123–30).

3. In fact, the cities do not actually ban Communists from Little Saigon. First, they declare that they do not “condone, welcome, or sanction stops, drive-bys, or visits” by “representatives or officials from the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.” Westminster adds that they do not welcome “commercial or trade delegations” from Vietnam either. Second, they resolve to obtain ten to fourteen days prior warning from the U.S. State Department of any such travel plans on the part of Vietnamese officials. Finally, the cities resolve not to repeat the mass demonstrations of 1999 and the *unprecedented finance burdens* (my italics) they incurred. Westminster specifies that it paid \$750,000 to the Westminster Police Department and neighboring police forces because of the Hi-Tek incident in which anti-Communists went on a rampage when the owner of a video shop displayed

a Vietnamese flag and picture of Ho Chi Minh in his shop window. Garden Grove states simply that it spent “an inordinate amount of public safety funds” to maintain “peace and order in Little Saigon” at that time. Basically, the resolutions are an attempt to avoid overspending public funds on conflicts that are internal to the Vietnamese-American community.

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Globalization and Free Trade: Undermining Human Dignity

Kenneth M. Weare

In their far-reaching pastoral letter, *Economic Justice for All* (1986), the U.S. Catholic bishops offered a visionary and prophetic perspective on the global economy. They taught that “every economic decision and institution must be judged in light of whether it protects or undermines the dignity of the human person.” They argued that the dignity of the human person, realized in community with others, is the criterion against which all aspects of economic life must be measured. They stated flatly:

Every perspective on economic life that is human, moral, and Christian must be shaped by three questions: What does the economy do *for* people? What does the economy do *to* people? And how do people *participate* in it?

The cultural impact of the broader sociopolitical and economic reality confirms that these values have not been well heeded by the global market players. In direct contrast to the advance of human dignity, from the Americas to Asia and around the world, the gap between rich and poor has escalated steadily. Women and children continue to be exploited. Rainforests disappear. Fish stocks are depleted. Natural resources are ravaged. Environmental pollution abounds. And the dignity of humanity is defamed on every side by the economic flagellation of neoliberalism.

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Indeed, if allowed to dominate the global economic infrastructure, free trade agreements will threaten to make more extreme the poverty, injustice, and inequality that people suffer both in rural areas and in cities, and to subordinate nations once and for all to the interests of transnational corporations.

Critique of free trade agreements

One of the strongest criticisms of the so-called “free trade agreements” is that they have been constructed without the participation of the people who will be most affected by them. Like the North America Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), the proposed Free Trade Areas of the Americas agreement (FTAA) clearly favors corporate profits above and beyond the social needs and human rights of citizens and irrespective of a sustainable environment.

As Nobel laureate and former World Bank Vice President Joseph Stiglitz recently warned,

Economic policy is today perhaps the most important part of America’s interactions with the rest of the world. And yet the culture of international economic policy in the world’s most powerful democracy is not democratic. (*New Republic*, 17 April 2000)

The free trade agreements also transcend democratic legislation. Ostensibly, the free trade goal is “to lower tariff and non-tariff barriers to trade and investment.” Thus local laws that protect the quality of water, require just wages for employees, give preference to wood harvested in an environmentally sustainable way, or protect domestic jobs, can be judged as “state interference” and struck down as a nontariff barrier.

NAFTA’s chapter 11 section on investment specifically accords private investors and corporations the right to challenge environmental, worker safety, and health regulations. In short, “free trade” means freedom from any democratically established laws that do not maximize the profit of international corporations.

Free trade policy and practices facilitate the privatization and deregulation of energy, health care, education, and water supply.

These services will no longer be seen as necessities to which every human person has a right. Rather, they become commodities to be traded for profit. Society's poor and marginalized are often forced to go without life's necessities. Free trade agreements thus undermine the ability of governments to fulfill their responsibility to ensure basic services to all their people.

Free trade agreements like NAFTA not only cost U.S. jobs, but also fail to provide good employment opportunities in developing nations. The U.S. Department of Labor certified that by the end of 2002, a total of 525,094 workers had lost their jobs as a result of NAFTA, while other studies put the figure as high as 3,000,000. While Mexican unemployment rates may have dropped, for example, poverty has increased and minimum wages fell 25 percent. Clearly, while free trade may be good for profits, it is bad for workers. As an AFL-CIO report concluded, "Globalization has spawned a race to the bottom for workers in both developed and developing nations alike."

Free trade impacts almost all sectors of society but meets the needs of only a select few. Instead, free trade ought to balance the needs of business, communities, and democratic governance.

Trade agreements are crucial to both developed and developing nations, and must meet everyone's needs and respect everyone's human rights. Unfortunately, current trade agreements emphasize market supremacy over and above the needs of the greater community. Trade agreements are needed that seek to alleviate poverty by educating the poor, offering opportunities for living-wage jobs, and make long-term social development a top priority. Trade agreements must also protect the environment.

Alternatives to the FTAA

As noted at the outset, the U.S. Catholic bishops teach that from the perspective of social ethics, "every economic decision and institution must be judged in light of whether it protects or undermines the dignity of the human person." In short, "the dignity of the human person . . . is the criterion against which all aspects of economic life must be measured."

Today, an alternative to the FTAA does exist. It was developed by the Hemispheric Social Alliance (HSA) in response to the proposed FTAA. The HSA is a coalition of labor unions, environmentalists, family farmers, economists, scholars, and other coalitions representing more than one hundred organizations throughout North, Central, and Latin America. It was created in 1999 to facilitate information exchange and joint strategies and action towards building an alternative democratic model of development in the face of the currently proposed international trade agreements within overall economic globalization.

The Alternatives for the Americas is a document of the HSA guidelines that would make the economic integration process of hemispheric globalization more inclusive, democratic, environmentally and culturally sustainable, and equitable. Fully consistent with the advance of human dignity, the plan proposes economic development based on democratic citizen participation, local control over resources, and the reduction of economic and social inequalities. It proposes a more responsible proactive role for the state and increased regulation of the economy both nationally and internationally in the pursuit of social justice, public services, and public security.

With the economic purpose of achieving a just and sustainable development, the *Alternatives* proposal affirms that trade and investment should not become ends in themselves, but rather the instruments (means) to promote economic justice for all. The *Alternatives* delineates in detail three main guiding principles: democratic participation, the role of the state, and the reduction of inequalities.

The *Alternatives* document affirms that local communities affected by economic policies should be involved in drafting, approving, and monitoring those policies. These include creating a national development program, free trade policies, development projects, mining, biodiversity, and so forth.

The document further affirms that the sovereignty of states should be preserved by any trade agreement in order that states can exercise authority to maintain citizen well-being. Such responsibility would include the duty to ensure that social needs supersede

corporate interests, especially regarding education, housing, and health care; to control investment hazards to workers, the environment, and the national development plan; to promote just and sustainable development; to ensure that the export market not sacrifice the domestic market; to evaluate and define rules and regulations of free trade agreements within frameworks of national development plans; and to protect natural resources, including small family farms.

Finally, in order to reduce social and economic inequalities, the following alternatives are proposed: promote improved standardization of rights and laws, including the use of insecticides, emissions and transfers of pollutants, and labor standards; institute a tax on revenues from international financial transactions to endow investment in education, health, and job training; forgive foreign debt; promote aid to developing countries; compensate women and various racial and ethnic groups previously exploited; and recognize indigenous rights to land and resources.

The proposed alternatives to the FTAA also include directives on the following categories: human rights, labor, investment, agriculture, gender, environmental protection, and immigration.

- Human rights should be promoted by economic integration. These rights constitute civil, political, economic, social, cultural, and environmental rights including rights specific to women, children, and indigenous peoples.
- Labor issues should be included in trade agreements. Basic workers' rights should be guaranteed, ensuring adequate social assistance to those negatively impacted by globalization.
- Investment should be productive rather than speculative, should transfer appropriate technology, and should create high-quality employment. Governments should have the right to curtail investments that do not further development or are detrimental to human labor and environmental rights.
- Agriculture should have high priority in trade agreements. To ensure food security, nations should have

the right to protect or exclude various food stuffs. Property rights need to be respected. Small-scale farming needs special protection regarding land conservation, appropriate technology (including biotechnology), agricultural research, credit, and subsidies.

- Trade agreements should ensure that women have equal access to needed resources such as credit, technological training, and land. Likewise, laws and policies should provide assistance to promote education, technological training, and skills development for women.
- Environmental protections should be prioritized over corporate interests. Trade agreements should recognize government rights to direct investment toward environmentally sustainable activities, prohibit the privatization of natural resources, and eliminate policies that subsidize fossil-fuel energy.
- Finally, all trade negotiations should address immigration issues. Governments should grant amnesty to undocumented workers, demilitarize border zones, and support international subsidies for regions and countries that are major exporters of labor.

In conclusion, we must find that the challenge is not insurmountable. The change of priorities requires a change of heart. And a change of heart brings a change of mind.

When the world's economic leaders are converted to see all men, women, and children as brothers and sisters, then the genius of our human history and the insight of our moral wisdom will guide our transformation from an economy of the few to an economy of the many. Only then shall we have begun to build the road to an economic justice for all.

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Globalization and Socialism: The Dialectics of the Changing World Economy

David S. Pena

Marxist-Leninists understand that the globalization of capitalism has had momentous consequences for class relations, ideology, and culture, and that these changes are of enormous significance for all people who seek a progressive and peaceful world civilization based on socialism, as opposed to a barbaric world of resurgent fascism, increasing capitalist exploitation, and perpetual war. Changes brought about by economic globalization are in a state of extreme dialectical tension between their positive and negative tendencies, so it is imperative for Marxist-Leninists to gain a better understanding of how these conflicting attributes affect prospects for the advancement of socialism.

A most important observation is that economic globalization is a positive development for socialism in many respects. Globalization brings the nations of the world into peaceful contact. It promotes commercial interaction between previously isolated or hostile peoples, fosters development of the productive forces, and teaches the peoples of the world how to utilize and improve these forces. It greatly expands world trade and creates opportunities for developing countries to use their comparative advantage in attracting investment and jobs. It encourages cultural exchange and scientific cooperation, and increases workers' recognition of the interests they share with other working people throughout the world. It facilitates global economic planning and regulation, and

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advances other internationalist values and initiatives conducive to building a socialist community of nations.

Civilization develops dialectically. As long as capitalism continues to exist, it will continue to produce socialism. Instead of sweeping socialism into the dustbin of history, the changing world economy is creating the material and cultural conditions for new forms of socialism to arise. This observation agrees with Marx and Engels's view that the globalization of capitalism prepares the world for socialism. We are all familiar with the famous passage from the *Communist Manifesto* in which they observed, "The need for a constantly expanding market for its products chases the bourgeoisie over the whole surface of the globe" (1976, 487). In the same vein is Marx's 1858 letter to Engels, which asserts: "The proper task of bourgeois society is the creation of the world market and the production based on that market" (1983, 347). The founders of scientific socialism had a firm scientific basis for asserting that capitalism's creation of the world market would open many opportunities for socialist revolution. Similarly, Lenin wrote that as capitalism moves toward its transformation into socialism, it begins to exhibit "the development and growing frequency of international intercourse in every form, the breakdown of national barriers, the creation of the international unity of capital, of economic life in general, of politics, science, etc." (1972, 27). Who can deny that capitalism is fulfilling these predictions by achieving the globalization of production in addition to having developed the world market? Although history has recorded many setbacks, zigzags, and blind alleys, the present stage of capitalist development is still moving toward socialism. Despite the upheavals of the last century, socialism has survived and progressed in the twenty-first century, and it will continue to live and grow as an ideal and a practical reality until humanity crosses the threshold of communism.

The present state of class relations, ideology, and culture reflects the continuing struggle between globalization's positive and negative attributes. Regarding class relations, globalization carries the contradiction between bourgeoisie and proletariat to every part of the world in which the capitalist economy takes root.

Globalization creates a global working class composed of workers from many countries who share similar experiences of living and working under capitalism. This lays the foundation for the future unity of the global working class in the struggle against exploitation. But globalization also creates a global bourgeoisie united behind the goal of exploiting the working class and working diligently against workers' aspirations in every corner of the world. The global bourgeoisie is a formidable enemy of working people, for it is the main power behind the economic, political, cultural, and technological changes that we associate with globalization. Presently, the bourgeoisie is more class conscious, more united, and better organized than the working class. It has powerful transnational organizations at its disposal; it dominates international media; and it is backed by the military might of the major imperialist powers and their client states.

The working class by contrast is relatively weak and passive despite its great potential. Most of its members do not yet view themselves as part of a global working class. If they are at all class conscious, they think of themselves as workers belonging to particular nation-states or multinational states and as having specific class and national interests opposed to the interests of workers of other countries, nationalities, and ethnicities. The working class is not fully aware of its potential to form a global association of comrades with shared fundamental interests that transcend particular interests. Thus, with the exception of the world's remaining socialist countries, the bourgeoisie currently has the upper hand in the struggle against the working class, but it is highly probable that the further expansion of capitalist exploitation and the increasing ease of communication across national boundaries will encourage the awakening of a global working-class consciousness. But this will not result in socialist revolution unless the working class forms its own transnational revolutionary organizations capable of spreading socialist ideology and leading the fight against the bourgeoisie. Marxist-Leninists must take advantage of the dialectical contradiction in contemporary capitalism, which spreads exploitation while simultaneously making it easier for working people around the world to make contact and work

together. Clearly there is a major role to be played by Marxist-Leninist parties in this regard, but they must coalesce into a revolutionary force capable of coordinating organizational and propaganda work on a global scale and of challenging the transnational organizations of the bourgeoisie. We have every reason to believe that the dialectic of globalization will yield the necessary upsurge of working-class consciousness and internationalist cooperation, which in turn brightens prospects for the survival and advancement of socialism.

Recent ideological developments reflect the changing dynamics of the global class struggle. The collapse of Soviet and Eastern European socialism caused imperialist ideologues to enter a triumphalist phase in their thinking from which they have never emerged. Their increasingly myopic and outdated worldview holds that there is simply no alternative to the economics of Western-style free-market capitalism and the politics of bourgeois democracy, despite the fact that over one billion people are living under viable, dynamic, and growing socialist-oriented market economies managed by Communist-led governments. The great success of socialist-oriented market economies—not the phony triumph of capitalism—is the major ideological and practical development of recent times, one that belies the claim that socialism is a moribund ideology and that capitalism has achieved a final, worldwide victory.

Bourgeois ideologists want the world to believe that the move toward socialist market economies is just a smoke screen hiding the bankruptcy of Marxism-Leninism, because they believe socialism can have nothing to do with markets. They fail to acknowledge that Marxism-Leninism has always allowed a role for the market in the transition to socialism. In the *Communist Manifesto*, Marx and Engels held that in the initial stage of socialist revolution in advanced countries, land, credit, communication, and transport would be nationalized, while the state would gradually extend its control over factories and instruments of production, thus leaving room for continuing market relations at levels below the economy's commanding heights (1976, 505). Since they countenanced this for advanced countries, we can assume they

would favor lengthier periods of market relations for less developed countries making the transition to socialism. Lenin did not use the phrase “socialist-oriented market economy”; instead he spoke of “state-monopoly capitalism.” He argued that continued monopoly-capitalist market relations were necessary for building up the productive forces even after the seizure of political power by the proletariat. In his view, monopoly capitalism would move society toward socialism, provided it was carefully managed by the proletarian state. In September 1917, Lenin wrote, “state-monopoly capitalism is a complete *material* preparation for socialism, the *threshold* of socialism, a rung on the ladder of history between which and the rung called socialism *there are no intermediate rungs*” (1974a, 363). And in 1921 he argued that societies in transition to socialism should not attempt “to prohibit or put the lock on the development of capitalism, but . . . channel it into *state capitalism*” (1973, 344–45). Clearly, the Marxist-Leninist viewpoint is that a socialist-oriented market economy is a necessary preparatory stage for socialism.

Vietnam’s *doi moi* policy is an adaptation of this Marxist-Leninist teaching to Vietnamese conditions. Under *doi moi*, Vietnam has developed a socialist-oriented multisectoral economy in which the state plays the leading role in directing market-driven growth toward socialism. Perhaps the greatest achievement of *doi moi* is its combination of vigorous economic growth with political stability and a dramatic reduction of poverty: In 1993, 58 percent of Vietnamese lived in poverty compared with 28 percent in 2002 (Turner 2005, 2006).

The socialist market economy brings socialist culture and capitalist culture into direct and open conflict. Socialist-oriented market economies cannot fulfill their potential without socialist-oriented culture, because socialism requires the appropriate cultural outlook as well as a new material basis. The market gives rise to an individualist culture that encourages renunciation of collective goals, pursuit of personal comfort and material gain as ends in themselves, and the desire by some to replace socialist democracy, which is democracy for the vast majority, with bourgeois democracy, which is really an abuse of democratic rights

and an abandonment of democratic responsibilities for the benefit of a tiny minority of exploiters. To adapt one of Lenin's insights: The market economy "engenders capitalism and the bourgeoisie continuously, daily, hourly, spontaneously, and on a mass scale" (1974b, 24). A real danger exists, therefore, that socialism will be rejected in favor of individualism. Nevertheless, no one will deny that greater emphasis on the individual is needed as a spur for innovation and growth. Thus the dilemma faced by socialist countries is how to find the right mixture of socialism and the market and the right combination of individualist and collectivist cultural orientations. These must be combined in a new socialist culture that avoids the pitfalls of unbridled individualism and the unregulated market, while utilizing the beneficial aspects of markets and individualism for the realization of communist ideals. The complex relationships constituting this culture will require constant adjustment and oversight; each generation will thus have to create new forms of cultural and economic renovation so that socialism can survive and advance despite the ups and downs of history.

Adoption of the socialist market economy is proving the bourgeois ideologists wrong. Socialism is not dead; it is a living, developing form of society. The market is not inconsistent with socialism; the socialist market economy helps to create a progressive, equitable, and humane socialist society. Socialist market economies are not inferior to capitalism; in fact, they have outstripped capitalism in growth and poverty reduction. The successful combination of socialism and the market is an example of socialist resurgence, and it embodies the course that socialism is most likely to follow as it advances toward the communist future.

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6. The sustainable development view of modern Marxist political economy.
7. Review of Marxist ecological theories.
8. Relevance and contributions of Marxist philosophy of the natural sciences to the problem of scientific development.

Nietzsche and African American Thought: A Review Essay

Ishay Landa

Critical Affinities: Nietzsche and African American Thought. Edited by Jacqueline Scott and A. Todd Franklin. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2006. 265 pages, cloth \$74.50; paper \$24.95.

Nietzsche scholarship over recent decades has produced a considerable number of books and essays representing efforts by or on behalf of different “oppressed,” “minority,” or “subaltern” groups to sort out their messed histories and ponder future prospects in the light of Nietzsche’s philosophy. Thus, in spite of the fact that the German philosopher seems overwhelmingly hostile to their cause, feminists or scholars of Jewish thought have written favorably on Nietzsche, the *prima facie* misogynist and fierce critic of the Judeo-Christian tradition. With such antecedents in mind, it seems only logical now for scholars to bring together Nietzsche and African American thought. For if woman is indeed the “nigger of the world,” as John Lennon averred, why should Nietzsche, having figured heavily in recent feminist literature, not contribute to Black studies as well?

The editors of *Critical Affinities* should thus be credited for being the first to pull together a long overdue anthology dealing specifically with Nietzsche and African American thought. To be

sure, Nietzsche concerned himself explicitly only marginally with Black people, in America or elsewhere, as compared with his concentrated and enduring interest, for example, in women and in Jews and Judaism. Yet he was keenly interested in and wrote prolifically on at least two topics that bear heavily on the collective experience of African Americans: namely, race and slavery. So it is of great interest to read African American authors and theorists, slaves themselves (Frederick Douglass, who features prominently in the book) or descendants of slaves (W. E. B. Du Bois, Richard Wright, and Toni Morrison, among many others), in the light of Nietzsche and vice versa.

The book's title promises a dialectical discussion, not limited to a mere "Nietzscheanizing" of African American thought, but rather underscoring the crucial differences between the two intellectual loci it engages, indeed employing the vantage point of African American thought in vital scrutiny of Nietzsche; for the affinities, such as they may be, are also said to be critical. This dialectical purpose is also clearly stated in the editorial introduction: "these unique angles of vision not only reveal the texture and nuance of many of the virtues of Nietzsche's thought, they also expose and make vivid its many lamentable and unfortunate shortcomings" (11). Unfortunately, however, throughout the book's pages this declaration of intent remains largely unrealized. Certainly, those readers looking for the "nuanced virtues" of Nietzsche's philosophy, real or imagined, will have them in abundance. Yet those more intrigued by the potential unveiling of the "shortcomings" of Nietzsche's thought, especially those concerning the heritage of African Americans, will finish their reading almost empty handed. In fact, the essays' accumulated effect is not to "expose" such flaws and "make them vivid," but, on the contrary, to veil and apologize for them.

The basic image of Nietzsche shared by most contributors to this volume (somewhat exceptional are the essays by Daniel Conway, Cynthia Willett, and, to a lesser extent, Paul C. Taylor) is heavily informed by Walter Kaufmann. This sanguine interpretation, once hegemonic in America, has come under increasing attack by a number of important studies, none of which receives

any attention. One might only mention such scholars as Domenico Losurdo, Geoff Waite, or Malcolm Bull. György Lukács, the quintessential twentieth-century anti-Nietzschean, and Robert C. Holub, whose numerous publications on Nietzsche provide an irreverent approach to many of the clichés of Nietzsche scholarship,¹ do make a fleeting appearance in the prologue, but only to be curtly dismissed, never to reappear. This choice of critical literature reflects the general tenor of the anthology: Nietzsche is repeatedly brought into play in the guise of a free spirit battling to unshackle individual expression from institutionalized mediocrity and the unwarranted dictates of the community. To cite just a few examples: Nietzsche “frequently advocates liberation of the spirit” (51); he was “endeavoring to free humanity from the seductive enchantments of dogmatic forms of morality and reinvigorate a sense of independence” (28); or: “once enlightened by the dawn of critical consciousness, those who face social coercion and psychological debasement become cognizant of the open possibility of contesting their situation” (30).

This basic approach to Nietzsche, resurfacing in different formulations throughout of the book, eschews the criticism that the philosopher’s independent individualism was reserved to an elect minority, whose free development, moreover, presupposed the deliberate narrowing and crippling of the individualities of the vast majority. Rather than striving to eliminate mediocrity, Nietzsche considered it indispensable for the existence of the elite: “Hatred for mediocrity is unworthy of a philosopher: . . . What I fight against: that an exceptional type should make war on the rule—instead of grasping that the continued existence of the rule is the precondition for the value of the exception” (Nietzsche 1968, 476). Hence, systematic *manufacturing of mediocrity* in the laboring masses was squarely endorsed: “The dwarfing of man must for a long time count as the only goal; because a broad foundation has first to be created so that a stronger species of man can stand upon it” (475). Very far from protesting against the “psychological debasement” of those who “suffer coercion” and equipping them with the “critical consciousness” required to liberate themselves, Nietzsche contemplated means of *instilling*

psychological debasement and narrow mindedness as a value, a value *for the slave*:

I attempt an *economic* justification of virtue.—The task is to make man as useful as possible and to approximate him, as far as possible, to an infallible machine: to this end he must be equipped with the values of the machine (—he must learn to experience the states in which he works in a mechanically useful way as the supremely valuable states; hence it is necessary to spoil the other states for him as much as possible, as highly dangerous and disreputable).

The first stumbling block is the boredom, the monotony, that all mechanical activity brings with it. To learn to endure this . . . that is the invaluable task and achievement of higher schooling. . . . Such an existence perhaps requires a philosophical justification and transfiguration more than any other. (473–74)

Occasionally, to be sure, some of the authors do admit, albeit hurriedly and reluctantly, as if complying with some unpleasant duty, that Nietzsche, committed to individual enhancement though he was, was not altogether an egalitarian, that he was in fact an “elitist,” an “aristocratic radical,” and so on. They also sometimes acknowledge that his opinion of Blacks, as expressed in a few passages scattered in his writings, was rather demeaning. Yet such recognition loses its real critical value for two reasons:

a) Nietzsche’s views are alleged to stem from the general prejudices of the time, rather than from any personal bias, and hence should not be allowed to detract from the general wholesomeness of his philosophy. Lewis R. Gordon, for example, concedes that when Nietzsche speaks of Blacks “the material is not pretty,” but directly plays this aspect down: “Still, this is a charge that could be made of most thinkers in the European canon since the Middle Ages. The usefulness of their thought, beyond their particular vices, is another matter” (91). Yet the European canon is in truth far less univocal on the topic of Blacks and of slavery than such defense implies. Take the example of Herder, who is actually associated with Nietzsche on three occasions in the book, as if

both German thinkers somehow espoused similar views on race. What an unhappy comparison! Although preceding Nietzsche by a century, Herder, of all people, was a passionate defender of human dignity regardless of skin hue, and a fervent proabolitionist, commending, for example, the Quakers' "active efforts for the abolition of the shameful trade in negroes and slavery" (2002, 392).

b) In the best of the Kaufmannite tradition, even Nietzsche's most unpalatable views are made good by ingeniously spotting some loophole in his argument. Thus, Christa Davis Acampora cites the following passage from *The Genealogy of Morality*, which William A. Preston, in an essay on "Nietzsche on Blacks" (published in another book, certainly), believed clearly incriminates the philosopher as a cruel racist:

Perhaps in those days—the delicate may be comforted by this thought—pain did not hurt as much as it does now; at least that is the conclusion a doctor may arrive at who has treated Negroes (taken as representatives of prehistoric man)—for severe internal inflammations that would drive even the best constituted European to distraction—in the case of Negroes they do *not* do so. The curve of human susceptibility to pain seems in fact to take an extraordinary and almost sudden drop as soon as one has passed the upper ten thousand or ten million of the top stratum of culture; and for my own part, I have no doubt that the combined suffering of all the animals ever subjected to the knife for scientific ends is utterly negligible compared with one painful night of a single hysterical bluestocking.

Acampora, however, disagrees with Preston, and argues that to read this passage attentively and in context is to realize that it is *neither* cruel *nor* racist. In actual fact, it is to realize that Nietzsche is paying Negroes a compliment, by comparing their admirable vigor to the laughable squeamishness of the modern intellectual. In her own words:

Animals and Negroes are less *dis*-eased, not less worthy; they fare better, from a Nietzschean perspective, than the miserable bluestocking. . . . Nietzsche's characterization of

“Negroes” as primitive and exemplary of “prehistoric” man no doubt betrays a kind of ignorance and pernicious prejudice that others would use in the justification of slavery, but his discussion of suffering here is not part of an attempt to justify racially based slavery or the torture of others. (191)

Notice, in passing, the recycling of the displacement mechanism characteristic of Nietzsche-apologia that regularly tends to defend Nietzsche by finding some “others”—be they slavers, fascists, or, best of all, the ignominious sister, Elizabeth—who perniciously mistake Nietzsche’s meaning and abuse him for their own sinister purposes. Yet Preston, in my view, was right and Acampora wrong, since Nietzsche’s intent definitely *does* accommodate a justification of “racially based slavery.” What else renders the Blacks, on Nietzsche’s terms, the ideal slaves than their physical prowess and their “scientifically proven” indifference to pain? Precisely on that account they should labor under the caste of feeble blue-stockings to which, again in passing, Nietzsche, too, belonged. In Nietzsche’s own words, from *Human, All Too Human*:

My utopia.—In a better ordering of society the heavy work and exigencies of life will be apportioned to him who suffers least as a consequence of them, that is to say to the most insensible, and thus step by step up to him who is most sensitive to the most highly sublimated species of suffering and who therefore suffers even when life is alleviated to the greatest degree possible. (1996, 168–69)

So, if Blacks are indeed “the most insensible” humans, then in Nietzsche’s utopian order “the heavy work and exigencies of life” will be fittingly apportioned to them, while the squeamish whites will be relieved of such work precisely in proportion to their squeamishness. Nietzsche’s utopia and the American South at the high times of slavery might thus be seen as almost interchangeable. As for what concerns “torture,” there is ample evidence in Nietzsche’s writings that sanctions plainly enough the suffering of toilers as part of their service to Culture, and I see no reason to count on Black slaves being the exception. As Nietzsche wrote in an early, unpublished pamphlet, *The Greek State*:

We must learn to identify as a cruel-sounding truth the fact that *slavery belongs to the essence of culture*. . . . The misery of men living a life of toil has to be increased to make the production of the world of art possible for a small number of Olympian men. (1994, 178–79)

And here we are at the crux of the matter. Nietzsche was, both persistently and centrally, a philosophical-ideological *slaver*. Terms such as “elitist” or “aristocratic radical,” while not incorrect, do not tell the whole story, and may even sound vaguely enticing to some readers, evoking a playful and irreverent bohemianism (could not the revolutionary Lord Byron, for example, also be described as an “aristocratic radical”?). The point should be made as clearly as possible: Nietzsche was concerned, even obsessed, with the banal question of who in society gets to work and who gets to play, with the issue of labor arrangements, since he considered the existence of an elite relying on slave labor the *sine qua non* of his ideal civilization. Nietzsche was a *nostalgic* supporter of slavery, in the sense that he looked back with admiration to diverse slaveholding social systems, from that of the ancient Greeks, to the Indian caste system, and—not least—to American slavery, which was officially abolished shortly before his writing career began.

Notice, for example, Nietzsche’s polemical and contemptuous remarks about the pious writings of that slave emancipator, and (on top of that) woman, Harriet Beecher Stowe. He was also, however, very importantly, advancing an ambitious project of a “new slavery,” concerned less with the legal status of slaves but with their actual socioeconomic function. As he once put it, the point was to take care of the “well being” of the worker in order to ensure that “he and his descendants will continue to work for our descendants, and will be available for a longer period of time than a single individual’s life” (Nietzsche 1988, 681). Admonishing his contemporaries against the reckless expansion of education to the workers, he stated: “If one wills an end, one must also will the means to it: if one wants slaves, one is a fool if one educates them to be masters” (Nietzsche 1990, 106).

So much of Nietzsche’s philosophy is inextricably bound with this abiding campaign to keep the “slaves” (meaning modern

workers) at bay and to disparage their political movements, their aspirations, and their culture—from his negative emphasis on the reactive and life-impairing “slave morality,” to the positive emphasis on the Will to Power, which was meant to preempt the possibility and refute the desirability of a future nonhierarchical society (we have already observed Nietzsche’s notion of utopia)—that, along with the African American philosopher Alain Locke, Nietzsche heralded “critical methodologies that demystify and de-essentialize pernicious systems of value” (Franklin 1999, 27). By all means, if under such “pernicious” axiologies one is willing to include “the dignity of man and of labor,” gender equality, or the iniquity of slavery, among other ideals or social projects that Nietzsche unequivocally discarded.

The book’s general discussion is enveloped in the thin air of idealistic abstraction, a philosophical atmosphere that might have profited enormously from a confrontation with Domenico Losurdo’s comprehensive historical contextualization of Nietzsche’s thought. As Losurdo compellingly shows, in the heated debates of his time Nietzsche placed himself squarely on the side of the slaveholders—both in the strict sense in the U.S. Civil War, and slaveholders in a figurative sense—rejecting all emancipatory movements as so many ignominious slave rebellions.²

This commitment to slavery is an important side to Nietzsche’s legacy, at the very least *alongside* his celebrated contributions to psychology, epistemology, aesthetics, or the philosophy of language. And it is a side that today, in a world that manifests striking parallels to Nietzsche’s vision of a “new slavery,” should be accorded some serious scholarly attention, particularly in a book that deals with Nietzsche’s relevance to African American thought. Nietzsche’s writings present a unique reservoir within the canon of modern philosophy of ruminations on slavery and an unquenchable well of insights into the ideological, cultural, and psychological workings of this institution. This anthology is thus an exceptionally good place for a serious pondering of slavery in the modern world and its Nietzschean ideological underpinning. Regrettably, its recoil from actually upsetting the Nietzschean discourse in any significant fashion can be exemplified by the way

the famous “slave narratives” of Frederick Douglass are analyzed with a view to Nietzschean theories. Since Nietzsche philosophized so abundantly and influentially on matters pertaining to slave morality, mentality, culture, and politics, without any firsthand knowledge of these subject matters, Douglass’s writings provide a wonderful opportunity to do something that, as far as I know, has never been attempted before in Nietzsche-studies—namely, to put the philosopher’s abstract theses to the concrete test of the personal testimony of a onetime actual slave, who was also Nietzsche’s contemporary. So how do our authors go about this task? The introductory essay (presumably jointly written by the editors), quotes Douglass’s passionate denunciation of the way Christianity was abused and distorted by the Southern slavers. Douglass maintained, for example, that

between the Christianity of this land, and the Christianity of Christ, I recognize the widest possible difference—so wide, that to receive the one as good, pure, and holy, is of necessity to reject the other as bad, corrupt and wicked. . . . I love the pure, peaceable, and impartial Christianity of Christ: I therefore hate the corrupt, slaveholding, women-whipping, cradle plundering, partial and hypocritical Christianity of this land. (3)

The obvious point to be made about this passage is that the hypocritical, “slaveholding” Christianity that Douglass abhorred is precisely the Christianity that Nietzsche sanctioned, and whose demise as a hegemonic institution he lamented; whereas the “good” and “holy” Christianity that Douglass appeals to is nothing but the hypocritical slave religion against which Nietzsche thundered with indignation to match that of Douglass: *écrasez l’infâme!*³ The contrast between Douglass and Nietzsche could not possibly have been greater, corresponding as it does to the irreconcilable antithesis between the slave and the master. So here was an unsurpassable opportunity to let fly some sparks and indeed use the unique perspective of the African American in exposure of Nietzsche’s lamentable shortcomings.

Yet nothing of that happens; the whole point of citing Douglass’s accusation of Christian iniquity appears to be, on the

contrary, to suggest the parallels between such anti-Christianity and Nietzsche's! And if, in that case, such a parallel remains implicit, C. D. Acampora goes one step further: discussing Douglass's description of his fierce struggles with the tormentors who own him, she shows that he was careful, even during the bitterest moments of struggle, to delineate his goal in terms of positively achieving freedom and dignity, rather than negatively striving to punish his antagonists. Again: what better chance can present itself to provide concrete refutation of Nietzsche's insistence that the souls of slaves are poisoned by hatred and that, consumed by impotent rage, they can only envision reactive goals and develop negative morals? Yet here again, like a philosophical cat, Nietzsche manages—or, better said, is allowed—to land safely on his feet. For instead of using Douglass's testimony in critique of Nietzsche, the author ingeniously reverses the procedure. She uses Nietzsche's theories of *Ressentiment* to commend the purity of Douglass's motives, and to certify the nobility of his morality and the uprightness of his quest for personal enhancement (176–78)! In that way, a potential deconstruction of a vital piece in Nietzsche's genealogy of morality is transubstantiated into a case of “what does not kill me makes me stronger.”

An intriguing feature of the African American adoption of the Nietzschean perspective in the book is the way some discussions employ this vantage point to unfold a critique of the masses, in line with Nietzsche's enmity towards “the rabble.” If this is only implied in John Pittman's essay, which analyses the extreme violence of postabolition lynching in terms of pent-up lower-class *Ressentiment* discharged at the cost of helpless social inferiors, a full-blown mass-critique is subscribed to in Lewis R. Gordon's essay, which analyzes the linkages between the Nietzschean analysis of tragedy and African American blues. Embedded in a fascinating theory about the structural decay of African American artistic forms—jazz, blues, R & B, reggae, etc.—once these are appropriated by the entertainment industry, commercialized and cleansed of artistic and social value, Gordon advances the thesis that Black culture should not be confused with American mass culture, the latter being an essentially white phenomenon. “Whites,” it is claimed,

“do not offer innovation but mass appropriation. . . . [M]ass’ is a peculiarly white phenomenon. . . . Black productions are not mass productions, although ‘massification’ is a constant aim of those who seek their commodification” (87). This is a Nietzschean critique of the masses from below, in which the Blacks substitute for the oppressed individual, whose creativity is stifled by the complacent rabble of the white middle class. This theory strikes me as a startling echo of European, elitist condemnation of American mass culture during the first half of the twentieth century, particularly the fascist defamation, which likewise regarded modern mass culture as a degraded, soulless arena, whose inferiority was due precisely to its cultural miscegenation, as it were, the hybridization of white and Negro forms, although of course in that account it was the Black influence that was construed as the dominant and insidious factor, contaminating white purity. This was by no means a peculiarity of German Nazism: consider, for example, the famous poster by the Italian propaganda painter Gino Boccasile, in which American occupation of Italy is denigrated in the form of a Black American soldier, grinning obscenely while embracing the statue of Venus de Milo, on which a \$2 mark has been scabbled—the ultimate mass despoliation of Culture.

Gordon’s highly original version of cultural pessimism deserves a closer analysis. Here I would only suggest that he might be overanxious to delimit an exclusively African American cultural domain, all the more so as this is understood in opposition to the masses. The success of originally Black art forms cannot be reduced to a mere industrialization and commodification, much as both played their part. Much of it, in America and internationally, owes precisely to those masses that have embraced the irreverence and identified with the suffering they expressed (and continue to express). Think of the admiration of many working-class British musicians such as the Beatles for blues and R & B artists like John Lee Hooker or Chuck Berry. The result was an impetus for popular art that cannot be dismissed as “appropriation” or “decay of values.” Another example of cultural and “interracial” cross-fertilization would be the creation of the popular art form known as the tango in Argentina and Uruguay, which originated through a mix of African

American (indeed, in Gordon's sense, which includes Central and South America) Candombe rhythms, with Italian, Spanish, and German influences plus, as Daniel Barenboim argues, the musical traditions of Eastern-European Jewish immigrants. In view of such historical antecedents, nurturing a relationship of critical affinity with the masses, white or nonwhite, might prove a better strategy for African American theorists and artists to pursue, than one of proud self-seclusion. This is even more the case, one might add, if the alternative is to wager on the dubious benefits of an alliance with Nietzsche, that archenemy of all things mass, who, incidentally, was himself white and half Anglo-Saxon.⁴

This review is nearly at an end and little has been said of the book's considerable merits. So I will now add, in utmost brevity and in ascending order, some words about those pluses that make the anthology, its fundamental shortcomings notwithstanding, an ultimately very rewarding read. First, the contributions are consistently very well written, avoiding needless jargon and managing to convey complex philosophical ideas in an accessible and attractive manner. Paul C. Taylor's piece, "Ecce Negro: How to Become a Race Theorist," for example, is a stylistic gem, and other essays do not lag far behind (for lack of space, rather than merit, I did not mention the essays by Kathleen Marie Higgins and James Winchester).

Second, many essays are original and thought provoking even as they give rise to many objections, some of which I have raised here. Most stimulating for me (as well as unsettling) was the essay just mentioned by Lewis R. Gordon, which includes, among other insights, a brilliant analysis of the racial division of play and of labor in American society, which condemns Black "rest" as "laziness" and stigmatizes Black play "as a transgression of social norms" (84). This is a compelling social critique, even if the author is oblivious to Nietzsche's endorsement of precisely such a hypocritical sociocultural constellation. Finally, and most importantly, the book offers a wealth of information and insights into the corpus of African American thought—including authors and thinkers such as W. E. B. Du Bois, Alain Locke, Frantz Fanon, Ralph Ellison, Richard Wright, Asante Molefi, and Anthony Appiah. These insights, for many readers who approach the book primarily from

the angle of Nietzsche studies—as did this reviewer—are bound to prove in many ways novel and productive.

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NOTES

1. See, for example, his dismantling of the ritual scapegoating of Nietzsche's sister by the philosopher's defenders (Holub 2002, 215–34).
2. See the discussion in Losurdo 2002, especially 401–37.
3. For a substantiation of this view of Nietzsche as affirming religion qua control mechanism, subduing and pacifying the slaves/toilers, but ultimately rejecting it as a revolutionary ideology, turning against the masters, see the comments in my essay on Nietzsche and religion (Landa 2005, 467–68).
4. Gordon's Nietzschean mass-critique compares interestingly with Paul C. Taylor's approach, which seems to endorse a democratic Nietzsche who creatively engages the masses (114).

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ABSTRACTS

Victor G. Devinatz, “The Needle Trades Workers Industrial Union: The Theory and Practice of Building a Red Industrial Union during Third Period Communism, 1928–1934”—The paper demonstrates the achievements of the Needle Trades Workers Industrial Union (NTWIU) as a Trade Union Unity League affiliate. Remaining flexible in its approach to building the red industrial union and left-wing opposition movements within the American Federation of Labor (AFL) needle trades unions, the NTWIU exerted influence in promoting its program and leading strikes well above and beyond its membership size, particularly in the fur and dress sections. The union attempted to construct, if somewhat imperfectly, a democratic labor organization that promoted the interests of all workers, including young workers, women, and African Americans.

Yannis Plangesis, “The Enlightenment, Philosophy of Nature and History: The Case of Joseph Priestley (1733–1804)”—The author discusses Priestley’s views on science and history. Three issues are in focus: his materialism, his conception of science, and his interpretation of history. Priestley’s materialism is mainly formulated as a critique of mechanical materialism. In the context of his materialism, Priestley conceives science as a rational developmental process and as a means of domination over nature and society. Crucial to his project is the idea of progress and science is viewed as its main agent. His philosophy of history and his vision of happiness do not supersede the limits of bourgeois Enlightenment. Real human emancipation presupposes the revolutionary Marxist perspective.

ABREGES

Victor G. Devinatz, « Le syndicat industriel des ouvriers des métiers de l'aiguille : théorie et pratique de la formation d'un syndicat industriel rouge pendant la troisième ère du communisme, 1928–1934 » — L'auteur démontre les réussites du syndicat industriel des ouvriers des métiers de l'aiguille (NTWIU) en tant que affilié de la Ligue pour l'Unité des Syndicats (Trade Union Unity League). Tout en restant flexible dans sa méthode pour bâtir le syndicat industriel rouge et des mouvements d'opposition de gauche au sein de la Fédération Américaine des Syndicats (AFL) des métiers de l'aiguille, le NTWIU a exercé une influence bien au delà de ses membres dans la promotion de son programme et dans la conduite des grèves, en particulier dans les sections fourrure et vêtements. Bien qu'il y ait eu quelques imperfections, le syndicat a essayé de bâtir une organisation ouvrière démocratique, promouvant les intérêts de tous les ouvriers, y compris les jeunes, les femmes et les Afro-américains.

Yannis Plangesis, « L'Age des lumières, la philosophie de la nature et l'histoire : le cas de Joseph Priestly (1733-1804) » — L'auteur discute les vues de Priestley sur la science et l'histoire. Il se focalise sur trois thèmes : son matérialisme, sa conception de la science et son interprétation de l'histoire. Le matérialisme de Priestley est principalement formulé comme une critique du matérialisme mécanique. Dans le contexte de son matérialisme, Priestley considère la science comme processus rationnel de développement, et comme moyen de dominer la nature et la société. Cruciale pour son projet est l'idée du progrès, et la science est vue comme son moteur principal. Toutefois, sa philosophie de l'histoire et sa vision du bonheur ne dépassent pas les limites des Lumières bourgeoises. Une vraie émancipation de l'humanité présuppose la perspective révolutionnaire marxiste.