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YOUTH AS A CLASS

by JOHN & MARGARET ROWNTREE

These days there seems to be a remarkable discrepancy between the nature of contemporary reality and the findings of contemporary scholarship. The newspapers report violence in the ghettos, widespread disaffection among the young, low morale about the war, moral malaise and social decay. The evidence of social upheaval is undeniable. Yet the scholarship of social stagnation is still the conventional wisdom, on the left as well as the right. Although the bankruptcy of the "end of ideology" school has been amply demonstrated by recent history, scholars still discuss the "rise of the middle classes" in the "affluent society" and the "containment of social change" by the "one-dimensional society" as if the crises of advanced capitalism were not embarrassingly evident. The scholars perceived an event at the end of World War II - the much-celebrated disappearance of the proletariat and rise of the middle classes - and, instead of examining the ramifications of that event throughout the society, they asserted that the end of the working class as they had known it was synonymous with the end of classes, therefore of class conflict, therefore of politics, therefore of ideology. The best known of this analysis is liberal; but even radical scholars have tended to think that class conflict was an outdated idea in the United States. Many radicals abandoned analysis altogether; others continued to study the production process, but not in such a way that the class relations embedded in it could be unearthed. There has been on the Left a general failure of imagination that has been manifested in a failure of a method of class analysis and a reification of old categories now lacking in empirical content.

No one has yet tried to explain the recent history of the United States by examining shifts in the mode of production and class relations since about 1940. It is the thesis of this essay that these changes have caused a redefinition of classes that has temporarily obscured the class conflicts, subsuming them on the one hand under international politics and the "problem of rising nationalism", and on the other hand under the "problem of generation". Marxists in the countries struggling for national liberation have seen through the "problems of nationalism"; we propose a way to do the same for the "problem of the generations". We argue that the amelioration of the lot of the workers in the United States in the 1940's is the result of "class-shifting" inside and outside the United States. As a result of this "class-shifting", the new potentially revolutionary exploited class is no longer the workers as a whole within the United States; instead the new proletariat is 1) the masses of the backward countries; and 2) the young of the United States.

This essay will analyze youth as a class in the United States. This requires adoption of the method that we set forth in Section II. We show in Section III how the process of production has changed, forcing youth into the crucial pivotal class position within the United States. Section IV shows how the alienation of the labor of the young is class forming, and section V shows that the young are increasingly becoming culturally and politically conscious of their class exploitation. Section VI suggests what may be done as the young develop their revolutionary potential.¹

Improved analysis requires improved method. We propose a radical class analysis, radical in the sense of getting at the roots. We take the traditional view that the roots of class are economic; classes come out of the mode of production itself, as it develops dialectically in time. Radical class analysis examines

the mode of production in such a way that the class antagonisms embedded in it are revealed. This may not be a simple process; classes are most clearly revealed only in crisis. In calmer times class antagonisms may seem to be non-existent; the exploited class may have "disappeared". What can such a concept mean? If class is related to the production process, then to say that a class has disappeared must mean either 1) that the production process itself has become classless or 2) that production has changed in such a way that the old class categories have become empty sets, making necessary a fresh examination of the production process and the new class categories embodied in it. If one is to avoid the errors of the academic sociologists, class analysis must be systematic, pursuing the problem at four levels, from the structural to the political.

1) At the most abstract level, the system must be considered as a whole to see if it contains inherent antagonistic contradictions that are essential to its definition. This macronic analysis is structural, not empirical; it specifies intrinsic conflicts without reference to their empirical expression. At this level, in other words, capitalism is a conflict-ridden system whether or not any conflict becomes visible in any given period; antagonistic classes define the production, political, and ideological roles of those living under capitalism.

2) The second level is micronomic and empirical. Class categories may exist at the system level, but may be empty in a given historical moment or may be filling obscurely, to be empirically observable only at a later time.

3) Class categories may exist both analytically and empirically, yet class members may be unconscious or only partially conscious. Explaining the development of class consciousness calls for a third level of analysis, involving individual and group psychology and sociology.

4) Finally, a specific historical class situation may vary in terms of class power and its expression, from great power freely exercised to feeble stagnation. This demands another level of analysis, the study of revolutionary politics.

To be systematic, class analysis must address these levels in order. Thus the "disappearance" of a class, such as the traditional working class in advanced capitalist countries, must be explored four ways. 1) The class may have ceased to exist macronically, via a revolution in the productive process. 2) The old class category may appear empty, yet a fresh analysis of the production process will yield a new placeholder corresponding to the apparently vanished class.

3) The ostensibly vanished class may have lost its class consciousness (or never had it), or a newly formed class may not have yet developed its consciousness of itself, so that a naive analysis concludes that a class does not exist because it is not self-perceived. 4) The political expression of the class may be feeble; it may lack revolutionary means to overcome its exploitation. The naive analyst, confusing class forms with their expression, may equate political weakness with nonexistence.

Most bourgeois analysts deny class on all four levels of analysis, coming up with different versions of the end of politics, end of ideology, end of revolution argument.² They argue that the society itself has become classless because the stereotypical working class has disappeared. They imply that the production process has become classless without socialist transformation and therefore deny the relevance of class analysis. Their assertion that a peaceful transition from

a primitive capitalism to capitalist utopia has taken place explains to them the lack of a militant working class ideology. Or, if they do not deny class outright, they deny it at the economic level and admit it only at the social and political level. Their argument then goes that while political conflicts remain, they have been separated by collective bargaining from economic conflicts, so that revolutionary political change can no longer be expected to grow out of economic conflicts.

These analyses, partial as they are, do contain insights into changes that have taken place in the productive process of advanced capitalism. But these analysts have reified the placeholder in an old class category--the factory worker in the category of the proletariat--and, upon finding him gone or sold out, have concluded that the class itself has vanished.

This reification is necessary ideologically to anti-Marxist sociologists, so they have perhaps been particularly energetic in the pursuit of classlessness. Unfortunately, however, Marxists have also fallen victim to many of these same tendencies. The apparent complacency of the American working class has puzzled and discouraged them, leading them to abandon dialectics in whole or in part. No Marxist has gone so far as to deny the relevance of the mode of production altogether; but many have failed to find the social relations to which it has given rise. As a result they have fallen into despair or a blind faith, have become *de facto* bourgeois reformers, or have abandoned the home front, seeing hope only in the national liberation struggles of the Third World.

Herbert Marcuse in *One-Dimensional Man* borders on despair. He is so dazzled by the apparent power of the technological apparatus of advanced capitalism that, at times, he seems to abandon dialectics altogether. Rather than explore the contradictions of the system, he concludes with a despairing note that one-dimensional society may contain its contradictions. He nourishes hope only in a revolt of the morally alienated, an internal revolt lacking a class base. His analysis of "containment of social change" differs from that of the bourgeois sociologists only because they view the present as a dream come true while Marcuse thinks that it is a nightmare.³

Many on the Left have refused to despair, but have also refused to make a new analysis of the mode of production in the United States. They are left with nothing but a blind faith that, even though the working class does not seem to be revolutionary, its essential spirit will win through and that workers will somehow, somewhere rise up some time. This is wishful thinking, not reasoning.

Others have looked for revolutionary substitutes for the quiescent working class, but have forgotten that classes arise out of production. These have confused production and consumption categories and have placed their hopes in the urban and rural poor, welfare recipients and other strata of the *lumpenproletariat*, who are identified not by their role in production but by their low level of consumption, which is fundamentally irrelevant to their revolutionary potential. These analysts have confused misery (which is merely sad) with Marxian immiseration (which holds dialectical promise), and have become inadvertent bourgeois radicals, working in civil rights and new left community organizations under the illusion that they are promoting new class formations.

A fourth group has begun radical Marxist analysis of the international scene but has not applied it to the advanced capitalist countries. Paul Baran and Paul Sweezy in *Monopoly Capital* have presented one of the best updated descriptions of the mode of production in the United States. However, they do not approach the problem from the point of view of ferreting out new class formations. Thus, although still revolutionaries, their tendency has been to think that perhaps domestic change in the United States is almost impossible, and that only as a result of the liberation of the peoples of the backward countries can capitalism in the United States be brought down.⁴

There is a consensus, then, among class analysts, left, right and academic, that economic definitions of class do not apply to the contemporary United States and that antagonist class formations with revolutionary potential no longer exist. We disagree and argue that all these analysts, by reifying the "working class", fail to comprehend the dynamics of economic and social change in the United States, following the four steps we have outlined. The first level of analysis leads us to believe that intrinsic antagonistic contradictions do exist in the United States today. We do not attempt to prove this proposition, as it involves a justification of Marxian methodology itself and thus takes us far beyond the scope of the essay. Section III of this essay is an analysis on the second level; given a class society, we seek the essential exploited class created by the production process. Section IV is the third level of analysis of the specific sociological and psychological determinants of consciousness in the exploited class. Section V is the fourth level of analysis of the cultural and political expressions of class consciousness by the exploited and potentially revolutionary class.

Changes in the Mode of Production and the Nature of the Exploitation of Youth

The argument that youth has become a class must rest on a demonstration that the mode of production has undergone changes that have altered the use of manpower in radical ways. The changes have been going on apace since 1940. The United States has moved away from the *simple* capitalistic mode of production, where the means of production are owned by capitalists and employed by them for their own profits. But it has not moved to a socialist mode of production, where the means of production are administered by a people's government on behalf of the whole society. Instead the United States is in a transitional form where the means of production are becoming, increasingly, government property, but still within the capitalist framework. The purpose of this government ownership is not to promote the social welfare, but to protect the capitalist mode of production from its own internal contradictions. This has been accomplished at home by large scale "socialization" of labor and implementation of the welfare state and abroad by the military protection of imperialism. Perhaps this mode of production can be called *administrative imperialism*, a special case of advanced capitalism. The U.S. economy has been characterized in many ways, from state capitalism to fascism; however, we feel that the term administrative imperialism appropriately characterizes the metropolis of imperialism as it becomes increasingly an administrative center, moving away from the production of commodities and toward the production of war and technology in the service of imperialism. The most dramatic actions of the administrative imperialist state are of course its overseas imperialist adventures; part of the system's formula for success is to keep the home front as tranquil as possible. Our attention here is on the domestic realities under the facade as we think that the potential for internally generated revolutionary struggle should be reassessed. The development of administrative

imperialism can be seen most clearly in the adaption of two traditionally public sectors of the economy--defense and education--to the service of monopoly capital. It is our thesis that these two industries embody the most acute and potentially explosive contradictions of this variant of the capitalist mode of production (as, for instance, heavy industry embodied the most explosive contradictions in the 1930's).

The class consequences of these contradictions become clear in the establishment of the following three propositions:

- 1) The American economy is increasingly dominated by two industries that are large, public and rapidly growing--defense and education.
- 2) The defense and education industries serve crucially as successful absorbers of surplus manpower, particularly young manpower.
- 3) Economic exploitation in the United States is increasingly specifically directed at the young; although the data is scanty and its meaning often obscured by the way it is collected and classified, something like classical economic immiseration has been imposed upon the young.

We shall consider these propositions in order, first examining recent changes in the structure of the U.S. economy, then going on to explore the effects of these changes on the use of manpower.

Changes in the U.S. economy in the last 25 years have been much discussed, with emphasis on the growth of the public sector as a whole. Total public expenditure as a percentage of GNP, still less than 10% in 1929, was 18.4% in 1940, 21.5% in 1950, and almost 26% in 1965.⁵ Government civilian employment at all levels (federal, state, and local) has risen dramatically since 1940, when about 4.5 million employees represented about 8% of the civilian labor force; in 1965, the 10.6 million civilian government employees represented about 14% of the civilian labor force. But this summary obscures as much as it discloses. For the growth represented by these figures is the result of the growth, not of government in general, but of two public industries--defense and education--whose share of public expenditures, GNP and employment is so large and growing so rapidly that these two industries have come to dominate the American economy.

The defense industry is more familiar than the education industry, so we shall consider it first. Defense-related expenditures as a percentage of GNP have risen steadily, from 2.5% in 1940 to 10.0% in 1950, standing at 10.6% in 1965. More importantly, however, defense uses a large and growing percentage of the labor force. Military personnel were 8% of the labor force in 1940. The tremendous increases of World War II were rapidly reduced at the war's end; however, the armed forces grew again during the Korean War. This time demobilization was very slow and gradual, and the armed forces never fell below 2.5 million men and amounted to 3.4% of the labor force in 1960. Today the figure is closer to 4%. To the large number of military personnel we must add civilian employees of the Department of Defense, about 1 million in the 1960's, and the employment in private industry resulting *directly* from defense and atomic energy (excluding space) programs' purchases of goods and services, about 3.1 million in 1962. Thus total employment *directly* related to the defense industry was estimated by the Department of Labor to be 7 million jobs in 1962; 1 in 10 employed workers in 1962 were directly employed by the defense industry⁶. The *total* employment

effect would of course be significantly larger if we took indirect effects into account, especially of the trade and service industries that depend for their survival on the direct 10%.

To think of education as an industry may require some adjustment for nostalgic humanists. But economists and educators are less delicate. In their 1967 *Annual Report*, the Council of Economic Advisers is quite clear:

Outlays for education have been rising by 10 and one-half % a year for the last decade, making it *one of the major U.S. growth industries*. Direct costs for formal schooling in the current school year (1966-67) will total \$49 billion..., nearly 6 and one-half % of GNP.⁷

In the same decade in which education outlays have grown 10 and one-half % a year, total economic growth has been less than 4% a year. The dimensions of the knowledge industry are characterized by Clark Kerr, ex-president of the University of California:

The university has become a prime instrument of national purpose. This is new. This is the essence of the transformation now engulfing our universities.

Basic to this transformation is the growth of the "knowledge industry", which is coming to permeate government and business and to draw into it more and more people raised to higher and higher levels of skill. The production, distribution and consumption of "knowledge" in all its forms is said to account for 29 percent of gross national product, according to Fritz Machlup's calculations (in *Production and Distribution of Knowledge in the United States*); and "knowledge production" is growing at about twice the rate of the rest of the economy.

This rapid rate of knowledge production has, of course, a significant direct employment effect, even if we take a narrow definition of the industry. Public (state and local) educational employment in 1965 accounted for about 5.5% of all civilian employment in the United States. Even more impressive is the *growth* of employment. In the 15 years from 1950 to 1965, total employment in the U.S. increased by about 21%; public educational employment, however, grew by 130%; the increase in public educational employment over the 15 years alone accounted for about *one out of every six new jobs created* in the U.S. economy.

We have established that the defense and education industries are large and rapidly growing. But their dominant role in the American economy rests not only on their size and their dynamism, but also on their interrelation. They draw on the same population groups for their manpower; further, they are intricately linked through research projects. Their first tie is formed by the young men whose choices are limited to school on one side and the armed forces on the other. We shall discuss this tie below; here we shall note that today about 50% of the young men between the ages of 18 and 25 in the United States are either in school or in the armed forces. Second, university graduates find employment in the defense industries. Seymour Melman says that "by 1963, two out of three research scientists and engineers were working directly or indirectly for the space or defense agencies of the Federal Government". Even more significantly, however, government--and the defense industry in particular--are paying the largest part, of university research bills. Melman notes that three-fourths of the expenditures

for research and development in 1964--\$15 billion out of \$20 billion--were Federal Government expenditures. "The figures indicates that without formal planning Research and Development have been undergoing a process of nationalization"⁹. Even more dramatic is Clark Kerr's evidence on the extent of federal support for university research. Higher education received \$1 billion from the U.S. Government for research in 1960. "The \$1 billion...accounted for 75% of all university expenditures on research and 15% of total university budgets". He notes that 40% of this \$1 billion was for research supported by the defense-atomic energy industries. Further, "These figures do not include funds for university-operated government research centers"¹⁰. The impact of defense on university research is thus seriously understated.

Our first proposition, then, argues that in the last 25 years the character of the American economy has changed from a largely goods-producing private economy to a government-supported economy producing war and knowledge. The defense and education industries, *narrowly defined*, now account for more than one-sixth of actual GNP. Further, these industries have become increasingly interrelated, and should be viewed as a single industrial complex. However, our second proposition goes farther than this. We argue that the true importance of the defense-education complex is greatly understated by the figures above, and that this complex is crucial because of its *capacity to absorb surplus manpower*--in particular, young manpower.

Let us go back to our first figures on the growth of the government sector. Between 1950 and 1955 total civilian government employment rose from 6.4 million to 10.6 million, i.e., from 10% to 14% of the total civilian labor force. Correspondingly, the percentage of national income originating in the total public sector rose from 9.8% in 1950 to 13.5% in 1965. As we saw above, these figures obscure the importance of the defense and education industries. Further, however, and more importantly, they obscure the importance of the defense-education complex as an *absorber of potential surplus-producing manpower*. To assess this function, we need to transform the data by looking at the way these industries utilize the potentially productive adult population. Then if we look at the increase in civilian government employment from 1950 to 1965, we see that it grew from 5.8% to 7.8% of the population age 14 and over. This appears to be a relatively small increase in government use of manpower. However, if the armed forces and student population 14 and over are added to the total civilian government employment, then the employment totals are: 1950, 16.7 million; and 1965, 31.9 million. This better estimate of employment in the socialized sector (although still narrowly defined) then shows an increase, as a percentage of the total adult population (14 years and over) from 15.1% to 23.5%¹¹. Thus while total civilian government employment as a percentage of adult population increased by only 2%, total adult employment in the socialized sector (civilian and military government employment plus students) as a percentage of adult population rose by 8.4%.

This "socialization" took place primarily among the young; in 1965 almost three-quarters of the armed forces were under 30 and 56% were under 25; in the figures used for the calculations above, all the students were under 35, and about 95% were between the ages of 14 and 24. This shows that even though the data generally used illustrate that the defense and education industries are growing faster than other sectors of the economy, as a percentage of GNP, the actual potential surplus absorption capacity of these two industries has been far greater than the ordinary data show. In 1965, the percentage of the adult population occupied in the military or inschools was 6.4% greater than in 1950 (8.4% - 2.0%). To return to

the 1950 enrollment-enlistment *proportions* (15.1% of the adult population) -- that is, to let the additional youths out of school and out of the armed forces (leaving the officers and teachers at their jobs)-- would put 8.7 million young workers into the ranks of the unemployed, increasing the 1965 unemployment figures 3.5 *times*. Defense and education have absorbed not only huge numbers of young people, but a rapidly increasing *proportion* of the potentially productive population.

Could these 8.7 million young people be employed some other way? Is the defense-education complex the *necessary* method of surplus absorption in the administrative imperialist state? While we cannot prove in a positive sense that there is no solution to this problem within the capitalist framework, we can show the historical failure of U.S. capitalism to offer another solution. Recent history should cause even the most stout-hearted Keynesian to doubt the private sector's capacity to generate new employment. In the 1960's, with the famous tax cuts, the war on poverty, and the war in Vietnam, the employed civilian labor force increased by 5,498,000 between 1960 and 1965. Yet in the same period adult population in schools increased 5,123,000 and in the armed forces, 208,000 so that adult population *not* in the civilian labor force grew almost as much as did civilian employment (5,498,000 vs. 5,331,000)¹².

The education industry, with its huge capacity to absorb manpower by enrolling it in school, faces the dilemmas of today's advanced capitalism: first, it magnifies and intensifies the system's contradictions; and, second, it focusses them specifically on the young, as goods-producing industries focus capitalist contradictions on the worker. Education is a form of socialized investment admirably suited to take up the slack left by a failing private sector: 1) it reduces the labor supply; and 2) it absorbs vast quantities of resources. However, investment in education results in a technological change in the nature of the human capital stock; the educated labor force is much more productive. This requires ever-increasing surplus absorption by the government, which means extending the years of schooling still further. This in turn implies that to the extent that students are exploited, exploitation in general will increase. A vicious circle is set up: to the extent that education "saves" capitalism in one period, the salvage operation must be even more heroic in the next.

Our conclusions, then, differ from those of Baran and Sweezy in their study of the U.S. economy:

"Increased non-defense purchases of goods and services have thus made almost no contribution to the solution of the surplus absorption problem."

This statement misses the tremendously important role of government as the absorber of potential surplus *manpower*¹³.

Students are particularly important as surplus absorbers, since what the economists have started calling "investment in human capital", i.e., abstention from remunerative employment during an increasingly long enrollment in school, can also be seen as coerced absorption of the surplus by students. Students absorb surplus in two ways: first, they absorb already-produced surplus; second, they refrain from producing still more surplus that would need to be absorbed. Surplus absorption in direct costs of education was almost \$49 billion in 1966-67, 6½% of GNP. Further, students in effect *absorb* the surplus they refrain from

producing. A. H. Halsey, in a comparative study of youth employment in the U.S. and other countries, points out that the vocational training that was once performed by industry (and still is, outside the United States) is now performed by schools¹⁴. This has a double advantage for the system: 1) it reduces costs to the debilitated private sector; and 2) further, it reduces the product as well. On the job training and apprenticeship programs yield a material product that has to be sold; academic training is not so encumbered. The Council of Economic Advisers, in its estimate of earnings foregone by students, sets a price tag on this unproduced product of \$20 to \$30 billion. This estimate must be considered the barest minimum, since it assumes "75 to 85 percent of students 16 years and over could find employment at from \$1000 to \$4500 per annum"¹⁵. In other words, even if 14 and 15 year olds are ignored, if an unemployment rate of 15 to 25 percent is assumed, and if an income ceiling of \$4500 is fixed, then foregone student earnings would still have increased GNP by another 3½%. Thus, although education (in direct costs) only absorbs 6½% of *actual* GNP, about 10% of *potential* GNP is absorbed by schooling if the surplus absorbed by students in foregone earnings is taken into account¹⁶.

The armed forces are another obvious unproductive absorption of the surplus. Not only could the "fighting man" have been producing socially useful product, but since the U. S. military force is conscripted, U. S. military personnel are underpaid. Therefore all dollar calculations of surplus absorption by defense activities are underestimates to the extent that adjustments are not made for the potential surplus absorbed by underpaid military personnel.

Not only do soldiers and students absorb surplus; their labor is unproductive. According to Baran's definition:

Most generally speaking, it [unproductive labor] consists of all labor resulting in the output of goods and services the demand for which is attributable to the specific conditions and relationships of the capitalist system, and which would be absent in a rationally ordered society¹⁷.

The labor of soldiers seeking to suppress national liberation struggles is obviously unproductive by this definition. Baran does not include students in his list of unproductive workers; however, student labor is largely directed to training for employment that is directly dependent on the perpetuation of administrative imperialism: students work at business law, journalism, political science for the State Department, economics for the monopolies, chemistry for germ warfare research, physics for the Atomic Energy Commission. So, even though student enrollment might rise even higher in a rational society, the content of education would change fundamentally.¹⁸

The growth of the defense and education industries are the crucial modifications in the organization of the U.S. economy that have led to the formation of youth as a class. It is "know-how" and force that keep the capitalist system together; and the exploited workers in these two critical industries are, overwhelmingly, young. Let us consider the exploitation of the young as soldiers, as students, and as unemployed workers. We shall discuss alienation in the next section; our concern here is only with economic exploitation, i.e., immiseration. In analyzing the economic immiseration of the young, we get very little help from the standard statistics on income distribution for

families and unrelated individuals. First, these data only provide information on changes in the status of income earners; as increasing numbers of young adults drop out of the labor force, go to school and live with relatives, their impoverishment is submerged in the family data. The other major shortcoming of this data is that it excludes single members of the armed forces living on the base. Thus, our analysis of the immiseration of the young must go beyond the statistics on size distribution of income to data that, while less systematic, are more revealing.

Consider the soldier. We noted above that 56% of the members of the armed forces were under 25 years old and almost three-quarters are under 30 years old; younger soldiers are the least well paid. Between 1955 and 1965, basic pay of enlisted personnel in the armed services increased from \$1792 to \$2094, 16.9%. Total per capita personal income went up in the same period from \$2027 to \$2507, 23.7%. In other words, during a decade in which the size of the armed forces never fell below 2.5 million men, young men in the service experienced objective immiseration relative to other occupational groups. However, this might be only a short-run trend; more to the point is the difference in wages between civilian and military government employees. In 1965, civilian government employees received an average wage of \$6689, while military personnel on active duty averaged \$4773. By this crude calculation, the average military wage is \$1916 lower than the average civilian government employee wage; the typical military government employee received only 71% as much as his civilian counterpart in 1965. This is economic exploitation. It is a low estimate of the exploitation of the young, military person, since it is an average figure and the draftee is obviously more more exploited than the volunteer officer.

Another way to evaluate exploitation in the armed forces is to see how much it would cost to recruit volunteers. Milton Friedman, 1967 president of the American Economic Association, in advocating a volunteer army, has pointed out:

Conscription is a tax in kind--forced labor exacted from the men who serve involuntarily. The amount of the tax is the difference between the sum for which they would voluntarily serve and the sum we now pay them...

He also notes:

Estimates of how much military pay would have to go up vary from \$4 to \$ 20 billion a year¹⁹.

This increase would all be for the pay of enlisted men, as officers are already recruited according to market principles. The increase per enlisted man on active duty--i.e., the exploitation per enlisted man in 1965--is thus estimated to range from \$1723 per year per man to \$8615 per year per man. While this latter figure looks high, it should be remembered that soldiers are in a high-risk occupation.

Consider the student. Although being a student is called investing in one's own human capital, and although much is made of the high returns on the educational investment, no one stops to consider whether this investment is voluntary in any meaningful sense, or whether it is coerced²⁰. No positive

"proof" can be offered that students are coerced; we can show, however, that they are exploited. Since school is a fulltime but unpaid job, most students work part-time or not at all, living on loans or family charity. Professor Theodore Schultz estimates that 55% of the costs of a college and 43% of the costs of a high school education are foregone income. The Council of Economic Advisers' indicator of absorbed surplus, can also be seen as an index of exploitation. This estimate implies that, for all students 16 and over, foregone earnings amount to about 40 to 60% of their "investment in human capital". This is roughly \$2000 per student 16 and over. These estimates are themselves exploitive, since they assume high unemployment and low wages. Yet students, like soldiers, lack real choice: they must stay in school (and be exploited), face the draft (and be exploited) or face exploitively high unemployment rates and or low wages.

In spite of the massive diversions of young people from the labor force into school and the military forces, unemployment rates among the young remain much higher than among older workers. For instance, in 1965, 14 to 24 year olds were about 20% of the civilian labor force, but 44% of the total unemployed. Thus, while the unemployment rate for those 25 and over was only about 3.2%, the rate for those 14 to 24 was fully three times higher, approximately 9.6%. For the young who do not "choose" to continue their schooling, however, unemployment rates are even worse, almost twice as high for high school dropouts in 1963 as for graduates (28% for 16 to 21 year old male dropouts, 15% for 16 to 21 year old male graduates). Yet a survey of dropouts in 1963 showed that almost 40% of the young men said they left school because they wanted or needed to go to work²¹.

When high unemployment rates fail to encourage the young to continue in school or accept military service, manpower policy makers are faced with even higher rates of unemployment. They have tackled these from two directions. On the one hand, they have looked for new ways to utilize young manpower; on the other, for new ways to ignore it. Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara's proposal for a truly universal national service should be viewed as an attempt of the first type. Postponing entry into the labor force for two years for all young people would certainly deflate the unemployment statistics. Another, far simpler device was inaugurated in 1967 by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, who simply dropped 14 and 15 years olds from the labor force. Although their labor participation rate was low (about 20%), since most of them are in school, they still constitute about 1½% of the labor force. It seems likely that their high unemployment rate--13% in 1965--was a more significant determinant of the decision to drop them than was their low labor participation rate.

In summary, it is clear that the young, while they might not prefer to join the military or go to school and live at a low standard of living, have limited alternatives when they face unemployment rates three times those of the labor force 25 and over.

The combination of conscription for military service, forced self-absorption of the surplus through investment in one's own human capital, and unemployment, has significantly changed the pattern of labor for young people. In 1950 only about 22.8% of all men between the ages of 20 and 24 years were either in the armed forces or in school; in 1965 the percentage was 40%; thus, two out of every five young men between the ages of 20 and 24, ages at which the

responsibilities of manhood have traditionally been well advanced, are either in the army or in school²². If we add to this the unemployed, then in 1965, 44.5% of all 20 to 24 years old men were in school, the military, or unemployed. For men 18 to 24 years old, the data are more impressive; of these, 52.1% or more than half were in school, the military, or unemployed. For older male youths 25 to 29, more than one-fifth were still in school, in the military, or unemployed in 1965. The figures for young women follow the same pattern: in 1950, 24.3% of women aged 18 and 19 were in school, and 4.5% of women aged 20 to 24 were in school; by 1965, the figures had increased to 37.7% and 11.8%, respectively.

What are our conclusions? Increasingly, young people are laboring in the two dynamic "socialized" sectors of the administrative imperialist system. If they venture outside army or school they are rewarded with unemployment rates two to five times the average. The young therefore form the new proletariat, are undergoing impoverishment, and can become the new revolutionary class. This new class is not a *lumpenproletariat*, like pensioners, welfare recipients, and the disabled. Instead they are in the classic proletarian position, growing worse off within an industry that is itself the engine of prosperity in the economy. They may not be the poorest group; nor are they, by any means, the only exploited group. But one's revolutionary potential, it must be remembered, is determined not by one's misery, but by one's role in production. And this revolutionary role, traditionally that of the industrial working class, has fallen to the youth. We have seen class shifting! The much-discussed "sell-out" of the traditional U. S. working class, viewed from this perspective can be seen as nothing but a successful gambit to buy time for capitalism. Confronted with a class-conscious labor movement in the 1930's, the state, acting as the agent of the ruling economic powers, moved to ease the pressure. By the end of the Second World War, the proletariat had "disappeared" because production had shifted from manufacturing to the administration of world imperialism, and a shift had taken place in class exploitation in the United States from the working class as a whole to the youth. Both bourgeois and Marxist analysts mistook the tranquillity during the shifting process for the end of revolution. This kind of confusion permeates the study of the history of the United States, where racial and ethnic divisions have long been employed to shift exploitation from one group when it becomes vocal and well-organized to another, less tightly knit or socially acceptable group. The domestic tranquillity thus achieved is always proclaimed to be permanent and natural. By giving in to the industrial working class, the U. S. system appeared to be saved once again; the class shift followed upon an underlying shift in the mode of production itself, and the class relations central to the (now modified) system became more rather than less exploitive, therefore potentially still more unstable.

The essential exploited class for the perpetuation of the existing economic system is thus now the young. The youth occupy the critical workplaces: they man the war machine and the idea factories. They absorb by their own sacrifice the surplus of which the irrational economic system cannot dispose. But, one may ask, how long can this process continue? How long can young people be kept out of the labor force? How large can the army and the graduate schools become? It is our thesis that the exploitation of the young is reaching its outer limits, and that, for the stability of the administrative imperialist system, it has already gone too far. As happens when a class is exploited, young people are beginning to become aware of their exploitation. Many have taken the essential first step to consciousness, the rejection of the present system, and are available to develop a consciousness of themselves as a class. A significant

number have gone even farther and are coming to see a relation between what is wrong with their position in American society and what is wrong with that society as a whole. In the next section we shall discuss the nature and dimensions of the alienation of the labor of the young in their critical workplaces and see how this alienation fosters class-consciousness is being express in the cultural and political forms of youth themselves.

If the young have become a class as soldiers and students, then, like all the exploited classes, they are subjected to alienation of their labor. Not only, however, is the young worker's product taken from him, but the dilemmas of monopoly capitalism makes his work increasingly unproductive and therefore subjectively repugnant. Yet the labor of youth is so essential to the perpetuation of the administrative imperialist system that rejecting this alienated labor meets strenuous attempts at repression, which fosters still greater group identity. In addition, the young are alienated not only from their labor, but also from their own potential. By denying that young people are adults for longer and longer periods after biological maturity is reached, the system denies young people the "traditional" integrated personalities of manhood or womanhood. Alienated labor and the alienation of one's own future lead to the many subjective expressions of discontent that psychologists and sociologists discuss as the "problems of youth". Although some of these analysts offer valuable insights, they do not see that the young are wretched for *systemic* rather moral-aesthetic reasons.

But how can we talk about the oppression of youth in the Great Society where so much is promised? Young people do grow up, after all. Would not a little patience on the part of the young, a little attention to their studies and their patriotic obligations, guarantee them the benefits of the two-car, three-garage Great Society of Tomorrow? Our answer is no. Although the young may grow older, youth *as a class* cannot be satisfied with a promise of benefits of monopoly capitalism tomorrow when they are exploited by monopoly capitalism today. "Youth" comprises a constantly increasing number of years; in the interim, youth are promised prosperity only to be unemployed, underemployed or unproductively employed; they are promised security only to be denied even the dignity of having their maturity recognized.

Let us look first at the objective alienation of youth, the appropriation of the product of their labor for the ends of others. Marx views man's capacity for labor as his distinguishingly human characteristic and the appropriation of human labor in the capitalist production process as the essence of its dehumanization. By taking man's product the relation of the worker to his world is irremediably deformed by the inhuman quality of his work situation. In advanced capitalist society, not only is the worker's product alienated from him, but increasingly the labor itself does not even produce a meaningful product to be taken away. Baran and Sweezy make clear that unproductive work is an important way of absorbing the surplus that threatens to suffocate advanced capitalist society. And the young not only are subjected to classic alienation of their labor but also are almost wholly employed in unproductive work. If the soldier does his work badly, he bears the double burden of alienation and poor craftsmanship. But if he does his work well, his double burden is alienation and collaboration with the morally reprehensible regime that is exploiting him. His labor is coerced (either through literal conscription or through the denial of significant alternatives). However, the authorities are eager to prevent the soldier from becoming conscious of his alienation. Soldiers develop certain

skills, such as killing, that governors are reluctant to see them use for personal ends. This is why citizen armies are preferred. It is hoped that thorough patriotic indoctrination can cause them to refrain from using their newly learned skills for ends contrary to the governors. Rulers do not count on positive incentives alone; they punish dissent swiftly and severely, as it is imperative to prevent cracks in the monolith of loyalty. Obviously the army does not face the immediate prospect of successful internal rebellion. Nonetheless, the patriotic ideology of the armed forces is essentially fragile. Morale could be threatened by the mildest deviance, by the perception of their alienation by even a few of the young men in the army.

It is easier to see the unpleasantness of the soldier's position than that of the student's. Yet studying has lost any trace of the self-propelled activity that it may once have been and has become a *form of labor*; the student's problem is the same as the soldier's--alienation. His mental labor power, which is very productive in his young years, is taken from him as objectively as the muscular labor power of the soldier is taken from him. The ideological mystification of student alienation equivalent to loyalty for a soldier is the notion that the student is investing in himself. Yet if he asks himself why he is in school, the student must honestly respond with answers that have little or nothing to do with his personal development and growth. Instead he must admit that he is in school because he cannot get a job (recall the unemployment figures above); if he is over 18 he may be drafted if he leaves school; but if he stays in school he continues to train for an occupation that is likely to be unproductive.

Student labor is thus alienated, in the sense that the product is for the future employer rather than for the student himself. Further, however, the whole education industry has been adapted to the production of technology for the administrative imperialist state, so that education is a critical socialized industry, and developments within that industry are crucial for the system as a whole. The interest of the Central Intelligence Agency in the National Student Association is an indicator of the recognition of student potential. The increasing use of universities for government research, classified and open, strengthens the ties between the academy and the battlefield. Universities are the research and development centers for governments. (Recall that 75% of university research budgets are Federal Government financed). Therefore, as in the case of the armed forces, when students begin to become aware of their alienation, they pose a real threat to the status quo. The university is not a monolith like the army, and wide ranges of verbal deviance are tolerated; however, the repression of students by university officials on the University of California and other restive college and high school campuses when overt resistance is attempted can be seen to be motivated by the same fears that lead courts-martial to be particularly punitive to political offenders in the armed forces. We should expect to see overt repression grow as the number of students and their awareness of their own alienated situation increase. (Recall that 37.4% of civilian young men [18-24] and 20.2% of young women [18-24] were in schools in 1965)²³

The two largest sources of youth labor, then, are alienated labor. We must now confront an even more pervasive form of exploitation, the denial of adulthood to youth. Since the discussion of youth became fashionable, one frequently hears that almost half the population is under 25. But since when is 25 the dividing line between child and adult? Biological maturation can hardly be

later than 14. But the societal recognition of that maturity has been delayed for about ten years, and the delay is constantly growing. How long can "maturity" be delayed before the quality of the maturity changes? We argue that extending "childhood" so long beyond its natural limits leads at first to adolescent psychological "growing pains", but then, dialectically, to the construction of youth societies in which the young mature according to their own standards. When this happens, the class formation is complete; to become an "adult" involves changing classes and joining the class enemy--"going straight". Increasing numbers are finding the class change too difficult and are getting older without becoming "adult". Others take on "adult" roles, but not adult psychology; they remain sympathisers of the proletarian youth class.

In precapitalist societies adulthood was generally conferred contemporaneously with biological maturation, somewhere between 12 and 15. New conflicts in the maturation process were introduced with the relatively recent innovation of adolescence, which embodies contradictory aspects: the adolescent is biologically and mentally mature, but declared still too young to marry or work. Instead he is exhorted to enjoy his ever lengthening years of "freedom" and to have a good time. But how? If the young are not free to marry and have a family, their awakened sexuality is denied socially acceptable outlets. If they are not allowed to work, their maturing minds are essentially idle. The system wastes the best years of young lives, offering freedom from drudgery but not freedom to do anything worthwhile with their leisure. The idleness of the young is the essence of bourgeois freedom--the absence of restraint--and its cruelest mockery.

Although the delay of maturation distorts the lives of all young people, it works perhaps the greatest hardships where it reinforces other discriminatory handicaps, and is thus particularly severe for black youth and for young women. Blacks experience the worst job discrimination; as a whole, non-white unemployment rates are typically twice the unemployment rates of the white labor force. This ratio persists among the young; thus, in 1965, while whites between 16 and 19 years experienced a 13.4% unemployment rate, non-whites between 16 and 19 years had a 26.2% unemployment rate. In 1964, median income of non-white families was only 56% of the median income of white families. In the face of such discrimination, it is not surprising to find a large number of blacks in the professional military--the major U. S. institution that really gives "equal pay for equal work." This equality of exploitation wages and inhuman work reveals equality in the U. S. today for what it is and has surely fostered the rise of black power politics led by the young blacks who bear the brunt of the administrative imperialist system.

Young women also experience multiple discrimination, first because they are women and second because they are young. Young women in the present period are in transition between roles, often finding satisfaction in neither. If they seek to leave behind the traditional role at home, they enter a job market in which they face severe discrimination (the median income of women is about one-third that of men, largely because so many are forced to work part-time) and no consideration for the ways in which they differ from men. Yet they cannot decide to withdraw from the unfair competition and stay at home because this traditional role no longer exists due to the exploitation of the young men whom they marry. Women married to young men see them excluded from adulthood. An increasing portion of young marriages take place while the husband is in the armed forces or in school. The couple's parents or the young wife provide the support. Exploitation of the young has in this way closed off the traditional

escape of women into the home. Increasingly, therefore, we should expect to see young women playing an important role in the formation of youth class consciousness.

Some of the consequences of delaying the maturation process have begun to be noticed by liberal psychologists and sociologists, but they do not see that the extension of adolescence is a result of the modification of the economic system. Instead, they tend to concentrate on the moral and psychological problems posed for the young rather than the ways in which the young are coping with their exploitation. Paul Goodman's *Growing Up Absurd* is perhaps the pioneer work on youth to discover, in the mid-1950's, that youth were dropping out of the society because of "value conflicts". He saw correctly that juvenile delinquents and the Beats shared a society-caused alienation. But he could not see what to do, and despaired of attacking the prevailing social inertia:

But this stupor is inevitably the baleful influence of the kind of organizational network that we have; the system pre-empts the available means and capital; it buys up as much of the intelligence as it can and muffles the voice of dissent; and then it irrefutably proclaims that itself is the only possibility of society for nothing else is thinkable...

But it is in these circumstances that people put up with a system because "there are no alternatives". And when one cannot think of anything to do, soon one ceases to think at all²⁴.

Goodman's despair is not very helpful, yet no bourgeois radical has improved on it.

Somewhat more insight into the changes in the maturation process itself are offered by Edgar Z. Friedenberg, who sees in *The Vanishing Adolescent* (1959) another aspect of the effects of delayed maturation. He attributes the disappearance of adolescence to a changed concept of maturity. People get older without developing a "stable identity" in the adolescent years. The society no longer wants to build self-directed, integrated personalities corresponding to the traditional entrepreneurial self-reliant man, and therefore no longer teaches such a model in the adolescent years:

Homo sapiens is undergoing a fundamental model change. The Western world has been tooling up for it for some time, and it involves a great alteration in the processes of personality development. A different kind of adult is being produced, representing a different conception of maturity. In order to turn him out in quantity, adolescence must become quite another sort of unit process than it was. In the school and society, the changeover is proceeding most efficiently. The change can be described most simply as a weakening in the relationship between maturity on the one hand, and stability of identity on the other²⁵.

Friedenberg sees, but cannot interpret, the transformation of the school from a bourgeois institution fostering the bourgeois ideal of maturity (self-direction etc.) to a socialized workplace that exists to build docile workers and simultaneously promotes proletarian consciousness. This consciousness has always been social, to the distress of the inner-directed bourgeois, who can

only understand individualist motivations. Friedenberg therefore sees only the alienation of the individualist self, but neither its causes nor its constructive results.

James S. Coleman in *The Adolescent Society* (1966) goes beyond Goodman's and Friedenberg's insights into youth alienation to see that young people have built subsocieties as a remedy for their alienation from the dominant society. He sees that young people are maturing by their own standards rather than those of the adult society, and that this is an important challenge:

Now the levers [by which children are motivated] are other children themselves, acting as a small society, and *adults must come to know either how to shape the directions this society takes, or else how to break down the adolescent society, thus re-establishing control by the old levers.*

I suspect, that this latter solution would be exceedingly difficult, for it flies in the face of large-scale social changes, and would seem to require a reorganization of work and community which is hardly in the offing. *The major thesis of this book is that it is possible to take the other tack, to learn how to control the adolescent community as a community, and to use it to further the ends of education.* 26

Coleman sees clearly the process of class formation in the young, the threat that they pose to the older society, and the totalitarian measures that will be necessary if the threat is to be controlled, so that adolescents can continue to be manipulated by the adult-designed educational structures. Such well-intentioned advocacy of repression suggests that the "conflict of generations" is reaching the proportions of a true class war.

To summarize, we have argued that the labor of soldiers and students offers clear examples of alienated labor. Further, youth are forced into labor that is unproductive and often morally reprehensible, yet so critical to the maintenance of the system that if they reject it they face severe repression. Force, however, only reinforces group identity. The formation of the youth class is further accelerated by the extension of the maturing process. Young people are becoming differentiated from the dominant system, a differentiation which is accelerating the development of class values. (This answers our earlier question about how long "maturity" can be delayed before the quality of the mature person changes). Friedenberg and Coleman are both right and both wrong. The adolescent is vanishing but the process of maturing is not vanishing; adolescent societies are being created, but they are class societies of young adults, not subsocieties of children. We contend that the development of these class formations is far advanced and that the young are beginning to express culturally and politically their development consciousness of themselves as a class.

Class Consciousness: Youth Culture and Youth Politics

We have argued that young people form a class in the advanced capitalist economy of the United States. Because the "growth industries" in the United States today are defense and education and because the majority of young people labor in these socialized industries, youth are the class whose exploitation is essential to the perpetuation of the system; if the youth should refuse to submit to their exploitation in the army and the schools, if they should refuse to accept their

lengthened childhood and demand to be treated as the mature persons that they are, the system would face a mortal threat. In this section we shall see the extent to which the youth class-in-itself is becoming a conscious class-for-itself. We cannot "prove" anything; only class action proves class consciousness. But youth culture and politics have developed in the last decade from individualist passivity to collectivist activism; instead of stressing the distance remaining on the road to class action, let us see how far youth has come.

Viewed one way, "youth culture" is an invention of merchandisers and a vehicle of false consciousness. However, it can also be the crucial support for alienated youth, making it possible to translate disaffection into open revolt. The flood of popular journalism about the young, although of little analytical value, shows that youth culture is causing discomfort to the dominant society. Most of this reportage concentrates on the consumption rather than the production aspects of youth culture, focussing on trivia--dress, music and drugs. Dress has always offered a means of identifying classes and cultures, and the particular garb worn by the contemporary young for *identification* seems in no way to be novel. Similarly, drug use, although it promotes a certain kind of group identification because it is illegal and because of the exaggerated adult reaction to drug use by youth, is a secondary rather than a primary concern. If drug use were to end (or to be legalized), the structure of youth culture would only be modified in detail. Music cannot be quite so easily dismissed, since it is produced as well as consumed within youth culture. We shall consider it below as a means of communication. Here we stress that it is not consumption patterns but, instead, their relations to the system of production that bind people together. It is the ties forged by the class role of young people in the defense and education production industries that lead them to adopt similar consumption patterns, attitudes, and modes of behavior.

The armed forces should therefore be a focus of emerging attitudes and behavior for a large group of young people. Unfortunately, the kind of data that would help us assess the formation of draftee subcultures is not readily available. There is a general impression of dissent over the Vietnam War; the cases of Howe, Levy and the Fort Hood Three, etc., seem to be the visible part of an iceberg of low morale. The London *Times* of August 17, 1967, published a report that U. S. soldiers in Europe were deserting at the rate of 1000 a year rather than face transfer to Vietnam. This report was of course denied by U. S. sources, and there is no way to confirm it. Lack of data makes it impossible to subject our analysis to test in the armed forces.

We can, however, look at the behavior of students and the unemployed young. Since black youth have developed a level of consciousness of their oppression far exceeding that of the white youth, it is not necessary to ferret out developments in black political consciousness from cultural phenomena. In the discussion of youth culture we will concentrate on white youth. White youth culture can be seen as becoming increasingly collective and activist in the last decade: autonomous communities are larger and more numerous; forms of collective activity are more frequent and more comprehensive; and, most importantly modes of communication have become much more intensive and sophisticated.

The youth communities--Haight-Ashbury, the East Village, etc--are important mainly because they define a quasi-political boundary between the young and the others. Therefore, like black ghettos, school grounds and campuses, villages provide a base from which youth can organize and a setting in which political learning

can take place. This learning is usually offered in abundance by the harassment of government authorities (especially police) representing the irate public of olders who feel threatened by the young.

The political potential of the villages is reinforced by the communalism of contemporary youth culture. Communal modes of living and eating are an integral part of the youth communities; the operational definition of the ubiquitous exhortation to "love" seems to be to share; the Diggers, a self-help organization in several villages, have adopted the name of the 17th century English utopian communists. The "be-ins" and "love-ins" are large-scale collective events that parallel the style for which the young strive in their personal relations. Contrast this style with the nihilistic, individualistic, painfully withdrawn Beat of the 1950's. While the Beat sought to lose his ego in Zen, the hippies seem to seek merely to escape their bourgeois individuality in groups.

These cultural traits are overshadowed in importance by the sophisticated musical and literary means of communication which the young have developed. Communication forms can be viewed from many angles. We shall concentrate on two: first, the development since the 1950's from esoteric communications for the persecuted to the exoteric self-confident, even bold communications of the 1960's; and second, the ideological content of today's communications themselves. The music and literature of the 1950's were concerned with the inner state of the creator--introspective jazz and poetry. These forms were the treasures of a tiny group who correctly viewed themselves as in constant danger of being demolished by the tyrannical mediocrity of the Eisenhower years. Contrast this introspection with the open, public, self-confident quality of today's music and journalism, which confronts the dominant society head-on. This confrontation is quite clear to the young, although the language in which it is couched may confuse the olders. (Bob Dylan says: "You know something is happening here, but you don't know what it is, do you, Mr. Jones?"). This confusion is intentional; the young "put on" the dominant society by talking at many levels, most of which the olders cannot understand. This means that their ideological content is much clearer to the young than to their half-listening olders. *Double entendre* is the stock in trade of resistance literature, and the lyrics of youth songs are like the poems that were used for communication in Nazi-occupied Europe²⁷. In addition to the language, youth music puts on the dominant society with the high volume and electronic violence of rock groups. The Beats whispered; youth today shout.

The shouting goes on not only from the stage but from the pages of youth newspaper as well. The underground press is a literary revival of participant journalism--by, for and of the young. Few underground papers are more than three years old; the recent formation of the Underground Press Syndicate with several dozen affiliates throughout North America signifies the birth of a continental system of communication in the youth culture. The underground press has been largely ignored by the popular analysts, perhaps because the style and format of the underground press makes them uncomfortable. The put-on preferred by underground editors is the gratuitous use of nudity and four-letter words. Even a casual examination of these periodicals belies the common allegation that the youth culture is apolitical. On the contrary, the youth papers are well informed, full of insight into the decay of North American society, quick to report police and government harassment of their own or other minority groups (racial-ethnic minorities and "outlaw" groups, such as motorcycle clubs), and imbued with a strong sense of solidarity with revolutionaries such as Che Guevara and

Mao Tse-Tung. And perhaps even more significantly, the underground press serves as a means of communication and mobilization within the villages and between them, as well as with youth outside the villages.

These cultural trends seem amorphous, but when we take a historical view, we see that youth culture today comprehends a large group and one that is collective and social in orientation. While the Beats dropped out individually, the young today are dropping out of one society only to come together in another. This coming together, utopian though it is, contains great political promise. While no one hoped to politicize the Beats, the young today are seen to be capable of political mobilization. In sum, then, we can say that the culture of youth today is a social culture of intense communication through public forms, music and journalism. The days of withdrawal seem to be over.

The political trends are as hard to interpret with certainty as the cultural, but they point in the same direction. The young have outgrown the nonviolent civil rights movement, South and North; the New Left is foundering; "black power" and "student power" are increasingly common slogans; class-consciousness is growing. The development from the Beats to the hippies was a development from individualist to collectivist cultural forms; parallel political developments can be seen, from individualist tactics--passive nonviolent resistance--to collectivist communitarian tactics--participatory democracy--to rudimentary class action--black power, student power, draft resistance, etc. At the same time the content of youth politics has matured, from issue politics in the liberal tradition to the "grass roots" politics of the archetypal New Left and further to the contemporary power politics in the ghettos and the schools.

Let us recall the origins of the New Left. The quiescence of the 1950's was broken by the forerunner of New Left politics, the non-violent civil rights movement. Beginning with sit-ins in the South, civil rights demonstrations spread, and the tactic was adapted to other issues such as peace and the House Committee on Un-American Activities. But youth were still playing issue politics, merely using a new tactic.

In this early period young white people, mainly students, worked closely with young black people. This first coalition soon went beyond the narrow limits of issue politics. The American problem was seen by the young activists as profoundly political, the death of the community. These new communitarians were the U. S. *narodniki*, the New Left--Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) and the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). Their slogan was "Let the people decide". The means they used was to organize communities--Freedom Schools, the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party, the Newark Community Union Project, the East Harlem Protestant Parish--in which participatory democracy was actually practiced.

The organizing activities of the New Left represented a tremendous step forward over the issue politics of passive resistance. Yet the New Left had a fatal flaw that doomed it from its inception; it refused to set its many parts into a historical or organizational whole. Jack Newfield's description is also an epitaph:

The New Radicalism is authentically new in this vague weaving together of anarchist, existential, transcendental, Populist, socialist and bohemian strands of thought. *It is not the logical outgrowth of the older radical traditions in the West*²⁸.

By refusing to develop a historical perspective, by insisting that they sprang full-blown from the heads of their founders, the New Left confused the political problems that they were trying to solve with the economic problems that underlay them. Thus two New Left intellectuals, Ronald Aronson and John Cowley, confuse the economic and political critique of capitalism so wholly that they see capitalism only as a political system. Their purely political definition leads them to propose purely political solutions. The fight becomes, not the fight against imperialism, but "the fight against paternalistic bureaucratic control"; and socialism becomes merely political: "The central concept of any contemporary socialism will be popular control--participatory democracy". This confusion of levels of analysis leads to idealism; they argue that a change in the political forms is the solution; moreover, this change in forms is accomplished by means of an ideological struggle. The task becomes to develop "a socialist consciousness capable of directly challenging the existing intellectual and moral supremacy of liberalism; it must break the present ideological unanimity"²⁹.

The New Left died in the summer of 1965, when SNCC abandoned non-violence and the Watts riots signaled the beginning of the end of grassroots reformism in the North. But its death was inevitable; by refusing self-examination, by remaining defensively anti-ideological, the New Left became *de facto* reformist; piecemeal projects, no matter how radical in themselves, do not become spontaneously revolutionary. Self-realization came to the New Left when the War on Poverty stole many of their techniques and in some cases even used the communities that the New Left had organized. Within the New Left itself, the crisis in the black freedom movement showed many of the young whites that they were not ready to follow the blacks on the road to power politics. A class front might have been attempted in 1965, but neither black nor white youth were able. After this crisis SDS returned to the campus, to resistance to the war and the draft in the schools. The New Left political style is being superseded by a more militant "confrontation" posture and a growth of "power" politics.

The successors to the New Left face both serious problems and hopeful prospects. They are frequently misled by false consciousness, especially the tendency to confuse their personal problems ("generational conflicts") with their new political role. Many, clinging to Puritan liberalism, still seek salvation in the People. Increasingly, however, young white people are coming to the awareness that young black people have had for some time, that they are being systematically victimized. And some are beginning to see that the revolution begins where they are, in the ghetto and on the campus. The SDS newspaper, *New Left Notes*, has taken on a newly realistic tone; to its original slogan, "Let the People Decide", has been added "Resist". It reports on draft resistance on the high school and college campuses. Two Marxist youth groups have been organized, the DuBois Clubs in 1964 and the Progressive Labor Party in 1965. Their survival and growth are significant, even though the number of their members remain small. The attempts by *Studies on the Left* to develop a systematic socialist consciousness before it succumbed is also hopeful.

The major consciousness-formers for white youth are currently draft resistance and student power movements. Draft resistance is difficult to evaluate, although militant campaigns to disrupt the induction centers' work have begun all over the country. The fears of government leaders are voiced by James Reston in the *New York Times* of May 5, 1967:

In Washington there is genuine fear that abolition of all or most college deferments might lead to massive defiance among undergraduates. One

estimate here is that if college students were called like any other nineteen-year-olds, *as many as 25 percent might refuse to serve.* (*italics added*).

While there is little evidence on which to examine developments within the military, the manpower pools for universities and the armed forces do overlap; trouble on the campus indicates that there is potential trouble in the army. "Soldier power" is an obvious choice of slogan for rebellious draftees.

The student power movement in universities is becoming overtly class-conscious. The critical development was the Berkeley student revolt of 1964, in which the New Left goals that inspired the unrest were superseded in its resolution. The first demonstrations began because the students wanted to use the campus as a base for their projects in Oakland. Clark Kerr was correct when he said:

A few of the "nonconformists" ... seek ... to turn the university, on the Latin American or Japanese models, into a fortress from which they sally forth with impunity to make their attacks on society³⁰.

However, as the conflict matured, the students went beyond their original notion of the university rules as an obstacle to their outside political action, and discovered that the university itself was part of the enemy. The near-universal student response to the December 1964 strike made clear that it was the alienation of the Berkeley student *qua* student, not the student as agitator (most students are apolitical in that sense) that inspired the student revolt. Mario Savio's speech at the final sit-in embodied the death of New Left counter-community and the beginning of student class action:

There is a time when the operations of the machine become so odious, make you so sick at heart, that you can't take part, you can't even tacitly take part. And you've got to put your bodies upon the gears and upon the wheels, upon the levers, upon all the apparatus, and you've got to make it stop. And you've got to indicate to the people who run it, to the people who own it, that unless you're free the machine will be prevented from working at all.

No longer seen as an alienated and deformed community, the university had become a factory. That the university was a workplace was confirmed by the strike and the bargaining that followed it. Student class action began with the Berkeley in 1964. Many other universities and high schools have since had similar upheavals. And when the students confronted the university authorities at Berkeley again in 1966, a strike was their first rather than their last resort. An attack on the University's ties to the military research establishment is emerging; students are beginning to confront the universities as they really are and to become conscious of themselves as they really are. Whatever the specific forms of action, youth have abandoned moral appeals to the community, marches and petitions and are instead attacking their own exploitation. They are thus reaching a level of consciousness that now makes possible a coalition with the black youth in the ghettos, who began the attack on their own exploitation some time ago.

Let us return, in conclusion, to a historical developmental view. Youth politics is not yet consistently revolutionary, but the changes in a decade are breathtaking. From an apolitical beginning, young people have taken up, used and discarded issue politics and non-violence. They have also tried and discarded "grass-roots"

politics and communitarian utopianism. Black youth are rapidly moving to a clear-cut revolutionary position, with Stokely Carmichael and others as the leaders. White youth have been catching up and are increasingly coming to understand their crucial class role in overthrowing the administrative core of imperialism. Unrest will get worse in the ghettos and in the schools and will develop in the military unless the conditions that make for unrest are changed. And since those conditions are embedded in the economic system itself, we may expect growing confrontations between youth and the administrative imperialist system.

We have argued an essentially optimistic thesis, denying that history in the United States stopped after World War II. Our radical class analysis refutes the despair or resignation of the "end of history" scholars. By remedying their failure to examine the mode of production, we have found that internal production has changed to meet the needs of what we call the administrative imperialist system. Its distinguishing characteristic is the dominant dynamic role in employment creation and surplus absorption played by the defense and education industries, industries whose labor is provided in large measure by youth. This shift in the mode of production led to a shift in the internal exploitation of the system, from the working class in general to the young in particular. As soldiers and students, the young experience moral and material alienation of their labor; rejection by the dominant society hastens both sociologically and psychologically the process of class formation among the young. This class has begun to express itself in its own ways, both culturally and politically; class action by youth *as a class* can be seen on every hand. The "problems of youth" will be not only better understood but also sooner solved when we see through the "conflict of generations" to the contradictions of capitalism underneath.

When it is seen that the revolt of the young in the United States has a class nature, it will become much less difficult for older radicals to speak to youth and for a radicalized youth to speak to elders. Effective communication will require mutual tolerance; of particular importance is the acceptance by older radicals of the culture patterns and *ad hoc* organizational style of the youth.

Any attempt to "organize" young people in traditional ways will probably fail. Instead, young people must be addressed via action; their understandable skepticism about the value of political action can be overcome only by offering to them modes of action that are demonstrably effective. This means that the young can be recruited only for confrontations with the system, not for negotiations with it. Increasingly, however, we argue that the young will be leading, and older radicals will be invited to lend a hand if they can.

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FOOTNOTES

1 - (See page 1) The perspective of this essay is parsimonious and exclusive. We focus on analysis inside an economy, even though events outside may be formative or even determining of internal dynamics. We are not blind to the raging of the world class struggle and the growing threat of an all-out war by the United States on China's socialism. But world affairs can also be viewed correctly as one of the pressures to which the U. S. responds internally: reverses abroad could aggravate exploitation and foster revolution at home; or domestic revolt could bring the war machine to a halt. Therefore, although our focus is domestic, we are aware of the interdependence of foreign and domestic events.

Nor, by our focus on youth, do we imply that there are no other groups in the U.S. with revolutionary potential. Black people are obviously reaching revolutionary consciousness at an extraordinary rate. But acute consciousness of exploitation is not enough to make a revolutionary class; that exploitation must be an imperative of the system. We argue, then, that even if the revolution takes place under the banner of black liberation its success and its socialist character depend on revolution by the young.

Also beyond the scope of this essay is any discussion of potential antagonisms within the youth class. The youth class is drawn from all of the diverse income, social, ethnic, etc., strata in U.S. society, divisions which can be and are being exploited by the dominant society. However, these intra-class conflicts (Will the soldiers fire on the students? Will the white work with black youth?) pose important tactical problems to be analyzed *after* youth are recognized as a crucial class formation.

2 - (see page 2) The best known of this analysis can be found in Seymour M. Lipset, *Political Man*; Daniel Bell, *End of Ideology*; and Ralf Dahrendorf, *Class and Class Conflict in Industrial Society*.

3 - (see page 3) Since the original draft of this essay was written Marcuse had an interview published in New Left Review no. 45. As the editors of NLR suggest, Marcuse reaffirms the necessity and possibility of revolution in the West. However, it seems to us that he places his faith in a rebellion of moral revulsion. Even though we would agree that "the opposition of American youth" is in fact a "determinate negation" of the system, we do not agree that 1) the youth are free from ideology or 2) that the negation of the young "is without effective organization and is in itself incapable of exercising decisive political pressure." These disagreements go to the heart of our essay. We feel that Marcuse is placing his faith in a "cultural revolution" of some sort. Our analysis, in which the young play the critical revolutionary role, does not depend on the development of a disembodied anticonsumer consciousness on the part of the youth, but instead finds a real revolutionary potential in the youth arising out of their role in production.

4 - (See page 4) Paul Baran and Paul Sweezy, *Monopoly Capital*, 1966, pp. 364-5

5 - (See page 5) Except where otherwise indicated, the data in this essay have been calculated from standard sources such as the *Statistical Abstract of the United States*, the *Budget of the United States*, etc. To keep our historical perspective and to avoid the problems of the statistical short run, we have brought our data only up to 1965. Our case does not rest on current war spending, and we do not wish to confuse our analysis of the long run problems of U.S. capitalism by introducing data collected under the influence of the most recent imperialist war.

Footnotes (p - ii)

6 - (See page 5) U.S. Department of Labour, *Report on Manpower Requirements...*, p. 19.

7 - (See page 6) Council of Economic Advisers, *1967 Annual Report*, p. 143; italics added.

8 - (See page 6) Clark Kerr, *The Uses of the University*, 1963, pp. 87-88.

9 - (See page 7) Seymour Melman *Our Depleted Society*, 1965, pp. 74, 76-7

10 - (See page 7) Kerr, *op. cit.*, italics added.

11 - (See page 7) By the socialized sector we here refer only to the direct government employment, counting students and soldiers as workers. This does not include any estimate of employment, in private industry resulting from government purchases of goods and services nor any indirect employment effects. Henceforth, "adult population" will refer to all persons 14 years and over, unless otherwise noted.

12 - (See page 8) Some might question using age 14 rather than, say 18, as the boundary of adult population. However, this is just our point; as we discuss at length below, adulthood and the performance of socially useful work *should* begin at biological maturity--i.e., about age 14. However, doubters should note that more than a third of the total increase of non-civilian-labor-force adults--i.e., about 2.1 out of 5.1 million--was an increase in college and university enrollment. It is also relevant that more than 30% (or 1,781,000) of the 1960-65 increase in the employed civilian labor force was accounted for by increases in civilian *government* employment. Thus, while the private sector generated 3,717,000 new jobs, the government's created jobs plus increased college student enrollment amounted to about 4,094,000 persons.

13 - (See page 8) Cf. *Monopoly Capital*, p. 152.

In an appendix to *Monopoly Capital*, Joseph Phillips has calculated the size of the U.S. economic surplus in terms of money flows. If the surplus were recalculated in terms of the use of adult manpower, we suspect that it would increase significantly in several dimensions--absolutely, as a per cent of GNP, and in the per cent absorbed by government. On page 33 above we concluded that the defense and education industries, narrowly defined, now account for more than one-sixth of actual GNP. However, rough calculations indicate that more than one third (36%) of the adult laboring population age 14-64 (total labor force, including armed forces and students) were, in 1965, in school, on active military duty, civilian employees of governments in education or defense activities, or employed in private industry as a *direct* result of government purchases of defense and education related goods and sources (conservatively estimated at 4 million employees).

14 - (See page 9) A. H. Halsey, "Youth and Employment in Comparative Perspective", in Margaret S. Gordon, ed. *Poverty in America*, 1965, pp. 139-160.

15 - (See page 9) Council of Economic Advisers, *op. cit.*, p. 144

16 - (See page 9) These calculations are based on estimates of the Council of Economic Advisers. The 1966 president of the American Economic Association, Fritz Machlup in *The Production and Distribution of Knowledge in the United States*, pp. 106-7, calculates that education cost (in 1957-58) 12.9% of potential GNP; and school enrollment has increased significantly since then.

Footnotes (p. - iii)

17 - (See page 9) Paul Baran, *Political Economy of Growth*, 1957, p. 32.

18 - (See page 9) See section IV, note 22 on page 42

19 - (See page 10) *Newsweek*, December 19, 1966, p. 100.

20 - (See page 10) Recall the slogan, "A College education is worth \$100,000" in extra income earned over a life-time. Gary Becker has estimated [in "Underinvestment in College Education," *Proceedings, American Economic Review*, May 1960] that, between 1940 and 1955, the return on investment in a college education was 12.5% before taxes. These returns, much celebrated by liberals and blithely promised by the economists, should be viewed with caution. First, they are an average of data with great variance; second, they imply that anyone who gets his schooling will get his return as if the labor market were competitive, while in fact it is notoriously monopolistic. In particular, returns from an investment in a college education are associated with one's economic and social background. A much more reasonable interpretation of all the "returns to education" data is that the number of years of schooling necessary to maintain the social status to which one was born has increased significantly. This is but another demonstration of our thesis: the system's exploitation is focussed on the young, who are excluded from the labor force for more years than were their parents, and who must pay ever more dearly for the same social position.

For a brilliant attack on the "returns to educational investment" literature, I see Ch. IV of Fritz Machlup's *The Production and Distribution of Knowledge in the United States*; Machlup also brings forth strong data to support his thesis that the U.S. education system has tremendous waste built into it and to support his program to reduce the high school leaving age from the current age 18 to about 14 or 15. What Machlup does not recognize is that the system at the broadest macroeconomic level of analysis thrives on the waste, which absorbs surplus.

It should be noted that our conclusions regarding the progressively increasing use of education as surplus absorber is not affected whether education *really* increases the productivity of labor (in constant supply) or merely increases the productivity of a small labor force due to the growing school enrollment.

21 - (See page 11) *Manpower Report of the President*, March 1966, Table 21 and text, p. 93. Parallel to the student and soldier absorption of potential surplus, the unemployed young also absorb surplus more than in proportion to their high unemployment rates. Drawing on the work of A. M. Okun, the *1963 Annual Report of the Council of Economic Advisers* (p. 26) concludes that a reduction of 1 percentage point in the unemployment rate would lead to a more than 3% increase in real GNP (About \$20 billion in 1965). This is because unemployment rates reflect many other underutilizations of manpower variables. However, it is clear that the young, by their high unemployment rates, are again bearing the potential surplus absorption in the U.S.

Between 1950 and 1965, not only did the young unemployed (age 14-24) increase as a percentage of total unemployed, from 34% to 44%, but also they increased in absolute numbers (1,069,000 to 1,522,000) while the over 25-year-old unemployed decreased in absolute numbers (2,073,000 to 1,934,000).

22 - (See page 12) It should be noted that even though the proportion of young men in schools and the military increased dramatically, the proportion of the young men in schools relative to those in the military remained about the same. In 1950, about 44.1% of the 20-24 years old socialized (school or military) males were in the military; in 1965, the percentage in the military was 42.1%. For all males 20-24 years old, the growth in total numbers from 1950 to 1965 was 1,375,000; the growth was 608,000 in military personnel and 867,000 in schools; thus the growth in schools and military absorbed the total growth in the population in the age group plus 100,000 more.

23 - (See page 14) This discussion of student labor does not mean that we are opposed in principle to extending the years of education and study, either in length or in scope. But education today has become work, work for others. The quality of the product is poor; in addition, regardless of quality, education promotes capitalist profits. Universities and high schools have become capital goods factories, and labor in them becomes particularly alienating since it deforms the whole life of the student worker. The more he invests in his capital, the less of himself for himself he becomes, the more of himself is alienated from himself, the more of himself is thus capital goods to be utilized by the capitalist (administrative imperialist) system of production. But we do not want to abolish broad based mass education any more than we would advocate abolishing mass production because the factory system of capitalism is alienating to the workers. Socialists have never been machine wreckers; but just as the socialist order will change the product of the factories, ending the production of fanciful packaging for inferior detergents, so will the content of education change, ending college courses that are merely cold war indoctrination. The students have become proletarians and the class rooms their workplaces in the mass education system of the United States. Ironically, dialectically, the highly touted growth of mass education, the "best" feature of liberal capitalism, will be a major engine of the destruction of the system.

24 - (See page 16) Paul Goodman, *Growing Up Absurd* (New York: Vintage Books, 1956), p. x, xi.

25 - (See page 16) Edgar Z. Friedenberg, *The Vanishing Adolescent* (New York: Dell Publishing Co., 1959), p. 204.

26 - (See page 17) James S. Coleman, *The Adolescent Society*, p. 11-12; italics added.

27 - (See page 19) Bob Dylan is the master of the ideological put on: anti-war but not pacifist ("Oh, you masters of war... You that hide behind desks / I want you to know I can see through your masks... I hope that you die / And your death may come soon..."); anti-school ("Twenty years of schooling and they put you on the day shift."); anti-hypocritical freedom ("for the poets and the painters far behind their rightful time..."); not only anti-liberal ("Mr. Jones") but also anti-New Left moralizing ("Good and bad, I defined these words, quite clear, no doubt, somehow. Ah, but I was so much older then, I'm younger than that now..."). He sums up youth values succinctly in one of his most apparently straightforward songs: "You ask why I don't live here. Honey, how come you don't move?!"

If the oppression of white youth were to persist as long as that of black people, they, too, might develop their own dialect. At this stage, however, white youth language is more like the highly specialized "jiving" of black street gangs.

- 28 - (See page 20) Jack Newfield, *A Prophetic Minority* (New York: New American Library, 1966), p. 132; italics in original.
- 29 - (See page 21) Ronald Anderson and John Cowley, "The New Left in the United States", *Socialist Register 1967*, New York: Monthly Review Press, 1967, pp. 887-88
- 30 - (See page 22) Kerr, *op. cit.*, p. 104.

(See page 19) This discussion of student labor does not mean that we are opposed in principle to extending the years of education and study, either in length or in scope. But education today has become work, work for others. The quality of the product is poor; in addition, universities and high schools have become capitalist profit centers. Labor in them becomes particularly alienating since it deforms the whole life of the student worker. The more he invests in his education, the less of himself he becomes. The more of himself he utilizes alienated from himself, the more of himself he thus capitalizes. But work by the capitalist (administrative-imperialist) system of production. But we do not want to abolish mass education any more than we would like to abolish the abolition of mass production because the factory system of capitalism is alienating to the workers. Socialists have never been machine workers, but just as the socialist order will change the product of the factories, so will ending the production of fanciful packaging for inferior detergents, so will the content of education change, ending college courses that are merely copied verbatim. The students have become proletarians and the class struggle in their workplaces in the mass education system of the third century. Economically, dialectically, the highly touted growth of mass education, the "best" feature of liberal capitalism, will be a major engine of the destruction of the system.

(See page 18) Paul Goodman, *Growing Up Absurd* (New York: Vintage Books, 1959), p. x, xi.

(See page 16) Edgar S. Friedlander, *The Unlearning Machine* (New York: Dell Publishing Co., 1959), p. 204.

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(See page 19) Bob Dylan is the master of the rhetorical but not anti-rhetoric but not lyrical "Oh, you masters of war, you masters of death, you kill and you want you to know I can see through your masks and I hope that you die and your death may come soon." ("The Times They are a-Changin'") and school and they put you on the day shift. ("The Times They are a-Changin'") and school and they painters far behind their right hand. ("The Times They are a-Changin'") and school and they Jones) but also anti-New Left moralizing ("Good and bad, I defined these words, quite clear, no doubts, somehow, but I was so much older then, I'm younger than that now..."). He sums up youth values succinctly in one of his most apparently straightforward songs: "You ask why I don't live here, Honey, how come you don't move?" ("The Times They are a-Changin'") and school and they If the oppression of white youth were to persist as long as that of black people, they, too, might develop their own dialectic. At this stage, however, white youth language is more like the highly specialized "living" of black street gangs.

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