

internally along race, ethnic, and class lines. Envision the fast talking, aggressive Yankee union organizer sent into Charleston, South Carolina. Any modern revolutionary practice is going to have to be sensitive to diversities, particularly to the many different positive cultural attributes that characterize the regional communities which make up the United States. Such a sensitivity does not easily emerge from an analysis which says culture is but a reflection of economic requirements. Where would the wisdom we should respect come from in that?

The orthodox Marxist understanding of the roots and implications of religious or national identification is also deficient. The dominant theme is that religion and nationalism are irrational and mere opiates. And this theme has profound implications for analysis. Religion and nationalism are seen as anachronisms that will progressively disappear under the weight of general scientific advance, though much more rapidly under socialism. How many Marxists of the earlier days of this century would have predicted the current proliferation of religious hostilities: Christians versus Moslems in Lebanon, Catholics versus Protestants in Ireland, Catholics versus Moslems in the Philippines, Greek Orthodox versus Moslems in Cyprus, Jews versus Moslems in the MidEast, Eastern Orthodox versus Jews in Russia, Hindu versus Moslem in India and Pakistan. How many Marxists at the beginning of this century would have believed that every successful advance of "socialism" would ride on the back of a powerful national liberation movement as in the cases of Yugoslavia, China, Korea, Cuba, Vietnam, Mozambique, and Angola? How many socialists would have believed that the preponderance of "shooting wars" between nations in the late 1970s would be between self-declared "socialist states" like Vietnam and Cambodia, China and Vietnam, Russia and China, Ethiopia and Somalia, Russia and Afghanistan and perhaps shortly, even as we write, Russia and Poland?

With no comprehension of the distinction between defensive and creative bases of cultural formations, and therefore no grasp of the positive social and cultural aspirations that religious and national identifications often address, orthodox analysts are hard pressed to explain the power and proliferation of these ties. Furthermore, with blanket condemnations, the real task of discerning what aspects are debilitating and deserve opposition, and

which aspects are positive and to be elaborated, is avoided. The prospects for addressing communities with powerful national and/or religious affiliations will remain dim for Marxists as long as the Marxist theory of community relations continues to stagnate.

Of course the exception is the Leninist commitment to anti-imperialist struggles, but even this is compromised, for its motivation is primarily anti-capitalist and not pro-nationalist. There is some ability to discern what is superficially good and bad in nationalist movements: The Ayotallah Khomeini may reasonably be "supported" as an opponent to western imperialism and the Shah, but also opposed as a religious, anti-socialist, and patriarchal extremist. But then the analysis of the roots of his influence is never begun. Where personality politics is disavowed as ludicrously naive where class forces are to be discerned, it is the accepted norm for most Marxists where national or religious forces are at work. The Leninist analysis does not often pierce the full social relationships behind religious and/or nationalist movements. This is debilitating to analysis and program. Regrettably there is no time here for a comprehensive survey of orthodox discussions of religion or nationalism, but in context of the prior discussion of the orthodox failure to understand culture in general, and racism, we hope the brief paragraphs above will add further impetus to the effort to find a new way of understanding community phenomena. The idea of a socialist world with no nationalities, no religion, and proletarian "cultural oneness" which emerges from the orthodox view of culture-as-reflection, is an insufficient basis for developing a socialist program that will attract the allegiance of people with real and passionate community ties. As Harold Cruse suggests in an interview, "Black experience in the United States has shown that it is dangerous and non-productive for blacks to adopt Marxism, just as it has been historically detrimental for blacks to have adopted Christianity. The reason for this is that blacks have been unable to add anything original to either Marxism or Christianity. Thus both of these doctrines remain the intellectual patrimony, not of blacks, but of whites. If blacks continue to adopt these philosophies in the form that they received them from whites, then blacks will forever remain subservient to whites, intellectually, ethnically, morally, etc."⁴⁰ And indeed, given our analysis, if Marxism remains bound by economism to find the economy primary and all other spheres to

one degree or another derivative, then this situation will prevail. For blacks will not be able to add anything substantial to this orthodox Marxism precisely because its fundamental concepts preclude such additions, at least insofar as they bear upon an understanding of racism as itself of fundamental importance. Whether the tenacity of orthodox beliefs is a function of confusion or of vested male, white, or academic interests—of “cultural capital” in Alvin Gouldner’s interesting terminology—is unclear. That it has got to be overcome, either within the Marxist heritage or by stepping beyond that heritage, will be obvious. In the next section we present some ideas toward a new theory of community.

An Alternative Theory of Community and Culture

We are not born religious, members of a race, or of an ethnic group. Rather we *become* Hindu or Moslem, black or white, Greek or Turkish—at least insofar as these designations have real social content. For these community characteristics are products of community activity, just as kin differentiations, economic differentiations, and political differentiations are products respectively of kinship, economic, and political activity.

Individuals become members of a community. Of course, as in the other three spheres there are many other ingredients and products as well, and the process is affected by other dimensions of social life. When an individual becomes a black man or a Turkish woman, all four types of social activity are at work. But when we abstract to address community alone—an approach whose value we’ve argued already—we find a subset of institutions that are most crucial to these processes, as well as a network of community relations which extend throughout all of society.

“Only in community with others has each individual the means of cultivating his/her gifts in all directions; only in community is personal freedom possible.”⁴¹ Only via community do we evolve shared norms, body and verbal languages, moralities, religious and cultural identifications. As we pursue these ends, so we develop community institutions and social networks. Real needs are served. The developed cultures may be more or less able to serve as a basis for fulfilling human development, but in all instances they will be rooted in real human needs and potentials, even as these are

historically formed and modified by changing social conditions.

Culture is certainly affected by economic, kin and political factors, just as class, sex, and political consciousness and social relations are affected by cultural processes. But still, it is useful in our opinion to see culture as rooted first in the sphere of community. For then we see that culture in all its forms is a *human product* aimed at the fulfillment of basic, albeit historicized, human needs. In this view cultural attributes are a product of all social interaction but primarily of community activity, and consequently have deeper roots than the rationalization of economic circumstances. Of course the family is the main initial *communicator* of cultural norms—whether religious, ethnic, or racial—but it is the family as a community institution rather than the family as a kinship institution that helps *create* these norms, while in the kinship mode it simply passes them along much as it passes along class and authority attributes as well. The Church, neighborhood, school, social club and workplace are other institutions which play both communicative and creative roles regarding community definition.

The development of a community means first and foremost the development of a common identity and language—not words but meanings—and a common understanding of the group’s place in history. A heritage is shared. Solutions to various life problems—how we see ourselves, how we view birth and death, and how we approach various moral issues—are all community matters. But equally important is the fact that distinct communities must interface with one another. Each community must not only evolve internal modes and intra-community relations, but develop inter-community modes of interaction with other communities as well. Whether intra-community relations are restrictive or liberatory, and whether inter-community relations are respectful and fair, or unequal and domineering, will vary from case to case. And the particular relations between intra- and inter-community characteristics—how each affects the texture of the other—will also vary. But understanding these two sides of community relations and their interrelation is certainly one critical aspect of a full approach to understanding any particular social formation.

Looking at communities in isolation from one another, for a moment, we see a variety of *principal* (but not exhaustive) types—national, racial, religious, ethnic, and regional. To become a

community of any of these "types," a group of people elaborates a variety of shared ways of seeing the world, relating to one another, viewing themselves in history, talking, celebrating, and otherwise engaging in cultural pursuits. Frequently groups develop community identifications encompassing two or more of the above types simultaneously. For example, Irish-Catholics, Southern-Baptists, and Italian-American-Catholics. The elaboration of such communities occurs to solve a host of problems of daily life. It is historical, yet once they are adopted solutions have a great deal of permanence. The evolved communities may be culturally enriching and supportive of human development or, on the contrary, very destructive of human potentials. More likely they will do some of both. Nationalism, for example, has included a disposition toward self-management of a group's own social life but whether this desire for sovereignty is liberatory, as was the case in post-revolutionary Cuba, or horribly restrictive, as in the case of nationalist pro-war sentiments in the United States during the Vietnam War, is always open to question. Similarly, religions have often included high moral precepts, opportunities for cultural advance, and dispositions toward human solidarity and mutual support. But religions have nonetheless more frequently been dominated by fetishism of gods, rationalizations of oppressive conditions, and manipulation of fear.

As opposed to some communities, racial communities, we should emphasize, cannot be understood even in a first approximation simply in terms of internal determinations. For a "race" is precisely the social product of inter-community relations. For this reason it would be especially pointless to study the American Black community or the American white community without studying the evolution of the interface between them—from slavery, to Jim Crow separatism, to predominantly legal forms of discrimination. Similarly, it is largely fruitless to study the Jewish community apart from anti-Semitism as well as Jewish racism toward Palestinians, nor to study the Palestinian nation without assessing the interface with Israel's Jews. For although all intra-community norms are very much affected by inter-community dynamics, racial communities are in the first instance the product of such dynamics. Robert Allen expressed it as follows:

Ethnocentrism is a form of inward looking narrow mindedness whereas racism involves an outward facing

hierarchical ordering of human beings for the purposes of racial oppression. The former may or may not be a universal facet of human nature, but the latter is definitely socially conditioned. The two should not be confused."⁴²

With some amendments and explication it is reasonable to say we subscribe to this view. Every community will have some inward looking view of itself, and in a hostile and oppressive context, this view will most often be narrow-minded and closed to ideas from without. Racism, on the other hand, is born in the hostile interface *between* communities. It is the view from a dominant community of a community which it dominates, and it is a rationalization of the oppression of the latter community by the former. But the resulting racism also has an inward focused effect.

As one example, consider the process of colonization. Members of one society subject the members of another to complete subordination. The process may initially be economically or politically motivated, but insofar as one community rules and terrorizes another, it also becomes a meeting of communities. Speaking of the Spanish conquest of Mexico, Magnus Morner says: "This colonial reality was characterized...by the dichotomy between conquerors and conquered, masters and servants or slaves.... People were classified in accordance with the color of their skin, with the white masters occupying the highest stratum. Theoretically, each group that could be racially defined would constitute a social stratum of its own."⁴³ Discussing the same instance, Tomas Almaguer argues "that five major *castes* came to characterize the social positions in colonial Mexico...1) peninsular Spanish, 2) criollos, 3) mestizos, 4) mulattos, zambos, and free Negroes, 5) Indios." The point, as Almaguer goes on to argue, is that social class divisions "came to correspond closely to the racial differentiation miscegenation was to produce in the colony," so finally the "division of its labor system came to be defined largely in terms of race."⁴⁴

The colonizer and colonized are therefore produced in the colonial dynamic. The former becomes racist to explain the treatment of the latter. The colonized are found less than human, or at best inferior humans requiring civilized administration from without. Of course it is all a sham that almost always accompanies a

vast rip-off, yet the rationalization is quite real in the minds of the actors. The racism that develops has profound roots in the identities of the colonizer. This racism is, ironically, the only route to self-esteem in the face of the colonizer's barbarism toward "the natives." As Frantz Fanon makes clear, the aim of colonialism is not to deny the indigenous culture entirely, but to degrade and close it. "The aim sought is rather a continued agony than a total disappearance of the pre-existing culture." The culture of the colonized people, "once living and open to the future, becomes closed, fixed in the colonial status, fixed in the yoke of oppression." The paternal superiority of the colonizer is borne out by the stagnation of the colonized culture.⁴⁵

The result among the *colonizers* is a racist overlay upon their own prior culture. And insofar as this racism flies in the face of humanism and the facts, the colonist too must become closed off to truth and sensitivity. "Racism bloats and disfigures the face of the culture that practices it. Literature, the plastic arts, songs for shop-girls, proverbs, habits, patterns, whether they set out to attack it or to vulgarize it, restore racism." The inter-community consciousness becomes a powerful force in the evolution of the oppressor community's own consciousness. And of course it is true for the effect of racism upon the colonized as well. For the *colonized* one route is "the negation of one's own ethnic origins or the art ingredients or cultural qualities of those origins."⁴⁶ The other route is revolt. And in between there is the debilitation of loving and hating oneself at once, of always giving in and rebelling simultaneously. For the colonized the inter-community pressures push one to see oneself as inferior and to emulate the colonizer—he is rich, he is learned, he is powerful; you are downtrodden, your culture closed, your integrity lost, save through identification. Colonization is the archetype oppressive relationship between two communities. Once it is established and has been operative for a considerable time both parties to the relation are powerfully affected. "The social constellation, the cultural whole, are deeply modified by the existence of racism."⁴⁷ Community activity in general produces "cultured people" who share solutions to diverse life problems. They develop a common identity. When inter-community relations are characterized by colonization, the ensuing racism disfigures all institutions of both communities, although one of course more powerfully and harmfully than the other.

According to Harold Cruse the Negro question is *essentially* a cultural question. This doesn't mean Blacks aren't exploited economically. It doesn't for a moment deny they have less political power. It doesn't denigrate the importance of familial norms to the reproduction of racism. It merely makes a useful abstraction from the whole to point out that the best angle to get at the "Negro question" is community. From there we are more likely to see things clearly, to discern the roots of the processes, and to be able to move on to a totalist analysis.⁴⁸

"The one factor which differentiates the Negro's status from that of a pure colonial status is that his position is maintained in the 'home' country in close proximity to the dominant racist group."⁴⁹ This is obviously not a small difference, but it is not gargantuan either. It tells us to expect that Black people likely have mixed perceptions of themselves and of whites.

Dubois said of Black people in the U.S., "one ever feels his twoness—an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder."⁵⁰ The Black person in the U.S., like the more traditional colonized person, is fraught with a tension—to attempt assimilation, the adoption of the oppressor's ways—or to attempt the reassertion of one's own ways via rebellion. Roughly, Black nationalism, like all nationalist responses to community oppression, is an expression of the latter desire; passivity or a movement to assimilationist integration is an expression of the former. James Turner suggests that Black nationalism aims for Black control over the Black community, for Black unity, for Black resistance to subordination or assimilation, and for Black pride in Black history and norms.⁵¹ Integration in the realm of the arts, for example, ignores the racist premises of white art and the fact that assimilation necessarily means self-denial for Blacks. Nationalism in the realm of the arts, on the contrary, notices that white art is generally white supremacist and that in any case Black people have their own art forms to further evolve and advance. There is no need to "integrate."

Black power is a nationalist expression as well. It is not explicitly anti-capitalist, though in our society the profound links between economic and community networks mean that the achievement of Black power would be impossible within capitalist

economic constraints. Still, an analysis seeing nationalist and Black power movements as basically emanating from community forces will have no trouble discerning that such movements have *both* positive and negative potentials. They can be revolutionary with regard to community, and literally reactionary with regard to economics, kinship, or politics—much as class movements can be racist, and women's movements bourgeois. But while a nationalist approach which degenerates into a longing for African homelands is simply escapist, unsuited to effective implementation in the modern age, Black nationalism which stresses the need for a cultural revolution in the interface between the white and the Black community, and which seeks new intra-community definitions freed from both colonizing and colonized residues, can be a mighty force for socialist change in the U.S.⁵²

Understanding racism as a product of the interface between white and Black communities in the U.S. also sheds light on the situation of whites.* White people's cultural identification, ways of viewing themselves, and assumptions about their history and life have all been affected by a three hundred year percolation of racism into all aspects of our culture. To counter racism means more than supporting demands for equality, however important that is. An analogy to the situation of men and women may provide a useful clarification.

When women began confronting men with their sexism in the late-1960s the issues were usually such highly perceptible things as

*Obviously there are also white/Asian, white/Native American, and white/Latino interfaces as well. Indeed though we have chosen to focus on Black/white dynamics, these others are important as well and the relative lack of attention they are receiving is more a function of the limits of our experience and learning than anything else. In many ways the life situation of Latinos in the U.S. is now approximating very closely to that of Blacks as is their population. The immense role of Chicanos in U.S. development is also comparable to that of Blacks—and certainly even if never slaves, Chicanos have been subject to colonial dynamics. For U.S. expansion, annexing half of Mexico, made Chicanos a minority on their own land and effectively a colony at once. Their subsequent contribution to U.S. development in agriculture, mining, and railroad construction and their racial mistreatment are well addressed in Tomas Almaguer, "Class, Race, and Chicano Oppression," in *Socialist Revolution*, No. 25, July-Sept. 1975.

language ("chicks," "broads" etc.), dress (bras, girdles, pants, etc.), and the most direct manifestations between men and women like "door-opening." Then the focus became men not taking women seriously—talking past them in mixed groups and acting as if women were helpless and dumb—and men brutalizing and raping women. Then came an emphasis on men exploiting women for nurturance while robbing women of access to knowledge, income, and power. (One can see the parallel to the manifestations of racism confronted by the Black movement a few years earlier.) But finally the women's movement began to suggest to men that male supremacy affected not only their behavior toward women, *but almost everything about themselves*. How men see the world, think, carry themselves; their personality, style, modes of expression, self awareness; how men compare themselves to others and how they feel, were all said to be infected by male supremacy. The dynamics of kinship had affected everything about men and women, not only things related to their direct interaction.

Black people have been saying the same thing to white people for some time now. But since Blacks aren't usually in as close proximity to whites as women to men, they have had a harder time communicating this penetration of white personality by racism. Yet one has only to watch Richard Pryor mimic whites to know that he understands something important about the very essence of "white culture," however much he may be parodying it for laughs.* The hostility that exists between whites and Blacks in the U.S. is not simply an economic phenomenon. Within prisons, for example, every inmate knows full well that racism is used by the warden and guards to divide and weaken them and thereby substantially reduce their well-being. They know all this, yet they stay separated despite the evident "material" loss. The whites are not about to admit that their community norms are infected with racism to such an extent that the Blacks have reason to not want to be around them, to not want to even eat at their tables, for example, even if the overt racism is kept under control. And so the separation, materially detrimental as it is, continues.

*Charlie Hill, an Oneida, presents a parody of white mores/attitudes/culture in much the same fashion as Pryor, though from a specifically Native American perspective.

It is often debated whether racism is beneficial to just a few whites or to all whites. Certainly it is beneficial to those whites who dominate society, the ruling class. For it does divide workers and thus serve to maintain capitalists' power. Or perhaps we should qualify this a bit. Given the existence of racism, it is put to good use by the capitalists within the economy. Whether a set of capitalist class relations is likely to finally last longer in a racially divided society than in a homogeneous one is unclear. It is plausible that racial divisions can propel revolutionary developments as well as delay them.

But whether or not whites as a whole benefit from racism is a question poorly put. A white racist has a view of the world, of himself or herself, and of Black people that is the product of his or her community involvement over a lifetime. Short of a revolution, this individual's self-image and psychic balance are well served by racist divisions and relations and highly threatened by anti-racism. Moreover, given the maintenance of capitalism for a period, it is not irrational during that period for whites to feel that there are only so many good jobs, nice houses, good schools, etc., and if these are open to everyone their own chances of getting them will diminish. It is irrelevant that white-black unity can increase the number of good jobs and redistribute wealth to the working class as a whole. The white person can seek this, and still continue to fight to retain the lion's share of the gains for "himself." Indeed, this has been the historical pattern.

No, to overcome racism it is essential to address it directly and fully. We can't make believe it is simply a confusion hoisted upon us which we can easily set aside. There can be no "end-run." We must uncover the processes by which the search for self-image and identity in a race-stratified society produce white supremacist racism, condescending white liberalism, Black passivity, and Black nationalism, as well as the process by which active practice can produce new community identifications for whites.

Manning Marable says of Blacks that "creating a positive, constructive image of blackness within the media must be viewed as a political effort."⁵³ Such a cultural revolution is necessary but not sufficient. In the first place kinship, economic, and political relations also help to reproduce racism and must be altered as well. In the second place the cultural revolution must occur on both sides of

the community line, for Blacks but also for whites. As Blacks must assert their own culture and integrity rather than assimilating to white supremacy, so whites must reevaluate their culture. Whites must confront the effects of racism within themselves, and purge their racism rather than purging the most vulgar racists. This will only be possible if activists develop an analysis of culture as rooted in community relations and in efforts to meet human needs, even if in debased environments, and if we also stay sensitive to the other factors critical to the reproduction of racism and affected by its reproduction.*

For it is true that when extended the institutions of the community, of all communities within society, obviously encompass the institutions of the other spheres as well. As we saw earlier, along with commodities racism is also produced in the factory and along with laws racism is produced in the state. But the reverse penetration holds as well. The Black community itself is not homogeneous. The experience of being Black is different for Black men and Black women. Seeing Black people as paradigm proletarians is foolish since the Black community itself is class stratified—in particular there are many Blacks in intermediate positions "above the working class."⁵⁴ Some Black nationalist movements are aimed only at helping a few Blacks rise up the class hierarchy while the rest sweat below.⁵⁵ In this they are no different than some feminist movements which have a bourgeois (and racist) side. Yet feminism aimed only at redefining kinship relations and nationalism aimed only at redefining community relations are both as revolutionary and non-

*"The black and white worlds, although separate and distinct, are too closely intertwined—geographically, politically, and economically—for the social maladies of the one not to affect the other. Both must change if either is to progress to new and liberating social forms.... It goes without saying that black people should not postpone their freedom struggle until white America rouses itself out of its lethargy. On the contrary, blacks should never desist from struggle and agitation. But neither should black people deceive themselves into thinking that simple separation from white society will solve the problem.... In the quest for black liberation, white society cannot be ignored or cast aside with a sigh of relief. It must be changed. Otherwise, the racism and exploitative social relations which characterize that society will defeat even the best efforts of black freedom fighters."

revolutionary as a Marxism aimed only at transforming class relations.*

The extension of community into the factory means that Black and white work roles are impregnated with cultural expectations that reproduce the oppressed situation of Blacks and oppressor situation of whites as surely as they reproduce class divisions. This goes beyond the obvious issue of white foremen for Black work crews, to the fact that, for example, the salesforce of most companies is overwhelmingly white because selling involves socializing with the customers. The point is that economic features that come into accord with community dynamics may also become a very central factor in their reproduction. Consider Richard Nixon's expression of this relationship in the preface to a study conducted for leading corporations in 1959:

In formulating a policy for broader employment of Negroes, a company cannot disregard the conventions and traditions within the community in which it operates. The community imposes itself on companies by providing a setting, both social and political, within which a plant operates. Employees of a company are residents of a community and they and the entire community are vitally concerned, as a matter of their own economic well-being, with the employment opportunities available in the company. Generally, company policy on the employment of Negroes will tend to reflect community attitudes, and reflection must be given to local practices, especially where a company wishes to go beyond them.³⁶

Political decisions and programs, family behavior, and in fact all social activities have to at least conform to community generated

*But such an approach, autonomy in context of a larger united but multifaceted movement, is also contradictory to Leninist norms. Indeed, on two counts Leninism is strategically insufficient to struggles against community oppression. In the first place the vanguard approach precludes an autonomous and leading role for third world people especially to the extent that they proclaim nationalist principles; and in the second, Leninism's insufficient analyses of the roots and processes of community preclude successful struggles against various types of oppressive community behavior (including sectarianism) within Leninist organizations themselves, much less within society as a whole. A proper analysis of the

norms and they may also help reproduce and further develop those norms. The entwining of male sexual privilege with racial dominance patterns is an obvious example. The fight against racism must therefore address all institutions in society; it must be part of a totalist movement with a diversity of aspects. But as Cruse argued in a passage quoted earlier, the struggle against racism will be led by Black and other third world organizations in coalition with other movements, but in no way secondary to them. Such a necessity arises as directly from our analysis as from the world we live in.

We should summarize some of the main theoretical innovations of the discussion to this point. Community is a concept which has many different manifestations and aspects. At the broadest level there is culture in general. With regard to the aesthetic mode, there is art per se. Regarding identification by origin or by socially emphasized characteristics, there is race and ethnicity. Regarding regional differentiation, there are neighborhoods and nations with gradations in between. And finally along what we might call a spiritual and moral axis, there is identification by religion.

In each case these phenomena have their "principal roots" in what we have termed community activity and in the community sphere of daily life. The basic common denominator is the process of people forging a shared identity: sometimes according to their own insular norms, other times according to requirements that emerge from an interface with another group of people, and often with elements of each of these pressures at work. Community activity is no more isolatable than economic, kinship, or political activity in either its effects, impacts, or reproduction. Yet, like them, it is sufficiently critical to warrant designation as a core moment of social life. The sphere of community activity and the network of community institutions is often as central to the character of social life and social possibilities within a country as are the spheres of kinship, economics, and politics. Moreover, it penetrates each of these other spheres often helping in their definition.

links in mode of perception and conceptualization between sectarianism and racism, for example, between vanguardism and segregation, has yet to be done. But we would nonetheless contend that there is a reasonably clear parallel and interpenetration of causes, one that should not come as a surprise since Leninist organizational forms and aims are products of people living in oppressive societies, inculcated with the norms of those societies, and self-consciously disdainful of the need for self-criticism of their organizations along these lines.

Returning to the different possible community demarcations, these may be characterized a bit further. "Culture" actually refers to their totality, and to the community manifestations of class, kin, and authority dynamics as well. It seems useful, on the other hand, to reserve the term "art" for aspects of culture which are created for the conscious purpose of communicating with what we might call the human aesthetic sensibility. The fact that these creations also carry information meant for our historical and analytic sensibilities is secondary and not essential for their designation as art. "Ethnicity" seems to us to be most useful as a term referring to the creation of a community along lines which have to do with national origin and which then, however, transcend any geographic border. "Race," in this lexicon, should refer to those divisions which are a function of *relations between groups* embodying hierarchy and the use of physical features (socially chosen) for differentiation. "Nationalism," on the other hand, might best refer to community identification which *does* relate to a geographic boundary, whether one which exists or one which is desired—though of course, in fact the word nationalism has most often been used more generally to refer to a host of different kinds of community identification, especially when such identification becomes militant in its outward expression. Finally, "religion" seems to refer to a form of community which has both a cerebral and a spiritual side. In most instances of religious affiliation there need be neither a geographic origin, nor a physical characteristic, nor any other such trait held in common. Rather, what is required is simply a shared adherence to a particular body of thought and catalog of behaviors and customs. In this sense, religion is the most self-consciously social of the various community designations, recognizing as it does the possibility of "joining" and of "leaving" the community.

We make no pretense to having clarified the details of the character of community organizations or their operation, whether the church, the neighborhood gathering, the media, the ghetto, the school or any others. For the most part we haven't even mentioned these, much less analyzed them. Nor have we fully clarified the interrelations between community formations and types, nor their interface with other critical dimensions of social life. Part of the reason for this incompleteness of our discussion is certainly our relative lack of experience and knowledge of these matters. But

there is another issue as well, one which distinguishes the study of community relations as compared, for example, to the study of kin, economic, or political relations.

With the latter three spheres there is generally an institution or a set of institutions which sets the parameters of the determinations of what interests and characteristics the evolved social group will have. Of course it isn't a mechanical simple determination, but in these cases it is generally possible to locate, label, and theoretically understand the functioning of institutions like the factory, state, and family as they relate in turn to economic, political, and kinship activity. These institutions can be x-rayed, in a sense, to show alternative economic, political, and kinship structures and associated role offerings which in turn tell us a great deal about the likely character of class, political, and sexual differentiations among citizens. But with community, the fourth sphere, things are different. There are only groups interfacing in endless ways which depend upon both the inward- and outward-looking relationships between the people involved. There is no single defining structure or set of structures that always recurs and can be labeled and easily dissected to show differences from one country, region, or race to another. There will always be specific institutions but in each new case they will have to be faced as if for the first time—always with fresh eyes rather than a "textbook preconception" of the sort which can indeed be useful in addressing the other spheres, particularly the economy. As a result it is difficult to avoid being either quite abstract or quite specific about matters of community. The middle ground discussion one can enter with regard to class relations, for example, applicable as a broad summary to all societies of a particular kind, is simply not attainable in discussions of culture. In any case short of a more complete theory and analysis, we have at least argued the importance of a sphere of social life that deserves critical attention both at the level of theory and social practice, and we have shown some of the failings that arise when this sphere is not given the serious attention it demands.

As a conclusion to this discussion of community theory, and to the theoretical discussions of the past three chapters as well, it is fitting to point out the greatest weakness of our work to date. Though we have put forward a framework emphasizing both an autonomous analysis of four spheres and *also of their interactive*

relations, we have hardly begun to address the second part of this research program. At the broad level there are two areas of investigation we have in mind. First, community does not form in a vacuum isolated from prior effects governed by political, economic, and kin dynamics. What is the meaning for the logic of development of community groups that their members are also members of classes, kin groups, and political demarcations? And of course, the same question must be asked in turn for each other principal focus as well. What difference does it make for the operation of class demarcation, for example, that economic actors are also members of groups defined primarily by the historical evolution of other spheres of daily life? Second, however, how do community dynamics manifest themselves as additional moments to activity in other spheres? What is the community moment of class formation? It would seem, just to take this instance, that while classes evolve material interests and certain ideological perspectives from their particular economic position and activity, they also evolve a cultural dimension which transcends those economic positions and arises instead from their group dynamics and cultural innovations, that is, from the community moment of their class definition. Likewise, one must also investigate the community penetration of the definition of the very economic roles which precipitate class formations. Finally the reverse is also true, economic dynamics will affect community roles and an economic moment will help to fill out the defining character of all community activity. But to finally approach a holistic understanding, a totalist analysis is required. The difficulty of attaining such a goal shouldn't dissuade us from its pursuit, and the value of the partial syntheses we evolve in route, should help motivate the quest.

Community and the Orthodox Socialist Vision

Demands for socialism fail to impress many Blacks in the United States. Would there be on-going racism or assimilation? Certainly one or the other, for where is the socialist who speaks clearly of a serious alternative?

Historically, as we have discussed, community relations have come into being in diverse ways, but ethnic, racial, religious, and national community forms have most often taken shapes detrimental to human well-being. They have had a we-versus-they

character. Providing a base for self-identification and sometimes even resistance to oppression, they have also often impeded experimentation and mutual learning between groups. Internal community cohesion has as often as not rested on a notion of self as superior or inferior to some other religion, nation, or race generating a catechism approach to self-definition. And external relations between different communities have been even worse, hostile to the point of grotesque forms of violence.

What should socialists do about community relations? Are present forms to be fostered, opposed, remolded, allowed to develop on their own, or repressed?

The orthodox socialist answer to these questions derives from the underlying orthodox theory of culture and economic primacy. As culture reflects economic relations, culture under socialism should reflect socialist economic relations. But religion is essentially bourgeois escapism. It is simply a means of rationalization of horrid circumstances, a way to give a thorn the appearance of a rose, or to justify the prick. Religion will disappear as this need passes. Similarly, racism and national identification are only means of dividing working people. They serve only false needs produced by bourgeois circumstances and bourgeois manipulation. Under socialism such identification should also pass. Of course, one must be patient. It takes time. The superstructure does not immediately follow the base—but it will eventually, and to aim in that direction is both reasonable and desirable.

So the most prevalent "socialist" answer for the existence of communities is to seek something we label "cultural homogenization." They have different names for it depending on the focus: working class culture, proletarian internationalism, and socialist realism are some. Local community forms are seen as backward, impeding the development of more general solidarity. There is perhaps a recognized right to "national self-determination," but it is a holdover right, a liberal right, one that is expected to become inoperative as time passes, and one whose implementation is seen not as a good in and of itself but as a tactical necessity for achieving working class solidarity in light of the legacy of previous imperialist caste oppression.⁶⁰ In any case, it becomes a weak second order principle at best, in the practice of most "socialist" governments.

The active aim becomes reduction of many cultures, ethnic and racial groups to one, of many religions to none. The goal is a society of socialists whose internal cohesion comes from an undivided identification with only the entire community. In the world of "art" the function of "socialist realism" has been to depict proletarian life as a realistic heaven of successful collective human struggle no matter the obstacles. The form is plain and the mode consciously reflective. The best art is the art that best teaches class consciousness—as defined by the most knowledgeable political authorities. There is no texture. Variety is threatening.

In theory, homogenization comes by "raising" the well being and the cultural standards of less "developed" internal communities, slowly integrating them into the dominant culture. Assimilation is not to be coercive. It is to be made desirable so it will be freely chosen over a reasonable period of time. In fact, however, the tenacity of ethnic, national, and religious cultures, and the elitist paternal mentality of vanguard leadership combine to make short work of the tolerant and voluntary aspects of this approach. In the end, the reduction of community to a single set of socialist norms is likely to be only partially accomplished even with doses of force accompanying the rhetoric of peaceful accommodation.

However, a proper verification of this chapter's worth, and of this final section's brief account of "homogenization," can only come through historical analyses of "existing socialism" and projections of an alternative "intercommunalist" community vision. These tasks are undertaken in the companion volume we will describe in the next and final chapter of this book.

SEVEN:

CONCLUSION AND ANALYTIC PROGRAM

People's lives are in turmoil. There is a sense of crisis for men as well as for women, and for children too. Do we have a line or even a glimmering about how people can and should live, not as victims as in the past for women, nor as atoms just whirling around on their own trajectories, but as members of a human community and as moral agents in that community?

Barbara Ehrenreich

In the first chapter of this volume we discussed a variety of philosophical issues concerning Marxism, science, and social theory. Paralleled by many subthemes, the paramount argument was that a rejuvenated social theory sufficient to contemporary socialist needs would have to transcend economism in all its guises and weave a number of complimentary analyses into a totalist framework. In the second chapter we set out such a theory premised on a fourfold conceptualization of history and couched in a manner suited to use in contemporary industrialized societies. However, being very brief, this presentation had to be augmented in two ways in the following four chapters. First, it was necessary to critically evaluate *existing* theories of each of the focused spheres, and second, we had to further elaborate each side of the new totalist theory as well.

In chapter three we discussed politics, economics in chapter four, kinship in five, and community in chapter six. In each instance we criticized a variety of existing theories and models and elaborated our own alternative. Though the discussions were too brief to permit inclusion of extensive detail, hopefully this sacrifice was offset by the unusual scope of the presentation. In any case, a second sacrifice within this volume, the relative paucity of historical examples and analyses, will hopefully be alleviated by the existence of a companion volume, *Socialism Today and Tomorrow*. For there we test our theories more concretely. In three historical chapters we examine the post-revolutionary experiences of the Soviet Union, China, and Cuba including political, economic, kinship, and community spheres. Hopefully these case studies show the practical meaning of our approach, demonstrate its power, and also provide an encompassing analysis of the three most important examples of "existing socialism."