

Fiction's First Finale

"The good ended happily, and the bad unhappily," said Oscar Wilde. "That is what Fiction means."

October 21

By the time the Civil War was over and industrial capitalism had literally burned the center of agrarian capitalism to the ground, most of the emergent bourgeoisie realized that "public education" was a more suitable institution than slavery had ever been for the domination of labor, and that immigrants were a particularly ingenious solution, since they not only became cheap labor, replacing the truncated bodies of recent war, but needed to be educated as well. Of course, executing even this form of domination was by no means easy, since "public education" was merely another name for compulsory education; there was a prolonged struggle, and as a struggle it was frequently harsh, indeed deadly. Working class parents physically overpowered their children's teachers in sporadic attempts to control their education, only to be slapped in the face with *in loco parentis* powers for the teachers. In an early version of the 'programmed text', immigrant employees of International Harvester were forced to learn English by reciting the litany of Big Business: I work until the whistle blows to quit; I leave my place nice and clean; I work until the whistle blows to quit; I leave my place nice and clean. There were numerous strikes against educational policies, some of which were bloody. But by various means of coercion and manipulation the bourgeoisie prevailed, and consciousness was gradually cut to fit the suffocating movements of mechanized labor. Reality edged closer to the flatness of Manet's "revolutionary" new paintings, sanity became a little more iron-clad; and by the end of the Civil War the sweat and blood of competitive capitalism was beginning to congeal into monopoly capitalism.

September 24

"I must study politics and war," John Adams had said in 1782, "that my sons may have the liberty to study mathematics and philosophy... in order to give their children a right to study

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Organization: A Collective Working Paper

Many artists are, for many reasons, organizing themselves into "groups", "unions", communalities, or perhaps just talking possibilities. But, for the most part, "organization" has no particular significance per se. No aspiring "rank and file"-high-culture-social-section-alliance can be realistic if its principles of organization fail to take into account the class historical nature of the process it is initiating.

Those enlisted in the high-cultural ranks know the contradictions mounted by a predatory capitalist culture: the intentions of our working are carefully, and violently misrepresented. We become forces opposed to ourselves. We are exploited at the same time that we are forced into exploitative relations to

others. We are unable to translate human needs into social outcomes. Our social alienation forces us into adopting forms of psychological expression.

For the Cultural "Marxists", New Left and all, the "fight" against alienation has become the panacea for society's "ills". But a psychological manifestation of alienation doesn't make alienation a psychological condition. Nor can it be rationalized and passed off, via the usual bourgeois claptrap, as the unfortunate by-product of "mass-production" culture. It is no unfortunate by-product at all, it is the very warp and weft of capitalist social and economic relations. It penetrates all social sections fatally. Thus, this en-

(Continued on p. 27)

This is the first issue of a magazine being edited and published by some of the former editors of *The Fox*. Why are we publishing another magazine?

While it is true to say that most of our production and history is appropriated, this process is certainly never air-tight. In any struggle against such appropriation, progressive forces emerge and coalesce. There may be little we can do to stop this magazine from becoming another coffee-table class diversion; there is much we can do to make sure that isn't all it becomes. Of course the forms this struggle takes are of necessity transitional, as *Red-Herring* is transitional.

We aren't volunteering here as the "organic intellectuals" of any cultural struggle or movement; nor are we claiming that our activities assume any logical priority in this struggle. In fact, we clearly recognize that what we are doing should, like everything else "made-in-New York", be regarded in many ways as yet another red-herring.

The first issue is devoted to the growing impact of state and corporate involvement in various aspects of culture, and the problems of organizing against this. *Museum Services...Natural Forms*, the first in a projected series of articles on Congressional legislation for the arts, analyzes the implications of a specific piece of legislation, the Museum Services Act. There is also a brief survey of other bills, both passed and pending, which are intended to affect the development of culture.

On the otherhand, Congressional legislation must be seen in conjunction with the federal grant system, and, as told by *Albert's Progress*, this grant system does as much as anything to control the lives of artists. But then *all* these cultural "incentives" can be seen as part of a process of concealing, while at the same time legitimizing, the productive relations of capitalism. Criticisms of bourgeois materialism are increasingly countered by bourgeois idealism, and high art has become a crucial factor in this process. This issue of idealization is taken up at length by *Fiction's First Finale*.

In the face of these developments; there has been a lot of talk about artists organizing. Some of these problems are discussed in *Organization: A Collective Working Paper*. This article, written from perhaps an overly optimistic point of view and itself reflecting some of the idealization of culture, nevertheless raises a number of substantive issues about organization. In addition, although the struggle of artists to organize ourselves economically should play a secondary role to organizing ourselves ideologically and politically, economic struggles do have their place. So we have also edited and reprinted an analysis of the San Francisco Art Commission, which projects primarily economic demands against the back-drop of cultural policies in that city.

While we work as a collective, and thus attribute our articles to the group instead of to individuals within the group, collectivity should be understood as a form of struggle. Our ideology is generally agreed upon, but there are always points where we disagree, too. At the moment, we are arguing over the correct analysis of the material conditions which act to organize culture; that is, we are arguing over the extent to which the high art world is objectively being pushed in the direction of wage-labor, or whether it is at all. This disagreement emerges in the articles as a contrasting emphasis on the State, as well as a divergence over the possibility of "trade union-like" organizations amounting to much in the high art world. We do, however, see these disagreements reflecting a larger problem -- namely, that there is no coherent class analysis of the United States yet. Although we hope our struggle will participate in developing such an analysis, it presently tends to reflect the disarray of this analysis.

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ANIMAL FARM - A REVIEW (SORT OF)

WHY ANIMAL FARM? MOST OF US READ IT YEARS AGO. WE READ IT BECAUSE WE WANTED TO. TODAY IT IS REQUIRED READING AT MANY OF THE SCHOOLS OUR CHILDREN GO TO. WHY? PERHAPS ITS MOST COMPELLING FEATURE IS THAT IT EMBODIES THE FEARS MOST OF US SUCCUMB TO ABOUT REVOLUTION—SOME OF US MORE OPENLY THAN OTHERS. THOSE FEARS OF AUTHORITARIANISM, TERROR AND SO ON. BUT WHAT ARE THESE FEARS BASED ON? DO THEY HAVE HISTORICAL SUBSTANCE? WHAT DID ORWELL BASE HIS FEARS ON AND ARE THEY HISTORICALLY ACCURATE?

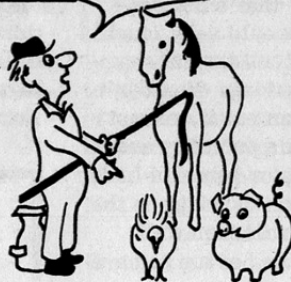


AS YOU KNOW ANIMAL FARM IS AN ALLEGORY. ORWELL USED ANIMALS TO PORTRAY THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION AND THE...

JUST A MINUTE, COMRADE, LET US TELL THE STORY, AFTER ALL IT WAS OUR REVOLUTION

WORK, WORK, WORK, OR YOU WON'T GET YOUR MUSH.

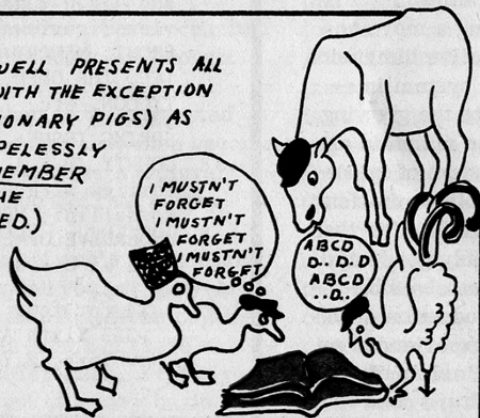
MR. ORWELL IS PRETTY SNEAKY. HE CONVINCINGLY DESCRIBES OUR EXPLOITATION UNDER HUMANS (CAPITALISTS TO YOU) AND REPRESENTS OLD MAJOR (MARX) AS A SYMPATHETIC AND WISE OLD PIG WHO LAYS DOWN THE FOUNDATIONS OF ANIMALISM.



SO FAR SO GOOD BUT THAT'S AS FAR AS IT GOES.

HERE'S HOW MR ORWELL REPRESENTS HISTORY:

FIRST: MR ORWELL PRESENTS ALL THE ANIMALS (WITH THE EXCEPTION OF US REVOLUTIONARY PIGS) AS DUMB AND HOPELESSLY GULLIBLE (REMEMBER THESE ARE THE WORKERS. — ED.)



SECOND: THE COMMANDMENTS (REVOLUTIONARY PRINCIPLES—ED) OF ANIMALISM WHICH MR. ORWELL HAD GUIDE OUR ACTIONS WERE SILLY UTOPIAN WET DREAMS (HIS), HISTORICALLY INACCURATE AND COMPLETELY DEVOID OF ANY POLITICAL CONTENT—FOR THE MOST PART THEY CONCERNED APPEARANCE AND GOOD MANNERS—HARDLY SOMETHING TO RUN A REVOLUTION BY.

UNDERLYING ORWELL'S COMMANDMENTS IS A UTOPIAN PRIMITIVISM—THE OLD RED-HERRING ABOUT THE EVILS OF TECHNOLOGY, ETC. —ED.

WHAT'S WRONG WITH CLOTHES AND A GOOD BED? MAYBE WE SHOULD EAT GRUEL TO BE GOOD COMMUNISTS?



THIRD:

HE CONVENIENTLY FORGOT ABOUT ME.



MR. ORWELL'S OMISSION OF LENIN IS ESPECIALLY STRANGE SINCE HE PUT SO MUCH VALUE ON INDIVIDUALS — ED.

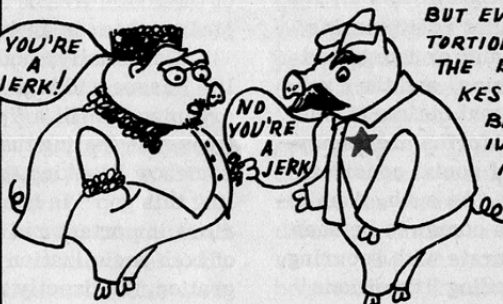
FOURTH: MR ORWELL MAKES THE HUMANS (CAPITALISTS) EASY TO DEFEAT TIME AND AGAIN, AS IF REVOLUTION IS JUST A MATTER OF 'MAKING UP YOUR MIND.' (WHICH IS TO CONCLUDE THAT THE FORCES OF THE ENTIRE IMPERIALIST WORLD, AND LATER THE FASCISTS, DID LITTLE IN THEIR MASSIVE ATTACKS.)



YOU'RE A JERK!

NO YOU'RE A JERK

BUT EVEN WORSE THIS DISTORTION ALLOWS FOR ALL THE BLAME FOR MISTAKES AND PROBLEMS TO BE PUT ONTO INDIVIDUAL PERSONALITIES AND THEIR CONFLICTS, RATHER THAN ON OBJECTIVE CONDITIONS.



FIFTH: MR ORWELL UNDER PLAYS THE ENEMIES OF ANIMALISM AMONGST THE ANIMALS. SO IT SEEMS THE ONLY ENEMIES ARE THE REVOLUTIONARIES THEMSELVES. CONVENIENTLY (ONCE AGAIN) FORGETTING SUCH CHARACTERS AS THE REMNANT BOURGEOISIE, THE PETTY BOURGEOISIE, CROOKS, PIMPS, AND SO ON.



WHO'S AFRAID OF THE BIG RED WOLF?

SIXTH: MR. ORWELL APPARENTLY EXPECTS A REVOLUTION TO CREATE THE PERFECT SOCIETY VIRTUALLY OVERNIGHT— WITH NO TRANSITIONAL PROBLEMS, FORGETTING THAT 'ANIMALS' (PEOPLE) HAVE INTERNALIZED BOURGEOIS VALUES. A POLITICAL REVOLUTION IS ONLY THE FIRST STEP IN A SOCIAL REVOLUTION— THE STEP WHICH ESTABLISHES THE POLITICAL CONDITIONS FOR A SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION.



I DON'T SEE WHY I HAVE TO STOP CHASING GEESSE, AFTER ALL IT'S 'NATURAL'!

UNFORTUNATELY, OR FORTUNATELY FOR MR. ORWELL, ANIMAL FARM (U.S.S.R. REMEMBER—EQ) HAS REVERTED TO STATE CAPITALISM BUT NOT WITHOUT HAVING FIRST ACHIEVED MAJOR REVOLUTIONARY STEPS:—

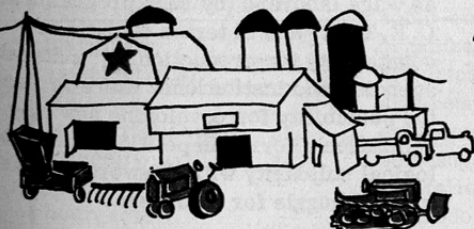


IT WAS THE FIRST SUCCESSFUL SOCIALIST REVOLUTION TO SIEZE STATE POWER

IT ELIMINATED PRIVATE PROPERTY, EXPLOITATION, AND THOSE 'WONDERFUL' PEOPLE, THE FEUDAL RULING CLASS, AS WELL AS THE SMALL-BUT-GROWING INDEPENDENT CAPITALIST CLASS.



IT BROUGHT 'THE FARM' (U.S.S.R.) OUT OF FEUDAL SOCIETY AND INTO MODERN SOCIETY



IT RAISED THE STANDARD OF LIVING AND EDUCATION FOR ALL 'ANIMALS'!



AND GAVE REVOLUTIONARY INSPIRATION TO THE WORLD.

BUT SOCIALISM DID COME TO FLOUNDER 'ON THE FARM', BUT FOR REASONS THAT ORWELL COULDN'T OR WASN'T PREPARED TO TALK ABOUT....



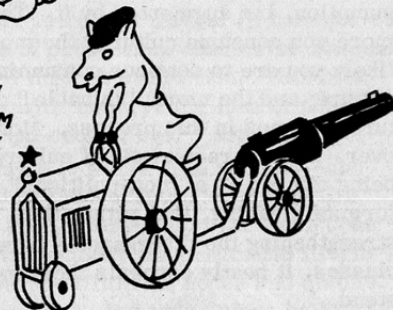
FLOUNDER? WHAT'S THAT, ANOTHER RED-HERRING?



....IMPERIALIST INTERVENTION, CONTINUAL ECONOMIC SANCTIONS AND LATER THE FASCIST INVASION FROM WITHOUT; UNDERDEVELOPED INDUSTRY AND AGRICULTURE, COMPOUNDED BY FAMINE, FROM WITHIN.



THIS PUSHED 'THE FARM' TOWARDS THE SHORT TERM GAINS, OF RAPID AND HEAVY MILITARIZATION AND INDUSTRIALIZATION, WHICH TENDED TO REINFORCE BOURGEOIS RELATIONS OF PRODUCTION WITHIN SOCIALISM.



ADD TO THIS THE INEVITABLE MISTAKES OF A PIONEER SOCIALIST COUNTRY—THERE EMERGED A BUREAUCRATIC ELITE WHICH CONSOLIDATED ITSELF AS THE NEW RULING CLASS OF 'THE FARM.'



BUT MANY LESSONS WERE LEARNED FROM ANIMAL FARM (U.S.S.R.) NOW THERE ARE NEW 'FARMS' AND THEY'RE WORKING.

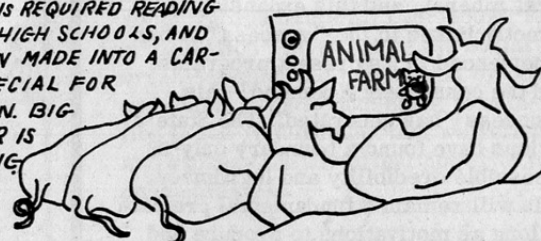


ANY NEW BOOKS GEORGE?



SO BY REDUCING HISTORY TO THE DRAMA OF PERSONALITIES, BY MAKING WORKERS DUMB AND HOPELESS, BY AVOIDING REAL ANALYSIS OF MATERIAL CONDITIONS ... ETC. MR. ORWELL BRILLIANTLY CONCLUDES THAT REVOLUTION CAN ONLY MAKE THINGS WORSE —BRILLIANTLY, THAT IS, FOR HIS OWN CLASS.

NO WONDER THIS BOOK OF MR. ORWELL'S IS REQUIRED READING IN MOST HIGH SCHOOLS, AND HAS BEEN MADE INTO A CARTOON SPECIAL FOR TELEVISION. BIG BROTHER IS WATCHING.



Museum Services...

(Continued from p. 23)

But I'm sure that there's an element of that in it." (Dr. Richard McLanathan; in an interview.)

Indeed, the interesting things about high culture is that it represent a "use-value" which isn't depleted through consumption, but augmented by it. The more you consume culture, the more likely you are to continue consuming culture; and the more "valuable" culture becomes in this process. Moreover, it is characteristic of culture in being offered as a "non-political" form of meaning, that rather than strengthening the divergencies between classes, it neatly conceals them instead.

The Shape of Things to Come

"I don't think that those people in Congress would be as enthusiastic supporters of this legislation helpful to museums, if they weren't concerned that they were answering a very definite understandable want on the part of the general public. Which is great, I think it's all very optimistic." (Dr. Richard McLanathan; in an interview.)

It certainly seems that agencies such as the N.E.A. and legislation such as the M.S.A. will be with us for awhile. As one manifestation of various crisis-avoidance tactics (management form), the State acting on behalf of monopoly capitalism cannot permit these programs (or others that are obviously "successes") to fail. In light of the fact that this principle of organization is a demand internal to monopoly capitalism, the State has had no choice but to take such programs upon itself; a failure to do so, or to continue to do so, could lead to a severe withdrawal of "public" sympathy (which was so hard to generate in the first place). In a sense, the State has initiated an expanding spiral of new areas of funding (and certainly not only in the socio-cultural sphere), and this expansion is directly linked to the "success" it has experienced in its present programs and the consequent "demand" this "success" has generated. The State's actions have found a boundary only in accessible credibility and legitimacy. This will remain a fundamental premise as long as motivations to produce and consume remain tied to relationships

which require extensive justification.

But general consent and compromise have been (temporarily) secured. The widening of the Administrative system's boundaries is seen and promoted as a "natural" and "necessary" process. As Carol Bannerman said, "People are increasingly expecting culture as a right of citizenship and of course this is augmented by increasing governmental support." Cultural affairs have been neatly shifted into the Administrative sphere of planning and control. At the same time, you would think, the potential for sorting out "traditions" which were previously obfuscated or viewed as "neutral" should increase. But the Administrative filtering of economically conditioned crises has in general made the fronts of repeatedly fragmented and compromised class opposition less comprehensible. The class compromise of cultural intervention has in part functioned to further weaken any organizational capacity or possibility of challenging the legitimization process; the class contradictions of this society which are the real source of the deficit in legitimacy have been temporarily mystified.

But, as we have said, all this peabodying on the part of the bourgeoisie and the State is not without its progressive elements. The bourgeois State cannot organize social reality without

intensifying the contradictions of capitalism. As far as the organization of high culture goes, the effects of this intensification are already being felt. The contradiction of the State's real intervention in the service of monopoly capital vs. its responsibility to "generalizable" interests is working to politicize the artworld (at least individual artists), and although this consciousness may in general be in an embryonic form, it is an ascending tendency. For example, the ease with which "political art" was coopted is forcing artists to reevaluate their particular relation to the class struggle in general. In addition, this onslaught of public funding has opened the door for the development of public consciousness in relation to accountability, which was less possible under essentially private funding of "public" institutions and programs. There is also the possibility for the development of new social relations among artists. As artists are becoming increasingly organized by the State, both as wage laborers (by such programs as C.E.T.A.) and in terms of their accountability for production to "cultural" agencies and institutions, there arises the possibility for developing new organizational forms in political and ideological solidarity with the working class in the struggle for socialism.

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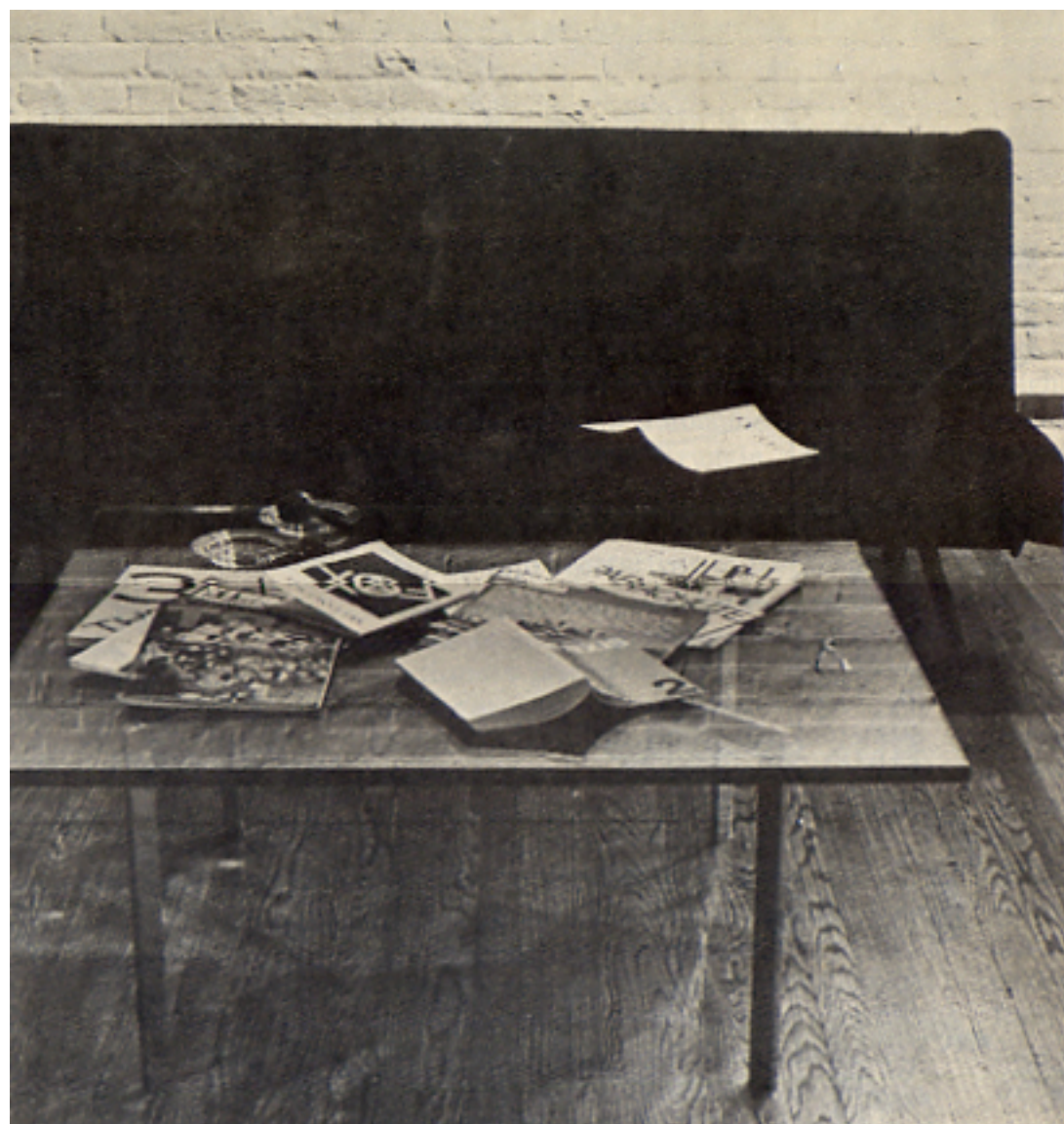
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