

## Marxism in a Lost Century

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# Marxism in a Lost Century

*A Biography of Paul Mattick*

*By*

Gary Roth



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# List of Abbreviations

AAUD	Allgemeine Arbeiter Union Deutschlands (General Workers Union of Germany)
AAUE	Allgemeine Arbeiter Union-Einheitsorganization (General Workers Union-Unity Organisation)
AFL	American Federation of Labor
APCF	Anti-Parliamentary Communist Federation
AWP	American Workers Party
CAZ	<i>Chicagoer Arbeiterzeitung (Chicago Workers Paper)</i>
CIO	Congress of Industrial Organisations
EVA	Europäische Verlagsanstalt
FAUD	Freie Arbeiter-Union Deutschlands (Free Workers Union of Germany)
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation
FSJ	Freie Sozialistische Jugend (Free Socialist Youth)
FWP	Federal Writers Project
ICC	<i>International Council Correspondence</i>
IISH	International Institute of Social History
IWW	Industrial Workers of the World
KAPD	Kommunistische Arbeiter Partei Deutschlands (Communist Workers' Party of Germany)
KAUD	Kommunistische Arbeiter Union Deutschlands (Communist Workers' Union of Germany)
KAZ	<i>Kommunistische Arbeiter Zeitung (Communist Workers' Paper)</i>
KPD	Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands (Communist Party of Germany)
SDS	Students for a Democratic Society (United States) Sozialistische Deutsche Studentenbund (Socialist Students Federation—West Germany)
WEA	Worker Educational Association of Chicago
UWP	United Workers Party

## About the Notes

- [brackets] indicate whenever I have added or changed parts of a quote.
- () indicates the source of a letter, either an archive or an individual. Letters from individuals have been given to the International Institute of Social History in Amsterdam.
- letters in Mattick's IISH collection appear without parentheses.
- for Mattick's bibliography, see: Buckmiller, 'Bibliographie der Schriften von Paul Mattick 1924–1981'. I have placed an amended version of this bibliography with the IISH.
- interviews of Mattick by Michael Buckmiller and Claudio Pozzoli, and my conversations with Ilse Mattick and Paul Mattick, Jr., are referred to repeatedly throughout the book.
- book citations without page cites indicate books that have been used extensively. The indexes to these books are indispensable.
- it became customary in Mattick's correspondence from the mid-1940s on to address letters to all family members, for instance: Dins and Mary (Wheeler) or Gabriel and Joyce (Kolko), even though only one person was the primary correspondent. In the notes, I indicate the primary letter writer or recipient.





1 *Paul Mattick in 1973.*

COURTESY OF KARLA DORIS RAB.



## Introduction

Socialism is no illusion, but a way of behavior. To ask whether socialism is possible is to ask wrongly. It is better to ask whether socialists are possible, and if they are, the cause is never lost.<sup>1</sup>

All left history functions as a form of nostalgia, simultaneously inspirational and impossible to replicate. Once asked for a background sketch, Paul Mattick stated: ‘it is far better to deal with the past, if at all, in connection with contemporary problems that have some urgency.’<sup>2</sup> I use Mattick’s life story to retell the history of the radical left in the twentieth century, or at least that part of the radical left with which Mattick was involved. The relevance of the past for the present, of social movements in formation and the desire to alter existing society root and branch, remains my ongoing concern.<sup>3</sup>

If on the one hand, this biography is a history of bygone eras in which a radicalised working class still constituted a hope for the future, it finds its justification in more current events, namely the reconfiguration in recent decades of the world’s population into a vast working class that extends into the middle classes in the industrialised countries and the pools of underemployed agricultural workers everywhere else. Of late, this class has come to share the rudiments of a common language, similar preferences in music, overlapping technologies for communicating, and consumption choices that are produced by a limited number of global concerns. It also suffers from economic and environmental deprivations that stem from the same deeply-entrenched causes.

Paul Mattick (1904–81) was an adolescent during the German revolutions that followed the First World War. He was a recent émigré to the United States during the depression of the 1930s, when the unemployed groups in which he participated were among the most dynamic manifestations of social unrest. The German events are heavily documented, and I have indicated in footnotes some of the outstanding work that has been written over the last half century. These events stretched for five intense years, from 1918–23, or seven years if one counts the anti-war strikes and demonstrations, food riots, and radical

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1 Mattick, ‘50 Years of Walter Boelke’ (SUNY-Albany), greetings sent on the occasion of Walter Boelke’s birthday, 1955.

2 Mattick to Paul Buhle, 4 March 1967 (WHS).

3 Lopes and Roth 2000.

agitations that began in earnest in 1916. Mattick belonged to several groups that came into prominence during the brief periods of revolutionary upswing. Many of the activities in which he took part—the workplace expropriations and thefts, agitational tours, and efforts to foster new waves of strikes—were attempts to rekindle a rebellion that had been beaten back repeatedly. Mattick later wrote extensively about these developments, which he thought were worthy of much greater attention than they have received.

What Mattick brings to this history is an understanding of the vicissitudes of working-class thinking and behaviour. His commentaries—expressed in some six hundred essays, book reviews, and interviews composed over a fifty-year period—provide a centre of gravity for a history often confused in its retelling. This is especially true for the 1930s, during which the working class in the United States shunned left-wing ideologies and organisations. The existing literature, whether focused on these developments, on left organisations, or on issues such as working-class ethnicity, citizenship, and culture, is not altogether helpful in plotting changes within the working class. Too much happened at once, with radical upswings often over before observers even took note. Bursts of revolutionary activity were mostly quite brief in duration—a mere eight months in one place, eighteen months in another, two and a half years at the outermost, a feature true for both the United States and for Germany. Mattick provides markers for the various twists and turns in his many publications.

I pursue three biographical themes in particular. The first is the self-taught nature of left-wing activity. Mattick's knowledge of theory, economics, history, and politics was acquired through study groups, reading circles, lectures, debates, and publications organised and produced by the radical movements of his day. Mattick's formal education ended with the onset of adolescence. In the United States, he faced the additional burden of learning English, something he attempted only after he emigrated. Because capitalism is also a history of mass migrations across continents, diasporas, and the flow of people from the countryside into the cities, I have followed Mattick's language-acquisition difficulties in some detail. I have also kept quotes in their original form, since the mis-handling of language is an integral part of the modern experience. Fifteen years after his emigration, Mattick remarked to a close friend about 'how hard it still is for me to write in English. Sometimes I use a whole day to write just one difficult page, which I may destroy again the next day'.<sup>4</sup>

Mattick's attempts to get his work published form a second theme in this book. During the 1930s alone, his essays appeared in several dozen journals from within the various German, German exile, German-American, and

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4 Mattick to Fairfield Porter, 13 April 1941 (AAA).

American left communities. Taken as a whole, these publications map the evolution of the left during that decade. Mattick's trajectory took him from one community to the next, a function of his language skills and also the shifting political currents in Europe and the United States. The journals he helped edit add still further dimensions to these various issues.

The nexus of men, politics, and friendship shapes the third biographical focus. Mattick's many intense friendships often stretched over decades. A rich body of literature now exists on friendships between women or between gay men, although less attention has been focused on interactions among heterosexual men. Consequently, I have documented in some depth Mattick's more important friendships. At one end of the spectrum were people like Dinsmore Wheeler, an advertising executive by profession, who over the course of four decades devoted substantial portions of his leisure time to editing, rearranging, and rewriting Mattick's work. At the other extreme was someone like Sidney Hook. In the 1930s, Hook was feted as America's foremost academic marxist, but he already exhibited the psychological trait that would plague his career—a belligerence towards anyone who did not share his political beliefs. During their short-lived friendship, Mattick became one of the first to experience this pattern. Hook was flattered by Mattick's understanding of his ideas and genuinely challenged by the depth of his insights, but he also subjected Mattick to a barrage of insults, all the while acting as a self-appointed mentor.

To document these friendships, Mattick's correspondence has been invaluable, with nearly 1800 letters archived at the International Institute for Social History in Amsterdam. Mattick, though, lacked the particular kind of self-consciousness that is needed to retain one's own communications. He kept the letters he received but did not make copies of those he wrote.<sup>5</sup> Reading this one-sided correspondence is akin to viewing a half-empty refrigerator while in the throes of hunger. With each return visit, the odds and ends of edible items somehow appear increasingly savoury and usable. Nonetheless, if not for the letters collected by others, Mattick's voice would be entirely absent.

During the 1930s, Mattick belonged to a second generation of council communists who were more interested than their predecessors in the specifics of Marx's theory. At the time, the tendency within the various socialist and communist movements was either to revise Marx or to ignore his economic theories altogether. Mattick—along with a small cohort of other working-class activists and authors—took a fresh look at the ideas that these movements had rejected. Following the lead of Henryk Grossman, they adopted an

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5 The two hundred or so letters to Dinsmore Wheeler were returned to the Mattick family after Wheeler's death.

understanding of capitalism that focused on its crisis dynamics. Grossman has never received a fair hearing within the marxist tradition. An almost wilful misinterpretation of his ideas characterises the subsequent literature. Mattick suffered some of this same fate.

Mattick's major work, *Marx and Keynes* (1969), presupposed a knowledge of marxian theory and mainstream economics. It thus served as a testament to the critical depth and intellectual sophistication of the radical left tradition. Despite the book's difficulty, Mattick found a wide audience for his ideas as the international economy unravelled during the 1960s and 70s. He offered an understanding of economic development that emphasised the dysfunctional aspects of the capitalist economy. His advocacy of workers' councils, and the applicability of the council model to a wide variety of circumstances (neighbourhoods, schools, office workers as well as service workers), made his politics attractive to the democratically-inclined within the 1960s radical upheavals. For Mattick, the workplace councils above all could be vested with enormous economic power and used as the lever to transform an entire society.

I have not emphasised Mattick's theoretical work in the following pages. Much of Mattick's writing is available in paper and on the internet, and I see little reason to summarise work that is best read in the original.<sup>6</sup> I have, however, indicated significant phases and shifts in his writing, and I have mentioned by name especially outstanding pieces. I have also used the lower-case for terms related to marxism and marxists. Once upon a time, ideologies such as Liberalism and Democracy were capitalised, but this is an old practice, and the application of uniform linguistic standards is long overdue. The truth is that there are many marxisms, even if there was only one Karl Marx, and capitalisation implies a commonality that does not exist.

Mattick once claimed that his core values had not changed substantially since adolescence, when he first came of age politically. His views had deepened, and their expression had become more sophisticated and subtle, but in all matters that were essential, he had not 'evolved from something to something else'.<sup>7</sup> He was nonetheless part of a vast effort to rethink the marxist tradition in terms of what was still useful in Marx, who for Mattick served as a guide to help decipher current and previous realities.

Mattick's writing focused on the latent tendencies within the modern economy towards breakdown and the inability of governmental intervention

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6 Marx's work suffers most of all from this—either summaries that contribute nothing new or revisions/refutations that leave him unintelligible.

7 Mattick to Paul Buhle, 14 February 1967 (WHS). See also Buckmiller 1976. A transcript of the interview has appeared in German and French. See Mattick 2013a, Mattick 2013b.

to solve the underlying problems. His popularity as an author mirrored the cyclical nature of the global economy. The most prolific periods for Mattick were the 1930s and the decade of protest that began in the mid-1960s, precisely when a disintegrating world led to the creation of new radical movements. At odds with the various tendencies that had represented marxism during the twentieth century, Mattick struck a receptive chord within a left that was similarly critical of marxism's history. Neither the socialist tradition, oriented toward the reform of the market system, nor the communist tradition, with its embrace of state-run systems, had much interest in the things that Mattick wrote about.

During every period of prosperity, it becomes customary to speak of the disappearance of marxism, its numerous failures, and its inadequacy as a theory, even though capitalism has been unable to solve its many difficulties despite the tremendous outpouring of wealth. The twentieth century has come and gone, but the themes which Mattick addressed retain their currency. The global system's tendencies towards economic crisis and stagnation, political conflict and war, and aggressive behaviour in every sphere of life remain ever-present. If Mattick is still important today it is because he viewed capitalism as an historical entity, limited in its durability and destructive in its attempts to preserve itself. For an understanding of the marxian critique and the radical tradition, Mattick is especially well-suited.

## Children at Work and War

### At Home

‘Over-population’ and the hunger and misery associated with it, are not products of nature but products of men, or rather of social relationships which preclude such a social organization of production and of life generally as would abolish with the problem of hunger that of ‘over-population’.<sup>1</sup>

Paul Mattick’s family was part of the vast urban migration that swept across Europe during the early 1900s. It was a family on the move and eager for what the world could offer. Mattick was born in 1904 in northeast Germany.<sup>2</sup> At the time, the entire region was governed by the province of Prussia; today it is located in Poland. Mattick’s father worked as a farmhand, while his mother performed domestic chores as a maid and laundress. Both were determined to escape the poverty characteristic of the area. Their trajectory was typical for those who sought social mobility by leaving the countryside for the city. For the Matticks, this meant an initial move to Stettin, about halfway towards the capital of Berlin, with resettlement there not long afterwards. Their dogged pursuit of a better life led them in many new directions.

Mattick was one of eight children born over an eleven-year period, a family size atypical for city dwellers and one that showed no signs of the ‘domestic feminism’ and voluntary limitation of fertility which accompanied the processes of industrialisation and modernisation.<sup>3</sup> When they married, his father was twenty-four, his mother a year and a half younger.<sup>4</sup> Mattick was born three years later as their third child.<sup>5</sup> Three of his siblings died young, in infancy or early childhood. As the oldest and only surviving son, he had the same first

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1 Mattick, ‘Review of Peter Kropotkin. ‘Mutual Aid’, *The Western Socialist*, January–February 1956.

2 Today Stettin is Szczecin. Buckmiller 1976, p. 1.

3 Smith 1979.

4 Paul Johannes Mattick, born 16 June 1878; Adeline Auguste-Alwine Kantz, born 17 December 1877; married 28 December 1900 in Stettin. Information from the father’s death certificate; Standesamt Mitte von Berlin.

5 13 March 1904.

name as his father. Together with his remaining siblings, one older and three younger sisters, they shared a single room. The children went barefoot in the summer, an indication that the newly developed urban areas had yet to be paved over or cobblestoned in their entirety. The children also wore clogs during the winter months and their socks were darned, with other tell-tale signs of their poverty always in evidence. Nonetheless, the differences between them and children born and bred in the city were more cultural than material.

Berlin itself was undergoing immense changes due to the influx of population. The Matticks changed apartments frequently, as did many newcomers to the city in their quest for better accommodation. Inside an apartment, renters were mindful of the amount of sunlight, access to fresh air, the size of rooms, and heat in the winter. The nearness to public transportation, work, food shopping, and outdoor space, especially for the children, was also important. All of these considerations were tempered by overriding financial constraints. Decent apartments that were affordable were difficult to find and in great demand. Mostly, though, newcomers took whatever they stumbled upon, and not until Mattick was school age was there some sense of stability regarding living quarters. A five room apartment, replete with leaky roof, accommodated the seven-member Mattick family.<sup>6</sup>

If Mattick's father had been a farmhand before, in the city this meant employment as an unskilled laborer, performing the kinds of repetitive, physical tasks for which lower class men are so eagerly sought. He worked initially as a stone-hauler with a horse-drawn cart. Around the time Mattick entered primary school, his father began new employment at the huge Siemens manufacturing complex, where he was assigned to the division that produced metal cables and pipes. With over 20,000 employees in Berlin alone, Siemens was a major telecommunications firm, known for its production of telegraph and telephone equipment and made famous by its installation of entire inter-city systems. It was one of the leading firms in the use and transmission of electrical power, pioneering the development of overhead 'electrified' urban street car networks.

Widely celebrated for its progressive policies towards employees, Siemens offered a range of benefits not typical of smaller firms in more competitive areas of the economy.<sup>7</sup> The pension system was funded through workplace fines imposed upon errant employees. Other services included survivor benefits, health insurance (but not for family members), a canteen that provided

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6 Address: Christstrasse 18, a six-storey building in the Charlottenburg district, where the family remained for many decades.

7 Feldenkirchen 1999, pp. 345-59.

meals, and a workday of ten hours. After five years of service, employees were even entitled to a week's paid vacation, although to qualify males needed to be thirty years old, females twenty-five.

At Siemens, Mattick's father worked as a teamster and performed the same sort of work he had as a stone hauler—he loaded and unloaded metal products. The ten-hour shift and a lengthy bicycle commute made it a very long day. Except for his day off on Sundays, the family did not see much of him. He left for work early and returned home after dark. The steady employment, however, brought a measure of financial regularity to the family, even though this didn't mean that everyone could eat adequately.

Hunger was a constant threat, the psychological consequences of which Mattick would never completely shake.<sup>8</sup> Even when food was plentiful, the monotony of the family's diet contributed to the sense of deprivation. Fresh fruit for urban-based, working-class families was limited for the most part to apples, plums, and pears following the autumn harvest and perhaps berries in the summer. Vegetables, especially during the long winter months, meant cabbage, potatoes, carrots, onions, and other root vegetables, supplemented by the few hardy plants that could be grown cheaply during the spring, summer, and autumn in nearby agricultural areas. Fresh meat was altogether absent from the household, except for the father's single pork chop each week, which he received because of his status as the household's primary wage earner and the rigour of his workday routine. Potatoes and cabbage, flavoured with inexpensive pieces of animal fat, and bread, were the mainstay of the diet.

Mattick's mother supplemented the family's income whenever she could by working as a laundress in other people's homes, with Mattick and his oldest sister taking on childrearing responsibilities. He and his sisters played together, and they also went off on outings as a group. One excursion, a two-hour bicycle trip from their apartment in Charlottenburg to the beach at Wannsee with his youngest sister on the handlebars, was long-remembered in family lore.<sup>9</sup> The Matticks lived in an apartment complex with some forty other children, and the building's small dirt yard, squeezed by the four buildings that surrounded it, formed a common play area with adults within viewing and listening range. A large group of similarly-aged children constituted their own social group and watched over one another.

Neither parent was fully literate, but they made education a central feature of their family life. Mattick's father often sat with his oldest daughter, Lisbeth, as they reviewed together her primer, an exercise that benefitted them both.

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8 Conversations with Ilse Mattick, 13–14 January 2006.

9 Alma Mattick to Mattick, 4 March 1941.



Before bedtime, stories were read aloud, with all the children participating. Mattick's mother wrote letters with a bluntness magnified by the many grammatical and word-usage mistakes. Her sentences lacked proper punctuation and capitalisation, applied the wrong tense, and included many misspelt words, yet her meaning was entirely clear and she conveyed her emotions and fears with great passion and intensity. Young Mattick was already proficient at reading and writing when he began school at age six. As a child he read books over and over again. These family traditions help explain his facility with writing and ideas later on.<sup>10</sup>

Working-class life could be a whirl of contradictions, and sometimes a world of tension and violence, traits soon to be exacerbated by the world war.<sup>11</sup> Mattick's father was the disciplinarian within their crowded and noisy apartment. He insisted on a certain decorum when he was home. On Sundays, everyone had to be bathed and dressed appropriately, with clothing properly repaired and presentable and with the children clad in shoes. The entire family went walking together on these occasions, a circumstance that the children found restrictive and not much fun.

There were times that Mattick's father came home late after work and stone-drunk, staggering through the apartment entrance. Thursdays were paydays, when factory hands proceeded to nearby bars with their colleagues. This long-standing tradition among blue-collar employees included a tendency towards extravagance—buying extra rounds and gambling—and thus posed a particular threat to the well-being of the men's families. Mattick and his elder sister knew which establishments their father frequented, and it was their task to meet him there and retrieve his wages.

In Berlin the municipal authorities regulated commercial rents in such a fashion that every intersection housed at least one eating and drinking establishment—a means to foster sociability in an urban environment where ties to the community could be quite tenuous.<sup>12</sup> These establishments also oriented themselves towards their constituents. Socialist workers might frequent the establishment on one corner, across from the barroom used by catholic workers and similarly separate from the establishment on the third of the four corners that catered to white-collar employees. Mattick's father's workmates filled his jacket pockets with candy when he was out on these jaunts, knowing that the children would lay awake until he returned home. More than sixty years afterwards, Mattick still had vivid memories of remaining alert until

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10 Conversations with Ilse Mattick, 13–14 January 2006.

11 Conversation with Paul Mattick, Jr., 2 April 2006.

12 Evans 1989.

two or three o'clock in the morning so that he and his sisters could raid their father's pockets as soon as he slipped off to sleep. The father's absence from the household had been transformed by his colleagues into a festive occasion.

The family made the transition to city living quite rapidly, perhaps a function of the initial desire to leave the countryside. Neither of Mattick's parents was particularly religious, although Mattick's mother maintained enough of a connection to religion that his sisters were confirmed as children. This arrangement was not at all unusual even for socialistic families in which fathers and sons might share leisure-time activities while mothers and daughters were oriented towards the household, domestic duties, and religion.<sup>13</sup> Mattick had less exposure to religion than his sisters, and later on, his mother's religiosity did not interfere with her sympathy for the socialist movement and revolutionary developments. His parents also opposed factory work for children, another indication of their openness to new and radical ideas and their interest in left-wing politics. Part-time, after-school jobs were one matter, full-time factory employment another. Both parents worked long hours so that their children would not have to.

Most remarkable about Mattick's parents was their rapid political transformation. Mattick's father joined a socialist union early on, despite the fact that Siemens organised employees into its own company union. He often invited younger workmates to the apartment, where they engaged in long, intense conversations about workplace issues. He brought home for all to read the socialist daily newspaper for Berlin, *Vorwärts* [*Forward*], and the socialist Sunday supplement, *Neue Welt* [*New World*], both of which were sponsored by Germany's Social Democratic Party. These papers included poetry, short stories, serialised fiction, and articles on the history and ideology of the socialist movement as part of their standard fare. Mattick became an avid reader of their contents.<sup>14</sup> He was well-versed in the broader outlines of socialist and union doctrine, and knew already the differences between the various socialist, catholic, and liberal employer-sponsored unions.

When Mattick was nine, his father pushed him to join the Social Democratic youth group, even though he was not yet interested. The youth movement was situated on the left wing of the socialist party because of its anti-war and anti-militarism stances. That this was the group deemed most appropriate by the father for the son tells us quite a lot about the evolution of the father's politics. A further transformation would soon follow.

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13 By ethnicity, the Matticks were Kashubian.

14 Fricke 1987a, pp. 553–9, pp. 588–90.

Life changed dramatically with the start of the war in 1914. Mattick's father was drafted into the army reserve and then sent to Belgium as part of the occupying force. For the next few years, the family saw him only sporadically during his annual week-long leave. Despite the war support received by the family, Mattick's mother had to increase her outside employment to make ends meet, often working day and evening shifts. Mattick and his sisters were increasingly left to care for themselves. Suddenly, school became a problem. Until then he had been an excellent student. He liked learning and was singled out as special by his teachers. His aptitude for drawing was particularly pronounced, prompting one teacher to visit his parents so that they could plan together how best to encourage his artistic abilities.

Because of budget cuts and the redistribution of wealth towards military spending and armaments, the school system deteriorated quickly. Mattick viewed many of the instructors as outright sadists. Some of them were disabled military officers who benefitted, it seems, from preferential treatment in hiring. During class, students were disciplined if they hesitated or gave the wrong answer. The instructors proceeded systematically, student-by-student. Mattick avoided punishments because he mostly knew the answers, but nevertheless, witnessing them and anticipating further ones dampened everyone's spirits. The anxiety made it impossible to concentrate. Besides, the classes contained forty students on average, and the method of instruction relied on rote memorisation. Mattick dutifully learned poems that he could still recite decades later.

When promotion to the next level meant placement in the classroom of the school's most notorious teacher, Mattick plotted with classmates to fail deliberately. They refused homework and projected themselves at every opportunity as unworthy of advancement. An episode in which they nailed the teacher's galoshes to the closet floor resulted in a beating for everyone. Not every teacher was so bad, but many were, and school became a negative experience. Failure, in the minds of Mattick and his friends, equaled success, and they remained in the lower level. Years later he told a friend: 'I myself was *never* happy in school and avoided it as much as possible'.<sup>15</sup>

The delinquency exhibited by Mattick and his classmates reflected attitudes absorbed from their parents. Class trips to the oversized, twelve-meter high wood sculpture of Paul von Hindenburg, the army's Chief-of-Staff, where visitors purchased nails to hammer into the base of the statue, repulsed Mattick and became another reason to avoid school. As the war dragged on, the authorities conducted metal-collecting crusades in which the population was asked

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15 Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 23 October 1964; Conversation with Paul Mattick, Jr., 2 April 2006.

to donate pots, metal utensils, and other brass and copper items as a way to address the country's inability to import raw materials. Mattick and friends loyally collected these items during the door-to-door campaigns but then expressed their disapproval by hiding the metal in the apartment building's basement. The materials they declined to hand over could later be exchanged for food.

Finding adequate food became a major challenge. War meant rationing and deprivation because of wage freezes and the lack of imported agricultural goods.<sup>16</sup> By 1916, turnips, instead of being fed to cattle as fodder, were made to serve as the main item of sustenance for people. Mattick and his friends began to steal food, a pursuit that became their primary free-time activity. Small groups of children targeted food vendors whose fresh fruit and vegetables were highly desired. By burying their hands in bags with false bottoms, they could snatch and flee. At night, they travelled to outlying districts where they broke into the huts that people built alongside their 'victory gardens'. These small plots of land were used to grow vegetables, fruit, and flowers, and the children stole potatoes and cabbages, items that had been staples in the pre-war period but had become luxury items since. At train stations, they pilfered coal to burn in their families' home heating stoves, sometimes sneaking aboard the coal cars to take more. Mattick also began to smoke cigarettes, which he discovered helped to dampen hunger pains.

Part-time employment took its toll on his schoolwork, and he began to show signs of exhaustion. When he fell asleep in class, it increased the difficulties he was having at school. One summer he was sent to stay with relatives on a farm outside Bremen just to guarantee that he received enough to eat.<sup>17</sup> Some of the agricultural skills he learned would prove useful many years later.

Disease and epidemics accompanied the slow starvation of the war years. By 1917–18 many children were anaemic and chronically fatigued. Virulent strains of influenza, pneumonia, and tuberculosis were rampant. Death from disease was, Mattick recalled, 'accepted as unchangeable and self-understood. We didn't understand what it was all about, that somehow this could have been avoided'.<sup>18</sup> The Mattick children were among those who suffered from tuberculosis.<sup>19</sup> The respiratory problems that would plague Mattick's adulthood began at this time.

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16 Davis 2000.

17 Conversations with Ilse Mattick, 13–14 January 2006.

18 Buckmiller 1976, p. 7.

19 Else Mattick to Mattick, 1 March 1934; Lisbeth Mattick to Mattick, 9 February 1935.

### Protest and Revolution

More had been expected of the German left-wing than of any other group . . . , and its behavior at the outbreak of the war was therefore particularly disappointing.<sup>20</sup>

The war deeply divided the socialist movement into pro- and anti-war factions. This was felt acutely in Berlin, where Germany's Social Democratic Party counted 120,000 members.<sup>21</sup> The most successful socialist party anywhere in the world—with nearly one million members nationwide, two and a half million organised in socialist-affiliated unions (including Mattick's father), more than a third of the popular vote, and one-fourth of all parliamentary representatives—the majority of the party nonetheless supported the country's war effort despite the strong anti-war sentiment that also pervaded much of the rank and file.<sup>22</sup> The unions respectfully broke off all wage and job-related campaigns and pledged to withhold union support from anyone who went on strike. The cooperation between the socialist movement and the military was so close that the unions supplied names of dissident members for immediate call-up.

Mattick was drawn into the growing polarisation that accompanied the war in both its triumphant and defeatist phases. His father returned from active duty in 1916 and aligned himself as a veteran with the growing and ever-bolder anti-war movement. Over the next year, this movement coalesced into the Independent Social Democratic Party, one of the many short-lived but pivotal political groups to emerge during this era.<sup>23</sup> The Independents were a disparate group, united primarily in their anti-war politics and their disgust with the patriotic stance of the 'majority' Social Democratic Party. The Independents included many of the leading socialist theoreticians, including Karl Kautsky, Eduard Bernstein, and Rudolf Hilferding—people whose writings had schooled several generations of socialists. But it also incorporated more radical groups like the Spartacus League with which Mattick's father was associated and which was centred around Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht in Berlin.

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20 Mattick, 'Otto Rühle and the German Labor Movement', in Mattick 1978, p. 90.

21 Only male citizens, over the age of twenty-five, with a full year's proof of residency, and who were not currently a member of the military or recipient of public support, could vote. Fricke 1987a, p. 310; Fricke 1987b, p. 698.

22 The best account of German Social Democracy in English remains Schorske 1983. From the German literature, see Groh 1973.

23 Morgan 1975.

Within the broader anti-war movement, other regional radical offshoots of the Social Democratic Party, especially in the northern seaports of Hamburg and Bremen (and also Berlin), never affiliated with the Independents. It was to these various anti-war and anti-capitalist groups that Mattick was soon drawn.

Mattick's mother was his immediate conduit to political activity. A huge anti-war strike in May 1916, when Mattick was twelve, followed an impromptu and illegal speech by Liebknecht in one of Berlin's central squares. When demonstrators began plundering the downtown commercial district, his mother came home and announced (prematurely as it turned out) that the revolution had begun, and off she ran with Mattick in tow. Wilmersdorfer Strasse was packed its entire length with people, some of whom attempted to pry open the storefront security gates in order to loot the food stores. The crowd consisted mostly of women and children—in other words, of mothers with their sons and daughters. Mounted police, with the spiked helmets characteristic of the Kaiserreich, attempted to restore order by riding directly through the crowds or backing their horses into the groups that gathered in front of the stores.<sup>24</sup>

Mattick then witnessed the kind of working-class resourcefulness that he came to appreciate so keenly. Women in those days wore large hats, secured by long pins. He saw one woman, with whom he had been backed against a wall by two of the mounted horses, use her hat pin to prick the horse's rump. Its bucking was violent enough that the women could pull the officer down, who was then kicked and trampled on. This episode, as Mattick came to understand, was his first encounter with truly revolutionary activity, with individuals who put themselves into direct confrontation with the constraints of the property system and its defenders. Later in this same demonstration, the mounted patrols were replaced by armed police who instead fired at the demonstrators as a means of protecting property.

On another occasion, Mattick was out walking with his uncle, a veteran disabled during the battle at Tannenberg in the opening weeks of World War I, with its 20,000 German and 30,000 Russian casualties. They crossed paths with a German military officer, who began cursing loudly at Mattick's uncle's refusal to salute properly. This scene was cut short when the commotion attracted a crowd that heckled the officer, with the latter quickly vacating the scene.

As the anti-war and hunger protests gained momentum, Mattick's formal schooling came to an end. Coinciding with his fourteenth birthday in March 1918, he began an apprenticeship at the Siemens factory complex where his father worked. Father-son combinations were another of the long-standing traditions that characterised factory employment. Apprenticeships, particularly

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24 Pozzoli 1972, p. 78ff.

in highly skilled areas, were coveted placements and not widely available. That the young Mattick was selected serves as a testament to the esteem in which his father was held—within Siemens, within his union, and by his colleagues.

At Siemens, Mattick trained as a tool-and-die maker, a trade far superior to the work done by his father. Tool-and-die makers performed much of what these days is done by computer. As highly-skilled machinists, they crafted the tools and machine-parts that were used in the production process, and they played a key role whenever procedures were altered or 'retooled' to new specifications. When Mattick began his apprenticeship, the combination of work and training filled a ten-hour day. With the time needed to travel between home and work, and with the mid-day break, it became a thirteen hour commitment, the very same long day that his father had worked all these years. The day was divided into two segments, with mornings spent on the shop floor and afternoons in a classroom. Eventually, he was assigned to the division that produced light bulbs.<sup>25</sup>

From the very beginning, Mattick was profoundly disappointed, embittered even, by the shop floor aspect of the apprenticeship. He saw little difference between work at the factory and the abusive schooling he had just finished. The factory instructors were mostly former soldiers and low-ranking military officers, who, like his public school teachers, used physical punishment as an instructional tool. Hitting and slapping the younger apprentices was commonplace. Male camaraderie within the factory also meant that the apprentices were subject to hazing and harassment. Mattick found the experience thoroughly unpleasant.

The shop floor incidents were only one part of the apprenticeship, however. What went on in the afternoons, in the classroom, was altogether different. Siemens, as a company, had a rather broad interpretation of employee training. Much of the instruction took place in subjects not really needed by the apprentices—stenography, drafting, algebra, other forms of mathematics, and speech. While this did not constitute the kind of broad-based liberal arts curriculum associated nowadays with university education, Mattick was nonetheless trained for a highly-skilled occupation that would make him responsible for decision-making on the shop floor. The ability to call on a wide range of knowledge served as a building block for the exercise of discretionary judgment. Mattick's classroom teachers—as opposed to the shop floor supervisors—had a genuine interest in his development and well-being.

In the months separating the start of Mattick's apprenticeship at Siemens and the outbreak of revolution in November 1918, German society disintegrated.

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25 The Osram division. Selma Babad to Mattick, 13 January 1922.



2 *Paul Mattick's Apprenticeship at Siemens (possibly: 1st standing row, 3rd to right of mustached man at centre).*

The year began with a massive strike in Berlin, where some 400,000 strikers elected a coordinating committee with more than 400 members. Their inspiration was the workers', soldiers', and peasants' councils that had formed in Russia the year before in the near-absence of an organised labour movement.<sup>26</sup> Socialist parties and workplace unions had been harshly restricted by the Tsarist regime and maintained only a peripheral existence. During the revolutionary year of 1917, the Russian councils dictated the tempo of the revolution, with the various political parties and groups struggling to maintain their relevance.

Within Germany, workplace strikes and street actions became more and more frequent, directed against the war, the needless slaughter of human beings, and the hunger produced by the lack of food. The military's implosion meant many desertions, a breakdown in discipline, perceptible resentment against—and even assaults on—members of the officer corps, and a widespread resistance to the continuation of the fighting. When sailors in the

<sup>26</sup> For the Russian soviets (councils), see Anweiler 1974.



German fleet at Kiel, on the northern coast, mutinied in early November 1918, their actions triggered a cascade of events which deepened with each passing day. Ordered to fight one last sea battle—despite a new civilian government that included socialist cabinet members committed to a negotiated peace, the sailors' actions led to the collapse of both military and civilian governance in Kiel. The sailors hastily convened their own council to take charge.<sup>27</sup>

News of these events electrified the country. The 40,000 or so mutinous sailors in Kiel commandeered bicycles, automobiles, and trucks and set out on a triumphant tour of the country in order to encourage the formation of councils elsewhere. Siemens, where Mattick worked, closed for several days because of the tumult, and he and his friends roamed the city in awe of the revolutionary sailors. The German revolution was, in his words, 'a great adventure.' A massive demonstration at the Reichstag attracted between 300,000–500,000 people. This was the only occasion when Mattick saw Rosa Luxemburg, whose ideas would influence him greatly in subsequent years.<sup>28</sup> Truckloads of revolutionaries roamed the streets, on the look-out for counterrevolutionary snipers on building rooftops. When Mattick jumped aboard a truck carrying some of the mutineers, he asked for one of their weapons. His inability to identify the gun's safety mechanism led them to promptly throw him off the vehicle. He witnessed repeated confrontations between military personnel and demonstrators. Small groups of officers looked to provoke fights with demonstrators, but also military officers were disarmed and had their insignia ripped from their uniforms.

What surprised everyone was the ease with which the old order crumbled. With the monarchy in flight and the army in an advanced state of collapse, the middle classes felt quite intimidated by the upsurge in activity that embraced virtually the entire working class. Having supported the war enthusiastically, the middle classes now stayed home in defeat and disillusionment.<sup>29</sup> In the immediate aftermath of the November revolution, the civil arena was relatively empty, and the socialist movement stepped quickly into this void. Germany's first government was an ad hoc coalition of the Majority and the Independent Social Democratic Parties. Even though the former was far stronger numerically, the tenor of the times turned the Independents into a formidable presence. The 10,000 or so workers' and soldiers' councils sometimes ruled independently of pre-existing governmental structures and sometimes

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27 Watt 1969; Plivier 1933; Ryder 1967. For Mattick's review of Ryder's book, see Mattick: *Science & Society*, Summer 1968.

28 Nettl 1969; Harmer 2008.

29 Schivelbusch 2003, pt. 3.

in combination with them, depending on the local situation and the degree of radicalisation that took hold. Almost without exception, every workplace and military garrison throughout the country had a council.<sup>30</sup> For the radicals, the November 1918 revolution concretised their assumptions about spontaneity and the working class.

Huge meetings were held at Siemens, with the formation of a factory-wide council as the intended result. Mattick was chosen to represent the apprentices because of his familiarity with socialist theory and workplace issues. His initial impression of the council was not favourable. The apprentices' priority was the abolition of hazing and equal treatment, and even though harassment abated substantially, employees who had treated them poorly previously were now only superficially more respectful. The apprentices were mainly ignored, and the spirit of equality and respect among employees that Mattick expected within the councils was missing.

Mattick's discontent with the council at Siemens paralleled the frustration with which the radical left experienced the developments of the next weeks. Workers' and soldiers' councils were everywhere, but the former in particular were dominated by the Majority Social Democrats who viewed elections and parliamentary politics as the proper vehicle for working-class ascendancy. The soldiers' councils were even more conservative since they included enlisted personnel who occupied the lower ranks of the officer corps, alongside the working-class draftees. By mid-December, some six weeks after the start of the revolution, the limits of working-class radicalism had become abundantly clear. At the national conference of councils, its first gathering on such a level, the Majority Social Democrats dominated, with 60 percent of the delegates. The Independents, not all of whom were advocates of a council system, were represented by only 20 percent; the radical left hardly at all. In many places, the leadership of the councils had been negotiated between the two socialist parties, and the national conference reflected this reality.<sup>31</sup>

As feared by the radicals, the conference sanctioned national elections, with universal suffrage replacing the tiered and gendered electoral system in place under the Kaiser.<sup>32</sup> Even though the councils were poised to control the economy, dominate the military, and assume governmental functions on both the local and national levels, the conference voted to re-empower, by means of

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30 For histories of the German councils, see Comack 2012; Kuhn 2012; Kolb 1978; Oertzen 1976; Arnold 1985.

31 Ryder 1967, pp. 177–83.

32 In many areas, votes during the Kaiserreich had been weighted according to the amount of taxes paid. For example, those who paid one third of the taxes received one third of the votes.

elections to be held in a month's time, the very same social groups the councils had just wrested power from: the bourgeoisie, aristocracy, middle classes, and military. Universal suffrage became the vehicle to defeat the overwhelmingly working-class councils. That the revolution had stalled was widely acknowledged. Despite the many achievements of the previous weeks—the overthrow of the monarchy, greater socialist participation at all levels of government, the end of press censorship, full expansion of the rights of free speech and assembly, voting rights for women and the disenfranchised, a newly-empowered union movement, an eight-hour day negotiated by the unions on a national level, and more—none of these gains were particularly socialistic.

Mattick's vantage point for these developments was his youth group, *Freie Sozialistische Jugend* [Free Socialist Youth or FSJ], which flourished in the liberalised conditions. Throughout Berlin, the recently-installed municipal authorities created youth centres, each with a few meetings rooms. In Mattick's neighbourhood in Charlottenburg, some 200 members belonged to the FSJ, with perhaps 2500 scattered throughout the city and 20,000 throughout the country.<sup>33</sup> On many days, work was cut short—often no more than four or five hours—due to the meetings, demonstrations, and strikes that continued to roil the working class. Messages travelled by word of mouth and, wherever possible, employees would simply gather and walk out of their workplaces. When Mattick was not at work, he almost always could be found at the youth centre.

Unique about the FSJ was that it served as a gathering point for radical youth to the left of the Social Democrats, regardless of the political and ideological differences that separated their parents. The latter were dispersed among the Independent Social Democrats, the Spartacists, the Bremen and Hamburg radical split-offs of the Social Democratic Party, and the anarchist and syndicalist formations in various parts of Germany. The children, at least briefly, occupied a sort of protected zone in which they could mingle regardless of the disagreements that agitated their parents. They were involved in all the same discussions, but somehow they were less caught up in the nitty-gritty that determined real life decisions. Teenagers and young adults, apprentices, factory workers, and day-labourers, a smattering of intellectuals and college students—these were the individuals with whom Mattick now spent all his free time.

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33 Membership estimates run as high as 35,000, but the 20,000 figure is probably more realistic. See Linse 1976, p. 15ff.; Falkenberg 1973, p. 175ff; Arlt, Heinze, und Uhlemann 1959 (the accounts by Noll, Huhn, Globig, and Eildermann); Bock 1969, p. 202n; Rübner 1994, p. 196ff.

Somewhat more slowly than their children, the adults coalesced into the German Communist Party, drawing members from these same groups. It too was more of a confederation of local organisations than a national organisation with local branches. But the party was deeply fractured from the beginning in a way that the youth movement was not. The majority of members, to whose position Mattick inclined, opposed any further participation in the electoral system or the union movement due to the conservatism of these institutions. The minority, however, argued that such participation might counteract the party's isolation. From what Mattick understood, the party's working-class members, who dominated initially, were more radical than the intellectuals, who like Rosa Luxemburg, were well-known and greatly respected because of their skills as writers, orators, and theorists, but who feared becoming too removed from the rest of the working class.<sup>34</sup>

Often overlooked in commentary about the early days of the Communist Party was its close relationship with the syndicalists, the radical unionists who generally shunned association with any political party.<sup>35</sup> Eventually renamed the Free Workers Union of Germany [Freie Arbeiter-Union Deutschlands or FAUD], the organisation forged its own version of anarcho-syndicalism as an alternative to the Social Democratic unions. In the immediate post-revolutionary period, its members were encouraged to join the political parties of the left, especially the Independent Social Democratic and Communist Parties. Likewise, the Communists urged its members to join syndicalist unions.<sup>36</sup>

The Communist Party was soon caught up in events that it would come to regret. The occasion was the dismissal by the Social Democratic government of the leftists who had taken control of Berlin's police force. A massive demonstration in January 1919 with upwards of 700,000 marchers—the city's largest yet—led the radicals to think that this was the start of a general uprising.<sup>37</sup> The radicals seized a series of buildings in the centre of the city, hoping that the government would flee and the working class prove receptive.<sup>38</sup> Particularly galling to the Social Democrats was the seizure of their printing house, which

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34 Pozzoli 1972, p. 1; Pozzoli, 1977, p. 85.

35 German syndicalism developed in the late 1880s as a response to the parliamentary focus of the Social Democrats. German anarchism developed as a reaction to the Social Democrats in the late 1870s. Thus, all three radical left tendencies (anarchists, syndicalists, and Spartacists) shared a common heritage as dissidents from the larger social democratic movement. See Bock 1990.

36 The primary source for the history of the radical left during this period remains: Bock 1969. A summary can be found in Bock 1976.

37 Winkler 1985, pp. 114–33; Kool 1970, p. 92ff.

38 Berger 1974.

prevented them from communicating with their members. In the tumult of these days, Mattick caught a brief glimpse of Liebknecht, protected by armed workers and soldiers.

The Majority Social Democrats, who had since outmanoeuvred the Independents and formed a government on their own, had no intention of relinquishing control of the city or the government.<sup>39</sup> They too had been extremely busy in the intervening weeks. Slowly and quietly, they rebuilt the armed forces by funding the so-called Freikorps, reconstituted military units staffed by veterans, often lower-level officers and careerists for whom no other employment was possible. Eventually numbering some 400,000 volunteers, the Freikorps bloodily suppressed the radical uprising in the several days of street fighting that followed. In the subsequent retaliations, Luxemburg, Liebknecht, and others were arrested and then killed. Only two months separated the November revolution from these events. Berlin was now controlled by paramilitary forces who followed orders from the Majority Social Democratic Party. That spring the Freikorps were used throughout the country against radical rebellions whenever and wherever they arose.

### Revolution in Retreat

The mass demonstrations of hundreds of thousands of people, even though temporary, were no less the Spartacus movement than the relatively small groups meeting regularly in an organized fashion. In fact, at that time, Spartacus meant anybody taking part in the attempt to wrest power from the social-democrats and their reactionary allies.<sup>40</sup>

1919 was a depressing year for the left everywhere. Stunned by how rapidly the situation deteriorated, the Communist Party remained a weak and defeated entity for months to come, hounded by the Majority Social Democratic government and divided internally by sharp differences of opinion. The Majority Social Democrats also fared poorly—the January 1919 elections forced them into a coalition with two non-socialist parties and brought to a halt the many projects their constituency expected them to enact.<sup>41</sup> Efforts to nationalise

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39 The Independents withdrew over frustration with the slow pace of change and the cooperation between the Majority Social Democrats and the remnant of the armed forces.

40 Mattick, 'Review of Eric Waldman. *The Spartacus Uprising and the Crisis of the German Socialist Movement*', *Science & Society*, Summer 1960, p. 267.

41 The best short summary of the Social Democrats during Weimar is Smaldone 2009, ch. 1.

(‘socialise’, in the parlance of the day) the mining industry, especially in the densely-populated Ruhr industrial belt, went nowhere, despite the harsh working conditions that continued to prevail. Discussions regarding a reform of the military similarly stalled, now that the Freikorps were ensconced as the government’s protective force. The Social Democrats had little to offer besides a promise of slow, incremental reforms—and even this depended on the agreement of their coalition partners.

Disappointment and repression re-radicalised the working class. While support for the Majority Social Democrats declined precipitously, both the Independents and the Communists benefitted. Radical governments popped up almost unexpectedly in different parts of the country, accompanied by a huge strikewave—some five thousand strikes throughout 1919, including a short-lived general strike in Berlin in March.<sup>42</sup> Many councils simply refused to return power to the municipal authorities. The coalition government, with the Majority Social Democrats in the lead, made free use of the Freikorps as a repressive force.<sup>43</sup>

Within weeks of the November revolution, Mattick’s youth group had begun publishing its own paper, *Junge Garde* [*Young Guards*], with Mattick soon involved in all aspects of its production, from article writing to street corner hawking. The abuse of apprentices remained a prominent topic. The group organised presentations and lectures each week, with study groups planned by the older members (the twenty-year olds). Readings were eclectic and traversed the political terrain—from anarchism to bolshevism, with Kropotkin’s *Mutual Aid* and later *The ABC of Communism* by Bukharin and Preobrazhensky.<sup>44</sup> Mattick also read Immanuel Kant from cover to cover, determined, in his own words, to claim the knowledge customarily reserved for the upper classes. He nonetheless admitted after he finished that he had not understood a single word.<sup>45</sup>

The FSJ was anti-authoritarian in ways not typical of other groups. Within the Social Democratic youth culture, for instance, party representatives could

42 Some 48 million workdays were lost in 1919 due to strikes, with even higher figures reported for 1920. Ryder 1967, pp. 208–17.

43 Siemens witnessed a brief strike in October; at a Reichstag demonstration in January 1920, 42 people were killed and 105 injured.

44 When Mattick reviewed a reprint of Kropotkin’s book thirty-five years later, he still appreciated its criticisms of social darwinism, even though he thought Kropotkin’s postulation of a ‘law of mutual aid’ as an alternative to the supposed innate competitiveness of human beings went too far in legitimising the malthusian point of view. *The Western Socialist*, Jan–Feb 1956.

45 Conversation with Paul Mattick, Jr., 6 August 2004.

veto activities and budgets. For the FSJ, notions of self-determination then current within the radical left precluded this kind of behaviour. Joint meetings were often held with the adults, and the older, more experienced party members visited and participated in meetings of the youth group, but all they could offer was guidance and suggestions. They attended as peers of the adolescents and young adults, not as sources of control.

This indulgence sometimes led to embarrassing situations. The free-wheeling sexuality did not please all the adults, and Mattick in particular provoked confrontations with crude comments and complaints about the adults' oppressive behaviour, even though these were Spartacist cadre to whom he was speaking. The club members just wanted to have fun, whereas the adults wanted them to behave as something other than themselves; that is, they wanted the adolescents to behave like adults. On one occasion, Mattick's remarks were sharp enough that an adult colleague threw a beer glass at him.<sup>46</sup>

Mattick had never been especially close to his father, attributable to the long hours the latter worked, his absence during the war, and his authoritarianism within the household. In his father's view, though, Mattick had grown far too wild and undisciplined. He referred to his son as a good-for-nothing, a loafer, as someone who didn't apply himself. Despite the father's radicalism, he warned Mattick to steer clear of activities that might draw the attention of the police or military authorities, directives that Mattick was not inclined to follow. These tensions prompted Mattick to spend as much time away from the family's apartment as possible. The FSJ youth centre functioned as a refuge.

Father and son parted company politically with the Spartacist uprising in January 1919. Mattick's father followed Luxemburg's lead in that he viewed it more as a putsch than a working-class revolt. The left was simply too weak for anything so ambitious. While the father returned to the Independent Social Democratic Party, the son adhered to the 'left wing' of the left wing, that is, to the Communists.

Around this same time, Mattick's father began to suffer from the debilitating illness that would cause his death seven years hence.<sup>47</sup> The family suspected lead poisoning from his work handling metal pipes at Siemens. Lead dust has pernicious effects on the body even at low levels so long as the exposure is long-term. Only when his father became bedridden, isolated, and had no one else with whom to talk, did he discover Mattick as a conversational partner. Throughout the next years, however, his father remained troubled by his son's political and employment trajectory.

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46 Buckmiller 1976, p. 12.

47 Mother to Mattick, 3 March 1941; Mattick to Claudio Pozzoli, 30 October 1972 (Pozzoli).

Tensions within the Communist Party came to a breaking point at a conference in October 1919. Initially divided into two more or less equal factions regarding participation in or abstinence from electoral politics and the union movement, the two sides also split over their assessment of the Russian Revolution. The Bolsheviks had come to power by encouraging the councils to push forward and then taking them over altogether, and it was precisely this issue—the primacy of the councils versus that of the party—that became the decisive issue dividing the two sides.

It was difficult to gain a clear picture of the Russian developments. Direct communications were impossible and travel between Germany and Russia was illegal and dangerous. Russia's internal situation changed as rapidly as Germany's, and news—both pro and contra—was customarily tainted because of the ideological convictions of the observers. The Bolsheviks were under intense pressure from counter-revolutionary armies funded by the Allies, economic sanctions, and a population wearied by war, illness, and starvation.

Certain details, however, were confirmed by multiple sources, and these set off alarm bells within the radical left. News filtered out about the replacement of the workers' councils and elected factory committees by appointed union representatives, the reintroduction of wages and piece work, the reinstallation of former managers and overseers to run production facilities, the wholesale arrests of anarchists and bans on anarchist publications, the disarming of worker battalions and the reconstitution of military units under the command of former officers, widespread bans on strikes, and greater restrictions on press freedom and the right of assembly.<sup>48</sup> No matter how besieged the Bolshevik regime might be, radical notions of revolution precluded these types of measures. The radical left perceived in bolshevism a new form of dominance over the working class, and a profound rethinking of the entire socialist project took hold.

Within Germany, the left wing of the Communist Party, estimated at slightly more than half the membership, was expelled through manipulated voting at the October 1919 conference and lost access to the party's press, funds, and administrative apparatus, all housed at party headquarters. In the chaos, the syndicalists distanced themselves, but Mattick's youth group sided with the expellees, as did nearly the entire party organisation in Berlin. Many people simply retreated from organised political formations altogether. For the next several months, the radical left consisted of a loose assemblage of individuals and groups. For them, the war had ruined the socialist movement in its social democratic and bolshevistic forms alike.<sup>49</sup>

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48 Brinton 1972; Deutscher 1954, p. 405ff.

49 Conversation with Paul Mattick, Jr., 2 April 2006.



## Young Radicals

### March 1920

These revolutions involved the organized as well as unorganized masses of workers, which created their own and new form of organization for action and control in the spontaneously-arising workers' and soldier's councils.<sup>1</sup>

As Mattick's involvement in the radical left escalated, so did the violence that surrounded him. What the left had anticipated and feared—that Majority Social Democratic encouragement of the Freikorps would result in a militaristic coup—came to pass. Several armed divisions overthrew the socialist-led coalition government in the so-named Kapp Putsch, titled after one of its ringleaders.<sup>2</sup> Although few military units knew of the plans in advance, most declared their neutrality by claiming that 'troops do not fire on other troops'. The government was left without a means to defend itself, and it fled Berlin.

The Majority Social Democrats announced a general strike against the military takeover, an appeal that met with an instantaneous and widespread response not unlike the outpouring of activity that occurred in November 1918. As word of the strike circulated through Berlin, activists travelled from factory to factory, calling on employees to demonstrate. At Siemens, the machines ceased suddenly, and the factory complex emptied. Matters in Berlin were quite confused, and no one understood fully what was happening. Mattick witnessed one odd scene after another. In some places, the police fought against the putschists, but elsewhere it was protestors against police and putschists alike.

Twelve million employees joined the strike, including civil servants who had been restricted from unionisation previously but who now emerged as determined supporters of the democratic system. It was an impressive show of force, and it immediately brought the country to a standstill. In Berlin, the public transportation system ground to a halt, as did the gas, water, and electric systems. The putschists were left powerless, both figuratively and literally.

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1 Mattick, 'Introduction', in Mattick 1978, p. x.

2 The Freikorps were incorporated into a much smaller armed force, in line with the stipulations of the Versailles Peace Treaty.

That the Communist Party (KPD) at first refused to support the strike, confirmed the criticisms of the radical leftists, whose own response was an all-embracing enthusiasm. Most important to the radicals was that the working class was once again in motion. They did not agree with the political ends that the strike was meant to achieve—the defence of the parliamentary system—but the widespread participation of the working class reopened all sorts of opportunities that might lead to a new revolutionary wave. The rump Communist Party, on the other hand, focused on its enmity towards the Social Democrats and hesitated to lend support. The status of the party, not the activities of the working class, guided its response. Only when the extent of popular backing for the strike became clear, including support from its own rank and file, did the party reverse its stance.

The putschists occupied a large housing complex in Charlottenburg, near where the Matticks lived. Soldiers with machine guns were set in the windows in order to keep at bay the crowds that assembled nearby. Small groups made repeated attempts to storm the complex, but each time they were met by gunshots from the soldiers. Every so often the soldiers lobbed a hand grenade, attempting to scatter the demonstrators even more. As the crowds grew in size and intensity, it became difficult for those in front to avoid injury. People were pushed inadvertently into the line of fire. Nearby windows, doorways, and storefronts had been shut tight and locked to prevent looting, but this also prevented escape.

One scene disturbed Mattick greatly. A demonstrator strode into the middle of the street, picked up a gun, and aimed it at the complex, only to be shot dead. Mattick found it hard to understand why anyone would be so reckless. Why run into the street when it was obvious that the soldiers had a clear shot and would not hesitate to fire? If nothing else, it showed Mattick the ineffectiveness of individual acts of resistance, no matter how morally compelling they might be.<sup>3</sup>

Already by the fourth day of the coup, the putschists began a negotiated retreat, with a safe return to their barracks guaranteed by the government they had just overthrown.<sup>4</sup> As the soldiers loaded guns and equipment onto trucks, the police stood guard. Posters warned looters to stay clear, a virtual invitation in the eyes of Mattick and his youth group friends. Hoping that weapons might have been left behind, they snuck into the complex that evening. They were arrested almost immediately. At the police barracks, they and others were lined up against the six-foot brick wall that formed the outer perimeter, hands

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3 Buckmiller 1976, p. 24.

4 On the second day of the general strike—the putsch began on Saturday, the general strike on Monday.

stretched over their heads and guarded by police with machine guns. Mattick was pulled out of line and taken inside, where he was beaten with the officers' sword belts so severely that he lost consciousness.<sup>5</sup> Mattick thought his age and youthful appearance had saved him from even harsher treatment—his sixteenth birthday coincided with the coup's collapse.

Rather than lifting the state of siege, the Social Democrats and their coalition partners reimposed it—to the bewilderment of just about everyone who had taken part in anti-putsch activities. Putschist-sympathisers were among the troops ordered to bring the demonstrators and demonstrations under control, emphasising anew that the socialist-led government viewed the radical left as a greater menace than the militarists. Excessive and punitive actions followed, including summary executions. The putsch had been defeated but nothing else changed. Not a single reform was introduced in its aftermath. The radical leftists were left dangling while all the other left-wing parties—Majority Social Democrats, Independent Social Democrats, and Communists—participated in negotiations to end the general strike and disarm rebellious workers. These discussions dragged on for an extra week, and in the intervening time there were numerous clashes between radical leftists and the authorities.

In one confrontation, a group that included Mattick was chased by a carload of police, who shot randomly at protestors before leaving in order to contain other disturbances.<sup>6</sup> As they ran through a rear courtyard, Reinhold Klingenberg, who Mattick knew only superficially, was hit by a stray bullet that ricocheted off a nearby wall. A deep gash opened on his foot, as if someone had taken a knife and sliced a part off. Klingenberg's leg began to swell badly. Together with another stranger, Mattick helped carry him to the street, where they hailed a taxi and took him to the nearby hospital. Klingenberg's leg was amputated, but he was forever beholden to Mattick for having saved his life. They would remain close friends for the next four and a half decades.

The end of the general strike in Berlin did not bring to a halt developments in other parts of the country, which continued to evolve tumultuously. The centre of attention was the Ruhr industrial belt.<sup>7</sup> Here too, military units declared their neutrality at the start of the putsch while ostensibly maintaining 'law and order' by using force directed against protestors. To a degree not seen in Berlin,

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5 Mattick to Wieland Herzfelde, 26 April 1966 (AdK). Mattick, 'Zündstoff' ['Inflammable Material'], *KAZ*, June 1927, 45–7 (but especially 46). Some scenes relate to the March 1921 actions. Mattick rarely wrote about himself in the first person.

6 Buckmiller 1976, p. 35.

7 For an intimate day-by-day, locality-by-locality account of the Ruhr uprising, and of proletarian self-organisation, Lucas's three-volume *Märzrevolution* is unsurpassed. See Lucas 1973, 1974, and 1978.

workers took actions independently of their party and union representatives. In areas where the military did not have an active presence, 'worker defence committees' replaced local police forces and the citizen militias of the wealthier classes. Where the allegiances of the local police forces and armed citizens' groups were not an issue, joint patrols were sufficient.

These patrol squads had their own picturesque style that included a leisurely way of walking with rifles slung over arms, red armbands inscribed with the group's name, and cigarettes dangling from mouths and fingertips. Paid directly by employers (negotiated through the workplace councils) or by municipal authorities, or through special taxes levied on the well-to-do in the respective areas, the squads were a throwback to the events of November 1918. The radicals, including many syndicalists and expellees from the Communist Party, played key roles, with events once again confirming the ability of rebellious workers to devise strategies shaped by immediate needs and specific conditions without the prerequisite of elaborate theories or fully-formed organisations.

From Berlin, Mattick and his colleagues followed events carefully. A constant flow of individuals to and from the area ensured that news spread despite the lack of a reliable and trustworthy press. Berlin had been a disappointment—a general strike that demonstrated the power of a united working class had nonetheless been tamed by socialist organisations using a marxist ideology to halt a further revolutionising of society. In the Ruhr, however, an altogether different dynamic was at work, and it was here that the radical left pinned its hopes.

Pockets of putschists and regular army units existed throughout the area, and for this situation new strategies were developed. Groups of armed and unarmed workers requisitioned trucks, automobiles, and bicycles in order to challenge the troops. Many simply walked huge distances to the nearest confrontation. A loosely structured but highly effective 'red army' materialised without preordained plans, and it involved an estimated 50,000 participants before the uprising was suppressed weeks later. As many as 20,000 took part in single campaigns. Commanders functioned as group coordinators, elected and subject to recall. Weapons came from a number of sources including disarmed military units, municipal storehouses, and house-to-house searches in middle- and upper-class neighborhoods. The insurrectionists accumulated artillery, tanks, railroad transport, and even airplanes—over 40,000 rifles, 400 machine guns, and 21 artillery pieces at the time of surrender.<sup>8</sup> Membership in the armed battalions was strictly controlled though minimum age guidelines,

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8 Winkler 1985, pp. 325, 333: 'most of the leaders of the red army can be described as left-communists'.

proof of prior membership in a worker organisation, and proof of previous military experience. These measures were intended to keep out looters, free-loaders, and provocateurs.

Success depended on overwhelming the opposition numerically. Whenever they fought the military in direct combat, the insurrectionists almost always lost. For a brief period, the military was driven completely out of the Ruhr area. Citywide executive councils coordinated the individual workplace councils and controlled local arrangements.<sup>9</sup> New workplace elections replaced existing council delegates with more radical representatives as the political mood within the liberated zones shifted leftwards. New elections also produced action committees as a means to bypass existing councils. In Chemnitz, for instance, 1500 delegates (one for each 50 employees) constituted the citywide council. Even though the various working- and middle-class parties had been unable to cooperate previously, the council forced them to do just that in order to maintain their representation. Citywide committees coordinated the strike, oversaw military matters, organised a press service, arranged the release of prisoners, requisitioned automobiles and gasoline, and managed traffic, the police, and other municipal business. Affiliated female relatives and friends formed their own units to handle public health and medical matters. However, food procurement proved to be an intractable task.

In the end, the military massed 30,000 troops and swept quickly through the area. Panic ensued among the 'red army' and the worker defence committees, with considerable looting and extortion occurring during the very last days. Six hundred partisans were killed throughout a three-day ceasefire not recognised by the troops. Most of those killed were arrested before they were executed.

#### KAPD

With the council system, a form of organization arose which could lead and coordinate the self-activities of very broad masses either for limited ends or for revolutionary goals, and which could do so independently of, in opposition to, or in collaboration with, existing labor organisations.<sup>10</sup>

In retrospect, the ill-fated Spartacist uprising of January 1919 was the start rather than the culmination of an ongoing process of radicalisation that set in

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9 Under the Weimar constitution, workers' councils became consultative bodies regarding workplace legislation. Members were elected annually.

10 Mattick, 'Workers' Control', in Mattick 1978, p. 215.

after the November revolution. The Kapp Putsch represented its mid-point. It accentuated further the class-based divisions that already fractured German society. A wholesale move towards the left characterised the working class, even though its organisations tended to move in the opposite direction. The radical left grew precipitously over the next two years and for a time became a real factor within the political scene.

The Communist Workers Party (Kommunistische Arbeiter Partei Deutschlands or KAPD) came into existence in the days following the Ruhr events, with Mattick as a founding member.<sup>11</sup> His youth group entered the new party en masse—a remarkable coherence given the splintering of the movement elsewhere. The adults were no different, carrying 7500 of the 8000 Berlin members of the Communist Party with them.<sup>12</sup> Nationwide, the KAPD began with some 38,000 members, leading Mattick to quip many years later that the organisation was too small to even begin the discussion of tactics. Germany now had two Social Democratic (Majority and Independent) and two Communist (KPD and KAPD) parties.

The KAPD viewed itself as an organisation without a future, a placeholder for radicals until the working class was ready to seize control of society by means of workplace councils. Deeply pessimistic about capitalism's recovery, its formulation of a 'death crisis of capitalism' served primarily as a confirmation of the dismal economic and political conditions that plagued the post-war era, rather than functioning as a prescriptive doctrine. In the radicals' view, capitalism had run its course as a productive and operative social system. The world war had resulted in the destruction of property and human beings on a massive scale, yet favourable conditions for the system's further expansion were still lacking. Neither the optimism of the social democrats regarding reforms nor the realism that the bolsheviks would soon adopt regarding the system's stabilisation made much sense if a continued deterioration of the social order might provoke further revolutionary action. Mattick's youth group was drawn into this ongoing duel of words and activities. Several hundred youth activists kept busy with meetings, lectures and study groups, collaboration with other youth centres, and citywide assemblies.

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11 Mattick to Maximilien Rubel, 17 March 1962 (Rubel). For the KAPD: Bock 1969; Kuckuk 1996; and the two fine books by Detlef Siegfried: Siegfried 2001 and 2004. A comprehensive history of the German radical left in the early 1920s has yet to be written. Previous attempts are characterised by neo-leninist approaches (in methodology if not in substance), with an emphasis on political stances and doctrines: Bourrinet 2001; Dauvé and Authier 2006; Fähnders and Rector 1974a.

12 Ihlau 1971, p. 3n.

The Charlottenburg branch (Mattick's) organised the production of the group's monthly paper, *Rote Jugend* [*Red Youth*]. Mattick contributed short pieces and progressively turned his attention to writing.<sup>13</sup> When he withdrew from view, friends assumed it was because he was composing something new. Radicalism meant that politics and creativity were pursued simultaneously, that protest and expression prefigured one another. The youth group publicised open forums through posters pasted on the sides of buildings. If a wall was wide enough, they displayed their entire newspaper.<sup>14</sup> Small teams set out at night, careful not to get caught. Two people would watch for the police at the respective corners while someone else carried the glue pot and another the poster. Wheat paste (flour dissolved in water) was inexpensive, easy to mix, and nearly permanent as an adhesive. Mattick especially liked the easy-going camaraderie where everyone got along.

Financing their paper was a huge challenge. KAPD members like Max Hoelz and Karl Plättner, whose exploits received considerable attention from the bourgeois press during the Kapp Putsch, served as models.<sup>15</sup> Hoelz mobilised a small army of 2500 to help with heists at banks, factory pay windows, and post offices, even commandeering a tank at one point. Plättner, a KAPD member from the beginning, attracted as many as 100 armed adherents, although the core group included fifteen-odd people who weaved in and out of participation. Members received regular wages in order to support their families and also to prevent personal gain and plundering as motivations. Inordinately scrupulous as to the use of force, they often threatened physical harm but never actually committed it. Couriers transferred expropriated funds between the field operations and KAPD colleagues in Berlin, with official receipts and proper paperwork to conduct the transactions. These radical leftists adhered to standard business practices whenever they handled money. Other KAPDists attempted to bomb Berlin's Siegessäule, the tall victory column erected to celebrate Prussia's crushing of the Paris Commune (and defeat of the French), albeit without success.

Class-conscious crimes aimed at the business world, the government, and the possessions of the upper and middle classes were considered proper and legitimate activities. The radicals determined from whom and how they would

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13 A complete set of *Rote Jugend* no longer exists, and none of Mattick's contributions prior to 1924 have survived.

14 Mattick, 'Die Erwerblosen Kölns Rühren Sich' ('Cologne's Unemployed Become Agitated'), *Kampfruf*, 1925.

15 For receipts: Hoelz 1930, p. 140; Ullrich 2000. For KAPD biographies, see Bock 1969; Weber and Herbst 2004.

steal by means of a politicised ethics which guided the choice of targets and the possible uses for the proceeds. Mattick teamed up with friends to sneak into the common areas of apartment buildings where they absconded with things like the brass rods used to hold the staircase carpeting in place. Mattick's expertise in metal recycling, learned during the war, was put to good use. They discovered, though, that much of the brass wasn't real brass, only brass-plated. With the platinum lightning rods they took off rooftops, they uncovered something similar. Many of them were counterfeit, affording the buildings no protection whatsoever. For all the hoopla about expropriations, all they had done was to mimic everyday occurrences within the business arena. In the real world, theft and commerce were complimentary phenomena. At Siemens, Mattick carted lead, brass, and copper through the factory gates to sell to the salvage dealers, his contribution to the rampant employee theft during this period.<sup>16</sup>

The youth group had its own stash of weapons—a range of firearms, automatic weapons, and hand grenades—though these were not to be used for expropriations. Mattick was part of a group that targeted a Social Democratic consumer cooperative, an indication of just how detested the socialists had become within the radical left. The Social Democrats were indistinguishable from the bourgeoisie, even if they were beloved by wide swathes of the working class. In their plan, Mattick's role was to smear soft soap in the face of the courier who carried the day's bank deposits, temporarily blinding him while his companions grabbed the moneybag and hightailed it on bicycles. When the courier failed to appear at the customary time, they readily abandoned these plans. Other youth group members pursued the book trade, facilitated by an inside source at one of Berlin's largest publishing houses. With fake invoices and delivery notices, they collected huge quantities of classic works for resale.

Germany was a tense, chaotic place in mid-1920, with the working class in particular in a high state of excitement. In the June elections, the Majority Social Democratic share of the vote fell from 37.9 percent to 21.6 percent, a ringing condemnation of their actions after the Kapp Putsch. But as the working class moved left, the nation as a whole moved right, and the Social Democrats lost their foothold within the coalition government, a short nineteen months after the November 1918 revolution. Because the radical left organisations were not strong enough to initiate actions on their own, they looked to one another for joint activities. For many workers, the differences between the KAPD, KPD, left Independent Social Democrats, FAUD syndicalists, and KAPD unionists were not particularly important, either ideologically or politically. Left-wing paramilitary units customarily included members from several of these groups.

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16 Bückmiller 1976, p. 13; Weitz 1997, pp. 104–5.



That summer an unexpected consensus emerged to disrupt the shipment of weapons to Poland during its border war with the Bolshevik regime in Russia, with even the Social Democratic unions endorsing the arrangement. The latter's motivation—fear of Polish incursion into German territory—was not shared by other groups, but nevertheless everyone agreed about the boycott.<sup>17</sup> The KAPDers and syndicalists—to the chagrin of Social Democrats and Communists alike—advocated sabotage as well. This produced an ironic situation in which groups critical of the Bolshevik regime were condemned by the pro-Bolshevik group for supporting the Bolsheviks too vigorously.

The merger of the Communist Party with the left wing of the Independent Social Democrats at the end of the year did not alter the political constellation significantly, even though the combined party now had close to 500,000 members and dwarfed the KAPD. The Communists hoped to be all things to all people, with candidates for elections on the one side and joint activities with the KAPD on the other. The latter also added members, another 10,000 in the year following the Kapp Putsch. Membership in the syndicalist FAUD unions and the KAPD-affiliated Allgemeine Arbeiter Union Deutschlands (General Workers Union or AAUD) grew to some 225–325,000 members. In Berlin alone, the AAUD had more than 30,000 adherents.<sup>18</sup> Venturing an estimate, then, we can say that at the height of its influence the radical left organisations encompassed a few hundred thousand members. To keep matters in perspective, the Social Democratic unions alone had over 7.3 million members at the end of 1919, another one million belonged to Catholic unions, and nearly 200,000 were grouped in employer-sponsored ('company') unions.<sup>19</sup>

If the syndicalist unions had been preferred by radical workers prior to the Kapp Putsch, the momentum shifted towards the AAUD afterwards, in part because the KAPD was so prominent in promoting it. In some places, the AAUD existed because of syndicalist hostility to political affiliations, and elsewhere because the syndicalists were absent. Open to any employee aged fourteen and over, it included apprentices like Mattick. In essence, anyone who worked for wages was eligible. The AAUD organised factory-wide committees in contrast to the Social Democratic unions that were organised by trade or by industry, or even to the syndicalist unions, which tended toward a hybrid of the two

17 For the twists in Communist Party policy, the still classic account is Angress 1963. See also Watt 1979, pp. 89–152; Peterson 1993.

18 Bock 1969, p. 195. In Berlin, AAUD membership included 21,378 men, 4348 women, and 3680 youth. See Siegfried 2004, p. 128, p. 138, pp. 151–2; Kool 1970, p. 596n; Rübner 1994, p. 22.

19 Winkler 1985, p. 280.

models. A hallmark of the councilists was that they were always workplace-oriented. Highly decentralised, with local autonomy and decision making at a premium, the group's shop stewards served as a district's executive council. All positions within the AAUD were voluntary and unpaid.<sup>20</sup>

Between the Kapp Putsch and mid-1921, the KAPD and KPD vied with one another for the attention of the Russian Bolsheviks, who for the first time expanded their funding to include both groups. A back-and-forth flow of members, as well as extensive contact and cooperation on the local level, characterised inter-party relations. The two groups were overly confident when they initiated the strike actions of March 1921. The ongoing political and economic turmoil, they anticipated, would lead to a strike wave that would spread across the country. Mattick's youth group was asked to agitate among the unemployed, often the easiest segment of the working class to arouse. A well-orchestrated campaign among Berlin's factories followed. Mattick joined a cluster that visited the large Borsig factory complex in northwest Berlin where heavy equipment and consumer appliances were produced. They pushed their way past the gatekeeper and proceeded room by room, exhorting the employees to join the walk-out. The response was not quite what they hoped for, and besides, police intervention dampened the momentum. By the following day, everyone had returned to work.<sup>21</sup>

If Berlin was again disappointing, matters elsewhere seemed more promising. The re-creation of the 'red army' briefly involved some 40,000 workers, once again emerging more-or-less unplanned from the great enthusiasm and determination of the strikers in the Ruhr industrial belt and isolated pockets elsewhere.<sup>22</sup> Peter Utzelmann, a founding member of the KAPD and soon to be of importance to Mattick, coordinated the strike committee at the Leuna chemical and gasoline refineries near Leipzig. The refineries had upwards of 20,000 employees, many of them new recruits from the surrounding country-

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20 This was not true for the KAPD, although the lack of a mass base and external funder (like Russia) meant that it had few paid functionaries. The AAUD, with its foothold among longshoremen and merchant mariners in Germany's northern seaports, was strongly influenced by the Industrial Workers of the World even though the IWW was more syndicalist in its orientation. Some sections of the AAUD used a slightly edited and amended version of the IWW Preamble for their own Principle Declaration.

21 The strike began on Maundy Thursday, which was the start of the four-day Easter weekend—itsself a gross miscalculation by the organisers. Thursdays and Fridays were also paydays, and strikes meant sacrificing one's wages from the previous period. Mattick, 'Zündstoff', *KAZ*, June 1927, 47.

22 The KAPD and KPD jointly shared the leadership of the new prisoner rights group, Rote Hilfe, from April to June 1921. Brauns 2003, p. 85.

side with no prior political experience. Half of them belonged to the AAUD and several thousand to the KAPD. No other workplace in Germany was as heavily organised by the radical left as this. The strikers at Leuna organised their own press service and defended the occupation of the complex with hundreds of rifles and automatic weapons. The military needed artillery to retake the compound.

Many people considered the uprising a gross miscalculation on the part of the radicals. The radicals, though, were aware that the possibilities for a revolution were slipping away bit by bit. The current of events everywhere was against them. If the March 1921 events were in retrospect ill-conceived, they nonetheless involved a few hundred thousand active participants. The repression afterwards was intense, with more than 4000 serving prison sentences. In Berlin, 800 were arrested and 2000 strikers dismissed from jobs. A year later, in mid-1922, Mattick's childhood friend Josef Kohn was still imprisoned under wretched conditions—a half hour exercise per day, meals eaten in one's cell, repetitive prison work as the only distraction, and limited reading materials.<sup>23</sup> While membership in the Communist Party plummeted from 350,000 to 180,000 between the end of March and the summer, the KAPD continued to grow, with a new influx of members who were disappointed in the new-found cautiousness of the combined Communist-left Independent party. However, the KADP paper had since lost half its readership, declining from 30,000 to 15,000 copies per issue. This proved to be a truer harbinger of things to come.<sup>24</sup>

Mattick never returned to Siemens. Arrested prior to the March 1921 events because of his theft of workplace materials, a long-winded legal process led to repeated interactions with the authorities, weekly probationary visits, and lengthy discussions to determine how his case would proceed. It was only because of the intervention of his instructors at Siemens that he had not been arrested earlier. Forever grateful for their concern and genuine interest in his problems, Mattick realised that they nonetheless could not control what happened to him. Dismissal from Siemens and a jail sentence seemed the most likely outcome. By not returning to work, he hoped that the entire matter might simply disappear.

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23 He was also housed in the Jewish wing of Moabit prison. Josef Kohn to Mattick, 9 March 1922.

24 Siegfried 2004, p. 141.

## Between Berlin and Cologne

### Bouts of Unemployment

Just as little as the bourgeoisie and its Social Democratic allies were able to assess their chances for survival during the first weeks of the revolution . . . , so the revolutionary minority could not assess the probability of success or failure within a situation still in flux and capable of going beyond its initial, limited, political goals.<sup>1</sup>

Until he exited Siemens, Mattick had not consistently worked full time. During his apprenticeship, mornings were spent on the shop floor, but afternoons were devoted to classroom learning. And except for a few part-time jobs after school or during the summer when he still attended middle school, Siemens defined his employment history. Mattick's relationship to work shifted considerably over the next years, and at each juncture his engagement in radical politics altered accordingly.

Mattick began to travel, leaving almost immediately for Hannover and then for the seaport and industrial centre of Bremen on the northwest coast of Germany. Bremen was a natural destination, given its history of radical activity—the Bremen Left-Radicals broke with the Social Democrats before the Spartacists were willing to do so, formed the left wing of the KPD by opposing electioneering and the socialist unions, and helped forge the KAPD. Mattick found some work as an electrician, one of several auxiliary trades that were familiar to anyone skilled in the mechanical arts. His talents included construction, masonry, and plumbing. For whatever reasons, though, he soon returned to Berlin, which remained his base until 1924 despite many trips and sojourns to various parts of Germany. Only then was he fully independent of his parents' household.

In Berlin, Mattick was hired as a low-level clerk for the trade association that represented the sugar industry. These manufacturing associations played key roles in price-setting agreements among firms. Through their publications, through meetings and conferences, and through less formal social gatherings, industry executives exchanged information about business strategies, import and production quotas, and marketing plans. The executives of an association

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1 Mattick 1983, p. 270.



3 *Paul Mattick is bottom centre; his mother to the right, top 2nd from left with baby, top middle with woman on bench, possibly also two photos bottom left corner and right corner. Other pictures may be his sisters and possibly his mother from earlier years.*

also functioned as lobbyists for the industry by monitoring the legislative and political processes.

The trade association, located on Kleiststrasse in the centre of the city, used Mattick for all sorts of odd jobs, most of them quite petty—sharpening pencils, fetching food for the white-collar employees, and other menial chores. Each day, he was tasked with finding newspaper articles that mentioned sugar. These were dutifully pasted into files in the association's archive room—alongside other materials that dated to the 1880s. Mattick found it curious that no one ever requested any material, but he kept adding to it. Later he made arrangements to sell the entire collection to a paper-recycling dealer, confident—at least at first—that this deed would not be soon discovered. The recycler drove to the rear entrance one day, and in a flash, the entire archive disappeared.

Housed in the same building was an association of German military officers that received significant quantities of mail. Left on their doorsill, Mattick began to take this as well. In the meantime, Mattick had grown nervous about the thefts, and he abandoned the sugar industry office not long afterwards. The

destruction of irreplaceable historical records was an issue he would rethink at another point in his life. At the time, though, the proceeds went to his youth group and its various publications.<sup>2</sup>

In his free time and whenever he was unemployed, Mattick sold the youth group's newspaper. The best locations were public transportation stations. Demonstrations and political meetings were other good opportunities. At a huge right-wing demonstration of some 500,000 protestors, Mattick was physically attacked when he heckled a pro-military speaker. Beaten to the ground with walking sticks, umbrellas, and crutches, half-naked and bloody, he shielded his head as best he could. Only because the police intervened and fired their weapons into the air was he saved. These were the infamous 'Noske' police, so-named after the socialist minister who organised the Freikorps. The irony of the situation was not lost on Mattick. Transported to police headquarters in order to be kept safe, he was escorted home that evening after the demonstration dispersed.

Mattick on occasion hawked commercial newspapers during the morning and evening rush hours. He netted very little, but it was often enough for a basic meal. He also observed some things that were of immediate interest to a new group of friends, including Peter Utzelmann, Karl Nachtigall, and other strikers from the Leuna complex who had dispersed in different directions after the defeat of the March 1921 uprising.<sup>3</sup> For instance, at the newspaper office, certain days were designated for the settling of accounts. With so much cash on hand, the head cashier did not bother to close the safe between transactions. Everyone was on good terms, and no one seemed to be worried by the casualness with which these many dealings took place. Mattick saw in this an opportunity to raise further funds for the radical movement.

Of the four people who planned the robbery, only Mattick had a legitimate reason to be on the premises. On his way upstairs, he was to push a bookcase away from the back entrance so that the others could enter by surprise. He did just this and then waited for everyone to join him. Mattick's associates were downstairs and hesitated when they spotted two police officers at the tram station on the corner. Afraid that someone might scream or yell during the robbery, they froze in place. Mattick grew terribly nervous and proceeded back down the stairs. As the group discussed their next step, a delivery truck appeared, and this meant a further delay. The more they waited, the more

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2 When Mattick visited Berlin in 1948, he was relieved to discover that the sugar association's building had been destroyed during the war and that the archive would have been demolished anyway (assuming that it had never been moved elsewhere).

3 Buckmiller 1976, pp. 32–4.

unnerved everyone became. It was only a matter of time before they abandoned the entire scheme.

Mattick intended to accompany the group to Braunschweig, 150 miles west of Berlin, where its members contemplated further expropriations. An older, more experienced colleague cautioned against this. Life as a fugitive, with no chance for regular employment or a normal existence, was not to be romanticised. With the revolution on the defensive, expropriations became a self-perpetuating need. Of the eight people who travelled to Braunschweig, six were soon dead. A robbery at a factory payroll window went terribly wrong. The employees were furious about the lost wages and chased the entire band into the woods. The radicals were armed, but they would not fire at other workers. When the police arrived, all six were executed—a fate that could have been Mattick's as well.

During the spring and summer of 1922, Mattick held a series of short-lived jobs—at a construction site and in a factory that filled fire extinguishers with carbonic acid. Another engagement found him in a kindergarten, a job for which his upbringing with four sisters had prepared him well.<sup>4</sup> The range of different employments was itself noteworthy. His living situation was likewise erratic and varied with his income. For a brief period, he rented space in an apartment that was organised by a KAPD member, where a dozen people slept two to a bed.<sup>5</sup> An attempt to bring a female companion with him was derailed when she hid in the hallway while he feigned sleep in the large collective bedroom until the last of his roommates finished reading. Mattick was jolted from his slumber by the woman who controlled the apartment. Had he been upfront in the first place, he was told, he and his friend could have stayed in the kitchen until everyone else had gone to sleep.

An attempt to secure a position as a draftsman with the Pohlig engineering firm (mines and foundry construction) ran afoul because Mattick had only completed three of the required four years of apprenticeship at Siemens. In the German system, either you had the necessary documentation, or you were undocumented and therefore unskilled. It was not a system that allowed for extenuating circumstances of the sort Mattick might offer.

Mattick turned to a new acquaintance, Selma Babad, who knew precisely the forms and signatures needed for employees to change jobs.<sup>6</sup> She had supported herself as a typist and stenographer since she was fourteen. Talented and multi-lingual, Babad was twenty-six years old when they met. She cautioned

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4 Mattick to Fairfield Porter, 11 December 1940 (AAA).

5 Buckmiller 1976, pp. 17–18.

6 Selma Babad to Mattick, 13 January 1922.

Mattick on the seriousness of forgery, should his deceit be discovered, and she suggested a letter of inquiry (along with a self-addressed, stamped envelope) as a means to procure signatures which could be copied onto other documents. If it turned out to be the case, as it often was, that officials of the former and future employers knew one another, signatures that looked authentic could be of critical value.

The relationship between Mattick and Babad soon turned personal, with a weeklong jaunt to Dresden during one of Mattick's stints of unemployment, a visit by Babad to Berlin, and another visit by Mattick to Prague, where she lived. Mattick overwhelmed her with reading matter—Hermann Gorter's *Der Historische Materialismus: Für Arbeiter Erklärt* [*Historical Materialism for Workers*] was almost obligatory for radical leftists. Letters between them ranged far and wide: electoral politics, unions, Max Hoelz, Heinrich Heine's *Atta Troll*, Ibsen's poetry, darwinism, novels, and Nietzsche.<sup>7</sup> At work, Babad objected to the elimination of the clothing allowance that was worth 25 percent of her salary. That her co-workers griped in private but did not support her openly left a bitter aftertaste. Her relationship to left-wing politics, however, was much more casual than Mattick's. She wavered in her allegiances between the KAPD and KPD, and she found quite acceptable socialist cultural activities like youth festivals that Mattick just detested because of their apolitical nature.

Babad clarified early on that she was 'eager to be married'. She told Mattick: 'I want to be with you because I love you and because you love me, because we understand each other, have the same goals, and complement one another'.<sup>8</sup> Living together meant that he contribute to the household and pursue regular employment. Babad was willing to help support him financially and offered gifts of money if he chose to refocus his life. The latter, she proposed, entailed a return to school for further professional training—in other words, evening classes to become a draftsman and a savings programme for apartment furnishings. All this would take two years, during which time her income would provide a stable foundation. She could ignore disapproval because of their eight-year age gap, but the uncertainty of his lifestyle was another matter. Babad referred to Mattick as 'my child', even signing one of her letters as 'your mother'.

Joining a regular union that provided unemployment benefits, a level of protection against arbitrary dismissals, and assistance with finding new positions was instrumental to these plans. When Mattick was nonetheless fired from his job, where he had been the only employee to refuse to join the union, Babad

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7 Selma Babad to Mattick, 17 November 1921; Selma Babad to Mattick, 7 April 1922; Selma Babad to Mattick, 18 June 1922.

8 Selma Babad to Mattick, 20 August 1922.



was convinced that his co-workers would conclude just the opposite of what Mattick had hoped they would conclude. They would note the vulnerability of his anti-union stance, and rather than sympathise with his plight, they would take fright from stepping outside the bounds of the traditional union movement. Why refuse to join a union when doing so meant the loss of one's job, an understanding that Babad thought was embraced by the AAUD?<sup>9</sup>

As their relationship unravelled, Babad referred to Mattick as reckless and irresponsible, as someone who pursued 'pipedreams', portrayed everything in simplistic terms, and did not give enough thought to matters before acting.<sup>10</sup> Babad realised: 'I fell in love with someone who only existed in letters.'<sup>11</sup> Her criticisms about immaturity and impulsiveness meshed with what was said about the radical left in general and could be heard from social democrats, bolsheviks, and the middle classes alike.<sup>12</sup> Although Mattick and Babad continued to see one another through the spring of 1923, an air of gloom pervaded her remaining letters.

### Movement in Decline

Revolutionary actions are directed against the system as a whole—for its overthrow. This presupposes a general disruption of society which escapes political control.<sup>13</sup>

The KAPD was never a stable organisation. For a few months after the March 1921 uprising it seemed to benefit from a migration of KPD members, but in fact the radical left had entered into an unending freefall. Supporters often melted away for no apparent reason. By the end of 1922, the KAPD was roughly a third of its former size. Politically, the world was shrinking.

Internal splits weakened the KAPD further, even when ruptures were accompanied by lively theoretical debates. The partition between the KAPD and the AAUD was viewed by some as a hierarchal holdover from the traditional labour movement, in which the party was separate from the unions,

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9 Selma Babad to Mattick, 4 October 1922.

10 Selma Babad to Mattick [after 20 August 1922].

11 Selma Babad to Mattick, 4 May 1924.

12 Lenin's well-known pamphlet, released in German during autumn 1920, referred to 'left-wing communism' as 'an infantile disorder'. Lenin encouraged KPD members to stop debating the KAPDists as a means to reduce the latter's influence. Lenin 1965.

13 Mattick 1977.

theory from practice, and politics from the shop floor. A unity organisation, the Allgemeine Arbeiter Union-Einheitsorganization (AAUE), objected to any separation between policies, politics, and organisational forms. Workplace councils dissolved these many divisions, a perspective that seemed to make the KAPD redundant. The AAUE critique was quite similar to that of the syndicalists. Tensions between the AAUD and AAUE were further aggravated by the predominantly intellectual leadership of the KAPD, which remained in place despite the organisation's proletarian focus and membership.

The second schism involved the relationship of the KAPD to the Russian Bolsheviks.<sup>14</sup> It was not clear to the KAPDers just how conversant the Bolsheviks were about the situation in Germany or about the conflict between themselves and the KPD. Even though the KAPD had developed a more sophisticated critique of bolshevik-inspired practices than anyone else on the left, not everyone had abandoned hopes of reconciliation. Successive KAPD delegations to Russia failed to produce satisfactory results, with visitors returning with ever-gloomier assessments. The timing with which various KAPD members and factions broke decisively with bolshevism was a source of schism. An attempt to form an international of like-minded groups as a counter-weight to the one created by the Bolsheviks led to further internal divisions. Just as there were two Social Democratic parties (Majority and Independent) and two Communist parties (KPD and KAPD), there were now two KAPDs (Berlin and Essen) and two AAUs (AAUD and AAUE).

Decline and rifts aside, the KAPD-AAUD-AAUE still counted some 50,000 adherents in mid-1922, with an especially large membership in Berlin. Political life remained vibrant and hopeful despite the many setbacks. That autumn, Mattick set out for Paris in pursuit of work—another wild idea. He and his friends had barely crossed into France when they were arrested and escorted back to Germany. Mattick headed to Cologne, where Josef Kohn—newly released from prison—had since taken a position as a furrier. For Mattick, this was the first of many trips he would take to the city before finally deciding to settle there.

Deutz Engines was hiring machinists, but the lack of paperwork regarding Mattick's apprenticeship at Siemens was a hindrance.<sup>15</sup> To his surprise, he received a letter of recommendation from his former teachers that smoothed the way, a gift he had not expected. The job, however, was physical, noisy, and

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14 For Mattick's lecture (24 October 1974) on Russia's policies towards the German labour movement: Roskilde University Center Library, Denmark. Müller 1977; Hans-Harald Müller to Mattick, 27 October 1975.

15 In some accounts, Deutz is known as Humboldt or Klöckner.

dirty and, in Mattick's words, 'simply dreadful'. Mattick worked in the division that produced locomotives. Huge metal plates, three centimetres thick and equal in length to the entire engine, hung from chains and required hammering from both sides to straighten them. This task was performed manually, and it was Mattick's specific assignment. Another project involved the tenders, the compartments that transformed water into steam in order to power the locomotives. Riveting was performed with exceptional care and subject to strict quality control specifications in order to yield leak-proof compartments. Mattick found it 'a loathsome job to sit inside the boiler and do this work'.<sup>16</sup> It was also dangerous, and a job-related injury interfered with his ability to work steadily.

Mid-1923 was another period of extreme tension within Germany. Parts of the Ruhr were re-occupied by France and Belgium in order to extract further reparations through the seizure of factories and mines, while the German government authorised unemployment benefits for strikers as a means to disrupt those same reparations. Rampant inflation produced extreme results, wreaking havoc on anyone whose earnings rose less rapidly than the rate at which the currency depreciated or who was chained to a fixed income. Currency dropped in value from 18,000 to 4.2 million marks per dollar between January and November. Unemployment increased six-fold over the same period. With only 25 percent of union members employed full-time, nearly half part-time, and the rest unemployed, employers conducted a successful campaign to roll back the eight-hour day.

Mattick helped instigate a strike at Deutz.<sup>17</sup> A group of thirty proceeded to the gatekeepers' booth, a strategic location because an emergency siren had the potential of calling the entire workforce to a central location. When the gatekeeper refused to cooperate, the strike committee disabled the electrical and alarm systems in their entirety. A combination of non-intervention by the British troops, who exercised police functions throughout the area, and non-involvement by much of the Deutz workforce—itself a form of approval since everyone lost wages while the strike was in progress—led to active negotiations between the strike committee and the firm's management.

Mattick was embarrassed by what took place next. As the strike leaders entered the director's office, each removed their hat. That they would humble themselves before the firm's manager was incomprehensible. Afterwards, an arrest warrant was issued because of the destruction of property. When Mattick learned that not he, but another colleague who had not been involved,

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16 Buckmiller 1976, pp. 19–20.

17 Pozzoli 1972, pp. 2–3.

was named, he stepped forward as the culprit. Because of his forthrightness, the judge agreed with Mattick's lawyer to drop the charges.

Throughout the year, Mattick had informal connections to several of the 'proletarian hundreds', the illegal paramilitary groups that awaited the next uprising.<sup>18</sup> Many still had weapons from the upheavals of November 1918 and March 1920. These were often buried underground in oil paper that served as a protective covering. Despite the hundreds' affiliation with the Communist Party, Mattick liked these groups because they were prepared to act. To avoid search-and-seizure operations by the various domestic and foreign security forces, Mattick transported weapons into rural areas, sometimes wandering as far afield as the border with Czechoslovakia, where other colleagues had better hiding places.

After Deutz, Mattick joined another AAUD strike campaign in Leverkusen, just north of Cologne, at the Hoechst chemical complex. The compound had been occupied by employees for two weeks already when Mattick arrived, with the strikers barricaded inside. Attempts to bring the surrounding area under worker control meant excursions into the nearby countryside to procure agricultural goods. The strikers also printed their own money, copying what corporations and municipalities did for themselves during the great inflation of late 1923.<sup>19</sup>

The reoccupation of the factory complex by the specially-trained German security police—organised into military units rather than precincts and armed with machine guns, flamethrowers, and artillery—exhibited none of the restraint that characterised the Deutz situation. They simply blew down the factory gates and chased whoever was not immediately arrested into the adjacent wheat fields. Mattick was captured by a mounted officer who hit him repeatedly with the blunt edge of a sword. Injured policemen toured the makeshift holding cells in search of their assailants. These were hauled out and beaten badly.

The next morning the group was transported to the old catacombs underneath Cologne's main police station, a dreary and filthy place that lacked

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18 'Especially in the Ruhr, the hundreds were composed largely of young, unattached, radical workers, eager to participate in a revolutionary action . . . The hundreds' local, rank-and-file base made them as unpredictable and uncontrollable as radical paramilitary groups had been in 1919–20 and during the March Action'. Peterson 1993, p. 371.

19 Consumer transactions and wage payments were conducted in cash, which put great pressure on the monetary system. The new currencies included expiration dates so that they would not pass into general circulation. As these dates neared, recipients were often forced to exchange at unfavourable rates.

elementary plumbing. Mattick was among those released early in the process in order to ease the overcrowding. With no prior convictions, he convinced the court authorities that he had travelled to Leverkusen in search of work and was unaware that a major strike was in process. His youthful appearance once again reinforced his seeming naiveté. Only when the court officials discovered the previous incident at Deutz did they reinstate the Leverkusen charges and issue a warrant for his arrest. For the next months, he avoided the area altogether.

The Communist Party distanced itself from the mid-year surge in activity, repeating its previous pattern. The Party found itself at odds with its own rank and file, particularly among the groups of 'proletarian hundreds', Mattick included, that had plans to occupy local police headquarters, disarm whoever they found, and announce a general strike. But the KPD hesitated and the moment passed. Several months later, in October 1923, the Party tried to recreate the militancy of the summer months, but the attempt at an uprising fizzled quickly.<sup>20</sup> Another round of repression followed, with many arrests, confiscation of materials, and newspaper bans. The syndicalist FAUD saw its membership fall by half between its peak in 1922 and the end of 1923, only to fall by half again by mid-1924. The Social Democratic unions were not immune to anti-working class campaigns—from eight million members in late 1922, only half remained two years later. Perhaps a few thousand KAPD members were still active.

A remnant of the proletarian hundreds hoped to free Jan Appel, a prominent KAPD member.<sup>21</sup> Appel had held important positions in virtually every radical left organisation since the war. His arrest in November 1923 placed him in considerable danger, since he stood to be jailed for a ship highjacking that had taken him to Russia during a KAPD expedition several years earlier. Courthouse security was quite lax, and it was easy for Mattick and friends to carry weapons inside bags, briefcases, and knapsacks. That the courthouse straddled the French occupation zone facilitated their plans because the respective police forces would not cross sectors. Before anything occurred, however, a plea arrangement allowed Appel to plead guilty to armed expropriations rather than the highjacking. This put an end to their plans.

Throughout 1924 and 1925, the KAPD and AAUD kept active, even though no one else considered them to be viable organisations.<sup>22</sup> In Cologne, the KAPD

<sup>20</sup> Angress 1963, pp. 426–78.

<sup>21</sup> For Appel's autobiography: Appel 1990, p. 373–83; Mattick to Claudio Pozzoli, 5 May 1970 (Pozzoli).

<sup>22</sup> Hermann Hahn to Mattick, 25 December 1946; Hermann Hahn to Mattick, 11 February 1947; Pozzoli 1972, pp. 2–4.

counted some twenty-five members, the AAUD perhaps 200. The nearby Ruhr industrial district remained a tense area, with many wildcat strikes, demonstrations, and meetings. The strikes were mostly spontaneous. Mining workers, for instance, would refuse to enter the premises at the start of a shift if wages were not increased, and half the day could be lost to employers before matters were settled satisfactorily.

A handful of colleagues arranged meetings throughout the region, at which Mattick was often the featured speaker. No one received compensation. Even the posters and publicity materials were self-funded. Politics was not an alternative form of employment. Much of this agitational work was done jointly with members of the Communist Party; as long as the KPD hierarchy was kept uninformed, collaboration was possible. KAPD and AAUD membership even improved slightly.

Mattick picked up odd jobs whenever possible, at different moments working as a housepainter and wallpaper stripper, handyman, and farmhand.<sup>23</sup> Short-term but full-time work was funded by the municipality as a means to keep the unemployed busy. Under the aegis of a huge construction firm, Mattick was assigned to an archaeological site that dated to the Roman era, where care was taken to sift for pieces of pottery and other relics. Because of a concentration of AAUD members, Mattick was elected as shop steward. He travelled from barroom to barroom after work on paydays. Dues-paying evenings were also social events, with wide-ranging discussions about politics, workplaces, and families. This was an opportunity to hear first-hand about movement activities and the wider situation, with Mattick as the information conduit for the union members. If the conversation flowed freely, a second beer followed, with still other locales to visit. By evening's end, Mattick had consumed twenty or thirty drinks. No matter how small the glasses, he was entirely inebriated by the time he arrived home. He soon began to dread the life of a shop steward.

On one occasion, Mattick was asked to retrieve ashes from the crematory by a recently-widowed colleague, a request that he fit into one of his bar-hopping routines.<sup>24</sup> En route, the ashes were left behind, and by the time anyone realised what had happened, no one could remember where this might have occurred. Not comfortable returning empty-handed, Mattick filled a container with ashes from a nearby yard. The widow noticed immediately that there were egg shells mixed in.

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23 Herzfelde 1983, p. 487.

24 Conversations with Ilse Mattick, 21–5 May 2005.

When Mattick returned to Cologne, he was arrested on the outstanding warrant and sentenced to an overnight period of detention.<sup>25</sup> A small intake room (one by two-and-a-half metres) contained six individuals. Processing took hours. The actual cell in which he was placed was equally uncomfortable—metal beds, thin and uncomfortable mattresses, buckets rather than toilets, an unbearable stench, and little light or fresh air. Thin coffee and boiled, tasteless food added to the dreariness. Daily searches of persons and cells and a brief twenty-minute exercise period barely dented the monotony of the day. If Mattick had remained longer, an assignment at one of the prison's shops or delegation as a trustee would have allowed him to wander more freely and talk with a greater range of people. Mattick was released after twenty-four hours, never to be confined to prison again.

### Older Friends

Workers' self-initiative and self-organization offers no guarantee for their emancipation. It has to be realized and maintained through the abolition of the capital-labor relationship in production, through a council system, which destroys the social class divisions and prevents the rise of new ones based on the control of production and distribution by the national state.<sup>26</sup>

In Berlin, Mattick's new friend, Reinhold Klingenberg, introduced him to an entirely different way of life. Klingenberg's parents were college educated, and their home—designed by his father—was filled with an immense library, artwork, and fine furniture. Otto Klingenberg was an architect of some renown, and as a young man he helped develop the city of Riga. When Mattick met him, his business interests had turned to antique furniture. Expensive rugs and mahogany furnishings dotted Reinhold's room. The house's den served as a sanctuary for Mattick and other friends like Josef Kohn, especially when Klingenberg's parents were away at their summer home. For Mattick it was a level of elegance and comfort that he had never experienced. So much space for so few people! His other retreats—the youth centre and the Kohn apartment across the street from his own—were always filled. Moreover, the Klingenberg

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25 Mattick, '24 Stunden im Klingelpütz', serialised in *Kampfruf*, February 1930 (this essay may have also appeared in *Kölner Tageblatt*, 1925).

26 Mattick, 'Introduction', in Mattick 1978, p. xi.

residence was located on Suarezstrasse in the central business district, and Mattick could walk or bicycle there easily from his parents' apartment.

Klingenberg's mother was a literary critic with many friends from within Berlin's artistic milieu, some of whom Mattick met when he stayed for dinner.<sup>27</sup> Lou Andreas-Salomé and Rainer Maria Rilke were frequent visitors and made strong impressions. Rilke was already known for his poetry, while Salomé had published several studies on Ibsen and Nietzsche.<sup>28</sup> Letters that she wrote to Reinhold had recently appeared as a separate volume.<sup>29</sup> Salomé drew Mattick into conversation, questioning him in particular on his favourite character from Dostoyevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov*. They mutually agreed that Dmitri, the rebel son, estranged from his father, and blamed for all sorts of misdeeds, fit Mattick the best. This entire crowd supported the Independent Social Democrats during the revolutionary years, as did Mattick's parents, but Mattick dismissed them as bourgeois, a sleight-of-hand he would later regret because he had not taken full advantage of these situations. These were thoughtful, knowledgeable people from whom he could have learned much.

Klingenberg was four years older than Mattick, a huge gap in view of the fact that Mattick had just turned sixteen when they met. An engineering student at the nearby Technical College in Charlottenburg until the war interrupted his studies, Klingenberg had a political trajectory that tacked perfectly with the rapid evolution of the radical left: Social Democrats, Independent Social Democrats, Spartacists, KPD, KAPD, and eventually the AAUD. His total devotion to the revolutionary cause was extraordinarily appealing to Mattick.<sup>30</sup> Klingenberg's scientific knowledge, particularly of chemistry, made him popular with his new, younger friends. He could build a still and brew liquor, and Klingenberg, Mattick, and Kohn embarked on days-long binges that included much speechifying and also oversized hangovers.<sup>31</sup> Mattick was so drunk one

27 Otto Klingenberg and Helene von Klot-Heydenfeldt. Her *Eine Frau: Studie nach dem Leben* (1890, 1893) was written in response to Tolstoy's *Kreutzer Sonata*. As far as I can tell, copies no longer exist. Buckmiller 1976, p.35; Conversations with Ilse Mattick, 13–14 January 2006.

28 A huge public scandal surrounded her supposed *ménage a trois* with Nietzsche and his best friend, the philosopher Paul Rée, because they roomed together. To give some sense of the ongoing scandal that surrounded Andreas-Salomé, she travelled to Russia for a vacation together with her husband, the linguist Friedrich Carl Andreas, with whom she had an open marriage, and Rilke, who was her lover and also 14 years younger. Welsch und Wiesner, 1988, p. 126–31.

29 Andreas-Salomé 1990.

30 Kubina 2001, pp. 156–7.

31 Reinhold Klingenberg to Mattick, 3 February 1946; Conversations with Ilse Mattick, 13–14 January 2006.



time that he fell into a plate glass window. It was a wild group: adolescent, hedonistic, but also fiercely radical, committed, and involved.

Klingenberg, Mattick, and Kohn were an interesting mix. Kohn's family lived in the same complex as Mattick's. The two boys had been inseparable as children and as adolescents. Kohn's family was even larger than Mattick's, but it also seems to have been characterised by less tension, perhaps because the father was away from home so often. This easy mixing of Jewish and non-Jewish families was not especially noteworthy at the time, as it would become from the mid-1920s onwards. With Kohn and Klingenberg, Mattick had two devoted friends, and each of their family homes served as a place to escape from his own.

If the Klingenbergs taught Mattick to love literature, Karl Gonschoreck encouraged him to write it. From a similar working-class background (his father was a miner), Gonschoreck had been wounded during the war and radicalised afterwards. An expropriator during the 1921 upheavals, he collaborated closely with Max Hoelz. During the surge of protests in the Ruhr region, he was a member of a bicycle battalion with a few hundred members that once dynamited an armoured car. A three day standoff with the guards locked inside meant that the latter were nearly starved before they finally surrendered and exited the vehicle.

Each group of expropriators had its own signature in terms of targets chosen and methods used. Gonschoreck specialized in house break-ins. Anything not nailed down, like china, silverware, linens, and expensive tchotchkes, was placed on the street in poorer neighbourhoods for passers-by to take. What could not be taken was set aflame. Better to leave the structures uninhabitable than have them return to private ownership.

Mattick met Gonschoreck after the latter's release from prison. Terminally ill with tuberculosis, the justice authorities commuted his life sentence. Mattick appreciated Gonschoreck's optimism, even though the radical left was in decline and Gonschoreck's health was deteriorating rapidly. Gonschoreck wrote for the papers that also began to publish Mattick: the KAPD's *Kommunistische Arbeiter Zeitung* [*Communist Workers Paper* or KAZ] and the AAUD's *Kampfruf* [*Call to Struggle*].<sup>32</sup> Gonschoreck wrote short stories, novelettes, and biographic sketches, and he put into words his experiences during the revolutionary years, including accounts of street fighting with the police and military, the Kapp Putsch, the March 1921 uprising, the inflationary wave of 1923, raids on his living quarters, militaristic festivals, and reformist politicians. As Gonschoreck's

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32 For Gonschoreck's unpublished and published work: Frida Hädecke to Mattick, 24 January 1929. Buckmiller 1976, pp. 30–2.

illness progressed, his agitational and literary work grew irregular. Mattick was Gonschoreck's closest friend, and after his death, Gonschoreck's partner wrote to him: 'you and your life meant everything to him. He could talk about you for hours, every letter gave him a new occasion, and while I know how good a friend he was to you, I am so pleased that he still means so much to you too'.<sup>33</sup>

Gonschoreck emboldened Mattick to expand his horizons beyond meeting reports and short book reviews, encouraging him to try to fictionalise and bring alive the situations he experienced as a revolutionary. Gonschoreck was more mature as a writer, his use of language was clearer and crisper, he was less prone to hyperbole and exaggeration, and he had a real talent for isolating issues and themes that made his work easy to read. He urged Mattick to follow suit, be experimental, and at all times keep writing. This was advice that Mattick heeded. The more that he wrote, the more committed to writing he became. Between 1924 and early 1926, twenty separate items of Mattick's were published—vignettes, political commentary, book reviews, movement reports (sometimes summarising his own speeches in the third person), and even a poem.

Several such pieces from Mattick appeared in 1924–5. The Communist Party's daily, *Rote Fahne* [*Red Flag*] published a story about a workplace injury that involved a conveyor belt, a fantasy piece based on Mattick's pathological fear of this technology. That he was paid—the first time ever—was also a nice acknowledgement for a budding author, especially in a field where usually one must be pleased simply to give away one's work. A second fictionalised piece, 'Saul', appeared in the KAPD paper, in which Josef Kohn's persecution became the basis for the story—a twenty year-old militant sentenced to eight months imprisonment in a small cell where he is given only two books to read, one in Hebrew (which Kohn could not read), the other nationalistic in orientation. A third story described the beating Mattick received at a Communist Party meeting when he attempted to rebut the main speaker (Ruth Fischer). Mattick learned first-hand that the KPD hierarchy no longer distinguished between the radical left and the radical right—between the KAPD and the Nazis.

Another fictionalised account that appeared in Franz Pfemfert's *Die Aktion* [*Action*] also focused on the bolshevisation of the German Communist Party, with its ever-stricter use of hierarchical decision-making and internal discipline.<sup>34</sup> *Die Aktion* was a widely-read journal of political satire that had

33 Frida Hädecke to Mattick, 24 January 1929. For Mattick's obituary of Gonschoreck: 'Karl Gonschoreck', *Kampfzruf*, August 1928. Mattick published a Gonschoreck story about street fighting during the Kapp Putsch: 'Ein Schuss: Skizze' ['A Shot: Sketches'], *CAZ*, February 1931.

34 Mattick's stories: 'Der Treibriemen' ['The Conveyor Belt']; 'Die Nationale Partei Deutschlands Mißhandelt Arbeiter' ['The National Party Mishandles Workers']; 'Saul';

its roots in experimental literature and art (dada), and in anti-war agitation. During the war, it avoided censorship by republishing the most reprehensible pro-war statements that appeared in bourgeois and mainstream socialist publications. In the mid-1920s, the journal targeted the cant that emanated from the pro-Bolshevik crowd. Mattick's article was part of that genre.

*Die Aktion* benefitted from the expropriations of the early 1920s, establishing a fund that ensured its immediate future. Without the robberies of small banks, post offices, and factory pay windows, it is unclear just how much of an institutional existence the radical left would have had. Unlike Social Democratic and Communist Party publications, the radical left did not accept paid advertising from small business owners and retail stores. Even though Pfemfert belonged to the group of intellectuals and editors of radical-left publications who benefitted from the expropriations conducted by working-class members of the KAPD (Hoelz, Plättner, Utzelmann, Nachtigall, Appel, Gonschoreck), he helped found the AAUE as an alternative to the KAPD. Pfemfert was incensed when he learned that Mattick belonged to the KAPD and AAUD, and he refused to publish anything further from him, even work that he had already accepted.<sup>35</sup> Despite this rebuff, AAUE members like the artist Franz Seiwert who objected to Mattick's blurring of organisational boundaries would soon count among his close colleagues.

In Cologne, the AAUD and AAUE were divided along class lines. Working-class members belonged to the AAUD, whereas the AAUE contained artists, writers, and other intellectuals. In other words, the Cologne AAUE was a non-working-class organisation (though its members still depended on wages, commissions, and salaries for their livelihood) whose political outlook was nonetheless focused entirely on the proletariat. Its adherents were deeply involved in the cultural avant-garde, and this made them very attractive to Mattick. He had no difficulty living in these two worlds, which he experienced as complementary rather than as conflictual. Each group embodied its own special combination of intelligence, experience, creativity, and dedication. Mattick's years in the movement were a unique apprenticeship.

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'Der Traum des Bolschewisierten Berufs Revolutionärs' ['The Dream of a Bolshevized Professional Revolutionary']. Weber 1969.

35 The rejected pieces appeared in *KAZ* and *Heimstunden: Proletarische Tribüne für Kunst, Literatur, Dichtung* (*Open Hours: Proletarian Tribune for Art, Literature, and Poetry*), the latter from the well-regarded Kurt Wolfe Publishers. Franz Pfemfert to Mattick, 25 September 1924; Franz Pfemfert to Mattick, 12 August 1925; Franz Pfemfert to Mattick, 14 September 1925; Mattick to Otto Rühle, 26 February 1941 (IISH: Rühle).

Paul Kühne served as Mattick's liaison to Cologne's artistic scene and to the Cologne Progressives (as the radical artists came to be known).<sup>36</sup> Kühne was employed at the bookstore of the Wallraf-Richartz Museum, a common meeting place for this crowd of people. Mattick was intrigued by the connections they made between radical politics and art and by their artistic experimentation with form and content. With their respective memberships in the AAUE and AAUD, Kühne and Mattick became their own small scale bridge within what had otherwise become a highly fractious radical left. Together, they planned a systematic theft of books for resale at the city's outdoor marketplace—the latter a colourful and popular spot with its vendors, craftspeople, and food stands. Items taken from the bookstore formed their initial stock, soon supplemented by large orders placed with letterhead from the Paul Kühne-Mattick Bookcart. This was a swindle that Mattick had learned in Berlin. For the next year, enough companies complied that new shipments of books arrived almost daily, and not until the trade newsletter identified Kühne-Mattick as fraudulent and un-creditworthy did the deliveries stop. Never one to miss an opportunity, Mattick used the excuse of a failed business enterprise to reapply for unemployment relief.

The bookcart led Mattick to the expressionist poet and novelist, Walter Rheiner.<sup>37</sup> Rheiner had developed a drug habit during the war. This was a means to avoid active fighting, but his addiction had dogged him ever since. He bought books on credit from Kühne and Mattick and then resold them, doing to them what they did to others. When Kühne and Mattick went looking for him, his wife, Frieda, appraised them of Rheiner's situation.

Charismatic, talented in music and languages, and exceptionally photogenic, Frieda had attended high school and spent a semester at a music conservatory in Cologne. Her self-presentation was very dramatic, with a real flair for stylish clothing. Mattick was deeply enthralled. Seven years his senior, she was also very worldly: 'for me sex was as natural as taking a bath or going for a walk with a loved one. I never knew remorse, or had hang-ups about my virginity or purity—I became the most delightful partner to all the men who loved me

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36 Mattick's colleagues included Franz Seiwert, chair of the city's AAUE, and Heinrich Hoerle, among others. Everett 1990; Bohnen 1976; Bohnen 1978; Bohnen und Backes 1978; Roth 2008; Mattick Jr. 2009a.

37 Rheiner's son (Mattick's stepson) referred to his father as the Alan Ginsburg of the Weimar Republic. Rheiner's novels and poetry collections usually sold in small editions of 300–500 copies but nonetheless attracted considerable attention, for instance: *Kokain: Novelle* [*Cocaine: Novel*], and *Das Fo-buch: Gedichte 1918–20*, a collection of poems dedicated to Frieda. See Rheiner 1917, 1921. Laub 1983.

and who were loved by me'.<sup>38</sup> Immersed in Cologne's radical art scene and—through her husband—Germany's avant-garde publishing scene, she helped to guide Mattick in these worlds. When Mattick moved into her seven-room apartment, he joined Frieda's two children (aged seven and five) and mother, displacing some of the boarders they customarily housed (sometimes as many as four at a time).<sup>39</sup>

Frieda's marriage to Walter Reiner had been particularly painful and difficult. Rheiner was institutionalised repeatedly in asylums and detoxification programmes, suffered periodic bouts of homelessness, and had a long history of harmful behaviour towards himself and others. Only twenty-one when she first met him, engagement, pregnancy, and marriage followed within a year. By the time she gave birth to their second child, Reiner was burglarising their doctor's office in order to steal prescription pads. He also absconded with the rent money and children's toys, such that she emerged from the birthing clinic malnourished, penniless, and homeless.<sup>40</sup>

Even before Rheiner's death by overdose in June 1925, Frieda was under intense pressure from his family and from Cologne's welfare authorities. Rheiner's mother had never approved of her—working class, half-Jewish, and a radical besides. The mother-in-law frequently enticed the children to her home with promises of food and candy, but without telling Frieda beforehand. Cohabitation between unmarried adults, now that Paul had moved in, was roundly condemned in the catholic-dominated municipality. Since she received public support, Frieda was ever more vulnerable, and the welfare authorities placed her children in foster care. This overcame any hesitations on Mattick's part: marriage was the only way to save the children. Four months after Rheiner's death, Paul and Frieda married. Paul was fully aware that his 'adventurous' life was at an end.<sup>41</sup> For the moment at least, the family received generous payments from the municipality because of his (un)employment

38 Frieda Mattick, 'Autobiographical Fragments' (AdK: Koval). For pictures, see the exhibition catalogue: Rheiner 1969. Interview with Jake Faber, 27 June 2005; Mattick to Kenneth Rexroth, 7 April 1946 (UCLA); Mattick to Uli Bohnen, 22 April 1972 (Bohnen); Mattick to Uli Bohnen, 20 March 1980 (Bohnen).

39 Frieda (24 February 1897–15 March 1980) was married three times. Her maiden name was Olle. Married names included Schnorrenberg (Rheiner), Mattick, and St. Sauveur. The children were: Rene Beate (17 August 1918–22 August 1967), and Johannes (Hans) (4 February 1920–26 January 1978). Frieda's mother died at the Theresienstadt concentration camp in 1945, just prior to the war's end.

40 Walter Rheiner to Frieda Rheiner, 18 March 1925 (AdK: Rheiner); Frieda St. Sauveur to Alexander Koval, 3 June 1977 (AdK: Koval).

41 Conversations with Ilse Mattick, 21–5 May 2005.

status and because of the children. Not surprisingly, Frieda was denied her share of Rheiner's inheritance by his family.

The future, at least in Germany, already belonged to the radical right, and not much remained in the sphere of radical-left politics.<sup>42</sup> Chronic unemployment also became less attractive to Mattick the longer he was out of work. Ever since March 1921 with the end of his Siemens apprenticeship, he had spent long periods without paid work and was either supported through the public authorities or subsidised with free rent through his parents or Frieda's mother.

The decision to move to the United States was almost whimsical. Distant relatives in Benton Harbor, Michigan sent the necessary affidavits and money for the voyage. Never shy about creating new possibilities, Mattick visited city hall with a special proposal—if they left the city forever, would the municipality finance their trip? He brought along calculations to show that one-time funding was cheaper than long-term support for a family of four. The mayor, Konrad Adenauer, was so intrigued that Mattick was invited back for a further discussion. Here was a means to rid the city of its unemployed leftists with no-return tickets to somewhere else. Once Mattick had regular employment and a place to live, so the plan went, Frieda and the children would follow. Unable to support himself in a sustained fashion over the last several years, he now intended to support three dependents as well. No one thought they would stay in the United States very long, not even Paul and Frieda themselves.

In March 1926, Mattick set sail, eight days before he turned twenty-two years old. The ship's manifest listed him as a library clerk.<sup>43</sup>

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42 Conversation with Paul Mattick, Jr., 6 August 2004.

43 *New York Passenger Lists, 1820–1957*.

## New Worlds

### Voyages

Unless spontaneous movements, issuing into organizational forms of proletarian self-determination, usurp control over society and therewith over their own lives, they are bound to disappear again into the anonymity of mere potentiality.<sup>1</sup>

Neither the journey to the United States nor the reception Mattick received once he got there were what he anticipated. The voyage was a meandering twelve-day excursion that crisscrossed the English Channel before finally arriving in New York City.<sup>2</sup> The steamship could hold several thousand passengers but seems to have been half empty when Mattick travelled. Three-quarters of the passengers, including Mattick himself, travelled third class (steerage) and were housed on the lower decks at the back of ship, where noise from the engines was audible, bathroom facilities shared, and warm water for bathing scarce. Mattick was assigned to the bunk beds adjacent to the ship's steering mechanism.

Relations between the crew and the lower-class passengers were tense.<sup>3</sup> The waiters looked for tips and oriented themselves accordingly, but in other situations they were unfriendly and unhelpful. When one of the waiters refused to serve coffee without prior payment, it triggered a small protest, with Mattick at its centre. The ship's crew also paid close attention to the medical inspections conducted en route. While a jazz band played overhead for the upper class travellers, the five hundred lower class men were lined up, half-naked, and subjected to quick, superficial examinations. The female passengers were processed separately while the male employees looked on. With no dressing rooms, the women were told to partially undress as they waited their turns.

From what Mattick observed, the doctor told one in five that they had a medical problem in need of urgent attention and would not be permitted to exit the ship in their present condition, even though everyone had been

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1 Mattick, 'Workers' Control', in Mattick 1978, p. 224.

2 The trip began in Antwerp with stops in Southampton, Cherbourg, Cobh, and Halifax. Recounted in: Mattick, 'Ueberfahrt', *KAZ*, May 1927.

3 Pozzoli 1977, pp. 88–9.

examined before departure and declared healthy, in some cases by several different doctors. This led to many difficult situations which played on the anxieties and fears of the travellers. Underlying these interactions was a much cruder motive. The ship's crew conducted a brisk trade in medicines and ointments that were offered at inflated prices. In Mattick's words, 'they took from those who were worried the last of their savings'.<sup>4</sup> The steamship companies actively encouraged their crews in these transactions to avoid fines imposed by the immigration officials for every rejected immigrant.

When the ship reached New York, it docked first in Manhattan to allow the first- and second-class passengers to disembark—one of the advantages of higher-priced travel. Everyone else was ferried across the river for processing at Ellis Island, an ordeal that took the entire day. Mattick was nervous—unnecessarily, as it turned out—that the authorities would be forewarned about the mini-rebellion.<sup>5</sup> After disembarkation, the passengers were divided by gender and marched into the huge, cavernous rooms which served as waiting areas where everyone was made to undress and carry a large, numbered card. New rounds of medical inspections extended for hours before the entire group was processed. Anyone with a suspected health problem was instructed to stand separately from the others. Mattick was one of them because the doctor diagnosed (falsely) that he had a hernia. When no one was looking, he simply crossed back to the other line.

Basic information was recorded at the intake window: how much currency were you bringing into the country, what kind of work would you seek, with whom would you live, and so on. There were also queries about one's ability to read and write. The screen for mental fitness consisted of a few questions that tested people's reactions according to the latest personality theories. A person near Mattick was asked: 'Why do cats have five legs?'—a question so perplexing that it left the man speechless, embarrassed, and thus subject to rejection by the intake officials.

Peddlers offered food and trinkets, a last attempt, in Mattick's opinion, to fleece the emigrants of any remaining funds. The journey had been long and arduous, with poor-quality food, hostile treatment, and inadequate sanitary conditions. Ellis Island was immense, impersonal, and bureaucratic. No one knew what came next. Strange words were barked in loud voices, with fingers pointed in this or that direction. If not for the lack of funds for a return voyage, some might have left immediately. Not until the Nazis began to build concen-

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4 Mattick, 'Ueberfahrt', *KAZ*, May 1927.

5 Pozzoli 1977, pp. 89–91.



tration camps did Mattick fully understand the dynamics involved in processing large numbers of people.

Mattick travelled immediately from New York to Benton Harbor, where his relatives lived. Benton Harbor was a small town of not quite 15,000 people, some ninety miles northeast of Chicago and within walking distance of Lake Michigan. His relatives had already arranged employment through their daughter's boyfriend, a manager in a nearby factory. By Mattick's third day in the United States, he was at work. Mattick soon learned that his relatives had sponsored him in the hope that he would marry one of their daughters and also help with their son, who was blind. When they discovered that he was already married, relations between them cooled.<sup>6</sup> They demanded that he repay the cost of the voyage, a matter that had not been raised before. Mattick felt deceived. From one day to the next, he was told to leave their home. This falling out had further negative consequences when Frieda and her children arrived in August, five months later, as it left them isolated within a small linguistically-bound community.

Work became Mattick's new refuge. Because of his training, Mattick was given interesting projects. The factory pioneered the production of milk cartons out of cardboard rather than glass, and introduced wood slats for banana crates. Of the several hundred people employed there, all were immigrants, including many Germans. The owner-operator was an inventor—a colourful individual, sixty years old, elegant in his dress and quite personable, who would not hesitate to crawl under a machine to diagnose a problem even when dressed in a silk shirt. Mattick, often tardy for work because he stayed up late reading, was walking towards the factory one morning when the owner pulled up alongside and offered a ride. As Mattick started to apologise for his lateness, the owner answered: 'Not you alone, me too!'<sup>7</sup> The wage structure was nothing special, but the place had a casual air to it such that no one ever seemed to have been fired. Years after Mattick had left, the enterprise was bequeathed to the remaining employees.

Benton Harbor was not a happy place for the Matticks. Paul had work, the children school, but Frieda felt the isolation acutely. They were also deeply in debt because of money borrowed from a work colleague for Frieda's move, an instalment plan for furniture, and automatic payroll deductions to repay Paul's relatives. Purchase of a radio was a significant improvement, but otherwise life was overly quiet and uneventful. Having lived such cosmopolitan lives, the adjustment was sharp. They rented a spacious two-storey detached house with

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6 Conversation with Paul Mattick, Jr., 6 August 2004.

7 Buckmiller 1976, pp. 40–1; Pozzoli 1972, p. 4.



4 *Paul Mattick is centre, left above centre with Frieda, right above centre with unidentified man, bottom left with Frieda, bottom right with Frieda; bottom middle Frieda alone.*

a sizable yard, but the lack of utilities meant cooking on a coal stove, a device with which Frieda was unfamiliar.<sup>8</sup> Soot and smoke covered everything. That winter was particularly cold, and coal was expensive.

Paul was determined to purchase an automobile and save every penny towards a move to Chicago. Ordinary purchases became a fraught, contested terrain. Clothing, shoes, airmail stamps, haircuts, and allowances for the children were postponed so that they could repay debts. Prolonged conversations over petty matters, needling, and resentment grew in intensity. The children were teased at school; Hans was caught stealing from a classmate. Spiteful remarks lead to slapping. Everyone felt miserable and trapped. When Paul left on a weekend jaunt to seek kindred political contacts, Frieda slaughtered the chickens he raised as pets and served them as a feast for herself and the children. She felt haunted by the warnings she had received from friends and family about how difficult it would be to sustain a relationship with someone so much younger in a place so far from home. She admitted her tendency to

<sup>8</sup> Address: 698 Waukonda Avenue, Benton Harbor (no longer exists).

use memories of past relationships to denigrate current ones; her relationship to her father was idealised to the detriment of Rheiner, whereas memories of Rheiner were used against Paul.<sup>9</sup> Both Paul and Frieda kept open the option of returning to Germany.

Frieda took a job peeling fresh fruit (pears) at a local canning factory. On her first day, she barely managed half of what the experienced peelers could accomplish (three bushels). Her dress and shoes were soaking wet and sticky from pear juice; her hands and arms so fatigued that she could not open the doorlock when she arrived home. Sobbing and distraught, she refused to return to the factory, and this provoked an angry and bitter altercation between her and Paul. Cooler heads ultimately prevailed, and she negotiated a different position, sorting and washing the fruit instead. She was also paid a salary rather than piece-work.

The mood in the house was sobered further by the news of Frieda's unexpected pregnancy.<sup>10</sup> They skimped on pre-natal care because of the expense, with the medical profession as much to blame. One doctor refused a routine examination because Frieda planned a homebirth and would not pay to use his clinic. An emergency caesarean, however, could not prevent a miscarriage, and Frieda's post-partum depression fuelled the tensions within the family. Reckless accusations followed and Frieda retreated into herself: 'I was unhappy beyond measure. When alone in the afternoons I sang lullabies to the dead boy till my voice drowned in tears'.<sup>11</sup>

That spring, before Frieda arrived, Mattick had learned that his father had died. A series of mournful letters from his mother described his final illness. Hospitalised for six weeks with heart problems, diarrhoea, blood irregularities, and extreme weight loss—symptoms consistent with lead poisoning and cancer, he refused all nourishment except seltzer and wine. He was not quite fifty years old. Mattick was more disturbed by his death than he had expected. In a letter to a close friend, he later wrote: 'I remember clearly my emotions . . . My father too had been ill for many years. Yet this made not the slightest difference to the great pain his death caused me'.<sup>12</sup>

Mattick's mother was extremely distraught. Each letter expressed her grief. In one, she wrote, 'I don't have enough tears to cry'; in another, 'I miss your

9 Frieda St. Sauveur to Dietrich, 2 March 1963 (AdK: Rheiner); Frieda St. Sauveur to Alexander Koval, 3 June 1977 (AdK: Koval).

10 Reinhold Klingenberg to Mattick, 23 June 1946.

11 Frieda Mattick, 'Autobiographical Fragments' (AdK).

12 Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 19 December 1953.

father so much, I often think my heart will break'.<sup>13</sup> In the next months, she lost over twenty pounds. Now that her husband was deceased, she forfeited the pension from Siemens. Burial expenses more than equalled the payout from the insurance policy. Everything cost extra—clothing in which to bury him, the casket, gravesite preparation, the headstone, a small bench next to the site, and more. His mother went without food rather than scrimp. Mattick sent money, but this became a further point of contention for Frieda, whose own mother received not a penny from them. Mattick offered to bring his mother to the United States, but she neither wanted to leave his sisters nor be far from her husband's burial plot.<sup>14</sup>

Mattick's mother, only forty-eight at the time, returned to work, putting in long hours washing laundry and cleaning other people's homes. The work was irregular—when her clients were away, she was left idle and payless. The work bothered her physically, causing chronic shoulder and knee pain and also a sensitivity to temperature changes, brought on by immersing her hands in the boiling water used for washing. About herself she wrote: 'I never had a childhood, only difficulties and work'.<sup>15</sup> Her daughters were busy with their own lives, about which Mattick received reports. Lisbeth was employed by the postal service but spent eight months at a sanatorium for lung ailments, the same health issue that dogged him. Given her salary and health benefits, the cost of treatment was a sensitive issue. A second sister, Else, ended a stint of unemployment with office work in a construction company, for which she needed to purchase suitable clothing. When Else's partner moved in with them, the overall financial situation eased considerably.

His mother passed along a story about a neighbour whom Mattick knew. Furious when he was laid off from his job at the power plant, he barged into the administration offices and shot dead the manager of human resources. Mattick's mother described the neighbour as a '*Hakenkreuzler*' ['swastika-ite'].

### Work and Writing

As long as you believe in the definite end of capitalism, the arguments you bring forth in support of this position do not really matter.<sup>16</sup>

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13 Mother to Mattick, 19 April 1926; Mother to Mattick, 17 May 1926.

14 Mother to Mattick, 23 June 1926; Mother to Mattick, 9 November 1926; Mother to Mattick, 22 December 1926; Mother to Mattick, 13 February 1927.

15 Mother to Mattick, 26 July 1927.

16 Mattick to Maximilien Rubel, 6 October 1961 (Rubel).

It was the peculiar mentality of the American working class that got Mattick to start writing again after many months in the United States. Flabbergasted by what he encountered, Mattick both documented and fictionalised working-class obsessions with sports, stock markets, and the sexual improprieties of the rich and famous. Mattick's insights were combined with descriptions of nearby cities and towns that he toured on weekends, sometimes by hitchhiking and later by car. That religion was so important was especially perplexing for Europeans accustomed to working-class discourse in which free-thinkers (atheists) and socialists dominated. The need for radicals in the United States to confront religion as a barrier to socialist understandings of the world accompanied, as Mattick noted, the pervasive influence of advertising slogans. The ideologies aimed at the working class were overwhelming in extent and persuasiveness.

In Benton Harbor, Mattick knew more than anyone else about the plight of Sacco and Vanzetti, the working-class anarchists on trial in the shooting deaths of two security guards during a company payroll expropriation. Mattick found the situation all the more curious because of the attention their plight received among the middle classes due to the egregious curtailment of the anarchists' civil liberties. By contrast, the factory workers with whom Mattick conversed were uninformed—and largely uninterested—in the case.

If cultural criticism was Mattick's venue, it was also a means to keep in touch with the German radical movement. Writing in German remained his only option. The KAPD's *KAZ* and AAUD's *Kampfruf* still had circulations of 2000 or more copies on twice-weekly production schedules.<sup>17</sup> Mattick came of age as a writer because the movement created its own publications and fostered a new cohort of authors. Of the three dozen pieces published by Mattick between 1924 and 1929, virtually all of them appeared in the journals of the radical left. *KAZ* published a wide range of materials from him—movement reports, descriptive articles on social conditions, book reviews, and a poem. With *Kampfruf*, fiction was added to the mix. These publications played the same role for new and emerging writers like Mattick and Karl Gonschoreck as

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17 The papers provided political and economic analysis on developments in Germany, commentary about the Communist Party, fictional stories about workers and strikes (like the one Mattick contributed), short news items, economic data, information about movement 'business' (such as the deaths of comrades and the expulsion of members for stealing from the organisation), rebuttals of articles that appeared in other papers, exhortatory poems (of the kind Mattick wrote), reprints of essays and speeches by important personages from within the labour movement, and articles on the KAPD. Alfred Weiland to Anton Pannekoek, 27 July 1950 (IISH: Pannekoek).

*Die Aktion* had once played for an older generation of radical leftists like Franz Pfemfert, Franz Jung, and Walter Rheiner, whose avant-garde styles and anti-war politics would otherwise have had no outlet. Mattick and Gonschoreck portrayed the connection between revolutionary experiences and literary expression, a shift in emphasis and style within this small cohort of radicals.

Mattick's articles regularly appeared in *KAZ* and *Kampfruf* with his initials, and sometimes with his full name, a distinction customarily reserved for well-known movement personages (like Luxemburg, Liebknecht, Anton Pannekoek, Franz Mehring) or popular left-wing authors such as Jack London and B. Traven.<sup>18</sup> Mostly, though, everything was left unsigned. Anonymity had its own significations—either that the piece had been written collectively (often, a single primary author, with comments, edits, additions, and deletions from the editorial collective), or that it represented the views of the group and therefore was not attributable to a single individual, who served more as a scribe than an author. In both situations, editorial collective members had input even if their particular skills did not include writing. That some of Mattick's pieces were signed indicated that he alone was the author.

When Mattick attempted to publish outside the bounds of the *KAPD* and *AAUD*, the reaction was highly supportive but also extremely critical. Rudolf Leonhard, the well-known left publisher with whom Frieda had contact, read a novel that Mattick had completed before he left Germany.<sup>19</sup> It is clear from Leonard's comments that Mattick had not refined the manuscript, which contained many basic mistakes—episodes that were overwritten and all too obvious, redundant phrasing ('his idea, which he had'), poor word choices, comical names that undermined the simplicity of his character sketches, and more. Leonard recommended that Mattick not send the manuscript elsewhere and that he first mature as a writer before again attempting anything so ambitious. It was a harsh critique, and it seems to have contributed to the writing hiatus that characterised Mattick's initial months in Benton Harbor. Novels were a medium to which he never returned. Almost as a consolation, the manuscript—Mattick's only copy—was lost in the mail. Because it was insured, he claimed a high value and was thus paid handsomely anyway.

Similar advice came from Wieland Herzfelde, who with his brother, the collogist John Heartfield, and the graphic artist George Grosz, headed the highly

18 The first initialled piece from before he left Germany: 'Wollin', *KAZ*, September 1925; the first fully signed article: 'Zündstoff', *KAZ*, June 1927. Anton Pannekoek to Dwight Macdonald, 30 March 1946 (Yale); Mattick to Claudio Pozzoli, 5 May 1970 (Pozzoli).

19 The title of Mattick's manuscript was *Ein Jammerlicher Mensch* [A Miserable Person]. Rudolf Leonhard to Frau Paul Mattick, 12 April 1926; Buckmiller 1976, p. 30.

influential Berlin publishing house, Malik-Verlag. Herzfelde was also interested in the interplay between radical politics and literary talent, but he was highly critical of Mattick's submission. Paraphrasing the reader's comments, Herzfelde wrote: 'you are obviously talented'. Nonetheless, 'it is a thankless task to make predictions about a young author', particularly one for whom reality rather than the literary canon forms the frame of reference:

Most important is that one has something to say that hasn't been said better or more convincingly already. Writers whose subject matter and style have been influenced by existing literature need to be better writers. But if concrete life is one's master, one must possess sufficient temperament and recall so that what one writes is also readable.

According to Herzfelde, talent often emerged slowly and unexpectedly, but he felt irresponsible advising Mattick to keep writing dozens of manuscripts in the hope that someday one of them might be worthy of publication. 'Dear Mattick', he concluded, 'it is time you asked yourself'.<sup>20</sup> Another editor, also favourably disposed otherwise, told him point blank about his poetry: 'in our opinion, you are no lyricist'.<sup>21</sup> Herzfelde recommended that Mattick write short pieces suitable for newspapers and journals. Karl Gonschoreck encouraged him along the same lines: 'we still need much practice', he wrote in one letter, but 'determination makes all the difference'.<sup>22</sup>

To move to Chicago, Mattick took a position as a mechanic on the night shift at Western Electric's Hawthorne Works—the huge jumble of buildings situated on 200 acres of land in the western part of the city.<sup>23</sup> In terms of size and density, it rivalled the Siemens facility at which Mattick apprenticed in Berlin. Chicago was the country's second largest manufacturing centre and was known for its large workplaces in which firms counted their employees by the thousands. Nonetheless, Hawthorne was the biggest of them all, so enormous that railroad cars were used to move materials internally. Hawthorne, like Siemens, produced telecommunications equipment such as telephones

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20 Wieland Herzfelde to Mattick, 23 June 1927.

21 *Die Neue Buecherschau* to Mattick, 19 June 1929.

22 Karl Gonschoreck to Mattick, 14 December 1926.

23 Contradictory statements by Mattick and his stepson indicate that they remained in Benton Harbor for anywhere between one and three years. Most likely they moved between September 1928 and June 1929, although Mattick may have left before the rest of the family. Various documents list him as an engineer, tool-and-die maker, and machine shop assembler. See, for instance, the 1930 Census form [[www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com)].

and transmission and switching gear.<sup>24</sup> During the 1920s, Hawthorne engaged 20–30,000 workers on a regular basis, but when Mattick began in September 1928, employment was near its peak of 43,000, part of the speculative surge that preceded the Great Depression.

In the decade that separated Mattick's training programme at Siemens from his employment at Hawthorne, corporate welfare programmes had evolved dramatically, even if they still only touched a small minority of the workforce.<sup>25</sup> Western Electric implemented an astonishing number of programmes in its effort to bind its employees to the firm. Amenities included an on-site gymnasium with adjoining baseball diamonds, tennis courts, a ten-acre track, and a professional stadium; Saturday afternoon athletic events in fourteen different sports, including soccer, skating, shooting, and bowling; athletic competitions between Hawthorne employees and teams from other firms; a lunchtime radio club that listened to broadcasts over a loudspeaker developed by the company's research division and whose members built their own receivers at the company's evening school; lunch hour movies; employee clubs that organised monthly dances at one of the city's ballrooms; sing-a-longs inside the factory with a movable piano that rotated to a different department each day; a factory restaurant; a credit union; employee publications and newsletters; beauty contests and pageants; a company band and bandshell for concerts and outdoor dances; and company-sponsored parades, rallies, and other weekend activities, both within the factory complex and in the nearby residential communities.<sup>26</sup>

All these measures provided the infrastructure for employees to organise their own leisure time. Employees at the Hawthorne Works had an unusual amount of clear time. The two-week paid vacations during the summer months were exceptional for American businesses (the nearby Westinghouse plant, for instance, only awarded one week after ten years of employment), as was the nine-hour workday from which Mattick benefitted. At the time, fewer than 20 percent of manufacturing employees nationwide worked so few hours.<sup>27</sup>

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24 Western Electric was the manufacturing arm of American Telephone & Telegraph and its nationwide network of regional Bell Telephone Companies. Adams and Butler 1999, p. 6ff, p. 90ff, p. 118ff.

25 Address: 822 W. North Avenue, near Halstead (no longer exists), a rented apartment just north of the firm's catchment areas.

26 The manager's suite included a fireplace, private dining room, kitchen, and shower. For corporate welfare systems: Bernstein 1966, pp. 170–88; Cohen 1992, p. 162ff, p. 173ff; Nelson 1979, p. 114ff.

27 The workforce at Western Electric was highly skilled, predominately male, and drawn from the traditional ethnic populations like the Germans, Swedes, and Irish, who had moved into occupations no longer characterised by excessively long hours and physically



In addition, Mattick found the work interesting, and there were few of the periodic lay-offs that characterised other establishments.

Western Electric, however, was not nearly as generous with other paid benefits. Company-sponsored insurance plans had length-of-service restrictions, with two years of full-time employment needed to qualify for medical insurance and five years of employment for life insurance. Restrictions also applied to disability insurance and pensions. These limitations excluded major portions of the workforce.<sup>28</sup> Employees were fined for lateness, a real weak-spot for Mattick, given his penchant for exhausting himself with activities, reading, and writing. The fines were used to purchase flowers for the different departments in the facilities, and Mattick joked that he did not mind at all the contributions to his fellow employees' well-being.

Mattick witnessed first-hand the attempts to increase productivity through inexpensive rearrangements of the workplace, the so-called Hawthorne effect. Western Electric worried that technological advances would make electricity cheaper and therefore lead to declining revenues, and it hoped to convince other firms that greater illumination would lead to increases in productivity. In other words, it planned to offset the declining per unit cost of production through a greater volume of sales. Much to the chagrin of company officials, the initial research indicated that lower levels of illumination might also be a cause of increased output. Between 1928 and 1930, 20,000 employees at Hawthorne were interviewed about their work routines, preferences, and habits, Mattick among them, in the quest to understand labour productivity.

### Amalgamation

The masses were not non-socialistic; they were without self-initiative because of their previous education, and they unfortunately left the decision to their leaders in the conviction that these leaders would best know how to improve their conditions. This belief of the masses may show inexperience but certainly not an absolutely conservative attitude.<sup>29</sup>

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draining routines. The new immigrants from southern and eastern Europe were the mainstay of the factories and foundries.

28 In 1929, less than 15 percent of those employed in industry and commerce had pension plans of any sort, and these were often underfunded and loaded with eligibility restrictions, such as a retirement age of 70. Bernstein 1966, p. 485.

29 Mattick, 'Review of Franz Borkenau. *World Communism*', *Living Marxism*, September 1939, p. 256.

A chance meeting in Chicago—someone whistling the Internationale (commemorating the Paris Commune)—got Mattick a free meal and a referral to the local office of the Industrial Workers of the World [IWW]. The IWW was by far the most congenial of the groups that Mattick visited.<sup>30</sup> Exclusively working class, it attracted many interesting and colourful people with whom Mattick felt comfortable, as if he were once again surrounded by colleagues from Germany. He also appreciated the mix of nationalities and ethnicities for which the IWW was known. There was no sense of an elite cadre who reserved for themselves the important decisions or of a bureaucracy that shielded some members from others. Everyone wanted to be active, but no one quite knew what to do. Mattick was readily accepted as a veteran of the revolutionary struggles in Germany, as someone well-versed in theory and politics, an accomplished public speaker, and a frequent contributor to German radical left publications. At events which drew German-speaking audiences, he distributed *KAZ* and *Kampfruf*, often with his step-son alongside him. Here was an individual with enormous personal energy and commitment.

Mattick imagined that he might serve as a catalyst to bring the IWW in contact with the radical left groups in Germany, an interaction that could conceivably energise them all. If nothing else, the groups could keep each other alive intellectually through discussions and debates about their respective traditions, previous successes and failures, current analyses and core ideas, and forms of organisation. The IWW had been devastated by the arrest, jailing, and deportation of its most active members a decade earlier. Turmoil and splits internally, as well as employer resistance, blacklists, and police repression, had left the organisation a shell of its former self. Whereas the IWW had perhaps 7000–8000 members, with large clusters in only two cities (Chicago and Seattle), the KAPD and AAUD had become even more skeletal, with only a few thousand adherents by the late 1920s. On-and-off merger talks between the KAPD, AAUD, and AAUE, misdirected discussions between the KAPD and dissident groups from the German Communist Party, an open break between the KAPD and AAUD, and well as a further splintering within the KAPD, characterised these same few years.<sup>31</sup>

What Mattick heard about the IWW from European colleagues was not encouraging, however. August Tschinkel, soon to be counted among the Cologne Progressives, lived in Czechoslovakia, where the Communist Workers Agitation Group was too small to publish its own paper. Eager to use the IWW's Czech weekly, *Jedna Vel'ka Unia* [*One Big Union*], Tschinkel relayed that the

30 Conversation with Paul Mattick, Jr, 6 August 2004; Pozzoli 1972, p. 4ff. For the 1920s IWW: Gambs 1932. For broader accounts: Renshaw 1967, and Brissenden 1957.

31 Fährnders and Rector 1974a, pp. 34–5; Ihlau 1971, p. 33.

IWW published undigested information taken from Russian-oriented papers out of step with KAPD and IWW views.<sup>32</sup>

Mattick passed documents between groups so that each could comment on the ideas and declarations of the other.<sup>33</sup> This alone forced Mattick to deal with his lack of English, and both he and Frieda launched major translation projects, together and separately, as a means to teach themselves the language. Mattick focused on what seems to be the IWW pamphlet, *The IWW: What It Is and What It Is Not*, although the translation was so loosely rendered that its derivation is unclear.<sup>34</sup> Frieda worked on literary texts, placing a short story with the German Communist Party newspaper by means of a connection from her first husband.<sup>35</sup>

Discussions soon revealed that two major issues divided the IWW from the KAPD/AAUD—the relationship to politics and organisational forms. Several dozen articles, commentaries, and letters, often serialised over periods of several months, were published in their respective papers.<sup>36</sup> Interacting with the KAPD was a non-starter for the IWW, in keeping with its non-affiliation with political groups and parties of any sort. But even after the separation of the AAUD from the KAPD, differences in organisational structure made an amalgamation unappealing to the IWW. Since the IWW had chapters in multiple countries, including Germany, it proposed that the AAUD reconstitute itself as IWW chapters, a suggestion that would have meant abandoning forms of organisation which had been developed in relation to the AAUD's specific situation.<sup>37</sup>

For the AAUD, the German revolution provided many examples in which quite disparate organisations were able to cooperate successfully in the furtherance of radical activity. Amalgamation, in the view of Mattick and his German colleagues, should allow each group to adopt forms of organisation appropriate to its needs—industrial unions for the IWW and workplace councils for the AAUD. After all, their respective radical traditions led in opposite directions—towards centralisation in the United States, against it

32 August Tschinkel to Mattick, 3 September 1928. Bourrinet 2001, pp. 219–20.

33 Lee Tulin to Mattick, 18 June 1928; Carl Harp to Mattick, 17 September 1928.

34 'Was ist die IWW?', *Kampfruf*, 9: 43–49, October–December 1928.

35 Frieda Mattick, 'Autobiographical Fragments' (AdK).

36 For this discussion, see the following issues: *Kampfruf*: 1928, Volume 9, Issue 31, 35, 36, 43–49, 51–52; 1929, 10: 1, 5, 7–8, 11–15; 1930, 11: 22–24, 26, 28–30, 32, 35, 38, 40; *Industrial Solidarity*, 1928: 4 July, 1 August, 8 August, 17 October, 31 October, 7 November, 14 November, 21 November, 28 November, 5 December; 1930: 14 May, 21 May, 28 May, 10 June, 17 June, 24 June, 1 July, 15 July, 22 July, 5 August, 12 August, 19 August, 26 August, 2 September, 16 September, 7 October, 14 October, 21 October, 11 November, 25 November, 2 December, 9 December, 16 December.

37 Wily Behnke to Mattick, 12 November 1930.

in Germany. Naturally, AAUD members who emigrated to the United States joined the IWW, as had Mattick. But the IWW's insistence that the AAUD transform itself into IWW chapters was, for them, a throwback to the 'bolshevisation' of the German movement, when the Bolsheviks forced their preference for trade unions on the radical movements of other countries.

Even if IWW ideas about a future society were more concrete than the AAUD's, which Mattick conceded, this was not a strong enough reason to prefer one organisational form over another. For the AAUD, for example, national coordination rotated annually from city to city to guarantee a wide distribution of leadership skills and ensure that no single chapter dominated. The IWW, on the other hand, relied on a separate headquarters group that was elected anew each year. The two organisations thus represented two distinct structural forms, and neither was inherently superior to the other. Why then insist that the AAUD morph into the IWW?

The deep-seated antipathy of the IWW towards political organisations perplexed the German discussants. August Tschinkel thought that the IWW simply confused the political with the parliamentary, which actually had no appeal for any of the discussants. For the IWW, only strikes and workplace activities were important. For the KAPD and AAUD members, however, economic dominance by the bourgeoisie was maintained not just through the ownership and control of the means of production but also through its ascendancy in the political, ideological, and cultural spheres—in sum, throughout the entire superstructure of society.

A lull in the discussions between mid-1929 and mid-1930 coincided with Mattick's shift from *KAZ* to *Kampfruf* as a publishing outlet. Sceptical that further discussions would lead anywhere, he nonetheless published an article that immediately provoked a wide-ranging discussion. The article, 'On International Affiliations', was Mattick's first English-language entry into this debate.<sup>38</sup> It appeared in several IWW papers: *Industrial Solidarity*, *Jedna Vel'ka Unia* (Czech), *Bérmunkás* (Hungarian), and *Il Proletario* (Italian) as well as the AAUD's *Kampfruf* and the journal of the Dutch council communists, *Persmateriaal van de Groepen van Internationale Communisten*. Groups in Sweden, Australia, and England also participated in the discussion.

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38 Examples of his still-rudimentary English skills: 'The IWW is an organized struggle against the system of capitalism private ownership, therefore it is also an enemy of all the bulwarks of capitalist society'. Mattick, 'On International Affiliations', *Industrial Solidarity*, 14 May 1930. Also: 'It is not here the place to delve into this subject, and I consider it even hopeless to speak about it with fellow-workers who carry their organization as if it were a birth-mark'. Mattick, 'Are International Affiliations Aimed Against the IWW', *Industrial Solidarity*, 9 September 1930.

The AAUD had since adopted several positions close to those held by the IWW, in which campaigns for higher wages, improved working conditions, a seven-hour day for miners, and social support for the unemployed became acceptable goals. The 'death crisis of capitalism', the radicals' tenet that capitalism was a spent force, was not abandoned as a guiding principle inasmuch as the AAUD sought a way to end its self-imposed marginalisation. But whereas the KAPD could maintain uncompromising positions because it was a political entity based on individual membership, the AAUD's status as a workplace organisation called for a new orientation towards working-class autonomy and self-determination. If workers controlled their own struggles, issues of reform versus revolution took on a new meaning. It was no longer what their organisations aimed to do, but what they wanted for themselves. Colleagues in Berlin pushed Mattick to choose between the KAPD and AAUD, for the party or for the union, a decision he declined to make for the time being.<sup>39</sup>

Mattick's main interlocutor from the AAUD was Alfred Weiland, an engineer by training who would become a close colleague for the next many years. From the IWW it was Joseph Wagner, a member of the group's General Executive Board and later its General Secretary.<sup>40</sup> Wagner had great affection for Mattick, to whom he referred as 'son', but the two men were equally exasperated with one another. Wagner wrote to Mattick: 'it always turns out that it is twenty-five years of IWW encountering 10 years of AAU-KAP. I never have a chance to meet in you a younger comrade, who needs a little of my advice and encouragement, but a harsh critic who is soberly judging a revolutionary movement . . . Encounters were always duels of wit.'<sup>41</sup> Wagner felt stung by Mattick's criticisms, Mattick by Wagner's rigidity and paternalism.

With nothing concrete to show after two years of discussions, Mattick drifted away from the IWW.<sup>42</sup> It was genial enough as an organisation, but Mattick missed an environment that was intellectually vibrant. Debates took place at the group's annual conferences, which Mattick attended, but otherwise the dues-paying evenings were occasions to drink beer and talk of nothing much. Too much collegiality and not enough engagement and activism drove him to consider other possibilities.

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39 KAPD to Mattick, 16 April 1930; Alfred Weiland to Mattick, 24 May 1930.

40 A syndicalist and a marxist, Wagner was a veteran of the French syndicalist movement, a founding member of the IWW in 1905, and a major participant in the schisms which rocked the organisation during its formative years. He served as the IWW's General Secretary from December 1932–February 1936 and January–December 1940.

41 Joseph Wagner to Mattick, 20 August 1930.

42 Alfred Weiland to Mattick, 31 May 1931.

## Chicago in the Depression

### Opening Years

The higher the purchasing power of the masses is in relation to total production, the greater are capital's difficulties in overcoming its depression and in maintaining its society. Precisely for this reason we suggest the continuous struggle for better living conditions.<sup>1</sup>

No one foresaw the swiftness with which social and economic conditions would deteriorate at the onset of the Great Depression. Three months after the precipitous fall of stock market prices in October 1929, unemployment nationwide increased eightfold. In Chicago unemployment grew steadily throughout 1930, until it engulfed 28 percent of the workforce early in the next year.<sup>2</sup>

Mattick was relatively immune to these developments, at least initially. His hours and pay check were both cut, but he held on to his job. Besides, he had a family to support, and as a rule, married women and single people without dependents were dismissed first. Western Electric's monopolistic position within the telecommunications industry meant that there were few direct competitors and less cut-throat competition and excessive price-cutting than in other areas. But with the general decline of business throughout the economy, the company's fortunes nonetheless deteriorated. Although employment at its Hawthorne Works had hovered around 43,000 when Mattick was hired, by the time he lost his job in early 1931 only 16,000 remained.<sup>3</sup> During this short interval, Mattick's world once again altered irrevocably.

The chaos in Chicago was intense. Assured by business leaders and academics alike that the crisis would be of short duration, the city's public authorities did little to counteract the negative effects of the economic downturn. Neither new agencies nor new programmes were forthcoming. Municipal borrowing

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1 Mattick, 'Unemployment and the Labor Market', *Industrial Worker*, 6 May 1939.

2 Bernstein 1966 remains the primary source for the Great Depression. Also indispensable: Lasswell and Blumenstock 1939. Many aspects of the depression are chronicled in: Mattick, *Arbeitslosigkeit und Arbeitslosenbewegung in den USA*, written in 1936. Piven and Cloward 1979, provides a useful summary; Brecher 1997, ch. 5, is a popular account.

3 A year later, the workforce at Western Electric was cut to 8,000. Cohen 1992, pp. 243–4.

was necessary even to continue existing operations, and the additional debt further stressed the tax base.

Chicago's relief system depended on private donations channelled through community groups, religious organisations, and neighbourhood churches. Food allowances, if available, were restricted to women and children, the aged, and the disabled, and were frequently distributed according to strict guidelines based on race, ethnicity, and religion. Single men, on the other hand, were funnelled past soup kitchens and herded into huge homeless shelters—when these existed at all. Rent subsidies were uncommon, and other forms of relief, like emergency health care, barely existed for the employed, let alone the destitute. No two welfare organisations followed the same procedures, and each established its own, often arbitrary, sets of qualifications for grantees. The unemployed were endlessly referred elsewhere, a major irritant in and of itself.<sup>4</sup> The forfeiture of property—homes, automobiles, and other fixed possessions—in order to receive benefits meant that people were required to further impoverish themselves in order to receive support. It was an open secret that relief efforts could reach only one-third of the unemployed. Everyone else was on their own.

The working class largely retreated into itself—its reaction, which Mattick recognised immediately, was slow and sullen. Savings were depleted, incomes shared across generations, and ethnic ties strengthened, all in an effort to outlast the crisis. A deep pessimism replaced the belief in progress and justice that pervaded the late 1920s—a significant change from the enthusiastic attitudes about steady employment, higher wages, and upward mobility that preceded the crisis.

What dominated, though, were ideologies of self-sufficiency and self-help, fuelled by masculine images of the rugged individual on the frontier, and by anti-monopoly, anti-government, and nationalistic sentiments. Self-help groups fostered the mutual transfer of skills and services among their members; in some places, the participation of farmers meant that basic foodstuffs were part of a barter economy. Producers of all sorts—of agricultural goods and handicraft items—exchanged goods directly and without interference by monopolies or profit-seeking entrepreneurs. Here and there, groups began to print their own forms of money. This was, nonetheless, a make-shift affair, a return to a lower level of economic functioning that posed little threat—except for small shop owners—to the prevailing capitalist norms.

Throughout 1930 there was a protest somewhere in the city nearly every day. Hunger marches, spontaneous demonstrations at relief stations, and

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4 Storch 2009, p. 116.

the plundering of food stores became increasingly common.<sup>5</sup> Whole groups would stride into an establishment, grab what they could, and run. Evictions attracted crowds of fifty or more who returned furniture to the vacated premises after the police left. At relief agencies, everything was lacking—sufficient personnel, large-enough waiting rooms, adequate bookkeeping systems, and ample copies of necessary forms. Impromptu protests became more frequent. Neighbourhood groups were highly combative but also equally unstable due to the constant flow of people in and out of their homes and the sudden changes in their employment status. The most heartening development, or so it appeared, was the 5,000 person demonstration against unemployment in March 1930, a feat replicated in towns and cities across the country. Mattick, somewhat alone among left commentators, typed it as an isolated event, and true enough it was another two years before one could begin to speak of a social movement of the unemployed.<sup>6</sup> In the interim, much took place to give to that movement its shape.

The Chicago police were known for their corruption and for their brutality, and demonstrations were routinely combated with clubs and tear gas. Nevertheless, attempts to create a movement that bound the local assemblies to a common programme and plan of action nearly always failed. Unemployed groups lacked funding unless they subordinated themselves to humanitarian or political entities interested in their activities. Liberal and church groups, as well as the Socialist and Communist Parties, fit this bill. Despite the great ferment during 1930, one could not yet speak of a radicalisation of the working class writ large. The unemployed groups were, with some exceptions, non-partisan and non-revolutionary. Protests took place outside the bounds of existing organisations, with each of the latter projecting preconceived notions as to the best course to pursue. A great competition arose over who would speak for the unemployed, with virtually no one representing the perspective that the unemployed should speak for themselves.

Mattick's activities were still largely confined to Chicago's German-speaking community. He collaborated with a small, loose-knit, and bi-lingual collection of a dozen or so individuals, some of whom hailed from the IWW or the Proletarian Party, and several others who had no particular experience within

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5 Mattick, 'What Can the Unemployed Do?', *Living Marxism*, March 1938; Mattick, 'Organizations of the Unemployed', *Living Marxism*, August 1938; Rosenzweig 1976.

6 Mattick, 'Ein Brief an die Union', *Kampfruf*, May 1930.



the left whatsoever.<sup>7</sup> Mattick had stumbled upon the Proletarian Party shortly after he moved to Chicago when he enrolled in a class on socialist theory, taught by the group's charismatic leader, John Keracher. Since all the specialised words were known to him from German, Mattick thought this an excellent means to improve his English. The class also met on Sunday afternoons and did not conflict with his work schedule.

There were many things about the Proletarian Party that Mattick appreciated. Its members were quite radical, extremely active politically, and free to take initiative independently of party approval. In its relation to the IWW, the Proletarian Party reminded Mattick of the KAPD and AAUD, although in this case the IWW considered the Party an unofficial and largely unwanted affiliate. That Mattick's class met at the IWW meeting hall was an indication of the fluid relations between the two groups, despite any IWW disclaimers.<sup>8</sup> Not even the Party's pro-bolshevik outlook bothered Mattick all that much. Russian chauvinism had no appeal for its members, in contrast to many Communist Party adherents, especially in New York, who belonged to Eastern European immigrant communities that had benefited from the Bolsheviks' policies on cultural autonomy and national independence. Proletarian Party supporters considered themselves truer adherents of Lenin's doctrines than the Communists. With a few hundred members scattered throughout the mid-West but especially in Chicago and Detroit, the Proletarian Party had a definite, even if only minor, presence within the left.

The loose-knit group with which Mattick worked coalesced into the Worker Educational Association of Chicago (WEA), a German-style 'Arbeiterbildungs Verein' in which self-education and political agitation were fostered through reading circles, lectures and classes, newsletters, leafleting, and strike support.<sup>9</sup> These types of groups were somewhat distinct from the agit-prop [agitation-propaganda] groups that emerged in Europe during the previous decade. Where the educational associations stressed the participatory aspects of their activities, agit-prop members often assumed a disjuncture between themselves and their audience in knowledge and political sophistication. Nonetheless, the Worker Educational Association experimented with agit-prop, something that Mattick's Berlin colleague, Alfred Weiland, encouraged. Each member dressed

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7 Ruff 1993; Rosemont 1990; Draper 1957, pp. 160–1; Dilling 1934, p. 218. For the class: *Industrial Solidarity*, 23 April 1930, p. 2.

8 For an announcement of an IWW-Proletarian Party debate: *Industrial Solidarity*, 9 May 1928.

9 I have been unable to locate publications by the group, either leaflets or its pamphlet: *Arbeiter-Politik* [*Labour Politics*].

identically, and the skits included singing, recitations, and a 'speaking choir.' A signboard and hat of some sort were sufficient as props. The sample skits that Weiland sent were, in his opinion, 'more effective than a three hour lecture'.<sup>10</sup>

Although small in size, the WEA attracted considerable attention, and this became the springboard for further plans. Everyone was extraordinarily busy, attending many meetings in order to put forth their views. As was the case with other left groups, they discovered that attracting new members was an arduous and slow-going process. Working-class audiences were generally unfamiliar with left-wing terminology and harboured entrenched aversions to anti-capitalist ideas. Group members needed to operate with circumspection, and in Mattick's opinion, more time than was warranted was spent explaining the various labels that were applied to them. Substantial portions of the working class also lacked basic literacy, which placed further constraints on the ability to explain sophisticated ideas.<sup>11</sup>

WEA meetings followed the European style in which a lead speaker, often Mattick, opened with a lengthy presentation, followed by discussion, questions, and answers, as each discussant took as much time as they preferred. The meeting announcements invited 'discussion without restrictions', a not-so-subtle swipe at Communist and Socialist Party meetings where speakers, topics, and sometimes questions were tightly controlled.<sup>12</sup> Agreed-upon protocols for the WEA might also guarantee speaking preferences to those who had not spoken already, or to those at a disadvantage within the overwhelmingly male left (women, younger colleagues, new visitors).

The onset of the depression had focused everyone's attention, and this was true for the WEA members as well. The various German socialist clubs within Chicago formed a coalition [Kartell] in order to finance a meeting hall and newspaper, in addition to the activities they sponsored already. Membership in the fifteen Kartell groups was gauged at around 2400, of which perhaps ten to twenty percent were politically active—this out of a German-speaking community in Chicago of more than half a million.<sup>13</sup> Among the sixty or so ethnic communities in the city, Germans represented one of the larger groups, but it was the smaller world of German socialists which formed Mattick's realm.

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10 Alfred Weiland to Mattick, 24 May 1930.

11 The IWW cited literacy surveys of military recruits: 'Was ist die IWW?', *Kampfruf*, 9: 43, December 1928.

12 'Arbeiter! Besucht die Diskussionsabende des Kultur- und Sports-Kartell Chicago', *CAZ*, March 1931.

13 The Arbeiter Kultur- und Sport Kartell Chicago.

Largely social democratic in orientation and with strong ties to the Socialist Labor Party (by then a small cluster that once had close relations with the IWW), the clubs mostly organised leisure-time activities and support services for their members.<sup>14</sup> There was a nature and hiking society, gymnastic and sports teams, singing groups (among which Frieda was especially active), and a Kartell-sponsored summer camp in Wisconsin—accessible by public transportation and offering cabins and camping facilities—that served as an inexpensive and tranquil vacation destination, especially for families with young children.<sup>15</sup> Other Kartell clubs offered health and life insurance (benefits not provided in the majority of workplaces), while a so-called ‘coffin club’ or cremation association offered its own specialised services. Local branches of the International Association of Machinists also belonged to the Kartell, as did the Freethinkers, with their Sunday meetings and supplementary classes for children. The Workers’ Gymnastic and Sports League had the avowed aim of removing working-class children from the ideological influence of middle class and apolitical sports clubs, and thus combined entertainment with a sense of cultural politics.

During an outing to duplicate a leaflet for the educational association, Mattick discovered the former printing establishment of the *Chicagoer Arbeiter Zeitung* [*Chicago Workers Paper* or *CAZ*]. This legendary and highly influential paper had gone defunct in 1924, but it was now revived on behalf of the Kartell.<sup>16</sup> Mattick poured his heart and soul, and also every spare moment, into this endeavour. Between February and December 1931, ten issues appeared, with four densely-filled pages per issue. Mattick wrote substantial portions of each. He also had great plans for the paper. Begun as a monthly, he thought that within six months it could become a weekly and eventually a daily. This presupposed a thorough radicalisation of the German-American community, characterised at that point by a greater sympathy towards the German fascists than the German left. Mattick’s plans also presupposed that *CAZ* would shed its Chicago identity and find favour in all of the small and large American cities where Germans had settled.

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14 The Socialist Labor Party served as a sponsor and institutional anchor for the IWW when it was formed in 1905, although differences regarding political affiliations led to the expulsion of the SLP members just a few short years later.

15 ‘Erholungs und Altenheim-Gesellschaft’, *CAZ*, July 1931.

16 Mattick felt a special affinity with Joseph Dietzgen, who as editor attempted to bridge the gap between anarchists and marxists in the aftermath of the Haymarket events. Mattick, ‘Aus der Geschichte der *Chicagoer Arbeiter-Zeitung*’, *CAZ*, October 1931; Avrich 1984; Buckmiller 1976, p. 47ff.

The Kartell clubs pledged start-up funds for the newspaper, and they guaranteed bulk purchases for their members. Subscribers alone would have been insufficient. Even though no one was paid except for the printer (and he often had to wait for payment), 2000 individual subscriptions were considered the break-even point for a weekly, 20,000 for a daily, whereas *CAZ* was printed in a total of 2000 copies per issue and not all these could be distributed.<sup>17</sup>

*CAZ* allowed Mattick to have an opinion on just about everything—the trend towards civil war in Spain, the Japanese occupation of Manchuria, other international and national developments, local elections, political persecution (especially the Mooney/Billings case), the intersection of race and class (the Scottsboro trial), prison conditions and prison unrest, lynchings and punitive sentencing practices, the history of the Chicago labour movement, a short story, and, of course, the economic crisis and crisis theories. Mattick averaged four to seven substantial pieces per issue, with some eighty articles, commentaries, book reviews, and shorter blurbs throughout the ten issues.<sup>18</sup>

If Mattick's *oeuvre* covered a wide range, the paper traversed a still more varied area, with reviews of novels and plays, reprinted essays and speeches from figures of the left like Rosa Luxemburg and August Spies (the *CAZ* editor executed in the aftermath of Haymarket), and political poems in the hortatory style of Oskar Kanehl (of the type Mattick imitated, although not in *CAZ*).<sup>19</sup> Foremost, though, *CAZ* devoted substantial space to the Kartell clubs, with listings of meetings and upcoming events—Saturday evening dances, neighbourhood festivals, concerts, lectures and discussions, commemorations of the Paris Commune and the Haymarket martyrs, May Day celebrations, special fundraising events for the unemployed, for striking miners in Kentucky, for a retirement home, and more.

Frieda's involvement in the women's choir meant that she was sometimes featured as a soloist at special functions. With the newspaper, she helped with translations.<sup>20</sup> For the Worker Educational Association, she played still

17 *CAZ* sold for 5 cents per copy, 60 cents for a yearly subscription if delivered through one's club, 75 cents if by mail. Pressekommission, 'An alle Leser unserer Zeitung', *CAZ*, December 1931; Cazden 1970, p. 28.

18 When Mattick helped compile his bibliography in the 1970s, he no longer remembered precisely which articles were his. Although he habitually retained copies of his published work, with *CAZ* he had kept entire issues. Besides the list in Buckmiller 1981a, additional contributions in *CAZ* can be identified by his initials ('M', 'PM').

19 Despite Kanehl's memberships in the KAPD and AAUE, his popularity within the German left meant that he was regularly published in the Communist Party press as well.

20 Her translations included: James P. Thompson, 'Das ABC der Klassenkampfes', *CAZ*, August 1931. For listings of Frieda: '11. November Gedenkfeier', *CAZ*, November 1931; 'Gedankfeier für die Haymarketopfer', *CAZ*, December 1931.

another role, running the group's book trade. Throughout the 1930s and into the early 40s, Mattick ordered books in bulk in order to take advantage of wholesalers' discounts, a skill he had mastered in Cologne. The books were sold at cost to friends and colleagues, thus creating a community with similar intellectual and historical reference points. Bulk purchases facilitated a luxury that few could otherwise afford. Ads for books appeared in *CAZ*, with Frieda handling the ordering, distribution, and cashiering functions. Whenever study groups needed materials (for instance, Gorter's *Historische Materialismus*), Frieda handled the details, procuring work from as far afield as Germany and the Netherlands.

### Opposition and Accusations

The real marxism died with Marx. It only lived as an idea anyway.<sup>21</sup>

That not all was well with the newspaper had been obvious from the start. Two years of preparatory work had flared occasionally into open rifts within the Kartell. When Mattick made disparaging remarks about left cultural traditions like the May Day celebrations that commemorated the Haymarket martyrs, he provoked opposition.<sup>22</sup> For Mattick, events such as these functioned largely on a nostalgic level, but for others, he was seen as someone who 'tramples on all that has been held high'.<sup>23</sup> Mattick referred to the movement veterans who enjoyed these occasions as '*alte Knacken*' [old geezers]. They in turn branded him as an '*übermensch*' [superior-man], with comparisons to the Italian dictator (and former socialist), Benito Mussolini. Mattick attempted to bridge the gap that emerged but without relaxing his views: 'I have openly promoted your work and events within the Kartell and spoken of you with the greatest respect'. The Mussolini remarks were reinterpreted as an indication of his critics' 'fighting spirit'.<sup>24</sup>

This incident, nonetheless, spoke to the finely-tuned policies that *CAZ* needed to pursue in order to further its radicalising mission without alienating potential supporters. As far back as January 1930, the newsletter of the Kartell

21 Mattick to Kenneth Rexroth, 7 April 1946 (UCLA).

22 Mattick, 'Proletarische Feierstunden', *Mitteilungsblatt der Arbeiter-Kultur- und Sport Kartells-Chicago*, December 1930.

23 John Pemoller and Emil Arnold, 'Zur Diskussion über die 'Proletarische Feierstunde'', *CAZ*, February 1931.

24 Mattick, 'Antwort auf Vorstehende Zuschrift', *CAZ*, February 1931; also, A.P., 'Zwei Kommune—Feiern', *Der Arbeiter*, 21 April 1931.

issued a broad call for open, multi-sided discussions, with an explicit request that no one henceforth be shouted down.<sup>25</sup> But no matter what the newspaper collective did, it was bound to raise suspicions among the various party members within the Kartell. Simply claiming that ‘the working-class press belongs in the hands of the workers themselves’ and that *CAZ* would be ‘written by workers for workers’<sup>26</sup> had implications for groups for whom this was not true, like the larger and better endowed left parties whose leadership often hailed from the middle classes.

Mattick’s description in the first issue of *CAZ* of a pro-fascist meeting implied these same issues. The meeting impressed him greatly because of its openness, in which an anti-fascist speaker (presumably himself) held the floor repeatedly. After the Kartell announced a follow-up evening of debate to which the Nazis were invited, Mattick urged it to conduct the meeting in a similarly unrestricted fashion.<sup>27</sup>

Communist Party members clustered in the Kartell’s Friends of Nature club were particularly vocal in their opposition to *CAZ*, which they viewed as a threat to their own fragile popularity among the working class. Communist Party doctrine was unequivocal on this point, that only they were equipped with the correct ideologies to lead the working class in its attempts at emancipation. *CAZ* was thus opposed with the same ferocity that the Communists employed against the Socialists, the Proletarian Party, the *rw*, and others.

To keep friction within acceptable bounds, the Kartell laid out guidelines for all to follow. Each club sent representatives to a Delegate Assembly, whose decisions were binding (Mattick was a member of a Kartell sub-committee that organised educational activities).<sup>28</sup> The clubs were likewise encouraged to send delegates to the Publications Committee that oversaw

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25 Der Bildungsausschuss [possibly Mattick], ‘Zu den Diskussionsabenden’, *Mitteilungsblatt des Arbeiter Kultur- und Sport-Kartells*, January 1930; Mattick, ‘Prinzipien, Aufgaben und Statuten des Arbeiter Kultur- und Sport-Kartells von Chicago’, *Mitteilungsblatt des Arbeiter Kultur- und Sport-Kartells*, July 1930 (reprinted in *CAZ*, August 1931).

26 ‘Aufruf’, *CAZ*, February 1931.

27 Mattick, ‘Die “Nazis” in Chicago’, *CAZ*, February 1931.

28 The Kartell’s Delegate Assembly entitled each club to two delegates for every 100 or fewer members and another delegate for every additional 100 members. The delegates selected the Coordinating Committee [*Arbeitsausschuss*], with its President, Business Agent, Treasurer, Secretary, and three members at large. The Coordinating Committee and Delegate Assembly met monthly, with a minimum of two general membership meetings each year. Dues were two cents per member per quarter, all decisions required a majority vote, and changes to the Kartell’s Charter [*Prinzipien, Aufgaben, & Statuten*] necessitated a two-third’s majority of the delegates present at the monthly meeting.

CAZ's editorial decisions, and individual Kartell members were asked to submit articles and news blurbs. CAZ's domain was further delineated in the following terms:

The paper is the organ of the Kartell and not of any party. It is marxist-oriented and not directed by the Executive of any party. The paper is dedicated to the fight against capitalism, not the group interests of the organized working class. The paper educates about class consciousness, not party loyalty.<sup>29</sup>

Nonetheless, party members who imagined their organisations as indispensable to working-class success viewed such statements as either very naïve or as a direct challenge. Colleagues from Berlin questioned whether CAZ could maintain its seeming neutrality in the face of such criticisms.<sup>30</sup>

If the social democrats within the Kartell tended to withhold support because of CAZ's radical views, Communist Party members were unabashed in their campaign to destroy the paper. A sustained, well-financed, and nasty fight ensued.<sup>31</sup> Party members simply disregarded Kartell protocols, and no matter how many reassurances were uttered by the CAZ editors—that they 'never intended to compete with a political party or its publications' or that they were 'not party-political', the crusade against CAZ intensified with every passing month.<sup>32</sup>

The Communists had the advantage of their own German-language paper, *Der Arbeiter* [*The Worker*]. The paper was heavily subsidised, distributed nationally through Party channels, and had appeared weekly ever since discussions about CAZ had begun in Chicago—a curious coincidence in timing. It also had full-time, paid editors, one of whom was assigned to Chicago mid-way

29 Pressekommission, 'Bericht von der Presse-Kampagne (Ein Wort an die Naturfreunde)', CAZ, February 1931.

30 Alfred Weiland to Mattick, 5 April 1931.

31 Fred Albers, 'Freisinnige Gemeinde der Nordwest-Seite', CAZ, February 1931; A.E. Holzgräfe, 'An die Presse-Kommission der "Chicagoer Arbeiter-Zeitung"', CAZ, March 1931; Presskommission, 'Antwort auf vorstehende Zuschrift', CAZ, March 1931; Arbeiter Kultur- und Sport-Kartell Chicago, 'Leser der "Chicagoer Arbeiter-Zeitung"', CAZ, March 1931. Additional opposition emanated from the *Kranken Unterstützungs- und Fortbildungs-Verein* [Health Insurance and Education Association] and the *Freisinnige Gemeinde der Nordwestseite* [Free Thinkers of Northwest Chicago].

32 Arbeitsausschuss, 'Dankadresse an den "Arbeiter"', CAZ, March 1931.

through the year.<sup>33</sup> That the Party invested extra in *Der Arbeiter* was all the more suspect because the Party had long since de-emphasised its foreign-language federations due to their radicalism and independence. The paper's national editor was booked at twenty-one separate speaking engagements in Chicago during April alone as a means to boost sales, as well as conducting an extensive promotional tour throughout the mid-west and New York State. These talks were often no more than twenty or thirty minutes at the start of lectures, but Mattick and colleagues made it a point to attend as many of the Chicago engagements as possible in order to talk up *CAZ* whenever the editor took questions.<sup>34</sup>

The insults hurled by the Communist Party members at Mattick and the other *CAZ* editors at meetings and in print were boundless. On one occasion, *CAZ* was accused of serving as a front for the Proletarian Party; on another, as hosting a mishmash of people from the various left groups.<sup>35</sup> *CAZ* was described as a 'deliberately anti-communist newspaper . . . that pursues counterrevolutionary aims beneath an ostensibly "marxist" mask'.<sup>36</sup> *CAZ*, it was said, utilised 'a directly counterrevolutionary, social fascist approach, whose purpose is to hold back the masses from organised and directed struggle through the demagogic use of "marxist" phraseology'.<sup>37</sup> It was blamed for undermining the Kartell: 'a newspaper under such ideological leadership is not capable of representing the class interests of the workers'.<sup>38</sup>

Other smears focused on the editorial collective, whose members 'write even more hatefully about the Soviet Union and the Communist Party than do Hitler or Goebbels'.<sup>39</sup> The *CAZ* editors were described as 'counterrevolutionary saboteurs,' 'ignoramuses,' 'charlatans,' and 'spiritual traitors,' when in truth the editors were each impressive in their own right. Kristen Svanum had been the *IWW*'s lead coordinator during the 1927–8 Colorado mining strike, the *IWW*'s last great undertaking.<sup>40</sup> Rudiger Raube, like Mattick, was a veteran of

33 In the Buckmiller interview (Buckmiller 1976), Mattick misidentifies Stephan Heym as the editor.

34 The tour included 26+ localities. Josef Berg, 'Auf Tour fuer den "Arbeiter" durch die Vereinigten Staaten,' *Der Arbeiter*, 29 September 1931. Cazden 1970, pp. 38–40.

35 A.P., 'Ein Wort an die Arbeiterschaft Chicagos,' *Der Arbeiter*, 17 March 1931.

36 'Organisierter Kampf oder Verantwortungslose Phrasen,' *Der Arbeiter*, 17 February 1931.

37 'Ein Demaskierter Gegner,' *Der Arbeiter*, 10 March 1931.

38 Hirschler, 'Tritt das Arbeiter Sport u. Kultur-Kartell Chicago für eine Klare Klassenlinie ein?,' *Der Arbeiter*, 17 February 1931.

39 'Chicagoer Kartell-Jeremiade,' *Der Arbeiter*, 20 October 31.

40 Rees 2004; Svanum, 'Communist Attacks on Coal Strike End in Colorado are Answered by Kristen Svanum,' *Industrial Solidarity*, 4 April 1928.



the revolutionary developments in Germany and had served on Hamburg's citywide workers' council in 1918. In Chicago, he was elected Secretary of the Kartell based on his experience in the Freethinkers Association, Friends of Nature, and the newspaper collective.<sup>41</sup> Carl Berreitter was a printer by trade and also a gifted speaker and writer whose *CAZ* articles appeared under the pseudonym 'Prolet' and were translated into English (or vice versa) in the Proletarian Party newspaper.<sup>42</sup>

The accusations created an impossible situation for the *CAZ* editors, precisely what was hoped for by their Communist Party antagonists.<sup>43</sup> Answering each charge was a waste of time and was bound to alienate anyone not directly involved. To not respond, on the other hand, allowed the defamation campaign to continue unimpeded. The *CAZ* editors tried everything—frequent messages of reassurance about their 'party-neutrality', brief rebuttals of the silliest accusations, criticisms of Communist Party actions, and a formal investigation by the Kartell into the charges. Finally they refused any further engagement.<sup>44</sup>

Throughout 1931, the Worker Educational Association maintained a separate existence, a circumstance that undoubtedly created as many suspicions about the editors' real motives as it did reasons to maintain *CAZ*'s independent stance. The Association organised discussion evenings on the threat of war, the role of the Communist Party, and the recent publication of *Grundprinzipien*

41 For Raube: 'Angeschlossene Vereine,' *CAZ*, March 1931; R.R., 'Konferenz des Freidenkerbundes von Amerika,' *CAZ*, October 1931; Freisinnige Gemeinde der N.W.S., *CAZ*, November 1931.

42 For Berreitter's speaking engagements: 'Chicago IWW Forum Program,' *Industrial Solidarity*, 26 February 1930; 'Doings at IWW Chicago Hall,' *Industrial Solidarity*, 2 April 1930. Also: Victor L. Berger, Hearings Before the Special Committee, Volume 1, 1919, 184ff. Berreitter later played a prominent role in the International Typographical Union that organised printers and newspaper writers. For his articles on England, Spain, Manchuria, and other topics: *CAZ* (February, March, May, July, November); the Proletarian Party's *The Proletarian* (March, May).

43 E.H., 'Wie "Sie" Würde und Wer "Sie" Führt,' *Der Arbeiter*, 24 February 1931.

44 Arbeitsausschuss des Arbeiter Kultur- und Sportkartells Chicago, 'Dankadresse an den "Arbeiter"', *CAZ*, March 1931; Pressekommission, 'Der Werkzeug Hirschler,' *CAZ*, March 1931. For the Kartell investigation: Carl Berreitter, 'Erklärung,' *CAZ*, March 1931; Die Untersuchungskommission (Festerling, Wehr, Basler), 'Berichte der Untersuchungskommission,' *CAZ*, May 1931 (reprinted in *Der Arbeiter*, 19 May 1931). For the contrasting accounts of this incident: Pressekommission, 'Zur Angelegenheit der Untersuchungskommission,' *CAZ*, June 1931; Eduard Hirschler and Erwin Holzgreffe, 'Ein Versuch der Weissgardisten von Arbeiterverraetern,' *Der Arbeiter*, 19 May 1931; 'Bericht der Minoritaet der Untersuchungskommission des Arbeiter Kultur- und Sportkartell Chicago in Sachen gegen Hirschler und Holzgreffe,' *Der Arbeiter*, 26 May 1931.

*Kommunistischer Produktion und Verteilung* [*Fundamental Principles of Communist Production and Distribution*], with its blueprint for the reorganisation of society on the basis of workers' councils.<sup>45</sup>

Mattick was unrelenting in his criticisms of Communist Party practices, declaring that he was available to discuss his views in any venue, with other individuals or at organised forums.<sup>46</sup> If the radical left was to have an opportunity to sway working-class opinion, freedom of expression was key—but without the personal denigrations. Mattick had helped draft the Kartell's charter (its by-laws) in which the formation of class consciousness and unity among similarly-minded groups were emphasised as vital.

Mattick targeted the Socialist and Communist Parties for their naïveté towards the electoral system, the main expression of which was their sham campaigns for electoral office. Elections encouraged workers to believe that they might alter society by voting, when 'it is not individuals who determine the system, but the system that corrupts everyone and everything connected to it'.<sup>47</sup> Neither the Socialist nor the Communist candidate had a remote chance of winning in the upcoming Presidential elections, and the campaigns themselves were hardly the revolutionary threat the parties made them out to be: 'the two worker candidates were pesky flies that are a nuisance while breakfasting'.<sup>48</sup> The Kartell, as Mattick reiterated once again, was 'not a parliamentary party looking to secure its position within the bourgeois political apparatus, but a synthesis of the many cultural organizations which themselves contain many politically divergent tendencies'.<sup>49</sup>

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45 Jan Appel was the lead author of '*Grundprinzipien*'. Mattick discussed this publication many times during a forty year period. Versions appeared as: 'Was Ist Kommunismus', *CAZ*, October 1931 (also released as a pamphlet); 'What Is Communism?' *ICC*, October 1934; 'Die Kommunistische Wirtschaft', *Kampfsignal*, 15 November 1934; 'Die Gesellschaftlich-Durchschnittliche Arbeitszeit als Grundlage der Kommunistischen Produktion und Verteilung', *Rätekorrespondenz*, July/August 1935; 'Communist Production and Distribution', *Living Marxism*, August 1938. Mattick was unable to convince the *IRWW* to release it as a pamphlet; Henk Canne Meijer, 28 May 1930 (IISH: Canne Meijer). The March and December *CAZ* announces lectures and discussions based on it. The May *CAZ* published a review by 'Ws', perhaps Alfred Weiland; Alfred Weiland to Mattick, 24 May 1930. Finally, Mattick's 1970 introductory essay to its rerelease in German (Rüdiger Blankertz Verlag).

46 Mattick, 'Vortrag der "Freunde der Sowjet-Union"', *CAZ*, November 1931.

47 Mattick, 'Thompson Siegt in Vorwahlen', *CAZ*, March 1931.

48 Mattick, 'Wahlrecht in Chicago', *CAZ*, April 1931.

49 Arbeitsausschuss, 'Dankadresse an den "Arbeiter"', *CAZ*, March 1931.

Newsworthy for *CAZ* were working-class initiatives such as the bread strike against higher prices organised by women consumers. At a time when declining raw material (wheat) expenses and wage cuts for bakers gave the edge to employers, the women's campaign persisted despite police harassment and arrests. That these strikers seized bankrupt bakeries and reopened them was something worth emulating.<sup>50</sup>

In addition, Mattick published a lengthy critique of the fundraising activities of the Communist Party's prisoner support group, the International Labor Defense. Using its own figures, Mattick calculated that less than fifteen percent of the funds collected over a three-month period were actually allocated to prisoners and their families. The remainder was spent on staff salaries and publications. This was an appalling state of affairs: 'workers contributed in the belief that they were helping the prisoners, but in reality, they were only feeding a bureaucracy, which then again keeps busy in order to be fed'.<sup>51</sup> The Kartell participated instead in the General Defense Committee, a broad coalition which included American Federation of Labor [AFL] unions, the Proletarian Party, Socialist Party, IWW, and several lesser-known groups like the Free Society Group (anarchists) and Socialist Youth League. Mattick served as the Kartell's delegate to the Kentucky Miners Defense and Relief Committee, one of the causes embraced by the General Defense Committee and a cause to which he devoted considerable time.

Mattick's article, 'Russland und die Weltwirtschaftskrise' ['Russia and the World Crisis'] provoked a negative response from Communist Party spokespeople and much unease elsewhere. Mattick traced the history of the Bolshevik revolution through its various phases and situated the Russian proletariat as locked between a land-owning peasantry that was emboldened by the state and an all-embracing state bureaucracy that stifled any hint of independent thought or action. In essence, Mattick summarised the analysis of the Soviet Union that had crystallised among the German radical left in the early 1920s.<sup>52</sup>

50 'Der Brotstreik an der Nord-West-Seite', *CAZ*, März 1931.

51 Mattick, 'Zu der Erklarung des Chicagoer Distrikt-Sekretäers der ILD (International Labor Defense)', *CAZ*, November 1931. As recently as August, Mattick had endorsed the ILD's fundraising for the Scottsboro case: Mattick, 'Die Bluthunde von Alabama', *CAZ*, August 1931. For the balance sheet: ILD's *Labor Defender*, July 1931; Wm. E. Browder, 'Die International Labor Defense und die Klassenkampf-Gefangenen von Harlan, Ky.', *Der Arbeiter*, 27 October 1931.

52 'Under the banner of communism, the creation of capitalism is actually taking place with all the fundamental elements: wages, money, banks, interest, piecework, compulsion, rewards, honorary decorations, secret police, jails with left-wing prisoners.' Reinhold Klingenberg to Mattick, 20 December 1931.

The Kartell's Publications Committee published a disclaimer to this article because of its strong condemnations of Bolshevik policies, while the IWW rejected a reprint in its own paper out of fear that it might jeopardise fundraising efforts on behalf of the Kentucky miners.<sup>53</sup>

The struggle to save *CAZ* demoralised the entire Kartell. The September edition was cancelled because of the lack of funds. Reports circulated that 20–25 percent of each edition went undistributed and that subscriptions were languishing. By November, matters came to a head. Even though the Friends of Nature proposal to withdraw Kartell support was rejected 7-1, a new round of bitter recriminations ensued. That some clubs only counted a handful of members (like Mattick's Worker Educational Association) and yet had an equal vote on the Kartell's Delegate Assembly, became a new point of contention. Several clubs withheld dues in protest and were expelled from the Kartell. Other clubs had shrunk in size because of unemployment and disappeared altogether. One of the sports groups joined a bourgeois federation and was expelled for that reason. With the Kartell in a rapid state of decline, and with the withholding of support from social democratic, Communist, and union supporters, *CAZ* could not continue. It was either too radical or too independent for the German socialist movement.<sup>54</sup> Mattick wrote to a colleague that he had become 'superfluous' and had been fighting a 'hopeless battle' in the effort to save the paper.<sup>55</sup>

The Communist Party's *Der Arbeiter* wasn't successful either. Despite the months-long campaign for 1000 new subscriptions, only 108 resulted. The outcome in Chicago was particularly dismal, with only 12 new subscriptions.<sup>56</sup>

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53 Mattick noted Stalin's calls for enhanced exploitation in order to increase productivity, a six-day work week to replace the five-day week, greater wage differentials between skilled and unskilled labor, and the reintroduction of craft unions for skilled workers. Mattick, 'Russland und die Weltwirtschaftskrise', *CAZ*, August 1931. The resulting discussion: Paul Seidler, 'Eine Antwort', *CAZ*, November 1931; Mattick, 'Vortrag Der "Freunde der Sowjet-Union"', *CAZ*, November 1931. For the IWW rejection: John A. Gahan to Mattick, 12 October 1931, who as editor of the IWW's *Industrial Solidarity* nonetheless offered: 'If you desire it, we shall re-write it for you for purposes merely of giving it purer English form'. For Communist Party attacks on the IWW: 'IWW Hilft Kohlenbaronen bei Verfolgung der ICD und National Miners Union', *Der Arbeiter*, 15 December 1931.

54 'Chicagoer Kartell-Jeremiade', *Der Arbeiter*, 20 October 31; Ernst Thompson, 'Ein Mitglied der "Naturfreunde" Schreibt', *CAZ*, November 1931; Arbeitsausschuss, 'Bemerkungen zur Letzten Kartell Versammlung'; *CAZ*, November 1931; Pozzoli 1972; Mattick to Claudio Pozzoli, 31 December 1972 (Pozzoli).

55 Adam Scharrer to Mattick, 18 February 1932.

56 "'1000-Neue-Leser"-Kampagne Macht Weitere Fortschritte', *Der Arbeiter*, 19 January 1932. A month later, the totals were 182 and 17: 'Ungenügendes Ergebnis Macht Verdoppelte

With 1356 members in Chicago alone (half the size of the Kartell), the Party had four full-time employees, a budget in excess of \$27,000, and an additional stable of nearly fifty individuals to work on the seventeen periodicals that it distributed in the city.<sup>57</sup> Neither *CAZ* nor the Kartell, with their all-volunteer staffs and shoestring budgets, could compete. But having accomplished their purpose by destroying *CAZ*, the Communists promptly lost interest in their own paper. The announcement in early 1932 about a new German-language paper that would be devoted to Chicago alone seems to have been nothing other than an attempt to stave off a revival of *CAZ*.<sup>58</sup>

With the demise of *CAZ*, the Kartell disappeared as well. For Mattick, an enormous outpouring of time and energy had gone nowhere. He had also grown unhappy with the paper's overly restrictive design. As a monthly, *CAZ* needed to scrutinise events often weeks old, yet the newspaper style inhibited lengthier pieces that functioned on a higher analytical level. In the last few issues, several of Mattick's contributions were serialised. Two other formats were better suited for such things—pamphlets or a journal, directions in which Mattick soon headed. He had outgrown the German socialist community. It was simply too small a world. New immigration into the United States had come to a near halt with the depression. Combined with the ongoing process of Americanisation, that world would only get smaller.

### Across the Country

The churches and pastors in the south are paid directly by the factory owners, not secretly, but as a matter of course. After a 72 hour workweek, the pastors are let loose on the slaves, and when they break off, sleep begins.<sup>59</sup>

With the loss of employment at Western Electric—Mattick's last industrial job until the very end of the decade—the Matticks also lost their apartment.

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Energie bei Werbung Neuer Leser Notwendig!', *Der Arbeiter*, 16 February 1932; 'Kommunistische Zeitung fuer Chicago', *Der Arbeiter*, 16 February 1932.

57 The equivalent of nearly \$400,000 in 2010. The Socialist Party published seven papers in Chicago, the *rw* four. The left press constituted 28 percent of all Chicago periodicals. Lasswell and Blumenstock 1939, pp. 64–5, pp. 221–6, p. 238, pp. 261–63.

58 Back in March 1931, *Der Arbeiter* had converted from sixteen small-print to eight large-print pages, soon to give way to a four-page layout. The Communist Party led a similar and similarly successful campaign against the *New Yorker Volkszeitung*.

59 Mattick, 'Gastonia: Ein Kapitalistisches Utopia' ['Gastonia: A Capitalist Utopia'], *Der Kampf*, December 1929.

Despite the cheap rent, they fell behind in their monthly payments.<sup>60</sup> The welfare authorities arranged a new place in early 1932, replete with 500 pounds of coal, but it lacked a coal stove. The previous apartment had been located above a bakery and was always warm during the winter months. In the new place, their cat saved them by snuggling against the warmest wall in the dwelling. This too was where the bed was placed, and for the remainder of the winter, the four of them—Paul, Frieda, and the two children, Hans and Renee, shared the sleeping space. Before the year was out, they would move again.<sup>61</sup> In all these apartments, insect infestations were a never-ending battle. Meantime, Mattick worried that the combination of immigrant status and unemployment might be used to expel him from the country.<sup>62</sup>

Mattick left that spring on a months-long excursion through southern United States, an indication that his relationship with Frieda had reached another low point. He travelled initially by car, but after it broke down he continued with much walking and hitchhiking. A friend accompanied him part of the way, but mostly he was on his own. The journey took him to New Orleans, along the Gulf coast to Pensacola FL, and then into Georgia. A day spent fishing yielded a bag of fish, which Mattick offered to a group of Seminole Indians. An invitation to visit their village was extended into a two-week stopover, during which they taught him to sleep outdoors, use plants for meals, and cook on an open fire, a unique opportunity for a non-Native American. On another evening, heavy winds blew away his tent. Apprehended in Georgia for hitchhiking and verbally threatened with detention on a chain gang, Mattick told the officers that he needed the bathroom. At the gas station, he locked himself inside and refused to come out. The station attendant took pity and intimidated the police by telling them that a warrant was needed for an arrest. When they left to obtain one, the attendant helped Mattick arrange a ride with the next customer.<sup>63</sup>

That autumn, Mattick spent several months in New York, where he had gone in search of work.<sup>64</sup> Now that he was unemployed, trips away from Chicago became more frequent. There were also vague plans to travel to

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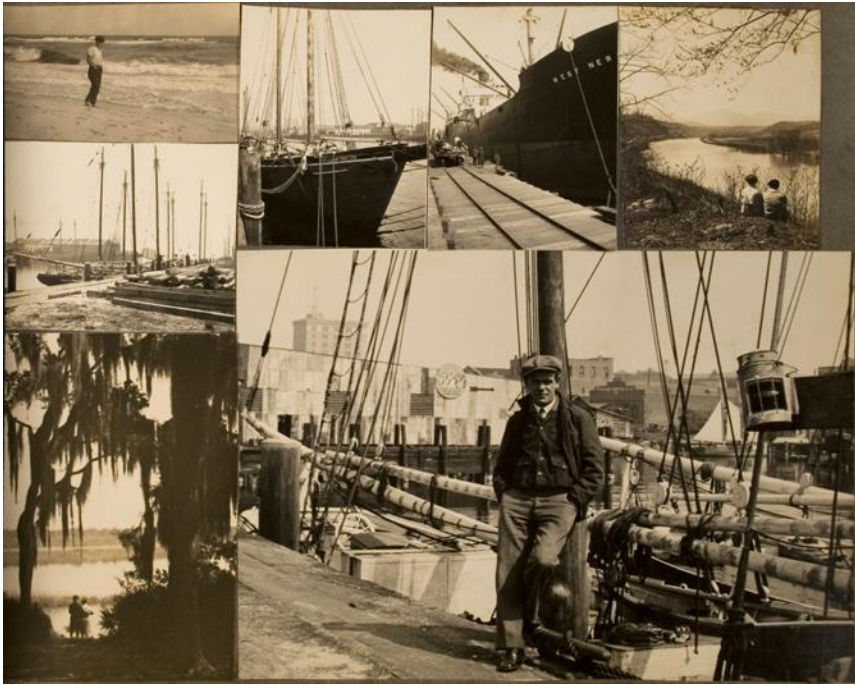
60 In 1930 half the dwellings in Chicago rented for \$50 or more per month. The Matticks paid \$25. Bureau of the Census 1930; Gosnell 1968, p. 3.

61 Addresses: 2235 North Halsted Street, 10 West Elm Street.

62 Reinhold Klingenberg to Mattick, 20 December 1931.

63 Mattick, 'New Orleans', *Der Freidenker*, 29 May 1932; Mattick, 'Am Golf von Mexico', *Der Freidenker*, 24 and 31 July 1932; Conversation with Paul Mattick, Jr., 6 August 2004; Conversation with Ilse Mattick, 3 November 2007.

64 Address: 2060 Crotona Parkway, Bronx NY. Fred G. Korth to Mattick, 8 October 1932.



5 Paul Mattick, perhaps on his 1932 tramping tour of southern United States.

Europe. Mattick sought out his former girlfriend from Berlin, Selma Babad—they had now been apart for eight years—but the letters to consulate offices in Washington DC, London, and Prague yielded no information.<sup>65</sup> In Chicago, it fell increasingly to Frieda to support the family. Training as a maid allowed her to pick up hotel work and other sporadic employment.<sup>66</sup>

CAZ may have folded, but Mattick had in the meantime established contact with several radical left editors. These included Alfred Weiland from the AAUD's *Kampfruf* in Berlin and Henk Canne Meijer from *Rätekorrespondenz* [*Council Correspondence*] and *Persmateriaal van de Groepen van Internationale Communisten* [*Newsletter of the Groups of International Communists*] in

65 Joseph Wagner to Mattick, 12 October 1932; Frank C. Lee (American Consul General) to Mattick, 26 October 1932; Commissioner of Naturalization (U.S. Department of Labor) to Mattick, 9 November 1932; Metropolitan Police (London) to Mattick, 8 March 1933; Royal Rumanian Legation (Prague) to Mattick, 13 March 1933.

66 Laub 1983, pp. 273–5.

Amsterdam, both of whom published him, and André Prudhommeaux in Paris along with Guy Aldred in Glasgow, who had plans to do the same.<sup>67</sup>

Contacts within the independent socialist movement in the United States led to other publishing possibilities. Foremost was *Der Freidenker* [*The Freethinker*]. This was the weekly periodical of the Free Thought League of North America, the umbrella group for clubs scattered throughout the mid-west and the two coasts of the United States. Except for the journals that Mattick edited during the 1930s, no other publication was as important for him as this one. The Chicago-based Freethinkers counted over 200 members and were among the strongest sponsors of the Kartell and *CAZ*, with Mattick's close colleague, Rudiger Raube, serving as the liaison.<sup>68</sup> The Chicago Freethinkers also had close ties to the Proletarian Party, where John Keracher developed a study plan for them.<sup>69</sup> The League's nine affiliated groups totalled 800 members, but the paper had 1300 subscribers (fallen by half from the start of the Depression). Since its constitutional preamble began with 'the full spiritual emancipation of the working class presupposes its economic emancipation', this was a paper for which Mattick could write.<sup>70</sup> Its columns and columnists were much more interesting than might be assumed by looking at its first page, which was often devoted to meeting minutes and treasurer's reports.

Politically *Der Freidenker* represented the broad spectrum of radicalism to the left of social democracy, including voices sympathetic to the IWW, the Bolshevik opposition, the Bolsheviks themselves, and various oppositional movements that developed within Germany and found resonance in the United States. Mattick's initial contributions were a continuation of the debate about Russia that had begun in *CAZ*, followed by several travelogues written during his sojourn through the South.<sup>71</sup> By mid-1932, Mattick counted among the paper's regular contributors. One columnist, August Ruedy, was a respectful but nonetheless staunch and unapologetic stalinist. A third was Theodor Hartwig, somewhat of a critical bolshevik—in other words, someone who criticised stalinist policies while maintaining that there was still something

67 André Prudhommeaux to Mattick, 22 March 1931; Alfred Weiland to Mattick, 31 May 1931. Bourrinet 2001, pp. 392–3; Shipway 1988, p. 133.

68 Raube, for instance, served as the Recording Secretary at the Freethinkers' national conference in Chicago in September 1931: *Der Freidenker*, 6 December 1931. In early 1933, *Der Freidenker* moved to a bi-weekly schedule. Buckmiller 1976, p. 42.

69 *Der Freidenker*, 12 November 1933.

70 This was actually a proposed first clause: *Der Freidenker*, 21 June 1931, 5; Arndt and Olson 1976, pp. 680–1 (note that this work confuses membership with circulation).

71 For the debate, see the following issues: *CAZ*, August, November; *Der Freidenker*, 31 January 1932, 7 February 1932, 20 March 1932, 8 May 1932.



socialistic about the Soviet Union. Hartwig became a close friend of Mattick's and over time moved nearer to his understandings of economics and politics. Hartwig had once led the international (European) association of freethinkers—until his independence alienated him equally from social democrats and communists alike—and thus he served for Mattick as an additional connection to the free-thought community.

*Der Freidenker* was similar to *CAZ* in that it offered Mattick an outlet for virtually every type of writing in which he engaged: political commentary, economic analysis, expositions of marxian theory, long essays that needed serialisation across several issues, short stories, travelogues, and also a poem.<sup>72</sup> The heaviest period of affiliation lasted through 1936, during which Mattick appeared in nearly every other issue, with the connection continuing in spurts until 1940. During the eight years he associated with *Der Freidenker*, Mattick published forty-five essays and commentaries, along with forty-plus book reviews. These contributions often appeared in other publications as well. At one point Mattick was offered the editorship, but he declined.

In the publishing world, the left's included, one door opened the next. Hartwig was still based in Prague, where he edited the freethinker journal, *Der Atheist*, and he solicited essays and book reviews from Mattick: 'your collaboration is not only desired by me, but I place special value on the recruitment of appropriate contributors from other countries'.<sup>73</sup> Several of Mattick's stories appeared in the German free thought journal *Urania*, a 'cultural-political monthly about nature and society'. A short story whose main character bore an uncanny resemblance to Mattick's father appeared in the collection *Dreissig Neue Erzähler des Neuen Deutschland* [*Thirty New Storytellers from the New Germany*], published by Malik-Verlag in Berlin, with Wieland Herzfelde as editor. The story was set in the mining region of Kentucky, where Mattick toured with the IWW as an invited speaker. Several other stories, primarily travelogues, appeared in the *New Yorker Volkszeitung* [*New York People's Paper*] and its various supplements.<sup>74</sup> As it turned out, none of these new publications, except for *Der Freidenker*, offered long-term possibilities—the European journals because of the spread of fascism, and the *New Yorker Volkszeitung* because of the Communist Party campaign against it, but they nonetheless served as stepping stones to still further publications.

72 For the poem: Mattick, 'Balkan', *Der Freidenker*, 11 September 1932.

73 Theodor Hartwig to Mattick, 11 May 1932.

74 Adam Scharrer to Mattick, 18 February 1932; *New Yorker Volkszeitung* to Mattick, 17 May 1932. Cazden 1970, pp. 21–2, p. 32.

### Crisis Theory

Although it is possible to combine a reformist practice with a revolutionary ideology, it is utterly impossible to pursue a revolutionary practice with a reformist theory.<sup>75</sup>

Like many of his friends, Mattick had only read Marx in pieces, never completing *Capital* in its entirety. Beginning in Benton Harbor, he began to read systematically for the first time in his life, ordering books in order to fill gaps in his knowledge. Evenings and weekends were now available. For marxian theory, he turned to Rosa Luxemburg, who represented the radical left, and Nikolai Bukharin, for the bolshevik perspective. The release of Henryk Grossman's *The Law of Accumulation and Breakdown of the Capitalist System* on the eve of the 1929 economic collapse, however, profoundly altered Mattick's understanding of marxism. Grossman was able to integrate the various pieces of Marx's economic writings into a coherent whole in a way no one yet had accomplished. In particular, Grossman focused on Marx's writings in the third volume of *Capital*, published posthumously in semi-finished form. This was where Marx discussed the economic system's tendencies towards crisis and breakdown. Mattick immediately began to talk about Grossman to everyone he knew.<sup>76</sup> Grossman became Mattick's epiphany.

Mattick and Klingenberg renewed their friendship after an absence of three years, and Klingenberg became one of Mattick's key interlocutors regarding crisis theory. Klingenberg had since finished his degree in high voltage electricity at the technical university in Berlin. Employed by the huge electrical machinery firm AEG, Klingenberg product-tested electrical transformers in a lab that housed a few dozen engineers and skilled employees. He liked the work but admitted that he was 'always a bit bored and dissatisfied'.<sup>77</sup> Reprimanded repeatedly about fraternisation with the manual workers, Klingenberg found the warnings from a Communist Party colleague particularly irksome. He still lived with his parents, albeit in the basement apartment. He wrote to Mattick in detail about the separation from his long-term companion. Klingenberg's new mate, like his previous one, was a seamstress, confirming his penchant for working-class women.<sup>78</sup> He had drifted away from direct political

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75 See Mattick's afterword in Grossman 1969, p. 115.

76 For a summary: Jacoby 1975. For biographies: Kuhn 2007; Scheele 1999. Conversation with Paul Mattick, Jr., 6 August 2004.

77 Reinhold Klingenberg to Mattick, 8 February 1929.

78 Klingenberg was similar to Friedrich Engels in this regard—he belonged to the category of upper middle class men who prefer proletarian companions.

involvement, but the renewed contact with Mattick prompted a connection to Alfred Weiland and the AAUD. What Grossman was to Mattick, Mattick was to Klingenberg.

Mattick received long, detailed letters from Klingenberg about developments in Berlin that mirrored what Mattick was witnessing in Chicago—workplace strikes, mergers of large firms, and successive waves of employee discharges (AEG dismissed more than a quarter of its workforce and forced the rest to accept shorter hours and less pay). Contradictory economic measures such as cuts in government spending accompanied by higher taxes on consumption items were part of the general confusion.<sup>79</sup> Klingenberg lost his job as of 1 January 1932 (with three month's severance pay). With some 90 percent of its members out of work, the AAUD had essentially become an organisation of the unemployed.

Klingenberg experienced Grossman as difficult to read and 'certainly not written for workers', but he was quickly convinced of the superiority of Grossman's approach to Marx.<sup>80</sup> Another of Mattick's correspondents, Henk Canne Meijer, echoed these sentiments. Canne Meijer had tried to read *Capital* many times but had always given up. Because of Grossman, he now thought that a thoroughgoing reappraisal of labour movement doctrine was possible. He and Mattick agreed to jointly collect statistical data to accompany Grossman's amplifications.<sup>81</sup>

Canne Meijer had been radicalised by the revolutionary developments during the war, and afterwards he helped found the small, 200-member Dutch version of the Communist Workers' Party. Originally trained as a machinist, he returned to school for an additional two years while still in his early twenties in order to become a primary school teacher. This was his strategy to avoid the dreadfully long workdays that characterised factory work in Holland and which prevented any sort of a life outside of the workplace.<sup>82</sup> In his own quiet way Canne Meijer played an exceptionally important role within the Dutch radical left, not least of all as a liaison to other colleagues in Germany, France, and—through Mattick—the United States. The journals that Canne Meijer helped edit republished key texts from the IWW-AAUD discussions and several pieces of reportage by Mattick that had first appeared elsewhere. Canne Meijer, Klingenberg, and Mattick were part of the same general conversation about the economic crisis, Grossman's rendition of Marx, and the political situation

79 Reinhold Klingenberg to Mattick, 1 March 1931.

80 Reinhold Klingenberg to Mattick, 20 December 1931.

81 Henk Canne Meijer to Mattick, 28 May 1930 (IISH: Canne Meijer).

82 Henk Canne Meijer to Mattick, 25 February 1927 (IISH: Canne Meijer); Henk Canne Meijer to Mattick, ND [1930] (IISH: Canne Meijer); Gerber 1989, p. 164ff.

in Germany. Letters and texts flowed freely between Amsterdam, Berlin, and Chicago.

Grossman received considerable attention in the ten issues of *CAZ*: two reviews of his book, another review of an article by him, and three substantial pieces that either mentioned him by name or else explained his theory in some detail, with Canne Meijer, Kristen Svanum, Carl Berreitter, and Mattick as the authors.<sup>83</sup> Besides the circle of people in *CAZ* who promoted Grossman's ideas, another centre coalesced in Berlin in the newly-formed *Kommunistische Arbeiter Union Deutschlands* [Communist Workers Union of Germany or *KAUD*], an anti-fascist amalgam of a few thousand members from the *KAPD*, *AAUD*, and *AAUE*. All of this was accompanied by considerable controversy because of the pre-existing interest in Rosa Luxemburg as the theorist of capitalist breakdown.<sup>84</sup>

Mattick and Klingenberg were soon in touch with Grossman. The initial link in Mattick's case was Frieda, who handled correspondence for *CAZ*. Grossman found it 'quite extraordinary to see that the *Chicagoer Arbeiter Zeitung* is interested in the theoretical issues of revolutionary marxism'.<sup>85</sup> In Germany, Grossman was the most renowned of the lecturers associated with the Institute for Social Research [Frankfurt School], the privately-endowed research centre that was affiliated with the state university at Frankfurt.<sup>86</sup> Although the Institute had no formal connections to any political party, virtually everyone who belonged to it was a marxist of some sort. No other academic establishment outside the Soviet Union took the study of marxism as seriously as it did. Frieda sent copies of *CAZ*, while Grossman reciprocated with reprints of recent publications, a gesture of good-will as well as an act of self-promotion.

83 Mattick, 'Amerika 1931 Bis ...?', *CAZ*, February 1931; Prolet (Carl Berreitter), 'Die Niedergang Englands', *CAZ*, March 1931; PIC [presumably Henk Canne Meijer], 'Ein Wichtiges Buch', *CAZ*, March 1931 (reprinted from *PIC*, February 1930); Mattick, 'Die Krise und Ihre Ursachen', *CAZ*, May 1931; Kristen Svanum, 'Der Weg Aus der Krise—Der Weg zur Revolution', *CAZ*, June 1931; Mattick, 'Review of Henryk Grossmann. *Die Änderung des Ursprünglichen Aufbauplans des Marxschen "Kapital" und Ihre Ursachen*', *CAZ*, December 1931. Canne Meijer to Mattick [March 1930] (IISH: Canne Meijer). Also, Canne Meijer's manuscript: 'Die Entwicklung des Kapitalistischen Wirtschaftslebens', October 1932 (Rubel).

84 Reinhold Klingenberg to Mattick, 11 January 1932; Frederick Henssler to Mattick, 21 September 1946.

85 Henryk Grossmann to Frieda Mattick, 14 April 1931. Some of the Grossman-Mattick correspondence is reprinted (with sections omitted) in: Grossmann 1969. Parts of these are translated into English in: Kuhn 2007.

86 Throughout the text, I refer to the Institute for Social Research as the Frankfurt School, as it has come to be known. Also: Kuhn 2007, p. 149; Wheatland 2009, p. 149.

Grossman developed many projects for Mattick, including an English-language translation of *The Law of Accumulation and Breakdown of the Capitalist System* (for which Grossman would forego royalties) and an article translation as a means to awaken interest in it. He also requested that Mattick collect labour movement materials for the Institute's library, undoubtedly the largest collection of working-class and radical publications in Europe until it was destroyed by the Nazis.<sup>87</sup>

The several dozen letters that Mattick and Grossman exchanged over the next years focused heavily on theoretical issues. Grossman had written that Svanum's review of his book in *CAZ* overemphasised the counter-tendencies to economic crises, just the reverse of Marx's procedure. Grossman planned to devote another book to this issue, since many of his critics had failed to note the limits of such counter-tendencies. Each economic process—such as the reduction of wages or the lessening of transportation costs—had built-in boundaries beyond which it could not be pushed. Counter-tendencies could only slow a crisis, not overcome it altogether. This theme, of counter-tendencies and their limits, would in later decades form the basis of some of Mattick's most trenchant critiques of other marxist writers.<sup>88</sup>

The reception of Grossman's book within marxist circles was no different than the response Luxemburg had received fifteen years earlier—universal rejection from all corners.<sup>89</sup> Mattick and his colleagues in Chicago, Berlin, and Amsterdam were the exceptions. They represented a second generation of council communists who were greatly interested in the specifics of the theory, more so than their predecessors who had refashioned Luxemburg's refashioning of Marx in order to demonstrate the imminence of capitalism's death crisis.<sup>90</sup> With Grossman, neither Marx nor reality needed tweaking in this fashion.

Grossman was quick to correct erroneous perceptions. That he was accused by virtually everyone of propagating a mechanistic theory that did away with human intervention—an extremely sensitive point given the attachment of the pre-war Social Democratic movement to such explanations—meant that

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87 Henryk Grossman to Mattick, 21 June 1931. The Nazis confiscated 60,000 volumes. Palmier 2006, pp. 556–8.

88 For instance, Mattick's critiques of Joseph Gillman and Paul Sweezy. Mattick, 'Value Theory and Capital Accumulation', *Science & Society*, Winter 1959; reprinted with an 'Afterword' as Mattick, 'Werttheorie und Kapitalakkumulation Mit Nachtrag' in Mattick 1974. Mattick, 'Monopoly Capital', in Mattick 1978.

89 For reviews of Grossman, see: Kuhn 2007, pp. 265–6n.

90 Mattick, 'Luxemburg Versus Lenin', in Mattick 1978.

he offered Mattick clear, crisp descriptions of his main ideas. During a crisis, Grossman explained, the surplus is:

not sufficient to guarantee *both* a satisfactory level of wages *and* a necessary rate of accumulation. One can only take place at the expense of the other. Hence the intensification of the class struggle.

From this, ‘an *objectively revolutionary* situation arises: the system reveals that it can no longer guarantee the living conditions of the population’. Since the relationship of objective to subjective conditions had so vexed the reviewers, he clarified still further: ‘obviously the idea that capitalism must break down “on its own” or “automatically” is alien to me’. But Grossman ‘also wanted to show that the class struggle alone is *not* enough’. Commentators had misconstrued his methodology:

*For the purposes of analysis*, I had to use the process of abstract isolation of individual elements in order to show the essential function of each element.

To put this into other words, Grossman reiterated:

My breakdown theory doesn’t aim to exclude this active intervention, but rather to show when and under what circumstances such an objectively given revolutionary situation can and does arise.<sup>91</sup>

Grossman’s critics misunderstood the role of abstract reasoning as used by himself and by Marx; in other words, they were confused about the protocols of scientific methodology.

An altogether different tone emerged between Grossman and Mattick as soon as the discussion turned to politics. Grossman mocked Mattick’s anti-parliamentarianism and defended the German Communists.<sup>92</sup> He also rejected an invitation to contribute to *CAZ*, ostensibly because he did not want to jeopardise a future visa application for travel to the United States.<sup>93</sup>

Not just Grossman, but other German radicals also looked to Mattick for assistance. Mattick had known Adam Scharrer only fleetingly when he lived in

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91 Henryk Grossman to Mattick, 21 June 1931.

92 Henryk Grossman to Mattick, 16 September 1931. For a quick response: Mattick, ‘Review of Carl Grunberg and Henry Grossmann. *Die Drei Internationalen*’, *Der Freidenker*, 26 June 1932.

93 Henryk Grossman to Mattick, 16 September 1931.

Germany, but the two now developed a spirited correspondence, full of information about the political situation, their respective work, and possible publishing outlets. Scharrer was a machinist by trade, but for much of the 1920s he worked in KAPD-related establishments—its printing firm and a radical left bookstore—or he collected unemployment insurance. A founder of the KAPD and a member of the editorial collective for its newspaper, he was also a leading theorist of the death crisis of capitalism.

At the age of forty, Scharrer turned to fiction writing and autobiography, publishing over a dozen such works during the following years. His first novel brought to the fore the depths to which the councilists had fallen in Germany. When the KAPD publishing house could not issue the novel for financial reasons, Scharrer offered it to a Communist Party press, for which he was expelled from both the KAPD and AAUD. This led Weiland to quip not altogether facetiously that there were now three KAPDs. Mattick heard about these events from several different directions: Weiland, Canne Meijer, and Scharrer included.<sup>94</sup>

The playwright, Herman Kesser, was another correspondent. Mattick had reviewed his play, *Rotation*, in *CAZ*. After Mattick sent a short story, Kesser wrote to say that it ‘made a very big impression’. Mattick also sent a copy of his play, *Brand in Zuchthaus* [*Fire at the Penitentiary*], but Kesser warned that it had no chance of finding a publisher, given the political chill that had descended on Germany. Klingenberg shopped the play to several publishers in Berlin, but he heard the exact same message.<sup>95</sup> Mattick’s artist friends from Cologne requested his assistance with an exhibition. Franz Seiwert, Heinrich Hoerle, and Otto Freundlich sent paintings, and Mattick arranged for them to be shown at Kroch’s, Chicago’s largest bookstore, which routinely showcased artwork in its gallery space. Nothing sold, but one painting was stolen.<sup>96</sup> Other requests for assistance proved to be unrealistic. A friend from Berlin asked if Mattick might arrange paid translations that included Bulgarian as one of the languages.<sup>97</sup> Times were desperate.

94 Alfred Weiland to Mattick, 24 May 1930; Adam Scharrer to Mattick, 18 February 1932; Mattick to Walter Fähnders, 22 October 1971 (Fähnders). Fähnders and Rector 1974b, p. 243ff; Müller 1975, p. 36.

95 Reinhold Klingenberg to Mattick, 11 January 1932; Hermann Kesser to Mattick, 30 January 1933. Mattick discarded his only copy; Mattick to Walter Fähnders, 22 October 1971 (Fähnders). Mattick, ‘Review of Hermann Kesser. *Rotation*’, *CAZ*, December 1931.

96 Franz Seiwert to Mattick, 8 November 1931; Mattick to Uli Bohnen, 22 April 1972 (Bohnen); Mattick to Uli Bohnen, 21 January 1977 (Bohnen).

97 Kurt to Mattick, 6 May 1931.

## The Unemployed Movement

### The Workers League<sup>1</sup>

It must be understood that we are just at the beginning of the crisis, not in a literal sense of years and days, but in the sense of the development of revolutionary experience, a point of view from which days sometimes count as years, and years as days.<sup>2</sup>

When Mattick returned to Chicago from New York in late 1932, the city was somehow different from just a few months earlier. Economic conditions nationwide had continued to deteriorate throughout the year. In the twelve months between January and December, three million additional employees lost their jobs. Production facilities now functioned at barely half capacity. The number of unemployed was approaching fifteen million (with family members, nearly forty million people were affected).

In Chicago, 40 percent of the city's workforce was idle, some three-quarters of a million people. Local relief efforts had collapsed, and even though the state and national authorities had since intervened with emergency funding, only a fraction of the impoverished actually received assistance. Evictions also reached a high point, double the number from just a year earlier when a temporary moratorium followed an anti-eviction rally at which the police killed several demonstrators. Only the Communists had been prepared to organise highly-visible, multi-racial demonstrations at the onset of the Depression, but much had changed since that time.

Mattick threw himself into the day-to-day activities of the unemployed movement, for which the next months would constitute its most critical phase.<sup>3</sup> The local protests, no longer as unplanned and uncoordinated as before, gave

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1 In German, the word *Arbeiter* is both singular and plural (and male), depending on context. In German-American publications, the use of 'worker's' rather than 'workers' in titles reflected the German influence on the American labour movement.

2 Mattick, 'Why Don't the Unemployed Fight: A Marxian Analysis', *The Industrial Worker*, 22 and 29 August, 5 September 1933.

3 Mattick wrote extensively about the unemployed and their movements: Mattick, 'Organizations of the Unemployed', *Living Marxism*, August 1938; Mattick 1969; Mattick, *Unemployment and Relief in Illinois* (11SH: Mattick, unpublished manuscript).



rise to a concerted effort to create a city-wide organisation.<sup>4</sup> An intensification of protest was the goal. The unemployed began to use abandoned storefronts for their own purposes. Locks were broken, and the stores became meeting places, with chairs taken from deserted movie houses. Mattick estimated that there were some fifty or sixty such locales in Chicago, serving as the movement's equivalent of neighbourhood settlement houses. In some areas, there were one or two such places on every street. Mimeograph machines were installed for the production of leaflets and movement literature. Paper was contributed by those still employed, who stole office supplies from their workplaces.

Among the unemployed were many skilled workers, and they procured electricity for the storefronts by running wire from the street lamps. Gas lines were tapped without setting off the meters—something that the plumbers knew how to do, and the gas was used for heating and cooking. Others solicited food in bulk quantities from nearby fruit and vegetable markets, food shops, bakeries, and meat stores, sometimes by threatening the proprietors. Makeshift kitchens were set up in the storefronts and meals cooked around the clock. The homeless also used the storefronts as rudimentary sleeping quarters.

Mattick helped write and distribute leaflets and pamphlets, and he spoke frequently at meetings. He worked with a loosely-structured group of one hundred or so individuals in the Workers League, the unemployed affiliate of the Proletarian Party.<sup>5</sup> Some of Mattick's immediate colleagues were people he knew from *CAZ*, others from the *IWW*. Among the group were veterans of the 1919 General Strike in Winnipeg *CA* and German émigrés with direct experience of the action committees and councils from the revolutionary years.

The *IWW* was not well-suited for people in Mattick's situation. The *IWW*'s focus remained the still-employed. Its advocacy of a four-hour workday—with full pay—as a means to put additional people to work went beyond the six-hour day embraced elsewhere in the labour movement (most employers had reduced both hours and pay together). It encouraged the employed to forego overtime, even though employees generally had no say in the matter. Consistent with its anti-political orientation, it did not advocate government-sponsored relief, enhanced benefits, or public works programmes, and this distinguished it from the rest of the left. Strike support was encouraged, but there was little focus on the actual circumstances in which the unemployed were trapped.

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4 During 1931, Chicago witnessed 408 demonstrations; during 1932, 566 protests. Attendance at meetings, demonstrations, and protest parades more than doubled between 1930 and 1932. Lasswell and Blumenstock 1939, p. 173ff, p. 204ff, pp. 232–6.

5 Buckmiller 1976, p. 43ff, p. 51ff.; Pozzoli 1972, p. 4ff.; Al [Givens] to Mattick, 7 January 1953 (Mattick Jr.).



- 6 *Family Photo*—Paul Mattick is seated on table with pipe, to the left is his step-son Hans, seated at left is Frieda, seated at right is step-daughter Renee. Two paintings from the *Cologne Progressive Otto Freundlich* hang on the back wall. Note the rifle and automatic weapons leaning on table and held by colleague on left. Books on table presumably include Marx's *Capital*. This photo was most likely taken in the Mattick apartment in Chicago.

Other than the Workers League, only the Socialist and Communist Parties had a major presence among Chicago's unemployed. The Workers League focused on the relief station (welfare office) as the basic unit of organisation—the functional equivalent of a workplace. This was where the unemployed gathered, where it was possible to speak with them about social and economic conditions, and where one could discuss possible next steps that they might take collectively. The Socialists and Communists, on the other hand, organised the unemployed into neighbourhood councils; in other words, their model was political rather than economic in inspiration. They looked to recruit members and funnel them into predetermined activities—legislative reform for the Socialists, advocacy of Russia for the Communists, and electoral participation for both.<sup>6</sup>

6 Shannon 1967. The standard histories of the American Communist Party each suffer from major weaknesses. Howe and Coser 1962 is the best for the 1920s but is overtaken by

The Workers League was predicated on the idea, which Mattick theorised, that no special ideology was required for workers to act in a revolutionary fashion.<sup>7</sup> When the contradictions between a set of beliefs and everyday life became too great, he argued, the beliefs gave way to fresh ways of thinking. The ideas to which the working class adhered stood in sharp contradiction to the new realities in which people found themselves. Old notions were thus simply ignored, and people began to act instead on the basis of their needs.

Under the aegis of the Workers League, groups with volunteer speakers from among the unemployed, Mattick among them, roamed the city, travelling from relief station to relief station. At each, the unemployed were urged to choose representatives to attend a city-wide house of delegates that could coordinate aims and activities. Only the unemployed qualified, thus preventing the influx of individuals from other social strata and also the paid representatives of the political parties and humanitarian groups that sought to represent the unemployed. These delegates included representatives of public works projects and anti-eviction campaigns, and they became the basis upon which an unemployed movement finally materialised.

Simultaneous demonstrations conducted at multiple relief offices became more frequent. Small groups would gather at separate locations, all with the intent of descending en masse on a central point, thus eluding police efforts to contain and disrupt protests before they began. The police played an unwitting role in radicalising the movement, as demonstrators began to challenge abusive practices by carrying sticks, clubs, and stones. Relief protests averaged ten per week throughout the year, according to the estimates of police and welfare agencies. Something was afoot every day.

The Workers League's goals were similar to those that had motivated *CAZ* just the year before—to provide a forum, in this case for the jobless, regardless of any party or institutional affiliations that individuals might have otherwise. At meetings organised by the League, discussants were free to speak at length, but they were asked to refrain from identifying themselves by party affiliation. This naturally frustrated the attempts of the political parties to dominate the movement, and it allowed ideas that reflected the thinking of the unemployed to gain currency.

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anti-communism for the period covering the 1930s forward; Klehr 1984 is fact-filled but biased throughout, with almost everything attributable to a communist-inspired conspiracy; and Ottanelli 1991 functions as apologetics.

7 Pozzoli 1977, pp. 93–5.

Mattick also began to organise study groups on Marx's *Capital*.<sup>8</sup> Many of his colleagues from the Worker Educational Association, CAZ, the Workers League, IWW, and Proletarian Party participated, with as many as 80–100 in attendance at individual sessions. Mattick distributed the *Workers League News*, and he contributed occasional articles on the development of relief programmes, unemployment insurance, and public works projects.<sup>9</sup> As the unemployed movement radicalised, the momentum swung towards the Workers League in terms of influence and popularity. Although it was often misunderstood at the time and mostly ignored in subsequent accounts, its adherents functioned by exchanging information and helping to coordinate the activities of the unemployed. In other respects they made no attempt to force their way on others.<sup>10</sup> The intent was to influence matters ideologically and therefore have an impact on what people did.

A 50 percent cut in food subsidies in October 1932 reshuffled relationships within the left.<sup>11</sup> The three dominant unemployed organisations—the Workers League and the corresponding groups from the Socialist and Communist Parties—agreed to mutually promote a hunger march in protest. The initial planning meeting included equal numbers of delegates (fifteen) from each group, even though the Workers League was much smaller than the others. Whereas the Communists claimed more than seventy unemployed groups throughout the city, and the Socialists sixty, the Workers League could only report ten affiliate groups, which translated into 10,000, 15,000, and 3,000 adherents respectively.<sup>12</sup> This three-way constellation of organisations was

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8 The *Capital* groups eventually led to the pamphlet: Mattick, *Outline Study Course In Marxian Economics*, Chicago: International Council Correspondence, 1935.

9 *Workers League News*: 'Struggles of the Unemployed in England', December 1932; 'Will We Have Unemployment Insurance?', April 1933; 'The NRA: A Failure. What's Next?', October 1933; 'Civil Work Program: What Is It?', December 1933.

10 Lasswell and Blumenstock, for example, attribute most everything to the Communists. About the radical left: 'on the fringe was a flotsam and jetsam of councils, semi-councils, and wholly dubious councils which shade off to the vanishing-point'. Lasswell and Blumenstock 1939, pp. 73–4.

11 For the 1932–3 events, see the following (some are imprecise about details): Seymour 1937; Schulman No Date; Rosenzweig 1975, 1976, and 1979; Lorence 1996; Dilling 1934, p. 133, pp. 151–2, pp. 185–6, pp. 231–2 (includes the naming conventions of the various unemployed groups); Klehr 1984, pp. 64–5, pp. 103–4; Kahn 1934, ch. 3; Asher 1934; Robert Asher, 'Chicago Unemployed Show Their Fists', *Revolt*, December 1932; Friedman 1933; Borders 1932; Hallgren 1933, pp. 132–3, pp. 192–5; Trolander 1975, ch. 6.

12 Lasswell and Blumenstock 1939, p. 260; 'Lessons of Victory of Chicago Unemployed', *Daily Worker*, 17 November 1932 ('Comrade M' mentioned in the 'Editorial' may be Mattick:

important because it increased the total resources that could be devoted to organising the hunger march. Each organisation had its own particular sources of revenue. The Communists drew funds from overseas as well as from many wealthy benefactors; the Socialists had developed a well-oiled bureaucracy over several decades (with 1600 affiliated groups nationwide); and the Proletarian Party received income from its publishing house (the Charles H. Kerr Publishing Company).<sup>13</sup>

Normally such calls for a demonstration brought forth faithful members of the organisations but not many others. The subsequent city-wide planning meeting, however, drew 700 representatives from over 350 local groups and organisations, exactly the huge house of delegates that the Workers League had hoped for all along. Every imaginable group was represented—the several left parties, the unions, and even the fascists. This alone was an indication that something major was about to take place. On the day of the march, upwards of 25,000 people wound their way past city hall in the pouring rain. They overwhelmed the downtown business district in a dramatic, three-mile long procession that stopped traffic and attracted many thousands of bystanders. At the parade grounds afterwards, the number of participants doubled.<sup>14</sup> The police had been placed every twenty or so feet along the march and were quickly surrounded and isolated from one another. This was a mistake they would not soon repeat. Protestors noticed that, once isolated, the officers became uncharacteristically friendly.

The relief cuts were withdrawn the next day, a tremendous victory for the protestors. The Socialists organised a follow-up meeting with participation from thirty organisations representing a reported 150,000 members (November 1932). From this, the Federation of Unemployed Workers League of America was launched with plans for mass meetings in multiple cities and a subsequent march in Chicago in the spring. The culmination would be a regional conference in mid-May 1933 for unemployed groups throughout the mid-west industrial region.<sup>15</sup> Because of its size and wealth, the Socialist Party's unemployed group, the Workers Committee on Unemployment, took the lead in organising

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also see the article by John Williamson); 'Jobless United Front in Chicago', *The Militant*, 29 October 1932.

13 For the March 1930 demonstration, for example, the Communist Party printed 200,000 leaflets, 50,000 stickers, and 50,000 shop papers. For the October 1932 hunger march, the three organisations produced over 200,000 leaflets.

14 'Proletarian Party Debates Liberal', *Proletarian News*, 1 December 1932.

15 Forty-four delegates attended, with still more groups joining between November and May.

the conference, but the Socialists were particularly nervous about Communist Party participation and insisted that they be excluded.

### Federation and Party

Like the development of capitalism itself, the development of class consciousness is not a continuous process. It proceeds in fits and starts, in an inverse relationship to the accumulation dynamic. If the economy is in a permanent crisis situation, it is reasonable to expect on the basis of previous experience, that revolutionary consciousness will grow alongside the ever-sharpening class differences.<sup>16</sup>

The influence of groups like the Workers League, the Socialists' unemployed committees, and the self-help groups that had since clustered around the charismatic religious leader, A.J. Muste, skyrocketed during 1932. The Communists, meanwhile, had burned many bridges, not only within the left but among the unemployed as well, and their unemployed groups stagnated in comparison. Widely respected for their aggressive advocacy earlier in the depression and for their pivotal role in anti-eviction campaigns, especially in African-American neighbourhoods, the Communists nonetheless routinely denounced their own members and affiliate organisations when these became too independent. Deliberate confrontations with the police (who needed no encouragement) led to much pointless 'bloodletting', as Mattick termed it. The Party viewed violence as a radicalising force, in line with the masculinist and threatening postures that it took towards other left groups whose speakers were customarily harassed by heckling, by the positioning of Communist speakers in overlapping locations, and by other disruptive tactics.<sup>17</sup>

Mattick was everywhere during the planning stages for the May 1933 conference. He wrote the conference protocols and lobbied hard for their acceptance. The conference attracted nearly 100 delegates, drawn not just from cities and localities of the mid-west but from the east, west, and southern coasts of the United States as well.<sup>18</sup> It was an auspicious beginning, but deep fissures emerged immediately.

<sup>16</sup> Mattick 1973, pp. 15–16.

<sup>17</sup> 'Unemployed Councils', *Proletarian News*, 7 January 1932.

<sup>18</sup> The delegates represented more than forty organisations with hundreds of branches in sixteen states and twenty-five cities. For a list of who participated and who withdrew: Socialist Party of America Papers 1975. Also: *The Militant*: 20 May 1933, 27 May 1933, 10 June

Contrary to Socialist Party dictates, Mattick arranged with delegates from the radical left groups, and some of the Socialists too, to include all unemployed representatives at the conference regardless of political affiliation. This meant admitting the spokespeople from the Communist Party. The number of delegates, however, was determined in such a fashion that no single group had a majority. A long contentious debate that took an entire day was needed to make this official. The final result restricted both the Socialists and the Communists from controlling the conference, and it also enhanced the clout of the much smaller radical left groups—as long as they voted as a bloc.

The delegates from the Communist Party went out of their way to antagonise the Socialists, and some of the latter—including the leadership group—withdrawed from the Conference before it was over. The management of the Federation passed to the Workers League by virtue of its role as conference co-organiser. Mattick was elected to the Executive Committee, along with others from the Proletarian Party (Workers League), Communist Party, IWW, Socialist Party, Musteites, Communist Party Opposition (Lovestonites), Communist League (Trotskyists), and several regional groups.

Besides the Socialists and Communists, the self-help movement was the radical left's strongest competitor within the Federation. Like the sudden blossoming of Chicago's unemployed movement at the end of 1932, the self-help movement had also grown phenomenally during this same period.<sup>19</sup> It had proven so successful that groups whose purpose was to coordinate the bartering of agricultural goods and handicraft services now owned retail outlets, trucks, and warehouses as well. The self-help movement was supported by many of the same groups that collaborated with the Socialist Party—i.e., social welfare, humanitarian, and church groups, and it was especially admired by the so-named Musteites, given the latter's own roots within the social gospel tradition.<sup>20</sup> At its peak, 330 organisations nationwide had a membership of over 300,000, with individual groups attracting anywhere from 200 to 13,000 members.

The self-help movement's ideas had evolved over the previous few years. Notions of the rugged frontier had been replaced by philosophies that embraced 'production for use', in which an alternative economy would eventually separate from the capitalist world. A cooperative commonwealth was

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1933, 15 July 1933, 22 July 1933; *Daily Worker*: 17 November 1932, 3 May 1933, 15 May 1933, 16 May 1933, 17 May 1933, 19 May 1933.

19 Bernstein 1966, p. 416ff.

20 The Musteites were also known as the Conference for Progressive Labor Action. Robinson 1981.

the ideal. The movement was most popular in areas with a close proximity between farmland and small cities, but it never took root in places like Chicago which tended to be the stomping ground of the left political parties. As it turned out, the experiments in self-help were unable to function without outside funding, and many of them were quickly hobbled by internal corruption. The movement simply imploded.

Even without the Socialist delegates, the reform-oriented delegates dominated at the May conference. At best the radicals could push decisions in certain directions, but they were not free to do as they pleased. The choice at hand was between self-help and paternalistic legislation. Since it was unlikely that self-help could survive on its own and outcompete the existing system, and since any improvements in the condition of the working class in a time of economic crisis would come at the expense of the bourgeoisie and exacerbate the class struggle, the radicals preferred to press employers and government officials alike for concessions.

This meant an embrace of unemployment insurance that would be paid fully by businesses and government, rather than requiring employee contributions. Other conference endorsements included a ban on evictions; free medical care and prescriptions for the unemployed; a guaranteed minimum level of support; union-scale wages on public works projects; relief payments in cash rather than as surplus food items;<sup>21</sup> a pledge to oppose all forms of discrimination (whether based on political beliefs, race, or religion); and a further pledge that all member organisations would refrain from slander and personal attacks on one another.<sup>22</sup>

For a short while, relations among the radicals were cooperative enough that two separate groups of dissident communists offered to publish Mattick's essays, although dealings unravelled soon enough that they reneged on these promises.<sup>23</sup> When Communist Party officials came to visit from their headquarters in New York, Mattick was one of the people they sought out. Neither the Socialists, Communists, nor Musteites were pleased with the clout of the

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21 This pledge was arrived at in view of the lopsided and unhealthy distribution of agricultural surpluses.

22 By mid-1932 even the American Federation of Labor dropped its opposition to government oversight of capital-labour relations and supported unemployment relief, if only because so many of its members were unemployed.

23 Jay Lovestone to Mattick, 5 March 1933; Will Herberg to Mattick, 7 Aug 1933; Mattick, 'Crisis and Unemployment in U.S.', *Workers Age*, 1 March 1933, of which the promised sequel never appeared. Max Shachtman to Mattick, 30 October 1933; nothing from Mattick appeared in *The Militant*.



radicals within the Federation, and this doomed it. The Socialists were pre-occupied with internal divisions and potential mergers with other groups. The Musteites, who tended to be strong in localities where the Socialists were weak, worked with the Communists to plan an alternative regional conference in Columbus OH that overshadowed the developments in Chicago. Federation delegates were allowed to attend but were denied any voting rights.

Simply put, the radical left groups were outmanoeuvred by groups that dwarfed them in financing, members, and national leverage. The radicals were a special threat because they wanted the Federation to become a self-standing group to which all the unemployed groups would belong, rather than a collection of representatives from the separate organisations like the Communist and Socialist Parties, the Workers League, and so on. In other words, the radicals wanted a single organisation for all the unemployed, rather than a federation, coalition, or united front. This was a plank that none of the larger parties were ready to accept.<sup>24</sup>

It wasn't just the betrayal of the three left organisations that accounted for the failure of the radical left in Chicago. In January 1933, the welfare authorities centralised the complaint and appeal process in a single office for the entire city, thus eliminating the local branches as a focus of protest. The Workers League was undercut directly. The political parties, on the other hand, strengthened their roles as representatives of the unemployed. They became unofficial liaisons to the government bureaucracy. Party officials, who the authorities preferred to unruly clients, were soon expert in the forms, regulations, and procedures of the welfare process. By virtue of this new configuration, their advocacy on behalf of the unemployed helped dampen conflict.

At mid-year, public works programmes funded by the national government were added to the mix of relief measures. Even though jobs were awarded on a lottery basis, with only 20,000 positions for all of Chicago, public works projects were fertile territory for lobbying by the political parties. One-third of the city's working population was receiving some sort of federal aid by the end of

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24 In and around Chicago, the idea of a comprehensive organisation for the unemployed gave rise to the Workers Alliance. By 1935–6, a series of local, regional, and inter-regional mergers led the Socialists, Communists, and Musteites to merge their respective unemployed groups into the Alliance. No longer so radical, the Alliance nonetheless derived its organisational arrangements from the structures and procedures that the Workers League had set in motion. But if this was true in a formal sense, the Alliance no longer functioned independently of the organisations that sponsored it, nor was it independent of the government bureaucracies to which it was increasingly oriented and beholden.

the year.<sup>25</sup> While this constituted a back-handed tribute to the campaigns conducted by the unemployed movement, it was a development that weakened the radicals still further.<sup>26</sup>

Mattick composed a series of post-mortems on the unemployed movement.<sup>27</sup> Only a negligible number of the unemployed had joined radical organisations, despite three years of harsh depression. In Chicago, the unemployed groups of the Socialists, Communists, and Workers League claimed collectively 28,000 participants, out of a city-wide total of nearly three-quarters of a million people without work. When the Communists surveyed their unemployed groups, they discovered that only 442 (four percent) out of the 11,000 participants were party members.<sup>28</sup> And during the 1932 elections in which the Socialist, Communist, and Socialist Labor Parties each had a presidential candidate, the combined vote nationally was less than one million out of an active electorate of forty million.

The opening years of the depression had been counter-intuitive from a marxist perspective. Unemployment and poverty had neither radicalised the working class nor pushed it towards socialist solutions. Surveys by social scientists indicated that the overwhelming majority of unemployed workers could be categorised as 'resigned' or 'broken'. Without objectives and well-developed ideologies of their own, the chronically un- and under-employed (the 'lumpenproletariat', in Mattick's parlance) tended to support any social movement that offered assistance. In Germany, fascism had proven attractive because it promised immediate improvement. In the United States, the unemployed had accepted the representation of just about anyone available, from the Communists to the Democrats.

As the radical unemployed movement declined, it was replaced by a series of strikes that swept the country during 1933–4. Employers had pushed wages and working conditions to unsustainable levels. During this brief period, strike-breaking was relatively absent, despite the ease with which strike-breakers

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25 Cohen 1992, p. 268.

26 'Chicago Unemployed Conference', *Workers Age*, 15 June 1933; 'C.P. Unemployed Council Wrecks Federation', *Workers Age*, 1 August 1933.

27 Mattick, 'The Scum of Humanity', *ICC*, March 1935; published as 'Das Lumpenproletariat', *Der Freidenker*, 17 February 1935. For rejections: *The Adelpi*: Richard Rees to Mattick, 31 May 1935; *Common Sense*: Alfred M. Bingham to Mattick, 20 August 1935; *Living Age*: Varian Fry to Mattick, 24 August 1935; *Socialist Vanguard*: Allan Flanders to Mattick, 14 August 1936. Mattick, 'Why Don't the Unemployed Fight: A Marxian Analysis', *Industrial Worker*, 22 August, 29 August, and 5 September 1933; published as 'Weshalb Kämpfen die Arbeitslosen Nicht?', *Der Freidenker*, 25 June 1933. Also Pells 1972, p. 86ff.

28 Storch 2009, p. 122.

could be hired. But like the unemployed movement, the strike wave soon dissipated in the rush of enthusiasm for Roosevelt and the New Deal. Why support radical organisations, Mattick queried, when the government claimed the very same goals as the unions and left political parties? How could the latter groups ever compete with an administration that planned to provide jobs for one-fourth of the unemployed? The left had little to offer besides education and enlightenment, and the rapid turnover of participants in left organisations was hardly surprising when viewed from this perspective. Revolution, Mattick concluded, presupposed an exhaustion of relief and further deterioration of living and working conditions until the quality of existence for workers was substantially identical to the quality of life for the unemployed.

Mattick's familiarity with Grossmann had given him great cache within the left. He could make Marx intelligible in ways that others could not. Grossmann's explanation of the falling rate of profit, for instance, rebutted theories of economic crisis based on underconsumption. Mattick knew of the latter from Rosa Luxemburg, although the Proletarian Party somewhat erroneously ascribed this idea to Lenin. Grossman thus became a weapon to be used against John Keracher, whose dominance of the Proletarian Party was almost total. Keracher was highly charismatic, extremely popular with Proletarian Party members, an articulate and accomplished orator, and widely-published, but he also controlled the party's finances and this alone gave him great power.<sup>29</sup>

Throughout this period, a small group had begun to meet regularly at the Matticks' apartment. What the Proletarian Party members had learned previously about Marx did not always jive with what Marx actually said. Members of the group who could read in both German and English translated parts of Grossman's work for the benefit of everyone else. Over time, Keracher took notice of the tough questions and disagreements that seemed to materialise from nowhere. He could not imagine that someone who spoke English as badly as Mattick could be the culprit. The combination of innocence and involvement that characterised Mattick's activities led to an invitation to join the party.

At the following Sunday morning meeting, Mattick's nomination was accepted without controversy. When the discussion led to Grossman's

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29 A shoemaker by trade, Keracher had sold his business years before in order to finance the party. In the late 1920s, another financial opportunity arose when the Kerr Publishing Company bequeathed its assets to Keracher on behalf of the party. The Kerr Publishing Company served as an institutional anchor for the radical left, translating many authors who were important to people like Mattick, such as Marx, Luxemburg, Anton Pannekoek, Herman Gorter, Otto Rühle, and others.

interpretation of Marx, the situation became very tense, and a new vote was called. A majority voted to rescind the offer of membership that had just been conferred an hour or so before. Mattick would later speak about this incident with obvious amusement. As he left the meeting hall, a few dozen attendees went with him. Mattick was the only German immigrant among them—a point of some historical importance in light of the many attempts in subsequent years to dismiss council communism as a foreign import.

The colleagues from the Proletarian Party wanted an identifiable organisation: thus the United Workers Party (UWP) was formed. It was launched in that same moment of optimism at the end of 1932 that gave rise to the Workers League and Federation of Unemployed Workers, and was one of many attempts nationwide to form a new radical party.<sup>30</sup> Mattick was agnostic about the name, taking his lead from Canne Meijer and the Dutch colleagues who already referred to themselves as a 'Group of Council Communists' in order to avoid the party-designation. This same collection of people were variously referred to as the Workers League, the left wing of the Proletarian Party, and the United Workers Party, depending on exactly when the commentator had been informed of the latest developments.

More important to Mattick than the group's name was that his new colleagues were eager to develop politically and ideologically. By December 1932, the United Workers Party had a real existence. An announcement in *Der Freidenker* referred to it as 'anti-parliamentary, anti-trade union'.<sup>31</sup> Rudiger Raube served as the contact person for the international community. The UWP's immediate focus was the unemployed movement. Because it functioned on a relatively high level theoretically, it did not appeal to everyone. Its manifesto excluded farmers and other components of the middle classes as revolutionary actors, and this at a time when farmer-labour coalitions were looked upon fondly by almost everyone on the left.<sup>32</sup> That farmers supported high wages (and, therefore, high prices for their produce) still left the underlying structures of wage-labour and private property in place.

30 In the UWP's immediate vicinity, party-building characterised the Communist Party-Opposition (Lovestoneites), Trotskyists, and Musteites (American Workers Party). Alexander 1981, pp. 94–6; Pells 1973, p. 50; 'For a New Party and a New International', *The Militant*, 30 September 1933.

31 Kristen Svanum to Mattick, 25 December 1932; 'Eine Antiparlamentarische-Antigewerkschaftliche Partei in USA', *Der Freidenker*, 5 March 1933. Also: Aldred 1935, pp. 61–2, p. 98, and p. 102, where he quotes a letter from Mattick, 11 April 1935, in which Mattick describes the Proletarian Party as 'very small and very quiet'.

32 Rudiger Raube to Comrades, 15 January 1933 (IISH: Pannekoek); *Program of the United Workers Party* (IISH: Pannekoek); Rudiger Raube to Comrades, 1 March 1934 (ABA).

About half the original group wandered away without much fanfare, some back to the Proletarian Party, while others lost interest in left politics altogether. A few expected to be expelled because of discordant views, but this manner of operation was odious to Mattick and his closest colleagues. What people did was what mattered; differences in theory were relatively unimportant. Theoretical debate enlivened the group and kept its members sharp intellectually. The United Workers Party stabilised at ninety-odd participants, and newcomers tended to come and go with about the same frequency.

### Fascism's Initial Impact

A capitalism forced to feed the workers instead of being fed by them has no future.<sup>33</sup>

Many things came to an abrupt end when the fascists came to power in Germany in early 1933. Mattick was peripherally involved with the newly-revived theoretical journal of the councilists, *Proletarier* [*Proletarian*].<sup>34</sup> Any publishing efforts had to be strictly clandestine. To throw off the censors, *Proletarier's* masthead claimed Amsterdam as the site of origination, and in fact the entire endeavour was abandoned after one issue.

The driving force behind the magazine was Fritz Henssler, assisted by Walter Auerbach and Heinz Langerhans, all of whom were close colleagues of Karl Korsch and all of whom Mattick would befriend after their respective emigrations in the years to come. Of this group, Korsch was the most influential. A lawyer by training, he had written extensively about workers' councils throughout the 1920s, first for the Independent Social Democratic Party, then the Communist Party, and finally the KAPD. Korsch was the author of the widely-noted *Marxism and Philosophy*, a member of the German Reichstag, a university professor (law), and had been appointed Attorney General in the short-lived (less than a month) Communist-Social Democratic coalition government in Thuringia during the rampant inflation of late 1923.<sup>35</sup> Korsch had gone through a considerable political evolution, and Mattick would soon

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33 Mattick, 'Future of Unemployment', *Living Marxism*, February 1938, p. 13.

34 It reprinted book reviews from *Der Freidenker*.

35 The Social Democratic-led coalition in Berlin pressured their counterparts in Thuringia to drop the Communists, lest the Berlin government declare martial law and send military troops to occupy the province. For Korsch's political evolution, see in particular the various introductions by Buckmiller to Korsch's *Gesamtausgabe* (Buckmiller 1980 and 2001).

comment that because 'he redefined himself so often', Korsch's views at any particular moment could be 'judged as only temporary'.<sup>36</sup>

The Korsch crowd rejected the thesis about capitalism's death crisis in both the Luxemburg and Grossman versions, and *Proletarier* included articles from Korsch and Henssler to this effect.<sup>37</sup> Korsch attributed to Grossman a mechanistic interpretation of the connection between economic crises and revolutionary politics. Henssler felt that Grossman neglected the 'realisation' problem, that is, the inability to sell commodities that had been produced in excess. Mattick heard from Canne Meijer that Anton Pannekoek had conducted an analogous critique of Grossman among the Dutch colleagues.<sup>38</sup>

Pannekoek, who would also become a close collaborator and friend of Mattick's in future years, was considered by just about everybody to be one of the 'grand old men' of European social democracy until he was pushed aside with the rest of the radical left by the Bolsheviks. He had withdrawn from active political involvement after the war and was since engaged as a researcher and professor of astronomy, but he still received many visitors who sought his wisdom and advice, including Canne Meijer. The latter had also opposed the 'death crisis' formulation until he read Grossman. But Canne Meijer preferred to speak about capitalism's problems as a 'permanent crisis,' since this highlighted the dead end from which the economy appeared to have no means of escape, without suggesting a predetermined outcome. Mattick listened to Canne Meijer carefully, and he adopted this terminological convention.<sup>39</sup>

Grossman was bitter about the Korsch/Henssler criticisms. He was bothered in particular by the misrepresentation of his thesis, the very issues he had written about to Mattick.<sup>40</sup> He was, however, duly impressed with Mattick's rebuttal of Pannekoek that appeared in *Rätekorrespondenz*: 'the anti-critique is powerfully and energetically written'.<sup>41</sup> Grossman's life had since been turned

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Also: Kellner 1977; Breines 1972; Karl Korsch to Easton Rothwell, 2 December 1940 (Korsch 1980).

36 Mattick to Sidney Hook, 22 July 1934 (Hoover).

37 The Korsch and Henssler articles, along with articles by Pannekoek and Mattick are reprinted in: Mattick 1973. Korsch's essay is translated in Kellner 1977; Pannekoek's in Pannekoek 1977.

38 Henk Canne Meijer to Mattick [March 1930] (IISH: Canne Meier); Mattick to Anton Pannekoek, 27 May 1934 (IISH: Pannekoek); Gerber 1989, p. 170ff; Brendel 1974.

39 Henk Canne Meijer to Mattick, 4 April 1934 (IISH: Canne Meier).

40 Henryk Grossman to Mattick, 1 November 1933.

41 Henryk Grossman to Mattick, 2 October 1934. Pannekoek remained unconvinced: 'a theory of the end catastrophe would not be very important for me'. Anton Pannekoek to Mattick,

upside down by the Nazis. In the weeks prior to their takeover, as many as 2000 students attended his lectures. By early March 1933, he had relocated to Paris.

In exile, Grossman's workaholic routines began to slip away. The move to Paris presented for him all sorts of difficulties, including the loss of his library (2000 volumes, including many rare items); the confiscation of a trunk with a decade's worth of manuscripts (the trunk was taken by the German police and only released months later); and the limited usefulness of a National Library that lacked many left-wing items necessary for the continuation of his work. Against these odds, he nonetheless hoped to produce a new edition of his book on crisis theory that would eliminate any polemics against the German theorists under attack by the Nazis, lest his criticisms be misinterpreted as somehow running parallel to the Nazi's activities. He also planned to add new material on theories that had become influential in the United States regarding government intervention into the economy. Another plan, also unrealised, involved a second volume on related theoretical and methodological issues. Mattick sent Grossman summaries, articles, and bibliographies for the American part and was dogged in his pursuit of an intellectual friendship with Grossman, despite the latter's frequent apologies for not reciprocating.<sup>42</sup>

Inside Germany, well-known leftists and anti-Nazis were targeted immediately by the new regime. Ad hoc street violence became official repression.<sup>43</sup> Some were dragged from their apartments and beaten in broad daylight. Korsch escaped arrest half a year later by exhibiting his war medals and fleeing the country as soon as the police left to check their records. Adam Scharrer lived underground for a few months but then fled to Prague when a warrant was issued for 'literary treason'. Theodor Hartwig was there already. Based on old records, the Mattick apartment in Charlottenburg was searched by the secret police (Gestapo), who arrived with an arrest warrant, treated his mother brusquely, confiscated a few items, and checked to see if anything had been hidden in the oven. She, however, had already burned any incriminating papers.<sup>44</sup>

Canne Meijer wrote to Mattick about Marinus van de Lubbe, the Dutch council communist who set fire to the Reichstag building. Partially blinded in an industrial accident and dependent on disability payments, van de Lubbe

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10 December 1934 (IISH: Pannekoek). Korsch felt similarly: Karl Korsch to Mattick, 10 May 1935 (*Gesamtausgabe*).

42 Henryk Grossman to Mattick, 6 March 1933.

43 For this history, see Evans' masterful trilogy. For the repression: Evans 2004, p. 318ff, p. 328ff, p. 340ff, p. 408ff; Evans 2005, pp. 55ff; Evans 2009.

44 Buckmiller 1976, pp. 60–1.

had grown increasingly impatient with life in general and the state of the world in particular. He also had a penchant for arson. In Berlin in the days before the fire, he met with Alfred Weiland and many others, but no one in Holland or Berlin was particularly enthused about his various schemes to provoke the working class into rebellion. Because the German Social Democrats and the Communists still hoped to use the electoral system to defeat the Nazis, the Reichstag became an obvious target to demonstrate the delusive aspects of these ideas.

The defamation campaign against van der Lubbe that was orchestrated by the Communists afterwards was particularly distasteful in councilist circles. Mattick's article in *Der Freidenker* was his contribution to the counter-narrative developed by colleagues in France, Great Britain, and Holland. While the Communists attempted to show their acceptability to the Nazis and bourgeoisie alike, van der Lubbe was denigrated unjustifiably.<sup>45</sup> Nearly fifty years later, Mattick would dedicate his final book (*Marxism: Last Refuge of the Bourgeoisie?*) to van der Lubbe.

Just about everyone with whom Mattick was in touch involved themselves in anti-Nazi activities. Henssler joined the Nazi student organisation to disguise his own undertakings and also to ferret out plans against his colleagues. Alfred Weiland and Karl Nachtigall (who Mattick knew from the expropriation years of the early 1920s) took part in the underground KAUD, as did the *Proletarier* editors.<sup>46</sup> A second group, Rote Kämpfer [Red Fighters], likewise attracted current and former colleagues of Mattick's.<sup>47</sup>

Of the estimated 20,000 people who took part in the resistance during the early years of the Nazi regime, probably half came from the small organisations of the radical left, of which the largest counted some 17,000 members in all of Germany. The two councilist groups, the KAUD and Rote Kämpfer, had a combined membership of less than 1000. The remainder of the resistance was drawn from the two primary left parties, the Social Democrats (with just under one million members at the start of 1933) and the Communists (with 180,000 members).

Weiland was arrested towards the end of 1933. The KAUD was by then a banned organisation. At the Leipzig police station, the beatings were so severe

45 André Prudhommeaux in Paris and Guy Aldred in Glasgow were among the publicists. Henk Canne Meijer to Mattick, 6 October 1933 (IISH: Canne Meijer); Mattick, 'Marinus van der Lubbe: Proletarier oder Provokateur?', *Der Freidenker*, 4 February 1934.

46 Kubina 2001, p. 25, p. 97, p. 101, p. 113ff, p. 120ff, pp. 131–5.

47 Ihlau 1971, p. 113ff; Friedemann und Schledorn 1994, p. 216ff; Foitzik 1986, pp. 32–3, p. 45, pp. 90–1, pp. 240–1.



that his jaw and nose needed to be reconstructed afterwards. A second brutal beating took place on the railway platform, en route to a concentration camp. Marching twelve kilometers (seven and a half miles) through snow to the camp, he was beaten again. Upon arrival, he was greeted by a gauntlet with two rows of guards and additional blows. When he lost consciousness, he was revived with ice cold water. The intake process involved hours of standing, during which further assaults occurred. The mandatory haircuts were just as bad, with dull-edged razors that pulled as much as cut. Some prisoners were forced to eat their own hair. Later on, they were subjected to elaborate proceedings and mock executions—a form of entertainment for the Nazi officials and camp personnel.

Mattick's childhood friend, Josef Kohn, returned from France to work against the Nazis and was caught flushing incriminating newspapers down the toilet during a raid on his apartment.<sup>48</sup> His next dozen years were spent in concentration camps. Known for his generosity, for helping others do their work and sharing his food in dire situations, Kohn benefitted when fellow prisoners reciprocated. He worked closely with the Communist network among the prisoners, a highly-coordinated, savvy, and rough-and-tumble group. When selections of Jews were made, the Communist overseers placed Kohn in solitary confinement. The Nazi officials had great respect for the protocols of punishment and therefore did not remove prisoners from the special punishment cells even when inmates were rounded up for the gas chambers. Kohn consequently survived the entire era.

Frieda visited Germany just as these events unfolded. She saw Grossman, who found her 'an unusually clever, wise, and sympathetic individual'.<sup>49</sup> She also arranged with the Cologne artist, Heinrich Hoerle, to serve as his American agent. Both Grossman and Hoerle soon headed into exile.<sup>50</sup> The news from Europe only grew worse. An exile press developed in Prague, Paris, and Amsterdam, but for the most part it was party-oriented and aimed at the remnants of each group's members. Within Germany, resistance of almost any sort was impossible. Illegal publications maintained bonds among kindred spirits, but anything more than this was suicidal. The 'underground' within Germany served as a conduit for information intended for the exile press. Canne Meijer

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48 Conversations with Ilse Mattick, 21–5 May 2005.

49 Henryk Grossman to Mattick, 7 May 1933. Also: Henryk Grossman to Mattick, 16 September 1933.

50 Hoerle wrote to say that his artwork would arrive unsigned as a means to avoid taxes, with instructions to mark the paintings as they saw fit, with Hoerle's name or with an alias if that was better. Heinrich Hoerle to Mattick, ND [after 30 January 1933].

reported that the Berlin colleagues wore gloves when touching illegal publications because of the finger proofing techniques of the secret police.<sup>51</sup> The Rote Kämpfer continued in existence until 1936, when an arrest in another matter exposed them as well. One hundred and fifty people were seized.<sup>52</sup>

### The German Émigré Community

[Fascism] is nothing other than the compulsion to permanent terrorism against the working class; and this compulsion results from the fact that the further endangering of industrial profits by social unrest can no longer be tolerated, since the already insufficient profit brings into question more and more the continued existence of the economic system.<sup>53</sup>

Sixty thousand people fled Germany during 1933 alone.<sup>54</sup> Of the exile journals, Wieland Herzfelde's *Neue Deutsche Blätter* [*New German Pages*] was the most important for Mattick. Short-lived and produced in the first flush of exile, it nonetheless published key pieces that helped establish him as an author. Herzfelde was lucky to have escaped Berlin after the Reichstag fire. When he heard the news, he abandoned everything he owned—clothing, possessions, his passport, access to his bank account, as well as the 40,000 books from Malik-Verlag that were warehoused in his apartment. In Prague, Herzfelde attempted to recreate what had been lost. With an initial print run of 7,000—of which a few hundred made it to the United States—*Neue Deutsche Blätter* utilised literature as an anti-fascist device.

To Herzfelde, Mattick represented a proletarian author who mixed dramatic accounts of real events with fictionalised stories about individuals. Neither Herzfelde nor Mattick seemed fully cognisant of the other's political orientation. Mattick, for example, claimed that 'Herzfelde is pro-Stalin if only because it is good business to be so'.<sup>55</sup> For Herzfelde, Mattick's descriptions of the bankruptcy of Chicago's transportation system (electric grid and street

51 Henk Canne Meijer to Mattick, 9 May 1934 (IISH: Canne Meier); Henk Canne Meijer to Mattick, 27 January 1935 (IISH: Canne Meier).

52 Organised into twelve independent cells of some fifteen members each in 1932, thirty-five remained in Berlin at the end, with others scattered in Cologne and elsewhere. Sandvoss 2007, p. 200ff; Müller 1988.

53 Mattick, 'The Future of the German Labor Movement', *ICC*, October 1934 [brackets added].

54 For the exile, especially: Palmier 2006, p. 11, pp. 369–71, p. 374.

55 Mattick to Sidney Hook, 13 August 1934 (Hoover).

cars), evictions in the African-American community, the August 1931 incident in which the police killed protestors, the strikewave that swept the country during 1933–4, and the contrast between the marriage of John Jay Astor and the plight of the homeless, were a perfect match for the literary endeavours of the magazine.<sup>56</sup> Even in his fiction, Mattick presented people and situations of which he had direct knowledge.<sup>57</sup>

Herzfelde was enthused enough that he enlisted Mattick to find an editor for an American version of *Dreissig Neue Erzähler*, a collection that included a short story by Mattick.<sup>58</sup> Mattick also took payment in books rather than money, since Herzfelde managed to publish forty of them during the two years in Prague.<sup>59</sup> Herzfelde was not the only one excited by Mattick's literary productions. Grossman was equally stirred by what he saw—the short story, he wrote to Mattick, was 'a gripping account of working-class life, whose aesthetic effect is heightened through a plain, unadorned simplicity and which drives to the question of why all this suffering?'<sup>60</sup>

While Mattick's fiction was appealing to the émigré crowd, Mattick would soon give up fiction-writing altogether. His last short story, loosely based on his father but drawn from Mattick's experiences in the Ruhr industrial region during the early 1920s, appeared the following year in *Der Freidenker*.<sup>61</sup> Travelogues, book reviews, and fiction had defined his recent work, but economic analysis became his new passion, and it was precisely work of this kind that he offered to other exile journals.<sup>62</sup> Klaus Mann, the editor at the Amsterdam-based *Die Sammlung* [*The Collection*], was duly impressed by Mattick's analysis of governmental interventions into the economy: 'instructive, and with much factual material, well-written'.<sup>63</sup>

The influx of émigrés into the United States that began in 1933 rekindled political activity within the German-speaking community. Joseph Wagner, Mattick's friend and protagonist from the IWW, finessed a project on Mattick's behalf

56 'Endstation', *Neue Deutsche Blätter*, 15 December 1933; Mattick, 'Die Streikwelle', *Neue Deutsche Blätter*, October–November 1934 and December 1934; Herzfelde 1973.

57 For example, Mattick criticises B. Traven for describing situations of which he had no direct experience; Charlot Strasser to Mattick, 13 March 1934.

58 Kristen Svanum to Mattick, 25 December 1932.

59 Wieland Herzfelde to Mattick, 19 June 1934.

60 Henryk Grossman to Mattick, 7 May 1933.

61 Mattick, 'Verhaftung eines älteren Gewerkschaftlers', *Der Freidenker*, 2 September 1934. I have been unable to confirm 'Traum eines Berufskranken', *Der Monat*, June 1935.

62 Mattick to Sidney Hook, 13 August 1934 (Hoover).

63 Klaus Mann to Mattick, 25 January 1934, 10 June 1934; Mattick, 'Planwirtschaft im Amerika?', *Die Sammlung*, 12 August 1934.

after another author submitted an unacceptable draft. Entitled *Programm und Aufgaben: Die Todeskrise des kapitalistischen Systems und die Aufgaben des Proletariats* [*Programme and Tasks: The Death Crisis of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Proletariat*], this pamphlet was written in the heyday of the unemployed movement and start of the strike wave that swept the country.<sup>64</sup> Pamphlets were a long-standing tradition within the socialist movement because production costs were low and their size allowed for lengthier treatments than a journal or newspaper. For Mattick, *Die Todeskrise des Kapitalismus* represented a brief return to the discussions of 1928–31 between the IWW and the KAPD/AAUD. From the IWW side, the pamphlet endorsed industrial unions; from the councilist tradition, it emphasised action committees, workplace organisations, and workers' councils.

Mattick wrote the first and last sections of the pamphlet and translated the rest from an IWW publication. He also compiled the foreign word glossary and designed the front cover, a motif of overlaid graphics reminiscent of the Cologne artists who were known for their innovative book covers and political posters. Collage was a Mattick pastime throughout this decade and the next. He stitched together photo books with many pictures of himself and especially Frieda, family members and friends, all of which were interspersed with magazine cut-outs of women in various stages of dress and undress, pictures of artwork, scenes of demonstrations, examples of injustice, and more. *Die Todeskrise* was printed in 5000 copies, signalling that this was a very ambitious undertaking by the IWW.<sup>65</sup> Henryk Grossman was 'especially pleased that my understanding of crises has been accepted as the theoretical basis' for the IWW's platform. The pamphlet, he added, 'is written clearly and is especially appropriate for propaganda among the masses.'<sup>66</sup>

After Mattick unilaterally approved printer corrections without clearing them beforehand, a new impasse emerged with Joseph Wagner, who functioned on a tight budget and needed pre-approval from the IWW executive board for cost overruns. Mattick also criticised Ralph Chaplin's IWW pamphlet on the general strike, but since this appeared only in *Der Freidenker*, few people

64 Joseph Wagner to Mattick, 12 October 1932; Joseph Wagner to Mattick, 20 April 1933. Serialised without the passages that mention the IWW in: 'Die Todeskrise des Kapitalistischen Systems,' *Der Freidenker*, 22 January 1933; 'Die Realität der Weltkrise,' *Der Freidenker*, 5 February 1933. Mattick's portion of the pamphlet is reprinted in: Mattick 1973.

65 Claudio Pozzoli to Mattick, 14 December 1972; Mattick to Claudio Pozzoli, 31 December 1972 (Pozzoli).

66 Henryk Grossman to Mattick, 7 May 1933.

took notice.<sup>67</sup> Mattick's membership in the IWW lapsed and he was further alienated from the group when its unemployed groups were folded into its industrial unions and began charging dues.

During 1933, Mattick was drawn into efforts to revive the radical journal, *Kampfsignal* [*Signal of Struggle*]. Its short but twisted and tangled history was similar to that which befell Mattick's *Chicagoer Arbeiter Zeitung* only two years before. Mattick's liaisons for this new endeavour were Walter Boelke and Wendelin Thomas. Boelke, like Mattick an émigré from the mid-1920s, was a skilled music engraver. Thomas, on the other hand, had only recently fled fascism. Fifteen years earlier, he had been a key participant in the naval mutiny that sparked the 1918 German revolution. He had also been a close associate of Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht. A merchant mariner and shipyard worker by profession, he had represented the Independent Social Democrats and the Communists in the Reichstag during the early 1920s. In New York, his stature within the radical left meant that he was destined to edit the *New Yorker Volkszeitung* until that enterprise collapsed.

Boelke and Thomas were members of the Proletarische Gemeinschaft [Proletarian Community], originally an anti-fascist youth group that sponsored elaborate events with guest lecturers and musical entertainment. Speakers included Thomas, Mattick (four lectures on dialectics, crisis theory, basic principles of communistic production and distribution, and tactical issues of the workers' movement), V.F. Calverton (editor of the independent left journal *Modern Monthly/Modern Quarterly*), and the German anarcho-syndicalist Rudolf Rocker. Boelke described its membership as 'a bunch of young, mostly German workers who adhere to marxian principles'.<sup>68</sup> The group was not able to pay speakers, but it did offer an engaged audience.

Thomas sat on *Kampfsignal's* editorial committee, helped draft the paper's statutes, and contributed articles. He also led a study group in marxian economics; in other words, Thomas did in New York what Mattick did in Chicago. And like Mattick, everyday existence was far from easy. Work as a janitor meant that purchasing an automobile was only possible if he lived rent free in the Proletarische Gemeinschaft meeting rooms.<sup>69</sup>

The Proletarische Gemeinschaft was part of a huge anti-fascist coalition in New York City that involved over fifty German-speaking groups—all the left

67 Kristen Svanum to Mattick, 10 January 1933; Mattick, 'Der Generalstreik in Theorie und Praxis,' *Der Freidenker*, 5 March 1933.

68 Walter Boelke to V.F. Calverton, 9 October 1935 (NYPL: Calverton). 'Notizen,' *Kampfsignal*, 15 November 1934.

69 Wendelin Thomas to Mattick, 7 November 1933.

political parties, union locals, benefit societies, and other cultural and sports groups. Their model was Chicago's Kartell. *Kampfsignal* hoped to fill the void left by the demise of the *New Yorker Volkszeitung* since the only alternatives were the Communist Party's *Der Arbeiter* and a new paper begun by a few conservative Social Democratic unions. *Kampfsignal* targeted just about any group it could think of: émigrés oriented to Germany's Sozialistische Arbeiter Partei [Socialist Workers' Party] because of its attempts to forge an anti-Nazi bloc of Social Democrats and Communists, IWW-partisans from within the German-American community, supporters of the Musteites in their effort to form the American Workers Party, the trotskysts, and more.<sup>70</sup>

*Kampfsignal* was doomed from the start. Whereas the *Chicagoer Arbeiter Zeitung* was sponsored directly by the Chicago's German-American Kartell, *Kampfsignal* relied on individuals who paid dues to cover expenses, with several institutional sponsors whose contributions entitled them to (over-)representation on the governing council. The Communists, a much stronger entity in New York than in Chicago, attacked it from the very beginning, despite an agreement within the anti-fascist coalition to focus exclusively on common enemies.

The Proletarische Gemeinschaft withdrew from the anti-fascist coalition, with Boelke and Thomas assuming full responsibility for *Kampfsignal*.<sup>71</sup> Only then did they draw nearer to the Chicago-based United Workers Party.<sup>72</sup> A joint declaration signalled their collaboration. Mattick's colleague, Rudiger Raube, described *Kampfsignal* as 'an uncompromised, marxist-revolutionary paper that receives no large donations from any quarter'.<sup>73</sup> If *Kampfsignal* had begun as a four-page weekly, it quickly converted to bi-weekly status, then became a monthly, was mimeographed rather than printed, and shifted focus from current news to theoretically-oriented articles. In this format, Mattick became a featured contributor. *Kampfsignal* appeared irregularly for two years, from December 1932 until November 1934, before disappearing entirely.

70 The Sozialistische Arbeiter Partei, with some 25,000 members at its height, originated as a protest against Social Democratic support of right-wing governments as a lesser evil to the Nazis. *Kampfsignal* was the name of its Berlin paper. Cazden 1970, pp. 29–30, p. 186.

71 'Wendelin Thomas, der geringesehene Gast der Volkszeitung', *Der Arbeiter*, 19 January 1932; 'Aus den Organisationen. Austritt der Proletarischen Gemeinschaft aus der Anti-Fa Aktion', *Kampfsignal*, 14 April 1934.

72 Walter Boelke to Mattick, 23 August 1933; Mattick, 'Die Deutsche Arbeiterbewegung in Amerika', 9–11, (IISH: Mattick, unpublished manuscript).

73 RR, 'Kleine Briefkasten', *Kampfsignal*, 20 January 1934. For the joint New Year's greeting, *Kampfsignal*, 6 January 1934.

Much of what Mattick wrote for *Kampfsignal* also appeared in *Der Freidenker*, and what didn't appear there appeared elsewhere. Anti-fascism was the main theme, given the New York situation.<sup>74</sup> The fascists had made few inroads among the German working class until the elections of 1930, but as Mattick pointed out, the Social Democrats, Communists, and Nazis had each adopted an economic programme that called for further governmental intervention into the economy as an antidote to the depression—a difference of degree but not of substance. Voters migrated rapidly from one party to the next.<sup>75</sup>

Fascism, from Mattick's perspective, was a unique development, a result of economic circumstances that foreclosed profitable investments. In its German version, anti-semitism justified the expropriation of one segment of the population in order to reward the party faithful for whom no other adequate source of compensation was available. Left opposition to the Nazis had materialised too slowly—only after the Nazis had assumed power. Until then, the Communists and the Social Democrats alike had urged their followers to respect the protocols of parliamentary procedures—the very thing that van der Lubbe reacted against. Once the Nazis were in power, resistance constituted a needless and ultimately futile sacrifice.

Mattick was particularly sensitive to the confused understandings of fascism that ran through the left. Both liberals and leftists tended to be unabashed in their support for the Roosevelt administration because it had adopted the types of economic measures they endorsed. Thus, anyone who opposed Roosevelt was branded as a fascist or fascist-sympathiser. For example, these terms were applied to members of the financial and banking sectors due to their opposition to new taxes and regulations. The Communists, because of their own peculiar doctrine, did not differentiate between real fascists and reform-minded socialists, thus adding to the general confusion.

The American middle classes, on the other hand, had shown no real interest in fascism. Mattick attributed this to the material reserves upon which they could draw, whereas the German middle classes had lost considerably during the inflation of the early and mid-1920s. In the United States, the fascist groups had neither significant membership nor influence: the group in Chicago, for

74 An example of how articles circulated: Mattick, 'Die Zukunft der Arbeiterbewegung in Deutschland', *Kampfsignal*, 23 December 1933 and 6 January 1934; in translation: 'The Future of the German Labor Movement', *ICC*, October 1934; reprinted in the *IWW's Industrial Worker*, 1 May 1935.

75 So did members of their respective paramilitary organisations, to which belonged one-quarter of all adult men aged eighteen to twenty-five. For the influx of Communist Party members to the Nazis: Brown 2009, pp. 136–9.

instance, never counted more than fifty adherents.<sup>76</sup> Americans seemed in no rush for political solutions to the economic crisis. Impoverished farmers may have attracted much attention, but fascism presupposed that the dominant groups were in danger and that the middle classes viewed the working class as an impediment to economic recovery. Only then might fascism become a mass movement. Almost everyone, however, confused fascism with the state-capitalist drift of economic policy.<sup>77</sup>

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76 Palmier 2006, pp. 459–62.

77 Mattick, 'Die "Revolution" der Babbits', *Kampfsignal*, 6 January 1934.



## The Independent Left

### German to English

Revolutionaries tend to overestimate economic difficulties in order to lend a sense of objectivity to revolutionary solutions.<sup>1</sup>

Mattick solicited advice about his writing from just about everyone he knew. Breaking out of the confines of the German-American socialist community continued to be his priority. With the Federation of Unemployed Workers and the United Workers Party, this had taken place. But indigenous left and liberal publications were another story. During all of 1933, only a handful of English-language pieces had appeared—in the *Workers League News*, the *IWW's Industrial Worker*, and *Workers Age*, the latter through his Federation contacts. Almost everything he wrote continued to be printed in *Der Freidenker*. Help was needed if Mattick was to have any measure of success, and a slew of people came to his assistance.

Kristen Svanum offered to edit and translate several draft essays that Svanum referred to as 'shockingly bad'. Mattick's knowledge of English usage still had many gaps, and Svanum—an immigrant himself—explained that the expression 'from top to bottom' was not the equivalent of 'from the top down, from the bottom up', the title of one of the pieces.<sup>2</sup> He told Mattick that cover letters needed to be equally well-written and that he should name names—that connections were important. Ludwig Lore, the last editor of *New Yorker Volkszeitung* before it collapsed, offered to contact publishers on Mattick's behalf.<sup>3</sup> Lore had only begun to publish in English some eighteen months earlier, even though he had emigrated decades before. Based on what Mattick sent him, Lore was pessimistic about the chances for success.

Max Nomad, another non-native speaker, gave Mattick many practical recommendations. Mattick was familiar with Nomad's work from having defended him in the pages of *Der Freidenker* against Communist Party critics. Nomad had just released *Rebels and Renegades*, with its portraits of

1 Grossmann 1969, p. 127.

2 Svanum's essay seems not to have appeared; Kristen Svanum to Mattick, 25 December 1932; Kristen Svanum to Mattick, 10 January 1933; Weiland Herzfelde to Mattick, 19 June 1934.

3 Ludwig Lore to Mattick, 11 July 1933.

well-known radicals. It was this book, Nomad explained, that opened the world of publishing to him. Magazines were reluctant to showcase unknown authors without already-established followings. Nomad also gave specific recommendations—that an article cannot start with a quote from Marx and that the thesis statement must be up-front and in plain language, preferably with a concrete example. A literary agent and translator, if he could afford them, would help. The stuff Mattick published in *Der Freidenker* was too long and too theoretical for American magazines.<sup>4</sup> The photographer, Fred Korth, also a German émigré, suggested to Mattick that he diversify his portfolio, another suggestion that Mattick followed.<sup>5</sup> With Nomad, Mattick reciprocated by providing a list of contacts for his extended trip to Europe: Korsch (still assumed to be in Berlin), Pannekoek (near Amsterdam), Grossmann (Paris), Hoerle (Mallorca), Kesser (Zurich), Herzfelde (Prague), Charlot Strasser (Zurich), Hugo Urbahns (Berlin), and others.<sup>6</sup>

The most important new contact was Allen Garman. It is unclear how he and Mattick were introduced, but the friendship began as an intense and mutually-supportive correspondence that only slowly transformed into something more. Six months of letter-writing, often several times per week, were needed before they exchanged personal information and photographs, and before Garman referred to him by his first name. Garman had grown up well-to-do and was college-educated. In the 1920s, he taught at a progressive private school in Washington DC, the Emerson Institute, one of the first coed institutions of its kind. He was also a linguistic *wunderkind* and native speaker of English who picked up occasional assignments as a translator during bouts of unemployment. He was thus the perfect helpmate for Mattick, precisely the person whom Nomad and Lore had encouraged him to find—a translator and marxist rolled into one. Even better, Garman had no interest in financial compensation despite his lack of employment.

Garman had once harboured literary ambitions of his own, with occasional publications of poetry and book reviews in small, overlooked magazines.<sup>7</sup> Mattick kept him well-supplied with a steady flow of reading material—*Neue Deutsche Blätter*, his own articles in draft and published form, and poems by Oskar Kanehl. About Kanehl's suicide, Garman penned: 'any man who could write such poems would naturally jump out the window, just as a final point

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4 Max Nomad to Mattick, 7 July 1933; Max Nomad to Mattick, 24 July 1933.

5 Fred Korth to Mattick, 8 October 1932.

6 Max Nomad to Mattick, 16 October 1933; Max Nomad to Mattick, 17 January 1934.

7 Allen Garman to Mattick, 12 May 1934.

of exclamation'.<sup>8</sup> Mattick also shared letters, since these functioned as informal information circulars.

Sidney Hook, then a young professor at New York University, was another of Mattick's boosters. Hook assumed the role of mentor, which in terms of publishing Mattick appreciated greatly. Mattick was also Hook's intellectual peer, and, as Hook would soon discover, more versed in marxism than himself. Hook had just published *Towards the Understanding of Karl Marx* to considerable acclaim in the mainstream and left press. It was the first major treatment of Marx by an American author in several decades, and this alone made it worthy of attention. Hook's elegant summary of Marx's materialism incorporated the latest thinking from continental European theorists, with their accent on the subjective side of the dialectic rather than what had become the traditional emphasis on immutable laws of development that operated without human intervention.<sup>9</sup>

From the start of their correspondence, Hook was convinced, as he told Mattick, that 'there is a great need in America for work of the kind you are doing'.<sup>10</sup> When Mattick sent his review of Hook's book, Hook replied that he appreciated the 'care and fidelity' with which it had been written.<sup>11</sup> When Mattick sent an expanded version which he hoped to publish as a pamphlet or small book, Hook was thrilled at what he saw: 'you are to be congratulated for raising certain fundamental problems in marxism and social science, and keeping your discussion on a high theoretical level. These days even the absence of *Schimpferei* [denunciations and personal insults] must be counted as a merit'. For Hook, Mattick's commentary was 'far and away the best criticism of my book which has anywhere appeared'.<sup>12</sup> He added: 'if I were editing a magazine I would undoubtedly publish it as a leading feature'.<sup>13</sup> Mattick reciprocated by approaching Herzfelde about a German translation of Hook's book.<sup>14</sup>

Hook felt strongly enough about Mattick that he recommended him for a teaching engagement at Commonwealth College in rural Arkansas. This school served as a training facility for experienced organisers within the Socialist Party, focusing on union campaigns among mid-western miners and southern

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8 Allen Garman to Mattick, 24 May 1934.

9 Feuer 1968.

10 Sidney Hook to Mattick, 9 August 1933.

11 Sidney Hook to Mattick, 4 October 1933.

12 Sidney Hook to Mattick, 14 October 1933 [brackets added].

13 Sidney Hook to Mattick, 4 November 1933.

14 Sidney Hook to Mattick, 22 December 1933.

tenant farmers.<sup>15</sup> It followed an educational model that was both innovative and experimental, with collective decision-making, syllabi decided through consensus, no grades or degrees, and everyone contributing to the day-to-day upkeep of grounds and facilities, including food production. Its director planned to visit Mattick during a cross-country fundraising and recruitment tour, but Mattick remained in Chicago.<sup>16</sup>

Hook also contacted several editors on Mattick's behalf, focusing in particular on V.F. Calverton, the editor at the independent-left magazine *Modern Monthly*. This journal was known for its talented constellation of authors and its attempts to use culture as a means to promote radical political consciousness. Calverton also heard about Mattick from Garman, Nomad, Lore, and Jay Lovestone, who together constituted a veritable lobbying campaign on Mattick's behalf.<sup>17</sup> Mattick's understanding of marxism, his unique political orientation, and his criticisms of social democracy and bolshevism greatly intrigued this crowd of people. But they didn't necessarily share all his perspectives. Even though the Communist Party campaign against the independent left in the early 1930s had spoiled whatever political relationships existed between these two communities, *Modern Monthly* had since become a gathering place for individuals who were excluded from the Communist Party but still maintained much of the same worldview. A multi-sided exchange of articles written for their respective publications took place, with Mattick part of this cross-fertilisation, invited by two separate groups of dissident communists and then by Calverton to write in their journals.

Calverton had already published several pieces by and about Hook, and he was loath to accept another. He instead joined his colleagues in suggesting still other journals that fit Mattick's specification of 'outside of any party control'.<sup>18</sup> Hook was certain that Mattick's 'criticism will never be untimely, and whether it sees the light in six months or a year, it is sure to be greeted as a genuine

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15 Lucien Koch to Mattick, 11 November 1933.

16 Cobb 2000, ch. 5–6.

17 A sporadic financial contributor to *Modern Monthly*, Garman had once been invited to join its editorial staff, although employer opposition prevented this step. Allen Garman to V.F. Calverton, 17 February [1931] (NYPL: Calverton); Allen Garman to V.F. Calverton, 20 September [1931] (NYPL: Calverton); Allen Garman to V.F. Calverton, 10 July 1934 (NYPL: Calverton). *Modern Monthly* sometimes appeared as *Modern Quarterly*, depending on the publishing schedule. Wilcox 1992, pp. 171ff, 179ff; Jay Lovestone to Mattick, 5 March 1933; Max Nomad to Mattick, 7 August 1933; Mattick to V.F. Calverton, 17 August 1933 (NYPL: Calverton).

18 Mattick to V.F. Calverton, 30 August 1933 (NYPL: Calverton). V.F. Calverton to Mattick, 3 October 1933.

critical contribution'.<sup>19</sup> Ultimately, though, the review of Hook's book appeared only in *Der Freidenker* and *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung* [*Journal for Social Research*], the latter shortened but in English.<sup>20</sup>

Mattick was determined to introduce Grossman to an American audience, and he submitted to *Modern Monthly* 'The Death Crisis of Capitalism', the excerpt from the IWW pamphlet that had previously appeared in *Der Freidenker*. Mattick translated it himself, admitting to Calverton: 'my mastery of the English language is very limited'.<sup>21</sup> He explained: 'the Grossman interpretation is *really* the most important contribution to marxism in the last three decades'. He felt that an article might pave the way for a translation of Grossman's book.<sup>22</sup> Calverton, however, put Mattick off once again and assigned the piece a low priority, repeatedly bumping it in favour of other articles. After the editorial board was enlarged to include Max Eastman and Edmund Wilson, Eastman wrote to say that he found the piece 'very dull to read' but was amenable to publishing if Mattick agreed to substantial cuts.<sup>23</sup> Breaking into *Modern Monthly* was proving to be quite difficult.

Mattick attempted to save what he could, writing to Eastman: 'the political mess in the labour movement is to a great extent due to the ignorance toward the consequences of the capitalist accumulation', with neither the Communist nor Socialist Parties willing to discuss crisis theory because it was of no use to them politically.<sup>24</sup> To Calverton he pleaded: 'it must seem to you that I am a very bothersome person, but I have to do this'.<sup>25</sup> The offer from Eastman remained firm—two short outline-like articles—although Eastman told Calverton that they should affix 'an editorial note preparing the readers to be bored to death in the name of science'.<sup>26</sup> A report from an external reader confirmed the hopelessness of the situation: Mattick's article was already 'too short to make the theory discussed understandable to the average reader, and it is too long to arouse interest in a reader who comes unprepared and without sufficient

19 Sidney Hook to Mattick, 4 November 1933.

20 Mattick was under the impression that it would also appear in *Sociological Review*, but this seems not to have happened. Mattick to Critchell Remington, 3 January 1934 (John Day).

21 Mattick to V.F. Calverton, 17 August 1933 (NYPL: Calverton).

22 Mattick to Sterling Spero, 29 November 1933 (NYPL: Calverton).

23 Max Eastman to Mattick, 17 July 1934. Max Eastman to Mattick, 22 May 1934; Wilcox 1992, p. 179ff; Aaron 1969.

24 Mattick to Max Eastman, 18 July 1934 with handwritten note Eastman to Calverton (NYPL: Calverton). Mattick to V.F. Calverton, 1 July 1934 (NYPL: Calverton).

25 Mattick to V.F. Calverton, 1 August 1934 (NYPL: Calverton).

26 Mattick to Max Eastman, 18 July 1934 with handwritten note Eastman to Calverton (NYPL: Calverton).

technical knowledge'.<sup>27</sup> By the time Mattick consented to drastic cuts, the moment had passed and the summary of Grossman never appeared.

With Hook, the close collegiality that at first characterised their letter writing turned decidedly antagonistic as Hook became evermore intolerant of views not his own. This transformation was in fact characteristic of Hook's evolution during these years, a process in which he grew dogmatic and cynical about left politics. Mattick was one of the first to be exposed to this side of his personality. Not unrelated was the circumstance that Hook was still an untenured professor at New York University when the correspondence began: Hook's belligerence became more visible as he became securer in his position. He simply bridled at criticism.

Early in the correspondence, Hook told Mattick: 'from *your* point of view, if my knowledge of marxian economic theory is inadequate, then my treatment of every other topic *must* be faulty'.<sup>28</sup> Hook referred to Mattick's ideas as 'naïve' and 'mystical', the very same '*Schimpferei*' that Hook had just complained about in others.<sup>29</sup> Hook had difficulty separating himself from the political and ideological issues under discussion. Every statement placed him at the centre of attention: 'I should like to see your criticism published because, although I think it is wrong, it will give me an opportunity to develop some important views on important themes you have raised'. He added: 'I feel it a duty to help bring to public attention your work which certainly deserves a wider audience'.<sup>30</sup> Mattick, in Hook's conception, was the recipient of his largesse. Mattick, on the other hand, was conscientious about not stooping to the same level of personal slander to which Hook was prone.

When Mattick wrote to Hook about the fate of the Grossman piece, he was rebuked in the harshest of terms: 'your suspicion . . . that your article has been deliberately held so as to prevent its publication elsewhere is so fantastic that only a man completely devoid of both a sense of humour and a sense of proportion could entertain it'. Besides, Hook told him, 'I do not believe . . . that you could have placed your piece anywhere else so that you ought to set it down to hard luck, of which you have had more than your share, apparently'. He offered Mattick advice about his relations with others: 'you must remember that most of the people with whom you are dealing have neither the interest nor the understanding necessary to appreciate your work—as wrong-headed

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27 Quoted in Sterling Spero to Mattick, 7 August 1934. V.F. Calverton to Max Eastman, 28 July 1934 (NYPL: Calverton).

28 Sidney Hook to Mattick, 4 October 1933.

29 Sidney Hook to Mattick, 14 October 1933.

30 Sidney Hook to Mattick, 4 November 1933.

as it is—and you must not look for too complicated an explanation of behaviour in others that can be set down to simple misunderstandings and down-right ignorance.’<sup>31</sup>

Their relationship frayed further when Hook read Mattick’s strongly-worded and cogent critique of the draft platform for the American Workers Party (AWP), which Hook had written.<sup>32</sup> Many of the people they knew in common, including Calverton and Ludwig Lore, had flocked to this new enterprise, an outgrowth of the Musteites and the self-help movement at a time when both the Socialist and Communist Parties were experiencing internal disarray. The AWP hoped to lend a distinctly American flair to radical politics in order to appeal to a conservative and cautious working class, and no sooner had the AWP formed than it opened merger talks with the trotskysts, in which Hook again functioned as facilitator. Both groups had played key roles in important mid-western strikes that unfolded during 1934. The auto factory strike in Toledo OH in April owed much of its success to AWP-affiliated unemployed groups that helped organise huge picket lines and demonstrations with as many as 10,000 participants. The unemployed groups outwitted and also out-fought the police, paramilitaries, and strikebreakers. A month later a city-wide general strike erupted in Minneapolis MN, led by the trotskysts.<sup>33</sup>

Mattick’s criticisms were published initially in *Der Freidenker*, even before the new party was officially constituted. To someone versed in the council communist critique, Mattick’s comments were standard fare. Mattick took aim at the philosophical underpinnings that elevated political parties to a privileged status within left-wing ideology. In this regard, the differences between the AWP and the Communist and Socialist parties were more subtle than substantive. Essential features remained in place: the need for enlightened members of the middle classes to bring revolutionary consciousness to the masses, an orientation towards elections and political transformation, the inability to distinguish between workers’ control and nationalisation, the proliferation of reform measures in the economic sphere, the reduction of workers’ councils to a by-product of brief revolutionary periods, a focus on the nation as the framework for progressive change, and an undue concentration on tactics rather than principles as a mode of revolutionary thinking.

For Mattick, the traditional marxian emphasis on revolutionary consciousness, ideology, and radical organisations was misplaced, the product of a bygone era. All that was needed was the impulse to alter the existing world.

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31 Sidney Hook to Mattick, 30 April 1934.

32 Mattick, ‘One Step Forward, Two Steps Backward’, *Modern Monthly*, December 1934.

33 Sidney Hook to Mattick, 18 July 1934; Phelps 1997.

Workers' councils needed no prerequisites, neither in thought nor in structure. This twin criticism of the idealist and reformist underpinnings of the marxian political tradition constituted one of Mattick's signature contributions to radical theorising, and it was a point to which he would return many times. In biographical terms, Mattick did not overvalue the role of the theorist or the importance of theory, inclinations to which intellectuals and revolutionaries were prone.<sup>34</sup>

Hook was extremely disturbed by Mattick's criticism: 'intellectually, politically and morally, it is beneath contempt'. He found it 'incomprehensible' that such a piece could have been written by someone with 'pretensions to intellectual integrity and moral sincerity', to which he added: 'if there were not evidence that you are pursued by a political obsession verging on paranoia, I would say that you do not understand English'. Hook denied that Mattick's essay had any value: 'you do not argue; you beg your position; you reason in circles or rather merely reaffirm your own position, whatever that may be'. Mattick's comments on the new party's 'tendencies to fascism' and its 'self-seeking' leadership brought Hook to new heights of contemptuousness:

My left-opposition friends in Chicago have been telling me a thing or two about you and the United Workers Party which I set down to a disordered imagination on their part. But this piece of yours convinces me that politically you are hopeless and that your anarchical syndicalism would be a positive menace if there were any likelihood, which there is not, of getting anybody to believe the nonsense.<sup>35</sup>

Hook dismissed what he could not decipher: 'to the labor activists of the AWP Mattick sounded like a crazed sectarian who mentally was still living abroad and utterly irrelevant to anything happening in this country'.<sup>36</sup>

Max Eastman, on the other hand, found Mattick's AWP critique 'wholesome'.<sup>37</sup> He wrote to Mattick directly that it was 'lively as well as valuable intellectually', precisely the combination sought by *Modern Monthly*.<sup>38</sup> Eastman recognised that Mattick's criticism of the leninist vanguard party and treatment of Lenin

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34 Communication from Paul Mattick, Jr., 17 June 2013.

35 Sidney Hook to Mattick, 30 April 1934. Sidney Hook to Mattick, 7 May 1934; Hook 1987, ch. 15; Phelps 1997, p. 109ff.

36 Sydney Hook to Michael Buckmiller, 29 December 1973 (Hoover).

37 Max Eastman to V.F. Calverton, 26 June 1934 (NYPL: Calverton).

38 Max Eastman to Mattick, 17 July 1934.



as a non-marxist derived from 'the ablest minds in the international movement', starting with Rosa Luxemburg.<sup>39</sup>

### Editors' Reluctance

Marxism is nothing other than the practical elimination of wage-labor.<sup>40</sup>

If Mattick's awkward use of English was offputting to editors, so too was his combination of marxian theory and economic analysis. Eastman, who had been so complimentary towards Mattick's essay on the AWP, had not liked the Grossman piece and disliked equally a new piece that Mattick submitted to *Modern Monthly*, 'Is a Capitalist Planned Economy Possible?' Even with Garman's translation, Eastman found it 'unspeakably dull'.<sup>41</sup> Eastman by then had come to a firm view of Mattick's talents. He referred to Mattick in both complimentary and critical terms: as 'a man who thinks his own thoughts' but also as 'the one and only true-blue, bona fide marxist in America'.<sup>42</sup> He suggested to Calverton that perhaps they could find another writer to produce an 'American (and human) rendering of Mattick's idea'.<sup>43</sup> Mattick's mixture of high theory and bad writing touched a sensitive nerve:

Christ, what a writer! And what a god awfully cumbersome way to say a few simple things! It ought to be published somewhere as an illustration of how not to present marxism to America.<sup>44</sup>

Eastman, though, was generally supportive towards Mattick, despite these sharply-worded criticisms.

Frank Knight, the University of Chicago economist, was another editor (working on the *Journal of Political Economy*) with whom Mattick had a long-winded dialogue, this time entirely fruitless. Knight was antagonistic from

39 Mattick to V.F. Calverton, 1 July 1934 (NYPL: Calverton), with handwritten note from Eastman to Calverton. For the Hook-Eastman differences: Denning 1997, pp. 425–34; Wald 1987, p. 112ff.

40 Mattick to Sidney Hook, 18 October 1933 (Hoover).

41 Mattick to V.F. Calverton, 1 July 1934 (NYPL: Calverton), with handwritten note from Eastman to Calverton.

42 Max Eastman to V.F. Calverton, 6 September 1934 (NYPL: Calverton).

43 Max Eastman to V.F. Calverton, 13 September 1934 (NYPL: Calverton).

44 Max Eastman to V.F. Calverton, 29 September 1934 (NYPL: Calverton).

the start. Unless an article was framed in terms used by economists, he told Mattick, the journal would not consider it, regardless of quality. This precluded marxian terminology, even though Knight considered himself socialistically-inclined and had campaigned for the Communist Party presidential candidate in 1932. Knight admitted to Mattick that ‘the critical part of your paper sounds to me very sensible’ but referred to the rest as ‘absolutely “crazy”—on the level of assuming that seven times five are one hundred and five, or that angels have green wings.’<sup>45</sup> Mattick’s impression was that Knight sought a ‘communism that can be enacted by the capitalists.’<sup>46</sup>

Convincing the editor of the *Virginia Quarterly Review* to print an article proved equally futile. Mattick’s cover letter mentioned the journals that had published his work and included references—precisely what his colleagues had encouraged him to do. Hook, Grossman, Knight, Pannekoek, and Max Horkheimer were listed according to their academic titles. Calverton and Nomad were named as well. He also revealed the University of Chicago faculty to whom he had submitted work. Besides Knight, there was Ellsworth Faris (Chair, Sociology Department and editor of the *American Journal of Sociology*) and Robert Morss Lovett (English Department and Associate Editor, *The New Republic*).

It was undoubtedly a mistake for Mattick to claim that his article ‘undertakes to attack all previous interpretations of marxism in the U.S. as fundamentally wrong.’<sup>47</sup> Such a statement was too bold for those not already convinced of that opinion and too arrogant for unsympathetic and neutral observers. If the editor could not differentiate between the various interpretations of marxism, how could he possibly judge Mattick’s contribution? Finesse was not yet Mattick’s strong suit.

When the editor, Lambert Davis, asked about other possibilities, Mattick sent descriptions of eight different essays.<sup>48</sup> ‘Any work on economics’, he explained, ‘presupposes a certain minimum of previous knowledge on the part of the reader’. Mattick was certain that ‘this work is not only original but will therefore at the same time come as a surprise to many.’<sup>49</sup> Nothing he proposed

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45 Frank Knight to Mattick, 21 May 1934. Sidney Hook to Mattick, 22 December 1933.

46 Mattick to Sidney Hook, 22 July 1934 (Hoover).

47 Mattick to Editor, *Virginia Quarterly Review*, 24 April 1934 (University of Virginia). Robert Morss Lovett to Mattick, 5 March 1934.

48 Mattick to Lambert Davis, 1 May 1934 (University of Virginia).

49 Mattick to Lambert Davis, 7 June 1934 (University of Virginia). Lambert Davis to Mattick, 8 June 1934 (University of Virginia); Mattick to Lambert Davis, 12 June 1934 (University of Virginia); Lambert Davis to Mattick, 24 August 1934 (University of Virginia).

was quite right, and he received from Davis a complaint similar to that of Frank Knight—that he could not quite grasp the logic behind Mattick's reasoning. Davis, however, explained this without the verbal abuse. Despite the rebuff, Mattick tried once more the following year, but again he was unsuccessful.<sup>50</sup>

Hook consoled Mattick: 'I am genuinely distressed that you have publication difficulties' and wondered how best 'to elbow space for you' in *Modern Monthly*. Hook referred to a new essay by Mattick as 'path-breaking' and as something that 'confirms the judgment I formed of the earliest work of yours'.<sup>51</sup> He recommended to Calverton that Mattick review Lewis Corey's *The Decline of American Capitalism*: 'I do not believe that it will find among marxists in this country a more competent critic'.<sup>52</sup> The attention accorded to Corey's book by the left and liberal press was similar to the attention Hook's book on Marx had received.<sup>53</sup> For Mattick it represented an opportunity to finally discuss Grossman's thesis. In one form or another, Mattick's review appeared in *Modern Monthly*, *Der Freidenker*, *Kampfsignal*, and *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung*, each with its own distinct audience.<sup>54</sup> Not everyone was pleased, however. Corey objected to the characterisation of his work as underconsumptionist.<sup>55</sup> Korsch thought that Mattick could have been more generous on this point, arguing that Corey operated with two distinct yet unintegrated explanations of crises.<sup>56</sup>

Even when Hook tried to be conciliatory, he could not restrain himself. He proposed to Mattick: 'let us talk philosophy and not politics in so far as the two can be disassociated. We might begin with logic, which, it seems to me, is your most conspicuous failing. However, I hope our political differences will not prevent fruitful discussion on marxist questions'.<sup>57</sup> To Korsch, who was in touch with both, Hook acknowledged that he found Mattick baffling: 'I can't altogether make him out but he strikes me as wrong-headedly honest and a

50 Lambert Davis to Mattick, 4 April 1935.

51 Sidney Hook to Mattick, 11 August 1934.

52 Sidney Hook to Mattick [after 7 July 1934].

53 Buhle 1995, ch. 5.

54 Mattick, 'Review of Lewis Corey. *The Decline of American Capitalism*', *Modern Monthly*, October 1934; *Der Freidenker*, 31 September 1934; *Kampfsignal*, October 1934; *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung*, 4:3, 1935.

55 Lewis Corey to Mattick, 16 May 1935.

56 Karl Korsch to Mattick, 4 April 1935 (*Gesamtausgabe*); Karl Korsch to Mattick, 5 May 1935 (*Gesamtausgabe*). Felix Morrow's review of Corey's book in the trotskyst *New International*, November 1934: 'Mattick continues the most repulsive aspects of the interpretation of marxian economics, as a mechanistic conception of an automatic collapse of capitalism'.

57 Sidney Hook to Mattick, 30 April 1934.

person of integrity'.<sup>58</sup> To Mattick directly he admitted: 'in virtue of your criticisms I understand my own position better—and even if the world does not show itself grateful to you for them, I have profited by them as wrong as they are'.<sup>59</sup> When Hook and Mattick finally met in person in October 1934 during one of Mattick's many jaunts to New York City—some fourteen months since their first letters, Hook was surprised to learn that Mattick's education had ended with the eighth grade. It was Mattick's impression that this knowledge interfered with Hook's ability to treat him as an equal. Relations between them ceased nearly entirely.<sup>60</sup>

During 1933–4, Mattick struggled to find publication outlets. He received rejections from *American Mercury*, *Journal of Political Economy*, *Virginia Quarterly Review*, *American Journal of Sociology*, *The Nation*, *The New Republic*, *Living Age*, and *Current History Magazine*. A few journals promised to publish him but then never did: *Social Science*, *Sociological Review*, and *The Militant*. With journals that published him, relations were often short-lived: *Workers Age*, *Volksrecht*, and *Adelphi*. Where there was more promise, as with *New Yorker Volkszeitung*, *Die Sammlung*, *Neue Deutsche Blätter*, *Urania*, *Proletarier*, *Der Atheist*, *Der Monat*, *Kampfsignal*, and *Workers League News*, the journals soon ceased publication.<sup>61</sup> Through the IWW, Mattick placed occasional articles in *Industrial Worker*. Through Canne Meijer, *Rätekorrespondenz* was a regular outlet for work in German, as was *Der Freidenker*. Because of Grossman's recommendation, book reviews appeared in *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung*. Finally, with the help of many people, *Modern Monthly* became a possibility for reviews and essays.

In early 1933 the Matticks moved to a new apartment in which they would remain for the next two years. The neighbourhood was an uneasy mix of Irish, Italians, and African-Americans.<sup>62</sup> Mattick's step-children had attended six separate schools since arriving in the United States, and this latest school, as his step-son recalled, was full of children not particularly interested in or capable of learning. It was known as one of the toughest and worst-performing schools in the city.

This contrasted sharply with the situation at home. Artwork from the Cologne progressives, Franz Seiwert and Otto Freundlich, hung on the apartment

58 Sidney Hook to Karl Korsch, 13 July 1934 (Hoover).

59 Sidney Hook to Mattick, 18 July 1934. Sidney Hook to Mattick [after 7 July 1934].

60 Conversation with Paul Mattick, Jr., 4 January 2009.

61 For example: Stephen Brodneý to Mattick, 21 May 1934; Leroy Allen to Mattick, 12 December 1934.

62 Address: 1358 Sedgwick Street (near Division Street).



7 *Mattick is bottom left with Frieda, bottom centre napping; Frieda standing in bottom photo, Frieda in three pictures across the centre, Frieda standing in top row.*

walls. The children knew the music of the classical composer Franz Schubert because Frieda sang his compositions while cooking. She took the children to museums and French movies. Frieda had also learned to speak perfect English, and she was an avid reader. She was gracious in style and very entertaining. She relished the role of hostess and liked to talk about a wide range of topics, including politics and art. Like Mattick, she was a good story-teller and enjoyed embellishing tales with great drama and effect. Frieda, to recall, had served as muse to her first husband and featured in his poetry, and she inspired Mattick similarly. Her interest in tarot cards attracted lots of attention. That she and Mattick enjoyed movies added still another dimension to their life together. For books, they relied on the public library and on publications that sent books for review.

Mattick's step-son remembered 'a home that was always full of books', where authors and political colleagues frequented their apartment and where intense conversations alternated with laughter and despair. Mattick, he recalled, was 'constantly reading and writing'. But he also thought that Mattick 'educated himself at the expense and welfare of the family'. This was because 'he almost

never made any money, though he was occasionally paid something for articles that he wrote'.<sup>63</sup> Frieda referred to Paul as a 'reluctant step-father'.<sup>64</sup>

Mattick spoke often in public, not only at engagements sponsored by the groups with which he was involved but at other forums as well. The counter-cultural Dil Pickle, while it was still open, was one venue. Later on, the Olivet Institute was another, with its forums six evenings per week 'for the benefit of the men and women of our community who because of financial conditions are not able to attend... events which would be of interest to them'.<sup>65</sup> Invitations sometimes took him into nearby coal mining districts.<sup>66</sup> Everyone in the family explored the city. As part of his travelogue series, Mattick had written about Chicago's different neighbourhoods. His short story, 'Endstation' ['Last Station'], was based on the Halsted Street area where the Matticks lived.<sup>67</sup> His article on the plight of black Americans ['*Schwarze Amerikaner*'] was published in the European free-thought journal, *Urania*, and represented another example of Mattick's interest in the most downtrodden among the working class.

Mattick considered these years the best times of his life, where he could live entirely within the movement, morning till night, 'a wonderful time... a time which one can still dream about today'.<sup>68</sup> Returning to Germany was out of the question, not only because of the political situation but because politics had become too interesting for him in the United States. The quality of life had changed dramatically, and not always for the worse. Mattick's step-son was recruited to act in a play after someone spotted him in the agit-prop group in which he and Mattick participated. This was a big deal—a six-week run of Henrik Ibsen's *Pillars of Society* at the socially-conscious Goodman Theatre, one of the city's showcase playhouses. Thirteen year-old Hans found his existence quite challenging—the reality of everyday life as a working-class kid in an ethnic ghetto combined with evenings spent in rehearsals and performances. That the family received welfare brought other benefits. At the age of thirty-six, Frieda visited a dentist for the first time ever.

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63 Laub 1983, p. 273; Mattick to Fairfield Porter, 17 December 1940 (AAA); Frieda Mattick, *Autobiographical Fragments* (AdK); Interview with Jake Faber, 27 June 2005.

64 Frieda St. Sauveur to Hans Mattick, 17 January 1978 (ADK: Koval)

65 The invitation originated with Jack Jones, presumably from the Dil Pickle; Dorothy Leek to Mattick, 20 May 1937; Rosemont 2003, p. 13; Fagan 1939, ch. 20.

66 Mattick to Fairfield Porter, 2 September 1938 (AAA).

67 Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 17 March 1962.

68 Buckmiller 1976, p. 57.

By the end of 1934, however, the family began to pull apart once again. Mattick spent considerable time in New York City between December and April. Suspicions were that he had a girlfriend there. That November, Hans left home for the first time, a week-long tramping trip that marked the end of his education for the time being. He was fourteen. Three separate stints in three different high schools, including an all-boys' school, would be necessary before he finally finished.<sup>69</sup> Joe Lohman, who would later propel his career in the juvenile justice field, came across Hans one afternoon, shooting craps behind a local candy store. What most intrigued Lohman was the juxtaposition of Hans's gambling with the copy of Charles Darwin's *The Origin of Species* that he carried in his back pocket.

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69 Frieda St. Sauveur to Hans Mattick, 17 January 1978 (AdK: Koval).

## International Council Correspondence

### Pamphlets and Authors

In reality, whether it is Japan or England that exports cotton piece goods to India should be a matter of indifference to the working population, for considered as a whole it makes no difference whether the Japanese or the English workers are without jobs.<sup>1</sup>

The United Workers Party was slow to gel. During 1933, it had only one document to distribute: the original four-page statement of beliefs.<sup>2</sup> Mattick explained to Hook that he was helping the UWP ‘to formulate a view which is by no means definite in form’ and that his own beliefs were not fully congruent with the UWP.<sup>3</sup> For such a small group, the UWP nonetheless had a lively and active institutional existence. Some fifty to sixty people attended its weekly forums. A visitor to the group at a somewhat later date, the artist Fairfield Porter, left an intimate portrait: ‘they were among the few people in the world who had really read Marx all the way through, not just a little bit’. How meetings were conducted caught Porter’s attention: ‘if anybody said anything at one of those meetings, they were never interrupted even if they talked for three hours. People just sat and listened until the person had said everything that he had to say before somebody else got up to speak. There was no interruption. There was no bullying. I admired that very much.’<sup>4</sup> This was a comfortable space where people deepened their understanding of the world. The *Capital* group that Mattick organised constituted a second evening each week. Here also several participants prepared short summaries of the material under discussion.

Mattick authored two of the three pamphlets that the UWP finally released in early 1934—a twenty-six page manifesto to replace the shorter version and

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1 Mattick, ‘Review of Union of Democratic Control. *Eastern Menace: The Story of Japanese Imperialism*’, *International Review*, November 1936, p. 144.

2 Rudiger Raube to Comrades, 15 January 1933 (IISH: Pannekoek); Program of the United Workers Party (IISH: Pannekoek).

3 Sidney Hook to Mattick, 7 May 1934.

4 Cummings 1968. Fairfield Porter to Alan Wald, 5 August 1974 (Mattick Jr.).



a response to a call for merger issued by a trotskyst group, the Communist League of America (Left Opposition).<sup>5</sup> The UWP hoped to reprint important texts from Luxemburg, Grossman, the Dutch colleagues, Hook, and Pannekoek, but except for offprints it produced later that year, these projects never materialised.<sup>6</sup>

By the time the UWP's journal, *International Council Correspondence* (*ICC*), appeared, nearly two years had elapsed since the founding of the group. A subset of the larger group, fluctuating between ten to twenty people, took charge of the editorial decisions, with weekly meetings at the Mattick apartment. For Mattick, this meant three evenings per week devoted to UWP activities. The Mattick apartment housed the mimeograph machine and thus served as a combination meeting hall and workroom. Since they had no external funding, responsibility for the preparatory work fell to the editorial group. The *ICC* masthead was hand-drawn, its pages mimeographed, and the magazine collated manually. The use of stencils meant that the typing had to be exact—any mistake became a permanent part of the printed text. The first issue failed to include page numbers, and another issue appeared with several pages in reverse order.<sup>7</sup>

Mattick had a backlog of essays ready for publication, some of which had appeared in *Der Freidenker* and were translated by Garman. Mattick, who seemed to exist without sleep, was the journal's primary contributor. Canne Meijer confessed to him: 'I am always amazed at your productivity'. He found

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5 *World-Wide Fascism or World Revolution?: Manifesto and Program of the United Workers Party of America* (translated in *Kampfsignal*) and *Bolshevism or Communism: On the Question of a New Communist Party and the 'Fourth' International*. The trotskysts and the UWP were the last two remaining groups in the Federation of Unemployed Workers. Max Shachtman to Mattick, 30 October 1933; *The Militant*, 10 June 1933. It is unlikely that Mattick wrote the third pamphlet, *What Next for the American Workers*, since it separated 'the defense against fascism and ... the eventual overthrow of capitalism' into two distinct moments. Henk Canne Meijer, 27 January 1935 (IISH: Canne Meijer).

6 The original plans included: Luxemburg, *The Russian Revolution* and *Marxism or Leninism*; Grossman, *Fifty Years of Marxism*; Group of International Communists (Holland), *Outline of Production and Distribution in Communism*; Hook, 'On Workers' Democracy', (appeared *Modern Monthly*, October 1934). Mattick to Anton Pannekoek, 27 May 1934 (IISH: Pannekoek); Mattick to Sidney Hook, 22 July 1934 (Hoover); Mattick to Sidney Hook, 11 August 1934 (Hoover).

7 Hans Schaper to *IWK*, 15 August 1991 (Mattick Jr.). *ICC*, January 1936, pp. 22–6. Goldwater 1977, p. 17, p. 22; Conlin 1974, pp. 357–63 (article by Mattick); Cazden 1970, p. 186.

it difficult to keep up with all that Mattick sent.<sup>8</sup> Mattick functioned as the UWP scribe, responding to requests, putting into words the long discussions that animated meetings, and revising pieces according to editorial suggestions. When articles were unsigned, as most of his were, it signified opinions that represented the entire group. The journal was, in Mattick's words, 'no more than a vehicle for the elucidation of the ideas of council communism'.<sup>9</sup> Mattick also omitted his name so that it didn't appear as if he had written the journal exclusively, even when this was so. For the first year and beyond, the lack of authors was a genuine problem.<sup>10</sup>

Planned as a monthly, *ICC* began in October 1934, and the first two issues sold out quickly. Pamphlets (off-prints) were cut from two of Mattick's essays.<sup>11</sup> His contributions over the next fifteen months exhibited the same wide range as had his work in *CAZ* and *Der Freidenker*, with essays, book reviews, and short news items. Pieces focused on social and economic theory, economic policy as enacted in the industrialised countries, developments in the Soviet Union, international relations, the trade union movement, and the latest twists and turns within the independent left and dissident communist groupings. Mattick also offered an analysis of the weak economic recovery of the mid-1930s, predicting that a new downturn was close at hand. Economic data was discussed in relationship to Marx's theory, with a special emphasis on governmental involvement in economic matters. He thus pushed Grossman's analysis into areas not pursued by his mentor.

Modelled on the Korsch group's short-lived revival of *Proletarier* and the Dutch colleagues' *Rätekorrespondenz*, *ICC* functioned on a high theoretical level.<sup>12</sup> The journal got off to such a strong start that by January plans were in place for a second publication, *Living Marxism*, to publish classic works of left and council communism and draw on the expertise of colleagues scattered throughout Europe.<sup>13</sup>

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8 Henk Canne Meijer to Mattick, 27 January 1935 (IISH: Canne Meijer).

9 Mattick, 'Introduction', *New Essays*. Editorial Committee, 'Announcements', *ICC*, March 1935; Anton Pannekoek to Mattick, 2 February 1936 (IISH: Pannekoek).

10 For issues written in their entirety by Mattick: March 1936, October 1936, and August 1937. October 1937 included fifteen separate book reviews by him.

11 'What is Communism', on production and distribution under socialistic conditions (based on the *Grundprinzipien*), and 'The Permanent Crisis', on the technical aspects of Grossman's theory.

12 Henk Canne Meijer to Mattick, 6 October 1933 (IISH: Canne Meijer).

13 *ICC*, October 1934.

The biggest difficulty was finding appropriate authors.<sup>14</sup> Mattick began soliciting contributions a full year before the journal began.<sup>15</sup> Few members of the editorial collective wrote for it. Some were simply too busy. This was true for his colleagues from CAZ, Rudiger Raube and Carl Berreitter, and for Al Givens, who like Mattick had been a delegate at the Federation of Unemployed Workers conference in May 1933. Other members of the editorial group just weren't writers, despite their keen intelligence and commitment. Of the inner group, only Kristen Svanum contributed articles in early 1935, but he was often away due to his employment as a merchant mariner. Mattick encouraged Garman to write, but where he could help most was with funding and translations. Garman recognised Mattick's authorship of the UWP manifesto because it was 'disguised by rather bad English'.<sup>16</sup>

Besides *Rätekorrespondenz*, the Korsch group was a second source of material during that initial year.<sup>17</sup> Korsch sent essays from his exile in London; like Mattick, he had a remarkable ability to keep working despite adverse personal conditions. Because of what he heard from Hook, Korsch had been somewhat sceptical about Mattick at first and viewed Mattick's harsh criticisms—of Hook, for instance—as exaggerated and unfair. The suspicions, however, ran in multiple directions. Canne Meijer wrote to Mattick that 'Korsch is a good person, but unfortunately a German professor. That means: what he writes could be much simpler and shorter'.<sup>18</sup>

Mattick, though, was dogged in his pursuit of this relationship, which followed the same pattern as his friendships with Grossman, Nomad, and Garman. He peppered Korsch with letters, postcards, magazines, and pamphlets, some of which contained his essays and reviews.<sup>19</sup> Mattick helped place Korsch's work in *Kampfsignal*, *Der Freidenker*, *International Review*, and *ICC*, even though it was Hook who arranged publication in the more prestigious

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14 Of those I could identify from the 1935 *ICC*: WRB—Walter Boelke; WT—Wendelin Thomas; L—Ernst Lincke; JH—John Harper/Anton Pannekoek; HW—Helmut Wagner; HG—perhaps Herman Gersom but not Grossman.

15 Charlot Strasser to Mattick, 8 October 1933.

16 Allen Garman to Mattick, 29 March 1934. Allen Garman to Mattick, 24 May 1934; Allen Garman to Mattick, 3 July 1934; Allen Garman to Mattick, 12 August 1934.

17 From them, the December 1934 *ICC* was devoted to Helmut Wagner's 'Theses on Bolshevism'; the August 1935 *ICC* to Canne Meijer's 'The Rise of a New Labor Movement'. The November 1934, April 1935, and December 1935 *ICC* also included substantial essays from *Rätekorrespondenz*.

18 Henk Canne Meijer to Mattick, 27 January 1935 (IISH: Canne Meijer).

19 Karl Korsch to Mattick, 15 March 1935 (*Gesamtausgabe*).

*Modern Monthly*.<sup>20</sup> Through Korsch, Mattick was in contact with Bernhard Reichenbach, another of the KAPD founding members who had belonged to a series of organisations in the late 1920s and early 1930s before joining Rote Kämpfer. An economist by training, Reichenbach had worked as a purchasing agent for a German chemical concern. In exile in London, employment was a pressing matter, and Reichenbach proposed, quite unrealistically, that Mattick translate his articles on the situation in Germany, with the honorarium split between them.<sup>21</sup>

Korsch was involved in several difficult situations during 1935. Heinz Langerhans, a friend and colleague from Berlin, had been arrested by the Nazis for distributing information about their rearmament plans. Charged with treason (revealing state secrets), he faced life in prison. Korsch drew on his knowledge of the German legal system and devised a plan to get the charges reduced. This involved the fabrication of a newspaper to contain the very same information that Langerhans had disseminated. The fabricated paper was backdated in order to establish that Langerhans had merely reprinted already-released news.

Because of his notoriety, Korsch could not correspond directly with colleagues and friends. Since Mattick's name would be trusted by KAPD associates in Germany and in exile, Korsch used his name as a cover. A Danish colleague, Harald Anderson-Harild, assisted by smuggling the fabricated paper into Germany, at great risk to himself. The paper was sprung on the judge during the proceedings, thus depriving the prosecution of the opportunity to investigate the new evidence and perhaps to discover that it was fraudulent. The scheme worked and Langerhans was sentenced to only thirty months in prison, although in fact he would not be released from the Sachsenhausen concentration camp until the amnesty on Hitler's birthday in 1939.<sup>22</sup>

A Langerhans essay that was smuggled out of the camps appeared anonymously in the May 1935 *ICC* with a commentary by Korsch. Mattick also solicited

20 Karl Korsch to Mattick, 7 December 1934 (*Gesamtausgabe*). *Kampfsignal* stopped publishing before anything from Korsch appeared; it is unclear if excerpts from his *Karl Marx* were published in *International Review*. Korsch essays appeared in the 26 May, 9 June, and 23 June 1935 issues of *Der Freidenker* and the January and May issues of *ICC*. He may also be the author of articles in July ('Americanizing of Marxism') and December (signed 'G').

21 Bernhard Reichenbach to Mattick, 7 June 1935. Reichenbach is the probable author of 'Germany Today', *ICC*, September 1935, and not Mattick or Henssler.

22 Buckmiller 1987. Interview with Michael Buckmiller, 12 June 2009; Mattick (Karl Korsch) to Harald Andersen-Harild, 19 March 1935 (*Gesamtausgabe*); Mattick (Karl Korsch) to Harald Andersen-Harild, 6 August 1935 (*Gesamtausgabe*); Karl Korsch to Otto Rühle, 10 January 1940 (*Gesamtausgabe*).

contributions from Anderson-Harild and Ernst Lincke, the latter a KAPD veteran who fled to Copenhagen.<sup>23</sup> When personal differences emerged between these two, Mattick, Korsch, and Canne Meijer found themselves embroiled in a situation that threatened to jeopardise colleagues still in Germany. Anderson-Harild was furious with Mattick since he refused to take sides, and he rejected collaboration with the ICC on that basis. He was equally angry because the UWP had barely contributed to fundraising efforts for political refugees in Europe, telling Mattick: 'you are big in theory but amazingly small in practice.'<sup>24</sup>

Korsch's existence in England was tenuous because the British government was not keen to have German communist exiles, regardless of the particular strand of marxism to which they adhered. When Korsch's lover, Dora Fabian, committed suicide along with her roommate, suspicion fell on Korsch, and a governmental inquiry pursued all manner of rumour and slander.<sup>25</sup> With the lapse of his visa, Korsch was given six days to leave the country, and he took up residence in Sweden near the playwright, Bertolt Brecht, who like Langerhans and Sidney Hook knew Korsch from the Marx study circles Korsch had organised in Berlin.

Pannekoek, similar to Korsch, was mistrustful of Mattick at the start, not because he thought Mattick's sense of criticism exaggerated, but because Mattick seemed to ape the worst aspects of the intellectual world. Crisis theory, in Pannekoek's view, was a long-winded means to attract radicals to a new political party. That the UWP manifesto was addressed to 'all serious revolutionists' only heightened his suspicions. Was this the proper focus of radical activities, he asked—the minority of workers who become radicalised in advance of the rest of the class? Pannekoek found ICC unnecessarily theoretical, at the expense of the proletariat in whose name it was written. He had an equally dim view of *Modern Monthly*, which Mattick viewed as a natural outlet for his work but which Pannekoek regarded as a magazine written by intellectuals about matters that only concerned other intellectuals.<sup>26</sup> Pannekoek may have

23 Mattick to Harald Anderson-Harild, 4 July 1935 (ABA); Lincke may have authored: 'L', 'Report from Denmark', ICC, October 1935.

24 Harald Anderson-Harild to Mattick, 10 September 1935 (ABA). Henk Canne Meijer to Mattick, 27 January 1935 (IISH: Canne Meijer); Harald Anderson-Harild to Karl Korsch, 15 August 1936 (ABA); Harald Anderson-Harild to Karl Korsch, 21 August 1936 (ABA); Harald Anderson-Harild to Henk Meyer and Mattick, 24 August 1936 (ABA).

25 Whether this was a double suicide or a murder-suicide was never determined. Brinson 1997. Edward Conzé to Mattick, 2 July 1935; Karl Korsch to Mattick, 30 November 1935 (*Gesamtausgabe*).

26 Anton Pannekoek to Mattick, 10 December 1934 (IISH: Pannekoek).

been a university researcher, but he had always pitched his writing towards a working-class audience.

Pannekoek's personal style—stately, soft-spoken, and self-effacing—fit his image as the *éminence grise* of the Dutch radical left and one of Holland's most esteemed academic scientists. Only in one respect was his behaviour incongruous.<sup>27</sup> It was as if all his professorial finicality was reserved for translations of his own work or the editing of work in relation to which he felt a sense of personal responsibility. Notwithstanding his earlier criticisms of *ICC*, Pannekoek readily acknowledged that the journal applied the ideas of the new labour movement, to which he was committed, to contemporary developments, even if the mode through which this was done was not Pannekoek's preference. He forwarded for consideration a pamphlet written by a colleague, but worried that it might be misused by the UWP. He insisted that no one except himself exert editorial control since every 'small rearrangement or deletion or addition of a comma changes the meaning'.<sup>28</sup> His directives to Mattick were exactly rigid. The UWP name was to appear nowhere except on the title page.

Mattick and other members of the UWP, however, thought differently about the pamphlet. Not only did it require significant editorial attention because of unnecessary repetition and stylistic awkwardness, but it also relied on idealistic terminology that was not customary within the circles for which it was intended. In other words, Pannekoek's knowledge of idiomatic English was not nearly as good as he thought, nor was Pannekoek attuned to the cultural particularities of American marxist discourse. Pannekoek, nonetheless, rebutted each suggestion in great detail. The UWP editors, he suspected, did not approve of certain modes of expression because of their obsession with economic causality. The 'statements that the result of each struggle depends on spiritual factors in the proletariat, on the courage, the self-sacrifice, the enthusiasm, the clear knowledge of the workers', he supposed, sounded strange to them. He asked Mattick outright if 'it is sufficient to tell the workers that their victory and communism are a necessary and unavoidable result of economic development?' This was the same mechanistic habit that had characterised the old labour movement. Pannekoek invoked his long involvement within the radical left as proof of the correctness of his opinions. He was further aggravated

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27 For Korsch's criticisms of Pannekoek's posture: Karl Korsch to Mattick, 1 January 1939 (*Gesamtausgabe*).

28 Anton Pannekoek to Mattick, 14 June 1935 (IISH: Pannekoek).

when Mattick claimed that funds were suddenly lacking.<sup>29</sup> None of this, however, permanently damaged their relationship. Pannekoek was one of the few authors to appear in *ICC* during all of 1936.

Even when Mattick received promises regarding submissions to *ICC*, a long and arduous process was often involved. Mattick began a correspondence with Edward Conzé in late 1933 after Hook forwarded Conzé's letter during the period when they shared their respective friend and colleague networks. Hook was surprised that Mattick had not heard of him already, since Mattick 'seemed to know everything about *deutsche Angelegenheiten* [German matters]'.<sup>30</sup> Conzé had been one of the 'minor architects' of German Communist Party doctrine until he fled the Nazis and also broke with the Communists.<sup>31</sup> University-educated and perfectly bilingual because of his upbringing in England (his family owned textile factories), he earned his living through language lessons, translations, teaching, and writing for union and labour party papers. He also authored several books on politics and social theory for a general audience.

Conzé's goal of political independence—he held the German Social Democrats and Communists equally responsible for the disorganised response to the Nazi takeover—proved elusive. The British Communists attacked whatever he published, and expulsion from the British Labour Party was a continuing worry because he criticised as ineffective the economic boycotts and military sanctions that were aimed at fascist regimes. His fear of ostracism and isolation from a working-class audience tempered his written expressions and contributed to his reluctance to associate openly with *ICC*. Despite frequent promises to produce an article on workers councils in Great Britain, nothing ever materialised. He did, however, arrange exchanges of *ICC* with British journals, and Mattick favourably reviewed several of Conzé's books in *ICC*, *Modern Monthly*, and *Der Freidenker*, notwithstanding his strong reservations about each.<sup>32</sup>

Theodor Hartwig, Mattick's co-columnist from *Der Freidenker*, was another possibility for *ICC*. Hartwig too had been hounded from within the left.

29 Anton Pannekoek to Mattick, 2 February 1936 (IISH: Pannekoek). Anton Pannekoek to Mattick, 25 December 1935 (IISH: Pannekoek).

30 Sidney Hook to Sam Solon, with handwritten note to Mattick, 23 May 1934 [brackets added]. Edward Conzé to Mattick, 18 December 1933.

31 Conzé 1979a, p. 6ff.

32 Edward Conzé to Mattick, 18 December 1933; Edward Conzé to Mattick, 20 March 1935; Edward Conzé to Mattick, 2 July 1935; Edward Conzé to Mattick, 10 August 1935; Edward Conzé to Mattick [after 15 October 1935]; Edward Conzé to Mattick, 30 December 1935; Conzé 1979b, pp. 33–4. For reviews: *Der Freidenker*, 26 May 1935; *Modern Monthly*, December 1935; *ICC*, April 1936; *ICC*, February 1937.

His activities in the school reform movement led to his alienation from social democratic politics. Later on he was pushed aside when he attempted to forge an international freethought association that was independent of social democrats and communists alike, only to watch from the sidelines as resources were squandered on large salaries and fruitless efforts to smuggle anti-fascist literature into Germany—the latter having no other result, in his opinion, than to increase the number of leftists in the concentration camps. Hartwig asked interesting epistemological questions—how was it possible, for instance, for a single theory such as Marx's to give rise to so many competing interpretations? Mattick followed Hartwig's career and helped when he could. Mattick reviewed Hartwig's work in *Der Freidenker* and forwarded articles to it that were not appropriate for *ICC*, especially those focusing on religion. Two of Hartwig's essays on contemporary European developments were finally published in *ICC* during late 1937.<sup>33</sup> With Mattick's prompting, Hartwig embraced Grossman's theory of capitalist collapse.<sup>34</sup>

The New York councilists, Walter Boelke and Wendelin Thomas, were at first preoccupied with saving *Kampfsignal*, but by early 1935 Boelke contributed an article on marxism and anarchism, with a piece by Thomas following a few months later. Boelke distributed *ICC* to amenable left bookstores around the city.<sup>35</sup> Another New Yorker, Herman Gersom, was approached by Mattick, but he was busy with the launch of *International Review*, to which Mattick was invited to contribute.<sup>36</sup> Potential contributors existed in Paris, but Mattick had no success with them either.<sup>37</sup> A colleague who returned to Sweden promised to translate pieces from *ICC* for the syndicalist press there and also send original contributions, but nothing ever appeared.<sup>38</sup>

The biggest disappointment continued to be Grossman. The Frankfurt School foundation, which supported him with a monthly stipend, frowned upon direct political engagement, although this consideration did not interfere with Korsch's collaboration, even though he too received a stipend. Grossman, though, objected to *ICC* for 'reasons of principle', namely, its criticisms of the

33 Mattick, 'Review of Theodor Harwig. *Die Krise der Philosophie*', *Der Freidenker*, 23 June 1935. Hartwig's *ICC* articles appeared in the October and December 1937 issues. It is unlikely that he authored 'Communism and Religion' in *ICC* May 1936.

34 Grossman quoted in: Hartwig, 'Die Wissenschaft im Lichte des Marxismus', *Der Freidenker*, 12 June 1938. Theodor Hartwig to Mattick, 12 February 1935; Theodor Hartwig to Mattick, 22 November 1937.

35 Walter Boelke to Mattick, 23 July 1934 [1935].

36 Herman Gersom to Mattick, 10 August 1935; George Holland to Mattick, 18 October 1935.

37 E. Bauer to Mattick, 11 June 1935; Lucien Laurat to Mattick, 29 September 1935.

38 Ellis Bohmer to Mattick, 14 June 1937.



Soviet Union. He cautioned that Mattick would ‘remain a sectarian with few followers and always stand outside the large mass movement’. He referred to Mattick’s views as ‘unmarxist’ and ‘fundamentally wrong’, even if they were ‘abstractly “correct”’. For Grossman, the Soviet Union needed to be ‘defended from external enemies at all costs.’<sup>39</sup> These statements seem to have finally convinced Mattick and the UWP to abandon plans to reproduce any of Grossman’s publications.

Mattick received information from colleagues in Germany that was not available elsewhere. A schoolmate from Berlin wrote after a break of ten years. Trained like Mattick as a metalworker, he had become a chauffeur, driving for a well-known composer until his employer was forced to flee into exile because of ethnic persecution. The alternative employment was that of a cabbie in a city overrun by too many drivers and not enough customers. Another Berlin friend, also a machinist, sent a long list of prices for basic food items, consumer goods, apartment rents, wage rates, and payroll taxes—a picture of daily life that Mattick might be able to use. Almost everyone in the factories performed piecework at ‘the cost of one’s body’. Working-class families made do with two-room apartments. Anything larger needed an income that only professional employees like engineers, foremen, and department heads could afford.<sup>40</sup>

### *The Inevitability of Communism*

The only labor movement which can be regarded as new is the one which is capable of seeing in the workers’ councils and not in itself and its own little party organization the genuine decisive factor of the revolution.<sup>41</sup>

Sidney Hook had encouraged Mattick to transform his review of *Towards the Understanding of Karl Marx* into a full-blown pamphlet. Hook promised a response, an *Anti-Critique* that would answer the criticisms of both Mattick and Eastman. At Hook’s prompting, Mattick approached the John Day Company, known for its imprint dealing with radical pamphlets.<sup>42</sup> In the cover letter,

39 Henryk Grossman to Mattick, 22 October 1935. Only at this point did *icc* stop announcing plans to produce Grossman’s work as a pamphlet.

40 Bernhard to Mattick, 12 April 1936. Karl to Mattick, 16 December 1935.

41 Mattick, ‘One Step Forward, Two Steps Backward: Critical Remarks on the “Statement of Programmatic Orientation by the American Workers Party”’, *Modern Monthly*, December 1934, p. 640.

42 Max Nomad to Mattick, 24 July 1933; Sidney Hook to Mattick, 22 December 1933.

Mattick quoted at length from Hook's letters of praise. He assured the editor that sizable distributions were possible in Chicago and New York—but to no avail.<sup>43</sup> An independent literary agent who also examined the manuscript was equally pessimistic: 'no magazine would publish a piece of criticism 12,000 words or more in length'. Yet Mattick's manuscript, when finished, was twice this size. Furthermore, the agent told him, 'bourgeois journals certainly would not accept a piece of interpretive writing from a communistic point of view whatever its complexion'.<sup>44</sup>

To the rescue came Sam Solon, who functioned in successive roles as student editor, associate editor, and business manager at *Modern Monthly*. Solon sponsored a separate pamphlet series under the rubric 'Polemical Publishers'. He was also Mattick's great advocate among the *Modern Monthly* staff.<sup>45</sup> Hook encouraged Solon to publish Mattick's pamphlet as a 'timely contribution to marxist discussion', even though Hook, always true to form, characterised Mattick as 'an intelligent man who cannot think straight'.<sup>46</sup> Since the pamphlet series was self-financed, Hook agreed to fundraise for it, while Solon promised to borrow whatever else was needed.<sup>47</sup>

What ensued was a give-and-take in which Hook expressed objections to Mattick's criticisms, while Mattick overhauled the manuscript. Hook continued to bait him at every opportunity: 'if your interpretation of marxism is sound, there really is no reason writing about it from your point of view'.<sup>48</sup> Garman, who was responsible for the translation, found Hook's corrections a matter of 'school-masterly pettifoggery'. Garman told Mattick: 'I'll soon dislike him as much as you do'.<sup>49</sup>

Just about everyone anticipated great things when *The Inevitability of Communism* was released in early 1935. With complimentary pamphlets by Hook and Eastman (who wrote a separate critique), their debate was sure to create a stir. Mattick distributed his own pamphlet freely among friends, colleagues, and potential editors. *ICC*, *Der Freidenker*, and *Modern Monthly* ran regular announcements. Grossman wrote to say: 'the philosophical work with

43 Mattick to Critchell Rimington, 3 January 1934 (Princeton).

44 Maxim Lieber to Mattick, 24 January 1934.

45 Sam Solon to Mattick, 22 November 1935; Sam Solon to Mattick, 28 January 1936. Solon, 'Partners in Plunder', *Modern Monthly*, June 1935.

46 Sidney Hook to S.L. Solon, 23 May 1934.

47 Sidney Hook to Mattick, 30 April 1934; S.L. Solon to Mattick, 26 May 1934.

48 Sidney Hook to Mattick, 18 July 1934.

49 Allan Garman to Mattick, 26 July 1934.

Hook has deepened your perspective and made the written expression tighter and richer'.<sup>50</sup>

But despite the good intentions of many people, *The Inevitability of Communism* was hardly noticed. Hook reneged on the *Anti-Critique*, therefore dampening the response to Mattick's pamphlet. Relations between the two had grown so bad that Hook pressed Calverton to pull ads from *Modern Monthly*, threatening to otherwise withdraw his financial subsidy of the journal. Mattick advised Calverton not to jeopardise the magazine. Calverton, though, refused to buckle under Hook's threats, and announcements about *Inevitability* appeared throughout 1935.

Mattick suggested that Grossman review *The Inevitability of Communism* in the Frankfurt School's *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung*, but, despite Grossman's inquiry to Max Horkheimer, nothing happened.<sup>51</sup> Korsch also made a request, but he had no more luck with Horkheimer than Grossman. Korsch's discussions with Solon about a review in *Modern Monthly* or even a self-standing pamphlet similarly yielded no results. Korsch considered adding a section to his *Karl Marx*, soon to appear in English, but space considerations prevented this as well.<sup>52</sup> Conzé was due to review Eastman's pamphlet in the British journal, *The Plebs*, and promised to plug Mattick, yet when the one-paragraph blurb appeared, Mattick's pamphlet was not mentioned, again perhaps because of space restrictions. Nor did later attempts to get coverage in *The Plebs* have any success.<sup>53</sup> The editor of *Social Science* pledged to review the pamphlet himself but then failed to do so.<sup>54</sup> The editor at *The New Republic* looked forward to reading Mattick's pamphlet, especially because he had liked one of Mattick's previous reviews, but he made no guarantees beforehand and here too nothing developed.<sup>55</sup> A proposal by Guy Aldred to both review and republish Mattick's pamphlet in Great Britain fell flat as well.<sup>56</sup> The editor of the Swiss socialist monthly, *Rote Revue [Red Review]*, also planned a review and also failed to

50 Henryk Grossman to Mattick, 2 October 1934.

51 Mattick to Sidney Hook, 22 July 1934 (Hoover); Henryk Grossman to Max Horkheimer, 30 January 1935 (Horkheimer 1995a).

52 Karl Korsch to Mattick, 7 December 1934 (*Gesamtausgabe*); Karl Korsch to Mattick, 15 March 1935 (*Gesamtausgabe*); Karl Korsch to Mattick, 4 April 1935 (*Gesamtausgabe*); Karl Korsch to Mattick, 29 August 1935 (*Gesamtausgabe*).

53 Edward Conzé to Mattick, 15 October 1934; Edward Conzé to Mattick, 20 March 1935; E.C., 'Adding to Confusion', *The Plebs*, February 1935.

54 Leroy Allen to Mattick, 23 January 1935.

55 Malcolm Cowley to Mattick, 11 February 1935.

56 Guy Aldred to Mattick, 4 February 1935.

publish one.<sup>57</sup> Eastman promised a review in *Modern Monthly*, but this did not transpire, possibly because of Hook's interference.<sup>58</sup> Pannekoek's comments rubbed sand in an open wound. He referred to the Hook-Mattick debate as 'an intricate and difficult splitting of curled hairs' and wondered 'how such clear and simple a theory as Marx's can be made so difficult by misunderstandings and learned or quasi-learned complications'. He wrote this in spite of his overall agreement with Mattick's point of view.<sup>59</sup>

The few reviews of *Inevitability* were quite mixed. *Der Freidenker* referred to it as 'a new important pamphlet' and published an excerpt as a self-standing article, but Wendelin Thomas's commentary was hostile and derogatory. He shared many of the complaints that were voiced by Korsch and Pannekoek—above all, the pamphlet was unnecessarily difficult. While Thomas congratulated Mattick for tackling tough issues, he characterised Mattick as someone looking to establish a name for himself. That he plugged another of Mattick's projects, a popularised version of *Capital* that was tentatively titled *Marx for Workers*, did not undo the negative impression of Mattick's work.<sup>60</sup>

The review in *ICC*, 'Marx Without Doctors', was laudatory, but it failed to engage directly with the issues that Mattick raised. The author may have been Kristen Svanum, someone entirely familiar with Mattick's politics, theorising, and personal history. Mattick was described as 'the most uncompromising of marxists, and at the same time one of those who are least hampered by traditions'. The review, however, emphasised Mattick's criticisms of left-wing politics, not the primary focus of the pamphlet.<sup>61</sup> A third review appeared in the publication of Commonwealth College, where Mattick had been invited to teach. The reviewer considered Mattick 'philosophically more capable' than Hook and described the latter as someone who 'is inclined to lose his temper whenever the shortcomings of the book are pointed out'. Since Hook's book, in the reviewer's opinion, was of no great consequence, Mattick's pamphlet was treated in the same dismissive fashion.<sup>62</sup> Finally, a one-paragraph book blurb appeared in *Books Abroad* that criticised Mattick for criticising the bolsheviks.<sup>63</sup>

57 Ernst Nobs to Mattick, 31 January 1935.

58 Mattick to V.F. Calverton, 20 January 1935 (NYPL).

59 Anton Pannekoek to Mattick, 13 April 1935 (IISH: Pannekoek).

60 Mattick, 'Marxismus und Wissenschaft', *Der Freidenker*, 11 November 1934; Wendelin Thomas, 'The Inevitability of Communism', *Der Freidenker*, 17 February 1935.

61 'Marxism Without Doctors', *ICC*, February 1935; Kristen Svanum, 'Daniel De Leon', *ICC*, March 1935.

62 William Cunningham, 'Review: *The Inevitability of Communism*', *The Windsor Quarterly*, Winter 1935.

63 Frederick Ryan, 'Review: Paul Mattick. *The Inevitability of Communism*', *Books Abroad*, Winter 1936.

Other than these, no further reviews appeared. Only Korsch provided substantive criticism, but this was in private. He told Mattick: 'I have so much to write to you that I am almost hesitant to begin'. Most profound was where Mattick challenged Hook's separation of the social from the natural sciences, and therefore also Hook's inclusion of marxism in the social sciences. Some parts of *Inevitability*, however, were straightforwardly 'mystifying' because of the haste with which Mattick synthesised and then criticised complicated ideas. Mattick's focus changed rapidly from Hook to Marx to Mattick, and only readers highly versed in dialectical marxism stood to benefit from the discussion. Besides, Korsch did not think that the dialectic was especially important for Marx except as a mode of expression.<sup>64</sup> Korsch objected to Mattick's habit of exaggerating differences in order to better clarify issues. Sharp polemics had a long and largely harmful history as the *modus operandi* for bourgeois and marxist critics. For Korsch, it was better to strive for common ground and carve out less aggressive approaches to political behaviour.<sup>65</sup>

A similar trajectory, albeit in miniature, occurred with Mattick's lengthy article, 'What is Communism?', whose fate was similar to that of *Inevitability*. In other words, it was known within parts of the radical left, but otherwise ignored.<sup>66</sup> Hook had referred to 'What is Communism?' as 'a *bahnbrechendes* [path-breaking] work' in which Mattick dealt extensively with the financing of non-productive establishments within a socialist system.<sup>67</sup> This was important because schools, health facilities, artistic theatres, and other venues not essential for the productive apparatus and workforce would be the truly expansionary aspect of an egalitarian world. 'What Is Communism?' seemed headed for widespread circulation. Mattick wrote Calverton: 'I am convinced that you will find it interesting, if you read it'. He explained: 'its point of view is absolutely *unknown* in this country, there never was anything similar published'.<sup>68</sup> Ultimately, though, the various versions of 'What is Communism?' circulated only within the German, Dutch, and American councilist communities by means of *Kampfsignal*, *Rätekorrespondenz*, and *ICC*.

64 Karl Korsch to Mattick, 10 May 1935 (*Gesamtausgabe*).

65 Karl Korsch to Mattick, 12 May 1935 (*Gesamtausgabe*); Karl Korsch to Mattick, 4 June 1935 (*Gesamtausgabe*).

66 The second 160-page Dutch edition of *Grundprinzipien* was printed in 750 copies. Henk Canne Meijer to Mattick, 27 January 1935 (IISH: Canne Meijer).

67 Sidney Hook to Mattick, 11 August 1934 [brackets added]. Mattick to Sidney Hook, 13 August 1934 (Hoover).

68 Mattick to V.F. Calverton, 20 January 1935 (NYPL: Calverton). Still later Mattick submitted the article to *Controversy*; C.A. Smith to Mattick, 29 June 1937.

Mattick grew weary. A tremendous outpouring of energy had yielded relatively little: neither authors for *ICC* nor a readership for his own work. Garman encouraged him to keep going, to ‘make something of a name for yourself—while awaiting the revolutionizing of the masses’. Writing was difficult and laborious, but Garman reminded him that such was always the case with ‘literature really worth reading.’<sup>69</sup> Mattick commented to another colleague that the UWP was making ‘slow progress, very slow.’<sup>70</sup> There was a certain stoicism about Mattick, as if life within capitalism inevitably involved suffering. Mattick was also developing great patience, given the sluggishness with which events and people seemed to evolve.<sup>71</sup>

Within council communistic circles, on the other hand, Mattick’s work circulated widely. A UWP chapter in Buffalo, with transplanted colleagues from Chicago, conducted outdoor meetings during the summer months and attracted several hundred participants. It organised classes on ‘revolutionary marxism.’<sup>72</sup> The New York group, essentially Boelke and a changing cast of others, had yet to gel in any distinct fashion, but this did not prevent them from widely disseminating UWP materials.<sup>73</sup> The Washington DC chapter seems to have consisted of Garman alone, but he too was energetic in his enthusiasm and outreach.

The UWP assembled a small library of pamphlets and books that sold at inexpensive prices, with plans for more to come. It distributed kindred magazines like *Modern Monthly* and *Rätekorrespondenz* and published Luxemburg’s ‘Leninism or Marxism?’ in an early issue of *ICC*. The Matticks continued their roles as distributors, with a long list of books that they made available at cost: Marx, Engels, Pannekoek, Mattick’s *Outline Study Course in Marxian Economics* (on *Capital*, Volume 1), Conzé’s *The Scientific Method of Thinking*, and more.<sup>74</sup> By the end of 1935, the group no longer referred to itself as the United Workers Party, preferring instead the nomenclature adopted by the

69 Allen Garman to Mattick, 3 April 1935.

70 Mattick to Harald Anderson-Harild, 7 April 1935 (ABA).

71 Conversation with Paul Mattick, Jr., 2 April 2006.

72 For the UWP groups: *ICC*, October and December 1934; Bob Leonard to Mattick, 3 November 1935.

73 Walter Boelke to Mattick, 23 July 1934 [1935].

74 Luxemburg, ‘Leninism or Marxism’, *ICC*, February 1935; Mattick to John Day Company, 21 November 1934 (Princeton); reprinted by the APCF as a pamphlet. *The Crisis and Decline of Capitalism* seems to have been a reprint of Mattick’s ‘The Permanent Crisis: Henryk Grossmann’s Interpretation of Marx’s Theory of Capitalist Accumulation’, *ICC*, November 1934; also the book blurb (presumably by Mattick) in *ICC*, October 1937. For lists: *ICC*, October 1935 and July 1936.

Dutch colleagues, Groups of Council Communists. The UWP had never been a political party as commonly understood and its name had caused many 'needless misunderstandings'.<sup>75</sup>

### Mid-Decade

What do we care about Aldred, Vera Buch, Weisbord or Mattick! We want to promote the consciousness of the class and not glorify individuals.<sup>76</sup>

It was the perplexing nature of 1935 that seemed to capture everyone's attention. Nothing had changed substantially, yet nothing seemed to be happening either. The sluggish economic recovery, attributable to the massive government spending, had yet to surpass the heights achieved in the late 1920s. Millions remained unemployed and dependent on relief. Public works programmes were clearly schizophrenic in their administration; projects were revamped or suspended in rapid succession. Tens of thousands would suddenly find themselves thrown back on the relief system, the latter minimal and inadequate at best. Many projects were geared towards the unskilled and did not impart useful skills, but this was not their intention anyhow. Maintaining the aptitude of the working class for workaday discipline was a major policy consideration. Taken as a whole, these measures—relief and make-work projects—achieved the desired effect of quelling the workforce. The strike wave of the previous year receded. The radical unemployed movement all but disappeared, replaced by a Workers Alliance on a national level that grew fiercely militant in rhetoric and tactics but which functioned as a lobbying group in favour of an expanded government sector.<sup>77</sup>

Mattick paid particular attention to the situation in rural mining districts. A few thousand tons of coal was mined illegally in some 10,000 pits by small teams of between two and four workers who also organised their own transportation and distribution systems. Working conditions, Mattick pointed out, harkened back to the Middle Ages, where little equipment was used except for hand tools. The sites were also prone to all sorts of workplace accidents. Despite these many obstacles, this self-help economy accounted for 10 percent of total coal production in the country. Not sustainable over the long-run, it was resorted to anyway out of sheer desperation in regions where no other

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75 'Please Notice', *ICC*, January 1936, p. 9.

76 Mattick, 'Guy Aldred's "Mission"', *ICC*, July 1935, p. 25.

77 Mattick 1969.

employment was possible. It was clear too that as industry started up again with its use of technology and its higher productivity, these illegal operations would disappear. Nonetheless, activities like these—if they became generalised throughout the economy—had the potential to transform society.<sup>78</sup> This was direct control of production by the producers themselves.

Dissonance plagued many of Mattick's initiatives. Relations with Guy Aldred and the Anti-Parliamentary Communist Federation (APCF) in Glasgow were quite positive at first. Aldred promised to write for *ICC*, while the APCF took on projects that were beyond the means of the UWP, including the publication of several pamphlets that Mattick brought to their attention. They also publicised and distributed Mattick's *Inevitability*.<sup>79</sup> Between the UWP and APCF, general agreement existed about anti-parliamentary politics, the permanency of the economic crisis, and the need for international communications.<sup>80</sup>

Mattick and the UWP also heard from Albert and Vera Buch Weisbord on behalf of a small dissident communist group that had members in New York and Chicago. Mattick, who shared freely his friendship and acquaintanceship networks, put the Weisbords in touch with Aldred and gave Vera Buch contact information for Korsch and Grossman, pending a European trip. The Weisbords, however, were leninists at heart, which put them at odds with the councilists. Weisbord was furious when Walter Boelke corrected his understanding of American history: 'it is ridiculous that YOU want to tell me about the history of MY OWN COUNTRY'.<sup>81</sup> None of this bothered Aldred, who drew quite close to the Weisbords. Mattick wrote him: 'queer things happen in this world. You will have a very good time with Vera Buch, as she is a real bolshevik. But we are

78 Mattick, 'What Can The Unemployed Do', *Living Marxism*, May 1938.

79 Garman corrected the Svanum translation of *Theses on Bolshevism* that appeared in *ICC*, December 1934. The APCF renamed it *The Bourgeois Role of Bolshevism*. Allen Garman to Mattick, 3 April 1935; William Ballantyne to Mattick, 28 April 1936. Perhaps related to these discussions were several *ICC* essays: WT [Wendelin Thomas], 'Revolutionary Parliamentarism', and Anon, 'Anti-Parliamentarism and Council Movement', *ICC*, October 1935. 'Work Shop Committees in England', *ICC*, November 1936, may have originated with the APCF group in Leeds; Guy Aldred to Mattick, 20 April 1935; Edward Conzé to Mattick [after 16 October 1935].

80 Two years earlier, Aldred attempted a three-way publishing enterprise with Prudhommeaux in Paris and the *Workers League News* in Chicago. Guy Aldred to Andre Prudhommeaux, 2 November 1933 (IISH Prudhommeaux). Guy Aldred to Mattick, 4 February 1935; Guy Aldred to Mattick, 20 April 1935; Shipway 1988, p. 137ff.

81 As quoted in Walter Boelke to Mattick, 23 July 1934 [1935]. Guy Aldred to Mattick, 25 February 1935.



marxists, and not followers of Lenin, and have no connection'.<sup>82</sup> When Aldred plugged the Weisbord group more fully than the UWP in his history of the radical left, Mattick distanced himself publicly from both groups.<sup>83</sup> Weisbord soon denigrated the UWP as 'far too German in its outlook'.<sup>84</sup> Elsewhere he referred to the Mattick crowd as 'good fascist agents' because of their criticisms of the Soviet Union.<sup>85</sup>

Dealings with the New York councilists were also fraught. Had *Kampfsignal* survived under Boelke and Thomas's tutelage, *ICC* would have been its English-language counterpart. Boelke and Mattick had even taken to publishing identically named articles in the two journals.<sup>86</sup> But tensions between Thomas and Mattick were ongoing. Thomas viewed the German radical left's thesis about the death crisis as part science, part propaganda: 'you have dreams, dear Paul, that is all'. Mattick thought that 'if you are part of the council movement, then it should be easy through discussion with one another to either bridge over the different perspectives, or one should be able to convince the other', but Thomas disagreed.<sup>87</sup>

Seemingly unbridgeable differences emerged between the German and Dutch colleagues as well, crystallised at the so-named Brussels Conference of mid-1935.<sup>88</sup> More of a meeting than a conference, it was attended by seven delegates from Germany, one from Holland, and the Danish hosts. Alfred Weiland was the primary organiser, a task to which he turned in the year after his release from the concentration camp. He also wrote the keynote paper, while Canne Meijer contributed a second pivotal piece. Anderson-Harild held the event at his home.

At issue was the relationship between capitalist, fascist, and state capitalist economies. This was a matter with which many people on the left were grappling. In other words, they pondered whether fascism represented the past, present, or future of the capitalist system. Was it best understood as a coun-

82 Mattick to Guy Aldred, 2 February 1935, cited in Aldred 1935, p. 98.

83 Mattick, 'Guy Aldred's "Mission"', *ICC*, July 1935.

84 Guy Aldred to Mattick, 25 February 1935.

85 'Shall We Defend the Soviet Union', *Class Struggle*, February 1936, 6: 2; Weisbord 1977, p. 312, p. 322. Henk Canne Meijer to Mattick, 27 January 1935 (IISH: Canne Meijer); Henk Canne Meijer to Albert Weisbord, 25 April 1937 (IISH: Canne Meijer).

86 Wieland Herzfelde to Mattick, 19 June 1934. WB [Boelke], 'Upton Sinclair auf dem Wege zum Faschismus?', *Kampfsignal*, 15 November 1934; Mattick, 'Upton Sinclair On the Way to Fascism', *ICC*, November 1934.

87 Quoted in Wendelin Thomas to Mattick, 20 July 1936.

88 Referred to as the Brussels Conference in order to confuse police spies, but held in Copenhagen.

ter-revolution, the dominance of big business (monopoly capital), or the slide towards governmental control of the economy, albeit facilitated in Germany's case by a racist regime.<sup>89</sup> Both *ICC* and *Rätekorrespondenz* covered the discussions at great length.<sup>90</sup> Unlike the German colleagues, Mattick did not think that fascist attempts to stabilise the economy would succeed or that Russian-style state capitalism would spread elsewhere. But he also thought that the Dutch colleagues over-estimated the ability of small, localised groups to survive on their own. He accused both sides of doing precisely what Korsch had accused him of doing just months before—exaggerating their respective ideas in order to make them more convincing.

Mattick's connections to *Modern Monthly* and *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung* proved to be short-lived. In *Modern Monthly*, he published several significant essays, commentaries, and reviews during the year. Calverton assured him: 'so you see, we are printing your stuff with regularity now'.<sup>91</sup> Mattick had not given up on an article about Grossman, but Calverton preferred the piece 'Luxemburg Versus Lenin'. When members of *Modern Monthly's* editorial board, now expanded to include dissident communists, objected, the second half never appeared.<sup>92</sup> A lengthy review of John Strachey's *The Nature of Capitalist Crisis* allowed Mattick to return to economic themes. Strachey, an important Communist Party theorist, emphasised the limits that capitalism faced as an economic system, but he also stressed a 'wage-push' theory that attributed the profit squeeze to rising compensation levels for employees. Mattick pointed out that this was an odd assertion in the midst of the depression.<sup>93</sup> Lewis Corey, whose economics Mattick also chided in the pages of

89 Benarrosh 1981; Benarrosh 1985; Bonacchi 1976.

90 For the discussions: *ICC*, August, September, October, December 1935 and January 1936; *Rätekorrespondenz*, April/May and July/August 1935, March 1936 and May 1936; *Persdienst van de Groep van Internationale Communisten*, January and February 1936. Bourrinet 2001, p. 241ff., p. 277ff.; Kubina 2001, p. 136ff.; Evans 2005, p. 370ff.

91 V.F. Calverton to Mattick, 16 September 1935.

92 Sam Solon to Mattick, 22 November 1935; Korsch later commented that 'one's relation to Rosa [Luxemburg] seems to me to still be the best proving ground for revolutionaries'. Karl Korsch to Mattick, 1 January 1939 (*Gesamtausgabe*). Mattick, 'Die Gegensätze Zwischen Luxemburg und Lenin', *Der Freidenker*, 18 August and 1 September 1935; Mattick, 'Die Gegensätze Zwischen Luxemburg und Lenin', *Rätekorrespondenz*, September 1935; 'De Tegenstellingen Tusschen Luxemburg en Lenin', *Persdienst van de Groep van Internationale Communisten*, December 1935; Mattick, 'Luxemburg Versus Lenin', *Modern Monthly*, September 1935 (Part 1); Mattick, 'Luxemburg Versus Lenin', *ICC*, July 1936 (Part 2).

93 Mattick, 'Review of John Strachey. *The Nature of Capitalist Crisis*', *Modern Monthly*, April 1935.

*Modern Monthly*, was not impressed, telling Mattick that he had not developed his critique strongly enough.<sup>94</sup>

While *Modern Monthly* treated Mattick as a full-blown contributor (at least for the time being), *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung* published book reviews from him, each a few paragraphs in length, and he became for them a specialist on American economic literature. By early 1936, however, each journal dropped him from their roster of authors. Mattick was a theoretician of economic crises, and the mid-decade improvement in the world's economy, no matter how tenuous, told against his type of analysis. Not until the economy collapsed anew in 1937 did Mattick reappear, albeit briefly, in both journals.

Mattick continued to send out his work, seemingly unperturbed by negative responses. If he received any encouragement whatsoever from an editor, he submitted additional work for their consideration. Praise was taken at face value. Any slight chance of success was pursued.<sup>95</sup> Throughout 1935, *ICC* and *Der Freidenker* remained his primary outlets, publishing in one form or another many of the essays and reviews that also appeared in *Rätekorrespondenz*, *Modern Monthly*, and *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung*. Versions of the same work often appeared in multiple places. A review of Ludwig Kotany's *The Science of Economy*, to take one example, was published in *Der Freidenker*, *Modern Monthly*, and *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung*, each with its own distinct audience.<sup>96</sup>

In late 1935 Mattick applied to the Guggenheim Foundation for a fellowship. He proposed a book length manuscript of 200,000 words that would present 'a simplified, abridged and modernized version of Marx's *Capital*'. In other words, he proposed to write a book 500 pages in length within a timeframe of one year. This was the *Marx for Workers* project on which he had worked sporadically

94 Lewis Corey to Mattick, 16 May 1935.

95 Examples: Theodore Brameld to Mattick, 12 January 1935; Alfred M. Bingham to Mattick, 18 January 1935; Malcolm Cowley to Mattick 11 February 1935; Alfred S. Dashiell to Mattick, 25 February 1935; Alfred M. Bingham to Mattick, 20 August 1935; Charles Angoff to Mattick, 28 September 1935.

96 Mattick, 'Review of Ludwig Kotany. *The Science of Economy*', *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung*, 4: 3, 1935; Mattick, 'Review of Ludwig Kotany, *The Science of Economy*'; Paul Douglas. *Controlling Depression*; H. Parker Willis and John M. Chapman. *The Economics of Inflation*', *Der Freidenker*, 1 September 1935; Mattick, 'Review of Ludwig Kotany. *The Science of Economy*'; Harold G. Moulton. *The Formation of Capital*; Paul H. Douglas. *Controlling Depressions*; H. Parker Willis and John M. Chapman. *The Economics of Inflation*', *Modern Monthly*, January 1936.

over the last several years.<sup>97</sup> The book, he claimed, was all but written, since he could draw from his published and unpublished work. Both Grossman and Korsch pledged their assistance.<sup>98</sup>

Grossman was very aware of Mattick's financial predicament and supported his application wholeheartedly: 'your situation is really difficult if you need to put aside all theoretical work'. The descriptions of factory life in Mattick's short stories, Grossman relayed, 'made a tremendous impression'. He told Mattick: 'you unquestionably have a great literary talent' and predicted that he would 'someday be an important novelist'. He also added parenthetically: 'that said, I do not mean to underestimate your theoretical talents'.<sup>99</sup>

References were key. Hook, a previous recipient, advised Mattick only to approach 'people who have some academic standing and who are sympathetic to your work'.<sup>100</sup> Mattick asked Lewis Corey to serve as a reference, but Corey was himself a Guggenheim applicant. Mattick told him: 'I really don't know whether I should wish you luck because your luck might be my misfortune as I presume that we have the same subject'. But he told Corey: 'I wish you luck just the same. If I were on the Guggenheim committee I would certainly choose you instead of myself'.<sup>101</sup> Corey, in fact, was the author of three books, a portfolio with which Mattick could not compete.<sup>102</sup>

From the Frankfurt School, Mattick also asked Horkheimer for a letter of support.<sup>103</sup> Grossman, whose correspondence with Mattick had now extended for nearly five years, described him to Horkheimer as 'an unusually lively spirit who despite an unfavourable material situation brings enormous energy to his own scientific development'.<sup>104</sup> To the Guggenheim Foundation, Grossman recommended Mattick as 'an original and sharp-witted thinker'. Grossman recognised that 'every new manuscript of Mattick's demonstrates a higher

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97 Mattick, 'Fellowship Application' (Columbia: Corey). A previous title was *The Economic Revaluation of Contemporary Society*: V.F. Calverton to Mattick, 3 October 1933; Mattick to V.F. Calverton [after 3 October 1933] (NYPL); Edward Conzé to Mattick, 18 December 1933; Sidney Hook to Mattick [after 7 July 1934]; Karl Korsch to Mattick, 30 November 1935 (*Gesamtausgabe*); Alfred Evenitsky to Mattick, 1 September 1960.

98 Korsch, 'Guggenheim Recommendation (Report)', No Date (HSH: Korsch).

99 Henryk Grossman to Mattick, 19 December 1935.

100 Sidney Hook to Mattick, 16 October 1935.

101 Mattick to Lewis Corey, 17 October 1935 (Columbia: Corey).

102 Henry Allen Moe to Lewis Corey, 26 October 1935 (Columbia: Corey).

103 Max Horkheimer to Mattick, 15 October 1935; Max Horkheimer to Mattick, 12 November 1935; Julian Gumperz to Mattick, 20 January 1936.

104 Henryk Grossman to Max Horkheimer, 30 October 1935 (MHA).

level in comparison with the previous'. It was a glowing recommendation.<sup>105</sup> Hartwig, Pannekoek, Korsch, and Conzé provided other letters.<sup>106</sup>

Wieland Herzfelde was a possibility, but what Herzfelde heard about Mattick disturbed him greatly: 'I am really astonished at the grotesque prejudices that you have about the S[oviet] U[nion]'. Behind Stalin, he assured Mattick, stood a socialist system worth defending: 'take a good look at pictures of Stalin. Does such a dandy seem intent on terror? Can't you see his slightly ironic smile with which he receives all the (admittedly not very tasteful) hero worship that comes his way?'<sup>107</sup> A mutual colleague, Stefan Heym, had written to Herzfelde about Mattick's politics. Heym had reneged on a speaking engagement for the UWP, and a nasty exchange ensued between Heym and Mattick. Decades later Heym was known as a dissident within post-war East Germany, but at the time he was a shill for the Communist Party. He denied that he had 'warned' Herzfelde about Mattick: 'one warns of dangerous individuals, dear Paul Mattick'. Besides, news of his father's suicide arrived the day of his UWP engagement, although Heym confessed to having no memory of these plans in any case. He questioned Mattick on why he hadn't confirmed the engagement in the day or two beforehand. Was it Mattick who had confused the matter, he asked?<sup>108</sup>

When Mattick stated: 'I don't criticize Russia and the Bolsheviks, I struggle against them', neither Herzfelde nor Heym understood his remarks.<sup>109</sup> Grossman likewise could not quite grasp Mattick's claim that it was the working class, rather than the worker's movement, to which he was oriented.<sup>110</sup> Similar incomprehension had characterised Hook's attitude towards Mattick. But what seemed like outlandish statements from Mattick were in fact straightforward declarations of belief. Herzfelde made his respective allegiances clear: 'I feel complete solidarity with the really existing Russia and the actual Bolsheviks, and whoever fights and offends them, fights and offends me.'<sup>111</sup> Estranged for

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105 'Guggenheim Report', Henryk Grossman, 29 October 1935 (IISH: Mattick).

106 Theodor Hartwig to Mattick, 15 November 1935; Anton Pannekoek to Mattick, 22 November 1935 (IISH: Pannekoek); Karl Korsch to Mattick 30 November 1935 (*Gesamtausgabe*); Eduard Conzé to Mattick, 15 October 1935.

107 Wieland Herzfelde to Mattick, 19 August 1935 [brackets added].

108 Stefan Heym to Mattick, 16 September 1935.

109 Mattick quoted in Wieland Herzfelde to Mattick, 28 October 1935.

110 Henryk Grossman to Mattick, 19 December 1935.

111 Wieland Herzfelde to Mattick, 28 October 1935.

the next three decades, Mattick and Herzfelde had no contact even when both lived in New York City during the late 1940s.<sup>112</sup>

An equally unpleasant exchange about the Guggenheim took place with Frank Knight, who wrote to the Foundation: 'I do not honestly think that it is possible to be a communist, or any kind of dogmatist, on the basis of anything like a "fair" approach to facts and conditions'. Knight affirmed that he considered Mattick someone with 'very considerable intellectual ability and energy, and complete earnestness and sincerity'.<sup>113</sup> To the Guggenheim judges he wrote of Mattick that 'he has intellectual ability of an unusual order, and is unquestionably sincere in his interests, both intellectual and in the way of social betterment'. But, he continued, 'Mattick is a dogmatic communist in political doctrine'. Mattick's project, he explained, 'is one of "interpreting" marxism, which unquestionably means the attempt to preach that gospel more effectively than has been done before'. To summarise: '*I think* that this whole position is simply poison'.<sup>114</sup> At best, the Guggenheim officials could ignore Knight's letter; at worst, it torpedoed Mattick's application. In either case, it did nothing to enhance Mattick's chances. He should have listened to Hook's advice about sympathetic referees.

The Guggenheim Foundation rejected Mattick's application. This meant an end to his plans for European travel.<sup>115</sup> He applied to the Brookings Institution for a research training fellowship at its facilities in Washington DC, but this too turned out negative.<sup>116</sup> Two years hence he would try for fellowships again.

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112 Mattick received information about Wieland Herzfelde from Walter Auerbach, who referred to him as a 'Russian businessman'. Pit and Walter Auerbach to Mattick, 4 November 1939.

113 Frank Knight to Mattick, 9 October 1935.

114 Frank Knight to Mattick, 21 December 1935.

115 Ernst Lincke and Eleonora Yberg to Mattick, 3 April 1936.

116 Leverett Lyon to Mattick, 20 May 1936.

# Towards War

## International Developments

It goes without saying that I shall not in any case help to defend a system which I find thoroughly repulsive and by which my life is spoiled.<sup>1</sup>

The focus of Mattick's writing shifted perceptibly during 1936. The economic decline had bottomed out, but the continuation of depression-like conditions for the working class amidst a steady but slow recovery for the business world tempered the optimistic statements that emanated from economists and politicians. For Mattick, the new status quo seemed only to confirm his thesis about the permanent crisis. His attention was drawn increasingly towards the bellicose statements emanating from Europe and Asia. Fascism remained a central theme, although this now extended into an understanding that war would be the vehicle for the re-division of the world.<sup>2</sup> In *Modern Monthly's* symposium issue on this topic, Mattick wrote that he was 'opposed to capitalist peace just as much as to capitalist war'.<sup>3</sup> Italy's invasion and brutal annexation of Ethiopia, in his opinion, constituted the opening salvo in the coming conflict.<sup>4</sup> He criticised other leftists, the trotskysts among them, for supporting Ethiopia against Italy and taking sides in the clash between indigenous and foreign bourgeoisies. The conflict remained local, and this indicated that substantial parts of the international order still favoured peace over war. But it was a period of peace during which military expenditures were growing rapidly.

Events in France represented another opportunity for Mattick to analyse the left's relationship to international developments.<sup>5</sup> The French Socialist and Communist Parties accomplished what their German counterparts had been

1 Mattick, 'What Will I Do When America Goes to War?', *Modern Monthly*, September 1935, p. 267.

2 Mattick, 'Current Trends in Czechoslovakia', *ICC*, March 1936. Many articles on international developments also appeared in *Der Freidenker*.

3 Mattick, 'What Will I Do When America Goes to War?', *Modern Monthly*, September 1935, p. 267.

4 Mattick, 'Notes on the War Question', *ICC*, January 1936.

5 Mattick, 'The Defeat in France', *ICC*, July 1936; Mattick, 'One Year "People's Front" in France', *ICC*, October 1937. Seidman 1991, chs. 10–3.

unable to do; that is, they formed a coalition to take control of the government. Mattick, however, considered this a major setback for the working class. The coalition was hesitant to alienate the middle class voters on whom it depended. Unwilling to tax heavily or to partially expropriate the business class (since this would worsen economic conditions), the coalition (Popular Front) responded cautiously to the strike wave that its own success fostered. The coalition partners were major players in the negotiations that ended the strikes, during which radical left newspapers were banned and strikers arrested.

The October 1936 *ICC* was devoted in its entirety to Mattick's analysis of the events in Spain. Spain resembled Russia in 1917, in which both a small working class and an underdeveloped capitalist sector confronted an overwhelmingly agrarian order (albeit for distinct reasons). The Catholic Church was the country's largest landowner, with additional holdings in industry and banking. Consequently, the anti-clerical campaign by the anarchists took on revolutionary significance. The army and government bureaucracy were powerful institutions that maintained their standing independently of the elected government. Landowners preserved their privileges by suppressing any modernising trends that challenged their sway over property and the peasantry. A series of abrupt changes had occurred since the beginning of the decade, resulting in a chaotic political situation. These included the fall of the monarchy in 1931 and its replacement by a republican government; agrarian reforms that nonetheless led to onerous payments to landowners that the peasants could not afford; the election of a conservative government in 1933 that brutally suppressed a working-class rebellion the following year; and finally, an elected Popular Front in early 1936 that included republicans, socialists, and communists and was supported by the anarcho-syndicalists.

The coalition government could not control the social situation—the expropriations of land, the assassinations of priests and monks (eventually over 700), burning of churches (nearly every church in Barcelona), strikes over wages and working conditions, widespread collectivisation of factories and farms, and street battles between workers and fascists. When a fascist-military uprising took place in July 1936, its leaders overestimated the chances for success, and civil war ensued. Wherever the labour movement was strong, the revolt was suppressed. The government was compelled to form workers' militias in order to defend itself, which also meant giving guns to the working class.

Mattick assessed the strengths and aims of the coalition participants. The revolutionary forces seemed headed for either a Russian-style state capitalism or state management of the economy as introduced by the fascists in Italy. Fascist success in Spain was feared by Great Britain, France, and Russia alike, who all saw that victory might hasten a broader conflict for which they



were not prepared. That Great Britain and France were simultaneously non-interventionist in policy but anti-fascist in rhetoric, Mattick summarised with the expression: 'in order to prevent deeds, it was necessary to make phrases'.<sup>6</sup> Mattick suspected that the two countries would tolerate a fascist Spain as long as their Mediterranean interests were protected. Russia supplied arms to its followers in the republican camp to counteract the flow of weapons, equipment, and advisors from Germany and Italy to the fascists. The amount of aid was just enough to deprive the anarcho-syndicalists of their social revolution, yet not quite adequate to keep the Popular Front afloat. Better that Spain emerged exhausted and useless to its allies, even if fascistic.

That the working class was divided into anarchists, syndicalists, communists, and socialists was not special to Spain: 'throughout the world, the weakness of the present-day labour movement is manifested among other things in its organisation and ideological fragmentation'.<sup>7</sup> Mattick sided with the anarcho-syndicalists, despite his criticisms of them. He thought it a mistake to participate in the anti-fascist coalition since this presupposed the suspension of revolutionary aims, without which cooperation was impossible. Having abandoned long-held principles, the anti-political stance of the anarcho-syndicalists made them an awkward junior partner to the left political parties, and they were outmanoeuvred at critical junctures. Mattick drew attention to the dubious role played by the syndicalist unions that overshadowed the workers' councils which had collectivised workplaces and introduced direct self-management. Mattick wrote about the anarcho-syndicalists that they 'spoke anarchistically and acted bolshevistically, that is, capitalistically'.<sup>8</sup> The odds for success were overwhelmingly arrayed against the few hundred thousand Spanish revolutionists. No matter who won, the fascists or the Popular Front, they would be crushed.

Russia featured prominently in Mattick's analyses of the French Popular Front and the Spanish Civil War because of the way that its national interests helped to quell revolutionary potential in both situations. His full-scale analysis of Russia's foreign policy appeared in a long essay that surveyed bolshevik

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6 Mattick, 'The Civil War in Spain!' *ICC*, October 1936, p. 27. Orwell 1952; Borkenau 1971; Bookchin 1977, pp. 254–301; Pinta 2012. For the comparison between Russia and Spain: Karl Korsch, 'Economics and Politics in Revolutionary Spain', *Living Marxism*, May 1938; Mattick, 'The Concentration Camp Grows', *Living Marxism*, April 1939; Jones 1999, p. 96ff, p. 125ff.

7 Mattick, 'The Civil War in Spain!', *ICC*, October 1936, p. 13.

8 Mattick, 'The Barricades Must Be Torn Down: Moscow-Fascism in Spain', *ICC*, August 1937, p. 28. Mattick, 'Civil War in Catalonia', *ICC*, June 1937. Mattick, 'Review of D.A. Santillan. *After the Revolution: Economic Reconstruction in Spain Today*', *ICC*, October 1937.

policy from 1917 until the mid-1930s. Whereas the industrial proletariat within which the party was anchored had been the counterweight to the independent peasantry during the 1920s, the collectivisation of agriculture led to a shift in internal priorities. Progress, in stalinist terms, presupposed the elimination of any restrictions. The remnants of the original Bolshevik Party were sacrificed as the state capitalist system was further consolidated and independent producers, who the party had embraced previously as natural allies of the working class, were eradicated. The economic transformations within Russia, particularly the collectivisation of the peasantry, provided the basis to understand the purges, forced confessions, and execution of the bolshevik Old Guard.<sup>9</sup>

In the United States, Mattick's focus remained the economy.<sup>10</sup> In a series of published and unpublished manuscripts, he documented the government's imprint during these years: the construction of nearly 500 airports, 11,000 public buildings, 19,000 bridges, and 3300 dams; a nationwide drive to create proper systems for roadside drainage, sewers, and water mains; and a massive production of clothing and food for the unemployed and destitute. Public financing accounted for the employment of 30,000 teachers and a proliferation of theatre, music, and art productions. He also drew attention to the fact that when spending was curtailed because of inflationary fears, the economy collapsed once again. By late 1937, production levels had again sunk below the pre-1929 heights. The recovery had lasted a short two years.<sup>11</sup>

A huge influx of workers into the unions was then taking place—some five million since the low point of 1933, nearly tripling union membership nationwide.<sup>12</sup> This time around, strikebreaking seemed more prevalent—perhaps, as Mattick conjectured, because petty criminals gravitated towards the unions now that Prohibition and the illegal distribution of liquor had ended.<sup>13</sup> The unions were a sorry spectacle. Many strikes were fought not for better wages or improved working conditions but simply for union recognition—hard-fought campaigns that constituted moral victories but provided nothing concrete for anyone except the union officials. Jurisdictional

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9 Mattick, 'The Development of Soviet Russia's Foreign Policy', *ICC*, March 1936, pp. 26–9.

10 Schivelbusch 1998.

11 Mattick, *Unemployment and Relief in Illinois* (HSH: Mattick, unpublished manuscript), pp. 287–8, pp. 326–7; Mattick, 'Welcome the Depression', *ICC*, March 1938.

12 Bernstein 1970, p. 769ff.; Piven and Cloward 1979, pp. 133–47.

13 Mattick, 'Racketeering: A Phase of Class Conflict', *ICC*, August 1937. An estimated 200,000 workplace spies were used to ward off union drives during the late 1920s. Bernstein 1966, pp. 149–50, p. 338ff.

squabbles were another hindrance. The west coast maritime strike involved 65,000 longshoremen and sailors, where shipping was one of the few industries in which the Communist Party had real influence. Yet the Communists sided with the arch-conservative American Federation of Labor (AFL) rather than the industrial unionists in the newly-formed Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO). Wage earners were thus pitted against other wage earners while conducting a campaign against ship-owners, strikebreakers, paid thugs, and National Guardsmen for control of the strike and the union.<sup>14</sup>

For industries that employed thousands of workers who performed more or less interchangeable jobs, the industrial unions of the CIO were a better fit than the craft- and skill-oriented unions of the AFL.<sup>15</sup> Industry-wide unions were finally finding acceptance within the bourgeoisie because of their ability to curb competition by eliminating the low wages that characterise cut-throat competition. The sit-down strikes, on the other hand, represented something entirely new. Mostly occurring in these same CIO-oriented branches of industry, employees simply refused to leave their workplaces as a means to force concessions. Mattick considered the sit-down strike 'the first real step in revolutionary development since the establishment of workers councils at the end of the last war', a view widely shared within the radical left.<sup>16</sup> During 1937, 477 sit-down strikes involved 398,177 workers; in Chicago alone, there were sixty strikes during a two-week period in March. But the wave of unrest proved to be short lived. Already by the end of 1937, the United Auto Workers union, the CIO, and dissident communists (Lovestonites) helped break strikes by disciplining employees with fines, suspensions, and dismissals, the first step towards ridding the unions of leftist influence.

### Opportunities

No one knows anymore today what is right, left, up or down. Fascists fight against Fascism, communists against Communism. Politics has apparently reached the level of Gertrude Stein.<sup>17</sup>

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14 Mattick, 'The Maritime Strike', *ICC*, January 1937.

15 Mattick, 'The End of a Strike!', *ICC*, March 1937; Mattick, 'Much Ado About Nothing: The Future of the CIO', *ICC*, August 1937; Mattick, 'The CIO Breaks a Strike', *ICC*, December 1937.

16 Mattick, 'New Strikes—New Methods', *ICC*, February 1937, p. 30. Bernstein 1970, p. 499ff.

17 Mattick, 'Election Year', *ICC*, April 1936, p. 3.

New opportunities appeared and disappeared in rapid succession at mid-decade, with no discernible trend for Mattick personally. Hermon Gersom at *International Review* solicited him for contributions while *ICC* ran promotional blurbs on its behalf.<sup>18</sup> The journal reprinted essays that had appeared elsewhere, especially in the European left press. Mattick suggested ‘a series of analytical articles on present-day marxism’.<sup>19</sup> His ‘Marxism and the Brookings Institution’ was a survey of economic theory and economic developments from the ‘profitless prosperity’ of the 1920s to the so-called ‘boom’ of the mid-1930s.<sup>20</sup> Many people found the essay difficult to follow, although Garman was supportive: ‘it contains some solid thinking, and administers a very much deserved drubbing to those bourgeois economists who try to appropriate an occasional marxian idea without ever becoming marxists’.<sup>21</sup> Before *International Review* ceased publication in early 1939, it published several substantial reviews by Mattick.

Lewis Corey solicited Mattick for his new journal, *Marxist Quarterly*, also aimed at a broad spectrum of the left.<sup>22</sup> This represented a fresh opportunity to write about Grossman. Hook, however, was a co-editor and warned: ‘if the things you write are too *schrullenhaft* [cranky], you will be frankly informed of the fact’. What shaped up was a possible debate between Mattick and Hook, after Mattick referred to Hook’s article in the inaugural issue as ‘not worth the paper it is written on’.<sup>23</sup> But *Marxist Quarterly* folded after only three issues, before anything by Mattick ever appeared.

Pannekoek, not Mattick, was solicited for still another new marxist journal, *Science & Society*. Given the journal’s orientation towards the Communist Party, Mattick attributed Pannekoek’s inclusion to the fact that his views were not widely known in the United States. Mattick chided Pannekoek in terms reminiscent of the things Pannekoek had said about *ICC*: ‘we all liked your article in *Science & Society*’, he wrote, but he hoped that Pannekoek’s upcoming contribution to *ICC* ‘would deal with a question which has more than theoretical

18 ‘This magazine cannot be too highly recommended’. *ICC*, February 1937, p. 43.

19 George Holland to Mattick, 18 October 1935; Herman [Gersom] to Mattick, 24 June 1937; Gilbert, ‘International Review’, pp. 546–7.

20 Mattick, ‘Marxism and the Brookings Institution’, *International Review*, August 1937. For background: Soule 1964.

21 Allen Garman to Mattick, 10 May 1937. From Scribner’s: Jo H. Chamberlin to Mattick, 7 May 1937; from the Frankfurt School: Leo Löwenthal to Mattick, 2 July 1937, with enclosure by GM; Anton Pannekoek to Mattick, 21 December 1937 (IISH: Pannekoek); Mattick to Anton Pannekoek, 15 January 1938 (IISH: Pannekoek).

22 Lewis Corey to Mattick, 29 July 1936.

23 Sidney Hook to Mattick [April 1937] [brackets added]; Sidney Hook to Mattick, 29 July 1937.

value'.<sup>24</sup> Even more, Mattick criticised *Marxist Quarterly* and *Science & Society* because they catered to non-workers, precisely what concerned Pannekoek about *ICC*.<sup>25</sup>

For European journals, Mattick sent versions of pieces that appeared in *ICC* and *Der Freidenker*. For *Rote Revue*, the radical social democratic journal from Zurich, Mattick published articles on the 1936 Presidential election. The small business owners who attacked Roosevelt in vehement terms knew that taxes limit profits and social legislation interferes with the ability to adjust wages and benefits to the vicissitudes of the business cycle. At the same time, Roosevelt's reform of the armaments industry meant a thorough-going rationalisation by eliminating smaller, less productive firms and introducing better technology and processes into the ones that remained. Behind a seeming disarmament, as Mattick pointed out, was a preparation for war.<sup>26</sup>

A spindly debate with Max Nomad over the role of intellectuals brought to the fore the tensions between Mattick and his New York colleagues. Nomad relied heavily on social-psychological explanations to justify his pessimism regarding left politics.<sup>27</sup> Panic amongst downwardly-mobile intellectuals, in his estimation, accounted for the perversion of the socialist movement, the rise of fascism, and the development of Russian state capitalism.<sup>28</sup> Mattick recast parts of Nomad's thesis, explaining that intellectuals occupy positions within society that gave them a broad overview of human interaction. Underlying their aspirations to make society function more efficiently was a desire to improve and secure their own social standing.

For Mattick, fascist Germany and communist Russia were exceptional occurrences, not the harbingers of things to come. Fascism resulted because capital

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24 Mattick to Anton Pannekoek, 15 January 1938 (IISH: Pannekoek); Anton Pannekoek to Mattick, 13 February 1938 (IISH: Pannekoek); Mattick to Anton Pannekoek, 18 March 1938 (IISH: Pannekoek).

25 Mattick, 'Two New Marxian Quarterlies', *ICC*, February 1937.

26 Mattick, 'Election Year', *ICC*, April 1936; Mattick, 'The Era of Good Feeling: Roosevelt's Second Term', *ICC*, January 1937.

27 Max Nomad to Mattick, 30 April 1934; Max Nomad to Mattick, 18 August 1934; Adolf to Mattick, 28 October 1935; Wendelin Thomas to Mattick, 20 July 1936; Walter Boelke to Mattick, 6 January 1962.

28 Nomad, 'Forward' and 'Conclusion', in Nomad 1932; Nomad, 'Capitalism Without Capitalists', *Scribner's Magazine*, June 1934; Mattick, 'Dictatorship of the Intellectuals? Critical Remarks on the Reflections of Max Nomad', *ICC*, June 1936; Nomad, 'Masters of Tomorrow', *ICC*, September 1936; Mattick, 'Max Nomad's "Masters of Tomorrow"', *ICC*, November 1936; Mattick, 'Review of Max Nomad. *Apostles of Revolution*', *Living Marxism*, June 1939; Borgognone 2003.

had been unable to make concessions to other social classes and thus supported a bureaucratic dictatorship over everyone. In Communist Party analysis, the fascists were the servants of the capitalist class; for the Communists, it was the success of the working class that had prompted big business to turn to the fascists. In Mattick's view, however, it was the relative weakness of all social groups and political parties that paralyzed society and fostered fascism as a solution to capitalism's problems. Similarly, 'state capitalism is not an indication of new capitalist life, but a sign of its weakness. These tendencies stand at the beginning and at the end of capitalism, at the two weak points of its development.'<sup>29</sup> The world crisis had brought matters to a head. In other words, fascism and state capitalism were the products of the crisis conditions, not their solution. That Nomad criticised workers' councils as a form of elite rule reflected his lumping of council communists and bolsheviks into the same bag.<sup>30</sup> Bitter relations ensued, with Nomad later referring to Mattick as a 'super-marxist' and 'maniac' who was 'one of the top leaders of a queer little sect'.<sup>31</sup>

During 1936 Mattick composed a lengthy theoretical assessment of the unemployment movement, *Arbeitslosigkeit und Arbeitslosenbewegung in den USA 1929–1935* [*Unemployment and the Unemployed Movement in the USA*], which he submitted to Leo Löwenthal and Max Horkheimer at the Frankfurt School. Horkheimer was aware of Mattick's precarious financial situation and realised that a book publication could alter his future. He considered Mattick 'quite talented', but he suspected that the manuscript wasn't ready for release.<sup>32</sup> Löwenthal sent \$100 as a retainer (half of what Grossman received as a monthly stipend), pending a final decision.<sup>33</sup> Grossman did what he could on Mattick's behalf. Grossman's précis for Horkheimer ran a full four pages: 'the attraction of the work lies in the theoretical mastery of the subject based on ample empirical facts'. In sum, 'the work is a masterful, gripping analysis'.<sup>34</sup> Löwenthal regretted that Mattick could not participate in the discussion circles they organised in New York, even offering to pay Mattick in return for

29 Mattick, 'Dictatorship of the Intellectuals?', *ICC*, June 1936, p. 31. For a similar analysis of fascism: SP [Helmut Wagner], 'German Fascism on the Offensive', *Living Marxism*, May 1938.

30 Max Nomad, 'Masters of Tomorrow', *ICC*, September 1936, pp. 31–37.

31 Nomad 1964, pp. 228–30.

32 Max Horkheimer to Henryk Grossman, 8 December 1936 (MHA VI–9, 337).

33 Leo Löwenthal to Mattick, 5 September 1936; Max Horkheimer to Mattick, 10 October 1936; Henryk Grossman to Max Horkheimer, 19 December 1936 (Horkheimer 1995a); Henryk Grossman to Mattick, 10 February 1937; Leo Löwenthal to Mattick, 20 September 1937.

34 Henryk Grossman to Max Horkheimer, 2 February 1937 (MHA).

manuscripts for their reading circle. He especially appreciated Mattick's expertise on recent developments within economic theory.

Now that they were in the United States, the Frankfurt School members were rapidly rethinking their situation, which worked against Mattick. Even though the group's endowment supported a few hundred people during its first decade in the United States, primarily academics and students, its finances were floundering, and this led to more parsimonious decisions than those that had been made previously. There was also considerable nervousness among the members of the group about their émigré status, with their marxism and their Jewishness viewed as liabilities. Theodor Wiesengrund became Theodor Adorno. The new title for Grossman's book dropped all reference to economic breakdown; it became *The Law of Accumulation in Capitalist Society*. Articles in their journal avoided the mention of 'marxism' and 'communism', substituting instead 'dialectical materialism' and the 'materialist theory of society'.<sup>35</sup> Within this constellation, Grossman and Korsch were marginalised; there was a bias against anyone with the potential to attract unfavourable attention. Mattick offered the manuscript on unemployment elsewhere, but without success.<sup>36</sup> Parts appeared in *ICC*, *Der Freidenker*, and *Sozialistische Tribüne* [*Socialist Tribune*], the latter a refuge publication in Paris, but otherwise the manuscript remained unpublished for the next thirty years.<sup>37</sup> This fate was an ongoing source of bitterness.

Mattick's personal circumstances improved greatly when in June 1937 he began employment with the Federal Writers Project (FWP), for which he composed manuscripts on the history of Illinois. Employment through the FWP was something special since its employees received considerably higher stipends than ordinary workers—in Mattick's case, \$94 monthly versus the near-starvation sum of \$54. Nomad was also a project writer and perhaps the

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35 Palmier 2006, pp. 556–8; Jay 1996, p. 34, p. 44, pp. 114–15, pp. 167–8, p. 205, p. 225ff; Wheatland 2009, p. 214ff.; Conversation with Paul Mattick, Jr., 6 August 2004.

36 Emil Oprecht to Mattick, 15 March 1937.

37 *Sozialistische Tribüne* was the supplement to *Sozialistische Warte*, which also published a response to Mattick's prediction that unemployment was long-term and without solution. Martin Hart to Mattick, 10 April 1937; Henryk Grossman to Mattick, 18 July 1937; Martin Hart to Mattick, 22 December 1937. Mattick, 'Notes on the Question of Unemployment', *ICC*, January 1937; Mattick, 'Arbeitslosigkeit in USA', *Sozialistische Tribüne*, 15 April 1937 and 1 May 1937; Klein, 'Wahrsagerkunststück', *Sozialistische Warte*, 1 October 1937; Mattick, 'Wahrsagen und Voraussagen', *Der Freidenker*, 10 July and 7 August 1938; Mattick, 'Wahrsagen und Voraussagen', *Rote Revue*, August 1938, pp. 428–34.

inspiration for Mattick's application. Garman, ever caustic in his comments, thought that 'the New Deal was something of a blessing' for Mattick.<sup>38</sup>

Roughly three hundred people worked on the Illinois project (some 5000 nationally). The end result was the tourist book, *The WPA Guide to Illinois*, and a series of regionally-focused publications.<sup>39</sup> Mattick worked on an early iteration of the project that had a documentary-historical focus. Frieda helped with the research and writing. What they produced was a type of local history from a historical materialist perspective, with some information drawn from Mattick's many book reviews. However, objections from business groups shifted the project's orientation from radical history to tourism, and nothing that Mattick submitted was included in the final publications.

Another FWP manuscript from Mattick, and the source of still further disappointment, was *Unemployment and Relief in Illinois*, a 362-page historical-sociological counterpart to the theoretically-inclined *Arbeitslosigkeit und Arbeitslosenbewegung*. This manuscript followed a plan that had been worked out with the director of the Illinois Project, a professor at Northwestern University.<sup>40</sup> Mattick had great hopes for the manuscript. It included vast amounts of data, numerous tables, detailed discussions of the welfare system, and examples drawn from his family's experiences during the depression regarding rent subsidies, short time (reduced work hours), and work camps for itinerants. Excessively long quotes were a tip-off, however, that Mattick at some point had become bored with the task. It evolved into an exceedingly dry and long-winded technical report, a tedious bureaucratic history with little of interest to anyone.<sup>41</sup>

Frieda's occasional employment helped support the family. Sometimes her earnings were their only source of income. For the Frankfurt School institute and for various health industry practitioners in Chicago, she conducted translations. She also tried a short stint as a Berlitz language instructor.<sup>42</sup> The family moved in mid-1935 and then twice again during 1937, the last time to an apartment in a beautiful 1880s brownstone where they remained for the next two years.<sup>43</sup> Mattick's step-son returned home intermittently. His jaunts away took him to a work relief camp in Kansas, where he worked as a labourer

38 Allen Garman to Mattick, 10 May 1937.

39 Federal Writers' Project 1983; Penkower 1977, p. 62ff, p. 160. Mattick's manuscripts can be found at the IISH.

40 John T. Frederick to Mattick, 6 June 1938.

41 Mattick, *Unemployment and Relief in Illinois* (IISH: Mattick, unpublished manuscript).

42 FBI File: #101-5672, 22 June 1945.

43 Addresses: 1701 Crilly Court; 33 East Division Avenue; 729 Roscoe Street.



on a dam-building project, and a fox farm in Wisconsin. He also went on an extended tramping trip to New Orleans and undertook other excursions to Florida, New York, and Detroit. In Chicago, he attempted to complete his high school education, only to discover that he had not taken the correct sequence of courses. Already eighteen years old, he abandoned any further educational plans and did not return to school until after the war.<sup>44</sup> Mattick too travelled frequently; when in New York, Boelke's apartment in Long Island City was his main base.<sup>45</sup>

From Germany, Mattick received news from his sisters, all of whom still lived in Berlin.<sup>46</sup> His mother was particularly sensitive to his comments, and his sisters did not hesitate to reprimand him for reprimanding her. One sister had a tumultuous relationship with a married man. Another sister spent extended periods unemployed with only occasional, temporary positions. Lung ailments plagued all of them, the same aftereffects of the tuberculosis and bronchial infections from which they had suffered as children. Lisbeth spent months at a sanatorium she could barely afford. One doctor blamed her nervous stomach on too much air swallowed while breathing. Noteworthy about the letters was the lack of any mention whatsoever of the political situation.

Mattick applied once again for a Guggenheim fellowship during 1937, after he was encouraged to do so by its officials.<sup>47</sup> Max Nomad had been among the previous recipients, as was George Grosz, who had once figured prominently in left-radical circles in Berlin.<sup>48</sup> Letters in support of Mattick's application came from V.F. Calverton, Max Horkheimer, Ernst Nobs (from *Rote Revue*), Kurt Lewin (University of Iowa professor known through Korsch), Julian Gumperz (Frankfurt School official), Theodor Hartwig, H.H. Fisher (Stanford University professor whose student Mattick mentored), and Ernest Lauer (Northwestern University professor).<sup>49</sup>

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44 Laub 1983, pp. 275–7.

45 Mattick to Max Horkheimer, 23 November 1936 (MHA).

46 Else Mattick to Mattick, 1 March 1934; Lisbeth Mattick to Mattick, 9 February 1935.

47 Mattick to Max Horkheimer, 29 October 1937 (MHA).

48 Nomad was listed under the name Max Norton.

49 Mattick to Max Horkheimer, 5 October 1936 (MHA); Max Horkheimer to Mattick, 10 October 1936; V.F. Calverton to Mattick, 20 October 1936; Ernst Nobs to Mattick, 23 November 1936; H.H. Fisher to Mattick, 24 November 1936; Ernest Lauer to Mattick, 27 December 1936; Julian Gumperz to Mattick, 1 November 1937; H.H. Fisher to Mattick, 3 November 1937; Theodor Hartwig to Mattick, 22 November 1937; Kurt Lewin to Mattick, 20 December 1937 (as an undergraduate, Sybille Korsch worked in the Lewin household; later he served as her doctoral dissertation advisor).

This time Mattick proposed to write two books. The first would be a 200–250 page account, *Unemployment in the United States*, based on the work he had done for the Frankfurt School and the FWP. But he also planned a second, ‘somewhat larger book’ that was ‘designed to be an objective analysis of the present socio-economic situation of the world and to draw therefrom conclusions regarding the further tendencies in the line of economic development’.<sup>50</sup> No one was optimistic about his chances for success. Grossman referred to the selection committee as a ‘closed group’ that preferred established scholarly paradigms and not the originality represented by autodidacts like Mattick.<sup>51</sup> The Guggenheim director questioned Mattick’s ability to use statistics and quizzed Grossman, who had since relocated to New York City. Grossman had not yet reneged on plans to visit Mattick in Chicago and was asked to report back after his trip. Pannekoek, the eternal pessimist, pointed out that even though the new application omitted any mention of marxism, it was a ruse that would not fool anyone since Mattick’s previous submission remained on file.<sup>52</sup> Mattick admitted that ‘the chance to get the fellowship is a very slight one’. Nonetheless, he told Pannekoek, ‘trying doesn’t hurt’.<sup>53</sup> The result was as predicted.<sup>54</sup>

Mattick’s relationship with Grossman also came to a sudden stop. During the previous years of exile in Paris and London, Mattick had been one of the few people genuinely interested in his work, and Grossman had been full of enthusiasm when he first arrived in New York, eager to meet and converse.<sup>55</sup> It is unclear exactly what transpired, but Grossman seems to have been warned off by others in the Frankfurt School crowd. Grossman studiously avoided Korsch as well, although he would soon share a similar fate vis-à-vis the Frankfurt School.

With Allen Garman, friendship worked best at a distance. His help with translations and editing had been indispensable, but it was also conducted through the mail. When Mattick visited Washington DC, their time together was awkward and strained, to their great disappointment.<sup>56</sup> Garman’s

50 Mattick, ‘Fellowship Application, October 1937’, (MHA).

51 Henryk Grossman to Mattick, 29 October 1936. Henryk Grossman to Mattick, 10 February 1937; Henryk Grossman to Mattick, 19 November 1937.

52 Anton Pannekoek to Mattick, 21 December 1937.

53 Mattick to Anton Pannekoek, 15 January 1938 (IISH: Pannekoek).

54 Charles Easton Rothwell to Mattick, 12 May 1938.

55 Henryk Grossman to Mattick, 5 November 1937; Henryk Grossman to Mattick, 19 November 1937; Kuhn 2007, p. 179ff.

56 Allen Garman to Mattick, 3 April 1935.

domestic situation was not good either. He communicated to Mattick plans to abandon his wife and three children, plans he reanimated every so often and then abandoned just as frequently. His wife was aware of this only because she happened to read a letter from Mattick.<sup>57</sup> Garman's attempts to woo Frieda, notwithstanding Mattick's offer to stand aside, only complicated matters, since Frieda was not willing to countenance this sort of intrigue.<sup>58</sup> Then suddenly and without warning, Garman's outlook on life changed: 'our intellectual paths seemed to have diverged so widely that we could scarcely be said any longer to have much in common'.<sup>59</sup> He rediscovered Roman Catholicism and became, in his words, 'a thoroughgoing reactionary'. With his house under foreclosure, Garman was more isolated than ever, but he was at least learning to take some pleasure in his children, now that they had reached adolescence.<sup>60</sup> Mostly, though, he had 'no other desire but to be let alone and forgotten'.<sup>61</sup>

Colleagues sent people to Mattick for guidance. Two Kansas brothers heard about him from Calverton, who was on a speaking and fundraising tour with a stop at the state university where one of them was a philosophy graduate student. They wrote: 'we farm wheat and hope for the revolution to come before we starve. We're not very optimistic about it!'<sup>62</sup> A professional relationship developed with H.H. Fisher, a Stanford University professor whose research focused on the Bolsheviks, and to whom Mattick had been referred by Lewis Corey. Mattick advised him of relevant left-wing publications and forwarded the same for the Hoover Library collection. Fisher's doctoral student, Charles Easton Rothwell, was in touch about his thesis on Rosa Luxemburg, for which Mattick provided a reading list as well as contact information to Korsch, Grossman, Herman Gersom, Leo Löwenthal, and Julian Gumperz, pending Rothwell's cross-country trip.<sup>63</sup> Mattick also provided explanations of the different interpretations given to Luxemburg by Korsch, Grossman, and himself.<sup>64</sup> Rothwell's self-description had him belonging 'in the category of academicians

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57 2832 Brentwood Road NE, Washington DC; Allen Garman to Mattick, 1 June 1935.

58 Allen Garman to Mattick, 28 June 1937; Allen Garman to Mattick, 22 July 1937.

59 Allen Garman to Mattick, 11 July 1938.

60 Allen Garman to Mattick, 3 December 1938.

61 Allen Garman to Mattick, 18 June 1939.

62 Glenn Austin to Mattick, 8 February 1936.

63 H.H. Fisher to Mattick, 24 March 1936; H.H. Fisher to Lewis Corey, 16 April 1936 (Columbia); H.H. Fisher to Mattick, 22 April 1936; H.H. Fisher to Mattick, 24 November 1936.

64 Charles Easton Rothwell to Mattick, 27 July 1937; Charles Easton Rothwell to Mattick, 19 August 1937; Henryk Grossman to Mattick, 5 November 1937; Charles Easton Rothwell to Mattick, 8 November 1937; Charles Easton Rothwell to Mattick, 23 November 1937; Karl Korsch to Mattick, 15 July 1938 (*Gesamtausgabe*).

who study about the marxist movement without being in it', even though, Rothwell admitted, 'Luxemburg had a name for such people which was not very complimentary'.<sup>65</sup> In his dissertation, only the professors were cited—Pannekoek, Grossman, and Korsch, despite the many-sided assistance given by Mattick.<sup>66</sup>

### *Living Marxism*

The New Deal may not be called a revolution, but it indicated a revolutionary change of attitudes in almost all the social questions and most profoundly in that of social security brought to the fore by large-scale unemployment. This attitude was experienced, either in a positive or negative sense, by all layers of society and created a set of new interests which, after being firmly established, will not allow a return to conditions prior to 1933.<sup>67</sup>

By the end of 1937, it was clear that the *ICC*—both the group and the journal—needed significant changes. As a mimeographed magazine, it was never possible to produce more than 1000 copies; otherwise it was just too much work. The norm lay in the range of 750–800. The core group was slowly shrinking. Some twenty-five people remained active in Chicago a year later, ten in New York, six in Gulfport MS, and a few isolated individuals elsewhere.<sup>68</sup> Yet the subscriber base kept expanding. This meant printing the journal rather than doing it themselves. Mattick wondered whether a more sophisticated-looking journal might draw an even greater number of subscribers. The journal had also begun to attract a wider range of authors. The first year, late 1934 to 1935, had been sustained by drawing on Mattick's extensive network in the United States and Europe. Mattick and Pannekoek carried the journal the following year. During 1937, it was authors and reprints from European journals with which *ICC* maintained contact.<sup>69</sup> Late that year, Korsch, now in the United States, took an active role in the journal's well-being. This changed everything.

65 Charles Easton Rothwell to Mattick, 24 February 1938.

66 Regarding the European contacts from Mattick: Rothwell 1985, pp. 61–2; Charles Easton Rothwell to Mattick, 30 September 1938.

67 Mattick, *Unemployment and Relief in Illinois* (IISH: unpublished manuscript), p. 113.

68 Mattick to Otto Rühle, 29 September 1938 (IISH: Rühle).

69 For example, the British journal *Controversy*. C.A. Smith to Mattick, 20 May 1937; C.A. Smith to Mattick, 29 June 1937.

In exile, dissidents from the German Communist Party kept in contact, regardless of which faction they had represented previously. Somewhat of a *bon vivant* of the left, Korsch distributed *ICC* wherever he visited, and he enticed colleagues to contribute to it. Korsch moved the journal into circles that had been inaccessible to Mattick. The journal's title, however, no longer reflected these altered circumstances. *Living Marxism*, originally conceived as a supplement to *ICC*, came into existence as its replacement with the February 1938 issue. Korsch's articles appeared so frequently that he often used aliases, while Mattick continued to appear anonymously.<sup>70</sup> For those not in the know, Korsch rather than Mattick might have appeared as the central figure. *Living Marxism's* statement of purpose was much more circumscribed than had been the case previously. With *ICC*, the short statement that formed the masthead on the journal's first page summarised the group's orientation towards crisis theory and the politics of the working class. With *Living Marxism*, on the other hand, the statement had been shortened and began with a negative: 'this magazine consciously opposes all forms of sectarianism'. The journal aimed to foster discussion rather than assert a point of view.

Korsch travelled cross-country frequently, between his wife and youngest daughter in Boston and his inamorata, Hanna Kosterlitz, in Seattle. Midway was Mattick in Chicago and his eldest daughter at the University of Iowa. Korsch was duly impressed by his new colleague: 'Paul Mattick surprised me with his liveliness and extraordinary capacity for work. The sectarian is only a small, if also unshakable, part of the man. He is also well-known and well-respected in Chicago!'<sup>71</sup> Mattick arranged numerous speaking engagements for Korsch, who found Mattick's co-workers 'unexpectedly lively theoretically and personally particularly nice'.<sup>72</sup> Korsch wished that he too had 'a circle of workers with whom you can begin the work of clarification', something 'especially important for your own thinking'.<sup>73</sup> Mattick put Korsch in touch with Joseph Wagner from the IWW, who promised further contacts in New York and San Francisco.<sup>74</sup> Mattick's associate, Carl Berreitter, stepped forward to help Korsch with translations.<sup>75</sup>

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70 Mattick's aliases when he used them: Luenika or M. Korsch used KK, K, Beta, or lh (the last initials of Karl and Korsch).

71 Karl Korsch to Felix Weil, 10 May 1938 (*Gesamtausgabe*).

72 Karl Korsch to Mattick, 27 March 1939 (*Gesamtausgabe*). Karl Korsch to Mattick, 17 March 1939 (*Gesamtausgabe*).

73 Karl Korsch to Mattick, 30 September 1939 (*Gesamtausgabe*).

74 Karl Korsch to Mattick, 3 June 1938 (*Gesamtausgabe*).

75 Karl Korsch to Mattick, 20 September 1938 (*Gesamtausgabe*); Karl Korsch to Mattick, 7 October 1938 (*Gesamtausgabe*).

Korsch made things happen, and this inevitably put him on a collision course with the Frankfurt School principals. The cautiousness that had characterised its members in Germany, where they remained independent of political parties, was heightened in the United States, where they steered clear of political engagement of any sort. Korsch referred to the Frankfurt School's 'double-entry bookkeeping' for theory versus politics. The 'almost exaggerated respect' with which he was treated made him even more suspicious.<sup>76</sup>

Most disturbing of all was Korsch's encounter with Grossman. Korsch wrote to Mattick: 'I have seldom in life gotten so fatal an impression of absolute cowardice and limitless egotism than in the conversation about you that I had with Grossman.' No matter how Korsch attempted to engage Grossman, the response was entirely blasé. Grossman was not interested in contributing financially to *ICC*, nor would he support Korsch's fundraising efforts among the Frankfurt School colleagues. Korsch relayed: 'all this in a very gentle conversation, in which I praised his books much more than I would have otherwise because I already knew that he was extremely vain and susceptible to the most obvious flattery.'<sup>77</sup> Efforts to induce the Frankfurt School group to invest in *Living Marxism* went nowhere.<sup>78</sup> Korsch had such difficulties with these people that despite his request that either Grossman or Horkheimer review his *Karl Marx*, neither did.<sup>79</sup> In the end he relied on Mattick's associate in New York, Walter Boelke, with whom Korsch had grown friendly and who reviewed his book in *Proletarian Outlook*. Mattick did the same in *Living Marxism*. For Boelke and Mattick, this was a throwback to when the two had published corresponding commentaries on Upton Sinclair in *Kampfsignal* and *ICC*.<sup>80</sup>

Among his many talents, Korsch was also a great editor, so much so that he established a glossary of symbols for Mattick's reference. Single, double, and triple exclamation points, for instance, stood for 'I agree,' 'Especially Good,' and 'Outstanding.'<sup>81</sup> Corrections of Mattick's language abilities was something of a Korsch family tradition, with Korsch's eldest daughter sending specific

76 Karl Korsch to Mattick, 20 October 1938 (*Gesamtausgabe*)—an English translation in Kellner 1977, pp. 283–5.

77 Karl Korsch to Mattick, 30 October 1938 (*Gesamtausgabe*).

78 Karl Korsch to Mattick, 26 July 1938 (*Gesamtausgabe*).

79 Karl Korsch to Mattick, 19 January 1939 (*Gesamtausgabe*); Karl Korsch to Max Horkheimer, 19 February 1939 (*Gesamtausgabe*).

80 Walter Bergh [Walter Boelke], 'Review of Karl Korsch. *Karl Marx*', *Proletarian Outlook*, January–February 1939; Mattick, 'Review of Karl Korsch. *Karl Marx*', *Living Marxism*, April 1939.

81 Karl Korsch to Mattick, 1 July 1939 (*Gesamtausgabe*).

suggestions.<sup>82</sup> When Korsch felt that Mattick's analysis had gone astray, he let him know. A piece on imperialist imperatives, in Korsch's opinion, lapsed into bourgeois modes of thought by skipping over the underlying social class relations that drive forward relations between countries.<sup>83</sup>

Deeper disagreements characterised their respective understandings of the European revolutionary tradition. Korsch upheld, while Mattick denied, that the bolshevik tradition had ever represented a revolutionary impulse.<sup>84</sup> For Mattick, Korsch 'never could rid himself altogether of his leninist inclinations'.<sup>85</sup> Korsch, for his part, found Mattick extreme: 'what the relatively most active person of our persuasion, Paul Mattick, does,' he explained to a close friend, 'seems too isolating and short-lived for me to get involved'. Events were often over before Mattick's commentaries were published. Korsch was reminded of the KAPD, which in his opinion had a knack for posing alternatives to situations that had been 'entirely without hope'.<sup>86</sup> Korsch was similarly critical of Pannekoek, whose purism he thought had not aged well. Why accuse the young of repeating the past if they had been too young to have lived through it the first time? For them, there was nothing to repeat.<sup>87</sup>

Pannekoek, ever sceptical about Mattick, assumed that *Living Marxism* would be oriented to intellectuals. Mattick assured him otherwise. The editorial group remained exclusively proletarian; most of them were current or former factory workers. The subscriber base was not much different. Authorship beyond the immediate group was another matter: how else to explain Pannekoek's and Korsch's involvement? Mattick admitted that at times they printed pieces that were not their first choice, but 'better something imperfect than to do nothing'.<sup>88</sup>

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82 Sibylle Korsch to Paul and Frieda Mattick, 5 February 1936 (IISH: Korsch).

83 Karl Korsch to Mattick, 7 December 1938 (*Gesamtausgabe*). Mattick, 'The World War in the Making', *Living Marxism*, November 1938.

84 Karl Korsch to Mattick, 24 January 1939 (*Gesamtausgabe*).

85 Mattick to Maximilien Rubel, 17 March 1962 (Rubel). For instance: Korsch's favourable comments on Lenin, the Russian Revolution, and the proletariat's 'first historical victory'. 'Marxism and the Present Tasks of the Proletarian Class Struggle', *Living Marxism*, August 1938, p. 116.

86 Karl Korsch to Paul Partos, 26 July 1939 (*Gesamtausgabe*). Mattick and Walter Auerbach, 'Security With 403's: What You Ought To Know About Relief and WPA', *Living Marxism*, September 1939.

87 Karl Korsch to Mattick, 30 December 1938 (*Gesamtausgabe*); Karl Korsch to Mattick, 1 January 1939 (*Gesamtausgabe*).

88 Mattick to Anton Pannekoek, 18 March 1938 (IISH: Pannekoek). Anton Pannekoek to Mattick, 13 February 1938 (IISH: Pannekoek); Anton Pannekoek to Mattick, 2 July 1938 (IISH: Pannekoek).

Much had changed in the Mattick—Pannekoek relationship. Pannekoek granted a free hand to edit his work as Mattick saw fit. Mattick arranged with a New York colleague to translate Pannekoek's *Lenin als Philosoph* [*Lenin as Philosopher*]. Five hundred copies had sold quickly in Holland, a second edition was under consideration, and Mattick hoped for similar success with an English edition.<sup>89</sup> It was probably Mattick who arranged the reviews in *Rote Revue* and *Der Freidenker*.<sup>90</sup> Korsch thought very highly of this work—'the first clear and documented philosophical discussion of Lenin' to appear anywhere. An attempt to get the *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung* (the Frankfurt School journal) to publish his own review of it went nowhere, another indication of Korsch's declining status.<sup>91</sup> *Living Marxism* was the fall-back, an English-language review about a German-language book.<sup>92</sup>

Through Korsch, Mattick developed several new and deep friendships. Walter Auerbach was a set designer and filmmaker who fled to Palestine to escape the Nazis.<sup>93</sup> A meagre existence for Auerbach and his partner Ellen [Pit] was carved out through work as children's photographers. Auerbach also participated in a Tel Aviv anti-fascist group. Auerbach suggested to its twenty-odd members a collective study of the Palestinian working classes, Jewish and Arab, but no one was particularly interested. He was perceived as an anarchist by the pro-Soviet communists who dominated the group, and this led to subtle and not-so-subtle manoeuvring to get him excluded. The dividing issue was unconditional anti-fascist support for Arab statehood no matter how fascistic those causes.<sup>94</sup> Auerbach's commentary on this history, composed with just one other colleague, was published by *Living Marxism*.

89 Henk Canne Meijer to Mattick, 19 July 1938 (IISH: Canne Meijer); Henk Canne Meijer to Mattick, 18 December 1938 (IISH: Canne Meijer).

90 Mattick to Anton Pannekoek, 21 June 1939 (IISH: Pannekoek); Mattick to Anton Pannekoek, 21 July 1939 (IISH: Pannekoek); *Rote Revue*, February 1939; *Der Freidenker*, 27 November 1938/11 March 1939.

91 Karl Korsch to Mattick, 24 August 1938 (*Gesamtausgabe*). Karl Korsch to Max Horkheimer, 31 August 1938 (*Gesamtausgabe*); Karl Korsch to Max Horkheimer, 13 September 1938. For the Korsch-Horkheimer correspondence, also: Horkheimer 1995a, Horkheimer 1995b.

92 Korsch, 'Lenin's Philosophy', *Living Marxism*, November 1938.

93 Karl Korsch to Mattick, 15 March 1935 (*Gesamtausgabe*); Conversations with Ilse Mattick, 21–25 May 2005.

94 Walter Auerbach to Mattick, 30 September 1935. Walter Auerbach to Mattick, 30 March 1936. Walter Auerbach, 'The Land of Promise: Report from Palestine', *ICC*, September 1936. This and other articles by Auerbach appeared in the publications of the Dutch councilists as well; see the following: *PIC*, September and November 1936; *Rätekorrespondenz*, December 1936.





8 Paul Mattick in centre photo and each photo on right (with Walter Auerbach); Frieda appears at bottom left (possibly at centre with veil and top right); possibly step-daughter Renee top centre and bottom centre.

Auerbach had special insight into the fascistic tendencies within the Jewish community. In an article that he drafted and which Mattick rewrote, Auerbach described the rudimentary agricultural and industrial conditions that prevailed in Palestine.<sup>95</sup> Even among leftists, class consciousness disappeared when it came to issues of Jews versus Arabs. The Jewish minority in the mid-1930s was allied with British imperialism and opposed agrarian reform, preferring instead to support the Arab landowning aristocracy as a means to acquire land not yet privatised in the hands of the indigenous population. Auerbach noted the coalition of Jewish workers and employers during the Palestinian general strike and rebellion of 1936. Jewish unions even opposed unemployment relief, lest the colonial authorities restrict immigration.<sup>96</sup>

Palestine was not the place for an anti-nationalist and anti-racist like Auerbach, but when he emigrated to the United States in early 1937, his language

95 Abner Barnatan [Walter Auerbach], 'The Brownshirts of Zionism', *ICC*, April 1937.

96 Walter Auerbach to Mattick, 8 March 1938; Walter Auerbach to Mattick, 11 August 1938. Walter Auerbach and Mattick, 'A "Marxian" Approach to the Jewish Question', *Living Marxism*, November 1938.

skills represented a real handicap. His speech was halting, thus inhibiting his interactions with other people. The New York council communist group was small and passive, and he offered Mattick detailed accounts of its meetings and members. The people closest to Mattick—Hans Schaper (from Berlin), Walter Boelke, and Emmy Tetschner—were the most active and the most talented. Auerbach's various initiatives, however, went nowhere, whether it was a plan to create a reading circle, to visit kindred groups around the city, or to sponsor presentations and discussion evenings. When no one at all turned out for a follow-up meeting, nothing more could be done. Neither in Tel Aviv nor New York could he find people with the same interests, commitment, and collectivist sensibility.<sup>97</sup> Mattick, in this regard, was a godsend.

Life took the Auerbachs to Elkins Park PA, near-relatives some twelve miles outside of Philadelphia. It was not all what they hoped for, but they pursued colour photography as a means to enhance their employability. The need to seek customers meant frequent travel, another unpleasant aspect of their new existence. Ellen Auerbach was more successful, but even so, finances were tight enough that Walter gave up book purchases as a means to cut expenses.<sup>98</sup> His experiences with the welfare system became the subject of another co-authored article with Mattick.<sup>99</sup>

Fritz Henssler also emanated from the Korsch crowd in Berlin. Extremely well-to-do, his family's fortune (his father had owned banks) was only peripherally helpful in the United States. Parental money was stuck in Holland and subject to a 50 percent tax rate if shifted elsewhere.<sup>100</sup> Henssler was a lawyer by training, but the lack of transferrable credentials meant employment as a paralegal and a return to law school for another two or three years. Henssler was already contemplating an academic career, and he tended to minimise political involvement until his future was secure. For a brief period, however, Henssler was enormously active as an interlocutor of and emissary for the council communists. Mattick suggested him as an instructor for the Work Peoples College in Deluth MN, an IWW affiliate, but law school came first.<sup>101</sup>

Auerbach was most enthused about *Living Marxism*, except for the title: 'the more the journal lives, the less that will remain from marxism.'<sup>102</sup> Henssler,

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97 Walter Auerbach to Mattick, 21 July 1937.

98 Walter Auerbach to Mattick, 29 May 1939; Walter Auerbach to Mattick, 14 June 1939.

99 Mattick and Walter Auerbach, 'Security With 403's: What You Ought To Know About Relief and WPA', *Living Marxism*, September 1939.

100 Fritz Henssler to Mattick, 24 August 1937.

101 Carl Keller to Mattick, 21 September 1937.

102 Walter Auerbach to Mattick, 19 December 1937. Walter Auerbach to Mattick, 11 August 1938.

on the other hand, sought a publication readily accessible to workers. He approached *International Review* about collaboration, but Korsch cautioned him about hasty commitments. Neither he, Henssler, nor Auerbach were familiar with the American scene, nor had anyone developed the necessary financial or institutional support for such a venture. Korsch suggested a pamphlet series as a stepping stone.<sup>103</sup>

*Living Marxism* struggled to stay afloat. By the end of 1938, it appeared only quarterly. Several issues were postponed because the printer could not be paid, and Korsch quipped about 'a largely stillborn "*Living' Marxism*".<sup>104</sup> Lengthier reviews were published in tiny print to save space, prompting Korsch to reminisce about the time he had been censored by the Bolsheviks for using a typeface ostensibly too small for workers to read.<sup>105</sup> He proposed a return to a mimeographed edition and took up Henssler's suggestions for a bi-weekly current events newsletter, supplemented by a journal that appeared every few months. He wondered if real names for the authors rather than pseudonyms might help.<sup>106</sup>

Auerbach's discouraging reports about the New York councilist group only reinforced Mattick's pessimism about the future.<sup>107</sup> New York's Proletarian Gemeinschaft, within which the councilist subset functioned, began to differentiate between the bourgeois democracies and fascist states, with the former deserving the left's support in times of conflict. This was the pro-war stance that would soon become generalised throughout the left. The Chicago group also had its problems. Mattick found it ingrown and stagnant. Notwithstanding input from his immediate co-workers, he functioned as *Living Marxism's* only editor and made most of the important decisions (as well as orchestrating much of the work). No one else was either willing or capable. Auerbach, who had always thought that magazines made sense only as the collective expression of a group, reconsidered his position and encouraged Mattick to persevere.<sup>108</sup>

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103 Fritz Henssler to Mattick, 24 August 1937.

104 Karl Korsch to Mattick, 7–14 November 1938 (*Gesamtausgabe*).

105 Karl Korsch to Mattick, 26 July 1938 (*Gesamtausgabe*).

106 Auerbach used Abner Barnatan; Henssler used Hans Berger. Karl Korsch to Mattick, 1 January 1939 (*Gesamtausgabe*); Karl Korsch to Mattick, 19 January 1939 (*Gesamtausgabe*). Fritz Henssler, 'The Dominican Republic Solves its Unemployment Problem', *Living Marxism*, May 1938.

107 Walter Auerbach to Mattick, 5 May 1939.

108 Walter Auerbach to Mattick, 4 November 1939.

## End of an Era

### Self-Reflections

Illusions are nourished not by dreaming of the future but by thinking about the past.<sup>1</sup>

Mattick's world grew smaller as the war grew nearer. This meant that 'the beautiful time'—the period in which he had devoted himself to the radical movement—'was over'.<sup>2</sup> Every publication that had opened its pages to him between 1938–40—*Modern Monthly (Modern Quarterly)*, *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung*, *Der Freidenker*, *Rätekorrespondenz*, *Industrial Worker*, *Rote Revue*, *Social Frontier*, *The Plebs*, and *Proletarian Outlook*—ceased to be possibilities for his work for one reason or another. Friends, too, took their leave. For the Europeans, this happened out of necessity because of actual or impending occupation. For acquaintances in the United States, it was a matter of political preference. Common ground and common bonds vanished in the rush to distinguish between democratic and fascistic forms of governance, between lesser and greater evils. For Mattick, nothing much changed in his way of thinking, but he suddenly appeared more intransigent than ever. Which system prevailed was not something that the working class determined, so why take sides?

In late 1938, Mattick tried again for a fellowship, his third attempt with the Guggenheim Foundation. This time, the Guggenheim director reached out to Korsch rather than Grossman for a conversation about the application. Like previously, Mattick proposed a colossal 200,000 word tome (500 pages), albeit with an entirely new topic. Korsch thought that both aspects, the length and the change in direction, would hurt his chances.<sup>3</sup> Horkheimer also deemed the proposal too ambitious, and he recommended that Mattick concentrate on either the history of socialist ideas or the principles of a socialist economy,

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1 Mattick, 'Long Live the War', *Living Marxism*, Fall 1940, p. 44.

2 Buckmiller 1976, p. 58.

3 Karl Korsch to Mattick, 23 December 1938 (*Gesamtausgabe*); Karl Korsch to Mattick, 5 January 1939 (*Gesamtausgabe*). Korsch, Guggenheim Recommendation, 30 December 1938 (IISH: Korsch).

but not both.<sup>4</sup> That the Frankfurt School journal during 1938 and 1939 assigned Mattick to review a series of books and monographs that dealt with New Deal economic policies may have been an attempt to boost his chances. Mattick asked Paul Douglas, the University of Chicago economist whose work he reviewed, and Charles Easton Rothwell, with his newly-minted doctorate, for recommendations.<sup>5</sup> A further request went to the director of the International Institute of Social History in Amsterdam, to whom Mattick offered several manuscripts.<sup>6</sup>

When news of the latest rejection arrived, Korsch told Mattick in no uncertain terms that it had always been hopeless. Less than ten percent of applicants were funded, and Mattick fit none of the most important criteria—no books or book contracts, no academic titles or affiliations, no allegiance to a recognisable oppositional group, and a publication record mostly confined to obscure left-wing journals. Korsch advised him to quit wasting his time. He worried that Mattick sought defeat as a means of confirmation, a tried-and-true pattern for sectarians.<sup>7</sup> None of this advice, however, deterred Korsch from submitting his own Guggenheim application the following year.<sup>8</sup> Mattick, in the meantime, persisted with further solicitations to the Brookings Institution and the American Guild for German Cultural Freedom, all for naught.<sup>9</sup>

Mattick's stipend from the Federal Writers Project ended when new regulations required citizenship for eligibility. Frieda had applied already for citizenship in June 1939, and as Paul lost his position, the Matticks somehow finagled it so that she could assume his appointment.<sup>10</sup> Hired as a Senior Clerk that September, she translated and summarised German publications. This was a matter of great pride for her, since it meant an independent existence,

4 Horkheimer, Guggenheim Recommendation, 6 December 1938 (MHA); Mattick, 'Fellowship Application', (IISH Archiv).

5 Charles Easton Rothwell to Mattick, 11 November 1938; Charles Easton Rothwell to Mattick, 10 December 1938; Paul Douglas to Mattick, 27 December 1938.

6 Mattick to N.W. Posthumus, 10 March 1938 (IISH Archiv); Mattick to N.W. Posthumus, 28 October 1938 (IISH Archiv).

7 Karl Korsch to Mattick, 27 March 1939 (*Gesamtausgabe*).

8 Korsch was equally unsuccessful. Karl Korsch to Felix Weil, 10 May 1938 (*Gesamtausgabe*); Karl Korsch to Mattick, 24 October 1939, (*Gesamtausgabe*); Karl Korsch to Mattick, 28 November 1939 (*Gesamtausgabe*); Karl Korsch to Mattick, 17 March 1941 (*Gesamtausgabe*).

9 Mattick to Sarah Brandes, 12 April 1938 (Deutsches Exilarchiv).

10 Frieda was naturalised on 6 June 1939. Some FBI documents list Paul's naturalisation date as May 1937, other documents as 19 May 1939, but it was 2 May 1940. FBI File: 101-5672, 8 September 1942, 22 June 1945. Mattick to Fairfield Porter, 9 October 1939 (AAA); Pozzoli 1972, p. 11.

something she had never experienced before. She had left home to join her first husband, then returned to her mother before joining Paul in the United States.

These circumstances were more than just good timing, as she and Paul finally made the decision to separate. Their marriage had never been smooth, and both children now lived elsewhere. Renee was twenty-one years old and roomed with friends. Hans, two years younger, had not lived with them on a regular basis for some time already. Back in Chicago with a factory job, he and his mother shared an apartment.<sup>11</sup> For Mattick, finding work as a machinist was no longer so simple. His lungs continued to bother him, and because he hadn't worked in a factory since 1931, his skills were dated. Technology had changed considerably in the intervening years, a process accelerated by the economic crisis. Nor did he own a set of mechanical tools, stolen during one of his many moves but a requirement for skilled employees. These were expensive and difficult to replace since armaments production had begun in earnest. Rudiger Raube waited six months for a micrometer.<sup>12</sup>

A bookstore position came first, arranged by a close colleague. The bookstore meant long hours, an evening shift, and low pay. Clerking from 1.00 until 10.00pm, six days per week, where he stood the entire time, left Mattick too tired to write. The work wasn't entirely without its fun. When he came across a young woman attempting to steal a large book, he advised her that the one she had chosen was not particularly valuable. Another customer was a mobster with a penchant for rare left-wing items, with whom Mattick struck up enough of a rapport to be invited for dinner.<sup>13</sup> Nonetheless, he missed most *Living Marxism* meetings, and the few he organised met irregularly and were badly attended.<sup>14</sup> A study group that examined whether 'our previous theories have proven to be wrong or need supplementation' had only recently begun, as had a second, smaller group of five that dealt with specialised questions and prepared discussions for the larger meetings.<sup>15</sup>

Until recently, Paul had been much slower than Frieda to grasp the importance of citizenship. The police had never taken an interest in him, and the arrest of radicals and deportation of immigrants had not seemed imminent. With the war, however, this situation could change suddenly. Travel restrictions and workplace bans were already becoming realities. Unemployed males

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11 Address: North Clark Street. Laub 1983, p. 277.

12 Mattick to Fairfield Porter, 16 November 1940 (AAA).

13 Conversation with Paul Mattick, Jr., 22 September 2007.

14 Mattick to Fairfield Porter, 10 November 1939 (AAA); Humphrey 1997, p. 9.

15 Mattick to Fairfield Porter, 9 October 1939 (AAA).

under the age of forty were targets of an impending military draft. Mattick was just thirty-six when he was naturalised in March 1940.<sup>16</sup> He moved into a rooming house, where he remained for the next two years.<sup>17</sup> He also stopped writing in German, now that the German-language radical press had mostly ceased to exist.<sup>18</sup>

A new friend, Fairfield Porter, attended a *Living Marxism* meeting. Notwithstanding his familiarity with left politics, Porter was extremely impressed by what he witnessed, and this formed the basis for a strong bond with Mattick. About the meeting, he later said:

I only went once because all the people there are supposed to be proletarians, and I was ashamed to let them know that I was not. Their correspondence begins ‘fellow workers’ and so do their speeches. I write them beginning ‘Gentlemen’.<sup>19</sup>

Porter lived from his family’s estate—they once owned a portion of the central business district (the Loop) in downtown Chicago. A graduate of Harvard University, Porter was nonetheless a sophisticated leftist who had done spells with the Socialists and the trotskysts before becoming dissatisfied with each.<sup>20</sup> Mural painting was his great passion because it allowed him to combine art with political representation. It was an art form, however, that required open space within large buildings. During the 1930s, mural painting depended heavily on federal contracts awarded through the various public works programmes, for which Porter did not qualify since he was ineligible for relief.<sup>21</sup> Nonetheless, art formed a central nexus in the Mattick-Porter friendship, and not long after they met, Porter began a portrait of him.<sup>22</sup>

Porter had a remarkable ability to get Mattick to open up about himself.<sup>23</sup> Porter’s affective life was a source of much anguish. He and his wife raised five children in a marriage that lasted over forty years, but Porter was also bisexual. Porter was quite supportive towards Mattick, then in the midst of his

16 Pozzoli 1972, pp. 10–11.

17 Address: 3624 ½ S. Lake Park Avenue (no longer exists). 1940 Census; Karl Korsch to Mattick, 19 July 1939 (*Gesamtausgabe*); Walter Auerbach to Mattick, 4 November 1939.

18 Mattick to Wieland Herzfelde, 14 December 1965, (AdK: Herzfelde); Mattick to Walter Fähnders, 22 October 1971 (Fähnders).

19 Fairfield Porter to John Wheelwright, no date [13 March 1937] (Leigh 2005, pp. 65–6).

20 Porter toured the Soviet Union in the late 1920s.

21 Spring 2000, pp. 94–8, 113–20.

22 Fairfield Porter to Mattick, 20 November 1939 (Leigh).

23 See the very fine biography: Spring 2000. Also, Leigh 2005.

own existential crisis—recently separated from Frieda and living in a rooming house, no longer employed by the Federal Writers Project, and working at a bookstore that took its toll physically and left him with little time and little pay, despite the long hours. Both the *Living Marxism* group and the journal appeared to be on their last legs. This was a deeply depressing time, and Mattick poured his woes into the correspondence with Porter.

Mattick was frustrated because he wanted to write and ‘play a part in social affairs, for which knowledge is necessary in order to avoid nonsensical actions and do the useful things’. But he also realised his limitations: ‘my whole past is against me. I have no real schooling, all my knowledge was developed unsystematically’. The years of unemployment had made many things possible:

It is not that I really want to escape going to work in a factory or anywhere else, but I want *much more to write* . . . I could cry when I have to go to work and have been forced thus to close a book in which I am vitally interested.

Work took its toll. No longer could he stay awake half the night. ‘Sometimes’, he admitted, ‘it becomes too much, and then I am really very miserable’.<sup>24</sup> He agonised over an essay on dialectics:

I have only one thought in my mind, to run away from it. I feel all my shortcomings in the most brutal manner and am always near complete despair. I procrastinate in order to escape the ordeal.

All of a sudden he discovered that the most elementary of skills were missing: ‘I do not know how to give those ideas that are quite clear in my mind a form that will convince others’.<sup>25</sup>

Throughout this period, Korsch was very supportive: ‘your background in economics and sociology is far better than the average academic—and in their own fields!’<sup>26</sup> He referred to Mattick’s essay, ‘Two Men in a Boat’, as a ‘truly first class accomplishment’.<sup>27</sup> Korsch’s friend, Hanna Kosterlitz, wrote: ‘I am simply enamored with the article from Paul. It is a great achievement. I can’t follow all

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24 Mattick to Fairfield Porter, 16 November 1940 (AAA).

25 Mattick to Fairfield Porter, 1 August 1941 (AAA).

26 Karl Korsch to Mattick, 22 March 1941 (*Gesamtausgabe*).

27 Karl Korsch to Mattick, 10 November 1941 (*Gesamtausgabe*).



the details but it has great power and is highly persuasive. I read it from beginning to end in one breath and could have happily read it all over again'.<sup>28</sup>

Fairfield Porter's mother, also known for her attachment to progressive causes, attended a *Living Marxism* event but was less charitable. Mattick was sure that 'she did not like what I said', since he insisted that a German invasion of Russia was not imminent, and this just days before it occurred:

The trouble with me is that I [do] not really care very much if people understand me or not. Not because I do not care for people, but because I do not think it of great importance that what I have to say should be understood, for somehow I feel that it really doesn't matter very much. As long as I understand it myself I am quite satisfied.<sup>29</sup>

He acknowledged that 'with such an attitude one should not write, at least one should not be interested in publication. But then, nobody and nothing is really consistent'. He explained further:

My attitude is, however, somewhat in line with my political attitude, that is, I do not want to educate because I do not want to be a leader among men. I want to fit myself into the social life of equals, despite all the differentiations among them. Thus first of all *I* want to know, *I* want to be clear as to what should be done and in what way to do it. Others should also know, but also more by their own efforts than by education through others.

He continued:

I have never tried in all my life to *win people over*, to *agitate*; I have only always stated what I thought of something or another, and left the decision to the listener. I do not wish to *influence* but rather to contribute. Thus I was always careless in my speech and my writing. Both were as much made for myself as for others.

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28 Karl Korsch to Mattick, 18 November 1941 (*Gesamtausgabe*).

29 Mattick to Fairfield Porter, 24 June 1941 (AAA) [brackets added]. Fairfield Porter to Mattick, 4 July 1941 (Leigh); Fairfield Porter to Mattick, 27 July 1941 (Leigh). Ruth Porter to Anne Porter, 17 October 1941 (AAA); Ruth Porter to Anne Porter, 25 November 1941 (AAA). Mattick, 'Why and When: Will the U.S. Enter the War?' (IISH: Unpublished Manuscript).

Speaking in public was no better:

Speaking is for me extremely difficult, it was difficult in German, it is almost unbearable in a language which—as I know—I will never really master. I hate to speak. I can speak only like in a trance, i.e. I let an idea get hold of me and carry me away. I see nobody and hear nothing, only hasten along from sentence to sentence like a machine that is wound up.<sup>30</sup>

When the trance broke, he would stutter or just keep quiet.

Mattick's mother was also worried about him. From photos, she thought he looked very thin, a product, she was sure, of too much sitting and writing. That he earned so little from it convinced her all the more that he ought to pursue manual labour. Even though she was chronically ill—swollen feet, constant headaches, troubled sleep patterns—she continued to work as a laundry woman. Physical labour, she told him, had special curative effects, and besides, 'at work one can forget all of one's troubles'.<sup>31</sup>

The immediate crisis for Mattick was prompted by the essay on dialectics, something too ambitious for the time and energy available.<sup>32</sup> In mid-1940, he took an entire week off work to complete it, only to quit work altogether a few weeks later. An average twelve-hour day for seven days straight at his desk resulted in a sixty-page draft with which he was as unhappy as he had been with the previous one. When he began the piece for the fourth time, he blurted out: 'I feel silly'.<sup>33</sup> A break-through book was the only possibility to alter his life dramatically, and that seemed entirely beyond his grasp. He had tried for nearly a decade to produce one and had failed. Mattick confessed: 'the work and I myself are in a mess'.<sup>34</sup> Without six months of uninterrupted time, a book would never materialise.

As Mattick's life fell apart, Porter stepped forward in all sorts of important ways, not only in terms of shared confidences but also as a liaison, helping to maintain relationships with others who were likewise involved with Mattick and *Living Marxism*. During the summer of 1939, the Porters along with Fritz Henssler and his fiancé embarked on an extended cross-country trip; the following summer the Auerbachs spent a month at the Porter summer

30 Mattick to Fairfield Porter, 1 August 1941 (AAA).

31 Mother to Mattick, 7 August 1938. Mother to Mattick, 19 May 1938.

32 Mattick, 'The Marxian Dialectic and its Recent Critics', *New Essays*, Autumn 1942.

33 Mattick to Fairfield Porter, 19 August 1941 (AAA).

34 Mattick to Fairfield Porter, 10 August 1940 (AAA); Karl Korsch to Mattick, 13 November 1940 (*Gesamtausgabe*).

compound off the coast of Maine.<sup>35</sup> Porter had previously lent *Living Marxism* a considerable sum of money. Asking for himself, however, did not sit easily with Mattick, who was 'sickly ashamed . . . even of having had the thought'. He knew that 'relationships with people always suffer as soon as money enters'.<sup>36</sup> Nonetheless, Porter volunteered assistance in this regard too.

Most important was the 'Friends of Paul Mattick' that Porter organised, a handful of close associates who pledged monthly donations while Mattick attempted a book manuscript.<sup>37</sup> A second booster was Dinsmore Wheeler, who had gotten to know the council communist crowd after he moved to Chicago in late 1938. When they met, Wheeler wrote advertising copy for the Wrigley Chewing Gum Company. Mattick, he described, 'is the only radical I've met that seems to have little or nothing of the trimmer, the phony, the jesuit, the politician or the sophist about him'.<sup>38</sup> Thus began an extraordinary friendship that continued without pause for the next four decades, during which Wheeler edited virtually every substantial piece of writing by Mattick. Wheeler adored his new friend. He also served for Mattick as a cautious, careful reader, possessed of the gentlest of touch when he transposed verbs and de-Germanised complex sentence constructions.

A descendent of the Thomas Edison family (Edison's sister) and, like Porter, a graduate of Harvard University, Wheeler was a talented writer, an amateur actor and director, and known for his imitations and hilarious jokes—the life of many a gathering.<sup>39</sup> His real desire, though, was to return to the 200-acre family farm in Huron OH that had been in his family's possession since the 1860s, where he and his brother had dreams of farming collectively and creating a literary and political retreat.<sup>40</sup> Still another booster was Jo Drake Arrington, then practising law in Gulfport MS and the centre of the small council communist

35 That the Porters kept the Maine house cold, for them an indication of health and ruggedness, was noted by the Auerbachs, who viewed such conditions as a sign of war-time deprivation. Spring 2000, p. 124ff, p. 137; Ruth Porter to Fairfield Porter, 10 March 1941 (AAA); Schloss 1984, p. 11ff. (AAA).

36 Mattick to Fairfield Porter, 16 November 1940 (AAA).

37 Fairfield Porter to Mattick, 27 November [1940] (Leigh); Mattick to Fairfield Porter, 2 December 1940 (AAA).

38 Dinsmore Wheeler to Dwight Macdonald, 15 June 1939 (Yale: Macdonald).

39 'The Pyramid Club Presents *Whispering Walls*', Town Hall, Milan OH, 11 February 1937 (Yale: Macdonald); Conversations with Ilse Mattick, 21–5 May 2005; Interview with Jake Faber, 27 June 2005; Interview with Mary Wheeler, 15 March 2008.

40 Even at college, Dinsmore Wheeler and Dwight Macdonald wrote to one another once or twice a week. Nancy Macdonald used the pseudonym Elsie Dinsmore when a member of the trotskyist Socialist Workers Party. Wreszin 1994, pp. 12–13, p. 334, p. 501n.

group (six members) that Mattick mentioned periodically. Arrington was part of the radical legal community in which Fritz Henssler also circulated. In Gulfport, Arrington was a pillar of local society, serving as legal counsel to the Board of Supervisors and frequently called upon to assist the local draft and mobilisation committees, appointments that could not be refused without outing himself as a leftist.<sup>41</sup>

Wheeler was the best of friends with Dwight Macdonald, a co-editor at the independent left *Partisan Review*, with whom he maintained as rigorous a correspondence as with Mattick. They had been friends for over fifteen years when Mattick entered the picture.<sup>42</sup> In truth, Wheeler served as muse for both men. The interaction between Mattick and Macdonald, however, grew complicated very quickly. Porter noted that Macdonald seemed jealous.<sup>43</sup> Twenty years later, Macdonald still asked: ‘what has Paul got that I haven’t?’<sup>44</sup> *Partisan Review* requested a book review from Mattick that was received positively (‘we all like it very much’), but Mattick was warned about its length.<sup>45</sup> Six weeks later came news that the journal had run out of space in the upcoming issue, followed by a further decision that they wouldn’t run the piece even if they had room.<sup>46</sup>

Mattick caught on to this routine with *Partisan Review* and Macdonald right away—soliciting a piece, responding favourably at first, and then slowly finding reasons for its unsuitability before finally deciding that it was unacceptable. An essay on Karl Kautsky quickly became an ‘uncut gem’ in need of a major overhaul. ‘The greatest defect of your writing’, Macdonald told him, ‘is poor organisation: you seem to get inspired by an idea and go off on long digressions which take on an independent importance and destroy the proportion of the whole’. About *Living Marxism*, Macdonald commented: ‘a certain vagueness and an elliptical way of writing bother me more and more.’<sup>47</sup> Mattick told

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41 Arrington later served as President of the Mississippi Historical Society. He may have authored ‘Southern Negroes’, *Living Marxism*, August 1938. Jo Drake Arrington to Mattick, 18 October 1940.

42 Fairfield Porter to Alan Wald, 5 August 1974 (Mattick Jr.).

43 Anne Porter, Transcript Excerpts, 26 September 1938 (AAA); Fairfield Porter to Mattick, 26 October [1940] (Leigh).

44 Dwight Macdonald to Dinsmore Wheeler, 25 May 1962 (Yale).

45 Dwight Macdonald to Mattick, 12 December 1938.

46 Dwight Macdonald to Mattick, 26 January 1939.

47 Dwight Macdonald to Mattick, 29 April 1939. Dwight Macdonald to Mattick, 8 May 1939; Mattick, ‘Karl Kautsky: From Marx to Hitler’, *Living Marxism*, June 1939.

Porter: 'I am now used to this procedure and do not any longer get mad about it'.<sup>48</sup> Finally, after much back-and-forth, *Partisan Review* accepted Mattick's commentary, 'How New is the "New Order" of Fascism?'—a good thing, because Wheeler, somewhat humorously, 'resolved to boycott [Macdonald] forever if it's refused'.<sup>49</sup>

Korsch complained about the same treatment. Asked to review Sidney Hook's latest book, he was told subsequently that it had been assigned elsewhere. Korsch and Mattick thus agreed to review Lawrence Dennis's *Dynamics of War and Revolution* in *Partisan Review* and *Living Marxism*, with Korsch adopting a historico-political perspective while Mattick approached it theoretically. Were Macdonald to renege, Korsch reasoned, *Living Marxism* could serve as the publication of last resort. Mattick adopted the same strategy for many of the items he submitted to other journals.<sup>50</sup>

Macdonald seemed to be listening carefully to the council communists. This was important because he hadn't yet untangled his affiliation to the trotskyist movement, which in New York City—where he lived—was especially popular among intellectuals dissatisfied with the Communist Party.<sup>51</sup> Kenneth Rexroth noticed the change in Macdonald as well and hoped that he 'manages to "survive it"'.<sup>52</sup> Mattick regretted that Macdonald was not interested in a combined *Partisan Review/Living Marxism*. The exchange of promotional blurbs and mutual invitations to write for each other's publications were about as far as matters got. Mattick suggested possible authors for *Partisan Review*, while Wheeler encouraged Macdonald to read the first volume, or at least the first ninety pages, of Marx's *Capital*.<sup>53</sup>

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48 Mattick to Fairfield Porter, 10 November 1939 (AAA).

49 Dinsmore Wheeler to Dwight Macdonald, 8 June 1941 (Yale) [brackets added]. Macdonald to Mattick, 20 February 1941; Macdonald to Mattick, 22 March 1941; Macdonald to Mattick, Saturday [after 22 March 1941]; Macdonald to Mattick, 22 April 1941, with comments by Clement Greenberg and Wendell Phillips; Macdonald to Mattick, 3 June 1941. Mattick, 'How New is the "New Order" of Fascism?', *Partisan Review*, July–August 1941; originally as 'Liberalism and Fascism', *Living Marxism*, Spring 1941.

50 Karl Korsch to Mattick, 10 December 1940 (*Gesamtausgabe*).

51 Macdonald 1957, p. 17ff.

52 Kenneth Rexroth to Mattick, 8 June 1941.

53 Fairfield Porter to Mattick, 20 September 1940 (Leigh); Mattick to Fairfield Porter, 23 September 1940 (AAA); Dwight Macdonald to Mattick, 20 February 1941; Dinsmore Wheeler to Dwight Macdonald, 8 June 1941 (Yale: Macdonald).

### Anti-Fascism

Our lack of clarity doesn't speak against us; it took almost 200 years of capitalistic development before the revolutionary mind could state the real character of capitalist relations and could come to some conclusions as how to organize and fight within it.<sup>54</sup>

Mattick's understanding of the market economy was already too sophisticated for many marxists. He explained to Macdonald that it was purely a 'choice of terminology whether one says the market has disappeared in fascism, or fascism is the perpetuation of the market economy'. How one addressed the issue was a matter of convention:

You can say there is no market at all, you can say the market is everywhere, you can also say there is only left a market between labor and capital and no other market, but you can also say there is a market left everywhere, only in the field of labor and capital it is abolished. *It is all the same*. If this sounds crazy, it is not. I think it best for purposes of clarification, at this time, to speak of the continuation of market relations between capital and labor, when the other market relations are disappearing.<sup>55</sup>

He viewed war as a permanent state of existence for the capitalist system, a theme developed independently by neo-marxists two decades later.<sup>56</sup>

The anti-fascism that emerged in the late 1930s obscured as much as it clarified because it sought to endorse a particular politics rather than compare two systems of governance:

There is certainly no 'democracy' as the term implies in capitalist countries, where democracy abstractly grants equal rights to all and in reality excludes such rights in all decisive spheres of life. But if democracy might also be used as a term expressing the overcoming of the gap between poor and rich, as a leveling process, as a greater participation of masses

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54 Mattick to Fairfield Porter, 6 January 1940 (AAA).

55 Mattick to Dwight Macdonald with 'Footnote', 16 June 1941 (Yale).

56 Mattick to Fairfield Porter, 10 November 1939 (AAA). Henk Canne Meijer to Rudolf Lang, 11 January 1939 (IISH: Canne Meijer); Henk Canne Meijer to Rudolf Lang, 15 May 1939 (IISH: Canne Meijer).

in the historical process, then fascism contains more real elements of democracy than bourgeois abstract democracy.<sup>57</sup>

The fascists hoped to re-enliven the capitalist economy through extra-economic means, and therefore it was possible to speak about the fascistic tendencies within the United States where similar activities had become an accepted part of government measures.

When Paul Frölich visited Chicago, his understanding of international politics was welcomed by the council communists. Mattick had been sceptical about Frölich's political past because he had remained a member of the German Communist Party throughout the 1920s—until he was finally expelled. Mattick discovered that 'he now has an entirely healthy outlook' and deemed him 'quite simpatico'.<sup>58</sup> Wheeler summarised Frölich's views: 'being anti-Hitler, anti-Nazi seems highly inadequate to him. He is interested only in being anti-capitalist'. Frölich had only recently come to the United States, 'having been in German and French prisons and concentration camps, of having his belongings, writings, notes, everything destroyed and a son in a concentration camp'. Despite it all, he maintained 'an amazing objectivity', with an approach that was 'very simple, undogmatic, straight forward'.<sup>59</sup> The German publication of Frölich's biography of Rosa Luxemburg required advance sales, and since Mattick was in the midst of expanding his book trade, he ordered fifty copies, an indication of his extensive reach.<sup>60</sup>

The news from afar was deeply depressing, as the horrors of 1933 were repeated on a trans-continental scale. Mattick's older sister, Lisbeth, was a committed social democrat and an employee of the Berlin Housing Department who took special pride in manipulating waiting lists so that Nazis were kept out of the Charlottenburg complex in which the family lived. Yet she mimicked

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57 Mattick to Fairfield Porter, 1 December 1939 (AAA). Mattick to Porter, 7 June 1940 (AAA); Mattick to Fairfield Porter, 29 June 1940 (AAA); Fairfield Porter to Mattick, 5 December 1940 (Leigh); Mattick to Fairfield Porter, 11 December 1940 (AAA).

58 Mattick to Otto Rühle, 17 September 1941 (IISH: Rühle). Paul Frölich to Mattick, 11 September 1941.

59 Dinsmore Wheeler to Dwight Macdonald, 21 September 1940 (Yale).

60 Pre-publication subscription was common with small presses: Cazden 1970, p. 118. With notes sketched by Korsch, Mattick seems to have composed the review: 'Paul Frölich. *Life and Work of Rosa Luxemburg*, *Living Marxism*, Fall 1940. Paul Frölich to Mattick, 28 April 1939; Paul Frölich to Mattick, 30 May 1939; Mattick to Otto Rühle, 3 September 1939 (IISH: Rühle); Karl Korsch to Mattick, 13 August 1940 (*Gesamtausgabe*); Karl Korsch to Mattick, 12 September 1940 (*Gesamtausgabe*); Karl Korsch to Easton Rothwell, 2 December 1940 (*Gesamtausgabe*).

wholesale Nazi propaganda about the war. Petrified that the Poles might invade, she described them as ‘simply like animals, but even worse’. She retold stories about the castration of German prisoners and mass graves: ‘I have never before experienced this kind of blind hatred’, even though she was not involved directly. Great Britain, she told her brother, was the greatest obstacle to peace and already committed to a war of annihilation against Germany.<sup>61</sup> Perhaps with her in mind, Mattick’s forthcoming article, ‘Two Men in a Boat’, contained the sections headings, ‘Hitler as Peace Angel’ and ‘You Cannot Trust Hitler’.<sup>62</sup>

Canne Meijer’s *Rätekorrespondenz* was already on its last legs when the German occupation of the Netherlands did it in altogether.<sup>63</sup> Canne Meijer had big plans for Mattick’s work, but this too was interrupted. In particular, he wanted to turn Mattick’s essay on ‘Marxism and the Brookings Institution’ (renamed ‘Marxism and Theoretical Economics’) into a self-standing publication.<sup>64</sup> The Dutch groups published four separate journals in 11,000 copies and had recently distributed some 30,000 brochures. Each local group functioned independently and produced periodicals, pamphlets, and leaflets at its own discretion. Mattick’s plan to publish Pannekoek’s *Lenin as Philosopher* was also put on hold. As the war approached, new initiatives made less and less sense.

Paul Kühne, Mattick’s bookcart partner from Cologne, sent an update on Rote Kämpfer colleagues rounded-up by the Gestapo in 1936. Kühne was lucky not to have been at home. News about their artist friends was equally disheartening; both Franz Seiwert and Heinrich Hoerle had since died from health complications.<sup>65</sup> Kühne helped edit *Internationaler Beobachter* [*International Observer*], produced by remnants of the Rote Kämpfer but printed by the Dutch colleagues. Canne Meijer informed Mattick about its precarious existence—he anticipated a turnover of only 200–300 copies. Nonetheless, Kühne was thrilled to be in touch with Mattick. Mindful of his status as an émigré, he asked that only letters be sent, never postcards. He also inquired about illegal immigrants in the United States. His marriage in Holland to a woman half-Dutch and

61 Lisbeth Mattick to Mattick, 20 November 1940. Lisbeth Mattick to Mattick, 12 December 1939. Evans 2005, pp. 695–6; Conversations with Ilse Mattick, 21–5 May 2005.

62 Mattick, ‘Two Men in a Boat’, *Living Marxism*, Fall 1941.

63 Henk Canne Meijer to Mattick, 6 January 1938 (IISH: Canne Meijer).

64 Henk Canne Meijer to Mattick, 19 July 1938 (IISH: Canne Meijer); Henk Canne Meijer to Mattick, 18 December 1938 (IISH: Canne Meijer); Henk Canne Meijer to Mattick, 18 May 1939 (IISH: Canne Meijer).

65 Seiwert succumbed to the aftereffects of childhood exposure to radiation and had been deeply depressed about the political situation even before; Hoerle perished from a lung ailment.



half-South Asian (Indian) had created something of a 'race scandal' and with the war near at hand, the future loomed large in his thinking.<sup>66</sup>

A mutual colleague, Juan Günter Ransenberg, was stranded in Mexico. Ransenberg had spent nearly three years in jails and concentration camps for smuggling literature into Germany. Released on condition that as a Jew he leave Europe altogether, only Mexico issued a visa, albeit with restrictions on work and resettlement possibilities. Even though he was a printer by trade and had owned a small firm, he was apprenticed to farmers in a small, isolated enclave while he learned the rudiments of agricultural production. His wife and two small children remained in Germany. Having sold all his possessions in order to purchase land, he asked Mattick to help procure the materials needed to establish him as a mushroom farmer.<sup>67</sup>

Otto Rühle had likewise ended up in Mexico, having first fled to Czechoslovakia. Like Ransenberg, he lived an odd and isolated existence. It had taken him three years to track down the Dutch colleagues.<sup>68</sup> Mattick immediately solicited contributions for *Living Marxism*, offering *carte blanche* for anything he might want to write. Rühle was a pioneering figure within German radicalism. One of the first Reichstag delegates to oppose funding for World War I, he helped kick-start the anti-war movement. He was also a founding member of important radical left groups during the post-war era. His anti-authoritarian texts had been enormously influential among the radical youth groups, Mattick's included. In Mexico, Rühle and his wife, the feminist educator Alice Rühle-Gerstel, worked as consultants for the Department of Education. Rühle's focus encompassed the underserved as students, progressive pedagogy, and adult education, whereas Alice Rühle-Gerstel was renowned for her expertise on women and psychology.

Rühle found Mexican social conditions too confusing to write about ('we are experiencing nine hundred years all at once').<sup>69</sup> When he requested anonymity for his essays because the Communists would boycott publications in which he appeared, Mattick assured him: 'you have more friends here than you might otherwise expect'.<sup>70</sup> In what became a signature piece for the council

66 Paul Kühne to Mattick, 26 April 1939.

67 Paul Kühne to Otto Rühle, 10 June 1939 (IISH: Rühle); Juan Günther Ransenberg to Mattick, 22 August 1939.

68 Otto Rühle to *Rätekorrespondenz*, 2 August 1938, (IISH: Pannekoek); Henk Canne Meijer to Mattick, 26 August 1938 (IISH: Canne Meijer); Mattick to Otto Rühle, 11 September 1938 (IISH: Rühle). Stecklina und Schille 2003; Marková 2007; Herrmann 1972–3.

69 Otto Rühle to Mattick, 21 September 1938.

70 Mattick to Otto Rühle, 24 May 1939 (IISH: Rühle).

communists, 'The Struggle Against Fascism Begins With The Struggle Against Bolshevism', Mattick provided the translation.<sup>71</sup> To earn money, Rühle functioned as an editor for an edition of Marx's *Capital* abridged by Leon Trotsky (a nearby neighbour).

Korsch and Mattick said about Rühle ('he still exists in the old world') just what Rühle said about Trotsky.<sup>72</sup> The latter surrounded himself with individuals who were not his intellectual equals, and he had difficulty getting along with other people, including associates who relocated to Mexico to assist him.<sup>73</sup> 'One almost feels sorry for the man' wrote Mattick, 'his past lies in the way of his understanding of the present'. For Mattick, 'an attack on Stalin without an attack on Bolshevism has no real value', and this was always Trotsky's limitation.<sup>74</sup> Trotsky was dangerous to Stalin because he pitched his appeal to the lower echelons of the Soviet bureaucracy with promises to democratise decision-making in order to give them greater influence.<sup>75</sup> Symptomatic of Trotsky's inability to deal with reality was the hesitation with which he responded to the war alliance between Germany and Russia. Normally the communiqués, commentaries, and essays flew from his pen, but as Rühle observed close at hand, Trotsky's delayed endorsement of the Soviet Union came as a shock to his followers and led to the decomposition of groups associated with him.<sup>76</sup>

With *Living Marxism's* intermittent publishing schedule, it was not always possible to print Rühle's articles in their entirety. Since Rühle insisted on anonymity, Mattick incorporated part of one essay into his own; after all, it too appeared without attribution.<sup>77</sup> Mattick attempted to place Rühle's essays in the IWW's *Industrial Worker*, *Der Freidenker*, and the New York group's *Proletarian Outlook*.<sup>78</sup> Alice Rühle-Gerstel promised a piece for *Living Marxism*

71 Otto Rühle to Mattick, No Date; Mattick to Otto Rühle, 24 May 1939 (IISH: Rühle); Otto Rühle to Mattick, 28 May 1939. Rühle's article appeared in *Living Marxism*, September 1939. Jones 1999, pp. 109–14.

72 Karl Korsch to Mattick, 25 June 1940 (*Gesamtausgabe*); Mattick to Fairfield Porter, 6 November 1940 (AAA).

73 Otto Rühle to Mattick, 24 April 1939; Otto Rühle to Mattick, 22 November 1940.

74 Mattick, 'Review of Leon Trotsky. *The Revolution Betrayed*, ICC, June 1937, p. 30, p. 34. In the United States, Trotsky's followers numbered some 1000–1500. Wald 1987, p. 165.

75 Mattick, 'Leon Trotsky', *Living Marxism*, Fall 1940.

76 Otto Rühle to Mattick, 17 September 1939; Otto Rühle to Mattick, 10 December 1939.

77 Mattick did the same with Walter Auerbach. Mattick to Otto Rühle, 31 March 1940 (IISH: Rühle). Rühle's work was incorporated into Mattick, 'The War is Permanent', *Living Marxism*, Spring 1940.

78 For Rühle: 'Which Side to Take', *Living Marxism*, Fall 1940; 'Imperialism as Fascism', *Industrial Worker*, 16 March 1940. From *Der Freidenker*: 'Der Imperialismus als Faschismus',

on marxism and psychology, but the difficulties of everyday living took a toll on her mental well-being.<sup>79</sup> Rühle planned to debate Wendelin Thomas in *Living Marxism*. Both had been members of the Dewey Commission that looked into the charges levelled against Trotsky during the Moscow show trials, and Thomas had since become a supporter of Roosevelt and the New Deal, so that there were plenty of issues in contention.<sup>80</sup>

The Rühles were desperate financially. The connection to Trotsky jeopardised their contacts in the Education Department in Mexico, as these were mostly Communist Party-types. Book purchases became difficult. Mattick and Korsch sent publications *gratis* in order to help them.<sup>81</sup> Willing to accept any kind of odd job, Rühle took to hand-painting notecards that could be sold at hotels and other vacation spots. Rühle-Gerstel hawked various consumer items, besides the tutoring and translation work that she picked up irregularly.<sup>82</sup> With Otto's health failing, more and more fell on her shoulders. Rühle died of a heart attack on 24 June 1943. Alice Rühle-Gerstel committed suicide later that same day.

By the time the United States entered the war, the American left was barely identifiable. No longer a self-standing entity, a continuum of institutions meant that it merged seamlessly into the nation's governing structures.<sup>83</sup> Its track record during the previous years had been erratic and without much promise. Strikes rarely went beyond predetermined goals for union recognition, higher pay, and improved working conditions. The Workers Alliance adjusted its focus to public works projects since these generated a new, unrepresented workforce; in Chicago alone, some 123,000 were employed by the Works Progress Administration by November 1938.<sup>84</sup> Similar to the unions, local initiative within the Workers Alliance became a matter of pre-approval within the increasingly centralised organisation. As the economy was reoriented towards war, public funds shifted to firms that produced armaments, and unemployment declined in tandem.

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4 February 1940; 'Tatsachen und Gedanken zum Problem der Revolution', 14 and 28 April 1940; 'Zur Ideologie des Nationalismus', 4 August 1940; 'Der Faschistische Mensch', 2, 16, and 30 March 1941. Nothing appeared in *Proletarian Outlook*.

79 Otto Rühle to Mattick, 6 July 1939; Mattick to Otto Rühle, 12 July 1939 (IISH: Rühle).

80 Otto Rühle to Mattick, 22 November 1940; Mattick to Otto Rühle, No Date (IISH: Rühle); Mattick to Otto Rühle, 8 January 1941 (IISH: Rühle).

81 Otto Rühle to Mattick, 6 July 1939; Mattick to Otto Rühle, 12 July 1939 (IISH: Rühle); Otto Rühle to Mattick, 16 July 1939.

82 Brunner 2003, p. 171.

83 Pells 1973, p. 292ff; Warren 1974, ch. 8; Warren 1993; Denning 1997.

84 Mattick, *Unemployment and Relief in Illinois*, p. 313 (IISH: Mattick).

Under the banner of anti-fascism, the Communist Party embraced Roosevelt and the New Deal, egged forward the country's economic and military policies, and found a new audience among intellectuals and professionals for whom Russia offered a means to appreciate the accomplishments of state planning. The more patriotic the party became, the more members it attracted. When the union movement adopted no-strike pledges to support the war effort, the Communists stepped forward as enforcers. The Socialist Party, meantime, had disintegrated by means of mergers and splits, and it became one of the remaining small organisations that constituted the anti-fascist left.<sup>85</sup> The problem with anti-fascists, in Mattick's view, was that they looked to the past as a solution to the present, either to a democratic capitalism or to outdated notions of revolution. He toyed with the idea of a book titled *Beyond Fascism*.<sup>86</sup>

While the left was disappearing, the *Living Marxism* group stayed active and continued to have a presence in Chicago:

Our little group is about the only one here that had some kind of activity during the last year. At least we managed a few well-attended meetings. Maybe this is because we do not think too much about ourselves; anyway if it hasn't been for us there would have been no public meetings at all in Chicago, except for one or two of the trotskyites.<sup>87</sup>

Talks by Mattick, Korsch, Carl Berreitter, and Oscar Lange were widely advertised and sometimes attracted sizable crowds.<sup>88</sup> The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) finally took note of Mattick with a visit in October 1941. He explained that the market for *Living Marxism* had declined and that he did not anticipate its continuation. He clarified too that he had never belonged to the American Communist Party, that the few meetings he attended in 1932 were 'excessively boring', and that he sought a 'harmonious society governed by consent'.<sup>89</sup> Funds received from the Soviet Union, about which the FBI agents

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85 By 1941, some estimates placed middle class membership as high as one-half of total members. Storch 2009, pp. 218–19; Klehr 1984, pp. 91–2, p. 153, p. 161ff, p. 240, p. 365ff, p. 378ff, p. 413, p. 443n; Piven and Cloward 1979, p. 155ff.; Lorence 1996, p. 241, p. 257.

86 Mattick to Fairfield Porter, 13 April 1941 (AAA); Mattick to Fairfield Porter, 1 August 1941 (AAA).

87 Mattick to Kenneth Rexroth, 13 June 1941 (UCLA). Arkadij Maslow to Ruth Fischer, 4 October 1941 (Fischer and Maslow 1990).

88 Mattick to Fairfield Porter, 6 January 1940 (AAA); Mattick to Fairfield Porter, 10 January 1940 (AAA); Mattick to Fairfield Porter, 12 April 1940 (AAA).

89 FBI File: 101-5672, July 1972, pp. 2–3.

were particularly interested, amounted to two subscriptions for the library at the Marx-Engels Institute, for which the Russian government paid \$2.45.<sup>90</sup>

Few opportunities developed during 1941–2 for Mattick's work. A request to reprint the *Partisan Review* article as a pamphlet in Great Britain did not get beyond the discussion stage. An invitation from Macdonald to provide short book reviews got cut short when Macdonald left the journal.<sup>91</sup> On the other hand, Mattick's friends from the Anti-Parliamentary Communist Federation printed an article from him in their journal, *Solidarity*. The same article was reprinted in the short-lived American journal, *Modern Socialism*, where Mattick's thesis on the uselessness of political parties provoked a wide-ranging and at times nasty debate in subsequent issues.<sup>92</sup> Except for one other journal, *Decision*, edited by Thomas Mann, no other publishing leads panned out.<sup>93</sup> A new book, *An American Looks at Karl Marx*, by the ex-banker William J. Blake, intrigued Mattick greatly. He recommended it widely as a successor to Hook's popularisation of Marx a decade earlier, but Mattick did not take the opportunity to write about it.<sup>94</sup> Korsch went looking for Blake in New York, only to report that he was 'smart, educated, lively—but completely stalinistic and he would please you even less than me'.<sup>95</sup>

Walter Boelke organised meetings in New York, although these were mostly lightly attended, perhaps a dozen or so people. Ursula Lustig, new to New York, was disheartened by the group—small, inactive, and no more successful than its counterparts in Europe despite the fact that fascism was entirely absent. Interacting with kindred spirits was very nice, she told Mattick, but nevertheless she had hoped for something more.<sup>96</sup> Mattick had published several key essays in *Proletarian Outlook* during 1939, but this proved to be an uncanny repetition of the pattern with *Kampfsignal* a half decade before, when Boelke similarly became editor and featured Mattick as a regular contributor, only

90 Buckmiller 1976, pp. 59–60; Conversation with Paul Mattick, Jr., 8 May 2007.

91 Dwight Macdonald to Mattick, 15 October 1941.

92 Shipway 1988, pp. 184–7. Mattick, 'The Party and the Working Class', *Solidarity*, August/September 1941 (not to be confused with Pannekoek's article of the same title in *Living Marxism*, September 1936); Mattick, 'The Role of the Party: From the Bottom Up', *Modern Socialism*, Winter 1941, with reactions in the Spring 1942 and Summer 1942 issues.

93 Mattick to Otto Rühle, 7 March 1940 (IISH: Rühle); Karl Korsch to Mattick, 23 January 1940 (*Gesamtausgabe*).

94 Mattick to Fairfield Porter, 1 December 1939 (AAA); Emmy [Tetschner] to Mattick, 12 February 1940; Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 13 June 1966.

95 Karl Korsch to Mattick, 3 June 1940 (*Gesamtausgabe*).

96 Lustig was the daughter of Karl Schröder, a KAPD founder and one of those arrested during the Rote Kämpfer raids. Ursula Lustig to Mattick, 18 February 1939.

for the journal to close down not long afterwards.<sup>97</sup> That *Proletarian Outlook* ceased to exist without much fanfare earned Dwight Macdonald's 'sneaking admiration'. This fate, Macdonald wrote, was counterintuitive—'the smaller the sect, the more grandiosely optimistic it usually is'.<sup>98</sup>

A seemingly minor matter—books borrowed by Mattick but then not returned—led to a full-scale falling out with Boelke, who was frustrated with Mattick's bitterness: 'whoever objects is ridiculed, and whoever expresses reservations about the correctness of your views, is referred to as ignorant or even an idiot'. He repeated Pannekoek's suspicions that Mattick slanted his work towards intellectuals from whom he hoped 'to be recognized as the big marxist'. Wasn't it enough that 'we read your essays avidly, admire your willpower, your stamina and your ability?'<sup>99</sup> Korsch provided a gloomy assessment:

I saw Boelke but he did not seem to be in good shape either theoretically or politically though he continued to be likable personally. It seems that he cannot survive the breakdown of the old dogmas and develop a new attitude for the coming phases of the class struggle. Somebody ought to help him but it will not be an easy task. Even less so as we do not know too well where we stand ourselves.<sup>100</sup>

Herman Gersom, the editor at *International Review*, had since joined the Socialist Party, which Mattick discovered only through casual conversation with the Party's National Secretary. 'One more man overboard', was his comment.<sup>101</sup> Even if Gersom was correct in his characterisation of the party as disorganised and ideologically adrift, Mattick questioned: 'what the hell is he doing there?'<sup>102</sup>

Despite his deep pessimism about the future, Mattick underestimated the magnitude of the changes that lay ahead. Two days before the outbreak of

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97 For the parallel tendencies: Walter Bergh [Boelke], 'Review of Karl Korsch. *Karl Marx*', *Proletarian Outlook*, January–February 1939; Mattick, 'Review of Karl Korsch. *Karl Marx*', *Living Marxism*, April 1939. Max Nomad, 'Karl Kautsky: In Memoriam', *Proletarian Outlook*, January–February 1939; Mattick, 'Karl Kautsky: From Marx to Hitler', *Living Marxism*, June 1939. Macdonald 1957.

98 Macdonald 1957, pp. 283–4.

99 Walter Boelke to Mattick, 17 December 1940. Al [Givens] to Mattick, 13 January [1940]; Al [Givens] to Mattick, 5 February [1940].

100 Karl Korsch to Mattick, 6 April 1941 (*Gesamtausgabe*).

101 Mattick to Fairfield Porter, 16 January 1940 (AAA).

102 Mattick to Fairfield Porter, 29 June 1940 (AAA). Mattick to Fairfield Porter, 7 June 1940 (AAA).

war, a colleague wrote: 'I quite agree with you that despite the dangerously tense situation, there will be no war—*not yet*'.<sup>103</sup> A few months later, Mattick predicted that the war 'will not take long'.<sup>104</sup> And he misjudged the German-Russian conflict repeatedly. Convinced that 'the prolongation of the war will thus progressively favor the Nazis', he also thought that 'whatever the course of the war, Russia will emerge from it weaker than she entered'. Ultimately, he forecast, 'there will be no Russian expansion either to the East or to the West'.<sup>105</sup>

A peculiar correspondence, warm yet impersonal, developed with the literary critic Michael Fraenkel, whose book on the spiritual decline of civilisation, *Death Is Not Enough*, was overly fatalistic for Mattick.<sup>106</sup> Mattick had sent copies of *Living Marxism* to the editor of the poetry and literary quarterly, *The Phoenix*, and was met with an enthusiastic response: 'your note came as a pleasant surprise. I hardly expected to come across a marxist with as lively and as *open* a viewpoint as that which you express'.<sup>107</sup> Fraenkel, a co-editor, was similarly impressed: 'you seem to be quite free from that sectarianism which makes it so difficult these days to talk to the "party" Communist'. This was all the more important for Fraenkel: 'I don't believe that anyone's viewpoint today is worth much unless it takes full cognizance of Marx and what he stands for'.<sup>108</sup> Mattick was drawn to Fraenkel's writings: 'there is something in your work which attracts me very much, I feel its importance, and again I cannot translate it into terms of my own thinking and feel quite helpless'.<sup>109</sup> Mattick reacted similarly to a second book that Fraenkel co-authored with Henry Miller: 'I disagree with it, but I love to read it'.<sup>110</sup>

Mattick attempted to place reviews—his own and others—of Fraenkel's work in *Modern Quarterly*, *Partisan Review*, *Decision*, *New Republic*, *Proletarian Outlook*, and *Living Marxism*.<sup>111</sup> He worried that Fraenkel would not like what

103 Michael Fraenkel to Mattick, 30 August 1939 (WSU).

104 Mattick to Fairfield Porter, 16 January 1940 (AAA).

105 Mattick, 'Two Men in a Boat—Not to Speak of the Eight Points', *Living Marxism*, Fall 1941, pp. 57–8.

106 Fraenkel's letters to Mattick were purchased by Washington State University in 1970 from a private collector, who presumably had bought them from Mattick.

107 James Cooney to Mattick, 17 February 1939.

108 Michael Fraenkel to Mattick, 28 February 1939 (WSU). Michael Fraenkel to Mattick, 8 March 1939 (WSU); Mattick, 'The Concentration Camp Grows', *Living Marxism*, April 1939, p. 170.

109 Mattick to Michael Fraenkel, 22 July 1939 (Roth).

110 Mattick to Michael Fraenkel, 24 June 1941 (Roth).

111 Michael Fraenkel to Mattick, 4 June 1939 (WSU); Mattick to Michael Fraenkel, 12 June 1941 (Roth); Nigel Dennis to Mattick, 9 July 1941; Klaus Mann to Mattick, 11 July 1941; Mattick,

he wrote and offered to withhold the review if he objected: ‘too often it happened to me that I lost friends and acquaintances because I did not try to be pleasant in matters of thought and action.’<sup>112</sup> Fraenkel was unfazed by the negative appraisal: ‘I am glad you have spoken so frankly’. He explained:

I find it [Mattick’s review] a substantially sound statement of my essential position, except that seen from *your* side exclusively and couched in *your* terms, it sounds like an indictment. State the same thing from *my* standpoint, in *my* terms, and it won’t be that at all.<sup>113</sup>

Where Mattick saw ‘weakness and escapism’, Fraenkel saw ‘strength’.<sup>114</sup> Fraenkel, though, was puzzled by Mattick’s reaction: ‘when I really like a book—you use even the word *love*—I am also in sympathy with it mentally: my emotional reaction is in line with my mental one. It doesn’t seem to be the case with you. I wonder why.’<sup>115</sup>

Thirty-five years old when he separated from Frieda, Mattick was helped by female acquaintances. One admirer advised him on how to understand Frieda—‘a good girl’ who ‘enjoys her games’.<sup>116</sup> She encouraged Paul to be clearer about his expectations and to communicate them better. Another female friend found the weekly *Living Marxism* sessions ‘always full of interest, stimulation and fun’ and assured him: ‘I think of you—always with much admiration and love’.<sup>117</sup> Emmy Tetschner, from the New York group, empathised greatly with the difficulties that Mattick had pursuing his interests while holding down a full-time job, and she wrote him in great detail about the difficulties she faced as a woman.<sup>118</sup>

Mary MacCollum appreciated Mattick’s effort to revive her ‘frail interest in marxism’. MacCollum was a veteran of the Proletarian Party, and more recently,

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‘Review of Michael Fraenkel. Death Is Not Enough’, *Living Marxism*, Spring 1940; Mattick, ‘To Be Or Not To Be’, *Decision*, January–February 1942.

112 Mattick to Michael Fraenkel, 22 July 1939 (Roth). Mattick to Michael Fraenkel, 12 November 1940 (Roth); Mattick to Michael Fraenkel, 24 June 1941 (Roth).

113 Michael Fraenkel to Mattick, 17 July 1939 (WSU) [brackets added].

114 Michael Fraenkel to Mattick, 17 July 1939 (WSU).

115 Michael Fraenkel to Mattick [June–July 1941] (WSU). When they finally met in 1946, Mattick was disappointed by the encounter; Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 21 August 1946.

116 Faith to Mattick, Saturday [1939].

117 Rose K[usian] to Mattick, Tuesday July [1940–1941]. Al [Givens] to Mattick, 5 February [1940]; Jake Faber to Mattick [Early 1941]; Interview with Jake Faber, 27 June 2005.

118 Emmy [Tetschner] to Mattick, 12 February 1940.



the New York group of councilists. Her paid employment was all-consuming—she transcribed engineering data for a large firm (fifty engineers) that built industrial-level heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems, work that involved much travelling and workdays that often lasted eleven or twelve hours.<sup>119</sup> She had great affection for Mattick: ‘Paul, you’re sweet. I take all of your kisses and give you as many’.<sup>120</sup> She read carefully his many essays and also offered to repay the group’s outstanding debts.<sup>121</sup> Mattick referenced MacCollum’s comments in ‘Two Men in a Boat’, a personal touch most unusual for him.<sup>122</sup> MacCollum was contemplating a major writing project, an update of Edward Bellamy’s futuristic vision, *Looking Backward*, although MacCollum hoped for a *Looking Forward* that would avoid Bellamy’s ‘social democratic concepts, such as revolution by peaceful methods, government ownership, and socialism within national boundaries’. She was inspired by Mattick’s ‘remarkable courage to carry on in spite of the almost overwhelming obstacles’.<sup>123</sup>

The war necessitated that Mattick return to work. A factory job was unavoidable, and soon after he secured one, Mattick attended a meeting of the machinists’ union. These were usually sparsely attended, but this one attracted a large audience because of a proposed no-strike pledge. Except for a promise from management that it would not contest union elections, no other concessions were forthcoming in terms of wages or benefits. Mattick spoke during the question and answer period. Since the bourgeoisie intended to fight this war, he explained to his workmates, an ideal opportunity existed to force wages higher. Why abandon their leverage through a ban on job actions when they were needed in the factories more than ever?

After the meeting, two union members offered to accompany him in order to continue the discussion. Mattick was quite pleased to find like-minded individuals, but after they had walked a bit, Mattick was told in no uncertain terms that a repeat visit to a union meeting would result in physical harm. He did not attend again.<sup>124</sup>

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119 Mary MacCollum to Mattick, 3 July 1941. Marquart 1975, pp. 50–iff, 68–9.

120 Mary MacCollum to Mattick, 17 June 1941.

121 Mary MacCollum to Mattick, 7 July 1941; Mary MacCollum to Mattick, 27 July 1941.

122 Mattick, ‘Two Men in a Boat—Not to Speak of the Eight Points’, *Living Marxism*, Fall 1941, p. 74.

123 Mary MacCollum to Mattick, 26 November 1941.

124 Conversations with Ilse Mattick, 16–20 August 2005; Mattick Jr., interviewed by Hannu Reime.

## The War Years

### Relationships

People go to war and seem to like it, just as they seem to go happily to work. But they have no choice, and where there is no choice the question of desire cannot arise. Desire can determine action only in situations that offer alternatives . . . What one has to do, one ‘desires’, because to ‘desire’ what has to be done anyway makes the compulsion more bearable. But this kind of ‘desire’ has nothing to do with ‘human nature’. It is an ‘artificial desire’ growing out of socially-created wide-spread fear and loneliness.<sup>1</sup>

Mattick knew a lot about Ilse Hamm before they ever met, and what he heard intrigued him greatly. Hamm worked at a private school in Croton NY where the Porters’ children attended after the family relocated from Chicago. Porter was captivated by Hamm, and he kept Mattick apprised of her situation. His kids referred to her variously as ‘mummy at school’ and ‘Mrs. Porter’, a matter of some amusement but also some embarrassment to the entire Porter family. Hamm had left Germany in 1938 at the age of eighteen. She had just completed a two-year teacher training programme in education and child psychology at Berlin’s university—the equivalent of an undergraduate degree—but was denied her diploma by the Nazis, ostensibly on a technicality but actually because she was Jewish.<sup>2</sup> In Berlin, she worked briefly with the ‘Kindertransport’, smuggling Jewish children to Great Britain and out of harm’s way. Her pedagogic focus on lower-class children, learning disabilities, and assessment made her particularly appropriate for the Porters’ children, one of whom was autistic at a time when prominent theories attributed this disorder to parental deficiencies rather than genetic, neurological, or environmental factors. Hamm’s

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1 Mattick, ‘Fascism Made in U.S.A.’, *Living Marxism*, Winter 1941, p. 29.

2 Hamm’s father was a commodity trader whose business was seized by the Nazis. He fled to the United States in 1935. Hamm emigrated with her mother and brother. The family had lived at 50 Mommsenstrasse in one of Berlin’s fancier districts. Mattick Jr. 2009b; Ilse Mattick, Curriculum Vitae, Unitarian Service Committee Application (HDS).

approach was refreshing because she dealt with children behaviourally, rather than focusing on the psychological traits of the mother and father.<sup>3</sup>

Hamm's involvement with the Porters meant frequent visits to their home, an invitation to the Porter summer residence in Maine, and discussions about Mattick's essays in *Partisan Review* and *Living Marxism*.<sup>4</sup> When Porter was travelling, he and Hamm corresponded, and Hamm would visit Anne Porter and the children at their home.<sup>5</sup> Porter described Hamm as 'small, very pretty, childlike in appearance, with thick black hair and little features',<sup>6</sup> for which Mattick was most appreciative: 'I might now be able to dream about her in my loneliness'.<sup>7</sup> Intimacy ran along multiple paths. With Anne Porter, Mattick discussed poetry, some of which she had published, and also childbirth.<sup>8</sup>

Another link was through Grossman, whom Hamm knew from within New York City's radical émigré community. In conversation with her, Grossman had referred to the council communists as 'hopelessly sectarian'. This comment bothered her enough that she subsequently wrote to Grossman.<sup>9</sup> Mattick wasn't at all surprised to hear this about Grossman: 'in America, I have probably more than anybody else (however little that might be) done to make him popular'. Mattick had not heard from Grossman since the latter's arrival in the United States: 'I am not an academician, have no degrees, no training, no connections'. He surmised that Grossman 'thinks it below himself to bother with such a person any further'. Grossman feared an association with anyone who might jeopardise his legal status, a reason that Mattick found unintelligible: 'my political activity is so unimportant and meaningless that for somebody else to be afraid of knowing me for this reason, could only indicate a possession by fear that approaches the ridiculous'. Because Mattick had done so much for

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3 Fairfield Porter to Mattick, 7 January [1940] (Leigh); Conversations with Ilse Mattick, 21–5 May 2005; Conversation with Ilse Mattick, 3 November 2007.

4 About Mattick: 'I'd like to know more about him and the whole Chicago group'. Ilse Hamm to Anne and Fairfield Porter, Sunday (AAA). Ruth Porter to Fairfield Porter, 26 March 1941 (AAA). Ilse Hamm to Anne and Fairfield Porter [No Date] (AAA).

5 Ilse Hamm to Fairfield Porter, 26 October [1941] (AAA).

6 Fairfield Porter to Mattick, 27 July 1941 (Leigh).

7 Mattick to Fairfield Porter, 1 August 1941 (AAA).

8 Mattick to Fairfield Porter, 9 October 1939 (AAA); Fairfield Porter to Mattick, 11 August 1941 (Leigh).

9 Fairfield Porter to Mattick, 4 July 1941 (Leigh). Mattick to Fairfield Porter, 10 July 1941 (AAA); Fairfield Porter to Mattick, 27 July 1941 (Leigh); Fairfield Porter to Mattick, 11 August 1941 (Leigh).

him, Grossman needed to manufacture reasons for the lack of contact, such as Mattick's supposed sectarianism.<sup>10</sup>

When Mattick visited New York in early 1942, he stayed at Walter Boelke's while he toured the city's art scene with Porter.<sup>11</sup> One evening, Mattick invited Hamm to a party. She had the impression that he was lonely despite his gregariousness. Mattick cut short his visit to the Porters—a planned sojourn of several weeks—in order to remain with her. Thus began their decades-long conversation about art, politics, and friendship.<sup>12</sup> In New York, they sublet an apartment in lower Manhattan until Hamm could wrap up her affairs.<sup>13</sup> A mutual friend, Edith Schloss, later wrote about them:

Paul was an outspoken man of great vitality and imagination, chunky features and brutal honesty. He was downright ugly, square built but not tall, the picture of the working-class man. He was self-educated. No one could resist his blunt wit and ultimate good nature. He was much older than his new girlfriend, the relentlessly flirtatious Ilse, who he could not keep from touching all the time, even when immersed in the deepest political exposition.<sup>14</sup>

Both as individuals and as a couple, Paul and Ilse were seen as exceedingly passionate and intense. They resolved to always speak in English with one another as a means to help Paul's writing, a convention they maintained even when they travelled to Germany twenty-five years later. English became their *lingua franca*.

Porter was bitter about the Mattick-Hamm liaison, an outright betrayal on both their parts from his point of view. Some months before, he had approached his wife with plans to live with Hamm in a threesome, announcing that he would otherwise abandon the family. Neither scenario had been discussed with Hamm beforehand. More importantly, Hamm was not interested in any such arrangement.<sup>15</sup> In a rage, Porter destroyed the portrait of Mattick that he had nurtured for so long, and a series of angry letters ensued between

10 Mattick to Fairfield Porter, 1 August 1941 (AAA).

11 Spring 2000, p. 116ff.; Anne Porter Correspondence Typescript Excerpts, 21 January 1942 (AAA).

12 Spring 2000, p. 143ff.; Conversations with Ilse Mattick, 21–5 May 2005.

13 Address: Greenwich Avenue.

14 Edith Schloss 1984, p. 2.

15 Spring 2000, pp. 133–45; Ilse Hamm to Fairfield and Anne Porter, 16 September [1940 or 1941] (AAA).



9 *Paul and Ilse Mattick.*

Porter and Hamm. If not for Porter's relationship with other members of the councilist group, particularly Fritz Henssler and Walter Auerbach, the connection to Mattick might have lapsed altogether.<sup>16</sup>

Before they left for Chicago, Mattick lectured at the Frankfurt School Institute at Columbia University. Of the group that gathered, only Grossmann seemed to appreciate Mattick's talk, asking questions that allowed Mattick to elaborate further on his ideas. Grossmann commented that his colleagues' criticisms were prompted by the policy-establishment orientation that had overtaken them, now that the United States was at war. Mattick and Hamm expected an invitation to lunch afterwards, but none was forthcoming. They began the long walk home, a distance of some 100 blocks from start to finish. About halfway they ran into Mattick's colleague from Chicago, Jake Faber, in town on a port call with the merchant marine. He could tell that they were hungry, and an invitation to eat became an occasion to slip some cash into Mattick's jacket pocket.<sup>17</sup>

16 A visit by Porter to Chicago later that spring resulted in an attempt at reconciliation. Fairfield Porter to Anne Porter, 15 June 1942 (AAA); Fairfield Porter to Anne Porter, August 1942 (AAA).

17 Conversations with Ilse Mattick, 13–14 January 2006.

In Chicago, Paul and Ilse moved in with the Wheelers, where Paul had begun to rent a room a few months earlier. The apartment was spacious and regal—curved windows and four bedrooms in an 1880s building whose entranceway passed through huge double doors and marbled walls. Situated in a beautiful neighbourhood that bordered the University of Chicago, they remained there through 1942, even after the Wheelers relocated to the family farm in rural Ohio.<sup>18</sup> Paul and Ilse subsequently rented a two-room flat in a plain four-story brick apartment building that was located slightly north of the central city. This was Mattick's tenth address since moving to Chicago fifteen years previously.<sup>19</sup>

Mattick returned to work, a factory job with a 4:00–12:00 p.m. shift and six-day work week where he helped develop prototypes for hearing aids and microphones. He was tasked with the issue of magnetisation and tolerances; in other words, limiting the degree of variation in the thickness of the metal components when these were produced through a mechanised process, since audio devices depended on thin metal conductors. The income from four months of employment was sufficient to support them for nearly a year, and Mattick worked out an arrangement in which he took frequent leaves of absence. Mattick was valued by his employer and popular with fellow employees. When an older colleague was dismissed for his lack of productivity, Mattick represented the shop-floor workers in advocating his reinstatement. Another time, he got the firm to reverse its smoking ban, a particularly unpopular measure during an era in which it was still customary to smoke at one's workstation, whether in a factory or in an office. Asked by upper management how workplace tensions might be eased, he told them to fire the supervisor, which they did. Later in the war he was interviewed for a special project at the University of Chicago (related to the atomic bomb, he deduced subsequently), but he was not hired because he still had relatives in Germany.<sup>20</sup>

Ilse was not thrilled with Chicago. She helped Paul with translations and correspondence, but she did not find work that utilised her skills as an early-childhood educator. Instead, courses at the University of Chicago continued her training in the same manner as had courses at Bank Street College and Columbia University in New York. Hamm was the same age as Mattick's stepchildren, and this produced its own peculiar dynamics. Relations with Frieda,

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18 Address: 5701 S. Kenwood Avenue. Dinsmore Wheeler to Dwight Macdonald, 4 January 1942 (Yale).

19 Address: 643 Roscoe Street.

20 Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 24 November 1945; Conversations with Ilse Mattick, 21–5 May 2005; Buckmiller 1976, p. 60.

who was prone to mood swings and depression, were not always easy. At her job with the WPA, Frieda was denounced as a Nazi and a communist (both together), thus prompting a full-scale FBI investigation with over a dozen interviews of co-workers and neighbours as well as an interrogation at the FBI's Field Office. Frieda, it was said, incited minority workers with talk of discrimination by the U.S. government and military, said positive things about Germany while criticising the United States, spread Nazi propaganda, and was a communist who hated Stalin. The FBI absolved her of any wrong-doing but recommended that she work only in non-defence related projects.<sup>21</sup>

### *New Essays*

Predictions became impossible; the economists found themselves drowning in their accumulated empirical material, or lost in abstract speculations remote from all reality.<sup>22</sup>

That *Living Marxism* was faltering had been obvious for quite some time—only eight issues appeared in all of 1938 and 1939.<sup>23</sup> Mattick was slow to grasp just how bad the situation was. In mid-1939 he still expected the journal to resume its monthly schedule. Just the opposite occurred. Publication slowed to a trickle, with two issues in 1940 and three during 1941.<sup>24</sup> The autumn 1940 edition relied exclusively on Mattick, Korsch, Pannekoek, and Rühle; in other words, long-term veterans of the council communist movement only. Max Horkheimer's 'The Jews and Europe' had been slated to appear, but Horkheimer objected, and the translator, Emil White, distributed it privately instead.<sup>25</sup> The spring 1941 *Living Marxism* was written in its entirety by Mattick and Korsch. When no one sent contributions for a summer issue, Mattick postponed its release: an edition with only his essays was 'a situation which I think is not very healthy'.<sup>26</sup> Mattick added a new pseudonym (Luenika) to hide some of

21 FBI File, 101-5672: 8 September 1942, 19 November 1942.

22 Mattick, 'The End of Bourgeois Economics', *Living Marxism*, Spring 1940, p. 32.

23 Essays were contributed by Pannekoek, Auerbach, Henssler, Otto Rühle, Helmut Wagner, Sam Moss, and Carl Schlicht (possibly Kurt Lewin).

24 Mattick to Otto Rühle, 22 July 1939 (IISH: Rühle).

25 White retitled it 'Liberalism and the Jews'. Mattick to Fairfield Porter, 6 November 1940 (AAA); Dinsmore Wheeler to Dwight Macdonald, 21 April 1942 (Yale). The issue also included a comment on a Korsch essay by a college classmate of his daughter.

26 Mattick to Fairfield Porter, 16 November 1940 (AAA). Mattick to Michael Fraenkel, 17 September 1941 (Roth); Mattick to Otto Rühle, 17 September 1941 (IISH: Rühle).

his contributions.<sup>27</sup> Planning for future issues was also difficult because the international situation changed so rapidly.

The quality of the journal bothered Mattick more than ever, and he blamed just about everyone—himself, other members of the *Living Marxism* collective, and the printer—for this state of affairs.<sup>28</sup> Both Mattick and Korsch grumbled about translations by Emil White and Sam Moss. White had known Mattick for many years. He had managed Chicago's Dil Pickle Club during the early 1930s and was a close co-worker of Mattick's in the unemployed movement. Through his intervention, Mattick was hired at the bookstore at which White was employed.<sup>29</sup> Sam Moss was one of the few members of the *Living Marxism* collective to write for the journal. For a time, he also served as Mattick's editor and translator. A brush-maker by trade, he supported himself as a clerk in the early 1930s and hoped someday to become a writer. He also married Mattick's step-daughter, despite the vocal objections of Frieda. Later on he produced several novels.<sup>30</sup> When Korsch translated an article from Heinz Langerhans, Korsch complained to Mattick that it was 'a terribly long-winded task'.<sup>31</sup> For such matters, Korsch preferred Carl Berreitter or Dinsmore Wheeler from among the Chicago group.<sup>32</sup>

Mattick's closest colleagues were subject to his grouching for purely personal reasons. Fritz Henssler (a.k.a. Hans Berger) had since finished law school, held a faculty position, and received a good salary, but when he insulted Fairfield Porter, Mattick commented: 'a greater selfishness as Henssler's is inconceivable,

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27 Mattick to Michael Fraenkel, 4 February 1941 (Roth).

28 Mattick to Fairfield Porter, 12 April 1940 (AAA); Mattick to Fairfield Porter, 17 April 1940 (AAA).

29 Humphrey 1997, pp. 8–11.

30 After the war, he found work as a proof-reader and technical support person at the *New York Times*. Moss, 'On the Impotence of Revolutionary Groups', *Living Marxism*, June 1939; Moss 1948. Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 27 January 1946; Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler [No Date]; Hans Mattick to Frieda Mattick, 19 December 1948 (Mattick Jr); Sam Moss to Mattick, 1 December 1946; Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 14 January 1949 (Mattick Jr); Interview with Ilse Mattick, 21–5 May 2005; Email from Dan Antenen, 5 July 2008.

31 Karl Korsch to Mattick, 21 January 1940 (*Gesamtausgabe*). Karl Korsch to Mattick, 4 January 1940 (*Gesamtausgabe*); Otto Rühle to Mattick, 8 February 1940. Heinz Langerhans (Alpha), 'The Historical Character of the War and the Task of the Working Class', *Living Marxism*, spring 1940. Originally as: H.L., 'Krieg und Faschismus', *Der Freidenker*, 4 February, 18 February, 3 March, 17 March 1940.

32 Korsch was fluent in German, French, and English, with a working knowledge of Greek, Latin, Italian, Spanish, Dutch, Danish, Swedish, and Russian; Karl Korsch to Easton Rothwell, 2 December 1940 (*Gesamtausgabe*).



and on that point I think that what he terms your selfishness was your lack of obeying properly'. Henssler, he added, 'mistakes his dictatorial attitude, like all dictators, with his benevolent sociality. He is authority personified'. Nonetheless, Mattick found this aspect of him 'so charming' because 'he himself will never be aware of it'. He admitted: 'I like him just the same, and maybe because of all this'.<sup>33</sup> Mattick described Walter Auerbach, whom he also valued greatly, as more feminine than his wife: 'not always is nature what, in my opinion, it ought to be, but this might be all for the better'. He concluded: 'all illusions would be lost, if men would be as practical as the majority of women'. Besides, 'a man is a "real" man if he has nothing of the masculine trends'.<sup>34</sup>

Korsch was just as cranky. Mattick's editing, he told him, should not extend to differences of opinion.<sup>35</sup> But when Henry Pachter and Helmut Wagner objected to the extensive editing of their essays, Korsch was entirely unsympathetic: 'I am losing my patience with these people who can neither express their thoughts in German nor in English and who then complain when someone with considerable effort and time turns it into something half-readable'.<sup>36</sup> He goaded Mattick about his command of the language, pointing out that while one country might ape or mimic the policies of another, no such entity as an 'aping country' exists in the English language.<sup>37</sup>

A relatively new correspondent, the poet Kenneth Rexroth, could be equally jaundiced in his perceptions. With a long history of involvement with the IWW and Communist Party literary clubs, Rexroth was well-versed in the many different and antagonistic tendencies within the left.<sup>38</sup> Rexroth had a wonderful sense of language and sent Mattick vivid descriptions of the various groups:

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33 Mattick to Fairfield Porter, 11 December 1940 (AAA).

34 Mattick to Fairfield Porter, 10 August 1940 (AAA).

35 Karl Korsch to Mattick, 21 April 1941 (*Gesamtausgabe*); Karl Korsch to Mattick, 22 April 1941 (*Gesamtausgabe*); Karl Korsch to Mattick, 8 May 1941 (*Gesamtausgabe*); Karl Korsch to Mattick, 17 July 1940 (*Gesamtausgabe*).

36 Karl Korsch to Mattick, 24 October 1942 (*Gesamtausgabe*). Pachter's correspondence and publications appeared under various names: H Rabasseire to Mattick, 3 June [1941]; H Bruggers, 'Stages of Totalitarian Economy', *Living Marxism*, Fall 1941. Karl Korsch to Mattick, 18 November 1941 (*Gesamtausgabe*); Karl Korsch to Mattick, 2 December 1941 (*Gesamtausgabe*).

37 Karl Korsch to Mattick, 30 June 1941 (*Gesamtausgabe*); Karl Korsch to Mattick, 2 June 1941 (*Gesamtausgabe*).

38 For Rexroth, see the very fine biography: Hamalian 1991; Kenneth Rexroth to Mattick, 24 January 1940.

When I start associating with the Leaders of the Left Wing of the Socialist Labor Party, and ex-Trotskyists who admit to a secret fondness for Mme. Blavatsky, and other disheveled mongrels of that kidney, an old surfeit overcomes me . . . The Schactmanites are curled around each other like marmots in hibernation, the Cannonites are being nasty to everybody including themselves, and the vestigial remnant of Thomasites are trying to cure their dyspepsia with doses of alum.<sup>39</sup>

To Macdonald, he commented: ‘as Mattick has said, sooner or later you are going to be driven into the ironbound “United Front” of the concentration camp, you might as well get on speaking terms with one another beforehand’.<sup>40</sup>

The need to make the journal ‘more lively’ was a continuing topic of discussion, with Mattick and Korsch untiring in their efforts to diversify the pool of authors.<sup>41</sup> Mattick approached a long list of individuals, most of whom could not be considered council advocates even if councils fit sympathetically within their understanding of left politics.<sup>42</sup> When Günter Reimann, a former official of the German Communist Party, was approached, Mattick was relieved to hear that Reimann’s *Vampire Economy* ‘was only a money-maker’ and might not reflect his true opinions or abilities.<sup>43</sup> An attempt to entice Oscar Lange, then a professor in the University of Chicago Economics Department, included invitations to speak at *Living Marxism* events and a lengthy discussion of his work in the journal.<sup>44</sup> Of the many contemporary theorists who Mattick critiqued, only one of them, the pro-fascist Lawrence Dennis, submitted a rebuttal. Soliciting contributions from authors who had once been popular was not an option. Max Eastman was suggested, but Mattick found him ‘quite arrogant and not much of a thinker. I do not think he would do’.<sup>45</sup> Korsch echoed these

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39 Kenneth Rexroth to Mattick, 8 June 1941.

40 Kenneth Rexroth to Dwight Macdonald [before December 1941] (Yale).

41 Mattick to Michael Fraenkel, 31 May 1941 (Roth).

42 Among them were Henry Jacoby and Herbert Solow. C.A. Smith to Mattick, 20 March 1938; Theodor Hartwig to Mattick, 21 February 1939; Herbert Zam to Mattick, 9 June 1939; Guenter Reimann to Mattick, 22 October 1940.

43 Mattick to Fairfield Porter, 10 July 1941 (AAA).

44 Walter Auerbach to Mattick, 14 June 1939; Oscar Lange to Mattick, 28 September 1939; Mattick to Fairfield Porter, 6 November 1940 (AAA); Mattick to Fairfield Porter, 16 November 1940 (AAA); Mattick to Fairfield Porter, 2 December 1940 (AAA). Mattick, ‘On the Economic Theory of Socialism’, *Living Marxism*, September 1939.

45 Mattick to Fairfield Porter, 11 December 1940 (AAA). Fairfield Porter to Mattick, 5 December 1940 (Leigh).

sentiments: 'neither Eastman nor Hook seem to be much important to me just now'.<sup>46</sup>

Fundraising for the journal was no easier. A full year separated the Fall 1941 and Fall 1942 issues because of outstanding debts.<sup>47</sup> Mattick told Rexroth: 'do not worry about the "bills" from *L.M.* We try to get whatever possible, but we do not like to worry people. If you still care to have additional copies of *L.M.*, if you think it has some sense to give them away, I would send you some'.<sup>48</sup> *Living Marxism's* only Chicago outlet drastically reduced shelf space devoted to such materials in 1942, and Mattick's appeal for reconsideration, sent to the company's corporate headquarters, went unanswered. Subscribers grew cautious about publications received through the mail.<sup>49</sup> Besides, the journal's name no longer corresponded with the tenor of the times.

The new title could not have been blander: *New Essays, A Quarterly Devoted to the Study of Modern Society*. Mattick was pressed by Korsch to make substantial alterations in the journal's focus.<sup>50</sup> Its preamble was replaced with a simple statement: 'the articles represent the points of view of individual contributors and are not necessarily those of the publishers'. Korsch was nonetheless unhappy with the first issue because the changes were not bold enough. Article titles included 'materialism, historical materialism, marxism, marxian dialectic, and so forth', hardly indicative of a broadened scope.<sup>51</sup> An editor at *Partisan Review*, Clement Greenberg, was quite impressed with the journal—'certainly there is nothing elsewhere that approaches the seriousness and audacity of these articles', but he felt that he must 'complain about the quality of the writing'.<sup>52</sup>

The real problem, Korsch thought, was the paucity of submissions, combined with Mattick's unwillingness to make tough decisions. Editorial concessions, Korsch emphasised, were a legacy of Mattick's self-perception as a leader rather than an editor, a criticism that must have carried a particular

46 Karl Korsch to Herbert Levy, 29 October 1941 (*Gesamtausgabe*).

47 Mattick to Fairfield Porter, 8 December 1941 (AAA); Dinsmore Wheeler to Dwight Macdonald, 28 October [1942] (Yale).

48 Mattick to Kenneth Rexroth, 13 June 1941 (UCLA). Kenneth Rexroth to Mattick, 20 July 1940.

49 Dinsmore Wheeler to Dwight Macdonald, 4 June 1942 (Yale); Mattick to Otto Rühle, No Date [Mid 1942] (IISH: Rühle).

50 Karl Korsch to Mattick 30 June 1941 (*Gesamtausgabe*); Karl Korsch to Mattick, 8 December 1941 (*Gesamtausgabe*); Karl Korsch to Heinz Langerhans, 4 November 1942 (*Gesamtausgabe*).

51 Karl Korsch to Mattick, 21 October 1942 (*Gesamtausgabe*).

52 Clement Greenberg to Editors, 23 October 1942 (Mattick Jr).

sting. Korsch volunteered to make the choices about which Mattick felt uneasy. Mattick talked boldly—and in Korsch’s opinion, recklessly. Was it at all helpful to refer to *Partisan Review* as a ‘joke’ or Mattick’s fascism essay that they had published as an ‘intentional joke’?<sup>53</sup> Korsch’s rebuke to Mattick did not arise from a better impression of that magazine—at one point he described its editors as ‘originally CP [Communist Party] superficially, later trotskyist, they are now more or less characterless artistic and literary’. But Mattick’s cavalier opinions confused the very people who listened to him carefully.<sup>54</sup> Strong opinions but weak decisions seemed to characterise his orientation towards his responsibilities.

The process of finding new authors proceeded through fits and starts. Jay Rumney, formerly with the Frankfurt School but then a professor at Rutgers University in Newark NJ, had misgivings regarding anti-radical investigations that might ensue.<sup>55</sup> A translation of a Walter Benjamin piece, arranged through the Frankfurt School, never appeared, perhaps because a suitable translator was lacking.<sup>56</sup> Korsch asked Herbert Marcuse, another Frankfurt School member, to forward his recent book on Hegel, although Mattick had used it already in his *Partisan Review* essay.<sup>57</sup> Boris Souvarine was another possibility, but word had it that Souvarine was ‘quite melancholy if not morbid’ because he had abandoned all his work when fleeing Europe.<sup>58</sup> The historian, Arthur Rosenberg, promised a book review but passed away before completing it.<sup>59</sup>

The journal had never published literary contributions, although Korsch thought that each edition ought to contain something along these lines.<sup>60</sup> Bertolt Brecht was one possibility, James Farrell another. An elegant essay by Victor Serge was passed over because it would have involved a difficult translation.<sup>61</sup> Literary criticism by Rosa Luxemburg, however, was possible, thanks to Frieda’s translation. Only three issues of *New Essays* ever emerged, but they included a notable range of contributors. Besides Mattick and Korsch, essays and reviews appeared by Dwight Macdonald, Victor Serge, Julien

53 Karl Korsch to Mattick, 24 October 1942 (*Gesamtausgabe*).

54 Karl Korsch to Bertolt Brecht, 14 October 1941 (*Gesamtausgabe*) [brackets added].

55 Jay Rumney to Mattick, 25 March 1942.

56 Frederick Pollock to Mattick, 9 December 1942.

57 Karl Korsch to Mattick, 20 August 1941 (*Gesamtausgabe*).

58 Dinsmore Wheeler to Mattick, 5 January 1943. Karl Korsch to Boris Souvarine, 6 October 1942 (Harvard); Karl Korsch to Mattick, 24 October 1942 (*Gesamtausgabe*).

59 Arthur Rosenberg to Mattick, 16 January [1943]; Mattick to Claudio Pozzoli, 5 May 1970 (Pozzoli).

60 Karl Korsch to Mattick, 21 October 1942 (*Gesamtausgabe*).

61 James Farrell to Mattick, 16 July 1943; Mattick to Macdonald, 24 August 1943 (Yale).

Coffinet, George Kimmelman, Leo Friedman, Sebastian Frank, C.P. West, Boelke, Pannekoek, and Langerhans. Authors were finally identified by name. Macdonald sent a financial contribution to help with the publishing costs.<sup>62</sup>

If Korsch was increasingly pleased with the magazine, Boelke was beside himself with disappointment. The winter 1943 issue—the very last one, as it turned out—was ‘the lousiest issue ever published thus far’, so awful that he cautioned Mattick: ‘you will fast lose all reputation if you continue in this way. It certainly would be better not to write at all instead of writing and publishing this stuff.’<sup>63</sup> Wheeler approached Macdonald, then dissolving his ties to *Partisan Review*, about the editorship of *New Essays*: ‘I think the job of writing, editing, proof-reading, writing letters begging for [manuscripts], subscriptions, contributions, mailing, etc. combined with working as a machinist is getting Paul down.’<sup>64</sup> Macdonald, however, was already thinking about something else.

The death of the printer ultimately determined the fate of the magazine. With quotes from new printers running two-to-three times as high, continuing would have meant more time spent fundraising. Mattick nonetheless kept casting about for alternatives, and well into 1944 he thought the journal might still reappear.<sup>65</sup> Wheeler began to write again—after years of encouragement from both Mattick and Macdonald—and Mattick undertook a campaign to get him published.<sup>66</sup>

Mattick still organised occasional meetings, especially if someone noteworthy passed through Chicago. Acting on a tip from her sister, Naomi Sager contacted Mattick on behalf of a small socially-conscious group of co-eds at the University of Chicago. Mattick invited them to a meeting. It was a miserable, cold, and snowy evening, and they had difficulty finding the address. The house was half-hidden behind another and was not clearly marked. When the door opened, they were bowled over from the cigarette smoke that billowed out. Inside were a group of some twenty men, seasoned radicals from the German revolutions, the IWW, and Chicago’s unemployed movement, face-to-face with four young, female college students. They were quite a sensation, and they stayed for several hours, where the conversations amongst the men were

62 Dwight Macdonald to Dinsmore Wheeler, 30 June [1943] (Yale).

63 Walter Boelke to Mattick, 29 January 1944.

64 Dinsmore Wheeler to Dwight Macdonald, 15 November 1943 (Yale) [brackets added].

65 Buckmiller 1976, p. 58; Pete Ponto to Mattick, 10 December 1943; Mattick to Dwight Macdonald, 11 May 1944 (Yale); Mattick to D.D. Paige, 30 June 1944 (Princeton: *QRL*); Joachim Schumacher to Mattick, 24 August 1944.

66 Mattick to Dwight Macdonald, 11 May 1944 (Yale). See the August 1946 and January 1947 *Western Socialist* for Wheeler’s work.

conducted in a mixture of German and English. Because Sager and Mattick did not get a chance to speak that night, they made plans to meet the next day and go walking in the park. During the three and a half hours they spent together, Sager felt extremely respected by him. He never talked down to her. They simply talked together as equals, despite the vast differences in age (twenty years), political experience, and social class.<sup>67</sup>

Just before leaving Chicago, Mattick attended the IWW's annual conference. He was not impressed and wrote to a distant colleague:

The enthusiasm you have towards the IWW I can understand well, still it has no basis in fact. The IWW is today just another insignificant trade-union movement—despite their program—they have no future and out of sheer bitterness, they become more and more sectarian at the same time when they are willing to compromise their principles in order to keep the sect alive. The thing is really dead, it makes no sense to try to blow life into this cadaver, however nice it was in its youth.<sup>68</sup>

Mattick was ready for something new.

### Leaving Chicago

I think I like paradoxes so well because they are truest to reality.<sup>69</sup>

The Chicago crowd slowly dispersed. The Porters had left the Chicago area in late 1939. Jake Faber, who had relocated from Philadelphia to work with the *Living Marxism* group, departed the following year.<sup>70</sup> Henssler lived in Newark NJ, and when he wasn't teaching, he travelled extensively. Towards the end of the war, he worked for the US government re-educating German prisoners.<sup>71</sup> Mattick's step-son had been drafted into the army, where he remained.<sup>72</sup> Emil White became fast friends with Henry Miller and would soon follow him to

67 Interview with Naomi Sager, 16 September 2004.

68 Mattick quoted in: James Dawson to Anton Pannekoek, 19 November 1947 (IISH: Pannekoek).

69 Mattick to Fairfield Porter, 1 August 1941 (AAA).

70 Jake Faber to Mattick, No Date [Early 1941]; Interview with Jake Faber, 27 June 2005.

71 Mattick to Fairfield Porter, 24 June 1941 (AAA); Fritz Henssler to Mattick, 9 July 1944; Cummings 1968.

72 Laub 1983, pp. 277–8.

the west coast, serving as Miller's *aide-de-camp* for the next several decades.<sup>73</sup> Wheeler took a job composing radio commercials, and by the end of 1942 he was set to relocate to the family farm, a six-hour train ride away. This experiment in subsistence farming did not last long—the project was abandoned after only fourteen months, doomed in part by Wheeler's health. Already as a college student, Dwight Macdonald had helped nurse him through a bout of meningitis, but he also suffered from a debilitating arthritis that eventually led to a hip fusion and lifelong reliance on crutches and a wheelchair. When the Wheelers returned to Chicago, they stayed for several months with Mattick and Hamm in their new apartment before an eventual return to the farm in Ohio.<sup>74</sup>

Korsch was less available too. Short-term teaching assignments at the University of Washington in Seattle (summer session) and a military training programme that was housed at Cornell University in upstate New York were superseded by a contract at Tulane University in New Orleans, although, for reasons that remain unclear, he resigned after the second of a three-year commitment.<sup>75</sup> The nomadic academic life took its toll, and once *New Essays* stopped appearing, Korsch published very little. He, like everyone else, was sucked under by the war. Korsch referred to his 'increasing depression caused by the general development and by its repercussions on our personal lives'.<sup>76</sup> Vague plans to teach sociology in Haiti never materialised. Hedda Korsch's income from German instruction at the small, all-women's college (Wheaton College) near Boston, where she taught from 1936–56, anchored the family. Meantime, their eldest daughter pursued a doctorate in child psychology, while the younger daughter attended medical school, thus ensuring that all four members of the family were in possession of a doctor's title.<sup>77</sup>

The loss of *New Essays* was somewhat diminished by news that Macdonald's new journal, *Politics*, was 'to combine the best features of *Time*, *PR* [*Partisan*

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73 Mattick to Michael Fraenkel, 15 September 1943 (Roth).

74 Dinsmore Wheeler to Dwight Macdonald, 8 June 1941 (Yale); Dinsmore Wheeler to Dwight Macdonald, 19 June 1942 (Yale); Dinsmore Wheeler to Dwight Macdonald, 15 November 1943 (Yale); Dinsmore Wheeler to Dwight Macdonald, 19 January 1944 (Yale); Dick Wheeler to Dwight and Nancy Macdonald, 13 April 1944 (Yale); Mattick to Dwight Macdonald, 11 May 1944 (Yale); Dinsmore Wheeler to Dwight Macdonald, 27 November 1944 (Yale); Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 27 January 1946. Wheeler, 'A Parachute for Hamlet', *The Western Socialist*, July 1944.

75 Karl Korsch to Dwight Macdonald, 21 September 1943 (*Gesamtausgabe*).

76 Karl Korsch to Paul Partos, 12 February 1942 (*Gesamtausgabe*).

77 Mattick to Dwight Macdonald, 13 July 1945 (Yale).

*Review*], *New Essays*, and a 3 ring circus'.<sup>78</sup> Mattick sent the *New Essays* subscription list and heard that a book review by him would appear early on.<sup>79</sup> The journal's circulation grew quickly from 2000 to 5000 per issue, far outstripping any of Mattick's previous initiatives.<sup>80</sup> But difficulties between Mattick and Macdonald soon emerged. Mattick sent several pieces for Macdonald's consideration, including a criticism of Paul Sweezy's *Theory of Capitalist Development*. He told Macdonald: 'it cannot be printed in a magazine because it is about 30,000 words long. I just did it for the "fun" of it'.<sup>81</sup> More realistic was Mattick's retrospective look at Otto Rühle's career and the council communist movement. Wheeler did not understand Macdonald's rejection: 'if ever there was an article for which the name itself and the general purpose of your magazine was designed, this is it. This is politics in its truest sense'. Mattick's writing might be wooden, he conceded, but the Rühle article offered 'marxian analyses free of special pleading for any party, clique, or dogma'. This he compared to Macdonald's writing, characterised by 'a certain unfortunate muddiness that comes from undiscarded bolshevik remnants and hangovers'.<sup>82</sup> Mattick was equally obstinate, rejecting an offer from Macdonald to publish an excerpt from the essay. His goal had been 'to bring out, that long before Trotsky, in fact, from the very outset of the bolshevik movement, there were groups and people opposed to it from another than a left-bolshevik point of view'.<sup>83</sup>

Mattick used this occasion to air the deeper, unspoken issues that inevitably seemed to interfere with his relationship to Macdonald:

I feel that you always hesitate too much whenever I send you a manuscript, and that I cannot help suspect that you would prefer not to be bothered by me at all. If this is so, there is no reason not to say so openly and a lot of trouble would be avoided for both of us.<sup>84</sup>

Macdonald appreciated Mattick's good-natured forthrightness but referred to him as a 'political mystic' who 'seems to live in a world of his own' and was

78 Dwight Macdonald to Dinsmore Wheeler, 29 November 1943 (Yale) [brackets added].

79 Mattick to Dwight Macdonald, 11 May 1944 (Yale). Dwight Macdonald to Dinsmore Wheeler, 29 March [1945] (Yale).

80 Its readers were overwhelmingly male, college educated, urban inhabitants who were either socialists or independents in politics, under 35 years of age, and middle class. Macdonald 1957, p. 26.

81 Mattick to Dwight Macdonald, 17 May 1944 (Yale).

82 Dinsmore Wheeler to Dwight Macdonald, 27 November 1944 (Yale).

83 Mattick to Dwight Macdonald, 13 July 1945 (Yale).

84 Mattick to Dwight Macdonald, 13 July 1945 (Yale).



prone to 'broad and extreme statements'.<sup>85</sup> Despite many areas of agreement, particularly where marxism and anarchism overlapped, Mattick was too rigidly marxist for his taste. It was Mattick's mode of thinking, more than his particular ideas, with which Macdonald had the most difficulty. Even though Mattick dealt with 'important theoretical subjects', Macdonald found his formulations overly abstract and circular. Macdonald favoured formal essays that had a clear structure, sense of internal development, and conclusion. That he published lesser authors than Mattick was due to Macdonald's preference for a 'modest success' rather than an 'ambitious failure'.<sup>86</sup>

Mattick had difficulty placing the article on Rühle. It was originally planned as part of a multi-lingual volume—a sort of post-mortem *festschrift*—by Rühle's colleagues in Mexico.<sup>87</sup> Attempts to place it at the *Journal of Politics* or *Journal of the History of Ideas* were unsuccessful, and the essay did not appear until the following year in a small Australian publication.<sup>88</sup> Most surprising was Grossman's recommendation of Mattick to the editor at *The Quarterly Review of Literature*, where they were interested in lengthy reviews from a marxist perspective.<sup>89</sup> Mattick sent something too long for their standards, but when asked to shorten it, he admitted: 'I have no carbon copy and do not remember well enough how the thing was constructed'.<sup>90</sup>

Mattick had once told Porter: 'behind my talk against children is no more than an enormous desire to have some; it is the continuous attempt to defeat one's own wishes, by denouncing them'.<sup>91</sup> Many people were overjoyed at the news of Ilse's pregnancy. Another of the radical merchant mariners, Jackie Saltin, visited just before she gave birth. Saltin had often given Paul and Ilse free passes for cruises on the Great Lakes, where he worked. An expensive baby carriage arrived at their apartment one day. He had spent the last of his money on them before hitchhiking to New York City.<sup>92</sup>

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85 Dwight Macdonald to Dinsmore Wheeler, 20 March [1942] (Yale).

86 Dwight Macdonald to Mattick, 3 August [1945]. Dwight Macdonald to Dinsmore Wheeler, 26 June [1945] (Yale).

87 Helmut Wagner to Mattick, 14 November 1943; Esteban Kalmar to Mattick, 10 July 1944; Fritz Henssler to Mattick, 28 July 1944; Henry Jacoby to Mattick, 28 July 1944.

88 Robert Harris to Mattick, 12 October 1944; John Randall to Mattick, 30 November 1944.

89 D.D. Paige to Mattick, 23 June 1944; Mattick to D.D. Paige, 30 June 1944 (Princeton: *QRL*); D.D. Paige to Mattick, 13 July 1944 (Princeton: *QRL*).

90 Mattick to Ted Weiss, 23 September 1944 (Princeton: *QRL*). Mattick, 'History for the Victors: Review of Hans Kohn. *The Idea of Nationalism*'. *Quarterly Review of Literature*, Fall 1944.

91 Mattick to Fairfield Porter, 16 November 1940 (AAA).

92 Conversations with Ilse Mattick, 21–5 May 2005.

The Matticks' son was born in mid-1944 and was also named Paul, in keeping with the Mattick family tradition. Ilse was eager for the elder Paul to quit factory employment, given his health problems. With a break from his work-a-day routine, they headed to the Wheeler farm for an extended stay of several weeks. Wheeler helped with the arrangements so that they could be married.<sup>93</sup> First, though, was the matter of Paul's divorce, and here Frieda was quite helpful, paying for the court costs and testifying that Paul had abandoned her—at the time, one of the few permissible grounds for legally ending a marriage. As Frieda sometimes explained to friends, her relationship with Paul had suffered because of the falling rate of profit, a reference both figurative (about Paul's interests) and literal (about the perilous state of their finances). After the court appearance, she babysat for Paul and Ilse, her gift so that they could go celebrate.<sup>94</sup>

Ilse was determined to leave Chicago. They considered a move to the west coast, but New York was their ultimate destiny—from what they had heard, housing was cheaper, and besides, they knew many people in and around the city. Ilse was able to arrange employment before they left, and an offer to take over a friend's apartment clinched the decision. In the months before they left, Paul had been chronically ill and 'felt particularly miserable all this time'.<sup>95</sup>

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93 Ilse was naturalised in May 1943. Dinsmore Wheeler to Dwight Macdonald, 22 March 1945 (Yale); Dinsmore Wheeler to Dwight Macdonald, 17 April 1945 (Yale).

94 Frieda St. Sauveur to Alexander Koval, 14 October 1975 (AdK: Koval); Conversations with Ilse Mattick, 16–20 August 2005.

95 Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 27 January 1946. Mattick to Kenneth Rexroth, 23 March 1946 (UCLA); Kenneth Rexroth to Mattick, 1 April 1946.

## New York City

### Isolation

This winter was one of the most terrible in my life. I hated to open letters; I could no longer stand the misery that spilled out of them.<sup>1</sup>

The profound silence that descended on political life in the United States after the war took even pessimists, Mattick included, by surprise. The Matticks moved into a loft in the Chelsea district of New York City, just below mid-town, during the first week of May 1946.<sup>2</sup> The top floor of a four-story walk-up, it was a large space, well-lit and without internal walls. For furniture, Paul and Ilse scrounged the streets on sanitation days, pending a return to Chicago to collect their belongings (Mattick's step-son had taken over their apartment). Lithographs from Mattick's artist friends in Cologne and reproductions of other artwork hung on the walls.<sup>3</sup> The loft required considerable work, with a leaky roof, a water heater in need of patching, and a newly-purchased but reconditioned oil burner that itself needed repair. These were chores to which Mattick now devoted himself.<sup>4</sup> The couch served as a guest bed, and in general the place was sparsely furnished. To friends, Mattick explained: 'I have succeeded making New York one large room in which I sit and read'.<sup>5</sup>

Ilse directed the preschool programme at the Hudson Guild School, a nearby settlement house. The centre handled 150 children, the parents of whom spoke some eighteen languages. While she directed its programmatic aspects, another colleague handled the administration. Whenever parents were late or unable to pick up their children, Ilse and the other employees took them home.<sup>6</sup> Ilse found the work purposeful, and as long as she worked,

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1 Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 16 April 1947.

2 Address: 153 West 21st Street, between 6th and 7th Avenues, where Hans Schaper had lived. Mattick to Kenneth Rexroth [No Date] (UCLA); Mattick to Kenneth Rexroth, 11 May 1946 (UCLA); Conversations with Ilse Mattick, 21–5 May 2005.

3 Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 11 May 1946; Interview with Sam Abramovitch, 14 November 2006.

4 Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 9 October 1946; Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 29 May 1950.

5 Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 16 April 1947.

6 Mattick Jr 2009b; Conversations with Ilse Mattick, 21–5 May 2005.

Paul could write full-time. Equally important to her was keeping him out of the factories, a critical consideration in light of the lung ailments that plagued him (that he was a cigarette smoker only slowly came into consideration).<sup>7</sup> Mattick transferred his unemployment benefits from Chicago and stayed at home—cooking, cleaning, entertaining, and also caring for their son whenever Paul Jr. did not accompany Ilse to her job.<sup>8</sup> Paul remained the primary caretaker until their son was ready for preschool. Friends were free to drop by whenever they pleased. There was no need to call ahead.

In these first months, a long list of people visited, including Korsch (sometimes alone, sometimes with his family), Hans Schaper (like Jake Faber, a merchant mariner), other IWW colleagues, Walter and Pit Auerbach (but independently, now that they had separated), Fritz Henssler (who the following summer was ‘on Porter’s Island busy with Porter’s wife’),<sup>9</sup> both his stepchildren, Emil White (visiting from Big Sur in California), Frances Francis (who helped launch Willem de Kooning’s career), the Arringtons from Mississippi (‘they have difficulties understanding my English and thus the discussions are rather awkward’), Ruth Fischer (former head of the German Communist Party, who Mattick satirised in 1925 in his article for *Die Aktion*), Heinz Langerhans (‘the best creature I have met in New York’), and others already in New York like Dwight Macdonald and Walter Boelke.<sup>10</sup>

The Matticks discovered a new set of friends in the art scene that was located in their neighbourhood. Fairfield Porter’s studio was down the block, taken over from Walter Auerbach when the latter’s marriage broke up and he left for Europe. Willem de Kooning, the abstract expressionist, lived a few doors down; Nell Blaine (painter) across the street, until she moved into the flat beneath them; Edwin Denby (dance critic and poet) and the photographer Rudy Burckhardt in an apartment that could be reached across the rooftops; the painter Edith Schloss was also nearby, as were James Schuyler, Jane Freilicher, and others. These were circles in which intimacy flowed easily—Langerhans

7 Conversation with Paul Mattick, Jr., 6 August 2004.

8 Interview with Sam Abramovitch, 14 November 2006; Interview with Norman Epstein, 4 November 2006.

9 Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 22 September 1947.

10 Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 21 August 1946. Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 6 June 1946; Mattick to Dinsmore and Midge Wheeler, 21 August 1946; Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 9 October 1946; Mattick Wheeler, 14 November 1946; Frances Francis to Mattick, 20 November 1946; Sam Moss to Mattick, 1 December 1946; Anton Pannekoek to Mattick, 6 February 1947 (IISH: Pannekoek); Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 24 October 1947. Other guests included: Anna Auel, Minerva Roitman, Magarete Marcus, the Blumes, Isaac Rabinowich (*The Western Socialist*), Van Albada from Holland, and Joe and Ann Walsh.

and Schloss, Denby and Burckhardt, Burckhardt and Schloss, the de Koonings, Fairfield Porter and James Schuyler, and more. Porter visited the Matticks on occasion, which Paul welcomed, although it took Ilse longer to recover her old warmth for him.<sup>11</sup>

Ilse Langerhans was another regular visitor. At one time a girlfriend of Korsch's (Ilse Mattick: 'but who wasn't'), she had survived the concentration camps because of her linguistic skills and ability to serve as a translator. At the war's end, she intervened repeatedly to prevent violence between liberated camp inmates and the ethnic Germans who had been expelled from Poland and who likewise needed to walk towards Germany. Her health never quite recovered from these experiences (exacerbated by cigarette smoking), nor did she ever forego the habit of picking up discarded food for reuse, a trait learned during her confinement.<sup>12</sup> Heinz Langerhans had also spent years in German and French prisons, concentration camps, and detention centres. Now in the United States, he enrolled as a mathematics student at Harvard. Of his many writing projects—with Mattick, with Boelke, and with the anthropologist, Margaret Mead—none ever quite came to fruition. Nonetheless, Langerhans pursued a career as a college professor.<sup>13</sup>

Zellig Harris and the loose-knit group that referred to themselves as the Frame of Reference for Social Change constituted still other newcomers to the Mattick social set. Almost everyone in the Frame of Reference was an academic, with participation fluctuating between six and twelve individuals. Insofar as they had an articulated purpose, it was to bypass Marx's theory-laden critique of capitalism while arriving at similar conclusions through an analysis of empirical data. Unpublished papers by Harris were the main focus of discussion. Aligned with the kibbutz movement in Palestine, the group's members were part of a broader effort that opposed Jewish terrorism, ethnic cleansing, and indiscriminate killings of the indigenous Arab population, signing a

11 Porter's studio: 116 West 21st; de Kooning's: 143 West 21st; Blaine lived at 128 West 21st before moving to the loft underneath the Matticks at 153 West 21st. Karl Korsch to Mattick, 2 June 1941 (*Gesamtausgabe*); Fairfield Porter to Alan Wald, 5 August 1974 (Mattick Jr). Sawin 1998 p. 19, p. 24; Stevens and Swan 2004, p. 144ff, p. 177; Spring 2000, p. 68; Cummings 1968; Schloss 1984; Porter, Anne Porter Correspondence: Transcript Extracts 1941–1950, 10 May 1947 (AAA); Denby 1986.

12 Conversations with Ilse Mattick, 21–5 May 2005.

13 Heinz Langerhans to Mattick, 15 August 1941; Karl Korsch to Herbert Levy, 29 October 1941 (*Gesamtausgabe*); Karl Korsch to Paul Partos, 12 February 1942 (*Gesamtausgabe*). Conversations with Ilse Mattick, 21–5 May 2005.

declaration in 1948 to that effect in the *New York Times*.<sup>14</sup> Even though Mattick thought of their work as 'a sort of modernised marxism as regards topics and language' which for his taste was 'too academic', none of this much mattered: 'I really do not care how a thing is presented so long as I get something out of it'.<sup>15</sup>

Mattick formed a discussion group in New York. For a few months regular meetings were held. Korsch was invited, although Mattick found it 'trying to listen to his lectures. He is much better in personal discussions'.<sup>16</sup> Henssler spoke about his new work on existentialism.<sup>17</sup> Karl Wittfogel, another of the German academic communists with whom Korsch was in contact, turned down a request to speak because he was too busy.<sup>18</sup> By the next spring, Mattick conceded that meetings 'seemed to be a waste of effort', a reference to the deteriorating political conditions brought on by the Cold War.<sup>19</sup> Participation declined and ever greater amounts of effort were needed to accomplish less than before. Existence as a leftist grew unrealistic.

Now that the war was over, Mattick turned his attention to Europe. It took months before news from friends and family began to filter through, starting with Pannekoek in Holland. Interrogated repeatedly by the Gestapo, Pannekoek had evaded harsh treatment because he had not belonged to a political organisation since 1921. The occupation government forced his retirement from the university, and during the last year of the war, he and his wife lived without electricity, gas, or heat, with only enough coal for cooking. They dressed with multiple layers of sweaters and socks for warmth, procuring what food they could by bicycling into the countryside to deal directly with farmers. Pannekoek managed to write by candlelight for a few hours each evening, and the enforced idleness stimulated him to great deeds. He finished three lengthy manuscripts on workers' councils, the history of astronomy, and the origins of humankind: 'working for large-scale goals was the only thing that helped us get through'.<sup>20</sup> In the initial flush of optimism after the war, Pannekoek

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14 'New Palestine Party', *New York Times*, 4 December 1948. Interview with Seymour Melman, 2 October 2004; Interview with Norman Epstein, 4 November 2006; Barsky 2011, p. 45ff; Harris 1997, pp. 124–6.

15 Mattick to Kenneth Rexroth, 20 February 1948 (UCLA). Both Ilse Langerhans and Naomi Sager subsequently studied under Harris at the University of Pennsylvania. Sager's sister was a part of the FOR group.

16 Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 14 November 1946.

17 Frederick Henssler to Mattick, 21 September 1946.

18 Karl Wittfogel to Mattick, 19 October 1946.

19 Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 10 April 1947.

20 Anton Pannekoek to Alfred Weiland, 3 December 1948 (IISH: Pannekoek). Dirk Hendrik Brauns to Mattick, 10 September 1945.

wrote to Mattick about his positive assessment of developments in America, while Mattick wrote of his hopes for Europe, views fostered by their respective absences from the situations about which they commented.<sup>21</sup>

Detailed descriptions were forthcoming from Berlin, where Reinhold Klingenberg had lived through some 450 bombing raids.<sup>22</sup> At the very end of the war, the streets had been littered with corpses, 'some ironed flat by passing tanks'. Six Russian soldiers in search of watches, alcohol, and women entered the basement where Klingenberg and his partner hid during a two-week period. One woman was dragged from her two small children and raped in front of them. Standing against the wall were two elderly women, aged sixty and seventy. Both were shot dead. Reinhold and Tami scrambled to find an old watch to offer the soldiers, everything else had been looted already. A mock execution which the soldiers found quite humorous was sufficient to calm the situation. The next months were dreadful. Reinhold lost seventy pounds, Tami forty: 'the hunger was terrible. For three months we did not see an ounce of fats. There was no transportation at all, the resulting chaos was terrific.'<sup>23</sup> Alfred Weiland also wrote to Mattick for the first time in ten years. In the hours before Berlin was captured, a colleague was hanged by the Nazis, another killed by a Russian grenade. Weiland, who had once served as the unofficial librarian for the radical left in Berlin, lost his extensive collection of books and pamphlets to Nazi plundering and bombing raids. His apartment had been destroyed eighteen months before the end of the war.<sup>24</sup>

Food, clothing, and heat were the most pressing concerns as it became clear that conditions would not improve rapidly under the occupation forces. With reference to the concentration camp at Bergen-Belsen, Mattick noted that just the opposite was happening: 'if the Germans reduced a minority to a Belsen-diet; the Allies have succeeded in putting almost the whole population on a diet below Belsen.'<sup>25</sup> Klingenberg asked him to send meat and sausages, anything that contained animal fat, powdered eggs, condensed milk, coffee, chocolate, sugar, sweets, cigarettes, fabric for clothing, stockings, sewing machine

21 Anton Pannekoek to Mattick, 11 June 1946 (IISH: Pannekoek).

22 Berlin lost 40 percent of its housing. Rumpf 1963, ch. 7; Moorhouse 2010; Lowe 2007; Ledig 2003; Nossack 2006.

23 Reinhold Klingenberg to Mattick, 3 February 1946. This letter was published as part of: 'The German Experience—Three Documents, 11', *Politics*, October 1946. On the rapes in Berlin: Anonymous 2005.

24 Alfred Weiland to Mattick, 4 February 1946. A shortened version of this letter appeared as: W.A., 'Berlin Letter', *The Western Socialist*, October 1946. Kubina 1995.

25 Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 16 April 1947.

thread, and rubberbands. Weiland's three children needed socks and shoes, without which they could not travel to school, and his wife lacked underclothing. He wrote Mattick about other colleagues—Karl Nachtigall, for instance, whom Mattick knew from the expropriation campaigns of the early 1920s and who also desperately needed assistance.<sup>26</sup>

The International Rescue and Relief Committee finally sent information about the whereabouts of Mattick's mother and sisters, nearly a year after the war's end.<sup>27</sup> Everyone had survived, but they too were slowly starving. Because travelling involved a great risk of robbery, relatives in the countryside could not help them. The apartment building that housed the family was still standing. The family's possessions, however, had been plundered by Russian soldiers and, when the Mattick family was not at home, by neighbours. Linens, silverware, bedding, rugs, and more were gone. They still did not have proper underwear, socks, or shoes. Mattick's mother, who was suffering from heart and kidney problems, fetched firewood from the nearby park during the summer so that they could heat the apartment in the following months. All she seemed to do, his mother wrote, was sleep and freeze. One sister supported her family by sewing gloves and shirts for the Russian occupation force. A second sister had been raped by Russian soldiers and now cleaned bricks as part of the reconstruction effort. Lisbeth secured employment in the local municipal administration, which was of great assistance to the family in the months to come. She admitted: 'we never imagined that losing the war would be as grim as it has turned out to be'.<sup>28</sup>

Mattick's extensive network of colleagues proved helpful in this situation. Mary MacCollum, who he had known since the years in Chicago, travelled with Army military intelligence to Berlin and Paris. Hans Schaper similarly served as a letter courier.<sup>29</sup> Mattick used a different tactic to send packages of needed materials, although these efforts were not particularly successful—it took many months to make all the arrangements and the courier pilfered the goods for his own use, despite being paid generously for his services.<sup>30</sup> A more sophisticated approach was developed by Dwight and Nancy Macdonald through the

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26 Reinhold Klingenberg to Mattick, 16 May 1946; Alfred Weiland to Mattick, 20 May 1946.

27 Irma Kadmon to Mattick, 23 April 1946.

28 Lisbeth Mattick to Mattick, 10 March 1946. Mother to Mattick, 10 March 1946.

29 Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 24 November 1945; Mary McCollum to Mattick, 6 August 1946; Alfred Weiland to Mattick, 12 December 1946.

30 Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 6 June 1946; Mother to Mattick, no date [after 9 September 1946].



auspices of *Politics*.<sup>31</sup> Mattick was suspicious at first and questioned whether their use of philanthropy was simply a means to promote the magazine.<sup>32</sup> His attitude softened when he learned that Nancy Macdonald had used a considerable portion of her family fortune to aid refugees from the Spanish Civil War. The Macdonalds were able to send items more cheaply than Mattick and without the threat of pilfering. Canne Meijer, Pannekoek, Klingenberg, and others in Berlin were recipients.<sup>33</sup> Mattick told Wheeler that a Berlin colleague 'will be very happy to hear that the package came from a friend of mine who shares his ideas, as it will fortify his sense of togetherness'.<sup>34</sup>

The winter of 1946–7 was exceptionally difficult in Germany, and this added to the sense of urgency. Food was still scarce, and the freezing weather exacerbated the problems. In Berlin over 1100 people froze or starved to death that winter, mostly the elderly. Suicides continued at a rate of several hundred per month. Having survived the war, some people could not survive the peace.<sup>35</sup> Nearly two years after the end of the war, one of Mattick's sisters still lived without window panes, covering them instead with cardboard. His mother and another sister existed without running water, toilets, or electricity. The gas remained shut for up to six hours per day.<sup>36</sup> Klingenberg hadn't purchased new clothing since 1939.<sup>37</sup> His workplace went six weeks without any heat whatsoever, and the electricity was cut off for eight hours daily: 'you sit in the dark, hungry and freezing, and you ruminate about the absurdity of life'.<sup>38</sup> Mattick's efforts yielded over 100 packages that were sent to thirty different families: 'the

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31 The Macdonalds sent some 20,000 packages over a three year period; Sumner 1996, p. 186ff.

32 Kenneth Rexroth to Mattick, 20 March 1946; Mattick to Kenneth Rexroth, 7 April 1946 (UCLA); Kenneth Rexroth to Dwight Macdonald, 22 November 1946 (Yale); Kenneth Rexroth to Dwight and Nancy Macdonald [1946] (Yale).

33 Anton Pannekoek to Dwight Macdonald, 18 December 1945 (Yale); Mattick to Dwight Macdonald [1946] (Yale); Kenneth Rexroth to Mattick, 24 May 1946 (UCLA); Reinhold Klingenberg to Mattick, 19 October 1946; Reinhold Klingenberg to Mattick, 20 November 1946; Conversations with Ilse Mattick, 21–5 May 2005.

34 Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 20 May 1947. Siegfried Köpnick to Friend, 13 April 1947 (Mattick Jr); Willy Fritzenkötter to Mattick, 24 October 1947.

35 Steege 2007, p. 108ff.

36 Lisbeth Mattick to Mattick, 27 October 1946; Mother to Mattick, 10 January 1947.

37 Reinhold Klingenberg to Mattick, 3 December 1946.

38 Reinhold Klingenberg to Mattick, 1 February 1947.

letters I got from Germany (more and more people showed up in the course of time) very simply too much to bear'.<sup>39</sup>

Frieda was another link to Berlin. The years since her separation from Paul had not been easy. After Chicago, she moved to New Haven CT with a man fifteen years her junior (not the last of her relationships with younger men). To circumvent the laws against the co-habitation of unmarried adults, Joseph St. Sauveur used Mattick for his surname. They were reported to the FBI by the landlady, who grew suspicious because she thought that Frieda's son, whose paychecks—issued by the Army while he was stationed in Europe—helped support her, was actually her husband. This prompted a hasty marriage with St. Sauveur, but the FBI had already launched a comprehensive investigation. Only with great difficulty could the authorities decipher St. Sauveur's background. Both Frieda and the FBI eventually concluded that he suffered from dementia, perhaps because of a car accident years before.<sup>40</sup> During this period, Frieda held a series of secretarial positions at the Yale University Medical School complex and also translated medical textbooks. This work finished when she moved to New York, within months of Paul and Ilse's own relocation.

The FBI investigation delayed action on Frieda's application to the United States Census Bureau for a posting to Germany, and not until October 1946 did she arrive in Berlin. Because she was permitted 400 pounds of freight, Mattick sent a trunk with clothing, shoes, and food.<sup>41</sup> Initial accounts record how unprepared she was for what she witnessed, incredulous that the city could still be functioning at such a low level a full year and a half after the war's end. An unpublished report she translated about ill and maimed children who had frozen to death in Berlin's hospitals disturbed everyone who heard about it.<sup>42</sup>

Frieda had always been a complicated individual—even the FBI reports described her variously as 'very emotional' and 'aggressive and forceful'—but this was now reflected in her relationships with Paul's family and friends. Her interactions with Reinhold Klingenberg—whose life Paul had saved during the counterrevolutionary putsch in Berlin—spoiled quickly, with any number

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39 Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 16 April 1947. Reinhold Klingenberg to Mattick, 21 March 1947. Packages arrived from Hanna Kosterlitz, Sam Abramovitch, Bruria Kaufman and Zellig Harris, the Arringtons, Wheeler, and Rexroth.

40 FBI File 101-5672; Laub 1983, p. 277.

41 Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 6 June 1946; Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 21 August 1946; Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 18 September 1946; Reinhold Klingenberg to Mattick, 19 October 1946; Lisbeth Mattick to Mattick, 27 October 1946; Alfred Weiland to Mattick, 31 January 1947.

42 Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 5 May 1947.

of small irritants serving as occasions for a major blow-up. At first she visited Klingenberg regularly and brought food with her, procured from the military commissary. When she asked Klingenberg to eat only the cookies she didn't like, he took offense. Frieda also talked openly about travelling and vacations, whereas Klingenberg and his partner struggled with the difficulties of everyday existence—receiving a CARE package could mean five hours in line in the rain. And when Klingenberg asked for more of just about everything he saw—cookies, cigarettes, and soap, Frieda resented the pushiness. That she purchased an expensive dog for herself astounded everyone. Klingenberg's tactless comments about the dog did not improve relations. Nonetheless, when the dog became ill, Klingenberg's partner offered the last of their oats as a means to stabilise its diet.<sup>43</sup>

Mattick's sister, who got along with Frieda just fine, was nonetheless fully aware of Frieda's self-absorption. Frieda thought nothing of helping herself to the coffee intended for the family on the grounds that she did not like the instant coffee that was available at the commissary. On the other hand, Frieda was also hugely gracious and giving, for which the Mattick family was extremely thankful. Lisbeth held Klingenberg equally at fault for the tensions with Frieda, if only because he could not control his food and nicotine urges.<sup>44</sup> Before Frieda left for Germany, Paul had told Rexroth: 'I have the best relations with her', but this now changed.<sup>45</sup> Paul scolded Frieda for her mistreatment of Klingenberg, while she contemplated breaking relations with Paul altogether. When she sought her son's support, Hans was quite clear about keeping these relationships separate: 'I'll handle Paul's relation to me on the basis of what happens between us and on the basis of what I think of him as manifested in his relations to others.'<sup>46</sup> Despite the tensions, Frieda continued to distribute packages that Paul forwarded.<sup>47</sup> Frieda remained in Berlin for three years, with a subsequent posting to Frankfurt for two more. Throughout, she solicited publishers on Paul's behalf.<sup>48</sup> Hans attempted to secure consulting work for Paul

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43 Reinhold Klingenberg to Mattick, 20 November 1946.

44 Mother to Mattick, 10 December 1946; Lisbeth Mattick to Mattick, 6 January 1947; Reinhold Klingenberg to Mattick, 5 February 1947; Reinhold Klingenberg to Mattick, 11 September 1947.

45 Mattick to Kenneth Rexroth, 26 February 1946 (UCLA). Rexroth was characteristically effusive: 'pictures of Frieda I have seen still get me all warm just remembering them. She was certainly a remarkable looking woman'. Kenneth Rexroth to Mattick [notated 1945/1946 but earlier than 26 February 1946].

46 Hans Mattick to Frieda Mattick, 19 December 1948 (Mattick Jr.).

47 Mattick to Karl Korsch, 19 September 1949 (IISH: Korsch).

48 Karl Böttcher to Frieda St. Sauveur, 1 June 1950.

on a research project that scrutinised the effectiveness of propaganda.<sup>49</sup> Paul, Frieda, and Hans were people who cared deeply about one another, notwithstanding how fraught their relations might be at any particular point in time.

### Travelling to Berlin

It is lack of knowledge on my part that prevented me from writing simply. If I know more I will become more comprehensible. This is why it is senseless to ask me to write clearer. I would if I could.<sup>50</sup>

Mattick was determined to visit Berlin, but every plan he formed to get there proved unworkable. Hiring out as a seaman was one option. Many of his friends had done just this. The only skill needed was the physical strength to haul goods on and off the ships. The problem was that crew members were not typically told the destination ahead of time, a lesson that Hans Schaper learned the hard way, winding up in Algeria rather than Antwerp. Mattick imagined he could hitchhike across Europe, as if it were 1932 all over again and he were tramping his way through southern United States—until persuaded by friends that he might disappear en route. Travelling legally was equally impractical. It required the approval of four separate agencies: the U.S. State Department, Justice Department, and Army, as well as the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Association. Another option was to hire out as a member of a relief agency, but Mattick's inquiries were rebuffed because he was inexperienced and beyond the maximum age for such work. Besides, employees paid their own way. A staff appointment to a State Department committee to assess Germany's economic capabilities proved similarly unrealistic.<sup>51</sup>

In order to travel as a special correspondent for a popular magazine like *Time*, *Life*, or *Reader's Digest*, Mattick asked Dwight Macdonald, Scott Nearing, and Max Eastman to provide introductions to the appropriate editors, to whom he proposed a three-month assignment in exchange for 'information

49 Hans Mattick to Mattick, 5 September 1949.

50 Mattick to Kenneth Rexroth [1946] (UCLA).

51 Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 11 May 1946; Anton Pannekoek to Mattick, 18 May 1946 (IISH: Pannekoek); Mattick to Kenneth Rexroth, 20 May 1946 (UCLA); Mattick to Dinsmore and Midge Wheeler, 6 June 1946; Eda Jean Bolton to Mattick, 27 January 1947; Lucille Nixon to Mattick, 28 February 1947.

they could not get otherwise'.<sup>52</sup> Mattick found no takers. Eastman, then an editor at *Reader's Digest*, wrote: 'I am extremely sorry about this, and if you can think of anything else I might do, I will be very glad to try it'.<sup>53</sup> Visiting Europe so soon after the war's end was simply not possible. During the long months of waiting for the travel restrictions to ease, Mattick sought work as a machinist.

Letters kept Mattick informed about the situation inside Germany. The contact with Klingenberg and Weiland was facilitated by a left-wing American military officer who agreed to ferry mail in and out of Berlin.<sup>54</sup> A loose-knit group of some 150 colleagues had since sprung up from former members of the KAPD, AAUD, KAUD, Rote Kämpfer, and other kindred groups. Because of the Soviet occupation, meetings were held clandestinely. Weiland was at the centre of this activity.<sup>55</sup> Membership in the various official political parties, like the Social Democrats and Communists, provided a cover for some participants. Klingenberg found work as a director of an adult education centre, a position he held for the next two decades. Weiland catapulted upward through a series of positions in the city bureaucracy that left him increasingly vulnerable when the Communists got wind of his activities.<sup>56</sup>

Klingenberg was eager for Mattick's comments on a long 150-page manuscript over which he had laboured for many months ('with cold legs, one can hardly think'). This was not the first time that Klingenberg had oriented his activities to complement Mattick's interests. When they revived their friendship in the late 1920s, Klingenberg discovered Grossman and crisis theory alongside Mattick. Now, nearly twenty years later, Klingenberg returned to these interests. The manuscript he sent was not an easy read. Based on the mathematical tables developed by Luxemburg and Grossman, Klingenberg hoped to draw out the implications of Marx's accumulation theory for a planned economy. Mattick found its technical reasoning overly deterministic. A global system that existed without conflict was not a realistic possibility, even as a theoretical exercise.<sup>57</sup> Nonetheless, the manuscript was prescient in

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52 Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 14 November 1946. Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 9 October 1946; John Jessup to Mattick, 13 November 1946; Scott Nearing to Mattick, 19 November 1946.

53 Max Eastman to Mattick, 31 December 1946.

54 Reinhold Klingenberg to Mattick, 23 June 1946.

55 Alfred Weiland to Mattick, 4 February 1946; Alfred Weiland to Mattick, 20 May 1946.

56 Reinhold Klingenberg to Mattick, 3 February 1946; Reinhold Klingenberg to Mattick, 19 October 1946; Reinhold Klingenberg to Mattick, 20 November 1946. Kubina 2001, pp. 153–62; Schivelbusch 1998; Graf 1976.

57 Reinhold Klingenberg to Mattick, 11 September 1947. Reinhold Klingenberg to Mattick, 30 June 1946; Reinhold Klingenberg to Mattick, 19 October 1946; Reinhold Klingenberg to

the sense that it foretold the kind of ‘engineer’s marxism’ that would overtake the field of marxian economics from the 1970s on.

Mattick placed important reports about the situation in Europe in sympathetic journals. An article by his step-son, an administrator at prisoner-of-war camps, appeared in Macdonald’s *Politics*. Extracted from a long, 70-page letter, the article described the unusual division of labour within the Russian workforce, in which no one knew anyone else’s job.<sup>58</sup> Klingenberg’s account of the rapes and shootings by Russian soldiers was also printed in *Politics*, whereas Weiland’s description of the political situation in Berlin appeared in *The Western Socialist*. Mattick provided the translations, Dinsmore Wheeler the editing. Mattick also placed the Klingenberg and Weiland reports in the British anarchist publication, *Freedom* (a journal that described Mattick and the council communists as the ‘true followers of Marx today’), and in the Australian journal, *Southern Socialist International Digest*.<sup>59</sup>

With the rekindling of Mattick’s multi-sided and far-flung correspondence, he once again became a conduit for ideas, news, and publications. Because Pannekoek could not buy books due to post-war restrictions on currency exchanges, Mattick sent them *gratis*, something he did for many of the German correspondents as well. He collected old copies of *Living Marxism* and *New Essays* and sent them along.<sup>60</sup> When friends travelled to Europe, he supplied addresses of people to visit: Sam Abramovitch, for instance, had contact information for F.A. Ridley (the editor of *Left*) and Paul Partos (a Korsch colleague from Berlin) in London; Canne Meier, Pannekoek, and Jan Appel in

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Mattick, 28 November 1946; Reinhold Klingenberg to Mattick, 5 February 1947; Reinhold Klingenberg to Mattick, 15 July 1947; Reinhold Klingenberg to Mattick, 2 October 1961/20 May 1962; Mattick to Roman Rosdolsky, 10 February 1964 (IISH: Rosdolsky); Roman Rosdolsky to Mattick, 13 April 1964 (IISH: Rosdolsky); Mattick to Roman Rosdolsky, 17 April 1964 (IISH: Rosdolsky). Klingenberg, *Kapitalistische Planwirtschaft, Sozialistische Bedarfswirtschaft*.

58 Mattick, ‘500 Red Army Men’, *Politics*, October 1945. Laub 1983, pp. 295–7.

59 “‘Gross’ Errors”, *Freedom*, 27 July 1946, p. 2. Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 21 August 1946; George Woodcock to Mattick, 23 November 1946. For the Klingenberg/Weiland letters: *Politics*, October 1946; *Western Socialist*, October 1946; *Freedom*, 5 and 19 October 1946.

60 The colleagues in France had an amusing habit of referring to *Living Marxism* as *Leaving Marxism*; Rodion to Mattick, 3 May 1946. Miguel Nolli/Lain Diez to Mattick, 18 February 1946; Charles to Mattick, 6 March 1946 (IISH: Korsch); Charles Berry to Mattick, 15 June 1946; Anton Pannekoek to Mattick, 11 June 1946 (IISH: Pannekoek); Hermann Hahn to Mattick, 15 November 1946; Ernst Lincke to Mattick, 1 December 1946; Paul Kohn to Mattick, 29 December 1946; Willy Fritzenkötter to Mattick, 24 October 1947.

Amsterdam; André Prudhommeaux in Paris, and other colleagues in Brussels and Rome.<sup>61</sup>

Many people hoped for a quick revival of *New Essays*, with promises of support from Korsch, Pannekoek, Henssler, Klingenberg, and Canne Meijer. Several of them favoured a news journal rather than something theoretical, and discussions about this continued on-and-off until such ideas were finally abandoned in mid-1950.<sup>62</sup> Rexroth proposed a journal combining politics and literature, but Mattick was not interested: 'I am not out to amuse people, nor am I interested in making reading easy for them.'<sup>63</sup> He explained:

Of course I try my best to be understood; otherwise I would not write at all. But it is not so easy to write simple on some subjects, like economics. It takes years of trying before one can write simply. A lack of knowledge prevents one to free oneself from the generally used terminology and modes of expression. Only after one has 'mastered' the subject, it becomes possible to speak in one's own terms, and to adapt those terms to the understanding of less versed people.

He added: 'it is often not possible to bring all ideas to the level of common understanding without killing the ideas.'<sup>64</sup>

If a new journal was unrealistic, a pamphlet series held great appeal. Work by Pannekoek was an obvious choice because of the resurgence of working-class militance in the immediate aftermath of the war, especially the huge strike wave in the United States and the political turmoil in many parts of Europe. Pannekoek was thought to be a logical bridge between the revolutionaries and a broader audience. His easy, down-to-earth writing style, focus on basic questions of working-class radicalism, and orientation to non-bolshevik forms of

61 Sam Abramovitch to Mattick, 2 August 1949; Interview with Sam Abramovitch, 14 November 2006.

62 Reinhold Klingenberg to Mattick, 1 September 1946; Frederick Henssler to Mattick, 21 September 1946; Sam [Abramovitch] to Mattick, 29 September 1946; Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 9 October 1946; Bruno to Mattick, 27 October 1946; Anton Pannekoek to Mattick, No Date (IISH: Pannekoek); Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 10 April 1947; Mattick to Karl Korsch, 12 July 1949 (IISH: Korsch); Frederick Henssler to Mattick, 18 January 1948; Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 29 May 1950.

63 Mattick to Kenneth Rexroth, 7 April 1946 (UCLA). Kenneth Rexroth to Mattick [1945/1946]; Mattick to Kenneth Rexroth, 26 February 1946 (UCLA); Kenneth Rexroth to Mattick [after 1946]; Mattick to Kenneth Rexroth, 7 March 1946 (UCLA); Kenneth Rexroth to Mattick [after 1 April 1946]. Hamalian 1991, p. 149ff.

64 Mattick to Kenneth Rexroth, 1946 (UCLA).

communism made him an ideal interlocutor. Efforts were underway to publish Pannekoek's work in Holland, France, Germany, Chile, Great Britain, and the United States. These projects centred on his *Lenin as Philosopher*, part of which had appeared in *Living Marxism*, and his new manuscript, *Workers' Councils*.<sup>65</sup>

The war had done nothing to diminish Pannekoek's fastidiousness regarding his publications—'the omission or displacement of one comma can entirely change or revert the meaning of a sentence', he wrote: virtually word-for-word what he had told Mattick twelve years earlier.<sup>66</sup> Ideas, he lectured, must 'find their way on their own merit without bias by the name of the author', a perspective on reading that overlooked the inner dialogue that is facilitated by personal identification with an author.<sup>67</sup> Mattick typed *Lenin as Philosopher* from Pannekoek's hand-written copy; the linguist, Zellig Harris, proofed it for grammatical and word usage errors.<sup>68</sup> Mattick was at first overly optimistic about finishing the project, which required sizable subsidies from Pannekoek and Pannekoek's brother-in-law, a loan, and the Matticks' own money. Advertisements were due to appear in nine newspapers and journals. With a 2000-address mailing list, Mattick also planned to ship fifty review copies. Book stores in New York, Chicago, San Francisco, Australia, South Africa, and England were targeted as part of the distribution network.<sup>69</sup>

Difficulties developed almost as fast as plans could be concretised. Dwight Macdonald offered a quarter-page ad in *Politics*, not the requested half-page, and he hesitated to share the journal's mailing list because of overuse.<sup>70</sup> Fritz

65 Anton Pannekoek to Mattick, 21 November 1945 (IISH: Pannekoek); Miguel Nolli/Laín Diez to Anton Pannekoek, 16 February 1946; Mattick to Anton Pannekoek, 13 September 1947 (IISH: Pannekoek); Guy Aldred to Anton Pannekoek, 8 October 1947 (IISH: Pannekoek); Anton Pannekoek to Alfred Weiland, 26 May 1948 (IISH: Pannekoek); Anton Pannekoek to Alfred Weiland, 7 July 1948 (IISH: Pannekoek); Miguel Nolli/Laín Diez to Mattick, 25 July 1948 (IISH: Pannekoek); Anton Pannekoek to Alfred Weiland, 20 December 1948 (IISH: Pannekoek); Alfred Weiland to Anton Pannekoek, 27 July 1950 (IISH: Pannekoek); Maximilien Rubel to Anton Pannekoek, 30 January 1953 (IISH: Pannekoek).

66 Anton Pannekoek to James Dawson, 12 October 1947 (IISH: Pannekoek).

67 Anton Pannekoek to Dwight Macdonald, 18 December 1945 (Yale).

68 Mattick to Anton Pannekoek, 20 November 1947 (IISH: Pannekoek); Mattick to Anton Pannekoek, 12 December 1947 (IISH: Pannekoek).

69 Ads were projected for: *Politics*, *Partisan Review*, *Resistance*, *Retort*, *Modern Review*, *New York Times*, *Industrial Worker*, *Now*, and *Left*. Mattick to Anton Pannekoek, 5 January 1948 (IISH: Pannekoek); Mattick to Anton Pannekoek, 21 January 1948 (IISH: Pannekoek); F.A. Ridley to Mattick, 27 January 1948; Mattick to Anton Pannekoek, 10 February 1948 (IISH: Pannekoek); Mattick to Anton Pannekoek, 8 March 1948 (IISH: Pannekoek).

70 Mattick to Dwight Macdonald, 3 January 1948 (Yale); Dwight Macdonald to Mattick, 7 January 1948 (Yale); Henry Mayer to Mattick, 6 June 1949.



Henssler also reneged on his commitment, despite marrying into considerable money—his wife was a tobacco wholesaler and together they owned a country estate, replete with rolling hills, dogs, sheep, and farm equipment: ‘very new, very modern, very expensive, very tasteful, very rich; one hardly dares to sit down, to walk, to use it.’<sup>71</sup> Yet Henssler claimed that he was broke, financially dependent on his wife, and in any case uninterested in publishing Pannekoek.<sup>72</sup> Within months of its release, orders for *Lenin as Philosopher* slowed. Of the 2000 copies, only 1000 were distributed (with many given away). For the copies that were forwarded abroad, no proceeds were received whatsoever, and only half the original outlay was recouped.<sup>73</sup>

Pannekoek’s *Workers’ Councils* presented even greater difficulties. James Dawson began the production process in Australia.<sup>74</sup> Dawson had a substantial track record as an independent publisher. During the mid- and late 1940s, he had released a small collection of Mattick’s essays, *Rebels and Renegades*, and he edited a series of short-lived journals that reprinted essays from the council communists.<sup>75</sup> Dawson planned to publish *Workers’ Councils* in instalments and also bind 1000 of them in book form, but he was over-committed, under-financed, and ultimately unable to do all that he had promised. Mattick explored various means to complete what Dawson had begun. He was sceptical that much of an American audience existed for such material: ‘people here know nothing about the council movement and what is more, they do not care to know anything about it.’<sup>76</sup> The project was left unfinished. Plans for other

71 Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 21 August 1946.

72 Frederick Henssler to Mattick, 18 January 1948; Miguel Nollí/Lain Diez to Mattick, 25 July 1948 (IISH: Pannekoek).

73 Mattick to Anton Pannekoek, 29 October 1949 (IISH: Pannekoek); Mattick to Anton Pannekoek, 15 January 1950 (IISH: Pannekoek).

74 Anton Pannekoek to Mattick, 21 November 1945 (IISH: Pannekoek); Anton Pannekoek to James Dawson, 1946; Anton Pannekoek to Mattick, 6 February 1947 (IISH: Pannekoek); Mattick to Gabriel Kolko, 19 October 1969 (York).

75 James Dawson to Mattick, 12 December 1944 (Wright); Mattick to Steve Wright, 24 May 1977 (Wright); Mattick to Steve Wright, 27 June 1977 (Wright). James Dawson to Anton Pannekoek, 22 January 1948 (IISH: Pannekoek). Dawson’s publications appeared as: *Workers’ Bureau*, *Southern Socialist Review*, *Southern Socialist International Digest*, and *Southern Advocate for Workers Councils*; Wright 1980.

76 Mattick quoted in: James Dawson to Anton Pannekoek, 19 November 1947 (IISH: Pannekoek). Henry Mayer to Mattick, 5 January 1949; Anton Pannekoek to Mattick, 6 January 1950; Mattick to Anton Pannekoek, 15 January 1950 (IISH: Pannekoek); Mattick to Anton Pannekoek, 31 January 1950 (IISH: Pannekoek); Henry Mayer to Anton Pannekoek, 9 February 1950 (IISH: Pannekoek); Anton Pannekoek to James Dawson, 15 February 1949 (IISH: Pannekoek); Anton Pannekoek to Mattick, 19 March 1950 (IISH: Pannekoek);

pamphlets—a translation of Korsch's *Marxism and Philosophy*, Langerhans on his concentration camp experiences, Henssler on Heidegger, and a multi-authored response to Macdonald's *The Root Is Man*—were similarly abandoned, as was an alternate plan to combine these into a book along with an early version of Mattick's *Marx and Keynes*.<sup>77</sup>

Not until travel to Germany became possible in the case of sick or elderly relatives was Mattick able to make his long-anticipated trip.<sup>78</sup> Plans for a three-month visit to Berlin, Paris, Amsterdam, and London were scaled back due to the expense. This was not entirely negative, as Mattick was 'eager to come back to Ilse and the child. They will have it rather difficult while I am away, taking care of the house and going to work too'. Besides, he had never met the contacts outside Germany and all he could do 'besides sightseeing, would be to gab with people'. In early April 1948, Mattick set sail aboard a converted troop transport that slept fifty to a room, the cheapest of the various travel options. The trip had been three years in the making: 'I am quite excited about the whole thing and a little scared although I do not know why'.<sup>79</sup> It had been twenty-two years since his last time in Europe.

Mattick spent a quick thirty days in Berlin, the maximum time allowed for a visit.<sup>80</sup> Nearly fifty participants attended a conference organised by Klingenberg and Weiland at which Mattick lectured on the labour movement in the United States and the international situation. Many of his former colleagues were in attendance, as were undercover agents from the city's security apparatuses. Even Klingenberg underestimated the degree of surveillance—of the eight participants in an economics class that he co-taught with Weiland,

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Mattick to Anton Pannekoek, 25 March 1950 (IISH: Pannekoek); K.J. Kenafick to Anton Pannekoek, 18 May 1950 (IISH: Pannekoek); Mattick to Anton Pannekoek, 11 July 1950 (IISH: Pannekoek); K.J. Kenafick to Anton Pannekoek, 2 August 1950 (IISH: Pannekoek); Mattick to Anton Pannekoek, 24 September 1953 (IISH: Pannekoek). Buckmiller 1978, p. 58.

77 Mattick to Kenneth Rexroth, 7 April 1946 (UCLA); Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 5 May 1947; Mattick to Dwight Macdonald, 3 January 1948 (Yale); Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 13 March 1948; Mattick to Karl Korsch, 12 July 1949 (IISH: Korsch). Mattick placed the FOR piece in Dawson's *Southern Advocate for Workers' Councils* as 'Essay on Socialist Theory'.

78 Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 16 April 1947; Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 22 September 1947; Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 13 October 1947; Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 24 October 1947; Mattick to Dwight Macdonald, 3 January 1948 (Yale); Mattick to Anton Pannekoek, 8 March 1948 (IISH: Pannekoek).

79 Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 13 March 1948.

80 Reinhold Klingenberg to Mattick, 16 May 1946; Mattick to Anton Pannekoek, 8 March 1948 (IISH: Pannekoek); Conversations with Ilse Mattick, 16–20 August 2005.

four were police spies.<sup>81</sup> Frieda and Paul overlapped in Berlin, and, although she paid a tailor to make him a suit of clothing, she was also angry when he kept an original George Grosz drawing from among the artwork that she was purchasing on the cheap.<sup>82</sup> From Berlin, Mattick proceeded to Holland to see Canne Meijer and Pannekoek, their first meeting after two decades of correspondence. During the seven weeks he was away, Mattick ate only what others ate and in the same quantities. He arrived home considerably thinner. His account of the trip, 'Obsessions of Berlin', appeared in *Partisan Review* a few months later.<sup>83</sup>

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81 Reinhold Klingenberg to Mattick, 1 September 1946; Kubina 2001, pp. 199, 244–5.

82 Frieda St. Sauveur to Alexander Koval, 8 June 1975 (AdK: Koval).

83 Mattick, 'Obsessions of Berlin,' *Partisan Review*, October 1948; reprinted in the British journal: *The Adelphi*, January–March 1949 and April–June 1949; with an edited version in the Chilean journal, *Babel*, #50, 1959. Mattick, 'The Bombed Mind,' *Resistance*, March 1949. Henry Williamson to Mattick [April 1948]; Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 14 January 1949 (Mattick Jr.).

## Quiet Times

### Writers' Bloc

There is no God but there are many hundreds of thousands of theologians.<sup>1</sup>

Mattick returned from Europe in mid-1948, ill with pneumonia and depressed. An excursion that summer to a resort area in upstate New York was intended to speed his recovery, but while they were away, the Matticks' apartment was robbed. This only added to the sombre mood. They lost a camera, their typewriter, jewelry, and rings. The burglar also took Paul's clothing, making the intrusion all the more personal.<sup>2</sup>

The connection with Dwight Macdonald fed the general sense of gloom. Attempts at friendship never seemed to work out, despite mutual good intentions, including an invitation to join the Macdonalds at their Cape Cod summer home and gatherings at the Matticks' home whenever Wheeler or Korsch came to visit.<sup>3</sup> Mattick was unable to overcome his basic distrust of Macdonald, and one situation after another—all centred on submissions to Macdonald's journal—flared into outright antagonism. Macdonald's comments about Mattick's writing bothered him long after the fact. In a moment of pique, Mattick claimed: 'sometimes I am glad not to be accepted by Macdonald. After all, *Politics* is not worth a shit'.<sup>4</sup>

Mattick encouraged Macdonald to publish Pannekoek but then experienced it as a deliberate snub of his own work when Macdonald did precisely what

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1 Mattick 1981, p. 157.

2 Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 24 November 1948 (Mattick Jr.); Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 14 January 1949 (Mattick Jr.).

3 Karl Korsch to Dwight Macdonald, 1 December 1946 (*Gesamtausgabe*); Mattick to Dwight Macdonald [1946] (Yale); Mattick to Dwight Macdonald, 1 July 1947 (Yale); Mattick to Dwight Macdonald, 3 January 1948 (Yale).

4 Mattick to Kenneth Rexroth, 26 February 1946 (UCLA). Macdonald described Mattick's writing as 'longwinded, inconclusive, fuzzy, and solipsistic', and 'barbarous and sterile': Dwight Macdonald to Kenneth Rexroth, 17 March 1946 (Yale). An article by Korsch appeared in the May 1946 *Politics*; Pannekoek's article appeared in the September 1946 issue, while only two book reviews ever appeared from Mattick.

had been recommended.<sup>5</sup> Pannekoek was equally upset with Macdonald's editing: 'I had not imagined myself to belong to the people whose articles have to be shortened by editors'.<sup>6</sup> And even though Mattick too did 'not care for the generality and the optimism in Pannekoek's work', he goaded Macdonald, telling him that Pannekoek was:

too old to learn that editors have 'power.' He thinks he deals with friends engaged in the common enterprise of enlightening the proletariat, whereas he deals with *Politics* and the reputation it has among its own crowd.<sup>7</sup>

Mattick did what he could to place Pannekoek's work elsewhere.<sup>8</sup>

Another blow-up with Macdonald occurred when Mattick questioned the payment scheme for the contributors to *Politics*:

It is only because I do not like any sort of *discrimination* that makes me ask you this. I am not accustomed to getting paid for my articles, and I am perfectly willing to write without ever getting paid for it, but this only where non-payment is a general policy.<sup>9</sup>

This time Mattick's misgivings had reached too far. Macdonald replied:

Your note and my note with the check must have crossed in the mail. Don't blame you for not wanting to be discriminated against in matters of payment, but why not first let me know you were in a hurry to be paid? Your suspicions should have a higher boiling point! Is it paranoia? Or do you expect, as a marxist, to be gypped by petty bourgeois types like myself?<sup>10</sup>

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5 Macdonald suggested that part of Pannekoek's *Workers' Councils* might appear in *Politics*. Dwight Macdonald to Anton Pannekoek, 15 October 1946 (Yale).

6 Anton Pannekoek to Dwight Macdonald, 30 March 1946 (Yale). Macdonald: 'the political tendency you and your friends adhere to interests me more than any other form of marxism today'. Dwight Macdonald to Anton Pannekoek, 15 October 1946 (Yale).

7 Mattick to Dwight Macdonald, 1 July 1947 (Yale). Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 9 October 1946.

8 Mattick to Anton Pannekoek, 13 September 1947 (IISH: Pannekoek); Mattick to Anton Pannekoek, 10 February 1948 (IISH: Pannekoek).

9 Mattick to Dwight Macdonald [1947] (Yale).

10 Dwight Macdonald to Mattick, 16 April 1947.

Mattick was deeply shamed: 'not being a popular writer and not having an academic background, people have behaved towards me in a bad way'. Macdonald's comments stung: 'there was really no need for all those suspicious remarks in your letter'.<sup>11</sup>

The next rejection provoked another outburst by Mattick. To Macdonald, he wrote: 'why are you so much in love with yourself?'<sup>12</sup> Macdonald responded: 'your concept of a magazine is that of public carrier which is legally committed by its charter to transport all who apply', an observation that Korsch once made as well. Macdonald acknowledged, almost wistfully:

This is an old story between us, and I'm sorry it has had to be told again. I like you and respect your ideas very much, but why (speaking of self-love) must you behave like Christ crucified whenever an editor rejects something?<sup>13</sup>

Macdonald's journal soon ceased publication, thus eliminating the grounds for further clashes. In truth, Mattick and Macdonald had drifted apart politically. No longer enamoured with marxism, Macdonald looked for other venues to keep a sense of critical politics alive. A forum on 'The Dangers of Stalin and Anti-Stalinism' pitted Mattick against Macdonald, William Phillips (*Partisan Review*), and Hannah Arendt, but Mattick was disappointed in the quality of the debate. The other speakers embraced the United States over the Soviet Union as the lesser of two evils. Mattick was particularly taken aback by Macdonald's suggestion that the United States drop shopping catalogues over Russia in order to show its population what an advanced place the West was.<sup>14</sup>

With the poet Kenneth Rexroth, a highly supportive relationship developed. Rexroth's enthusiasm for Mattick was unabashed. He regularly goaded Macdonald about Mattick's absence from *Politics*, distributed old copies of *Living Marxism* and *New Essays*, and was eager to engage Mattick in new writing opportunities, suggesting a joint column in George Woodcock's *Now* or co-editor status in a political and cultural review that was starting in San

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11 Mattick to Dwight Macdonald, 17 April 1947 (Yale).

12 Mattick to Dwight Macdonald, 2 January 1948 [1949] (Yale).

13 Dwight Macdonald to Mattick, 7 January 1949.

14 Mattick was not mentioned in Macdonald's memoirs (Macdonald 1957). Barry Miller to Mattick, 11 December 1948; Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 16 February 1949; Mattick to Karl Korsch, 1 March 1949 (IISH: Korsch).

Francisco.<sup>15</sup> Thanks to Rexroth, Mattick had 'quite a following' on the west coast among anarchists and pacifists.<sup>16</sup>

Yet Mattick repeatedly had to explain himself, despite Rexroth's long experience within the radical left. Rexroth referred to marxism as 'a dogma of barbarians', a comment that could only be provocative for someone like Mattick.<sup>17</sup> Mattick told Rexroth that he was equally unenamoured with the anarchist tradition. Mattick had 'never bothered about Marx's personality', nor did he ever 'mention the idiosyncrasies of the big shots, whether they are marxists, or anarchists, or anything else'. What mattered was not their private lives or their opinions of their contemporaries, but 'their theories and their social actions'. Everything else was gossip, and 'though I have nothing against gossip, I do not attach any value to it either'. Mattick conveyed to Rexroth that 'the anarchists I have met in my life (and I have met many) were scissor bills, petty bourgeois, just like the marxists I have met'. He added:

I do not any longer take terms like marxism and anarchism seriously. I ask people what *they* think and what *they* propose to do and watch them to find out what they are actually doing. With some I can associate, with others not. But the isms I can do very well without.<sup>18</sup>

As for Rexroth: 'you always think of Russia when you think of marxism'.<sup>19</sup>

Rexroth heard from Mattick about a kind of marxism to which he had not been exposed. Mattick explained that 'the labor movement thus far was a nationalistic movement'.<sup>20</sup> Similarly, 'economics are mostly nonsense, marxian economics included. Or rather, mostly ideology and little concrete reality'. Even under crisis conditions, he did 'not think that people will be as fast revolutionized as the chaos of society becomes greater'. Nonetheless,

there is no solution short of socialism. And if you want to change conditions there is no choice but to be a socialist (not a member of any particular party) regardless as to whether or not you believe that socialism is a thing for the present or the future.<sup>21</sup>

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15 Kenneth Rexroth to Mattick [1945/1946]; Kenneth Rexroth to Mattick, 20 March 1946.

16 Kenneth Rexroth to Mattick, 19 February 1948.

17 Kenneth Rexroth to Mattick [after 1 April 1946].

18 Mattick to Kenneth Rexroth, 23 March 1946 (UCLA).

19 Mattick to Kenneth Rexroth [1946] (UCLA).

20 Mattick to Kenneth Rexroth, 23 March 1946 (UCLA).

21 Mattick to Kenneth Rexroth, 20 May 1946 (UCLA).

Rexroth's approach was cultural and personal. He defined value not in economic terms but as 'the living relationship with other persons' and was astonished that Mattick seemed not to do the same.<sup>22</sup> For Mattick, though, the significance of marxism was not entirely pertinent to the domains that Rexroth held dear, whom he told: 'marxism helped us to learn many things, for instance, to recognize that what passed as marxism was not such, and what passed as capitalism was a kind of tendency towards fascism'. Beyond this, marxism 'will not help us to determine the future in our direction. For that we must find our own ways and means. But I am sure we will find them the better, the better marxists we are'.<sup>23</sup>

Where Mattick and Rexroth found agreement was in their criticisms of Henry Miller's fiction. Rexroth found Miller's 'erotica utterly inhuman and loveless'.<sup>24</sup> As he put it, 'I am not interested in disembodied cunts'.<sup>25</sup> Mattick too preferred to 'miller myself' than read him.<sup>26</sup> But Mattick had a more deeply negative view than Rexroth of psychoanalysis, which Mattick viewed as a means 'to speak about sex without saying fucking'.<sup>27</sup> These differences aside, whenever Rexroth visited New York, the Matticks hosted parties on his behalf, attended by many New York City poets and literary figures.<sup>28</sup> When Rexroth left his wife, Marie, for another woman, Mattick told him: 'you are in a terrible fix, and in for some great mental miseries'.<sup>29</sup> Marie Rexroth appreciated Mattick's support: 'thank you for being so friendly and comforting—it adds to the total picture I have of Paul Mattick—which is all to the good'.<sup>30</sup>

Other friends developed attachments from which Mattick held back. For a time, Walter Boelke associated with Karl Paetel, an anti-Nazi who nonetheless combined a staunch nationalism with a radical socialism.<sup>31</sup> Korsch was close to Ruth Fischer, who became increasingly obsessed with Soviet influence, so much so that she denounced her own brother to a U.S. government committee

22 Kenneth Rexroth to Mattick, 1 April [before 23 March 1946]. Kenneth Rexroth to Mattick, 20 March 1946.

23 Mattick to Kenneth Rexroth, 7 April 1946 (UCLA).

24 Kenneth Rexroth to Mattick, 1 April [before 23 March 1946].

25 Kenneth Rexroth to Mattick [May 1946] [probably end of March].

26 Mattick to Kenneth Rexroth, 7 April 1946 (UCLA).

27 Mattick to Kenneth Rexroth, 7 April 1946 (UCLA).

28 Hamalian 1991, p. 174, pp. 183–4, pp. 209–10; Conversations with Ilse Mattick, 21–5 May 2005; Interview with Jake Faber, 27 June 2005.

29 Mattick to Kenneth Rexroth, 17 November 1949 (UCLA).

30 Marie Rexroth to Mattick [noted as being after March 1949].

31 Walter Boelke, '...An diesem Abend gesellte Ich mich zu dem einzelnen...'. (SUNY-Albany).



(the House Un-American Activities Committee) because of his affiliations with the German Communist Party.<sup>32</sup> Dinsmore Wheeler was preoccupied, not because of politics but because of the family farm, elderly parents, and his own long-standing health issues. To deal with his physical disability, the doctors settled on a hip fusion, a process that welded into one piece the entire area from the pelvis to the knee: 'where there is no joint, there is no movement; no movement, no pain'.<sup>33</sup> This was his seventeenth hospitalisation since childhood, and it left him in a full body cast for fourteen weeks. Mattick offered to visit in order to care for him, but this was not necessary.

A final attempt for a Guggenheim Fellowship confirmed Mattick's general dispiritedness. Rexroth was a current recipient. Zellig Harris, a previous awardee, sponsored the application.<sup>34</sup> Mattick realised that the application was a '*Schnapsidee*' [drunken whim] in which 'there are less chances than at a horse race',<sup>35</sup> but he tried anyway because 'sometimes accidents do happen'.<sup>36</sup> He proposed a study of economic and social conditions in post-war Germany. No one was surprised when he was turned down once again.<sup>37</sup>

Mattick's productivity slowed considerably. He chipped away at his essay on 'Spontaneity and Organization' for more than six months. A return to fiction-writing crossed his mind.<sup>38</sup> He confided to Korsch: 'it is quite difficult to get enthusiastic about working in face of the total lack of interest that surrounds one, and so I have periods of depression during which I do absolutely nothing'.<sup>39</sup> He wondered 'whether or not it makes any sense to write, but I do write a little nevertheless'.<sup>40</sup> Life grew monotonous: 'people are losing interest

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32 Karl Korsch to Paul Partos, 12 December 1946 (*Gesamtausgabe*).

33 Dinsmore Wheeler to Mattick, 13 October 1949.

34 Mattick to Kenneth Rexroth, 17 November 1949 (UCLA).

35 Mattick to Karl Korsch, 30 September 1949 (IISH: Korsch).

36 Mattick to Anton Pannekoek, 15 January 1950 (IISH: Pannekoek).

37 Frederick Henssler to Mattick, 2 October 1949; H.H. Fisher to Mattick, 4 October 1949; Karl Wittfogel to Mattick, 10 October 1949; James Farrell to Mattick, 25 October 1949; Miguel Nolli/Láin Diez to Mattick, 25 December 1949; James Laughlin to Mattick, 23 February 1950; Mattick to Karl Korsch, 25 March 1950 (IISH: Korsch); Mattick to Anton Pannekoek, 25 March 1950 (IISH: Pannekoek).

38 Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 30 November 1949. Mattick to Karl Korsch, 1 March 1949 (IISH: Korsch); Karl Korsch to Mattick, 30 September 1949 (*Gesamtausgabe*); Mattick to Karl Korsch, 9 October 1949 (IISH: Korsch).

39 Mattick to Karl Korsch, 25 March 1950 (IISH: Korsch). Mattick to George Gloss, 19 August 1948 (Rab).

40 Mattick to Karl Korsch, 16 October 1950 (IISH: Korsch).

in anything and in each other'.<sup>41</sup> Walter Boelke was equally disenchanted and only attended political meetings 'in order to hear how low matters had sunk'.<sup>42</sup>

After his return from Berlin, Mattick reapplied for unemployment benefits (he was eligible to receive benefits for another two years).<sup>43</sup> For Ilse, on the other hand, life was blossoming. She took on new responsibilities at the Hudson Guild Settlement House and was well-respected within the city's childcare community.<sup>44</sup> In mid-1950, she joined a three-month project to train childcare workers in Germany. Of particular concern were the children of displaced persons, for which Ilse's expertise in childhood deprivation and trauma was especially needed. All expenses were paid, although the trip nonetheless entailed financial sacrifice for the Matticks.<sup>45</sup> The Hudson Guild parents undertook fund-raising to purchase books, art supplies, and musical instruments for shipment to Germany. Ilse choose materials carefully, according to their age-specific suitability, but also to suit the peculiar educational notions of German childcare workers. Items, for instance, should not be 'used to keep children passive but to encourage children to share of their experiences with a group or to help bring to the surface their worries or confusion'.<sup>46</sup> It was also important for 'young people to choose for themselves and reach their own decisions'.<sup>47</sup>

Ilse's three weeks in Berlin were especially hectic, with as many as eleven site visits during a single day. With an interlude of an additional week before moving to the next city, Ilse stayed with the Mattick family (Paul's mother and his sister, Lisbeth).<sup>48</sup> Ilse had shipped food items directly from the United States and used her commissary privileges in Berlin to purchase still more. She also met for the first time Paul's close colleagues, including Reinhold Klingenberg,

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41 Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 28 January 1950.

42 Walter Boelke, '... An Diesem Abend Gesellte Ich Mich Zu Dem Einzelnen...' (SUNY-Albany); Brown 2009.

43 Pozzoli 1972, p. 11.

44 Ilse Mattick to Miss Fogg's Secretary, 8 June 1950 (HDS); Ilse Mattick to Helen Fogg, 25 April 1951 (HDS).

45 The project was sponsored through the Unitarian Service Committee, the U.S. State Department, and the German *Arbeiter Wohlfahrt* [welfare department]. Raymond Bragg to Ilse Mattick, 14 April 1950 (HDS).

46 Ilse Mattick to Helen Fogg, 9 April 1950 (HDS). Helen Fogg to Ilse Mattick, 11 May 1950 (HDS); Ilse Mattick to Helen Fogg, 13 May 1950 (HDS); Ilse Mattick to Helen Fogg, 25 April 1951 (HDS).

47 Ilse Mattick to Helen Fogg, 13 November 1950 (HDS).

48 Ilse Mattick to Helen Fogg, 9 April 1950 (HDS); Contract for Ilse Mattick, 10 April 1950 (HDS); Ilse Mattick to Helen Fogg, 8 January 1951 (HDS).

Alfred Weiland, and Josef Kohn. The literature that she distributed included an essay for Willy Huhn, delivered in the hopes that he might print it in *Pro und Contra*. For Franz Jung, the expressionist novelist and former KAPDER, she collected copies of his books, as he had been forced to flee Europe without them.<sup>49</sup> After her return to the United States, she was asked repeatedly to speak about the German situation. She kept in touch with her new contacts and shipped materials whenever she could.<sup>50</sup> A further year-long posting was a possibility, but all things considered, she would not have been able to support Paul and Paul Jr. on the stipend.<sup>51</sup>

When Ilse was away, Paul did no writing whatsoever. His time was divided between caretaking for their son, which was a great treat for both of them, and renovating the loft with new partitions and paint. This amounted to two months of steady work.<sup>52</sup> Mattick had grown increasingly disgusted with the New York scene. Sidney Hook, a professor at nearby New York University, had by then become a thoroughly vile character, 'actually performing stool-pidgin services for the FBI'.<sup>53</sup> Of the intellectuals clustered in the Congress for Cultural Freedom (Mattick: 'Congress for American Imperialism'), many were former acquaintances: 'I would not like to be seen with them together. For these people I am a pest, at best'.<sup>54</sup>

Undergirding his pessimism was a sense that a new war was imminent, with the United States pitted against the Soviet Union.<sup>55</sup> The political situation in Berlin continued to deteriorate. Klingenberg was censored by the American authorities, restricted in the types of courses that could be offered through the adult education centre. In the Soviet zone, the repressive measures were much harsher. Franz Peter Utzelmann, one of the Weimar-era expropriators with whom Mattick had collaborated, was arrested by the Soviet authorities and spent six months in detention. No matter who ruled Germany, Utzelmann always wound up in jail—during the Weimar era of the 1920s, under the Nazis during the 1930s, and now with the Communists. He avoided a second arrest

49 Reinhold Klingenberg to Willy Huhn, 20 July 1950 (IISH: Huhn). Conversations with Ilse Mattick, 21–5 May 2005.

50 Ilse Mattick to Helen Fogg, 13 November 1950 (HDS); Ilse Mattick to Helen Fogg, 8 January 1951 (HDS).

51 Helen Fogg to Ilse Mattick, 24 April 1951 (HDS); Ilse Mattick to Helen Fogg, 25 April 1951 (HDS); Helen Fogg to Ilse Mattick, 1 May 1951 (HDS).

52 Mattick to Karl Korsch, 16 October 1950 (IISH: Korsch).

53 Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 29 May 1950.

54 Mattick to Frieda St. Sauveur, 25 May 1950 (AdK: Koval).

55 Mattick to Frieda St. Sauveur, 8 December 1950 (AdK: Koval).

by fleeing to Berlin's western sector, where the authorities were not eager to receive him.<sup>56</sup>

Weiland was acutely aware of police surveillance. For short periods after the war he held positions in the departments of cultural affairs and public information in the Soviet zone. Arrested in November 1950, he was beaten in public when he resisted apprehension. It would be two years before his family received official notification of his whereabouts. Interrogations lasted through the night. Weiland was kept in a cold, unheated room with his hands shackled behind him. Even when he eventually confessed, he refused to name names and thus jeopardise friends and collaborators, and this brought further abuse. Of the fifteen-year sentence, he served seven years, during which his clothing was left unwashed for months at a time. He was denied reading materials, and periodically he would be made to forego a bed, blankets, medicines, eating utensils, and shoes. Skin ailments and other nutrition-related diseases were endemic among the prison population, many of whom spent long periods in solitary confinement. Weiland organised a hunger strike that encompassed over 500 inmates and lasted six months before it was suppressed (the chief prosecutor was a former KAPD member). Released in November 1958, and in permanently poor health, he immediately re-engaged in political work in West Berlin. Mattick's childhood friend, Josef Kohn, helped care for him over the next two decades as his health deteriorated.<sup>57</sup>

Kohn had survived the concentration camps only to witness the murder of his closest friend, killed arbitrarily the day before the Nazis abandoned the camp. In East Germany, he was recruited to the judiciary. He was given a short six-week crash course on how to be a judge. Asked why he never convicted anyone, he explained that after his experiences, he could not bring himself to do so. Alternative employment as a gardener (at his request) required a level of physical exertion that he could not maintain. A transfer to a publishing concern at least guaranteed a steady supply of toilet paper despite the scarcities. East German newspapers, he told the Matticks, were well-suited for such things.<sup>58</sup>

The little writing that Mattick did produce circulated widely, especially 'Obsessions of Berlin' and his piece on Otto Rühle,<sup>59</sup> but other possibilities

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56 Kubina 2001, p. 144, p. 277ff.

57 Alfred Weiland to Mattick, 21 December 1973; Kubina 2001, p. 389ff; p. 427ff; Conversations with Ilse Mattick, 16–20 August 2005.

58 Conversations with Ilse Mattick, 21–5 May 2005.

59 The Rühle piece also appeared as: 'Anti-Bolshevik Communism in Germany'. Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler [before 21 August 1946]; Miguel Nolli/Láin Diez to Mattick,

proved elusive.<sup>60</sup> A few essays appeared in small publications like *Resistance* and *Left*.<sup>61</sup> Miguel Nolli was intent on publishing Mattick's essays in South American journals, but he had great difficulties in doing so.<sup>62</sup> *The Western Socialist*, where good friends George Gloss and Isaac Rabinowich were keen supporters, published a steady stream of Mattick's reviews and essays over the next decade and a half.<sup>63</sup>

Mattick and Korsch were approached about co-editorship of a new journal. Mattick was clear that he would not participate unless it were 'a marxist magazine free of all party associations'.<sup>64</sup> Another magazine with which Mattick attempted to collaborate was *Dissent*, a magazine 'run by a bunch of former trotskyites, who, though hiding their true intentions in order to get a wider circulation, have not become friendlier to people like me'.<sup>65</sup> The editors, nevertheless, were 'short of people who can write on economic subjects',<sup>66</sup> and 'in view of the fact that there is no place left for us to write',<sup>67</sup> he submitted several pieces, of which only one review appeared. Mattick attended some of their

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23 September 1946; George Woodcock to Mattick, 21 December 1946; Barry Miller to Mattick, 11 December 1948.

- 60 Alfred Bergdoll to Mattick, 27 November 1945; Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 2 December 1945; Martin Ponch to Mattick, 22 January 1946; Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 27 January 1946; Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 3 February 1946; Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 16 March 1946; Mattick to Karl Korsch, 17 March 1936 [1946] (IISH: Korsch); George Woodcock to Mattick, 23 November 1946; Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 10 April 1947; Dachine [Rainer] to Mattick, 28 February 1949.
- 61 F.A. Ridley to Mattick, 26 February 1949. F.A. Ridley to Mattick, 19 January 1949.
- 62 Miguel Nolli/Laín Diez to Mattick, 8 September 1945; Miguel Nolli/Laín Diez to Mattick, 25 January 1947; Miguel Nolli/Laín Diez to Mattick, 4 April 1947; Miguel Nolli/Laín Diez to Mattick, 4 May 1947; Miguel Nolli/Laín Diez to Mattick, 18 May 1949; Miguel Nolli/Laín Diez to Mattick, 21 February 1950; Miguel Nolli/Laín Diez to Anton Pannekoek, 25 December 1950 (IISH: Pannekoek).
- 63 Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 10 April 1947; Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 5 May 1947; James Dawson to Anton Pannekoek, 19 November 1947 (IISH: Pannekoek); Karl Korsch to James Dawson, 3 May 1948 (*Gesamtausgabe*, but also printed in Kellner 1977); Mattick to Karl Korsch, 1 March 1949 (IISH: Korsch). Interview with Karla Doris Rab, 11 August 2012.
- 64 Mattick to Karl Korsch, 30 September 1949 (IISH: Korsch).
- 65 Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 12 December 1953. Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 30 August 1953; Mattick to Anton Pannekoek, 30 August 1953 (IISH: Pannekoek); Lewis Coser to Mattick, 26 January 1954; Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 9 June 1954.
- 66 Irving Howe to Mattick, 31 December 1953.
- 67 Mattick to Anton Pannekoek, 24 September 1953 (IISH: Pannekoek).

meetings, but except for a few people like Noam Chomsky and his friends from *The Western Socialist*, no one was particularly interested in what he had to say.<sup>68</sup>

*Marx and Keynes* began as a journal article to help finance Mattick's trip to Europe.<sup>69</sup> Both Max Eastman and Korsch encouraged him to turn the article into a book, but it was slow going. The initial drafts, Mattick confessed, reinforced the 'pessimistic attitude to my own work.'<sup>70</sup> Mattick recognised that 'encouragement is what I really need at this point', because otherwise the book's contours would ultimately 'be decided by my tiredness.'<sup>71</sup> Mattick's goal to finish by early 1950 proved entirely unrealistic.<sup>72</sup> Korsch suggested that he publish separately the parts that focused on contemporary events, and these appeared during 1950 and 1951 in *American Perspective*, *Resistance*, and *Contemporary Issues*.<sup>73</sup>

Over the next years, *Marx and Keynes* took shape as Mattick positioned the book midway between Marx's explication of the capitalist economy and Grossman's breakdown theory. The focus was government intrusion into the business arena in market economies and full-scale government intervention in the state-run systems. *Marx and Keynes* provided an economic analysis that accompanied the developments of the previous period. With a complete draft in hand in early 1953, Mattick was fully confident of its acceptance.<sup>74</sup> The John Day Company assigned a team of three to review the manuscript, but they found it far too technical for a company that needed to sell 5000 copies in order to justify an investment. During a two-hour face-to-face conference,

68 Interview with Noam Chomsky, 2 March 2007; Barsky 1997, p. 36ff.

69 Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 24 October 1947; Mattick to Marthe Larsen, 10 February 1948 (UCLA).

70 Mattick to Karl Korsch, 12 July 1949 (IISH: Korsch). Mattick to Dwight Macdonald, 3 January 1948 (Yale); Dwight Macdonald to Mattick, 7 January 1948 (Yale); Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 13 March 1948; Max Eastman to Mattick, 7 September 1948; Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 28 January 1950.

71 Mattick to Karl Korsch, 4 January 1950 (IISH: Korsch).

72 Mattick to Anton Pannekoek, 15 January 1950 (IISH: Pannekoek).

73 'Potsdam and After in the Light of Keynes' was rejected by *Partisan Review* and *World Politics* before *American Perspective* accepted it. Other rejections came from *Harper's*, *Rote Revue*, *Measure*, and *Foreign Affairs*. F.A. Ridley to Mattick, 20 June 1949; Karl Korsch to Mattick, 29 December 1949 (*Gesamtausgabe*); Mattick to Karl Korsch, 25 March 1950 (IISH: Korsch); Val Gitermann to Mattick, 18 April 1950; Hamilton Fish Armstrong to Mattick, 19 June 1950; Alfred Folsom to Mattick, 6 July 1950 (University of Chicago); E.V. Swart to Mattick, 18 September 1950; Mattick to Karl Korsch, 16 October 1950 (IISH: Korsch).

74 Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 1 April 1953.

the editors suggested a university press or the American publisher of Keynes as alternatives.<sup>75</sup> The saga of *Marx and Keynes* would drag on for a total of two and a half decades before Mattick finally found someone willing to publish it.

For the Matticks, New York City was winding down. In their many excursions to upstate New York, rural New Jersey, Canada, and elsewhere, they had discovered a tranquil spot in Jamaica, Vermont, about an hour's drive from the New York border. A simpler, unencumbered life was quite appealing. They had vacationed in Jamaica several times during the previous years, and they knew quite a few people who lived or summered nearby, including Scott and Helen Nearing, and Meyer and Lillian Schapiro.<sup>76</sup> Mattick sold most of his books and purchased a station-wagon in preparation.<sup>77</sup> The rejection letter for *Marx and Keynes* arrived just days before they left. It had been a bittersweet period, preceded by the death of Ilse's father and another period of illness for Paul. In April 1953, they embarked.

### Back to Nature

I did a great amount of reading but it was not of much use. Dozens of books on economics that yielded nothing.<sup>78</sup>

Paul and Ilse soon discovered just how much effort their situation required. After leaving New York City, they spent a leisurely week visiting friends in central New Jersey and upstate New York before arriving at their new homestead. Snow, rain, and mud greeted them. They had purchased a one-room shack that sat on several acres of land, and they needed to stay at a nearby stone house while they added to the existing structure.<sup>79</sup> This would take many months. They immediately set to work, cutting wood for the stove in their temporary quarters and planting an extensive garden to feed them through the winter.

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75 Richard Walsh to Mattick, 2 April 1953; Richard Walsh to Mattick, 10 April 1953; Mattick to Kenneth Rexroth, 20 August 1953 (UCLA).

76 Dwight Macdonald to Dinsmore Wheeler, 30 June 1943 (Yale); Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 10 April 1947; Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 22 September 1947; Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 13 October 1947; Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 19 September 1949.

77 Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 1 April 1953.

78 Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 1 September 1956.

79 Hank and Ada Mayer were friends from Chicago who then lived in northern New York (their children were named Eugene Debs Mayer and Scott Nearing Mayer). They along with Alexis and Myrtle Orloff were Ilse's citizenship witnesses. Paul knew Alexis through factory employment. Conversations with Ilse Mattick, 21–5 May 2005.

They learned quickly that the gardens alone required many weeks of full-time labour, a routine they would repeat every spring. Their shack sat atop solid rock that had to be blasted apart piece-by-piece in order to expand the dwelling. Assistance was needed with the foundation, chimney, and house frame, but everything else they did themselves. All things considered, it would have been easier to tear down the original structure and start from scratch.<sup>80</sup>

What emerged was a three-room, fully-insulated house, replete with a second floor, storeroom, and woodshed. Two stoves provided heat, one of which was also used for cooking. They added electricity but not running water, with the latter taken from the brook that ran past the house. By mid-winter, the exterior work was complete, and they turned their attention towards the inside. This meant building walls, cupboards, book shelves, and furniture. Another six months were needed before they finished. The house was surrounded by beautiful flower, vegetable, and herb gardens that more than adequately nourished them. For the garden borders and walkways, they hauled stones from the brook bed.

The area was rural enough that street addresses were not necessary for letters and packages.<sup>81</sup> Houses were spaced helter-skelter and at a great distance from one another. Few families lived nearby, and tourism was still relatively unknown.<sup>82</sup> Snow drifts could reach ten feet, high enough to walk straight onto the roof. Snow also meant shovelling a path in order to fetch water. That they might run out of wood was a thought that nagged at them. They learned that the preparatory work for winter—gathering and cutting wood, canning fruits and vegetables—had to begin in mid-summer. Life in Vermont had its own unique rhythms and simplicity. Paul used a scythe to cut the grass, mowing one day and raking the next. Ilse developed new talents and hobbies. She became an accomplished cook and an expert at canning food, a task she relished. She gathered wild mushrooms from the nearby woods, learned photography, and at one point tried her hand at writing children's books. Along with the hard

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80 They paid \$600 for 3.6 acres in December 1952. The plot was later expanded to prevent development of the adjoining parcel. Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 8 May 1953; Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 30 August 1953; Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 23 January 1954; Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 5 May 1954; Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 25 July 1955; Paul and Ilse Mattick to Dinsmore and Mary Wheeler, 12 March 1956; Lepkoff and Joly 2008.

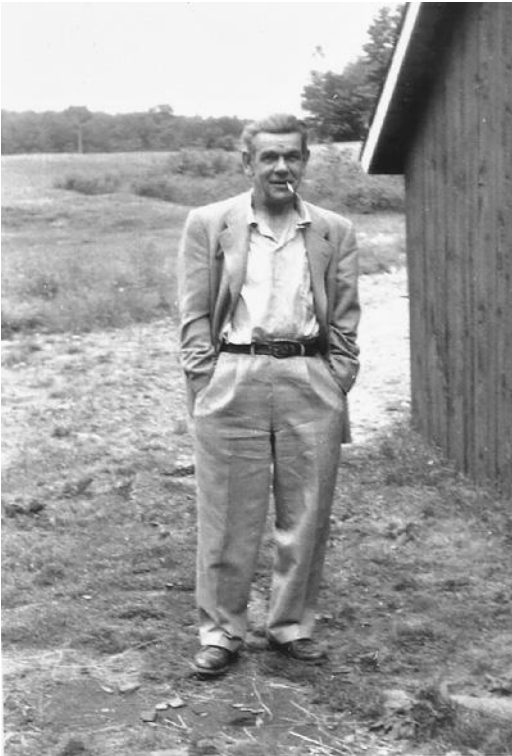
81 When they eventually needed to provide a name for the dirt path that led to the house, they chose to honour their dog.

82 Today Stratton Mountain is a major ski and winter resort location.





10 *The Vermont home.*



11 *Paul in Vermont.*



12 Paul and Ilse in Vermont. An old car seat serves as an outdoor bench.

work came different forms of leisure. The waterfalls and swimming hole at Pikes Falls were a long but easy stroll from their house.

Many kindred spirits lived in the area, a combination of subsistence farmers and loggers, with more recent inhabitants from the various Quaker, pacifist, and anti-conscription communities that had found in rural Vermont a safe haven. The Matticks were part of an active, tight-knit community. The adults organised dances for themselves and puppet shows for the children, and reading groups were a regular part of community affairs. Everyone contributed to the various town meetings and annual Summer Festival, with its colourful costumes and dance performances. When the state attempted to deprive a resident (single mother) of welfare benefits, neighbours came to her aid. The Matticks attended court and testified on her behalf, and they and others jointly constructed a cottage to replace the shack that the authorities had condemned. Mattick was known for his easy-going style, so much so that he was persuaded to serve as a town official after his neighbours determined that the incumbent was spending recklessly. Mattick agreed on the condition—to which everyone consented—that he would not actually have to do anything.<sup>83</sup>

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83 Scott and Helen Nearing were neighbours briefly, until they relocated to Maine. Scott Nearing was a divisive figure, offending some because of his pro-Stalinist inclinations (even sending his son for schooling in the Soviet Union), others by his authoritarian

Visitors arrived in Vermont virtually every weekend, especially during the summer months. Each guest brought something special into the Matticks' lives. The artist Nell Blaine rented a cottage one summer and used the Matticks' garage as a studio.<sup>84</sup> Housing options included a nearby hotel (a large bed and breakfast) or else Paul Jr.'s upstairs room where everyone could sleep 'like sardines'.<sup>85</sup> Discussions were fun, and they varied depending on who was there. Mattick's antipathy to Freudian psychology was well-known and mostly ignored by others. Wild conversations were the norm—would Mozart-like talents proliferate within a truly socialist world? Was George Grosz a mere draftsman or a genuine artist? After dinner, conversations about politics and the world sometimes alternated with sex talk and ribald jokes.

Josef Kohn visited them in New York and Vermont, although New York in particular dazzled him with its crowds, noise, and round-the-clock life. After so many years in concentration camps, he was starved for people and activity in a way that the rather placid East Berlin could not satisfy. His older brother, Ludwig, also visited. Ludwig had a terrific sense of irony. When the German government issued stipends in compensation for his experiences in the camps, he quipped that he would have enjoyed himself much more if only he had known that he would be paid. The Matticks also travelled frequently to see friends in Boston and New York.<sup>86</sup>

Franz Jung read aloud from drafts of his autobiography, *Der Weg Nach Unten* [*Road to the Bottom*], during one of his visits. Jung was an exceedingly colourful individual, an initiator of dada in literature, an early member of the Spartacist League, a KAPD expropriator who once hijacked a steamship in order to travel to Russia, and a member of the Rote Kämpfer. Jung could be shy and

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manner. With their maple syrup business, the Nearings owned a sizable plot of property and were important local employers. But Nearing also fined employees for infractions of work rules, and this created many bad feelings. Ilse Mattick to Mary and Dinsmore Wheeler, 29 December 1956 (Mattick Jr.); Conversation with Paul Mattick, Jr., 6 August 2004; Conversation with Paul Mattick, Jr., 4 June 2005; Conversations with Ilse Mattick, 21–5 May 2005; Interview with Wesley Frost, 15 June 2005.

84 Spring 2000, pp. 223–24; Mattick Jr. 2003; Walter Boelke to Nell Blaine, 5 December 1972 (AAA: Nell Blaine); Interview with Naomi Sager, 16 September 2004.

85 Visitors included James Schuyler, Ilse and Heinz Langerhans, Hedda and Karl Korsch, Dinsmore and Mary Wheeler, Franz Jung, Al and Francis Heatherington, Zellig Harris, George Gloss, and Neil Daniels. Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 8 November 1954; Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 25 October 1955; Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 23 April 1956; Conversations with Ilse Mattick, 16–20 August 2005; Phone Interview with Seymour Melman, 2 October 2004; Phone Interview with Mary Wheeler, 15 March 2008.

86 Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 4 February 1955; Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 13 June 1956.

unassuming at one moment, highly contemptuous another time, and amusing on still other occasions, and he had an outlandish ability to treat impractical schemes with great seriousness. For a reunion of Weimar-era dadaists, he proposed the Premier of the Soviet Union, Nikita Khrushchev, for the welcoming remarks. Mattick helped break Jung's isolation by putting him in touch with friends and acquaintances—Kenneth Rexroth on the west coast, Naomi Sager in New York City, and Naomi again along with Maximilien Rubel and Louis Evrard in Paris. Mouth and throat cancer (including several rounds of treatment that left him partially debilitated) made Jung's last years particularly difficult. Mattick's Parisian friends helped to care for him through this final period.<sup>87</sup> Upon his death, Mattick grieved: 'he was such an exceptional person and I had hoped to see him again'.<sup>88</sup>

For his closest friends, Mattick's most admirable trait was the ability to avoid bitterness, despite life's difficulties and disappointments. He had few personal ambitions in terms of career or fame. For sure, he hoped to influence public opinion, but this was not an issue of self-importance. Yet he also had an uncanny ability to confound people's judgments of him, sometimes by making vexing statements about politics and other times by needling people unnecessarily. He greatly upset a neighbour one evening by claiming that John Kennedy's assassin, Lee Harvey Oswald, would someday be remembered for the greatness of his deed and have schools and airports named after him. And despite his many bi-sexual and lesbian friends—Fairfield Porter, Nell Blaine, and his sister Lisbeth among them—he told his son that long hair made him look like a 'fag'.

Another time, Mattick was invited to a meeting of the Boston chapter of the Lenin- and Mao-oriented Progressive Labor Party, where instead of speaking on the suggested topic, he launched into a critique of vanguard politics. This all but guaranteed that he would not be invited back. Mattick's contrarianism was

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87 Franz Jung to Ruth Fischer, 10 February 1954 (*Jung Briefe*); Franz Jung to Adolph Weingarten, 18 May 1960 (*Jung Briefe*); Franz Jung to Paul Mattick, 8 December 1960; Mattick to Franz Jung [1960] (DLA); Franz Jung to Mattick, 23 October 1961 (Mattick Jr.); Franz Jung to Adolph Weingarten, 30 October [1961] (*Jung Briefe*); Franz Jung to Mattick, 14 December 1961; Franz Jung to Käte Ruminoff, 16 January 1962 (*Jung Briefe*); Franz Jung to Adolph Weingarten, 10 February 1962 (*Jung Briefe*); Franz Jung to Frieda St. Sauveur, 9 March [1962] (*Jung Briefe*); Franz Jung to Adolph Weingarten, 4 May 1962 (*Jung Briefe*); Franz Jung to Adolph Weingarten, 14 May [1962] (*Jung Briefe*); Franz Jung to Adolph Weingarten, 12 June [1962] (*Jung Briefe*); Franz Jung to Frieda St. Sauveur, 11 September 1962 (*Jung Briefe*). Conversations with Ilse Mattick, 16–20 August 2005; Phone Interview with Ilse Mattick, 29 January 2006.

88 Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 5 March 1963.

encapsulated by his declaration that one could always believe what the sectarians said of one another, even if their respective self-understandings came up short.

There was in Mattick's character a type of working-class traditionalism that did not quite fit with the expectations that people had for him, and in some sense these expectations were themselves a reason for his provocativeness.<sup>89</sup> Both Boelke and Korsch complained about this side of his personality. With women, he often focused on their presence as sexual beings.<sup>90</sup> Nonetheless he was also valued by female colleagues for his deep recognition of their intellectual and political development. When Isle Langerhans was at a particularly low point, he spent a day with her on the lawn, listening and helping her to talk through the issues that seemed to crowd out her will to live. People appreciated him as a confidante.<sup>91</sup>

By the second year in Vermont, the Matticks discovered that even the summers could be cold and rainy.<sup>92</sup> Paul was often ill, worn down by the harsh weather, the wood-burning stoves, and cigarette smoking. Lung cancer was suspected, and he undertook a tour of doctors' offices in Vermont and then New York City, where Naomi Sager arranged extensive testing at the Sloan-Kettering Cancer Institute. Medical treatment represented a financial hardship, prompting the Matticks to sell artwork and letters to cover expenses. The tests turned out negative, and Paul's susceptibility to colds, bronchitis, and pneumonia remained a puzzle. His various ailments nonetheless accounted for the slow start with which he began many mornings.<sup>93</sup>

Some sort of supplementary income was necessary, if only to purchase things like gasoline and writing paper that they could not grow or make themselves. No matter how simply they lived, other items were needed. After a year in Vermont, this had already become a concern. Mattick imagined that he might sell an occasional piece of writing. Once again he contemplated a return to fiction or perhaps a type of reportage that would focus on people who lived

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89 Conversation with Paul Mattick, Jr., 9 October 2010.

90 To Dinsmore Wheeler, he would admit: 'I still admire the female body and it will not be too long before that will be all I can do with respect to it'. Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 31 March 1960.

91 Interview with Naomi Sager, 16 September 2004.

92 Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 27 September 1954.

93 Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 9 May 1955; Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 1 October 1955; Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 25 October 1955; Ilse Mattick to Mary and Dinsmore Wheeler, 25 October 1956 (Mattick Jr.); Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 22 February 1957; Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 28 July 1957. Conversations with Ilse Mattick, 21–5 May 2005; Interview with Naomi Sager, 16 September 2004.



13 *Two families, sons and wives. Step-son Hans with wife, June, on top left; Paul Jr. top middle and bottom right; Frieda top right; Ilse on bottom row; painting possibly by Jackie Saltin—Paul and Ilse's merchant marine friend from Chicago.*



14 *Frieda on left bottom; Ilse on top left, top centre, middle, right centre with Paul and Paul Jr., bottom right with unidentified woman, bottom centre with Paul's mother; step-daughter Renee with unidentified woman on bottom left of centre.*

nearby. None of this came to be, nor was he able to publish any other type of writing.<sup>94</sup> Nothing whatsoever of his appeared during 1952 and 1953, and only a single book review was published in 1954, followed by two more in 1955. This was the first break in publishing in thirty years.

Occasionally Mattick picked up odd jobs locally. An offer to rebuild the summer home of the Offenbachers solved their monetary problems for quite some time—it was a task that took a full year to complete. But building a stone fireplace turned into ‘a job I wish on nobody’.<sup>95</sup> Ilse became skilled at cement mixing. Another neighbour, however, tried to cheat him, and the matter wound up in a small claims court where the judgment eventually fell in Mattick’s favour.<sup>96</sup> Wheeler sent money periodically. After two years of subsistence living, a return to urban life and actual employment was becoming more of a temptation.<sup>97</sup>

Occasional news from old friends dampened spirits. Klingenberg, who had visited them in New York, wrote about the suicide of his partner of twenty-three years. Her health had never fully recovered from the deprivations and abuse at the end of the war. More recently, an operation for varicose veins that had gone badly sent her into a deep depression, with an ongoing addiction to pain medicine and repeated suicide attempts. Klingenberg was beside himself, although Mattick was not entirely sympathetic. He knew his friend well enough that he wondered whether ‘a little more love and understanding would have saved her life’.<sup>98</sup> Korsch too was ill, rapidly sinking into the dementia that would characterise his last years. Visits brought Mattick to tears.<sup>99</sup>

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94 Mattick to Kenneth Rexroth, 12 January 1955 (UCLA); Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 1 October 1955.

95 Mattick to Dinsmore and Mary Wheeler, 28 July 1957. Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 29 July 1956; Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 1 September 1956; Ilse Mattick to Mary and Dinsmore Wheeler, 25 October 1956 (Mattick Jr.); Ilse Mattick to Mary and Dinsmore Wheeler, 20 May 1957.

96 Mrs Richard J. Walsh to Mattick, 3 June 1955; Mattick to Dinsmore and Mary Wheeler, 4 March 1957.

97 Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 21 May 1955; Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 25 October 1955.

98 Mattick to Dinsmore and Mary Wheeler, 18 March 1954. Reinhold Klingenberg to Mattick, 8 February 1954 (Mattick Jr.).

99 Mattick considered Korsch’s late work such as the much-noted ‘Ten Theses’ (which seemed to disavow marxism) untrustworthy because of Korsch’s slow deterioration. He nonetheless felt obliged to write about it, if only in response to the attention given it by others. Mattick to Maximilien Rubel, 8 November 1964 (Nanterre). Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 22 February 1957; Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 26 March 1957.

Leaving Vermont was not an easy decision, but after five years of rural living it made sense for many reasons. An outside source of income was a necessity, and besides, Ilse was eager to resume her career. As Paul Jr. approached high school age, the local school system also became an issue. It just did not offer the same breadth of educational possibilities as a citywide system. Paul and Ilse briefly considered a prep school, but that was unrealistic without a full scholarship. A move to Boston meant that the house in Vermont could remain as a weekend and summer destination—Vermont was ‘a little more human, so to speak, where there are less humans.’<sup>100</sup> Boston was also relatively inexpensive as far as city-living was concerned, certainly much less expensive than New York.

### Boston

Maybe all of us are not only on the way down but are down for a long time already without being fully aware of it. From my own experiences I know, of course, that very few people indeed are still interested in listening to us.<sup>101</sup>

Ilse and Paul Jr. moved into a two-room apartment on Newbury Street in Boston prior to the start of school in autumn 1958. Weekend jaunts to Vermont sometimes meant that Paul Jr. stayed with family friends in Newton MA. Paul Sr. remained in Vermont to finish a few construction projects. When he joined them in Boston, the family rented a floor-through apartment across from the Fine Arts Museum—a district later torn down and redeveloped as part of Northeastern University.<sup>102</sup>

Ilse’s life headed in entirely new directions. Because of her expertise with troubled children from underprivileged backgrounds, she was hired to direct a therapeutic nursery school in Boston’s South End neighbourhood. This experimental project (funded through the Boston University Medical School) used psychoanalytically-informed methodologies to study infant and toddler

100 Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 12 September 1965. Ilse Mattick to Mary and Dinsmore Wheeler, 25 October 1956 (Mattick Jr.); Ilse Mattick to Mary and Dinsmore Wheeler [26 April 1957] (Mattick Jr.); Ilse Mattick to Mary and Dinsmore Wheeler, 20 May 1957.

101 Mattick to Franz Jung, 7 December 1961 (DLA).

102 Address: 22 Greenleaf Street, Boston. The friends were the Rabinowich and Feinzig families. Rab 2010, p. 102; Interview with Karla Doris Rab, 11 August 2012; Communication from Paul Mattick, Jr., 22 May 2013.



development. One outcome of the project was a widely-disseminated volume of essays in which Ilse authored key chapters. These exhibited her keen powers of observation, which she used to teach students and other professionals to discover a child's mode of learning by means of constant reflection and discussion.<sup>103</sup>

Eighteen months after the first move, the Matticks rented a larger apartment in the same neighbourhood and with the same proximity to Ilse's workplace. Another round of renovations, mostly painting, was required. The purchase of a refrigerator meant that they were now better situated to accommodate visitors.<sup>104</sup> Expenses for the apartment coincided with the need to purchase automobile insurance. Paul worked occasionally at George Gloss's bookstore, a fixture of the downtown Boston area that specialised in rare, out-of-print, and used books. Mattick considered Gloss 'a genius for disorder' and took it upon himself to clean and reorganise the store—'a miserable and dirty job'. He was convinced that the store would revert to its original condition the moment he stopped working, but he persevered anyway.<sup>105</sup>

These next years were an odd time. The change in environment from rural Vermont did nothing to cure Mattick of his various ailments. He was ill for much of the first winter in Boston, and sickness was a constant theme in his correspondence. Eventually a ten-day hospitalisation and repeated blood infusions were needed to counteract an ailment that no one could quite diagnose.<sup>106</sup> The death of Korsch and then of Mattick's mother two years later ('my knees shake when I see a letter from Berlin and I am too upset to be able to concentrate seriously on work'), combined with his son's departure for college, left

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103 Pavenstedt 1967 contributed to the government's attempts to counteract poverty's negative effects on children. These attempts became widespread under the Head Start program. Mattick Jr. 2009b; Conversation with Paul Mattick, Jr., 6 August 2004; Conversations with Ilse Mattick, 21–5 May 2005.

104 Address: 452 Parker Street, Boston. Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 11 December 1959.

105 Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 17 February 1960; Franz Jung to Adolph Weingarten, 18 May 1960 (*Jung Briefe*).

106 Mattick to Naomi Sager, 18 February 1959 (Sager); Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 24 March 1959; Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 8 May 1961; Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 23 May 1962; Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 19 July 1964; Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 24 September 1964; Ilse Mattick to Mary and Dinsmore Wheeler, Saturday, 'early morning'; Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 9 June 1965; Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, October 1965; Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler [before 14 December 1965]; Interview with Noam Chomsky, 2 March 2007.



15 Paul, his sister, Lisbeth, during her visit to the United States, and Zellig Harris.



16 Paul on top right; Karl Korsch on bottom right.

him lonely and depressed.<sup>107</sup> Indebted to his sister for her dedication to and care of their mother, Paul arranged her visit to the United States. This meant lots of sightseeing but also many mixed feelings. After a few weeks of a stay of several months, he admitted: 'I am not particularly fond of her and she is much too German, both in appearance and temperament'.<sup>108</sup>

As in Vermont, the Matticks had many visitors. Ilse helped Myrtle Orloff find a job, and the Orloffs lived in their apartment while the Matticks went to Vermont for the summer. Of all of Paul's correspondents, Wheeler was the most faithful. The two would often exchange several letters in a single week. The Matticks were avid movie-goers and avid readers, and Paul provided a running commentary on the books and films they had read and viewed. Likewise, the autobiographical publications of friends and colleagues like Kenneth Rexroth and Henry Miller intrigued him.<sup>109</sup>

Mattick was very aware of 'the metamorphosis people go through in order to live well in this society'.<sup>110</sup> Frieda, who had since returned to New York City—where she held a series of mostly part-time jobs as an administrative assistant at the NYU Medical School and Hunter College library—was of a similar opinion. She procured her jobs by claiming that she had attended the University of Cologne. No one could check because all records had been destroyed during the bombing campaigns of the war. Besides, the University division she claimed to have attended did not even exist during the dates on her resume. When she heard that Paul had become a property owner in Vermont, she was astonished at 'how people can change'.<sup>111</sup> Once upon a time, he would have only cursed such an existence as bourgeois. Paul was no less cynical about her:

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107 Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 26 July 1961. Lisbeth Mattick to Mattick, 22 August 1961 (Mattick Jr.); Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 15 September 1961.

108 Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 26 July 1963. Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 7 July 1963; Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 21 October 1964 [1963].

109 Rexroth 'manages to make himself appear quite a personage, even though most of his experiences are just imaginations': Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 18 March 1966. Mattick to Naomi Sager, 24 November 1958 (Sager); Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 11 May 1959; Mattick to Naomi Sager, 1 April 1960 (Sager); Reinhold Klingenberg to Mattick, 27 August 1961; Reinhold Klingenberg to Mattick, 2 October 1961/20 May 1962; Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 17 March 1962. Interview with Naomi Sager, 16 September 2004; Conversation with Paul Mattick, Jr., 2 April 2006; Interview with Mary Wheeler, 15 March 2008.

110 Mattick to Naomi Sager, 24 November 1958 (Sager).

111 Frieda St. Sauveur to Alexander Koval, 21 September 1952 (AdK: Koval). Frieda St. Sauveur to Alexander Koval, 10 July 1955 (AdK: Koval); Frieda St. Sauveur to Alexander Koval, 24 November 1977 (AdK: Koval). Frieda returned on 26 February 1952 and lived at 780 West End Avenue. Later she moved to 242 East Fifteenth Street.

she 'is crazier than ever but does very well for herself. She has a good job in a laboratory in a hospital and gets paid well'.<sup>112</sup>

Mattick found the censorship practiced by leftists particularly galling. An editor at *Science & Society*, Eugene Genovese, asked if Mattick's reference to the insignificance of the socialist movement might be qualified by "in the West" or better still "in the United States" in order to avoid criticism of the Soviet Union.<sup>113</sup> Perry Anderson, the editor at *New Left Review*, told him something similar: 'to characterize the Russian Revolution as "one particular aspect of international counter-revolution"', as Mattick had done, was 'too far from anything that we feel for us to be able to publish your piece'.<sup>114</sup> An editor at *International Socialist Journal* in Rome wrote to tell him that they had 'changed state-capitalist to either socialist or state-owned' so as to not 'antagonize too many readers'.<sup>115</sup> Editorial license like this was not a make-or-break issue—better that the articles get published despite the terminological inaccuracies introduced by the editors. Nonetheless, Mattick was prompted to comment that 'these socialists turn censor even long before they have governmental power'.<sup>116</sup>

Erich Fromm solicited an essay from Mattick on socialist humanism, and this too turned unpleasant. Fromm claimed that the essay repeated what other contributors had submitted already, but Mattick knew that 'this is, of course, so much shit'.<sup>117</sup> To a mutual friend, Fromm admitted that Mattick's piece might cause difficulties for the Eastern European contributors. The tipoff was its characterisation as 'sectarian': Fromm 'finally confessed (not to me but to Rubel) that he feared for some of the Polish and Czechoslovakian as well as Yugoslav contributors, who may get into difficulties by appearing in a book which expresses views like those contained in my article'.<sup>118</sup> In other words, the

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112 Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 25 October 1955.

113 Eugene Genovese to Mattick, 12 April 1960. The passages in question were deleted entirely from Mattick's 'Review of Max Nomad. *Aspects of Revolt*', *Science & Society*, Spring 1961.

114 Anderson, nonetheless, recommended other left journals that might be more sympathetic: Perry Anderson to Mattick, 27 March 1962; Stuart Hall to Mattick, 15 April 1961.

115 Samuel Rohdie to Mattick, 4 May 1966. Mattick to Maximilien Rubel, 25 May 1966 (Nanterre).

116 Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 12 May 1966. Mattick to Roman Rosdolsky, 12 May 1966 (IISH: Rosdolsky).

117 Mattick to Maximilien Rubel, 26 January 1964 (Nanterre).

118 Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 28 February 1964. Maximilien Rubel to Mattick, 8 February 1964.

volume on socialist humanism was pre-censored for the sake of the censors in 'socialist' countries.<sup>119</sup>

Attempts to publish just about anything hit a thick wall of resistance. Mattick's article on 'The Keynesian Revolution—Twenty Years After' was rejected by *Atlantic Monthly*, *Virginia Quarterly Review*, *Fortune*, *Yale Review*, *The Reporter*, *World Politics*, *New York Times*, *Pacific Spectator*, and *American Scholar*.<sup>120</sup> From *Dissent*, he received successive rejections from its editors—Irving Howe, Michael Walzer, and Meyer Schapiro.<sup>121</sup> *Partisan Review* and *The Nation* solicited articles from him and then rejected them anyway.<sup>122</sup> Renewed attempts to break into academic and mainstream publications led nowhere, with additional negative responses from *American Economic Review*, *Harvard Business Review*, *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, *The Progressive*, *History and Theory*, *Social Research*, *Scientific American*, and *Commentary*.<sup>123</sup> One bright spot during these years was when Rexroth used a column in *The Nation* to plug Mattick's work, even though *The Nation* was one of the few independent left magazines in the United States never to publish him at all.<sup>124</sup>

*Marx and Keynes* continued to occupy Mattick's time. He typed multiple copies for Zellig Harris to show to publishers in London.<sup>125</sup> Wheeler was invaluable as his editor. When Mattick wondered if *The Economic and International*

119 Maximilien Rubel to Mattick, 17 June 1963; Erich Fromm to Mattick, 27 September 1963; Maximilien Rubel to Mattick, 19 November 1963; Maximilien Rubel to Mattick, 20 December 1963; Erich Fromm to Mattick, 20 January 1964; Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 19 February 1964; Maximilien Rubel to Mattick, 19 February 1964. Fromm 1965.

120 Byron Bryant to Mattick, 21 January 1955; Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 4 February 1955; Mattick to Kenneth Rexroth, 12 February 1955 (UCLA); Kenneth Rexroth to Mattick, 18 February 1955; Byron Bryant to Mattick, 12 March 1955; Charles Morton to Mattick, 21 March 1955; Charlotte Kohler to Mattick, 1 April 1955; Freeman Lincoln to Mattick, 15 April 1955; J.E. Palmer to Mattick, 28 April 1955; Louisa Dalcher to Mattick, 31 May 1955; Jean MacLachlan to Mattick, 13 June 1955; Alice Sheehy to Mattick, 14 June 1955; Robert North to Mattick, 25 November 1955; Hiram Haydn to Mattick, 10 December 1955.

121 Irving Howe to Mattick, 25 November 1958; Michael Walzer to Mattick, 21 February 1961; Meyer Schapiro to Mattick, 8 March 1962.

122 Mattick to Naomi Sager, 24 November 1958 (Sager); Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 24 November 1958; Philip Rahv to Mattick, 11 March 1959; Philip Rahv to Mattick, 10 March 1961; Heinz Lubasz to Mattick, 24 July 1962; Robert Hatch to Mattick, 13 February 1963.

123 B.F. Haley to Mattick, 27 April 1960; David Ewing to Mattick, 23 May 1960; John McGrath to Mattick, 31 March 1961; Sherry Abel to Mattick, 3 May 1962; Midge Decker to Mattick, 10 March 1963.

124 Kenneth Rexroth, 'The Notebooks of Simone Weil', *The Nation*, 12 January 1957; Mattick to Dinsmore and Mary Wheeler, 28 July 1957.

125 Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 5 May 1954; Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 9 June 1954.

*Relations of State-Control* might serve as the book's subtitle, he asked whether the *The* was necessary, an indication of his continuing problem with definite articles and their differential use in English and German.<sup>126</sup> To create interest, Mattick submitted multiple reviews and essays during 1956 to *The Western Socialist* and a kindred publication in Britain, *The Socialist Leader*, including an excerpt from *Marx and Keynes*.<sup>127</sup> Visits to publishers and agents were part of his campaign, which resulted in another round of disappointments.<sup>128</sup> Mattick asked just about everyone with whom he came into contact about possibilities.<sup>129</sup>

Mattick had given up hope that *Marx and Keynes* would ever be published—so much so that he discarded the original manuscript—when an inquiry arrived from Maximilien Rubel, who had seen Mattick's essay of the same name in *The Western Socialist*. Mattick began anew from scratch. Over the next several years, excerpts from the book appeared in Rubel's *Etudes de Marxologie* and *Science & Society*.<sup>130</sup> An audience for Mattick's work was beginning to re-emerge, although it would still be many years before a publisher could be found. Rubel approached a British colleague about *Marx and Keynes*, while another friend hoped to print parts of the manuscript in pamphlet-form. Initially, neither undertaking met with success.<sup>131</sup> An application for a fellowship through the Fund for Social Analysis was also rejected.<sup>132</sup> A further round of negative responses to the *Marx and Keynes* book proposal rolled in from Atherton Press,

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126 Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 25 July 1955. The same issue arose over Mattick's essay 'Dynamics of the Mixed Economy'; Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 17 March 1962.

127 Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 12 March 1956; Andy Sufritz to World Socialist Party, 22 May 1958. Mattick, 'Marx and Keynes', *Western Socialist*, November–December 1955; Mattick Jr 1999.

128 Companies included: Praeger, The Free Press, Vanguard Press, Harcourt Brace and Company, and Beacon Press; Franz Jung to Mattick, 20 January 1955; Mattick-Dinsmore Wheeler, 16 December 1955; Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 12 April 1957; Jeremiah Kaplan to Mattick, 30 April 1957; James Henle to Mattick, 2 May 1957; Robert Harben to Mattick, 14 May 1957; Margaret Marshall to Mattick, 7 June 1957; Thomas Bledsoe to Mattick, 7 November 1957.

129 Franz Jung to Mattick, 20 January 1955; Alexander Erlich to Mattick, 28 September 1957; Raya Dunayevskaya to Mattick, 25 January 1958.

130 Alfred Evenitsky to Mattick, 1 September 1960; Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 13 April 1961; Chet Manes to Mattick, 6 December 1965. Communication from Paul Mattick, Jr., 22 May 2013.

131 Frank Maitland, 20 December 1961; Frank Maitland, 24 January 1962; Frank Maitland to Mattick, 3 March 1963; Maximilien Rubel to Mattick, 13 August 1964; Maximilien Rubel to Mattick, 30 October 1964; Mattick to Maximilien Rubel, 8 November 1964 (Nanterre).

132 Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 11 May 1959; Alfred Evenitsky to Mattick, 1 September 1960.

The Free Press, Little Brown and Company, Harper & Row, and Doubleday.<sup>133</sup> The attempts to publish the book in the mid-1950s and then again during the early- and mid-1960s had all failed.

A complimentary volume, the 135-page ‘The New Nationalism and the Old Imperialism’, was also offered to publishers, but without luck. It focused on recent events in Eastern Europe and the Middle East. Mattick found instructive the worker rebellion in Hungary because within the ‘ridiculous nationalistic issue is also contained the specific opposition of the workers to the conditions of state-capitalist exploitation’. He recognised that ‘the goal of the rebels is not any better than that of their oppressors’, but nonetheless ‘all rebellions against the Russians and all rebellions against any other controlling power’ were events to be supported: ‘one is in the fight even though the fight belongs to others’.<sup>134</sup>

Not every initiative ended so badly. On occasion Mattick addressed small audiences. Naomi Sager arranged three lectures in late 1958. These were held in the living room of her Greenwich Village apartment and drew a surprising thirty-five attendees. Ilse Langerhans travelled from Gettysburg PA; Zellig Harris and Bruria Kaufman came from Philadelphia—‘a lot of trouble just to attend a meeting’. Invited lectures also took place at Brandeis University and at *Western Socialist* meetings.<sup>135</sup> A new friend, Gabriel Kolko, put Mattick in touch with people at Harvard, who invited him to talk about Marx. A group of students hoped to start a new radical organisation: ‘they looked promising but it is too early to tell how serious they really are’.<sup>136</sup> When Herbert Marcuse organised Cuba-support meetings in view of the tensions between the United States and the Soviet Union over the stationing of intercontinental missiles,

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133 Richard DeHaan to Mattick, 20 February 1963; Martin Kessler to Mattick, 5 November 1964; Stanley Hart to Mattick, 25 March 1965; Jeannette Hopkins to Mattick, 27 April 1965; Charles Harris to Mattick, 4 May 1965.

134 Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 13 November 1956. Richard Walsh to Mattick, 14 May 1957; George Stone to Mattick, 8 November 1957; John Saville to Mattick, 4 July 1958; Mattick to Paul Partos, 9 September 1958 (IISH: Partos); Mattick to Paul Partos, 24 September 1958 (IISH: Partos); Mattick to Claudio Pozzoli, 13 June 1968 (Pozzoli).

135 Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 5 November 1958. Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 3 December 1958; Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 26 January 1959; Interview with Naomi Sager, 16 September 2004; Barsky 1997, p. 42.

136 Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 1 April 1963. Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 17 February 1960; Mattick to Naomi Sager, 1 April 1960 (Sager); Franz Jung to Mattick, 16 November 1960.

Mattick attended: 'one must stand behind the Cubans without *any reservations*'.<sup>137</sup> It wasn't that Mattick liked the Cuban regime, but he liked imperialist aggression even less.

Activities that caught his attention included conferences on the Cold War, anti-nuclear bomb meetings, fundraising events for the civil rights movement, and even an occasional electoral event ('it was fun to enliven their meetings').<sup>138</sup> During these years of isolation, a loose-knit circle of radicals from the Boston area socialised together and supported each other's work, including Howard Zinn, Noam Chomsky (who Mattick knew through Zellig Harris), the Kolkos, and Herbert Marcuse.<sup>139</sup> Mattick's mood remained somber: 'almost nothing seems to make sense in view of the general prevailing attitude on the part of most people. They court disaster as if there never has been a first and a second world war'.<sup>140</sup> As for writing, he 'did very little and found excuses in the general futility that now seems to adhere to all human activity'.<sup>141</sup>

An unexpected request for a textbook on marxian economics was arranged by Zellig Harris for the left-wing kibbutz movement in Israel whose members sought a counterweight to governmental policies.<sup>142</sup> As Mattick described it: 'they want to learn about business and economics and about political economy as understood by the bourgeoisie'. This meant 'they want to learn a lot of useless nonsense, if only to convince themselves that it is pure nonsense'.<sup>143</sup> A

137 Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 8 May 1961. Mattick to Maximilien Rubel, 1960 [1961] (Nanterre).

138 Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 28 August 1964. Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 8 December 1960; Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 16 February 1961; Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 22 July 1964.

139 Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 9 June 1965; Howard Zinn to Mattick, No Date [1964]; Mattick to Kolko, 3 December 1967 (York).

140 Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 27 September 1962.

141 Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 17 June 1963.

142 Selections were due to appear in the *Lexicon of Social Science (Entsiklopedyas le-mada'e ha-hevrah)*, edited by David Knaani and published by Sifriat Poalim [Workers' Book Guild]. Eventually Mattick was assigned five of the planned fifty-book series, to stretch over a ten-year period. Intended authors included Meyer Schapiro, Erick Erickson, Gabriel Kolko, and Zellig Harris. Mattick's manuscripts: *Keynesian Economics: Critique of Theory and Practice* and *Business, Economics, and Political Economy* (IISH: Mattick, unpublished manuscripts). Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 24 November 1958; Mattick to Naomi Sager, 24 November 1958 (Sager); David Knaani to Mattick, 29 May 1959; Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 6 June 1962; David Knaani to Mattick, 12 December 1962; Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 23 October 1964.

143 Mattick to Roman Rosdolsky, 8 November 1964 (IISH: Rosdolsky). Mattick to Roman Rosdolsky, 23 October 1964 (IISH: Rosdolsky).



familiarisation with recent economic literature was in order: 'not even a bourgeois in his right mind could be swayed by it'.<sup>144</sup> The project offered Mattick an opportunity to explore anew the themes that he pursued in *Marx and Keynes*.

Sometimes Mattick's doggedness yielded results. *American Socialist* published several important essays, the editors' trotskyst backgrounds notwithstanding.<sup>145</sup> Occasional pieces appeared in an odd collection of journals: *Liberation*, *Chicago Jewish Forum* (a referral from the editor at *The Nation*), *Minority of One*, *Controversy* (its inaugural issue), *Survey*, *Science & Society* (which published him regularly), and *New Politics* (to whom Mattick sent a list of possible subscribers, with his essays appearing in two of its first four issues).<sup>146</sup> An old friend summarised this state of affairs: 'it is unfortunate, indeed, that your significant work must be published in such insignificant little papers'.<sup>147</sup> Where Mattick had surprising success was with *The New Republic*, placing four book reviews over a seventeen-month period.<sup>148</sup> Income from writing, which had eluded him during the Vermont years, began to flow. The kibbutz textbooks paid handsomely, and with income from a few other publications, his earnings now supplemented Ilse's income.

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144 Mattick to Roman Rosdolsky, 29 January 1965 (IISH: Rosdolsky).

145 Bert Cochran to Mattick, 16 October 1958; Wald 1987, p. 298ff.

146 Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 31 December 1958; Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 11 May 1959; Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 31 March 1960; M.S. Arnoni to Mattick, 17 April 1961; Julius Jacobson to Mattick, 19 June 1961; Richard Gilpin to Mattick, 22 June 1961; Julius Jacobson to Mattick, 28 June 1961; Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 1 July 1961; Ken Eaton to Mattick, 10 July 1962; Julius Jacobson to Mattick, 23 July 1962; Walter Laqueur to Mattick, 14 March 1964; Walter Laqueur to Mattick, 9 April 1964; Walter Laqueur to Mattick, 20 April 1964.

147 Leo Friedman to Mattick, 15 October 1965.

148 Gilbert Harrison to Mattick, 24 November 1960; Robert Evett to Mattick, 5 January 1961.

## Rekindling

### Recent Admirers

To be against both the status quo in East and West, closes almost all the publications to one's work. However, I have gotten used to it and do not really care any longer.<sup>1</sup>

New friends helped sustain Mattick's spirits. Henk Canne Meijer profiled Mattick's work for the benefit of colleagues in Paris, Louis Evrard among them. Evrard was an editor at the Gallimard publishing house who travelled to the United States in order to talk to Mattick directly. He in turn was the conduit to several individuals who became Mattick's boosters and translators over the next decades, particularly Serge Bricianer, Rina and Daniel St. James, and Maximilien Rubel. The latter was especially important because he headed a prestigious research institute and edited a well-known journal, *Etudes de Marxologie* [*Studies in Marxology*], and because he offered *carte blanche* for whatever Mattick wanted to publish.<sup>2</sup> At this point in his life, Mattick preferred to write in English even though German was a possibility. Some years later he admitted: 'I have stopped writing German about 30 years ago in order to improve my English writing. However, I never really learned to write a good English and I unlearned to write German'.<sup>3</sup>

1 Mattick to Roman Rosdolsky, 2 July 1964 (IISH: Rosdolsky).

2 These same colleagues attempted to publish an essay collection by Mattick for many years until they finally succeeded in 1972. Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 31 March 1960; Mattick to Naomi Sager, 1 April 1960 (Sager); Serge Bricianer and Daniel Saint-James to Mattick, June 1960; Maximilien Rubel to Mattick, 10 October 1960; Maximilien Rubel to Mattick, 6 November 1961; Mattick to Franz Jung, 7 December 1961 (DLA); Louis Evrard and Serge Bricianer to Mattick, 15 February [1962]; Maximilien Rubel to Mattick, 5 March 1962; Enrico Filippini to Mattick, 6 April 1962; Louis Evrard to Mattick, 15 March 1963; Serge Bricianer to Mattick, 23 September 1964; Maximilien Rubel to Mattick, 21 October 1964; Mattick to Maximilien Rubel, 8 November 1964 (Nanterre); Maximilien Rubel to Mattick, 15 November 1964; Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 9 June 1965; Gaston Davoust to Mattick, 31 January 1966; Serge Bricianer to Mattick, 19 June 1970; Interview with Naomi Sager, 16 September 2004; Reeve 2004; Mattick 1972b.

3 Mattick to Claudio Pozzoli, 4 February 1969 (Pozzoli). Maximilien Rubel to Mattick, 11 August 1960; Maximilien Rubel to Mattick, 7 September 1960; Mattick to Gabriel Kolko, 1 November 1969 (York); Mattick to Otto Morf, 2 August 1970.

Rubel's visiting professorship at Harvard University in early 1961 cemented their friendship. For Mattick, Rubel was someone 'with the right human as well as political attitudes and very scholarly. We have a very good time together'. While Mattick helped Rubel with his English, he heard all about 'manuscripts hidden in archives I will never see'.<sup>4</sup> Mattick admitted that 'research is not what I like (going to libraries and trying to locate relevant literature)', but hearing about such things was another matter.<sup>5</sup> Their correspondence would span two decades and cover a wide range of topics: Marx's theory of money, Volumes I and II of *Capital*, the capitalistic nature of socialist Russia, alienation and orthodoxy in marxism, the productive or unproductive nature of circulation work, waste production, the subjective motivations of the working class, Marx's notion of socialism, and socialist ethics.

Rubel's priorities were not always Mattick's, and Mattick often downplayed things which Rubel held dear. Mattick, for instance, thought that monetary theory was not something that interested Marx, even though Rubel spent considerable time trying to decipher Marx's ideas about it.<sup>6</sup> Rubel's major project involved a re-editing of Volumes II and III of *Capital* in order to correct the editorial mistakes that marred the original publication. With this project, too, Mattick was not in full sympathy: 'there is enough in *Capital*, such as it is, to know what Marx was actually saying, even though he was not very clear at times'. Furthermore, he told Rubel, 'all theories remain fragments and mere approximations to the truth'. Even if Marx had finished *Capital* in its several volumes, it was nonetheless 'beyond the capacity of one individual to comprehend all the ramifications of a dynamic system such as capitalism'. For Mattick, 'Marx did more than anybody else', but this only meant that 'the point was to *continue* Marx's labors'. The decline of theoretical marxism, so lamented by Rubel, was not due to misinterpretations of the original texts. These merely accompanied 'the whole decline of the radical labor movement' and 'the erosion of Marx's radical concepts through the increasingly greater willingness to

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4 Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 2 March 1961. Maximilien Rubel to Mattick, 5 January 1961; Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 16 February 1961; Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 15 March 1961; Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 13 April 1961; Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 27 September 1962.

5 Mattick's preference was to 'work the other way around, by trying to find the procedure in the result'. Mattick to Maximilien Rubel, 6 October 1961 (Nanterre).

6 Maximilien Rubel to Mattick, 4 October 1961; Maximilien Rubel to Mattick, 28 September 1962; Mattick to Maximilien Rubel, October [1962] (Nanterre); Maximilien Rubel to Mattick, 10 October 1962; Maximilien Rubel to Mattick, 12 February 1963; Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 13 March 1963.

“improve” Marx via bourgeois economic theory.’<sup>7</sup> A peculiar dynamic developed between the two men in which Rubel would solicit Mattick’s views, only then to disagree with them. It was clear from their correspondence that Rubel used Mattick as his foil. Nonetheless, Rubel admitted at one juncture that ‘I don’t know anyone who can help me as much as you’.<sup>8</sup>

Like Rubel, Roman Rosdolsky was another new friend who shared an intense interest in Marx and marxist theorising. Mattick initiated the correspondence, declaring that the two of them seemed to have views that were ‘often identical, perhaps even to an uncomfortable degree’. He was eager to peruse Rosdolsky’s *The Making of Marx’s Capital*, a book on which Rosdolsky had laboured for seven years but which had not yet been released commercially.<sup>9</sup> Both Mattick and Rosdolsky knew from personal experience the difficulties of finding outlets for one’s work. Mattick told him: ‘my own articles circulate sometimes for two to three years before they see the light of day. In fact, I am almost completely isolated with regard to outlets for my writing. I write mostly for the waste-paper basket’. Rosdolsky’s despondency did not alarm Mattick, who gently guided him through it: ‘your state of depression is not foreign to me’. He encouraged Rosdolsky to keep writing: ‘very few people are as productive as you are: I, at any rate, think that you are extremely productive, which will help you out of any depression’.<sup>10</sup>

What unfolded was a highly conceptual and intellectual correspondence that only intermittently grew personal, even after the Rosdolskys spent their summer vacation in Vermont.<sup>11</sup> Dialectics and their applicability to nature, necessity versus accident in history and social affairs, the preference on Rosdolsky’s part for the terminology of state socialism versus Mattick’s preference for state capitalism, the usefulness (Rosdolsky) or irrelevance (Mattick) of the reproduction schemes used by Marx and Luxemburg, the character and function of revolutionary nationalism, and the differences—if any—between

7 Mattick to Maximilien Rubel, 6 October 1961 (Nanterre). Maximilien Rubel to Mattick, 29 October 1963; Maximilien Rubel to Mattick, 25 January 1964.

8 Maximilien Rubel to Mattick, 23 August 1965. Maximilien Rubel to Mattick, 4 March 1962; Mattick to Maximilien Rubel, 15 October 1962 (Nanterre). Maximilien Rubel to Henk Canne Meier, 5 November 1962 (Nanterre).

9 Mattick to Roman Rosdolsky, 12 January 1964 (IISH: Rosdolsky). Mattick to Roman Rosdolsky, 26 January 1964 (IISH: Rosdolsky).

10 Mattick to Roman Rosdolsky, 2 July 1964 (IISH: Rosdolsky). Roman Rosdolsky to Mattick, 17 January 1964 (IISH: Rosdolsky).

11 Mattick to Roman Rosdolsky, 15 May 1965 (IISH: Rosdolsky); Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, August 1965.

Lenin and Stalin, were topics discussed in their correspondence.<sup>12</sup> When Emmy Rosdolsky suggested that the two men jointly write an article on the cartelisation of the global economy, Mattick did not reject the idea out of hand, unlike similar suggestions about joint writing projects from Rexroth, Rubel, and Kolko.<sup>13</sup>

Mattick described Rosdolsky as a 'bolshevik of the 1920 vintage', but an undogmatic one, a description with which Rosdolsky would have agreed. When they argued about the Soviet Union, he told Rosdolsky: 'I do not believe that we will soon come to an understanding as regards the character of Russian society, but I can make my position more convincing by paying greater attention to the objections you raised'.<sup>14</sup> Rosdolsky practiced an odd form of marxism that was tinged with Ukrainian nationalism and trotskyism. He also hoped to exert a real influence on government-level policy decisions in putatively socialist regimes in places like Poland and Cuba, to which Mattick replied that he would rather view matters 'from the standpoint of the workers, not the rulers' and that in certain conditions, one 'can keep quiet until an opportunity again presents itself to act socialistically'.<sup>15</sup>

There were times when Rosdolsky and Mattick needled one another out of annoyance over each other's views. Rosdolsky accused Mattick of ethnocentrism because he excluded rebellions in the non-industrialised world as a decisive factor in the ultimate collapse of the capitalist system, for which the Russian and Chinese systems showed the way forward.<sup>16</sup> When *International Socialist Journal* transformed 'state-capitalism' into 'socialism', Mattick egged on Rosdolsky by telling him that 'some of these changes should please you'.<sup>17</sup> For Mattick, state-run societies were not a stepping stone to a more progressive world, nor was there much point in equating the doctrines of Rosa Luxemburg

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12 Mattick to Maximilien Rubel, 26 January 1964 (Nanterre); Roman Rosdolsky to Mattick, 29 January 1964 (IISH: Rosdolsky); Mattick to Roman Rosdolsky, 2 February 1964 (IISH: Rosdolsky); Mattick to Roman Rosdolsky, 10 February 1964 (IISH: Rosdolsky); Mattick to Roman Rosdolsky, 26 June 1964 (IISH: Rosdolsky); Roman Rosdolsky to Mattick, 18 May 1966 (IISH: Rosdolsky).

13 Mattick to Maximilien Rubel, 27 January 1964; Maximilien Rubel to Mattick, 19 February 1964; Roman Rosdolsky to Mattick, 12 April 1965 (IISH: Rosdolsky); Mattick to Roman Rosdolsky, 1 May 1965 (IISH: Rosdolsky).

14 Mattick to Roman Rosdolsky, 15 May 1964 (IISH: Rosdolsky).

15 Mattick to Roman Rosdolsky, 3 March 1964 (IISH: Rosdolsky).

16 Roman Rosdolsky to Mattick, 7 February 1966 (IISH: Rosdolsky).

17 Mattick to Roman Rosdolsky, 12 May 1966 (IISH: Rosdolsky).

with those of Lenin, as Rosdolsky insisted.<sup>18</sup> As Rosdolsky grew more combative in tone, Mattick became less interested. He ultimately concluded that Rosdolsky was ‘an old bolshevik no longer able to unlearn what he had learned’, even if he was ‘a decent man just the same’.<sup>19</sup>

After Rosdolsky’s death, the Matticks remained close friends with Emmy Rosdolsky, who travelled regularly to visit them. She had worked for several decades for the United Auto Workers union as a financial analyst and had been the primary wage-earner for her family. She also had a keen sense of politics, which the Matticks appreciated greatly. About a mutual colleague, a veteran from the Proletarian Party who for many decades was a critical but faithful member of the UAW, she remarked that he ‘was the only social democrat who I know, who moved left with age’.<sup>20</sup> She arranged for Mattick to contribute an obituary to the *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte*, where her husband’s essays had sometimes appeared. But the editors of this journal, sponsored by the research foundation of the German Social Democratic Party, refused to publish Mattick’s obituary ‘out of consideration of co-workers in communist countries’, a refrain that he had heard previously from Erich Fromm.<sup>21</sup>

When different neighbours moved into the Matticks’ apartment building, the noise level created by the three children became a real problem. Gabriel Kolko heard about an apartment in the Cambridge section of Boston, just north of Harvard University and one block from the Kolkos’ apartment. In mid-March 1964, the Matticks moved once again, their third move in six years, this time to a more spacious duplex in a three-storey wood building.<sup>22</sup> Of plain, clapboard construction, the building did not have a rear yard but instead contained a driveway and parking area. The apartment also had a small outdoor deck at the back. A tiny plot for shrubs and flowers adorned the front, next to the stoop. That same summer, the Matticks finally installed a pump and running water in their home in Vermont.<sup>23</sup>

18 Roman Rosdolsky to Mattick, 5 November 1966 (IISH: Rosdolsky); Mattick to Roman Rosdolsky, No Date [November 1966] (IISH: Rosdolsky).

19 Mattick to Maximilien Rubel, 15 September 1968 (Nanterre).

20 She was referring to Frank Marquart; Emmy Rosdolsky to Mattick, 26 July 1970. Emmy Rosdolsky to Ilse and Paul Mattick, 23 July 1968.

21 Georg Eckert to Emmy Rosdolsky, 7 January 1971. Bert Andréas to Mattick, 17 February 1968; Emmy Rosdolsky to Hans Pelger, 29 March 1970.

22 Address: 45 Sacramento Street, Cambridge MA. The building contained three apartments. Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 19 February 1964; Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 28 February 1964; Interview with Gabriel and Joyce Kolko, 19 and 24 March 2006.

23 Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 19 July 1964.

## A New Left

There is no *third world*, only one world, with many different nations.<sup>24</sup>

Even with the radicalisation of the Civil Rights and Anti-Vietnam War movements in the mid-to-late 1960s, the response to Mattick's work in the United States was fitful at best. A long, drawn-out saga with *Studies on the Left* arose at the very beginning of the decade, not long after the journal was founded. Over the next seven years, Mattick experienced anew a pattern he had seen previously with other journals, in which editorial confusion led to broken promises. Mattick's submission, 'Marxism and the New Physics', had been written in response to an essay by the physicist Max Born.<sup>25</sup> The editors at *Studies on the Left* intended to use Mattick's piece as the lead to a symposium with several historians of science. But from these lofty plans, indecision emerged from within the constantly changing cast of graduate student editors.<sup>26</sup> Mattick was miffed; all the more so since some journals published him 'even though they could not possibly agree with my political position'.<sup>27</sup> That Mattick nonetheless kept the dialogue open led one editor to comment that she could 'only express wonder and gratitude that you are still our friend'.<sup>28</sup>

The next round of bad feelings, this time caused by Mattick, was deeply embarrassing. He had offered the same piece to *Studies on the Left* and *New Politics*, only for both journals to accept it for publication.<sup>29</sup> A third round of

24 Mattick to Joyce Kolko, 22 February 1974 (Mattick Jr.).

25 Born's essay appeared in the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, which rejected for publication Mattick's response. Mattick sent the essay to Born directly, at the suggestion of the Bulletin's editor. Eugene Rabinowitch to Mattick, 14 September 1959; Max Born to Mattick, 13 October 1959; Meyer Schapiro to Mattick, 27 November 1959.

26 Joan Bromberg to Mattick, 18 December 1959, with note: Mattick to Friends, 17 February 1960 (WHS); Martin Sklar to Mattick, 19 March 1960; Mattick to Friends, 23 March 1960 (WHS); Martin Sklar to Mattick, 7 April 1960.

27 Mattick to Friends, 11 August 1960 (WHS).

28 Joan Bromberg to Mattick, 2 September 1960. Lacking confidence that the article would ever appear, Mattick declined to make further changes on their behalf. After rejections from *History and Theory* and *Social Research*, Zellig Harris helped place it at *Philosophy of Science*. Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, ND [after 26 August 1960]; Mattick to Joan Bromberg, 12 September 1960 (WHS); Eleanor Hakim to Albert Blumberg, 16 September 1960 (WHS); Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 1 January 1961; Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 1 February 1961; Elizabeth Todd to Mattick, 24 February 1961; Edward Dunham to Mattick, 30 March 1961; Richard Rudner to Mattick, 6 December 1961.

29 'The Economics of Cybernation' had been offered already to *The Nation* and *Scientific American* before *New Politics* accepted it. Carey McWilliams to Mattick, 19 November

recriminations resulted when it took nine months for the editors at *Studies on the Left* to reject another submission.<sup>30</sup> A further attempt to collaborate led Mattick to send them 'Dynamics of the Mixed Economy', perhaps the finest short statement yet written on the limits of governmental attempts to revive the capitalist economy. Originally composed from material for the Kibbutz courses, Mattick was aware that the subject matter was 'too difficult for more popular publications and too radical for the academic magazines'.<sup>31</sup> This time it was rejected with a viciousness uncharacteristic of the journal: 'Mattick's peculiar gobbledygook', 'an abortive attempt to explain the stagnation of the American economy', 'Mattick's main point, invalidly made', 'Mattick doesn't explain', 'Mattick neglects', 'his originality lies in the mish-mash of unsupported assertions, arbitrary definitions leading to invalid conclusions, and muddle-headed "analysis" on a high level of abstraction from economic reality or fact'.<sup>32</sup> This wasn't the kind of collegial rejection that one might expect from kindred spirits who share a basic respect regardless of any theoretical or political differences. Mattick continued to send manuscripts despite this latest rejection.<sup>33</sup>

Mattick's first choice for 'Dynamics of the Mixed Economy' had been *Monthly Review*, a left journal with an explicitly marxist focus. The editor, Paul Sweezy, had written to him years before about a previous submission: 'if you read [*Monthly Review*] at all regularly, you doubtless think it is as confused on the subjects of capitalism and socialism as I think the enclosed is'.<sup>34</sup> This time, however, Sweezy was so impressed that he encouraged Mattick to expand

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1958; Carey McWilliams to Mattick, 29 May 1962; Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 6 June 1962; Dennis Flanagan to Mattick, 20 June 1962; Mattick to James Weinstein, 24 July 1962 (WHS); James Weinstein to Mattick, 28 July 1962; Mattick to Roman Rosdolsky, 29 April 1964 (HSH: Rosdolsky). It was also offered to *Socialisme ou Barbarie*; Serge Bricianer to Mattick, 23 September 1964.

30 Mattick to Editors, 5 March 1963 (WHS); Martin Sklar to Mattick, 8 March 1963 (WHS).

31 Mattick to Zellig Harris and Naomi Sager, ND (Sager).

32 Mattick to Friends, 27 January 1964 (WHS); Alan Cheuse to Mattick, with addendum, 4 February 1964 (WHS).

33 Ellen Levene to Mattick, 18 August 1966 (WHS); James Weinstein to Mattick, 3 October 1966 (WHS); Mattick to James Weinstein, 5 October 1966 (WHS); James Weinstein to Mike, 10 October 1966 (WHS); Dale Lewis to Mattick [after 10 February 1967] (WHS).

34 Paul Sweezy to Mattick, 28 October 1958 [brackets added]. Sweezy was referring to Mattick's criticisms of Joseph Gillman's *The Falling Rate of Profit*. Mattick's piece on Gillman had been rejected already by *Dissent*, *Social Research*, and *Journal of Political Economy* before its final acceptance: Mattick, 'Value Theory and Capital Accumulation', *Science & Society*, Winter 1959. John Sayville to Mattick, 6 October 1958; Henry Pachter to Mattick, ND [late 1958]; Alvin Johnson to Mattick, 2 December 1958; Albert Rees to Mattick, 2 December 1958.



'Dynamics of the Mixed Economy' in order for the Monthly Review press to release it as either a pamphlet or a book. This opinion he nonetheless changed quickly when he showed the piece to his co-editors. It seems that Sweezy had misread the piece initially and thought it said something other than what it actually said.<sup>35</sup>

Mattick next turned to *Science & Society*, where the article was received unexpectedly well. The editorial consultant was Joseph Gillman, whose own book Mattick had reviewed rather critically several years before. Gillman acknowledged quite candidly that 'Mattick succeeds to say in 20 pages what has taken me to say in 350 pages', and he referred to 'Dynamics of the Mixed Economy' as 'an important and provocative paper'.<sup>36</sup> That Gillman could be so favourably impressed with Mattick's work, even though its thesis was the opposite of his own, and that Sweezy could be confused by it, was a curious phenomenon. Gillman was perhaps the most knowledgeable of all the American marxist economists at the time. Sweezy, for his part, was the most influential of them, whose previous book, *The Theory of Capitalist Development*, became a mainstay within the New Left, in part because it did not presuppose a knowledge of Marx in order to understand marxian economics.

Politically, Mattick did not care for Sweezy's perspective in which 'socialism equates with an *organized capitalism* (an actual impossibility and a contradiction in terms)'.<sup>37</sup> Sweezy's new book, *Monopoly Capital*, became the occasion to sketch their respective differences. Even though *Monopoly Capital* had 'the intent to modernize Marx', the result as Mattick saw it was that 'marxism has been thrown overboard altogether'.<sup>38</sup> He viewed its thesis as an unacknowledged plagiarism of Gillman's work: 'the fact is that Baran and Sweezy have taken their whole *theory* from Gillman without giving him any credit'.<sup>39</sup> More importantly, *Monopoly Capital* repeated what 'we know already from Marcuse, Gillman, and similar people, who take the nonsense of the *affluent society* seriously'.<sup>40</sup> Sweezy thought that capitalism had solved its crisis tendencies and was now characterised by an overabundance of productive capacity that

35 Paul Sweezy to Mattick, 15 November 1963; Paul Sweezy to Mattick, 30 November 1963.

36 Joseph Gillman to Al Evenitsky, with Comments, 11 July 1964. Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 19 July 1964. When Mattick gave Gillman's subsequent book, *Prosperity in Crisis*, an equally negative review, Gillman wrote: 'I am disappointed that you disagree so broadly with my thesis'; Joseph Gillman to Mattick, 15 December 1965.

37 Mattick to Roman Rosdolsky, 2 February 1964 (IISH: Rosdolsky).

38 Mattick to Wieland Herzfelde, 23 July 1966 (AdK: Herzfelde).

39 *Monopoly Capital* was co-authored by Paul Baran. Mattick to Maximilien Rubel, 5 November 1966 (Nanterre). Mattick to Maximilien Rubel, 8 February 1970 (Nanterre).

40 Mattick to Maximilien Rubel, 3 August 1966 (Nanterre).

could only be kept functioning by means of waste production, lest it undermine the class-based nature of civil society. For Mattick, Sweezy was nothing other than an unreflective outgrowth of the post-war prosperity: 'all these beautiful phrases of the Great Society and its *affluency*, while the reality is an armed camp and murder from all sides'.<sup>41</sup>

Unable to find a publisher for his pamphlet-length critique of *Monopoly Capital*, Mattick turned to the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) chapter at Harvard University, several of whose members belonged to an affiliate organisation, the Progressive Labor Party.<sup>42</sup> Mattick referred to the latter as 'quite crazy, besides being maoists', but nevertheless their magazine gave him entrée to an audience with whom Sweezy was popular.<sup>43</sup> Mattick also sent a copy to Sweezy, who thought that the economic data from the previous half-century fit his own thesis better than Mattick's 'unless I simply don't understand what you are saying—which I admit is possible'.<sup>44</sup> The latter comment is perhaps why Sweezy never responded to Mattick's critique despite the wide hearing it received, especially in Europe. His only acknowledgement was a footnote that mentioned several New Left theorists who followed Mattick's lead, in which Sweezy referred to Mattick as 'the dean of this school of thought'.<sup>45</sup>

This combination of respect and non-recognition also held for Herbert Marcuse's relationship with Mattick. Among the 1930s leftists who were still active, Marcuse and Mattick were both known as sympathetic and supportive of the New Left as it emerged during the 1960s. Mattick was a long-term fan of Marcuse's work. He considered Marcuse's *One-Dimensional Man* 'one of

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41 Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 23 July 1966.

42 *Kyklos* rejected it. *Science & Society* was interested, but only if Mattick cut the text by half. *Studies on the Left* also agreed to publish it but experienced delays when the journal was transformed into *Socialist Revolution*. Mattick to Maximilien Rubel, 13 September 1966 (Nanterre); Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 1 October 1966; Jacques Stohler to Mattick, 2 November 1966.

43 Mattick to Maximilien Rubel, 5 November 1966 (Nanterre). Ted Bayne to Mattick, Wednesday [August 1966]; Milton Rosen to Mattick, 20 December 1966. On another occasion he referred to them as 'somewhat ridiculous' because 'some of their demands cannot be realized without a total change of society, but Harvard is not the place to bring this about'. Mattick to Gabriel Kolko, 22 April 1969 (Mattick Jr.).

44 Paul Sweezy to Mattick, 30 October 1966.

45 Sweezy 1974. The New Left theorists were David Yaffe and Mario Cogoy. A few years later Sweezy recommended either Mattick or Mattick's son as a speaker for a conference in Australia; Steve Wright to Mattick, 15 July 1977.

the most important and most beautiful books written in recent times'.<sup>46</sup> That Marcuse was equally enthusiastic about Mattick's work was common knowledge among their colleagues.<sup>47</sup>

But Mattick was also keenly aware of the limits of Marcuse's work, and when he wrote *Critique of Marcuse*, his intention was to 'deal with the things Marcuse has left out, but which must be said in addition to what he actually has said'.<sup>48</sup> This centred on Marcuse's dismissal of the working class as an agent of social transformation and his assumption that capitalism had solved its crisis dynamics. Of especial importance for Mattick was 'the chances of present-day capitalism to survive'.<sup>49</sup> After Mattick's *Critique of Marcuse* appeared in print, Marcuse referred to it as 'the only solid and real criticism of *One-Dimensional Man*'.<sup>50</sup> Still later he told Mattick: 'as far as your critique of my stuff is concerned, I think I told you before that yours is the only central criticism'.<sup>51</sup> These comments by Marcuse, however, were stated in letters; in other words, in private communications only.<sup>52</sup> In this avoidance of open debate, Marcuse and Sweezy were quite similar.<sup>53</sup>

If Marcuse and Sweezy attempted to ignore Mattick, at least in public, the FBI was not quite so complacent. His son's anti-war activities at Haverford College in Pennsylvania prompted visits to father and son by FBI agents who asked each separately about the other's activities. Paul and Ilse told them

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46 Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 8 June 1964. Mattick rhapsodised about Marcuse's *Soviet Marxism*—'although I disagree often with what Marcuse relates, I can see the validity of his reasoning from his point of view and my respect for Marcuse is increasing'; Mattick to Naomi Sager, 13 March 1959 (Sager). Interview with Volkhard Brandes, 22 June 2009.

47 Herbert Marcuse to Mattick, 17 December 1962; Paul Buhle to Mattick, 1 July 1968.

48 Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 9 June 1965.

49 Mattick to Roman Rosdolsky, 10 October 1965 (IISH: Rosdolsky).

50 Herbert Marcuse to Mattick, 25 October 1967. An earlier version of Mattick's *Critique of Marcuse* (Mattick 1972a) appeared as 'The Limits of Integration', and it is the latter to which Marcuse refers.

51 Herbert Marcuse to Mattick, 22 November 1969.

52 'What I do believe is that the end of the system will not come through the class struggle in the advanced capitalist countries, and your reliance on the growth of "intelligence" among the exploited population strikes me as somehow unrealistic ("idealistic") if I think of the depth in which the needs and aspirations of the victims are manipulated—and satisfied! Even a reduction in the standard of living wouldn't do'; Herbert Marcuse to Mattick, 29 December 1965. Wheatland 2009, pt. iv.

53 In contradistinction, Gillman to his credit responded to Mattick's thesis in depth in the German edition of *The Falling Rate of Profit* (*Das Gesetz des tendenziellen Falls der Profitrate*), with Mattick's rejoinder in his *Kritik der Neomarxisten* (1974). Neither of these texts appeared in English.

point-blank that they approved wholeheartedly of what their son was doing. When Paul and Ilse visited Haverford, Paul found the anti-war students, who had been accused of treasonable activities by the local newspaper, to be 'a good bunch of people, sincere as well as intelligent'.<sup>54</sup> When interviewed still another time, Mattick told the FBI agent that he hoped to be arrested since this would attract attention and therefore an audience for his publications, a response that left the agent more befuddled than convinced.<sup>55</sup> Mattick was of sufficient interest that his mail was monitored, and the FBI kept fairly precise records on his travels to and from Vermont. The files noted such details as that he received copies of a British trotskyst journal.<sup>56</sup>

As late as 1966, Mattick still faced considerable difficulty placing his work. The rejections, however, were often quite gentle; it was a question of timing and fit, not necessarily of fundamental disagreements in perspective. This itself was a noteworthy change from the past.<sup>57</sup> Some responses, of course, were hardly believable, as when an editor at the *American Economic Review*, to which Mattick subscribed, claimed that his essay 'largely tells us what we already know', an assertion hard to accept given the lack of discussion within its pages of almost anything related to marxian economics.<sup>58</sup>

These various cross-currents of not quite knowing what to do with Mattick's work remained especially pronounced in the United States. Paul Buhle contacted Mattick regarding a new SDS-sponsored publication, *Radical America*. Mattick at first was sceptical about the magazine's historical focus and reluctant to write 'about long-deceased groups which meant little, or nothing, while

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54 Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 8 June 1964. Paul Jr. attended Haverford on a scholarship and worked in Zellig Harris' linguistic lab at the University of Pennsylvania. Mattick to Maximilien Rubel, 6 October 1961 (Nanterre). Conversations with Ilse Mattick, 21–5 May 2005.

55 Conversation with Paul Mattick, Jr., 8 May 2007.

56 In the early 1970s, though, a FBI report concluded that 'on the basis of available information and Mattick's advanced age, Boston contemplates no further action in this matter and is placing it in a closed status'. Mattick had turned sixty-eight a few months before. FBI File 101-5672: Letter to Acting Director, 31 July 1972.

57 Rejections came from the *Journal of Contemporary History*, *Kyklos*, *Contemporary Issues*, *Kursbuch*, *New Republic*, *New York Review of Books*, *Commentary*, *New Left Review*, and *International Socialism*: Walter Laqueur to Mattick, 20 January 1966; J. Stohler to Mattick, 3 March 1966; Harold Wurf to Mattick, 6 March 1966; Hans Magnus Enzensberger to Mattick, 6 June 1966; Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 13 June 1966; Robert Evett to Mattick, 12 July 1966; Nigel Harris to Mattick, 6 August 1966.

58 John Gurley to Mattick, 2 February 1966. Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 29 November 1968.

they were active'.<sup>59</sup> But Buhle persisted and eventually persuaded Mattick to cooperate in these endeavors.<sup>60</sup> Buhle's many plans included the republication of Mattick's 1930s journals (*ICC*, *Living Marxism*, *New Essays*), an anthology of his essays (with an introduction by Theodor Adorno or Herbert Marcuse), an issue-length monograph by Mattick, the pre-publication of a chapter of *Marx and Keynes*, and an entire issue of *Radical America* devoted to reviews of it.<sup>61</sup>

Buhle's interest in Mattick, however, started to wane almost as soon as it began. Early on Mattick told him: 'I am sorry to hear that you are getting interested in cultural and aesthetic subjects. Why don't you leave that to the bourgeoisie?'<sup>62</sup> Buhle in the meantime had discovered the Caribbean marxist C.L.R. James, who supplanted Mattick as the focus of his attention. James represented a form of trotskysm closer to syndicalism than the social democratic tradition which had appealed to Buhle previously.<sup>63</sup> Mattick was clearly annoyed when, after two and a half years of correspondence, he told Buhle that it was 'high time that you drop the Mister when writing to me. After all, aren't we fellow-workers?'<sup>64</sup> As for *Radical America*, only two pieces by Mattick were ever published—a lengthy review of an Ernest Mandel book on marxian economics and a short, more complicated piece on Nixon's economic policies. Of the anticipated reviews of *Marx and Keynes*, only one materialised.

These difficulties notwithstanding, Mattick's relationship to the world of publishing altered dramatically beginning in 1967. A book contract for *Marx and Keynes* and a commitment to rework the text one last time left him with little availability for manuscript submission. Solicitations of new material also began to arrive with increased frequency and without any prompting on Mattick's side.<sup>65</sup> A new set of contacts facilitated Mattick's access to journals,

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59 Mattick to Paul Buhle, 4 March 1967 (WHS). Paul Buhle to Mattick, 8 February 1967.

60 Mattick to Paul Buhle, 15 October 1967 (WHS).

61 Paul Buhle to Mattick, 11 October 1967; Paul Buhle to Mattick, 24 October 1967; Paul Buhle to Mattick, 8 February 1968; Paul Buhle to Mattick, 11 April 1968; Paul Buhle to Mattick, 4 May 1968; Mattick to Paul Buhle, 10 July 1968 (WHS); Paul Buhle to Mattick, 29 January 1969; Herbert Cohen to Mattick, 11 March 1969; Paul Buhle to Mattick, 7 April 1969; Paul Buhle to Mattick, 11 August 1969; Paul Buhle to Mattick, 21 December 1969; Paul Buhle to Mattick, 29 December 1969; Mattick to Paul Buhle, 1 January 1970 (WHS); Mattick to Paul Buhle, 14 January 1970 (WHS); Mattick to Paul Buhle, 10 June 1970 (WHS); Paul Buhle to Mattick, 18 June 1970.

62 Mattick to Paul Buhle, 22 October 1968 (WHS).

63 Paul Buhle to Mattick, 23 February 1969; Email with Paul Buhle, 6 September 2008.

64 Mattick to Paul Buhle, 24 December 1969 (WHS).

65 For example: Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 18 March 1966; Pino Tagliazucchi to Mattick, 18 October 1966; Richard Kuper to Mattick, 20 May 1968; Ada Cavazzani to Mattick, 15 June 1968; Richard Kuper to Mattick, 4 April 1969.

publishers, and the various student movements. Gabriel Kolko was pivotal in much of this.<sup>66</sup> A group asked Mattick to lead a *Capital* study group, with meetings every other week and readings of 200 pages each session:

There is no real plan connected with the class of *Capital*. It is like a seminar; people read some chapters and then we discuss them together; clearing up doubtful points, and relating Marx's writings sometimes with respect to other theories and sometimes with respect to actual conditions.<sup>67</sup>

When SDS attempted to launch a Boston-area Free University that offered short courses on political and social affairs, Mattick was asked to lead a course on marxian economics.<sup>68</sup> Increasingly he was invited to lecture at nearby universities.<sup>69</sup>

The Matticks and the Kolkos had grown close throughout these years. The Kolkos visited Vermont and used the Mattick apartment in Cambridge when the Matticks were away; later the two families coordinated summer vacations in France.<sup>70</sup> Paul particularly admired Gabriel's courage: 'a very busy young man, engaged in all sorts of activities: demonstrations for integration and demonstrations against nuclear warfare'.<sup>71</sup> Gabriel had great difficulty finding an academic posting. At times, suspicions abounded about his supposed terrorist connections. Several teaching assignments were cut short and he was excluded from consideration for other faculty positions because of opposition to his politics. Only after many years of a nomadic life that took him from one university to another did he secure a permanent position.<sup>72</sup>

The Kolkos, though, represented New Left attitudes at odds with Mattick's understanding of the world. Gabriel repeatedly praised the North Vietnamese

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66 Mattick to Gabriel Kolko, 16 March 1973 (York).

67 Mattick to Roman Rosdolsky, 19 November 1965 (IISH: Rosdolsky). Mattick to Roman Rosdolsky, 10 October 1965 (IISH: Rosdolsky); Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, October 1965.

68 Mattick to Roman Rosdolsky, 5 October 1966 (IISH: Rosdolsky); Mattick to Gabriel Kolko, 23 October 1966 (York); Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 24 October 1966; Mattick to Gabriel Kolko, 11 December 1966 (York).

69 Noam Chomsky to Mattick, 6 October 1969; Mattick to Maximilien Rubel, 6 March 1970 (Nanterre); Mattick to Gabriel Kolko, 7 December 1970 (Mattick Jr).

70 Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 7 July 1963.

71 Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, [after 26 August 1960]. Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler [before 17 November 1960].

72 Gabriel Kolko to Mattick, 6 February 1967 (York); Gabriel Kolko to Mattick, 1 March 1967 (York); Gabriel Kolko to Mattick, 21 April 1970; Gabriel Kolko to Mattick, 2 August 1970 (York); Gabriel Kolko to Mattick, 21 August 1970 (York).

as 'sensible, quite independent of the Russians and Chinese, not at all arrogant about the correctness of any tactic and program, and very anxious to think and learn'.<sup>73</sup> Mattick, on the other hand, told him: 'you are in for a great amount of disillusionment'. He explained that 'being an anti-imperialist does not make one into a nationalist (no matter whose nations), even though one cannot help supporting nationalism by being an anti-imperialist. This is an objective fact, but doesn't force me to become subjectively involved into flagwaving and hurra-patriotism'.<sup>74</sup>

For such a sharp critic, Mattick's notions of dissent were quite expansive: 'I welcome all kinds of protests against the Vietnam war, even those based on mere illusions'.<sup>75</sup> The anti-war activities were noteworthy, among other reasons, because they broke with 'the whole shit about the consensus and the one-dimensional man'.<sup>76</sup> Throughout their many conversations, Mattick encouraged Kolko to an understanding that moved beyond what was common within the New Left regarding disenfranchised students and minority groups: 'if you cannot stop the factories, you cannot stop anything seriously'. This did not negate other forms of protest, since 'every bit counts and I am by no means objecting to the limited sabotage of academia', but Mattick encouraged everyone to keep in mind those circumstances that could lead to a transformation of society writ large.<sup>77</sup> If anything, Mattick 'worried that too much ultra-left negativism would have kept our friends from fully enjoying and partaking in the events'.<sup>78</sup> When colleagues of Kathy Boudin (a friend of his son's) from the Weather Underground were killed while preparing bombs in a New York City townhouse, he explained:

I can only advocate what I am willing to do myself. And this I am not willing to do *at the present situation* in the United States. No, these actions of the rich kids are not by themselves, or even despite themselves, the marks of a beginning to something more important. They might, though, at another time, and at such a time I would not talk about them but be a participant.<sup>79</sup>

73 Gabriel Kolko to Mattick, 26 September 1975. The Kolkos were long-term affiliates of the Bertrand Russell Tribunal that investigated war crimes by the United States in Southeast Asia. Gabriel Kolko to Mattick, 18 February 1974.

74 Mattick to Gabriel Kolko, 1 April 1973 (York).

75 Mattick to Maximilien Rubel, 15 February 1967 (Nanterre).

76 Mattick to Gabriel Kolko, 19 October 1969 (York).

77 Mattick to Gabriel Kolko, 4 January 1968 (York).

78 Mattick to Gabriel Kolko, 1 July 1968 (Mattick Jr.). Daniel St. James to Mattick, 5 April 1970.

79 Mattick to Serge Bricianer, 22 March 1970 (Mattick Jr.). Braudy 2003, p. 130; Conversation with Paul Mattick, Jr., 22 September 2007.

To his son, he remarked casually that bank robberies and bombings were the sorts of things that one did when you were young.

Mattick favored 'any organization, party, or group that advocates the self-emancipation of the proletariat'. Even if workers were not interested in revolutionary ideas, radical groups could discuss on their own how the working class might organise production, distribution, and control over society.<sup>80</sup> This was especially important because:

The theory of socialism and the socialist revolution has still to be evolved; Marx has here nothing to offer. Marxism exhausts itself in the analysis of capitalism and the class struggle *within* capitalism. But there it stops. There does not exist a theory of the proletarian revolution and of the socialist society. Perhaps, it may be even too early to begin?<sup>81</sup>

He told Rubel: 'I am afraid that when it comes to communism, we have to make our own theories with respect to both the structure of the new society and the ways by which to reach it'.<sup>82</sup>

The escalating violence that characterised the United States in the 1960s disturbed Mattick greatly. In his view, it was symptomatic of 'the general demoralization' that goes 'hand in hand with the total corruption which accompanies the dissolution of the capitalist system'.<sup>83</sup> The brutality directed towards the Civil Rights and Anti-Vietnam War movements reminded him of the Weimar Republic's last years: 'the negroes on the street are attacked by thousands of whites', while at the same time 'the people who attack the anti-Vietnam demonstrators are also growing in numbers'. Further escalation of the Vietnam war, he expected, would 'lead to the application of terroristic methods inside the U.S.A., both on the part of the population at large and on the part of its police system'.<sup>84</sup>

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80 Claudio Pozzoli to Mattick, Addendum 'Zu den Fragen', 3 March 1971.

81 Mattick to Maximilien Rubel, 24 December 1969 (Nanterre).

82 Mattick to Maximilien Rubel, 6 April 1970 (Nanterre).

83 Mattick to Maximilien Rubel, 3 August 1966 (Nanterre).

84 Mattick to Maximilien Rubel, 16 August 1966 (Nanterre). Still later he remarked: 'everything is corruption, crime and murder. Now they are killing off the Black Panthers systematically. They also put more and more of the students in jails. There are strikes, but all strictly on the trade-union level. But business is bad and people getting restless'. Mattick to Maximilien Rubel, 16 December 1969 (Nanterre).



## Reception

### Discovery in Germany

The world economy is quite a subject and gets more intricate all the time. Of course it is also exceedingly simple, as it is only a question of selling and buying, stealing and being robbed, killed or get killed, but the details are nonetheless overwhelming.<sup>1</sup>

The West German student movement discovered Mattick while excavating Marx and the history of workers' councils. In the United States, it was racial discrimination, civil rights, a foreign war, and a cynical political establishment—perceived as a lost democracy—that drove the student radicals to the left. In West Germany, the legacy of fascism and the post-war political consensus that extended from the Social Democrats to the Christian Socialists constituted the immediate backdrop for this radicalisation. People unearthed Mattick's articles from previous years. The New Leftists came rushing towards him.

A letter from Claudio Pozzoli in mid-1968 asked about the republication of Mattick's work in book form. Pozzoli was a gifted and energetic individual. His many projects included journalistic commentary (sometimes published under women's names) and media initiatives that involved radio and television broadcasts. Given the nature of his politics, these projects often hit obstacles that could not be overcome. Objections from the Italian government put an end to a radio show aimed at immigrant workers in Germany—too many songs of protest was the official reason. Attempts to launch a new journal dragged on for eighteen months before the project was abandoned: 'thank god that socialism doesn't consist solely of planning'.<sup>2</sup>

Pozzoli was active as an editor and author's agent. He focused mostly on Mattick's contributions to current debates. *Marx and Keynes*, of course, was a signature contribution because of its critique of the capitalist economy in both its free-market and state-run forms. Mattick's criticisms of Herbert Marcuse and Paul Sweezy were important because of the impact these two had on the

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1 Mattick to Gabriel Kolko, ND [early 1974] (York).

2 Claudio Pozzoli to Mattick, 3 March 1971. Claudio Pozzoli to Mattick, 15 September 1970; Claudio Pozzoli to Mattick, 10 April 1971; Claudio Pozzoli to Mattick, 16 January 1972. Thomas 2003; Markovits and Gorski 1993.

German left. Both argued that capitalism had solved its most pertinent crisis problems, thereby relegating any ongoing difficulties to the cultural and political spheres. Pozzoli also edited or helped bring to light Mattick's work on Grossman and Pannekoek. As a co-founder of the German SDS publishing house, *Neue Kritik*, he arranged the publication of Mattick's 1936 manuscript on unemployment that the Frankfurt School had solicited but then never released. Other plans encompassed a set of Mattick's essays, eventually to appear as *Kritik der Neomarxisten*.<sup>3</sup> In Italy, where Pozzoli also had contacts, parallel discussions began about *Marx and Keynes* and several volumes of essays. Pozzoli was so helpful that contracts soon included a fee for his services.<sup>4</sup>

The amount of Mattick's work that was released in Germany between 1969 and 1971 was nothing short of astonishing: three books, a mimeographed pamphlet, substantial essays in seven other collections, and several journal articles.<sup>5</sup> Europäische Verlagsanstalt (EVA), perhaps the most important publishing intermediary for the independent left at this juncture, also emerged as a primary vehicle for Mattick, with two books and essays in four collections appearing during these same few years.<sup>6</sup> Other publishing opportunities arose through the New Left's Sozialistisches Büro and its journal, *links [left]*.

In Berlin, an independent group emerged in resistance to the student movement's evolution towards vanguard parties.<sup>7</sup> Mattick befriended several of its

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3 Mattick 1974.

4 Claudio Pozzoli to Mattick, 11 June 1968; Mattick to Claudio Pozzoli, 13 June 1968 (Pozzoli); Claudio Pozzoli to Mattick, 30 July 1968; Claudio Pozzoli to Mattick, 17 August 1968; Claudio Pozzoli to Mattick, 16 January 1969; Claudio Pozzoli to Mattick, 2 February 1969; Mattick to Claudio Pozzoli, 4 February 1969 (Pozzoli); Claudio Pozzoli to Mattick, 14 February 1969; Claudio Pozzoli to Mattick, 15 May 1969; Mattick to Claudio Pozzoli, 4 November 1969 (Pozzoli); Mattick to Clara and Paul Thalman, 14 January 1970 (ISH: Thalman); Claudio Pozzoli to Mattick, 30 November 1970.

5 When an editor suggested that Mattick pitch an essay for a volume on Lenin's legacy towards the revival of a distinctly German communist party, the advice was not well received. Klaus Meschkat to Mattick, 17 September 1969; Bernd Rabehl to Mattick, 28 October 1968 [1969]; Bernd Rabehl to Mattick, 14 November 1969.

6 Mattick to Maximilien Rubel, 8 February 1970 (Nanterre); Mattick to Maximilien Rubel, 6 April 1970 (Nanterre).

7 Friends of Mattick's like Alfred Weiland and Peter Utzelmann, both of whom maintained contact with the younger radicals and served as a conduit to Germany's radical past, were puzzled by the fragmentation within the New Left. Weiland counted twenty-six New Left groups in Berlin alone. The German security forces counted nearly 400 radical left groups with some 165,000 adherents in all of Germany. Rüdiger Blankertz to Mattick, 24 September 1970; Alfred Weiland to Mattick, 5 October 1971. Thomas 2003, pp. 142–3.

members. 'Because these young people have difficulties imagining the past', he suggested texts from the 1930s that they might republish, including pieces by Otto Rühle and the Dutch councilists. When they appeared, all of these contained introductions and essays by Mattick.<sup>8</sup> This helped to establish him as a living link to the council communist tradition—a role he exercised not just in Germany but in France and Italy as well. Key essays by Mattick appeared in the Berlin group's short-lived journal, *Die Soziale Revolution ist keine Parteisache* [*The Revolution is No Party Matter*]. Members of the group were convinced that a Mattick essay 'would certainly have a good effect on sales'.<sup>9</sup> A veritable 'Mattick industry' was beginning to appear.

The Berlin group numbered anywhere from a handful of people to a steady cohort of a dozen or so individuals, with almost everyone dedicated to movement activities of one kind or another. Like Mattick's Parisian colleagues, group members undertook translations of his work.<sup>10</sup> Jörg Asseyer was one of them, eventually abandoning his teacher preparation programme in order to co-establish an alternative bookstore that became a mainstay of the Berlin scene. At special events and fundraising parties hosted by the group, several hundred people might attend. Other plans, including a newsletter for workplaces around the city, did not come to fruition, but this was due to the rapidly evolving circumstances within the left. The instability of the group around *Die Soziale Revolution* was merely symptomatic.

With Peter van Spall, matters grew complicated but nonetheless were indicative of the widespread interest in Mattick's work. Spall hoped to establish himself as an independent agent, and he sent Mattick a series of questions, the answers to which he planned to place in progressive and left-wing publications such as *links*, *Spontan*, *diskus*, *Pardon*, *Bundesdeutschen Tabus*, *Wiener Tagebuch*, *Studien von Zeitfragen*, *Neue Politik*, and *focus*. Mattick, however, was not pleased that Spall earned income from the interview while Mattick himself received nothing. Mattick also balked at *Spontan's* pictures of naked women as a means to make radical ideas more attractive to a youthful (male) audience.

8 Mattick to Gabriel Kolko, 4 February 1970 (York).

9 Rüdiger Blankertz to Mattick, 8 December 1969. Rüdiger Blankertz to Mattick, 12 May 1970; Rüdiger Blankertz to Mattick, 25 June 1970; Karin Viesel/Kramer to Mattick, 8 December 1970; Jörg Asseyer to Mattick, 6 November 1971; Jörg Asseyer to Mattick, 26 June 1973; Interview with Michael Buckmiller, 12 June 2009.

10 Serge Bricianer to Friends, 4 October 1968; Maximilien Rubel to Mattick, 15 December 1968; Serge Bricianer to Mattick, 27 April 1970; Serge Bricianer to Mattick, 7 June 1970; Serge Bricianer to Mattick, 19 June 1970; Serge Bricianer to Mattick, 9 July 1970; Rüdiger Blankertz to Mattick, 4 March 1971; Interview with Jörg Asseyer, 17 June 2009; Email with Jörg Asseyer, 18–23 June 2009; Interview with Marc Geoffrey, 18 June 2009.

Pornography in this context was both tasteless and pointless, and even if *Spontan* had a circulation sixty times as great as *Soziale Revolution* (122,000 to 2,000), this did nothing to moderate Mattick's objections.<sup>11</sup>

In short order, a half dozen publishing ventures were vying for Mattick's attention. Sometimes they competed for identical pieces; in such cases, Mattick would ask that the contending parties confer directly. The progressive and highly successful Suhrkamp Verlag intended to publish him in runs of 10,000 copies or more, with frequent inquiries from across Europe regarding reproduction rights. Solicitations to republish old work and write new contributions poured in. For the first time ever, Mattick did not need to seek publishing outlets. Pozzoli's job included the coordination of the many requests.<sup>12</sup> Mattick worried about possible confusion, having twice previously occasioned such mix-ups all on his own (with *Studies on the Left and New Politics*, and also with *International Socialist Journal* and *Science & Society*).<sup>13</sup> Further problems lay ahead.

Travel to Europe facilitated these contacts. Much had changed since the Matticks' years in Vermont. In 1965, Ilse had been hired by Wheelock College in Boston as an Associate Professor and at a decent salary (\$9000). She was recruited because of her grant-writing skills—this at a time when the federal government was vastly expanding its efforts to alleviate poverty in rural and urban areas. Korsch's daughter, Sybil Escalona, by then well-known for her work on child development, recommended Ilse for the position. Ilse would

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- 11 The interview appeared in the pirated edition of *Marx und Keynes*. Peter van Spall to Mattick, 9 August 1970; Arno Klönne and Christel Beilmann to Mattick, 28 August 1970; K.H. Neumann to Mattick, 15 April 1971; Peter van Spall to Mattick, 25 February 1972; Peter van Spall to Mattick, 8 April 1972; Peter van Spall to Mattick, 19 April 1972; Mattick to Claudio Pozzoli, 22 April 1972 (Pozzoli); Peter van Spall to Mattick, 30 April 1972; Mattick to Michael Buckmiller, 7 July 1972 (Mattick Jr.); Peter van Spall to Mattick, 16 July 1972; Mattick to Uli Bohnen, 20 August 1972 (Bohnen); Claudio Pozzoli to Mattick, 23 August 1972; Uli Bohnen to Mattick, 27 August 1972; Klaus Vack to Mattick, 1 March 1973; Peter van Spall to Mattick, 16 May 1973; Peter van Spall to Mattick, 9 July 1973; Mattick to Claudio Pozzoli, 29 July 1973 (Pozzoli); Spall 1973.
- 12 Serge Bricianer to Mattick, 23 January 1970; Rüdiger Blankertz to Mattick, 2 February 1970; Claudio Pozzoli to Mattick, 4 February 1970; Serge Bricianer to Mattick, 10 February 1970; Rüdiger Blankertz to Mattick, 14 February 1970; Helmut Schauer to Mattick, 17 February 1970; Mattick to Claudio Pozzoli, 2 March 1970 (Pozzoli); Claudio Pozzoli to Mattick, ND; Rüdiger Blankertz to Mattick, 6 March 1970; Claudio Pozzoli for Mattick, 30 March 1970.
- 13 Mattick to Maximilien Rubel, 15 September 1968 (Nanterre); Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 24 September 1968; Mattick to Claudio Pozzoli, 7 December 1970 (Pozzoli); Mattick to Claudio Pozzoli, 31 December 1972 (Pozzoli); Claudio Pozzoli to Mattick, 19 September 1978.

remain at Wheelock for the next nineteen years, establishing a clinical programme that put students into direct contact with troubled children and families. With an occasional course at Tufts University, just north of where they lived, her professional life took off in all sorts of ways, and she found many opportunities to publish, consult, and lecture.<sup>14</sup>

During the summer of 1967, Ilse and Paul travelled to Europe, the first of six extended trips they would take over the next decade. This was a grand tour of three months (coinciding with Ilse's summer break), with stopovers in England, France, Germany, Italy and Holland. The Wheelers accompanied them for the first leg, a venture made possible by a recent inheritance.<sup>15</sup> In Europe they rendezvoused with the Kolkos, Naomi Sager, Maximilien Rubel, and assorted new and old friends.<sup>16</sup>

Because Mattick's sisters were divided between the eastern and western sectors of Berlin, Paul and Ilse stayed with Lisbeth in the western zone where visas and official approval were not needed. Lisbeth lived not far from where she and Paul had grown up. They also visited Wieland Herzfelde, with whom Mattick had not been in contact since the early 1930s. Herzfelde had stumbled across an article by Mattick in a West German radical publication and tracked him down. Herzfelde had lived in New York during the 1940s, but there hadn't been any contact between them during those years. It is likely that Mattick knew about Herzfelde, given Mattick's extensive connections within the radical milieu and Herzfelde's prominence, but it is equally likely that Herzfelde knew nothing about Mattick, given the latter's relative obscurity. In 1967, when

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14 Her close colleague was Frances Perkins, Wheelock's first African-American faculty member, with whom Ilse team-taught undergraduate and graduate courses on child development and language acquisition. The programme was highly innovative. Students maintained contact with the same families throughout their academic studies, thus providing the children a degree of stability otherwise missing from such programmes. Ilse was active in the following: National Association for the Education of Young Children, *Early Childhood Education Journal* (editorial advisory board), Head Start (consultant), and *Day Care Journal* (mental health editor). Also see the correspondence between Ilse Mattick and Lois Murphy at the National Library of Medicine. Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 9 June 1965; Mattick to Gabriel Kolko, 23 October 1966 (York); Mattick to Maximilien Rubel, 19 December 1968 (Nanterre); Conversations with Ilse Mattick, 21–5 May 2005; Mattick Jr. 2009b.

15 Mattick to Gabriel Kolko, 14 February 1967 (York); Dinsmore Wheeler to Dwight Macdonald, 27 March 1967 (Yale 730/59/1393).

16 The itinerary included London, Paris, Rome, Florence, Venice, Vienna, Linz, Munich, Amsterdam, Paris again, and Berlin. Gabriel Kolko to Mattick, 19 May [1967] (York); Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 14 September 1967.



17 *Dinsmore Wheeler on top right; step-daughter Renee in centre; all the rest are magazine cut-outs, including Picasso's Guernica about the Spanish Civil War on bottom right and the entertainer, Groucho Marx, on bottom left.*

the Matticks visited, Herzfelde was in the midst of planning a huge retrospective on Malik-Verlag, the experimental press that had once published Mattick's short stories and journalistic reportage. Herzfelde was also an esteemed member of the East German cultural elite and, in his own words, had 'no monetary worries'.<sup>17</sup>

Mattick cautioned Herzfelde that he was not a marxist 'in the spirit of the purely-ideological marxism that is dominant these days'. He sent samples of his publications, mentioning beforehand that 'most of these things do not fit in the particular worldview' of East Germany, lest they should put Herzfelde in a difficult position vis-à-vis the censors.<sup>18</sup> The actual visit, long in planning, was not a happy occasion. Invited to a party by Herzfelde and his brother, the widely-acclaimed collagist John Heartfield, the Matticks were introduced to several highly-placed individuals. The excessive drinking was accompanied

17 Wieland Herzfelde to Mattick, 15 January 1966. Wolf Schenke to Paul Brass, 29 November 1965; Wieland Herzfelde to Mattick, 26 November 1965.

18 Mattick to Wieland Herzfelde, 12 March 1966 (AdK).

by much cynicism about the East German system—from people who were its beneficiaries. Paul and Ilse found the evening utterly distasteful.<sup>19</sup> All things considered, though, Mattick returned to the United States ‘less pessimistic now with respect to the future than I would be from an entirely American outlook.’<sup>20</sup> In the aftermath of the visit to Europe, new acquaintances travelled from across the ocean and joined a steady flow of friends and colleagues to the Mattick household.<sup>21</sup>

The trip two years later (1969) was also three months in length, with visits to many of the same cities and with the same friends, and the Matticks were again accompanied by the Wheelers for part of the journey. On this trip, too, they were introduced to a new set of acquaintances and supporters. The stop-over in Brussels included a conference with veterans of the May 1968 events in France, including Daniel Cohn-Bendit, Claude Orsoni, Serge Bricianer, and others. Mattick at one point referred to his own interest in radical theory as nothing other than a hobby and claimed that his analysis of capitalist society had no practical implications—statements that some participants found difficult to digest.<sup>22</sup> And once again, the tour of Europe triggered return visits to the United States.<sup>23</sup>

The English-language edition of *Marx and Keynes* appeared a few months later. Both Kolko and Rubel had helped shop the book to various publishers. When Porter Sargent—representing the press founded by his father—asked Mattick to turn the essays that had appeared in Rubel’s *Etudes de Marxologie* into a book, Mattick was sceptical. About Porter Sargent, he remarked: ‘the only thing anarchistically about him is his long beard.’<sup>24</sup> The press was known for its guide to private schools and summer camps for the children of the elite, but it also published a small series on civil disobedience and non-violence. Rubel’s recommendation had carried great weight, and in May 1967, a full two decades after the project began, Mattick received a book contract. It would take another two and a half years—and many new headaches—before *Marx and Keynes*

19 Conversations with Ilse Mattick, 16–20 August 2005.

20 Mattick to Wieland Herzfelde, 17 January 1968 (AdK).

21 Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 26 August 1968; Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 10 September 1968; Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 7 December 1968.

22 Stops included Amsterdam, Cologne, Frankfurt, Berlin, Munich, Verona, Venice, Milan, Zurich, Basel, Brussels, and Paris. Mattick to Maximilien Rubel, 25 May 1969 (Nanterre); Klaus Meschkat to Mattick, 26 May 1969. Gabler 2009, pp. 83–4; Conversation with Paul Mattick, Jr., 4 June 2005. Buckmiller 1976, addendum.

23 Mattick to Maximilien Rubel, 13 September 1970 (Nanterre).

24 Mattick to Maximilien Rubel, 11 July 1966 (Nanterre). Arnold Dolin to Mattick, 8 July 1966; Arnold Tovell to Mattick, 4 November 1966; Arnold Dolin to Mattick, 28 February 1967.

appeared, but nonetheless Mattick finally had a firm commitment.<sup>25</sup> One last time he reworked the entire manuscript in order to give greater coherence to the various pieces; this process alone delayed the book by eight months. With chapters grouped into five key areas—Marx and Keynes, marxian economics, capitalism in crisis, the mixed economy, and a concluding section—Mattick considered the book an interconnected collection of essays rather than as a *magnum opus*.<sup>26</sup>

*Marx and Keynes* generated a huge amount of excitement. Kolko wrote: 'I want to assure you, it is, and will in time be recognized, as a really fundamental and important analytic work. I think you have saved marxian economics as an intellectually relevant and respectable tool in this generation, and explained much more with it than anyone who has tried in a long, long time'.<sup>27</sup> Publishers in Italy, Germany, and Great Britain approached Porter Sargent about foreign rights even before the book appeared. Other inquiries soon followed from France, Spain, and Japan.<sup>28</sup> Mattick was so encouraged that he wrote to publishers about a paperback edition, a measure that Porter Sargent undertook after the first printing sold out.<sup>29</sup> Still further translations appeared in Denmark and Sweden, with inquiries over the next years arriving from Mexico, Greece, and Portugal. At various points, five different publishers in Italy inquired about *Marx and Keynes*, besides two from Spain, one from Mexico, and a second British firm in addition to Porter Sargent.<sup>30</sup>

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25 Abram Engelman to Mattick, 10 November 1966; Roberta Davies to Mattick, 4 May 1967; Interview with Gabriel and Joyce Kolko, 19 and 24 March 2006; Email Correspondence with Pricilla Long, 24–6 January 2009.

26 Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 5 January 1968; Mattick to Paul Buhle, 19 April 1969 (WHS); Claire Joseph to Mattick, 9 July 1968; Claire Joseph to Mattick, 18 July 1968; Mattick to Paul Buhle, 19 September 1969 (WHS).

27 Gabriel Kolko to Mattick, 2 February 1970.

28 Claudio Pozzoli to Mattick, 30 July 1968; Mattick to Maximilien Rubel, 2 August 1968 (Nanterre); Claudio Pozzoli to Mattick, 17 August 1968; Claudio Pozzoli for Mattick, 30 March 1970; Sandra Mandeville to Mattick, 23 October 1970; Richard Kuper to Mattick, 6 December 1970; Sandi Mandeville to Mattick, 15 December 1970; Mattick to Maximilien Rubel, 3 January 1971 (Nanterre); Mattick to Maximilien Rubel, 31 October 1971 (Nanterre).

29 Mattick to Penguin Books, 5 January 1971; Julian Shuckburgh to Mattick, 12 January 1971; F. Porter Sargent to Mattick, 28 September 1973.

30 Mattick to Gabriel Kolko, 12 March 1972 (Mattick Jr); Mattick to Claudio Pozzoli, 8 April 1972 (Pozzoli); Mattick to Maximilien Rubel, 1 August 1972 (Nanterre); Athanasios Kastaniotis to Porter Sargent Publisher, 26 August 1975; J Amaral to Mattick, 12 November 1977; Richard Kuper to Mattick, 7 March 1978; Mirsini Zorba to Mattick, 14 March 1978; Neus Espresate to Mattick, 13 July 1978.



### From *Marx and Keynes* and Roskilde

I am sure that your life is rather hectic but, then, without being hectic, life is not really life.<sup>31</sup>

When the Matticks next returned to Germany in 1971, the radical student movement was deeply influential within the university system. A German edition of *Marx and Keynes* appeared that year. At the universities in Berlin and Heidelberg, students and professors lobbied their administrations for a guest professorship for Mattick, initiatives that were stymied by the mandatory retirement age. Short of this, invitations to lecture were forthcoming from Berlin, Heidelberg, Giessen, and Göttingen, with attendance at events often numbering in the hundreds.<sup>32</sup> The Heidelberg student newspaper published verbatim the transcript from the lecture, while the city's daily newspaper covered Mattick's visit as a featured story.<sup>33</sup> During one of the Berlin lectures, a student rose from his seat to berate Mattick: 'if you had read Lenin, you would know. . . , if you had understood Lenin, you would realize. . . ', continuing at such great length that Mattick had to gesture to the audience to allow the speaker to finish without interruption. Mattick sat down and waited patiently during the entire time. At the end of these admonishments, Mattick strode to the microphone and replied: 'OK, I'll read Lenin', a rebuttal so simple that it elicited wild clapping and cheers.<sup>34</sup>

With fifteen days in Berlin, Mattick spent considerable time with members of the *Soziale Revolution* group. At a restaurant in the Neukölln district, he regaled them with songs remembered from his youth, an occasion marked by much talk and laughter. Some people found it endearing that Mattick now spoke German with an American accent.<sup>35</sup> Members of the group like Marc Geoffrey and Gisela Richter met the Matticks again as they travelled through

31 Mattick to Gabriel Kolko, 11 December 1967 (York).

32 Georg Elwert to Mattick, 12 June 1970; Rüdiger Blankertz to Mattick, 24 September 1970; Marc Linder to Mattick, 11 November 1970; Peter Bieri to Claus Offe, 13 January 1971; Peter Bieri to Mattick, 5 February 1971; Rüdiger Blankertz to Mattick, 4 March 1971; Peter Lösche to Mattick, 18 March 1971; Peter Bieri to Mattick, 3 May 1971; Hartwig Berger to Mattick, 3 May 1971; Mattick to Claudio Pozzoli, 10 May 1971 (Pozzoli); Lodder to Mattick, 26 May 1971; Email with Peter Lösche, 21 September 2008; Interview with Marc Geoffrey, 18 June 2009; Tent 1988.

33 Walter Thoms to Mattick, 27 July 1971.

34 Conversation with Paul Mattick, Jr., 6 August 2004.

35 Jörg Asseyer to Mattick, 7 June 1971; Email with Hansjoerg Viesel, 15 September 2008; Interview with Jörg Asseyer, 17 June 2009.

southern Europe. Old friends, Heinz Langerhans and Walter Boelke in particular, were thrilled to hear about his success.<sup>36</sup> Ilse too lectured while in Europe, and on each leg of the trip, the Matticks housed with friends in order to reduce expenses.<sup>37</sup>

Michael Buckmiller was already recognised as a Karl Korsch scholar when he travelled from southern Germany to Berlin to hear Mattick lecture. Korsch was of particular interest to the New Leftists because of the years he had spent as a dissident communist, having rejected the rigidity of the stalinist model without yet fully embracing the council communist orientation. Korsch's political evolution offered many vantage points from which to judge the mix of liberatory and authoritarian impulses that convulsed the left. Mattick put Buckmiller in touch with people from Denmark, England, and France who were similarly engaged in bringing Korsch's work to the left's attention, and he later helped search for a publisher. Such was their friendship that the Matticks toured southern Germany with the Buckmillers and the latter visited Vermont.<sup>38</sup>

Many people turned to Mattick for his expertise. Walter Fähnders worked with colleagues who planned several volumes on the novels and fictional work produced by KAPD members, and he asked for Mattick's assistance in locating materials. Hellmut Haasis was one of the many independent editors and agents who sought Mattick's participation in a book project. Uli Bohnen's endeavour focused on the Cologne Progressives, the radical artists by whom Mattick was befriended during the mid-1920s.<sup>39</sup> The International Institute of Social History (IISH) in Amsterdam periodically solicited Mattick for his correspondence with Pannekoek, Rühle, Grossman, Korsch, and finally Rosdolsky, as its archivists worked to create a repository for European radical history. Mattick gathered together a set of *ICC/Living Marxism/New Essays* for its library. Götze Langkau, who would subsequently organise Mattick's papers with great care, was the main contact during the 1970s. He had met Mattick in 1967 at a confer-

36 Walter Boelke to Mattick, 11 October 1971.

37 Gabriel Kolko to Mattick, 1 August 1971 (York).

38 Serge Bricianer to Mattick, 27 March 1971; Michael Buckmiller to Mattick, 12 May 1971; Mattick to Michael Buckmiller, 7 July 1972 (Mattick Jr.); Mattick to Michael Buckmiller, 24 July 1972 (Mattick Jr.); Email with Michael Buckmiller, 24 October 2004; Email with Rudi Rizman, 10 September 2008; Interview with Michael Buckmiller, 12 June 2009. Also: Dutschke 2003, p. 278, p. 281.

39 Walter Fähnders to Mattick, 6 October 1971; Mattick to Walter Fähnders, 22 October 1971 (Fähnders); Walter Fähnders to Mattick, 30 January 1972; Hellmut Haasis to Mattick, 12 March 1972; Hellmut Haasis to Mattick, 20 March 1972; Uli Bohnen to Mattick, 17 April 1972; Mattick to Uli Bohnen, 22 April 1972 (Bohnen); Uli Bohnen to Mattick, 10 August 1972; Mattick to Uli Bohnen, 2 November 1972 (Bohnen).

ence on Marx's *Capital* organised by the EVA publishing concern, where both Mattick and Rosdolsky were in attendance. Parallel to Serge Bricianer's efforts in France, Langkau was then preparing a new edition of Korsch's *Karl Marx*, and he later collaborated with Buckmiller on Korsch's *Collected Works*.<sup>40</sup> So important was Mattick to these many efforts that Hedda Korsch wrote to Paul and Ilse: 'you two are the only ones whose opinion is important and instructive for me, almost the only ones whose connection to Karl still has something that I would like to call validity'.<sup>41</sup>

In Germany *Marx and Keynes* sold thousands of copies. The EVA edition was quite expensive, and an ad hoc group soon planned a pirated version at one-quarter of the cost. The latter, however, was hastily done and appeared with blank and illegible pages. A second pirated printing corrected these problems and put more than 2000 additional copies into circulation. Finally, EVA agreed to release a cheaper edition, at which point all concerned were satisfied.<sup>42</sup> Given the level of English-language fluency within the college-educated population, reviews began to appear in advance of the German edition. Study groups used *Marx and Keynes* as a primary text, and from them emerged essays and books in which Mattick's understanding of the mixed economy was placed at centre stage. Mattick was enormously far-sighted in his criticisms of Keynesian policies, developing his critique even before the latter really began to unravel.<sup>43</sup> He helped shape debate by encouraging a fresh look at Marx's relevance for the contemporary world, not as a sociological or philosophical critique but as a means to understand economic developments and their relevance to radical upheaval. Virtually alone among marxist economists,

40 Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler [before 17 November 1960]; J Domnisse to Mattick, 25 July 1960; A.J.C. Rüter to Mattick, 8 July 1965. Conversations with Ilse Mattick, 21–5 May 2005; Interview with Götz Langkau, 20 March 2006.

41 Hedda Korsch to Ilse and Paul Mattick, 12 August 1974.

42 Eberhard Seifert to Mattick, 20 October 1973; Claudio Pozzoli to Mattick, 14 January 1974; Volkhard Brandes to Mattick, 29 January 1974; Eberhard Seifert to Mattick, 16 March 1974; Volkhard Brandes to Mattick, 30 April 1974; Mattick to Volkhard Brandes, 6 May 1974 (Brandes); Eberhard Seifert to Mattick, 30 June 1974; Interview with Eberhard Seifert, 12 June 2009. Interview with Michael Buckmiller, 12 June 2009.

43 Claudio Pozzoli to Mattick, 27 June 1972; Mattick to Claudio Pozzoli, 29 July 1973 (Pozzoli); Claudio Pozzoli to Mattick, 14 January 1974; Email with Christoph Deutschmann, 30 November 2010; Email with Rudi Schmiede, 26 May 2011. Regarding one of the study circles on crisis theory and state intervention that met from 1969–72: Cogoy 1973; Deutschman 1973; Hermanin 1973; Rödel 1972; Schmiede 1973. For other examples of Mattick's influence: Asseyer 1975; Beckenbach and Krätke 1978; Botta 1973; Maramao 1975–6; Morf 1972; Rachleff 1976a; Rachleff 1976b; Semmler 1972; Yaffe 1972.

Mattick held that Marx's exposition of value theory was still useful, and he was intent on demonstrating just how.

Lengthy reviews of *Marx and Keynes* were the norm. Otto Morf, a friend of the Rosdolskys and now an admirer of Mattick too, wrote one for the Swiss journal *Kyklos*.<sup>44</sup> Mattick had been quite positive about Morf's book on dialectics ('not only valuable but also beautiful'), but he reminded Morf that Marx's trajectory had been away from Hegel, not towards him.<sup>45</sup> Mattick was also aware of negative comments about *Marx and Keynes* in mainstream journals, to which he responded: 'no praise from the bourgeoisie, and that is as it should be'.<sup>46</sup>

Pozzoli's efforts on Mattick's behalf, with up to a dozen projects at any particular moment, continued throughout the 1970s. Pozzoli's dissertation proposal focused on the council communists during the 1930s, a topic not covered in other accounts: 'as you can see, if things continue as they have so far, in another year I will barely write about anything else except you'.<sup>47</sup> The publishing projects that Pozzoli was unable to complete with the EVA publishing house were soon under contract with Fischer Verlag, including a yearbook series (eventually six volumes) with a distribution of 30,000 copies in which Mattick featured prominently; a volume of critical essays (*Kritik der Neomarxisten*) with a print run of 20,000 copies; and *Economic Crisis and Crisis Theory*, Mattick's history of economic thought during the twentieth century. All told, Pozzoli would edit a dozen books that were either written in their entirety by Mattick or which contained major contributions from him.<sup>48</sup> No one did as much as Pozzoli to ensure the proliferation of Mattick's work.

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44 Reviews or announcements also appeared in: *Politikon* (Germany), *Problemi del Socialismo* (Italy), *Il Manifesto* (Italy), *L'Espresso* (Italy), *Bulletin of the Conference of Socialist Economists* (Great Britain), *International Review of Social History* (Holland), and elsewhere: Claudio Pozzoli to Mattick, 27 September 1969; Jan Boddie to Mattick, 29 October 1970; Claudio Pozzoli to Mattick, 10 April 1971; Claudio Pozzoli to Mattick, 8 August 1972; Hans-Peter Gente to Mattick, 20 September 1972.

45 Mattick to Otto Morf, 2 July 1970. Emmy Rosdolsky to Mattick, 26 April 1970; Otto Morf to Mattick, 24 May 1970; Otto Morf to Mattick, 5 July 1970; Otto Morf to Mattick, 26 March 1972.

46 Mattick to Serge Bricianer, 1 August 1972 (Mattick Jr.). Mattick to Maximilien Rubel, 1 August 1972 (Nanterre).

47 Claudio Pozzoli to Mattick, 1 March 1973. Claudio Pozzoli to Mattick, 26 July 1974.

48 *Economic Crisis and Crisis Theory* began as an article, morphed into a pamphlet, and was published as a short book. See Mattick, 1981. Claudio Pozzoli to Mattick, 25 October 1972; Michael Buckmiller to Mattick, 26 November 1972; Claudio Pozzoli to Mattick, 14 December 1972; Mattick to Claudio Pozzoli, 23 January 1973 (Pozzoli).

In the meantime, other independent editors pursued Mattick. Volkhard Brandes, who, like Michael Buckmiller, would later found a publishing company, solicited Mattick for essays on political economy and invited him to co-edit a similarly-oriented series of books.<sup>49</sup> Mattick's visits to Europe were regularly combined with invitations to speak. A peace conference in Denmark requested his participation—Kolko and Chomsky had recommended him—and thus provided the opportunity to write about the Vietnam War.<sup>50</sup>

The Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation invited Mattick to its conference in Austria. This 1973 trip, the fifth that the Matticks had taken since 1967, turned into another of their grand tours, with stops in Linz, Vienna, Munich, Frankfurt, Berlin, Amsterdam, and Paris. It included a gathering in France with veterans of the French, German, and British radical movements.<sup>51</sup> Invitations to other conferences followed.<sup>52</sup> Mattick befriended many of these new acquaintances and offered to help find publication outlets for them.<sup>53</sup> Frequent solicitations to serve as a book reviewer for *Internationale wissenschaftliche Korrespondenz* meant an opportunity to comment regularly on ideas current within the German New Left. Over the next decade, this radical history journal replaced *Science & Society* as his primary outlet for reviews.<sup>54</sup> And because of the contact to the IISH and to left repositories in East and West Berlin, Mattick

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49 Buckmiller founded Offizin Verlag; Brandes co-founded Brandes and Apsel Verlag. Volkhard Brandes to Mattick, 9 January 1974; Volkhard Brandes to Mattick, 27 March 1974; Mattick to Volkhard Brandes, 1 May 1974 (Brandes); Volkhard Brandes to Mattick, 21 May 1974; Mattick to Volkhard Brandes, 24 May 1974 (Brandes); Interview with Volkhard Brandes, 22 June 2009.

50 Gabriel Kolko to Mattick, 28 February 1971; Peggy Duff to Mattick, 15 April 1971; Peggy Duff to Mattick, 3 May 1971

51 Ken Coates to Mattick, 28 April 1972; Mattick to Maximilien Rubel, 30 August 1972 (Nanterre); Mattick to Uli Bohnen, 1 September 1972 (Bohnen).

52 Guglielmo Carchedi to Mattick, 5 January 1973; Lelio Basso to Mattick, 5 June 1973 (Basso Foundation); Maximilien Rubel to Mattick, 22 July 1973; Henryk Skrzypczak to Mattick, 2 October 1973.

53 Mattick to David Yaffe, 6 February 1971 (Yaffe); David Yaffe to Mattick, 24 May 1971; Mattick to David Yaffe, 26 May 1971 (Yaffe); David Yaffe to Mattick, 12 September 1971; Mattick to David Yaffe, 22 October 1971 (Yaffe); Mario Cogoy to Mattick, 20 November [1971]; Mattick to Mario Cogoy, 30 November 1971; David Yaffe to Mattick, 29 March 1972; Mattick to Mario Cogoy, 16 October 1973 (Cogoy); Mattick to David Yaffe, July 1975 (Yaffe); Email with David Yaffe, 19 July 2008.

54 Gunter Krüschet to Mattick, 22 February 1972.

sometimes served as an intermediary for colleagues who wished to sell important documents.<sup>55</sup> He was much in demand.

Mattick's reception in Denmark repeated the pattern in Germany. Mattick was quite sceptical when solicited by Leif Hansen for a guest professorship at the experimental university in Roskilde. He was approaching seventy and had no academic credentials: 'I am afraid you will not succeed in this endeavour. But thanks just the same'.<sup>56</sup> Nevertheless Hansen persisted, and with the help of a sympathetic dean and another colleague, Mattick was invited for the autumn 1974 semester, due to begin four months later.<sup>57</sup> Hansen knew of Mattick's work through Jorge Valadas and Jackie Reuss, associates of the Parisian crowd, who had passed along a copy of *Marx and Keynes*.

Another admirer wrote to Mattick: 'you are becoming a well-known person in Denmark'.<sup>58</sup> Between 1973 and 1976, four books, essays in three collections, and further contributions to seven different journals characterised the intense interest in Mattick's work within the Danish left. Leif Hansen let Mattick know that '*Marx and Keynes* has become somewhat of a best-seller' when it was released in a second edition of 3000 copies within a year of its original appearance.<sup>59</sup> Bjarne Avlund Frandsen began work on Mattick's bibliography, a project that necessitated a search through many widely-dispersed publications that dated as far back as the 1920s.<sup>60</sup> The magazine *Kurasje* [*Courage*],

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55 Mattick also seems to have sold Michael Fraenkel's letters to a private dealer around this time as a means to finance their European travel. Jim Lowell to Mattick, 23 April 1970. Mattick to Claudio Pozzoli, 28 June 1973 (Pozzoli); Claudio Pozzoli to Mattick, 12 July 1973; Gunter Krüschet to Mattick, 23 November 1973; Götz Langkau to Mattick, 7 December 1973; Wieland Herzfelde to Mattick, 11 January 1974; Heinrich Gemkow to Mattick, 29 January 1974; Mattick to Wieland Herzfelde, 7 March 1974 (AdK: Herzfelde); Gunter Krüschet to Mattick, 26 March 1974; Götz Langkau to Mattick, 1 April 1974; Heinrich Gemkow to Mattick, 11 April 1974.

56 Mattick to Leif Hansen, 13 January 1974 (Hansen).

57 Leif Hansen to Mattick, 21 April 1974; Mogens Kühn Pedersen to Mattick, 25 April 1974; Conversations with Leif Hansen, 5–6 August 2007.

58 Bjarne Avlund Frandsen to Mattick, 5 November 1973.

59 Leif Hansen to Mattick, 2 January 1974. By the end of the decade, *Marx and Keynes* had sold 7500 copies in Denmark; his history of crisis theory, 3000 copies; and the book on unemployment during the 1930s, 2000 copies. Preben Kaarsholm to Mattick, 3 January 1980.

60 In serial fashion, Frandsen, Mattick Jr., and Buckmiller added to the bibliography, eventually published as: Buckmiller 1981a. Mattick to Bjarne Avlund Frandsen, 12 November 1973 (Frandsen); Bjarne Avlund Frandsen to Mattick, 17 July 1974; Bjarne Avlund Frandsen to Mattick, 14 June 1976; Michael Buckmiller to Bjarne Avlund Frandsen, 18 September 1981 (Frandsen).

where Hansen was part of the editorial collective, played an important role in Mattick's reception. Hanson was also part of a publishing collective that worked without compensation (and did not pay royalties), from which three volunteers undertook the translation of *Marx and Keynes*.<sup>61</sup>

Roskilde University was only two years old at the time, a product of the educational reforms that stemmed from the student unrest of the previous decade. It offered admission to a wide range of students, including those from working and lower-class families who would have been excluded from the university system previously. Known for its interesting experiments with pedagogical methods, interdisciplinary curricula, and group projects in place of exams, Roskilde was also a centre for marxist studies, particularly in the humanities and social sciences. Students were grouped into 'houses' that matched 50–60 students with five or six faculty members and a staff administrator who together planned and implemented the first two years of general studies. Several of Mattick's admirers were faculty members, including Hansen.

Mattick was deeply impressed with Roskilde. Even without formal assignments, he was 'overly busy' with lectures and group discussions that sometimes averaged three or four per week and left him with little time for preparation. Roskilde was, in his opinion, a 'fully marxist university'. The 'monk marxism' practised at the university was too theoretical for his taste, with its emphasis on the first four chapters of Marx's *Capital* as the key to all else, but what impressed him greatly was the ability of the students to determine their own course of study: 'if you didn't experience it yourself, you couldn't imagine that it's true'.<sup>62</sup> Ilse too found the place most congenial: 'everything there is very loose and friendly'.<sup>63</sup> Mattick arrived at his office each morning, taking two buses en route. That everyone spoke English helped considerably. Mattick liked Denmark—a sort of 'civilized capitalism insofar as one can speak of capitalism as civilized at all'.<sup>64</sup> His position carried a generous salary, some \$25,000 for the academic year, much more than he had ever earned previously. That he would be paid for talking about ideas that were important to him was a prospect that

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61 Leif Hansen to Mattick Jr., 4 February 1972; Leif Hansen to Mattick, 12 November 1972; Jens Brinch to Mattick, 5 February 1973; Preben Kaarsholm to Mattick, 12 March 1973; Finn Hansson, 13 December 1973; Mattick to Preben Kaarsholm, ND (Mattick Jr.); Email with Preben Kaarsholm, 14 January 2006; Conversation with Leif Hansen and Finn Dam Rasmussen, 8 August 2007.

62 Mattick to Michael Buckmiller, 7 November 1974 (Mattick Jr.).

63 Ilse Mattick to Claudio Pozzoli, 27 September 1974 (Pozzoli).

64 Mattick to Michael Buckmiller, 7 November 1974 (Mattick Jr.).

he found most appealing.<sup>65</sup> He was pleased when the Roskilde contract was extended for a second semester.<sup>66</sup>

Mattick was an intense and passionate speaker who lectured without notes. One person referred to a talk by him as ‘three volumes of Marx’s *Capital* in ninety minutes.’<sup>67</sup> Besides the lectures and group discussions at Roskilde, he was invited frequently to other universities, sometimes repeatedly to the same place. Visits that year included the universities in Copenhagen, Aarhus, and Odense. Special events were planned too—a debate with the British economist Joan Robinson, meetings with representatives from the Italian radical group, *Il Manifesto*, and a conference with members of the *Kurasje* collective in Denmark and the West German radical journal, *Prokla*.<sup>68</sup> Admirers in Germany organised lectures and discussions—Michael Buckmiller arranged an event at the university in Hannover, Eberhard Seifert arranged a week of lectures and discussions in Hamburg and Bremen, and Volkhard Brandes made possible a visit to Cologne. Invitations also arrived from Norway, Sweden, and the Netherlands.<sup>69</sup> Pozzoli helped coordinate a conference in Italy during the spring that included colleagues from Denmark and Germany.<sup>70</sup> New publications followed—a pamphlet from the talk in Hannover, a major essay from a lecture that had been planned for Florence, and a transcript from a discussion with Elmar Altvater.<sup>71</sup> Ilse, too, was busy with speaking engagements and tours of day-care centres in Copenhagen, where her experience with children from poor backgrounds made her a welcomed consultant.<sup>72</sup>

During the year, the Matticks had travelled frequently to other parts of Europe, either to visit friends, or on some occasions, for Paul to conduct lectures. Trips had included Amsterdam, Paris, Berlin, and other German cities.

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65 Conversations with Ilse Mattick, 21–5 May 2005.

66 However, the possibility of a semester at the university in Hannover (where Michael Buckmiller taught) did not interest him. Mattick to Buckmiller, 20 November 1974 (Mattick Jr.).

67 Interview with Jeremy Brecher, 26 June 2011.

68 Carl Madsen to Mattick, 4 December 1974.

69 Eberhard Seifert to Mattick, 30 June 1974; Dick van Haaster to Mattick, 23 December 1974; Ilse Mattick to Joyce and Gabriel Kolko, 2 February 1975 (York); Interview with Volkhard Brandes, 22 June 2009.

70 Claudio Pozzoli to Mattick, 3 July 1974.

71 Michael Buckmiller to Mattick, 14 August 1975; Mattick to Michael Buckmiller, 14 October 1975 (Mattick Jr.); Michael Buckmiller to Mattick, 27 October 1975; Claudio Pozzoli to Mattick, 3 November 1975; Leif Hansen to Mattick, 13 November 1975; Mattick to Leif Hansen, 1 December 1975 (Hansen).

72 Conversations with Leif Hansen and Finn Dam Rasmussen, 8 August 2007.



The Kolkos, who vacationed in Vezelay FR, had enough space at their countryside retreat that mutual friends could travel from Paris in order to see them. To end the year, the Matticks took a leisurely five-week vacation, touring both the countryside and cities of Italy.<sup>73</sup>

Unbeknownst to anyone, this would be the Matticks' last visit to Europe. The previous winter had seen the return of Paul's health problems. During the spring, a bout of pneumonia (nine days bed rest) and frequent colds counted among his various ailments. The Matticks were living in a cottage in Roskilde, which they preferred to an apartment in Copenhagen (some twenty-five minutes distant by train). The cottage, though, was not entirely suitable for the winter months. For warmth, additional electric heaters were needed. The frequent periods of illness continued after the return to the United States.<sup>74</sup>

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73 Gabriel Kolko to Mattick, 19 November 1974 (York); Ilse Mattick to Joyce and Gabriel Kolko, 7 December [1974] (York); Mattick to Frieda St. Sauveur, 20 January 1975 (AdK: Koval); Mattick to Volkhard Brandes, 5 July 1975 (Brandes); Mattick to Volkhard Brandes, 22 July 1975 (Brandes); Mattick to Volkhard Brandes, 15 September 1975 (Brandes); Mattick to Preben and Bodil Kaarsholm, 20 September 1975 (Mattick Jr).

74 Address: Havelodden 44, Roskilde. Mattick to Volkhard Brandes, 20 March 1975 (Brandes); Ilse Mattick to Joyce and Gabriel Kolko, 22 March [1975] (York); Mattick to Volkhard Brandes, 20 May 1975 (Brandes).

## Winding Down

### Last Years

Anybody writing today writes history; things move faster than can be told.<sup>1</sup>

Mattick's reception in Europe was not matched in the United States. SDS's *Ole Mole* published a favourable review of *Marx and Keynes*, but this was an isolated case. Only 750 copies of the English-language edition of the book sold during the first year.<sup>2</sup> The commentary in *Science & Society* panned *Marx and Keynes* because of its criticisms of both the Soviet Union and Keynesian economic policies.<sup>3</sup> The reviewer in the *American Political Science Review* dismissed *Marx and Keynes* as a 'humdrum textbook' that 'reads like the English translation of a German translation of a Hungarian original'.<sup>4</sup> In other words, the reviewer hadn't understood the book. The long-anticipated review in *Radical America* attributed to Mattick views that were not his, and Mattick suggested that the reviewer 'read the book once more and more carefully'.<sup>5</sup> David Yaffe was astonished that the leading journal of marxian economics in the United States, *Monthly Review*, 'failed to even review your book' when 'your work on political economy is now proving of great interest to the serious marxist left'.<sup>6</sup>

Mattick received frequent invitations to speak and was often pleased by the sophistication of the student audiences. At Amherst College, he had been 'very much surprised to find there a bunch of students and some professors who are seriously concerned about economic matters from a marxian point of view'.<sup>7</sup>

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1 Mattick to Joyce Kolko, 22 February 1974 (Mattick Jr.).

2 Gabriel Kolko to Mattick, 14 March 1970 (York); Gabriel Kolko to Mattick, 21 April 1970; Mattick to Gabriel Kolko, 1 September 1970 (York); Sandra Mandeville to Mattick, 23 October 1970. Mattick Jr. 1975.

3 Howard Sherman, *Science & Society*, Summer 1970. Mattick to Paul Buhle, 25 June 1970 (WHS).

4 Martin Bronfenbrenner, 'Review of *Marx & Keynes*', *The American Political Science Review*, 65. Another hostile review appeared as: Robert Lekachman, 'Review of *Marx and Keynes*', *Journal of Economic Literature*, June 1970. Mattick to Gabriel Kolko, 12 March 1972 (Mattick Jr.).

5 Mattick to Paul Buhle, 8 February 1971 (WHS). Martin Glaberman, 'Review of *Marx and Keynes*', *Radical America*, January–February 1971.

6 David Yaffe to Mattick, 30 December 1970.

7 Mattick to Gabriel Kolko, 24 December 1971 (York).

At Yale University, too, 'it seems that marxism is making some headway in the academic world'.<sup>8</sup> An unexpected solicitation to become a contributing editor to a new marxist journal, *Kapitalistate*, also came his way.<sup>9</sup> Only occasionally did talks include a working-class audience, given the university-centredness of the protest movements.<sup>10</sup> Study groups that focused on Marx were a mainstay at many American universities. In New York City, for example, groups existed at both Teachers College at Columbia University and The New School.<sup>11</sup>

Yet, there were limits to just how far the discussion could be carried. At the University of Massachusetts in Amherst, for instance, the economics department constituted one of the few centres for marxist studies in the country. The marxist professors, however, were not as a rule well-versed in Marx's *Capital*, and the few who were deemed Marx's work out of date. In the class in which students read Marx, the book was presented in such a helter-skelter fashion that any sense of Marx's methodological rigor was lost. *Capital* became a collection of concepts rather than a theory of society and the economy. An attempt by students to bring Mattick to the campus faltered because of opposition from the professors.<sup>12</sup> These circumstances stood in sharp contrast to developments in Europe, where a group of West Berlin students fashioned a study guide for *Capital* that was reproduced in 20,000 copies.<sup>13</sup>

Publishing opportunities in the United States remained limited. *Science & Society* was one of the few journals to which Mattick could turn: 'I have no connection anywhere else'.<sup>14</sup> This journal, though, was a mixed blessing because of its 'attempt to fake a kind of "neutralism"' in order to show independence from the Communist Party and to attract a wider audience:

Here in America one has not much choice as far as publications are concerned. The magazines are either social-democratic or communistic or

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8 Mattick to Gabriel Kolko, 6 December 1972 (York). Richard Weisskoff to Mattick, 20 December 1972; Richard Weisskoff to Mattick, 12 January 1973. Other examples: Bard Thompson to Mattick, 22 January 1976; Bard Thompson to Mattick, 4 March 1976; Mattick to Michael Buckmiller, 22 March 1976 (Mattick Jr.); Mattick to Preben Kaarsholm, 12 April 1976 (Mattick Jr.); Mattick to Maximilien Rubel, 14 April 1976 (Nanterre).

9 James O'Connor to Mattick, 8 December 1972.

10 Mattick to Gabriel Kolko, 20 May 1972 (York).

11 Conversation with Grace Roosevelt, 2 February 2013.

12 Fred Moseley to Mattick, 27 February 1975. Kolko's attempt to bring Mattick to the University of Toronto similarly faltered, ostensibly on budgetary grounds. Joyce Kolko to Mattick, ND [18 February 1974].

13 'Introduction to Marxists Economy', in the possession of the author.

14 Mattick to Gabriel Kolko, 27 February 1969 (Mattick Jr.).

trotskyistic. In none of these could I appear. The academical journals will not print me because of my lack of academic qualification. The bourgeois journals are not interested in anything I am able to write.<sup>15</sup>

Mattick's son was at the centre of several initiatives that pushed beyond these limits. The journal *Root & Branch* appeared sporadically over the next decade and published key essays by Mattick Sr. as well as a pamphlet series that featured Pannekoek's *Workers' Councils* and a commentary from Mattick's Parisian colleagues on the May 1968 uprising in France.<sup>16</sup> During 1972–3, Paul Jr. led a *Capital* group at the highly innovative Goddard-Cambridge Graduate Program in Social Change, from whose members there emerged still further *Capital* groups. In all this, Mattick 'let the young people find their own way'.<sup>17</sup> There was also a constant flow of people between father and son—visitors from Europe, student radicals from the Boston area, and more.<sup>18</sup>

A grant—Mattick's first ever—from the Rabinowitz Foundation entailed its own set of woes. The Foundation provided small research and travel grants to progressive scholars, but it was sponsored by a lawyer close to the Communist Party (the law partner of Louis Boudin). Consequently, the selection process did not proceed smoothly. Mattick was encouraged to drop his project on workers' councils and instead focus on a topic in keeping with Communist Party interests, like anti-fascism. Convinced that this disagreement had sealed his fate, Mattick was quite surprised when he was awarded \$5000 for travel to archives in Amsterdam and Berlin.<sup>19</sup>

Further unpleasantness nevertheless awaited him. Victor Rabinowitz balked at paying the final instalment on the fellowship because Mattick had completed other projects first: 'the reason for dividing the payment of grants

15 Mattick to Maximilien Rubel, 1 August 1972 (Nanterre). Mattick to Claudio Pozzoli, 4 February 1969 (Pozzoli).

16 Paul Mattick, Jr. to Paul Buhle, 25 July 1968 (WHS); Paul Mattick, Jr. to Paul Buhle, 8 August 1968 (WHS); Mattick, to Gabriel Kolko, 24 September 1968 (Mattick Jr.); Paul Mattick, Jr. to Paul Buhle [Spring 1969] (WHS); Mattick to Maximilien Rubel, 16 December 1969 (Nanterre); Serge Bricianer to Mattick, 10 February 1970; Robert Chasse to Mattick, 20 June 1970; Mattick to Maximilien Rubel, 13 September 1970 (Nanterre).

17 Mattick to Maximilien Rubel, 4 November 1969 (Nanterre).

18 Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler [April 1965].

19 Mattick to Rabinowitz Foundation, with Project Description, 1 February 1973 (NYU); Catherine Rosenberg to Mattick, 24 April 1973; Russell Nixon to Mattick, 25 April 1973; Mattick to Gabriel Kolko, 29 July 1973 (York); Gabriel Kolko to Mattick, 14 August 1973; Gabriel Kolko to Mattick, 29 September 1973.

in this manner is precisely to protect ourselves against what happened here'.<sup>20</sup> Mattick sent a long letter of appeal. Workers' councils, he explained, 'cannot be presented, or understood, without reference to the changing socio-economic situation, the crises-cycle, and so forth'. He felt sure that Rabinowitz had misunderstood the scope of his project. Essays on Pannekoek and Lenin, which were completed during the year, were germane because of the inter-connectedness of the left's history.<sup>21</sup> Rabinowitz relented, although 'with considerable reluctance', since 'some of the most reputable and honourable men in the United States have accepted grants from us and have failed to produce'.<sup>22</sup> Mattick was gracious in his response: 'I thank you very much for the additional check and for overcoming your own reluctance'. He also assured Rabinowitz that 'the Foundation will not be disappointed'.<sup>23</sup>

Some unpleasantness was gratuitous. Raya Dunayevskaya, the editor of *News & Letters*, a small trotskyist publication, described Mattick as part of a group that 'consider themselves marxists but have made a veritable profession of anti-leninism', a wilful misrepresentation of his intentions.<sup>24</sup> Paul Piccone, the editor at *Telos*, a New Left journal oriented towards the Frankfurt School, referred to Mattick's 'stubborn insistence on the infamous law of the tendential rate of profits to fall', a thesis that 'has been shot down too often by marxist critics to warrant any further attempts'. In other words, Mattick's ideas were not worthy of discussion, and Piccone referred to Mattick's 'faith in a Rip van Winkle proletariat to be awakened into action'.<sup>25</sup> In this case, polemics disguised as wit substituted for real debate.

The same dull response was evident too with Mattick's books. Not until the mid-1970s did sales of *Marx and Keynes* quicken.<sup>26</sup> Other books of his likewise experienced considerable delay. It was eight years before the essay collection *Anti-Bolshevik Communism*, originally offered to Paul Buhle, finally appeared in an English-language version.<sup>27</sup> Another collection, for which Kolko was the key intermediary, was translated from the German. *Economics, Politics, and the*

20 Victor Rabinowitz to Mattick, 9 July 1974.

21 Mattick to Victor Rabinowitz, 15 July 1974.

22 Victor Rabinowitz to Mattick, 22 July 1974.

23 Mattick to Victor Rabinowitz, 29 July 1974 (NYU).

24 Dunayevskaya, 'A Footnote on the Detractors of Lenin'. For Mattick's harsh review of a Dunayevskaya book: 'A Marxian Oddity', *The Western Socialist*, March–April 1958.

25 Piccone 1975, p. 155, p. 156n.

26 Mattick to Leif Hansen, 12 April 1976 (Hansen); Nisse Sjødén to Mattick, 30 October [1977].

27 See Mattick 1978. Merlin Press to Mattick [1971]; Martin Eve to Mattick, 4 April 1974; David Musson to Mattick, 2 July 1976; Mattick to Gabriel Kolko [mid-1976] (York); Mattick to Gabriel Kolko, 25 March 1979 (York).

*Age of Inflation* was published initially as an issue of the *International Journal of Politics*. All this took time.<sup>28</sup> A seven-year gap separated the German- and English-language editions of *Economic Crisis and Crisis Theory*, translated by Mattick's son. Delays characterised related publishing ventures as well. Efforts to release Pannekoek's *Lenin as Philosopher* in the United States fell flat, and by the time a British edition was ready for distribution, the market for such work had disappeared.<sup>29</sup>

In Denmark, on the other hand, strong demand for *Marx and Keynes* continued throughout the decade, so much so that the publishing collective's all-volunteer staff eventually ceased to distribute it. The dozens of small left-wing bookstores scattered throughout the country only ordered a few copies at a time, and this placed an unsustainable burden on the publishers. In order to issue other books, deliveries of *Marx and Keynes* had to stop, halted after some twelve to thirteen thousand copies in total had been shipped.<sup>30</sup>

### Illness

Death makes all life senseless, unless we get it out of our mind. But that is difficult and takes a long time.<sup>31</sup>

After the Matticks returned from Roskilde, renovations for their Vermont home became a priority. To make the place more comfortable for overnight visitors and more liveable throughout the winter, Paul spent the four summer months of 1976 outfitting an additional room and digging a well that could support an inside toilet and shower.<sup>32</sup> He also had many ideas for new books. The manuscript on workers' councils continued to occupy him.<sup>33</sup> A separate

28 Gabriel Kolko to Mattick, 1 April 1976 (York); Mattick to Gabriel Kolko, 1 December 1976 (York); Arnold Tovell to Mattick, 18 March 1977; Arnold Tovell to Mattick, 7 November 1977; Mattick to Gabriel Kolko, 8 February 1979 (Mattick Jr.).

29 Mattick to University of Michigan Press, 5 January 1971; James Langford to Mattick, 15 February 1971; James Herod to Mattick, 11 April 1974; James Herod to Mattick, 25 June 1974; Martin Eve to Mattick, 16 April 1975; James Herod to Mattick, 6 December 1975; James Herod, Email Correspondence, 17 July 2008 and 27 January 2009.

30 Conversations with Leif Hansen, 5–6 August 2007.

31 Mattick to Dinsmore Wheeler, 19 December 1953.

32 Mattick to Gabriel Kolko, 14 October 1976 (York); Mattick to Preben Kaarsholm, 14 October 1976 (Mattick Jr.); Mattick to Leif Hansen, 19 October 1976 (Hansen).

33 Sometimes referred to as 'The Proletarian Revolution'. Mattick to Maximilien Rubel, 19 December 1968 (Nanterre); Mattick to Hellmut Haasis, 1 March 1976 (Haasis).

text on bourgeois economics, already extant in draft form, was another project that he returned to many times: 'this literature is awful and quite ridiculous but must be read just the same if one wants to write about this subject'.<sup>34</sup> He told Rubel that 'the dullness of the subject stops me from writing consistently'.<sup>35</sup>

Mattick's various projects eventually gelled into a single work, the posthumously released *Marxism: Last Refuge of the Bourgeoisie*.<sup>36</sup> The title referred to the acceptance of marxism within academic circles.<sup>37</sup> Mattick was well aware of the changed circumstances in which the left found itself in the mid-1970s. Even before he arrived in Roskilde, the radical elements of the New Left had been in retreat.<sup>38</sup> Mattick's initial plan for *Last Refuge* was to show the validity of Marx's analysis without resort to the discussion of 'value', a possibility hinted at by Marx but never fulfilled.<sup>39</sup> This was a project to which his son would turn many years later with *Business As Usual*.

If the radical movement was shrinking, Mattick's immediate audience grew increasingly sophisticated. Yolande Benarrosh, a doctoral student at the University of Nanterre, focused her thesis on the interpretation of fascism by the council communists.<sup>40</sup> Finn Dam Rasmussen, who had discussed Mattick's ideas in his dissertation, had plans for a film that wove together Mattick's life and beliefs.<sup>41</sup> Steve Wright was unearthing the history of the radical left in Australia. He inquired about Mattick's contacts to James Dawson, who had published a pamphlet of Mattick's essays, *Rebels and Renegades*, in the

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34 Mattick to Maximilien Rubel, 18 February 1973 (Nanterre). Among the names: 'Marxism and Bourgeois Economics', 'The Bankruptcy of Bourgeois Economics', 'Modern Economics', 'New Economics', and 'Theory and Practice of Bourgeois Economics'. Mattick to Claudio Pozzoli, 6 April 1970 (Pozzoli); Mattick to Maximilien Rubel, 31 October 1971 (Nanterre); Mattick to Claudio Pozzoli, 23 January 1973 (Pozzoli); Frank Benseler to Mattick, 15 March 1973.

35 Mattick to Maximilien Rubel, 3 February 1972 (Nanterre).

36 Mattick 1983. Mattick to Michael Buckmiller, 11 December 1975 (Mattick Jr.); Mattick to Maximilien Rubel, 14 April 1976 (Nanterre).

37 At the time: 'the "radical economists" are proving that the rate of profit cannot fall, while the capitalists themselves speak of the collapse of capitalism, as if they had been to school with Marx'. Mattick to Preben Kaarsholm, 5 July 1980 (Mattick Jr.). Mattick to Maximilien Rubel, 27 January 1980 (Nanterre).

38 Mattick to Serge Bricianer, 22 June 1972 (Mattick Jr.); Mattick to Maximilien Rubel, 18 February 1973 (Nanterre); Mattick to Leif Hansen, 21 May 1979 (Hansen).

39 Mattick to Michael Buckmiller, 1 July 1977 (Mattick Jr.).

40 Yolande Benarrosh to Mattick, 20 June 1978; Interview with Claude Orsoni and Yolande Benarrosh, 12 May 2008.

41 Rasmussen 1978.

mid-1940s.<sup>42</sup> Jorge Valadas was involved with several publishing ventures in Portugal and France that featured work by Mattick and Pannekoek.<sup>43</sup> Jan Birket-Smith, a friend from Roskilde, relocated to Mozambique to serve as an urban planner with the newly-installed revolutionary government. Mattick cautioned that he would soon be disappointed.<sup>44</sup>

Many requests focused on economic theory and contemporary developments.<sup>45</sup> Eberhard Seifert was greatly influenced by Mattick's essay on the *Grundprinzipien*, and his own essay on the 'economics of time' is perhaps the finest piece of Mattick-inspired writing to be published.<sup>46</sup> Claudio Albertani noticed that Mattick's views on whether the Soviet Union produced surplus value in the marxist sense seemed to have altered between the 1930s and 1970s, which Mattick freely acknowledged: 'I must admit that I changed my mind with respect to the law of value and its application in Russia.'<sup>47</sup> Mary Lynn Cramer completed a manuscript on inflation and the mid-1970s oil crisis and asked Mattick for suggestions. Joyce Kolko asked for comments on her *America and the Crisis of World Capitalism*: 'as you know, I respect your opinion more than that of others'.<sup>48</sup>

In Italy, Mattick was referred to variously as a 'theoretician of the new student, youth, and unemployed movement' and 'father of the autonomous workers'.<sup>49</sup> A literary agent approached him on behalf of a government-run publishing house in Yugoslavia: 'even more surprising was the amount of money they send me; no bourgeois publisher is that generous. It is indeed a

42 Mattick to Steve Wright, 24 May 1977 (Wright); Steve Wright to Mattick, 14 October 1977; Mattick to Steve Wright, 31 October 1977 (Wright).

43 Jorge Valadas to Mattick, 25 January 1976.

44 Signe Arnfred to Mattick, 7 January 1976; Signe Arnfred to Mattick, 17 March 1978; Conversations with Jan Birket-Smith, 6–7 August 2007.

45 Further examples, from which many others could be chosen: Jürgen Klein to Mattick, 4 November 1974; Hans-Harold Müller to Mattick, 8 September 1975; Hans-Harald Müller to Mattick, 27 October 1975; Per Jonsson to Mattick, 9 November 1976; Gabrielle Bonacchi to Mattick, 16 November 1976; Mathias Greffrath to Mattick, 24 January 1977; Mattick to Claudio Pozzoli, 24 May 1977 (Pozzoli); Mattick to Claudio Pozzoli, 27 February 1978 (Pozzoli); Hjalte Tim Iversen to Mattick, 1 November 1979.

46 Eberhard Seifert to Mattick, 18 November 1975; Eberhard Seifert to Mattick, 20 December 1977; Interview with Eberhard Seifert, 12 June 2009. Seifert 1983.

47 Mattick to Claudio Albertani, 17 May 1978 (Albertani). Claudio Albertani to Mattick, 8 May 1978.

48 Joyce Kolko to Mattick, ND [Late February 1974]. With several translations, distribution reached 135,000 copies; Mattick to Joyce Kolko, 22 February 1974 (Mattick Jr.); Gabriel Kolko to Mattick, 26 September 1975.

49 Claudio Pozzoli to Mattick, 17 March 1977; Eberhard Seifert to Mattick, 20 December 1977.



strange world'.<sup>50</sup> Others wrote about new or intended publications to which Mattick might contribute—mostly journals but also book series, too.<sup>51</sup> When Mattick and Pozzoli realised that they had each offered the same material to two different Spanish-language publishers, Mattick was greatly distressed: 'I am just as much dismayed as you are'.<sup>52</sup> He felt rather helpless about the confusion: 'it is a bad situation but I do not know what to do about it'.<sup>53</sup>

When Mattick first corresponded with Pozzoli, he told him: 'I do not like any form of self-advertisement: the less said, the better'.<sup>54</sup> For close friends, though, he made exceptions. Pozzoli conducted an interview with him in 1972 that wove together Mattick's personal history and commentary on the movements and events through which he had lived. In mid-1976, Michael Buckmiller visited Vermont, where a long reflective discussion took place over a period of three days.<sup>55</sup> The following summer, Pozzoli arrived with a film crew, the result of which was a five-hour, made-for-television documentary, 'Capitalism Between the World Wars'. This production included archival footage along with an extensive interview. From the same raw footage, Pozzoli crafted a one-hour television special, 'Paul Mattick—A Rebellious Worker', which highlighted Mattick's political trajectory.<sup>56</sup> Other requests for interviews, however, were turned down: 'I do not like to draw attention to myself. Besides my ideas

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50 Mattick to Gabriel Kolko, 25 March 1979 (York). Geisenheyner & Crone to Mattick, 23 February 1979.

51 Examples: Berit Göransson to Mattick, 17 August 1976; Helmut Haasis to Mattick, 21 June 1977; Nico Perrone to Mattick, 25 July 1977; Maria-José Aubet to Mattick, 26 July 1977; Jürgen Hoffmann to Mattick, 28 February 1978; Julio Amador to Mattick, 5 June 1978; Ma'rgora to Mattick, 14 February 1980.

52 Mattick to *Neus Espresate*, 24 July 1978. *Neus Espresate* to Mattick, 13 July 1978.

53 Mattick to *Neus Espresate* 30 July 1978. Mattick to *Icaria Editorial*, 30 July 1978.

54 Mattick to Claudio Pozzoli, 4 February 1969 (Pozzoli).

55 Claudio Pozzoli to Mattick, 1 February 1973; Michael Buckmiller to Mattick, 16 March 1976. Buckmiller 1976.

56 Pozzoli's projects turned increasingly towards film, including documentaries on the experimental universities at Roskilde and Bremen, as well as fictionalised interviews with historical figures like Luxemburg, Rousseau, and Freud that used actual quotes in a question-and-answer format. Claudio Pozzoli to Mattick, 9 September 1976; Claudio Pozzoli to Mattick, 1 November 1976; Claudio Pozzoli to Mattick, 15 May 1977; Gül Seden Wines to Mattick, 1 August 1977; Claudio Pozzoli to Mattick, 19 February 1978; Claudio Pozzoli to Mattick, 26 August 1979. Claudio Pozzoli to Mattick, 20 October 1979; Claudio Pozzoli to Mattick, 22 February 1980; Claudio Pozzoli to Mattick, 23 March 1980. Communication from Paul Mattick Jr., 22 May 2013.

and attitudes are not personal qualities but the result of circumstances shared with many people.<sup>57</sup>

A conference at the Autonomous Metropolitan University near Mexico City during March 1978 was Mattick's last trip outside the United States. Ilse and Paul Jr. accompanied him on this two-week tour, during which he gave several major speeches and was involved in many smaller discussions. Echoing what Rühle told him forty years earlier, Mattick described Mexico as 'not one but two societies with a hundred year gap between them. The misery is almost unbearable and the contrast between rich and poor enorm'.<sup>58</sup> Mostly, though, he rejected speaking engagements if they required extensive travel, including invitations for a multi-city tour in Denmark and a lecture series in Frankfurt.<sup>59</sup>

Illness continued to plague him. The winter after Roskilde, a two-week bout of the flu was followed a few months later by a pneumonia that lingered, and he only slowly returned to writing.<sup>60</sup> The next year he was much worse, with an illness that hung on for nearly six months and prevented all work. What began as a series of colds evolved once again into pneumonia, except this time it resisted antibiotics. The doctors found that he suffered from anaemia and kidney problems as well, and perhaps an auto-immune disease, while other medical problems indicated that an operation might be necessary.<sup>61</sup>

An entire cohort of friends and colleagues was winding down. When Ilse Langerhans passed away, Mattick wrote that 'her death hit us very hard. She was one of the finest persons imaginable and also absolutely reliable in every

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57 Mattick to Finn Dam Rasmussen, 17 August 1977 (Rasmussen). Finn Dam Rasmussen to Mattick, 2 August 1977; Helmut Haasis to Mattick, 6 March 1978; Helmut Haasis to Mattick, 20 April 1978.

58 Mattick to Preben Kaarsholm, 27 April 1978 (Mattick Jr.). G.R. Héctor to Mattick, 15 November 1977; Mattick to Claudio Pozzoli, 27 February 1978 (Pozzoli); Juan Luis Campos and Gustavo Leal to Mattick, 21 June 1979.

59 Morten Giersing to Mattick, 8 March 1977; Helmut Reinicke to Mattick, 15 August 1977; Mattick to Claudio Pozzoli, 1 September 1977 (Pozzoli); Eberhard Seifert to Mattick, 20 December 1977.

60 Leif Hansen to Mattick, 18 February 1976; Mattick to Gabriel Kolko, 18 February 1976 (York); Mattick to Michael Buckmiller, 23 February 1976 (Mattick Jr.); Ilse Mattick to Elizabeth and Jean Malaquais, 3 June 1966 [1976] (IISH: Malaquais); Mattick to Preben Kaarsholm, 1 December 1976 (Mattick Jr.). Conversation with Ilse Mattick, 3 November 2007.

61 Mattick to Claudio Pozzoli, 24 May 1977 (Pozzoli); Mattick to Finn Dam Rasmussen, June 1977 (Rasmussen); Mattick to Hellmut Haasis, 1 June 1977 (Haasis); Mattick to Uli Bohnen, 29 September 1977 (Bohnen); Mattick to Claudio Pozzoli, 27 February 1978 (Pozzoli); Mattick to Finn Dam Rasmussen, 2 March 1978 (Rasmussen); Signe Arnfred and Jan Birket-Smith to Mattick, 17 March 1978; Mattick to Joyce Kolko, 19 April 1978 (Mattick Jr.).

respect'.<sup>62</sup> They had been friends for twenty-five years. His step-son's suicide at age 57 shook everyone. Hans Mattick had been ill for some time, in pain and disfigured because of dental surgery, but no one realised the depth of his despair. His career in the field of juvenile justice had been exemplary, including many important publications—some ninety books, articles, and reports, with the national and local media often turning to him for commentary. His particular focus was prisoner re-entry and the effects of imprisonment on families and children, but he also devoted considerable time to anti-death penalty work. His familiarity from childhood with Chicago's poorest neighbourhoods and residents had proven to be a genuine asset in the conduct of his work. In recent years, however, his health problems had been compounded by the loss of state-funded grants, a result of the change in political climate in the late 1970s. This had led to the cancellation of many of the progressive programmes on which he had worked.<sup>63</sup>

Frieda never quite bounced back from this. In these last years she was nearly completely isolated. Despite her many decades spent in New York City, few of her friendships remained. Ever since the late 1960s, she had worked part-time as a cataloguer at the New York University Library. Finally, in mid-1975, at age 78, she stopped working altogether, relying on the pure-bred kittens she raised in her apartment for additional income. She was also heavily involved in the re-publication of the *oeuvre* of her first husband (Walter Rheiner), and she kept up an active correspondence with friends and authors, Henry Miller and Emil White among them.<sup>64</sup> In the years before his suicide, her son sent money and wrote occasionally, but he no longer visited. Frieda disliked his spouse. Relations with her daughter's husband had grown so bad that he ended visits between Frieda and her granddaughter. She hadn't been in touch for many years with Mattick's sister, Lisbeth, who had been greatly offended when Frieda visited Berlin in the early 1960s, stayed at her apartment, and yet never bothered to do anything socially with her.<sup>65</sup>

Frieda complained bitterly about Paul during these last years, despite attempts by close friends to present a fairer picture. Her closest correspondent

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62 Mattick to Serge Bricianer, 26 March 1974 (Mattick Jr.).

63 Hans Mattick to Frieda St. Sauveur, 18–19 September 1976 (Mattick Jr.); Laub 1983; Conversations with Ilse Mattick, 21–5 May 2005.

64 Henry Miller to Frieda St. Sauveur, 10 March 1971 (ADK, Koval); Frieda St. Sauveur to Alexander Koval, 20 August 1971 (AdK: Koval).

65 Frieda St. Sauveur to Alexander Koval, 30 July 1962 (AdK: Koval).



18 *Step-son Hans and Frieda, October 1968.*

COURTESY OF JAKE FABER.

told her: 'Paul M. made a big impression on my son'.<sup>66</sup> During 1976, she pursued a plan to return to Germany, but given her age and financial situation, this proved unrealistic. She also began to write her memoirs, even procuring a contract to publish them, but progress was slow and not much was written.<sup>67</sup> During her final illness, Jake Faber, who had once moved to Chicago because he found Mattick's understanding of politics so compelling, commuted from Philadelphia to help care for her. Suffering from cancer, much of her last year was spent in the hospital. She died on 15 March 1980.<sup>68</sup>

These last years had been difficult for Mattick too: 'I am at an age where things are slowly falling apart'.<sup>69</sup> Progress on *Last Refuge* slowed to a crawl.

66 Alexander Koval to Edouard Roditi, with note to Frieda St. Sauveur, 23 January 1975 (ADK, Koval). Frieda St. Sauveur to Alexander Koval, 8 February 1975 (AdK: Koval); Frieda St. Sauveur to Alexander Koval, 8 June 1975 (AdK: Koval); Alexander Koval to Frieda St. Sauveur, 1 July 1975 (AdK: Koval); Frieda St. Sauveur to Alexander Koval, 14 October 1975 (AdK: Koval); Frieda St. Sauveur to Alexander Koval, 24 November 1977 (ADK, Koval).

67 Ursel Locke to Alexander Koval, 23 December 1977 (AdK: Koval); Frieda Mattick, 'Autobiographical Fragments' (AdK: Koval).

68 Mattick to Uli Bohnen, 30 March 1980 (Bohnen); Interview with Jake Faber, 27 June 2005.

69 Mattick to Gabriel Kolko, 8 October 1979 (York). Mattick to Leif Hansen, 26 March 1979 (Hansen); Mattick to Preben Kaarsholm, 26 October 1979 (Mattick Jr.).

Requests to write were turned down or simply overlooked.<sup>70</sup> He tired easily, and his memory was no longer as sharp as it had been. During the academic year 1980–1, Ilse took a sabbatical leave from her teaching position in order to care for him. Plans to travel abroad were postponed indefinitely. Paul was often in pain. A hospital stay revealed a tumour. He was too ill to remain in Vermont and was never told about the cancer he believed he had beaten.<sup>71</sup> Even with oxygen to ease his breathing, he pleaded for an occasional puff of his pipe. Ilse would dutifully dismantle the oxygen apparatus and move it to another room. When asked if he was getting tired, he still had enough of a sense of humour to ask: ‘how will I get educated if I nap?’

The last weeks were especially hard.<sup>72</sup> Paul had been ill without pause since June 1980. In early February 1981 he died. Ilse wrote to friends that Paul had died ‘in the afternoon, quietly in his sleep. Until that last sleep he remained quite himself, always under control and always kind and gentle and thoughtful—despite great misery.’<sup>73</sup> Ilse and Paul Jr. were with him. When Ilse called Mary Wheeler twelve hours later, she learned of Dinsmore’s death. The two men, friends for forty years, were each spared the loss of the other.<sup>74</sup>

Paul’s ashes were scattered on the Matticks’ property in Vermont. Friends gathered in New York for a memorial ceremony. A handful of obituaries appeared in radical left journals in Europe and the United States.<sup>75</sup> The family collected Paul’s letters from colleagues and friends, with the hope of assembling a commemorative volume. From manuscript fragments and from passages that Paul dictated to Ilse when he was too weak to write but still cogent enough to think, Paul Jr. edited *Last Refuge*.<sup>76</sup> Eberhard Seifert along with Michael Buckmiller and Paul Jr. planned an international conference centred on Mattick’s work, but this did not occur. The radical left passed out of

70 Geoffrey Gardner to Mattick, 14 September 1979; Mattick to Geoffrey Gardner [ND] (USC).

71 Mattick to Preben Kaarsholm, 14 September 1979 (Mattick Jr.); Mattick to Leif Hanson, 6 December 1979 (Hansen); Mattick to Maximilien Rubel, 27 January 1980 (Nanterre); Ma’rgora to Mattick, 14 February 1980; Mattick to Gabriel Kolko, 3 March 1980 (York); Mattick to Maximilien Rubel, 16 March 1980 (Nanterre); Mattick to Michael Buckmiller, 24 July 1980 (Mattick Jr.); Ilse Mattick to Kolko, 5 September [1980] (York).

72 Conversations with Ilse Mattick, 21–5 May 2005.

73 Ilse Mattick to Elizabeth and Jean Malaquais, 26 February 1981 (IISH: Malaquais).

74 Ilse Mattick to Joyce and Gabriel Kolko, 11 February 1981 (York). Ilse Mattick to Leif and Birgette Hansen, 16 February 1981 (Hansen).

75 Buckmiller 1981b, translated in *Root & Branch*, #10. Other obituaries appeared in: Anon, 1981, pp. 4–5; Dingel 1981, pp. 190–7. Also: Mattick Jr. 1985.

76 Conversation with Paul Mattick, Jr., 6 August 2004; Conversation with Ilse Mattick, 3 November 2007.

existence before plans could be concretised.<sup>77</sup> Rather than revitalising radical politics, the economic crisis of the 1970s somehow had the opposite effect. Mattick's work disappeared from view, seemingly not relevant during a period of low-level stability that masked the ongoing economic stagnation. Friends and admirers dispersed in different directions, with loose-knit relations maintained among cohorts of similarly-minded people.

Within what marxist discussion remained during the following decades, Mattick's work had little influence. A process of forgetting took hold, even for people who had once considered Mattick significant. Russell Jacoby excluded both Mattick and Grossman from his history of the European radical left, *Dialectic of Defeat*, published in 1981, despite having only recently devoted considerable space to an exposition of their views on crises.<sup>78</sup> When Paul Buhle published *Marxism in the United States* in 1987, Mattick was not mentioned at all.<sup>79</sup> It remained for the next crisis and breakdown of the international order in the early years of the new century to show whether Mattick's work, and his life too, was of any relevance for the next generation of radicals.

Paul's son accepted a teaching position at Bennington College, not far from the Matticks' Vermont home. Ilse returned to her teaching position at Wheelock College for two more years, before retiring to Vermont in 1984, where she was active in community affairs and the environmental movement.<sup>80</sup> She died in 2009, just shy of her 90th birthday, fiercely independent and strong-willed to the end. Known for her sharp wit and untamed commitment to issues of social justice, she was widely respected throughout the region, a terrific friend, and source of support to all who knew her.

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77 'Spenden-Aufruf und Einladung zur Vorbereitung einer Veranstaltung zum 80. Geburtstag von Paul Mattick (1904 Berlin–1981 Boston)', *Prokla*, #51, June 1983, p. 149.

78 Jacoby 1975 and 2002.

79 Buhle 1987.

80 Conversations with Ilse Mattick, 21–5 May 2005; Mattick Jr., 'A Tribute to Ilse Mattick', *Brooklyn Rail*.

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