In political science it is a common place to hold that leftists are radicals, such members of a party as hold views diametrically opposed to its current policies. Reactionaries whose views are not radically different from those of a party and who are opposed to all reforms and progress are not, strictly speaking, leftists. Leftism cannotes a criticism of the existing order, a protest against it accompanied by a keen desire to change it to another pattern. Psychologically, it is the attitude of the rebel whose sensitivity to social injustice in the present order is so keen as to make him impatient with "what is" or the existing order and proceed compulsively towards the attainment of "what ought to be" or the order of his vision. Born of discontent, it craves "closure" satisfaction i.e., the satisfaction brought about by the completion of the segregated parts of some thing or act into a whole. When once the incomplete systems attain final stability, one is left with the satisfaction of having attained "what ought to be". The unmet needs corresponding to the incomplete systems give birth to a rebel.

The terms 'Leftism' and 'Rightism' stand for the attitudes of rejection and acceptance. In the controversy over what social order should be allowed to prevail, the leftist answer is "surely not the existing order". The leftist visualizes a society of his
dreams and fights to translate his utopia into reality some time in the future. He is essentially an idealist, dynamic and destructive of the existing order because he refuses to owe any allegiance to it. The rightist, on the other hand, accepts the existing order as sacrosanct and advocates its perpetuation without any change or with minimum change. It concentrates its efforts on reforming and consolidating the gains of the present order. In its extreme sense, therefore, leftism can be defined as an attitude of protest against the existing order of society rooted in the need to criticize it with a view to changing it partially (to start with) or entirely (in the ultimate sense) to an alternative system which it offers as a form of utopia.

There are three main types of leftism: Socialism, Communism and Anarchism. Common in aim, they are different from each other in their means of achieving it. The establishment of a stateless and classless society is their aim. If it is to be realized by parliamentary methods, through legislation and education, it is socialism. If, on the other hand, it adopts violent means to capture power, establish a "dictatorship of the proletariat" and then to redistribute wealth to the members of a society, it is Communism. Anarchism does not believe in the
middle stage of the dictatorship of the proletariat and straigh-
taway tries to destroy the existing order by violent means so
that individuals may live in the atmosphere of mutual respect for
one another without any state control or class conflict. All vari-
eties of leftism in America - the I.W.W., early Comperism, Socialist Labor Party, Socialist Party, Communist Party and the Socialist workers' Party fit in somewhere with the major types.

Leftism came in two spurts in America in the first half of the 20th century. The war separates the two spurts. There are marked differences between them. First, while in the pre-war era socialism was mainly a dream, in the post-war period it became a reality with the birth of the U.S.S.R. It was possible for the post-war generation to observe how Russia, where socialism had been actually established, fared in terms of human comforts and misery. Second, the Communist Party of America came into existence in 1919. The socialists of the early century were evolutionary while the communists of the post-war age were revolutionary. Moreover, the Communist Party unlike the early Socialists, was international in character and sought its instruction from Soviet Russia.

Both Dos Passos and John Steinbeck had sympathy for the leftist cause to start with though when its authoritative nature
was revealed to them they were compelled to revise their stand. A brief survey of the leftist movement can be rewarding as a background study to a thorough understanding of the leftist element in their novels.

The period 1909-1919 has been characterised in Politics by two movements called Progressivism and the New Freedom. It was marked by the existence of big business corporations which flourished in the climate of monopoly and free enterprise resulting in the concentration of wealth in a few hands at the expense of the masses. The poor and the middle class groaned under the juggernaut of corruption, chicanery and manipulation of the rich. The exploitation of women and children, impure food and drugs and betrayals of public trusts were some of the common features of the period. Both Theodore Roosevelt and Taft, as Presidents of the U.S.A., were fired with the reformist zeal. The former promised a "square deal" to the people and the latter set himself up to implement the welfare policies of the government. Woodrow Wilson, the next President, promised 'New Freedom' to Americans. It was almost a crusade to make a democratic world. The Democratic party was captured by agrarian reformers and the Republican Party by urban progressives. The churches took up socialism as settlement houses blossomed in every slum. New England liberals...
for the Negroes and the Indians; crusades were launched against imperialism. Temperance, conservation, peace, women's suffrage, children's rights and civil service reforms were advocated. It was a time of protest and reform, the rejection of the old and championship of the new, a fight against vested interests and social injustice. The aim was to weed out social abuses and democratize government, humanize industry, improve the lot of the workingman and the farmer, rescue the victims of social injustice and elevate the moral tone of society. The goal was to establish a co-operative commonwealth of people. Their pattern was democratic and Socialism their utopia. Critics, reformers, political leaders and writers all had a vague feeling of the kind of society they wanted but no definite programme of action. Marxism could not attract them beyond all proportions and they seldom forgot their American heritage. Americans as a people were not in favour of any dogmatism or authoritarianism and the tendency to reform without any loss of liberty was characteristic of the movement. It was experimental in nature.

The literary world received the reform movement more enthusiastically than the political leaders. Though critics were first to recognize it, literary artists assumed the role of its most effective prophets. It became a psychological necessity to
They immediately engaged themselves in describing the ugly now of capitalist industrialism and the beauty of Co-operative Commonwealth. In other words, the elements of Realism, and Utopia, also the elements of Marxism, dominated their writings. The novelists of the period could not close their eyes to the squalor of the rising manufacturing cities, the chicanery and brutality of politicians and business leaders, the human suffering and waste of competitive industry. As a writer cannot often help writing about what he experiences directly in life, novels incorporating the ugly details of the shocking state of things became the order of the day. The vision of the future Society that governed their novels, the establishment of a co-operative commonwealth of the entire American population, the investors of wealth as well as the workers who produced, was optimistic and gave them a panacea for the ills of society. The journalist helped the literary artist by exposing evil.

Another era dawns with the election of Harding as President— the age of American Nationalism. The twenties were a period of a self-critical and analytical nationalism canalized into a crusade for world democracy. The first world war had set in new tensions so that instead of reform, there was a widespread hostility to foreigners and foreign ideas.
The birth of Americanism called for the repression of the 'red'. The Communist Party went underground to consolidate its position, the Ku Klux Klan became active, and a number of Department of Justice raids were carried out. The country was seized with the hysteria for deportation of foreigners. On the business front, this was the period of the new Capitalism. The Harvard Business School established an annual advertising award and the Scriptures became the great source of sales aphorisms. Frederick Lewis Allen shows how "Moses, Persuader of Men" was the title of an inspirational pamphlet (issued by an insurance company) wherein Moses was described as one of the greatest salesmen and real-estate promoters that ever lived; and in The Man Nobody Knows, Jesus was an outdoor man and a great executive who picked up twelve men from the bottom ranks of business and forged them into an organization that conquered the world.¹

The automobile introduced a revolution in manners and morals, fashions changed and the young went gay. They were the ballyhoo years. The patriotism aroused during the war wanted a new outlet after it was over; and, it found its outlet in cynicism and looseness of manners and morals.

The intellectuals of this age were not reformists though they did have a talent for exposure that compared well with that of their counterparts of the pre-war generation. They were
angry with society and frustrated in their attempts to reform it. In utter helplessness, they started mocking at its absurdities feeling a sort of superiority over it. There is, however, a difference between the intellectuals of the former era and those of the latter. While the former were rebels who protested against the society by being in it, the latter did not involve themselves in it. Daniel Bell in *Socialism and American Life* Vol.I writes:

"Standing outside the gates, the intelligentsia mocked at all this with full-throated voice. Babbit and boobookie passed into word currency. The expatriates flocked to Paris in droves; a civilized life is impossible to live in America; Harold Stearns proclaimed, and the dung and roses school flowered in Branch Cabell; the "Lost generation" found a symbol in Scott Fitzgerald and its historian in John Dos Passos; Nineveh had its counterpart in Babylon (Long Island), and the lust of Caligula in the ruthless drive of the Big Money. It was a mad, careening society. It shot up to the age of the precipice at a dizzying pace, teetered for an instant, and toppled over with a splintering crash".  

The intellectual highbrows in the twenties demanded a free and continuous life, disliked all forms of censorship
religions as well as legislative, doubted and distrusted all reforms and reformers, expressed disbelief in God and the Church, scorned the bourgeois, Babbits, Rotarians, the Ku Klux Klan and supersalesman and took pleasure in debunking the idols of the majority. They were sex-obsessed young men who pictured the punctilious Puritans as hypocritical and indecent and delighted in reading biographies that showed American worthies as committing all the sins that flesh is heir to and glorified the notorious rascals of history.

With the stock-market crash towards the end of the twenties, once more, Communism found a fertile soil to grow in because the Depression was an indisputable proof that the capitalist system of society had failed. During the years 1932-33, the beginning of the thirties, it became common to see hungry demonstrators demanding food, school children parading through Chicago or raiding a buffet lunch and hundreds of the jobless surrounding a restaurant to demand food without charge. It gave a shock to the young and maturing intellectuals and, en bloc, they veered to the left. Dos Passos' Big Money shows the facade of the period of boom contrasted with the reality of the hunger marches of the common man and Steinbeck's Grapes of Wrath stresses the need for unity, co-operation, change of heart and a more intelli-
-igent adjustment in society. Both showed how unsatisfactory
the so called achievements of capitalism had become. In terms
of moral values, capitalism had given rise to a mechanistic
America where man had been deprived of all his worth, talent,
humanity and ethics. The worship of material wealth led them
to worship technology and machines which, in their turn, con­
verted men also into machines sans the milk of human kindness
and love. Cases of suicide by partners in a business and share­
holders at the Stock Exchange only climaxed the failure of
Mammon-worshippers.

Bourgeois society and its norms of conduct, ration­
alistic, prudent, impersonal and anti-quixotic had to be reje­
cted in favour of either the genteel tradition of the western
world, the code of the gentlemen, the ideal of bravery, the myth
of the hero and the emphasis on uniqueness or the ideology of
revolutionary Marxism. As the former, though good in itself, had
no programme of action, the intellectuals preferred the latter
which provided them with both a rigid logic and a programme of
action with sure results. The novelists saw their hero in the
invincible common man through whose agency history might be made
in America just as it had been made in Russia through the Bol­
shevik hero. They found their gospel in Revolution and example
in Russia. Consequently the Communist Party saw an increase in its membership and gained speed in its activities.

Daniel Bell has mentioned seven twists in the Communist Party policy in America after its formation in 1919. The first period from 1919 to 1921, the second from 1921 to 1928, the third from 1928 to 1935, the fourth from 1935 to 1939, the fifth from 1939 to 1941, the sixth from 1941 to 1945 and the seventh from 1945 onwards. During the entire period of the Party activity, except from 1919 to 1921, the American communists, had unquestionably followed the directives of the Russian Communist Party in terms of motives, needs and action.

In the first period the Party boasted of World Revolution while insurrections took place in Hungary and Bavaria and Lenin's Red Army invaded Poland. In U.S.A.; however, the Party was busy with underground organization. The second period, that of New Economic Policy in Russia, characterized by an acceptance of the stabilization of world capitalism, professed the policy of friendliness to the British Labour Party and flirtation with farmer-labour movements of the United States. The third period was characterized by the Communist condemnation of Socialism, the fourth by the 'Popular Front' tactics and the fifth by the Soviet-Nazi Pact in 1939. The sixth period began with Hitler's invasion of
Russia and the communist co-operation with the democracies and in the seventh period new aggressive tactics were adopted.

In America, the Communist Party organized unemployment demonstrations and strikes, promoted ex-servicemen's leagues and created a 'Red Army' replete with arms and uniforms. They also set up 'dual unions' in their war against socialists, "Class against class", and encouraged mass violation of all injunctions against labour. During the 'depression' years they organized coal strikes and Textile strikes and had a number of skirmishes with the police. In politics, they lashed out bitterly at the Roosevelt administration and his New Deal. Four achievements of the Party, however, are remarkable. First, it succeeded in bringing an important section of intellectuals under its influence; second, it captured the Youth Movement; third, it captured the workers' Unions in the C.I.O.; and fourth, it exerted considerable influence in the cultural field.

Almost all prominent literary figures of the period had sympathy for the Communist Party and endorsed William Z. Foster, a communist for Presidentship in 1932. Dos Passos, too, was one of them. The 'Proletarian Novel' was created and proletarian culture and agitational propaganda were emphasized. Art was used as a weapon in the class struggle full of glorious pictures of the
Marxian Utopia after the Revolution. Workers were made heroes who broke their chains and joined the Communist Party. In the field of drama, the Theatre Union, the Worker's Laboratory Theatre, Theatre of Action and the Theatre Collective were started. In journalism, the small magazine saw its heyday with the publication of 'The Anvil', 'Partisan Review', 'Left', 'Left Front', 'Dynamo', Left Review', 'Blast', 'New Theatre', 'New Dance', etc.

The Youth Movement in Europe came into being after the disillusionments of the First World war when the older mores crumbled and the backbone of the middle class was broken due to economic disintegration. Its one manifestation was the tidal wave of Bohemianism that gripped the post-war Western World and took resort in nihilism, anti-humanitarianism and revolutionary movements of Fascism and Communism. In America, too, though the youth had suffered from the post-war disillusionment and revolted against the state of affairs, it was the 'Depression' that aroused them. During the twenties two student Leagues - the Socialist 'Student League for Industrial Democracy' and the communist 'National Students'League' - worked simultaneously. But, gradually the communists went on gaining majority till their merger into 'The American Student Union' in December 1935 reducing the
Socialists to an impotent minority. 'The American Student Union' the seed-bed for the future intellectual elite of the country, came thus to be captured by the Communists who had spread their nets far and wide in the Youth Movement. Even the American Youth Congress, patronized by Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt was no exception.

The Communists also captured various workers' Unions. When the heads of eight Unions in the A.F.L. formed a Committee for Industrial Organization (C.I.O.) in November 1935 to meet the labour problems arising out of mass-production in industries, vast organization drives were made and a large number of volunteers were enrolled for the job. The communists seized this opportunity and sent a large number of men to factories to establish a political base and gain the final control of the Unions. By 1937, they succeeded in gaining the control of more than a dozen C.I.O. Unions.

The Cultural organizations of America also found themselves crowded with the Communists who, after capturing the League of American Writers, elected Donald Ogden Stewart, a Hollywood film writer, as the President of the Second Congress of the League in June 1937 instead of Waldo Frank, the League's first President. The League was affiliated with the International Union of Revolutionary Writers in the beginning and encouraged revolutionary writing but the election of Stewart indicates a change
from the earlier revolutionary line to that of the slick and polished urban comedy following the change in the Party Policy of 'Popular Front'.

The thirties were the days of armed risings in Spain and trials in Moscow. Spain gave Communism its gilded appeal because the communists were fighting for the loyalist cause there though at a high price. They demanded the control of press and propaganda, command over several armies and the right to maintain their own secret police. But as soon as their demand was conceded a reign of terror against political opponents broke out in the Loyalist camp till the Loyalist cause was irretrievably lost. Similarly, the Moscow trials had such a mystery about them and caused such a terror in Russia that the Americans found their conscience revolting against the dictatorial mass murders of former revolutionaries after branding them as social fascists. The 'confessions' which followed the inhuman torturing of these unfortunate people were eye-openers to the freedom-loving Americans. The intellectuals in America could see a rent in the golden canopy of Communism. The final blow that tore it completely for them came in 1939 when Russia signed a pact with Nazi Germany. The myth of Russia was exploded and their entire disregard of morality, their opportunism and their untrustworthiness shook
the intellectuals to their roots. En bloc they gave communism a kick in disgust. It was their divorce from Russia.

The communists in the forties could appeal only to the ministers of the Church, College professors and scientists mostly because of the Christian and Utopian elements implicit in it. The scientists were attracted by its tough-mindedness and power role. But by and large, the movement had failed to capture the popular imagination. To a majority of American writers, Communism was a beautiful god who had bewitched them from a distance but showed his feet of clay on a close interview.

Dos Passos is almost a historian of the first half of the twentieth century and his heroes reflect the best dreams of the common man in America. But as the reality is at variance with the dreams, they are usually shattered to pieces in a conflict. The Utopian element, however, keeps on reasserting itself as in novel after novel new American adjustments with reality are made whether it is capitalism, New Deal or trade Unionism. The Utopia has consistently remained the same and only the emphasis has been shifted. What is true of Dos Passos is true of Steinbeck too though in a different way. The idea of a self-governing democracy which embraces all ideals that integrate the individual self-interest with the interest of the community forms the basis of
their thinking. In their rejection of the social reality of their times they are rebels against all that stifles the free-development of the human personality. Their leftism, though largely manifested in the rejection of the various aspects of social reality, has the Utopia too in the background. While in the techniques of social action they are democratic and non-violent, challenging the ways of Marx, their Utopia includes much that Marx stood for.

The following chapters interpret and evaluate the extent and quality of the leftist element in their novels, compare and contrast it various aspects and present a study of its development till the final volteface in the sixties. The novelists have been examined in four phases- the early or formative, the socialist, the liberal and the moralist. The leftist element rises like an arch in the first two and then, falls in the last two phases. The conclusion sums up the argument.