The American Socialist

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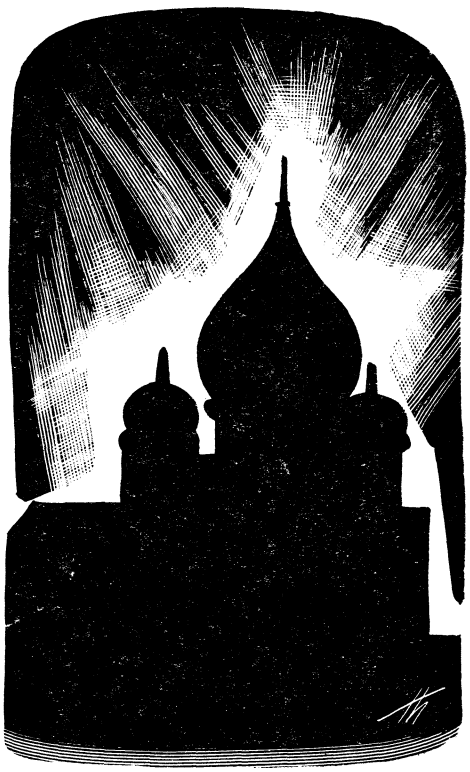
Which Way To a New American Radicalism?



The Russians Revolt Against Stalin

Walking their Way to Freedom

A Special Report from Alabama on the Bus Boycott

CLIPPINGS

SENTIMENT is building up that the Rosenberg trial and executions were a monstrous miscarriage of justice. Judge Patrick H. O'Brien of Detroit, impressed with the solid array of evidence presented in John Wexley's book, "The Judgement of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg," has recommended it to all reviewers. "What makes this case so important today," O'Brien asserts, "is that a young scientist, Morton Sobell, the living co-defendant of the Rosenbergs, is serving a 30-year prison sentence at Alcatraz. He is renewing his appeals in the courts, reasserting his innocence, as he has done from the moment of his arrest."

Professor Francis D. Wormuth in an extended review of the book published in the Western Political Quarterly at the University of Utah concludes his survey with a favorable quotation of these remarks of Elmer Davis: "Assuming that the record is here correctly cited (and I have no reason to suppose that it is not) I cannot believe the testimony of Elitcher and the Greenglasses, or much if any of that of Harry Gold." Professor Wormuth then sums up as follows: "This means that the government had no case against the Rosenbergs. Obviously the Department of Justice cannot answer all criticisms. But unless it answers Mr. Wexley's we must conclude that the Rosenberg case is our Dreyfus case, outdoing the first in sordidness, cruelty and terror." (See letter of Warren K. Billings on Page 31.)

THE strike of 12,000 Republic Aviation Corporation workers at four plants in Long Island, N. Y., passing its first month at the time of writing, has been called by the Machinist, publication of the International Association of Machinists, "the first on the firing line" in this year's national aircraft negotiations. The strikers are up against the combination that has become all too familiar in recent strikes: police brutality, organized scab-herding, and court injunctions. The corporation, which works almost exclusively on government contracts, increased its net worth from $19 million in 1952 to almost $43 million last year, and hiked its dividends three-fold. But it has still not budged from its nickel offer to the workers.

The Machinists and auto union are conducting negotiations with most of the important aircraft companies at this time. The Machinists won their first breakthrough at Lockheed Aircraft in Burbank, California, where a contract was signed providing for an 11-cent increase, upgrading of groups of workers, an automatic 7-cent increase the second year of the contract, and a number of important fringe benefits.

A. J. MUSTE of the Fellowship of Reconciliation announced that a national campaign will be undertaken against the Smith thought-control law. Muste was responsible for starting the Christmas amnesty petition signed by Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt, Norman Thomas and 44 others. According to Muste, a bill to amend the Smith Act will be introduced shortly into Congress by Rep. Roy Weir of Minnesota to eliminate its most objectionable features.

The Emergency Civil Liberties Committee is holding a large public meeting on "The Smith Act—Its Origin, Purpose and Poison" at Carnegie Hall on Wednesday evening, March 28. The gathering will be addressed by Harvey O'Connor, Leonard Boudin, and Dr. Corliss Lamont, and will be chaired by Dr. J. Raymond Walsh. Clark Foreman, ECLC Director, stated in announcing plans for the meeting: "It is ironical that Howard W. Smith, Congressman from Virginia and author of the Act... should be one of the 96 members of Congress who are now attacking the Supreme Court. . . ."

GOVERNOR Harriman is talking militant on the segregation issue, but his acts don't follow suit. He has already signed extradition papers three different times sending back to torture chambers or possible death Negroes who managed to escape North: Willie Morgan to South Carolina, Willie Reid to Florida, and Clarence Crenshaw, who fled an Alabama road gang a year ago. The New York CIO Council told Harriman that a refusal to extradite Crenshaw "will mean more than all the pious primary campaign speeches that are being made from the Atlantic to the Pacific. . . . Never let our friends or enemies say that Crenshaw's death warrant was signed by the Governor of the State of New York because it might serve to corral votes of Southern delegates."

A STORM of protest broke over the head of William F. Tompkins, Chief of the Justice Department Internal Security Division, after he charged that court-appointed lawyers who defend Communists and bar associations which help raise funds to pay expenses were "dupes" of Communists. This vindictive smear attempt was occasioned when five of the Justice Department victims escaped its clutches in the recent Cleveland Smith Act trial. Eugene H. Freedheim, one of the seven court-appointed lawyers and president of the Cleveland Bar Association, declared, "We don't intend to take this attack lying down"; the bar association demanded a public retraction. Stephen M. Young, president of the Cuyahoga Bar Association, branded Tompkins' remarks "incredible and outrageous." E. Smythe Gambrell, president of the American Bar Association, termed the attack as aimed at the very concept of the right to counsel and a fair trial. The Cleveland Press, a Scripps-Howard paper, stated editorially that Cleveland can give Tompkins a lesson in the American Way: "He needs it." Under this barrage Tompkins issued a mealy-mouthed denial of his original remarks. The tide of liberalism has grown so strong it is no longer safe to smear with the red brush presidents or other prominent members of America's bar associations.

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The Russians Revolt Against Stalin

TWO major trends have been in operation since the end of the second World War. First, power has been shifting away from the imperialist West to the forces of socialism reinforced by the independence struggles of the colonial nations; second, the Russian system of government characterized by one-man dictatorship, ubiquitous police rule and Byzantine obscurantism has been colliding and becoming incompatible with the country's emergence as a modern industrial power. The Twentieth Congress of the Russian Communist Party took official notice of these changes both at home and abroad and attempted to align the policies and conduct of the regime with the new reality. That is why the Congress is of historic importance.

When Stalin crushed all his opponents in 1928 and took over as sole dictator, Russia was isolated in a still triumphant capitalist world. Her economy was one of Europe's most primitive and her vast agricultural population heavily illiterate. The country was in the throes of the kulak rebellion to starve the cities, the program for compulsory collectivization of agriculture was just being projected in an atmosphere of crisis, and the first Five Year Plan to try to expand the hitherto stagnating economy was still a year away. Russia seemed to be sunk in the depths of its backwardness.

The present Khrushchev-Bulganin leadership stepped onto the stage of the Communist Party Congress twenty-eight years later on behalf of a Russia that is the second industrial power of the world. Her pre-war isolation has given way before the growth of the Soviet bloc, which now encompasses one-third of the human race. Her erstwhile encirclement is being broken by her friendships with the colonial nations and her military might which includes possession of nuclear weapons. New Russia not only finds Stalin's despotism odious; his very name has to be removed from the pantheon of Soviet heroes. Isaac Deutscher is being proven right in his contention that present-day Russia with its mushrooming cities, its flowering urban mode of life, its working class grown close to 50 million, and its modernized agricultural system cannot be ruled any more by Stalin's crude bludgeon and primitive magic.

AS the country grew strong, its economy far-flung, the Soviet bloc a powerful reality, and the economic and cultural level high, Stalin's barbarous regime appeared increasingly inexcusable and intolerable. The improvements in living standards over the past years only further unloosed the well-springs of aspiration, so long dammed up, for a voice in the building of the country and in the shaping of its destinies, for an end to the nightmare of police surveillance and suppression. From the moment the old dictator was laid in his coffin, the new rulers gave unmistakable signs of understanding that the old methods could no longer continue, that drastic reforms had become unpostponable, and could be ignored only at their own peril.

Stalin's regime had already become an anachronism in its final years and was interfering with Russia's progress. The Lysenko papal decree pointed up the regime's incompatibility with the country's scientific development. The attempt, with the frameup of the Jewish doctors, to resurrect the bloody purges of the thirties sent tremors of apprehension up and down the spines of the ruling circles and millions associated with them in the ranks of government employees and party and industrial personnel. The capitalist world was watching entranced, hopeful that Russia might be due for another internal convulsion where its energies would be consumed in internecine warfare.

Stalin's ideological influences produced, as one Congress delegate put it, "our dessicated and nebulous literature on party history" to feed the minds of the youth inside the country, and the combination of ecclesiastical bombast and bureaucratic rigidity in its foreign pronouncements. It was leading to mental anemia at home, and making the Soviet Union an object of ridicule abroad. Finally, Stalinism dominated the Communist parties of the world no less effectively, if by different methods, than the Vatican controls the Catholic churches throughout Christendom. The system of subverting mass working-class parties into auxiliary detachments of Soviet government policy piled up a mountain of resentments and hatreds which will live on for years to come. But the system came to a dead end when new Communist states arose in Yugoslavia and China. The Moscow monopoly was broken, and the rebuff that Stalin was dealt at the hands of Yugoslavia made evident that a new relationship had to be devised if the Soviet bloc was not to fly apart into warring component sections.

IN all spheres therefore stresses and strains had accumulated dangerously and changes and adjustments were overdue. The Twentieth Congress represents the climactic point in the new leadership's attempt to revamp the archaic structure, to stabilize the post-Stalin regime on viable foundations, and modernize its workings all along the line in tune with the new problems and realities.

The first big accomplishment in this revamping job was the elimination of one-man dictatorship and its substitution by broader committee rule. This change was virtually dictated to the new leaders. Upon Stalin's death, no one person could rise as the undisputed ruler without subjecting the country and the regime to a convulsive bloodbath like Stalin's death grapple with the Bukharin and Trotsky oppositions in 1924-28 that erupted finally into the Moscow Trial witches' sabbath. The new leadership in demoting Malenkov and slapping down Molotov, while still permitting them to function in the leadership, made a public avowal, in effect, of its deep resolve not

BULGANIN

KHRUSHCHEV

MALENKOV

MIKOYAN

The most prominent of the new Russian leaders who are now shedding a fresh light on the past quarter-century of Russian history.

to return to the old way. Many believe that Beria's swift destruction was due precisely to his attempt to violate this gentlemen's agreement and hoist himself into Stalin's exalted seat on the shoulders of the secret police which he headed.

The capitalist press correspondents were skeptical for a while about the legitimacy of the declarations concerning "collective leadership." But their doubts were dispelled as the campaign against the Stalin cult mounted to furious heights at this Congress. The campaign started in truth the very moment the old dictator passed away, when his name all but disappeared from public notice. But instead of the issue dying out as time went on, it continued to gather force until it burst into a full-throated cry at this Congress. From Khrushchev on down every speaker took his pot shot at the "cult of personality" and associated himself over and over again with the "Leninist method of collective leadership." Even the facade of anonymous accusations was flung aside by Mikoyan who savagely tore at Stalin by name, sneered at his pretensions as a theoretician, hurled a philippic against his "twenty years" of dictatorship (which would officially inaugurate it with the Kirov assassination in 1934), proposed to junk his "Short History," rehabilitated in passing several of his victims, one of whom, Antonov-Ovseenko, who had led the assault on the Czar's Winter Palace in 1917, was in earlier days associated with Leon Trotsky. As a parting shot, Mikoyan referred obliquely to Lenin's Testament, which up to now has been a suppressed work in the Soviet Union. The reference could only have been made with the intention of depriving Stalin of the last vestige of kinship with Lenin, in view of the nature of Lenin's final message to the party, dictated on his sick bed several months before his death. Lenin, with remarkable foresight, wrote:

By the stability of the Central Committee, of which I spoke before, I mean measures to prevent a split, so far as such measures can be taken. For, of course, the White Guard in Russkaya Mysl *. . . was right when, in the first place, in his play against Soviet Russia he banked on the hope of a split in our party. . . . I have in mind stability as a guarantee against a split in the near future, and I intend to examine here a series of considerations of a purely personal character.*

I think that the fundamental factor in the matter of stability—from this point of view—is such members of the Central Committee as Stalin and Trotsky. The relation between them constitutes, in my opinion, a big half of the danger of that split, which might be avoided, and the avoidance of which might be promoted, in my opinion, by raising the number of members of the Central Committee to fifty or one hundred.

Comrade Stalin, having become General Secretary, has concentrated an enormous power in his hands, and I am not sure that he always knows how to use that power with sufficient caution. On the other hand, Comrade Trotsky, as was proved by his struggle against the Central Committee in connection with the question of the People's Commissariat of Ways and Communications, is distinguished not only by his exceptional abilities—personally he is, to be sure, the most able in the present Central Committee—but also by his too far-reaching self-confidence and a disposition to be too much attracted by the purely administrative side of affairs.

These two qualities of the two most able leaders of the present Central Committee might, quite innocently, lead to a split; if our party does not take measures to prevent it, a split might arise unexpectedly. . . .

This testament was dictated by Lenin on December 25, 1922. Then a week later on January 4, 1923, he added this postscript:

Stalin is too rude, and this fault, entirely supportable in relations among us Communists, becomes insupportable in the office of General Secretary. Therefore, I propose to the comrades to find a way to remove Stalin from that position and appoint to it another man who in all respects differs from Stalin only in superiority—namely, more patient, more loyal, more polite and more attentive to comrades, less capricious, etc. This circumstance may seem an insignificant trifle, but I think that from the point of view of preventing a split and from the point of view of the relation between Stalin and Trotsky which I discussed above, it is not a trifle, or it is such a trifle as may acquire a decisive significance.

After the Congress, the foreign correspondents got word that Khrushchev delivered an additional secret report

where he made sensational charges that Stalin was a paranoiac murderer who kept his associates in a state of terror, a military bungler who brought the country to the edge of disaster, and an irresponsible intriguer who had stripped the Red Army of its effective leadership with the execution of Marshal Tukhachevsky and other leading officers.

HOW account for this unabated drive to destroy the prestige of a man in his grave? How account for its passion? The present leaders clearly despised the old megalomaniac and hated the system which forced them to grovel at his feet and deliver Byzantine homage to his alleged genius. But the Stalinist system, beyond degrading the individual, held a whole bureaucracy in the grip of unutterable fear that any day, with a turn of the wheel outside of their own control, relations might alter on top and therewith thrust them into disgrace or worse. They are now resolved to destroy the Stalin cult root and branch. Not primarily to give vent to their own pent-up grievances, but to make impossible a recrudescense of personal dictatorship. The declarations of the Congress served notice on any would-be Caesar that his pretensions will not be tolerated, and an assurance to the millions in the governmental and party staffs that they have no need to link their careers with this or that leader but can rally behind a whole collective committee without fear of reprisals or discrimination.

The broadening of the base of rulership at the topmost level is apparently accompanied by an attempt to loosen and decentralize the top-heavy structure which they inherited. More than 11,000 industrial enterprises have been turned over to the constituent Republics in the past two years, and Khrushchev made a special point in his report of the need to disperse the various industrial and scientific institutions. The Congress similarly amended the party rules to regularize the convocation of regional and local congresses and meetings. In other words, there is a concerted attempt to grant more autonomy in local matters to both the government and party divisions, to encourage initiative among a host of second-line officials who had learned under Stalin that the safest policy was to pass the buck, and to breathe some

STALIN

life into innumerable institutions which have become badly atrophied in recent decades. It is possible that this decentralization concept was borrowed from Tito's experiences in Yugoslavia, where it has been experimented with since the latter's break with Stalin. Khrushchev's report stressed the estrangement of the party from the masses, and these measures are obviously intended to reestablish influence with the rank and file.

THE Khrushchev-Bulganin government is continuing to pour its major efforts and capital into expansion of heavy industry, and the breakneck pace to catch up with the United States will be maintained. The people's needs will have to wait. While, according to Khrushchev's figures, real wages of factory and office workers increased 39 percent over the past five years, they are scheduled to increase only 30 percent in the next five years. The real income of collective farmers rose by about 50 percent in this period, and is scheduled to go up 40 percent during the sixth Five Year Plan. Nevertheless, the regime hopes to improve living conditions in many ways despite its heavy-industry concentration, and the structural lopsidedness and unevenness of the economy, because Soviet economy is now so vast that it can begin producing all sorts of consumers goods even as a by-product of its main efforts, especially in those industries which do not require too great an outlay of capital and heavy equipment.

For example, the per-capita supply of cotton goods, which was about 25 yards in 1955, is to be 32 yards in 1960, approximately Britain's standard. Shoes which are now manufactured 1½ pairs per person per year, will rise to 2 per year, again approximately the same as in Britain. However, in electrical appliances, automobiles, radio and TV, and above all, in housing, Russia continues to lag behind the West very badly. But the regime obviously hopes to compensate for its modest goals in this sphere by a considerable improvement in welfare advances such as lowering the work week with no reduction in pay, wage adjustments for the lower-paid categories of workers, raising pensions for the aged, doubling the school-building program, abolition of all tuition fees, free hot lunches to students, etc., and the promise to double urban housing construction in the course of the coming Plan.

ON the ideological front, Khrushchev-Bulganin are out to junk the Stalin mythology which is unusable in New Russia and of even less worth outside where it cannot be rammed down anybody's throat by police sanctions. What is in the offing, so far as the Congress reports indicate, is the revamping of the ideology on a more modern and workable level, the rehabilitation of some of the old names, in order to permit the past and present to be presented in more mature terms and the word brought into some harmony with the deed, to lift the dead hand of bureaucracy that has been impeding the progress of science, and to give more elbow room to the arts which are in a sad state of decay.

Finally, on the international field, the new leadership has for the past three years been occupied in drastically overhauling the old methods, concepts and relationships, and by a series of bold strokes has won moral authority for itself over the capitalist West. It withdrew its troops from Austria and established the concept of friendship with countries that stay out of either power bloc, thus opening up the road to the big strategy of neutralizing Germany. It rectified Stalin's outrage against Yugoslavia and therewith demonstrated that it was willing to deal with socialist countries outside of its bloc on a basis of mutual sovereignty. It concluded a treaty of friendship with China which accepted the latter as a partner of the Soviet bloc. It elimi-

nated some of the worst abuses in the East-European satellite states such as the joint-stock corporations and the reparations payments, and has apparently loosened its hold in other ways. It withdrew from its bases in Finland and Manchuria.

Acting on the conviction of growing Soviet strength, the leaders have given a dazzling display of purposeful virtuosity in their diplomatic dealings with the West. They have relied not only on diplomatic conferences and exchanges, but at times talked over the heads of governments to the peoples on behalf of disarmament, peace, trade, the aspirations of backward countries to free themselves from the imperialist grip and to industrialize. It is not with the voice of Russian Communism in the first days after 1917 when Lenin and his co-workers thought Europe was going revolutionary any day. But it is undeniably a step toward a return to an internationalist perspective as against Stalin's long night of national self-exclusiveness and contempt for the labor and popular movements outside of Russia.

THE Congress recorded the superiority of the socialist system of national ownership and planned production in figures that leave no room for argument. Since the first Five Year Plan a quarter of a century ago, Russian industrial output increased twenty times over despite the frightful damages inflicted by Hitler in the second World War. In that same period the Unites States doubled its output and the other Western countries didn't do quite that well. It will still be many years before Russia equals the United States in overall production and consumption, but the trend is all with the socialist mode. And with Russia's rise as the second industrial power, the harsh political regime is beginning to mellow, very haltingly, very restrictedly, as yet—but here too the trend is in the right direction. All the ex-Communist and capitalist Cassandras who saw things only getting worse and worse until we would reach the nightmare of "1984" stand repudiated as false prophets. The Soviet Union, with the growth of its economy, is not deepening the aspect of Asian barbarism, but is beginning to turn its back on the bloody twenty-five-year interlude.

WE would be far off base were we to jump to the conclusion that the dictatorship is now a thing of the past, or is any day due to end. The reforms promulgated by the Twentieth Congress follow along strictly demarcated lines. The stratification of Russian society with its glaring inequalities remains as under Stalin the working basis of the system. But a number of improvements and steps toward equality are being introduced. That these will not be permitted to transgress the established system for a while was driven home by Khrushchev himself when he inveighed against the "hotheads" who wanted to pass over to "the transition to communism"—in other words, to wipe out the major inequalities of present-day Soviet society.

The draconian criminal code had not yet been altered. A new code was promised in 1953 but its issuance has been repeatedly delayed since then. Voroshilov announced, however that the new code is now completed, that the whole judiciary system has been reorganized, and that a new labor code is being worked on. Furthermore, the reports are apparently authentic that most of Stalin's concentration and forced-labor camps have been closed, and that those inmates who have not been rehabilitated are permitted to live as free people in prescribed areas. It is probable therefore that the political climate has improved considerably.

Nevertheless Soviet criminal and constitutional law cannot by any stretch of the imagination be considered as satisfactory for a socialist state, as it lacks the safeguards of the Bill of Rights, and is harsh to the point of savagery with the liberties of the individual.

The Communist Party, one gathers from the Congress, is due for a considerable shaking up, and it may soon

British Left Looks at the Changes in Russia

THE world this week is still trying to work out the significance of three amazing speeches delivered at the congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Put together with all that has happened since the death of Stalin, they reveal a change whose importance cannot be exaggerated.

Nothing like it has been seen since Peter the Great took a pair of garden shears and cut off the beards of the Russian nobles to teach them that they were out of date.

The Khrushchev message took six hours to deliver, but its essence can be summed up in three words: *Think for yourselves!* Two hundred million people, long imprisoned by dogma, and mesmerized by the frown of a dictator, are encouraged to start working out for themselves the answers to the manifold problems of an expanding economy.

It has never been true, even in the darkest days, that the Russian people were enslaved by brute force, after the same fashion as the Germans after Hitler.

The achievements of the successive five-year plans and the heroic defense of their country would have been impossible, had they not possessed a strong sense of comradeship and a passionate identification with the social system instituted in 1917.

These achievements were themselves hindered, and this devotion sorely tested, by the brain-numbing idolization of Stalin, by a vast force of police and spies delving into words and thoughts as well as deeds, by waves of killings and prison sentences for minor offenses and for no offense at all, and by the substitution of decree for discussion everywhere from the Kremlin down to the local party cell.

WHO says so? For years the faintest murmur of such criticisms—only possible in capitalist countries—was denounced by the Communists as slander or nonsense or both. Now this picture of the Stalin era is drawn in uncompromising phrases by Khrushchev, Malenkov, and Mikoyan.

In this situation nothing is more pathetic than the gasping cry from the *Daily Worker*, as it pants to keep up with Khrushchev, that the Congress "is giving the world a valuable lesson by example" in self-criticism.

If anyone needs this lesson it is those who slavishly approved the worst excesses of Stalinism and who would find excuses readily if Khrushchev turned back to absolute tyranny.

Happily, there is a good chance that will not happen. The change is a real change. What matters is to see the reasons for it, to prepare for its future effects, and to take full advantage of it in the interests of peace and of genuine socialism.

Bevan's London *Tribune*
February 24, 1956

enjoy more freedom in the management of its local business, but it remains nonetheless a regimented organization obsessed with the doctrine of monolithism. As for such democratic concepts as the right of opposition parties to exist, an opposition press, free speech and assembly—we are still a long way away from that. In other words, the Khrushchev-Bulganin government seeks to stabilize the new regime by a considerable break with past Stalinist practices in major fields and by revamping, modernizing and decentralizing the dictatorship, but retaining right now the basic structure and the hierarchical stratification that they inherited from the previous regime.

It can be assumed that the reforms will be accepted with a lot of gratification on the part of the Russian people. What the exact mood of the masses is in Russia is difficult to say, in the absence of a free press. In Poland, when the regime permitted a wide latitude of criticism last year, the press was literally inundated by a flood of grievances and bitter comments which revealed a lot of dissatisfaction with the drabness of life, the regimentation, and the fakery of official propaganda. The mood may be less hectic in Russia: The achievements of the Soviet system both at home and abroad are so sensational, the opportunities for the young generation are so enormous in the swiftly growing country, and open up such inspiring vistas, that for the next years the shape of the Soviet state may well be the one drawn by its leaders at the Twentieth Congress.

Even here, the rehabilitation of people previously designated as public enemies, and the re-writing of 25 years of history, have a logic of their own: One rectification will open up the demand for another. Undoubtedly, we will witness in the coming months more changes, and more loosening up, before a new equilibrium is established.

BUT historically, the new regime has to be considered a transient stage toward the establishment of a full political democracy of socialism. All dictatorships, even the best ones, rest heavily on a people, and are oppressive to its spirit. When enough circumstances in the form of people's understanding, high level of culture and economic advancement mature, the irrepressible desire for freedom will break through and demand satisfaction. The stratification of Soviet society into a comparatively privileged sector of military, government and party officials, professionals, industrial managers, etc., and a far less privileged mass, arose in the country because of its poverty and backwardness, and the need to create a new governing elite in a hurry. With the rise of the cultural level and the material enrichment, the demand for equality is growing and will in time become irresistible. As the country matures, its people will increasingly resent being spoon-fed predigested ideology. This is already evident in the arts and sciences, and soon the demand for an independent voice in their affairs will be heard in spheres that affect the mass of the people more directly and immediately. We can sum up by saying that the Twentieth Congress represented at one and the same time an overdue adjustment to the changed realities inside the Soviet Union and abroad, and a faint harbinger of the future toward which the country is now unmistakably travelling, whatever may be the ebbs and flows of the process.

The doctrinal discussions and innovations introduced at the Congress are of considerable interest and connote a determined effort to again infuse Russian Marxism with the spark of life which Stalin extinguished during his reign. Some of the discussions on international relations and trends in the United States were of a higher order than have been heard at Soviet gatherings for years. The Soviet leaders modified traditional Leninist doctrine on the questions of war and the road to socialism in the light of the new facts in the world situation, and probably impelled by the exigencies of their practical political needs. The presentations on the latter question at the

Congress were far more complex than the U.S. press indicated, and we must leave discussion of the theoretical aspects to another occasion.

BUT the theoretical modifications will certainly facilitate the Soviet's politics. The Russian leaders have in the past few years grown highly effective in their efforts to box up the U.S. State Department and its assortment of war blocs in Europe and Asia. The purpose of this strategy, let us recall, is to make it difficult if not impossible for the American jingoes to take the path of war. The thesis that the war threat comes from Russia is the big lie of our times, and it is a lie that the New Look Soviet diplomacy is exploding with growing success. The American policy makers are not afraid of war coming from the other side. They know better. Here is their dilemma as their own authoritative journals describe it:

> *Khrushchev feels convinced the Soviet Union, rather than the U.S., is operating from strength. He has no hesitation in confronting the U.S. with these two alternatives*: 1) *accept a pact between the "two greatest powers of the world" that would end the arms race in return for a neutralized Europe; or* 2) *face increased Soviet pressure to blow up the Western alliance and isolate American influence to the Western Hemisphere.* (Business Week, *February* 18, 1956.)

That is a correct if too abbreviated summary of the Soviet position.

Among the different approaches being brought into play on behalf of the Soviet aim is the friendly proposal for joint action with the Western Social Democrats. The recent Social Democratic conference has already scornfully declined the invitation. But that does not end the matter at all. Especially in those countries where the Communists are strong as in France and Italy, the call for united action will evoke widespread popular response. As this unity sentiment grows, Socialists will only lose face and influence if they attempt to sidestep it.

Unfortunately, the Communist leaders in both France and Italy are interpreting their tasks (presumably on Moscow's inspiration) by calling for the creation of pre-war Peoples Front governments, which means governments based on a coalition of the workers' parties with those of the liberal capitalist groups. This coalition policy, so-called, did not work out successfully before the war and there is nothing to indicate that it will be any more satisfactory today. Working class parties get a chance to form governments in periods of capitalist crisis when the nation is deeply dissatisfied with traditional capitalist rule. The workers and middle-class elements back the workers' parties in the faith that these parties will introduce basic, radical changes in the sick social system to redress the most crying injustices and wrongs. But the very alliance of labor with the middle-class liberals is predicated on the government not introducing any basic alterations in the capitalist setup, and any attempt to do so would be met with the immediate split of the capitalist party from the coalition.

The Peoples Front coalition government is thus limited by its very nature and composition to putting through minor reforms which cannot help but disappoint its supporters and give aid and comfort to reactionary and fascist elements who thereupon push their claim that only they have a solution for the crisis of "decaying democracy." Strong voices in the Italian Communist Party have been heard within the past year calling for an end to this present right-wing policy of appeasement and catering to the capitalist leaders of the Center. It is to be hoped that these voices will get strong enough to shift the present course of West European Communism and change the most important of these parties into independent instruments of their respective working classes.

The Twentieth Congress has already thrust the Communist Parties around the world into a first-class crisis. Involved is not a question of making a mistake or two, but the basic proposition of whether parties can be run by little dictators who are themselves only robots and repeat parrot-like everything they are told by others. This question is of primary importance to all of us as socialists, and we intend to return to it again for more extended treatment very soon.

IF there is any one conclusion that has impressed itself upon us from studying the reports and discussions of the Twentieth Congress sessions, it is the utter imbecility of American socialists trying to build a movement in this country on the shifting sands of Russian policy and changes of government personnel. No popular movement will be built here that bases itself on the kaleidoscopic changes arising from the development of a foreign revolution. American socialists must certainly have an attitude of friendship for Soviet Russia and all socialist countries. We must try to learn from their experiences as well as mistakes. We must support them against the slanders and attacks of capitalism. But we socialists must retain our critical faculties about the doings in the socialist countries as about all other matters.

Socialists will build a viable movement in the United States only if they are animated with the conviction that the American working people must determine their own destiny, retain their own sovereignty of decision within their own organization, and create their own self-reliant leaders responsible to them, and only to them. Past attempts to build a movement as an adjunct of Russia have failed—and if the attempt is made again, it will fail even more ignominiously. Socialists have to be internationalists of course. But that grand concept must never be bowdlerized to mean that an American socialist movement will surrender its own independence or become an apologist for un-socialist behavior anywhere in the world even if it is backed up by state power.

It appears that everybody on the Left has now been converted to the concept that socialism will develop in each country in line with its own special needs, national characteristics, background, and indigenous peculiarities. If this general truth is now converted into a solid understanding that the old Communist movement has failed because it did not live up to this precept, that what is now required is a collaboration of Left forces looking toward the creation—when the time is opportune—of a new socialist party on new healthy foundations, then the American Left will have grown a head taller. It will be better prepared to face and eventually solve the problems of its temporarily difficult isolation in this country.

Walking their Way to Freedom

by A Special Correspondent

The magnificent movement in Montgomery described and analyzed in this on-the-spot report of the bus boycott and the people who made it possible.

HOW does one account for the boycott of city buses carried on for four months by the 40,000 Negro residents of Montgomery, Alabama? Although "the Cradle of the Confederacy" has grown in recent years, nothing makes it seem other than a sleepy Southern town. No new industries have altered its landscape; it leeches off two air-force bases near the city limits. A venerable family oligarchy controls the political strings; Negro voters number a pitiful 1,600. The Shinto worship of ancestors thrives as in no other place in the region, except perhaps Charleston, S. C., and the Negro community bears the surnames of white aristocracy—symbolizing a racial relationship that remained substantially unaltered from slavery days.

Then what happened? Was the boycott an NAACP "plot"? Although virtually all of the boycott spokesmen are NAACP members, one has said that the organization "looked down" on the protest at its outset because it did not seek integration. The boycotters' original main demand, drafted at a mass meeting the night of December 5, was for racial division of passengers on a first-come, first-served basis. This is the arrangement in effect in most Southern cities.

Two decades of mistreatment provided the fodder for the protest. Every Negro who boarded a bus stood a good chance of being abused. Drivers, under cover of enforcing segregation statutes, constantly yanked up Negro passengers to provide seats for late-coming whites. They passed by Negroes waiting at stops. Negroes were required to pay at the front door and then get on at the rear, so that drivers sometimes took their fares and drove off without them. Drivers even carried pistols in their cash boxes to "settle" disputes over change and transfers. Year after year delegations of Negroes called on city and transit-line officials, asking better treatment. They received nothing, not even a courteous audience, because the white fathers thought that the bulk of the Negro population was hopelessly dependent on transit service. "You would think that since we were their best customers, they'd try to please us a little," a Negro stenographer commented bitterly. "But they wanted it easy. They wanted our money and wanted to beat on us, too. I have just put them out of my mind. I can keep walking forever."

THE incident that touched off things happened simply and spontaneously. It was not a test case. On the night of December 1, 1955, Mrs. Rosa Parks, a seamstress at a Montgomery department store, was returning home from work. She boarded the bus that would take her to the public-housing project where she lived. She was carrying a sack of groceries, bursitis racked her shoulders, and she was dead-tired. She sat near the front of the Negro section. After a few minutes she heard the driver order her to move to the back—where there were no seats vacant. She looked up and saw a white man waiting to claim her place. She didn't move. The driver again called out. She still didn't move. The driver then stopped the bus, announcing that he was going for the police. For thirty minutes the passengers remained in the halted vehicle. No one got out, no one—white or Negro—spoke to her. "It was the longest time of my life," Mrs. Parks recalls. The police came and she was booked for violating the segregation ordinance—although the law specifically states that the driver can only reassign passengers if there are other seats available.

E. D. Nixon, sleeping-car porter who is president of his union local, put up her bond. The following day he summoned the city's Negro ministers and suggested organizing a mass protest. As former president of the Alabama NAACP and long-time fighter for the right to vote, Nixon had some claim on the consciences of the men of the cloth. And Mrs. Parks, too, was not unknown. For years she had been doing the drab secretarial and dues-collecting chores of keeping an NAACP chapter alive in Montgomery, without thanks or glory. Nixon suggested that Negroes stay off the buses on the day of her trial, scheduled

The author is a prominent Southern journalist and participant in the new movement of the Negro people.

for December 5. The proposal won the enthusiastic approval of the Rev. M. L. King, Jr., 27-year-old native of Atlanta and graduate of Boston University, and he persuaded the others. The following Sunday some twenty ministers passed the idea along to their congregations.

NATURALLY, word leaked out to the white community. Police commissioner Clyde Sellers announced that he was assigning patrolmen to protect would-be passengers against Negro "goon squads." The newspapers held up to ridicule hand-lettered signs that had been posted in Negro neighborhoods, announcing the boycott. But December 5 found the organizational strength of the Negroes more than equal to the task. The vehicles volunteered to carry commuters covered the range of the social spectrum —from Cadillacs to battered trucks. Negro-owned taxicabs offered a special rate of a dime a person to any place in the city. Those who walked, walked proudly. The bus line admitted that the protest was 95 percent effective. The spectacle of motorcycle police escorting empty buses provided a vivid proof of the helplessness of white force against the united Negro will. Mrs. Parks was convicted and fined $14, but the bus company lost more than two thousand dollars that day and was to lose thousands more.

That night, at a meeting originally intended to be a religious close to the activities, some 10,000 Negroes overflowed a church building and shouted their desire to continue until the bus line agreed to change conditions. Nixon called the event "the most amazing and the most heartening thing I have seen in my life. The leaders were led. It was a vertical thing." A timid, long-suffering, precarious community had found itself. As in most Southern cities, the class structure of Montgomery Negro society consists of a handful of professional men and a mass of unskilled, impoverished workers. Neither business opportunities nor unionization amount to enough to provide a class that bridges these two groups, and the economic interests of potential leaders and potential followers are often at such variance as to stultify collective action. (It should be noted that Southern white society, though generally better off, is also divided sharply, on lines that are as much psychological as economic. A dominant "plantation" attitude and a docile "sharecropper" response defeat attempts to gain such basic civic improvements as paved streets, modern sewage disposal, etc.)

HOWEVER, in the Negro community there is a tradition of organized self-help bred out of the hard necessity of survival. Basically, it amounts to the idea that scavenging for a living can be accomplished better in teams than singly. In Montgomery, when the Negroes provided their own transportation system, they were only behaving toward the transit buses as, on many another occasion, they had been obliged to do for medical care, shelter, and food. Inspired (and perhaps surprised) by the effect their gesture had on a previously indifferent white community, the Negroes declared they were embarking on a campaign of "passive resistance." As a people they had been passively resisting extinction all their lives; the difference now was that a meaning and a pride had been given their struggle. They have remained solid and unabashed in the face of police harassment, White Citizens

Among those taken into custody for violating an ancient anti-labor statute by their work on behalf of the bus boycott were (l. to r.): Rev. R. D. Abernathy, Rev. Garner, Rufus Lewis, Rev. Leroy Bennett, Rev. W. F. Alford, Rev. J. M. Cherry, Rev. H. H. Herbert, and Eli Judkins.

Council threats, bombings, and the arrest of 89 leaders under an old anti-boycott law originally intended to smash labor unions.

The Montgomery county grand jury specifically accused Negro ministers of organizing the boycott. Ministers make up a majority of members of the executive board of the Montgomery Improvement Association, which has coordinated strategy and financed a car pool costing $2,100 a month to operate. The movement is, indeed, a religious movement in all appearances. Boycotters hold meetings twice a week at various churches—gatherings limited in attendance only by the size of the building. Hymn singing and sermons make up most of the program. Such religious emphasis is not surprising in view of the historic relationship of the Negro and his church:

1. The church is literally the Negro's only sanctuary in the Deep South. Only here can mass meetings be held without threat of police raid. Only here can rare interracial gatherings take place.

2. The Montgomery ministers avowedly accepted leadership because it would be harder to bring pressure to bear on them. Ministers are virtually the only Negro professional men who need not depend to some extent on the good will of the white community.

3. The only language of protest that does not bring harsh retribution from the whites is protest couched in Christian terminology. The Negro, therefore, must use this idiom to air his grievances. Significantly, the choice of hymns at the Montgomery meetings includes: *We Shall Not Be Moved, Nobody Knows the Trouble I've Seen,* and a special set of lyrics to *Old-Time Religion*:

We are moving on to victory
We are moving on to victory
We are moving on to victory
With hope and dignity.

We will all stand together . . .
Until we all are free.

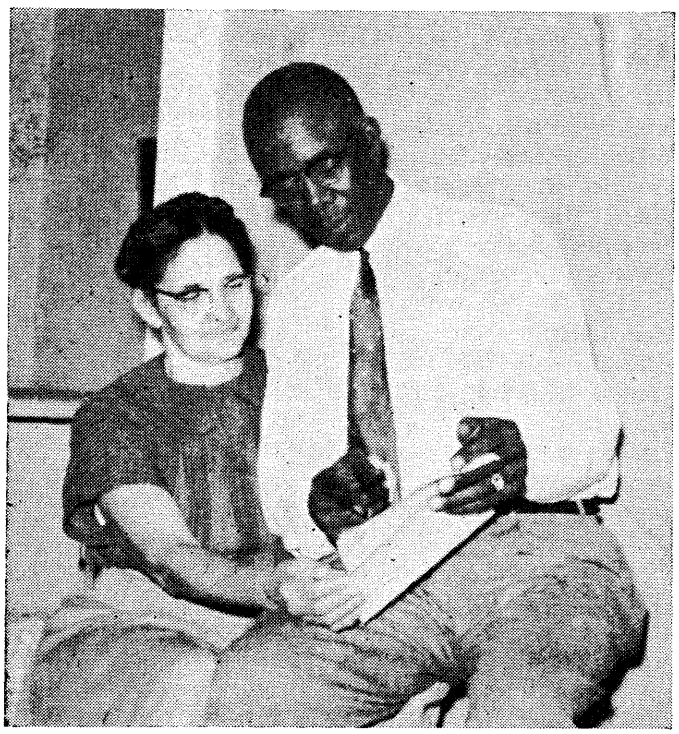
Black and white both are brothers . . .
To live in harmony.

The Negroes have now filed a federal suit challenging the constitutionality of city and state transit segregation laws, and Mrs. Parks's conviction is being appealed toward the same end. Action against other racial barriers has not been mentioned publicly.

BUT there is a force among the Negroes of Montgomery who looks beyond the immediate goal: E. D. Nixon, a tall, lean, deliberate native son. He declares emphatically, "The South will never be free until the Negro is able to free himself and then set the Southern white man free."

How will this be done? Through economic understanding and unionization, he says. But he does not claim it will be easy. Negroes generally have not been educated for union membership. And on the unions' side, the national bodies—especially the AFL—have not "cleaned their house." He regrets that Negro members of the railroad brotherhoods did not seize the recent lengthy Louisville & Nashville strike as an opportunity to end the non-voting auxiliaries to which they are consigned. When the Birmingham, Ala., Federation of Teachers withdrew from the national organization because of the latter's anti-segregationist policy, he tried in vain to get Negro teachers to apply for the charter.

He tells with pride of the Montgomery bricklayers' local, where Negroes did obtain the charter and whites were obliged to apply to them for membership. Their meetings and social affairs are unsegregated and union activities proceed smoothly. The all-Negro Amalgamated Clothing Workers local in Montgomery is giving official support to the boycott. He says he feels "sort of a father" of that union, since he wrote directly to Walter Reuther to call attention to the workers' desire to organize. Reuther passed the letter to a regional representative, who in turn mailed Nixon the cards.



Mr. and Mrs. E. D. Nixon read some of the messages of congratulation the boycott has been receiving from all over the country.

Nixon is not impressed by the growth of the White Citizens Councils, nor by their spread among white union members. He cites several racist organizations which had their vogue and "then blew up, leaving a few men holding a lot of money."

But doesn't the constant cropping-up of these outfits prove that the Southern whites are dead-set in their prejudices? How do you go about setting them free?

"Show them. Traditions don't change by themselves, you have to change them," he fired back. And he told this story:

"I was asked to talk before these workers at a creosote plant—a mixed group—where one white man was holding back the drive to get them in the union. I knew about this fellow, that he lived in a cheap house with blocks under it and a privy in the back and a dirt road in the front. His children had to walk a long ways to get to school. So I used it against him. I told him, in front of the audience at the meeting, that if the boss set so much store on his white skin he'd pay him enough to let him live in a decent house in a good neighborhood. Being white ain't worth a damn when you're hungry.

"That fellow got up and he said, 'Yes, by God, I've been the one stopping the union. And I never thought I'd see the day when a black n——r would convince me to join. Where are the cards?' That night they got a union."

NIXON is fairly sanguine about the situation in Alabama. "I feel hopeful. This boycott is the best thing that ever happened. It has shown the world what is going on down here. I can't say what will come of it, but I can say this: I've been fighting for twenty years—I'm almost disappointed when a week goes by without getting a threat on my life—but I'll be fighting still, even if nobody isn't saying a word but me."

The example of Montgomery is fermenting the thinking of Negroes all over the South. But if the Montgomery boycotters are not to be worn down through the "massive resistance" of white supremacists, who know very well its potential importance, they must gain reinforcements. And if the Montgomery boycott is to be truly victorious, its participants must be given a glimpse of other goals they can earn. An obvious source of support and inspiration is the national labor movement. Union funds should be made available in substantial amounts. Prominent union speakers should express their willingness to come to Montgomery, if they are invited. And, perhaps more painful to the hierarchy of labor, fruitful efforts must be made to curb the pro-White Citizens Council activities of Alabama unions.

If the union movement does not accept this opportunity to gain the respect and interest of the Negro population of the South, such leaders as E. D. Nixon will not be hurt or discouraged. They have learned to endure. The Negro masses, who never expected anything from "white folks' clubs" anyway, will keep on taking care of themselves as best they can. And union labels will remain scarcer in the South than Confederate fifty-cent pieces.

The prolonged period of full employment has shaken the Left's confidence in Marxist economics, and given rise to all sorts of "coalitionist" notions in politics. This discussion of socialist perspectives sets forth a program for the coming period.

Which Way to a New American Radicalism?

by Harry Braverman

BY this time, the fact that the American Left has suffered a serious decomposition—in numbers, spirit, organization, and ideology—is no longer anybody's private secret. The problem is being discussed from time to time in periodicals and organizations of the Left, and even those groups which try hardest to maintain an outward demeanor of calm and unruffled composure show signs of a shaken confidence.

As an important example of such recent discussions, the two series of articles in the *National Guardian* by Tabitha Petran represented a healthy reaction against shortcomings of the American radical movement which have weakened it in its present crisis. The Communist Party took a heavy and well-deserved slugging for its long-time penchant for dealing in slogans and maneuvers without regard for their basic soundness; for its failure to base its work, these many years, upon a serious and sustained advocacy of socialism in America; for its latest hapless adventure in the form of a so-called "coalition policy"—this last being nothing but a fancy name for a pathetic attempt to become a tail on a capitalist donkey.

It is widely understood that some of the major causes for the Left's decline were outside its own control: the stabilization and expansion of the capitalist economy after World War II, and the red-scare hysteria connected with the cold war. No tactical recipes can drastically change our situation, and infuse glowing health and rapid growth. But what such a discussion can produce, if it is honestly and fearlessly pursued, is a renewal of perspective, without which no movement can thrive, and a set of tactics which can meet the most pressing present problems, restore a secure footing and balance, and open the way for progress on a small scale today and on a larger scale when the situation in the country is more favorable.

MUCH of the discussion has rightly centered around the prospects for the U. S. economy. Many reasons have been adduced, both on the Left and elsewhere, why we can no longer expect any serious economic debacle in America. Government intervention and stabilizers, war production, new industries, have all figured in the argument. But undoubtedly the weightiest of all considerations has gone unmentioned: the conservatism of the human mind. Much economic reasoning that passes itself off as based on deep and technical cogitation rests on no more than the difficulty on the part of the reasoner of conceiving a sharp turn in a situation which has continued without break for a relatively long period of time. Realism is a quality of thinking much to be admired and striven after, but where it lacks an essential leavening of flexibility and dynamism it tends to see the future as a simple and indefinite continuation of the seemingly solid and impressive trends of the present. In an epoch which is subject to sharp changes—without notice—the better prophets have often been the "unrealistic visionaries."

The truth of the matter is that the long prosperity has shaken the confidence of many American socialists in the Marxist economic analysis. The end of World War II was firmly expected to produce a return to the depression of the thirties. Later, the '49 slump was regarded as the definitive turn in the economy, and again in 1954 the expectations were renewed. Leaving aside whether these analyses—which all on the Left shared in common—were justified at the time they were made and just what altered the picture in each case, the effect in the Left was in every instance a further weakening of confidence. The hypnotic effect of a long-sustained boom which began to involve many people on the Left personally in its workings didn't help matters much ideologically either, although financially the effect was salubrious in individual cases.

IN the process, much of the Marxist conviction leaked out and left a hollow shell of ceremonial phrases filled by a kind of left-Keynesian content. Many ex-radicals working as research directors for labor unions may secretly believe that they are surreptitiously bringing Marxism to America when they throw out a few superficial remarks about "the worker not being able to buy back what he produces" but a serious American left wing has to be grounded on more solid ideas.

Thus the first requirement of a discussion is that we stop nibbling at the edges of the problem of the American economy and go in for a thoughtful consideration of the core of the problem: Has the fatal imbalance of the capitalist structure of production and distribution been corrected, or can it be basically corrected, by the governmental measures that have been taken or which are in prospect? If that question is answered in the affirmative, then the traditional Marxist perspective must be set down as no longer valid, and a snail's-pace program of reform put in its place as the only practical course for the indefinite future. In that case, the posture of distinct separation from liberalism which the Left now maintains ought to be altered, and the program of merging with the liberals in the Democratic Party becomes a proper or at least a possible course of action.

It has by now become pretty widely accepted in several

schools of economic thought that every capitalist boom period is accompanied by certain features which lead to its downfall: The boom carries the seed of its own destruction. The Keynes school saw the trouble in a "psychological law" by which people don't increase their spending as fast as their incomes go up during a prosperity; this leads to a growing gap which investment fails to bridge, and this in turn leads to a downward spiral. But statistical observation in many periods of rising income has stubbornly refused to confirm the existence of such a "psychological law."

The over-simplified theory of the laborites is that in a boom, profits rise faster than wages, thus producing a shortage of purchasing power. While this cuts closer to the heart of the matter, it takes effect for cause, and fails to dig deeply enough for the underlying reasons. The theory falls down when one considers that the remedy it proposes—rising wages—is a feature of every boom period, and has never yet succeeded in preventing the collapse.

THE unique feature of the Marxist analysis is that it describes a basic disproportion in capitalist economy which cannot be lifted out of the system short of doing away with capitalism. Every boom hits its stride because of a growing strength in purchasing power, but this in turn produces a frenzy of competition and expansion in industry which is bound to far outrace the population's consuming power. The mechanics which force capitalism to this end are not primarily psychological, although that element plays a role in the later stages of an upswing, but are directly economic in character. In the anarchy, planlessness and jungle law of capitalist competition, each capitalist is forced to fight for his profit position and competitive standing; the race of technology and productivity grows exceedingly swift; every possible particle of capital and credit is drawn into the maelstrom in which money miraculously breeds money; and every encouragement in the way of a boost in purchasing power drives the boom to more dangerous speculative heights and overexpansion of industry. To eliminate depression by a rise in wages adds a trifle of consuming power and keeps the bubble going a while, but only inflates it bigger in the long run.

Are we in such a speculative boom today? There is no purpose here to dive once more into a juggling of figures about the national income, investment, consumption, etc., as this material has already been paraded extensively in the press to the point where people are getting to know those facts as well as they know their own wages, and, in any event, what can be drawn from them has a limited value. One feature of the attack which has been made upon the economic problem is worth considering, however.

IF we retrace our steps over the analysis which was made by the Left during the past decade, we find that our starting point was this: The boom, it was postulated, is due to the vastly expanded military program which was inaugurated with the cold war. This first axiom was undoubtedly correct. But from there we went on to others which may not have been so correct. Take away the expanding war sector, we said, and the boom will fall as a tree when its trunk is severed. We now have the experience of the past years in which the budget of Federal expenditures has leveled off; the boom, instead of collapsing, went on to a new height.

Why did the boom walk so easily past the grave we had ready-dug for it? The answer, apparently, is that, like every boom in capitalism, when once under way it had a great internal power to exhaust by its own natural development. We forgot what the Marxists since Marx have always readily admitted: that capitalism in its upswing disposes of an enormous expansive force which revolutionizes production and consumption for the duration of that part of its cycle. That there was no inherent reason why this was no longer possible in mid-Twentieth Century America has now been substantially proven, although it may well have been impossible without the priming effect of the huge war program to get it started.

Actually, the war program, by devouring the speculative surpluses thrown off by the boom, may have restrained the feverish excesses for a while. There is much evidence to show that this is so, and there is also evidence which may indicate that the pattern of the twenties is only now beginning (see: "Is the Boom Losing Its Balance?" *American Socialist,* March 1956). Corporations, having attained the necessary glow of reassurance which is always most dangerous in a boom, are starting a competitive expansion and modernization of their plants which the consumer-government markets do not appear to warrant.

OUR purpose here is not to deny that the laws of capitalism may be modified in their action. The laws which Marx discovered are the skeletal bones of the structure; they have been repeatedly modified. Britain's long Nineteenth Century stranglehold of the world market postponed the operation of the basic trend in that land, and the Marxists were forced to take account of that. The broad growth of imperialism in the three decades preceding the first World War, by coercing into existence a vastly profitable field of trade, investment, and super-exploitation of colonial labor and markets, brought about still another and bolder modification of Marxist economics, brilliantly accomplished by Lenin, Rudolph Hilferding, and others. The special circumstances making possible the flowering of American capitalism in the twenties when world capitalism was already in decay, again forced a re-adjustment of Marxism, although this last has never been accomplished in the U. S. as well as it should. In every case, there were many who wanted to throw out the entire Marxist system, and made their revisionist pronouncements to that effect—generally just before the new economic collapse.

In any case, Marxism is not a ready-made slot-machine dogma, but a broad theory of social development which requires application and re-interpretation in every period. In the present period, we are up against the problem of the effect of a permanent war economy upon the evolution of capitalism. Such a big war sector as we now have can bring a great boom into existence where none was before; that we have already seen in action. But there is no evidence to show that the continuation of a big war sector at a maximum level can suspend the basic laws of the system entirely. On the raised plateau to which the war sector has lifted it, the economy develops the same contradictions and disproportions as previously, as we are now beginning to witness in the U. S. If it is argued that a new slump can be fought by another increase in the government sector, that can only mean the ever-increasing governmentalization of the economy. Should this occur in the form of ever-greater war spending, then sooner or later a devouring of the people's living standards by the demands of Moloch begins. And should the attempt be made in the form of welfare spending of major proportions, that would involve a great political struggle which would inevitably become a struggle for socialism, as the capitalist class will never submit to that road without an all-out battle.

What's in the cards? Probably the extremes of a continuously rising war budget which will pauperize the people while the factories are going full blast, or a huge welfare program to save capitalism, are both out as realistic present perspectives. More likely we will see the present level of government expenditures maintained or expanded somewhat, and, on the basis of this high plateau, the laws of capitalism begin to reassert themselves and, sooner or later, cause an economic decline even while the government sector remains large.

There is no attempt here to exhaust the question under discussion, as there is much more to it. An economic theory which has been so brilliantly confirmed over a period of a century in so many countries should not be discarded as a result of the experience of a half-dozen years in one country—that is the main proposition for Marxists to keep a firm grip on. Taking this as the basis for our discussion, we at once confront some further questions, the first of which is: What will be the effect of a serious and prolonged weakening of the economy upon politics?

IT has been argued (by the Communist Party and others) that radicalism would not benefit from a depression, that fascist and McCarthyite demagogues would be the chief beneficiaries. Even were this so it would not prevent a depression if one were in the cards. But this is a claim that flies in the face of all historical experience. One need only recall Europe in the twenties and thirties, when the breakdown and stagnation of capitalism produced a mass radicalization which has persisted and deepened to the present day, or America in the Great Depression. The German experience showed that it was only after a prolonged period of hardship, during which the working-class parties proved incapable of resolving the crisis, that fascist demagogues, born also of economic troubles, and preaching their brand of "idiot's socialism," were given their chance by middle classes crazed by long desperation.

In the last decade of his life Frederick Engels brought to bear a truly admirable realism and objectivity upon the perspectives held in earlier years, and concluded that many vistas had been foreshortened in the minds of the founders of scientific socialism. For England, he attributed the slowness of development to the "share" in the benefits of "England's industrial monopoly" which fell to the working class. But, he concluded in a sentence which he was able to quote triumphantly seven years later, "With the breakdown of that monopoly, the English working class will lose that privileged position; it will find itself generally—the privileged and leading minority not excepted—on a level with its fellow workers abroad. And that is the reason why there will be socialism again in England." The same proposition holds here. Socialism will come again to America only when economic conditions prepare the way.

The Communists insist in their polemic with the *National Guardian* that with this view the Left would seem to favor a worsening of the conditions of the workers as an aid to the Left. But Marxists are irrevocably committed—so long as they remain Marxists—to the proposition that the capitalist system is running up against its limits of progressive development, and will increasingly produce an intolerable situation for the mass of the people. That is the *raison d'être* of modern socialism as a mass movement and not just an ideal in the minds of men of good will. To discard all that and try to masquerade as simple citizens, kindly puzzled souls, and community-conscious PTA members who expect nothing but good from capitalism and will be rudely shocked by anything else, is a bit too disingenuous. It means to abandon our role as critics of the present order and prophets of a new one, and dissolve our thinking to the level of light-weight liberalism; doing this would court more of the same kind of disaster for the Left as it already has met with.

Our argument that capitalism in America still faces economic crises of its classic sort, while it forms the basis

for a perspective, does not automatically solve the tactical problems of the present. For the fact remains that between the present and a future breakdown of American capitalism there lies an interval of time—no one can pretend to know how long. For a period, the present isolation of the Left will persist, and socialists need an approach to the problem of what to do now.

ONE service performed by the articles in the *National Guardian* is that they made clear what had not previously been pointed out about the Communist Party's coalition policy; the line is grounded in that party's entire outlook about economics and politics. The domestic program which the Communist Party wishes to carry to the people differs in hardly any important respect, except occasionally in degree, and in the more aggressive methods of work proposed, from that of the labor leadership and the few liberals remaining in the Democratic Party leadership. True, the Communists maintain Marxism and socialism (of their specific sort) as a "basic" program, but in their practice the word "basic" may be translated as "not to be sullied by daily use but saved only for ceremonial occasions."

A century ago, the "Communist Manifesto" defined the permanent role of socialists in the labor movement excellently: "Communists fight on behalf of the immediate aims and interests of the working class, but in the present movement they are also defending the future of that movement. . . . In all these movements, communists bring the property question to the fore, regarding it as fundamental, no matter in what phase of development it may happen to be." Immediate demands, labor battles, Negro struggles, all have their role in the development of the consciousness of the working class, but it is wrong to counterpose them to socialism. The Communist Party's number one dictum for years has been that "socialism is not the issue," but that confuses two things. If it is taken to mean that at present no direct struggle for socialism is possible in the form of mass activities or a broad national election campaign, that is quite true. But if it is taken to mean that on this account it ought to be discarded or shelved to a future millenium, that is dead wrong. Exactly because now is not a time when the Left can move masses into struggle either for immediate demands or for socialism, its role as an educator, posing fundamentals and recruiting a serious following on a fundamental basis, comes to the fore.

The extreme weakening and isolation of the forces of socialism demands such a rebuilding as a pre-condition for the future of the movement. It is for this reason that the C. P. "anti-depression program" is so misplaced. The *National Guardian* argumentation against it may not have been flawless, insofar as it gave the impression of opposing such a program on rigid leftist grounds. But its instinct in counterposing basic socialist education to feverish shouting which today succeeds only in deafening the shouters themselves appears to us to have been sound.

IF we take seriously our job as socialist educators, not much room remains for self-defeating maneuvers such as going into the Democratic Party. This is not only opportunist but utopian as well. The thankless and hopeless cleansing of those Augean stables has been pursued with zeal and tenacity these twenty years and more by the organized labor movement. The result has been that while labor has grown stronger in numbers and union gains, it has gone downhill on the political front with such consistency that its political power in the country and in the Democratic Party has never been weaker since the formation of the CIO than it is right now. And the Democratic Party is further than ever from reform. For the Left to try now to add its mite inside the party of the Eastlands, Lyndon Johnsons, and other assorted racists, oil-industry servitors, and cold-warriors would not alter the balance within that party, and would certainly hasten the total moral and ideological corrosion of the Left, and its final decomposition.

The next great stage in American politics will be the formation, by the organized labor movement, of its own party. Mr. Reuther's and Mr. Meany's disavowals to the contrary notwithstanding, the entire dynamic of labor points to that. Even leaving aside the comparable experience of Britain in past years, labor is due to run up against an increasing number of crises in which political strength is of prime importance to it, at the same time that its political strength continues to decline. Sooner or later—no one can predict when or in what specific forms—pressure for a new party will begin to build up again, as it did twice before when labor was on the march: in the days of the rise of the CIO, and in the closing years of World War II. Growing independent labor activity will once more open up the national political scene to radicalism, at the same time lifting the entire consciousness of

the American people to a new level. If this be taken as a true perspective of the future, then the most fruitful course for the American Left would be in identifying ourselves with the tactic of a break from Democratic-Republican politics and the launching of a labor party. While such a movement would not be socialist at its outset, it would prepare the new and broader groundwork indispensable for socialism.

But organized labor in this country is a massive and slow-moving body where politics is concerned, and tends to move as a unit, out of timidity and conservatism, and fear on the part of each leader of getting out too far in front. This means that groups inside and outside the labor movement will tend to outrun it in pioneering attempts, as happened in Britain as a prelude to the organization of the Labor Party there. We will probably see many third-party attempts of various sorts before the twin-headed monopoly is finally broken. Radicals can and should take an active part in these advance-guard movements.

MUCH discussion on the Left has centered around the third-party proposal embodied in the *National Guardian* call of January 1955. The *American Socialist* supported that proposal, although we were under no illusion, as we made clear at the time, that such a party could be either the party of American socialism, or a labor party, or even a pioneer forerunner of a labor party in the country. Our reasoning was as follows: The Left, driven backward in rapid retreat and demoralization, threatened with disintegration by the push of an influential group within itself towards the Democratic Party, is badly in need of a rallying ground to halt that drift. If an active and independent progressive grouping could serve that purpose alone, it would fulfill an important need.

However, we are now in a position to evaluate the matter further. The Progressive Party of 1948, widely supported by workers and progressives, was the most ambitious third-party movement of recent years. It rallied very large meetings and much enthusiasm in many major labor centers, and for a while was a considerable headache to the union bureaucrats. It was favored by the backing of a number of prominent individuals with personal political followings on the national scene. Even its vote, in the face of Truman's last-minute demagogy, was not bad.

Since that time, a near-decade of cold war, witch-hunt, and economic boom has taken its toll on the forces of dissent. The experience since the *Guardian* call made clear that the forces for the creation of a new party as a rallying force for the Left, even on a much reduced scale, were no longer available. Sufficient support could not be built, especially in the face of Communist Party opposition, which withdrew its own forces, demoralized much of what remained, and crippled every possible apparatus that might serve the purpose. And so, while it may be possible for local third-party candidacies to be launched here and there, as a national prospect it is not in the cards right now. The Left will have to plow the ground more thoroughly before it can go over to organization.

THERE has been no attempt here at an exhaustive survey of the job of the Left. Much good work is open to us on the civil liberties front, in the fight for full equality for the Negro people and in the fight for peace; but these are areas of general agreement and are at any rate not the core of the problem of the present discussion. If we review our basic conclusions, we find the following: The socialist movement needs to revivify its Marxist economic perspectives, instead of permitting them to become weakened by disuse and diffused by too much concentration on the small-scale and immediate as against the long-term trend. We need a re-dedication to the task of socialist education, and a bold approach to converting youth in particular to socialism. We need to identify ourselves with a labor party perspective for the unions, and try to make a mark for that perspective wherever possible *inside* the unions, instead of a pro-Democrat adventure. We are convinced that this is the correct approach to re-creating a virile, principled, and confident socialist cadre in America.

Is There a Class Struggle in the United States?

The following editorial, written by Earl W. Jimerson, president, and Patrick E. Gorman, secretary treasurer, of the Amalgamated Meat Cutters and Butcher Workmen, AFL-CIO, appeared in the March issue of The Butcher Workman, *the union's official publication.*

* * *

"CLASS STRUGGLE" REJECTED?

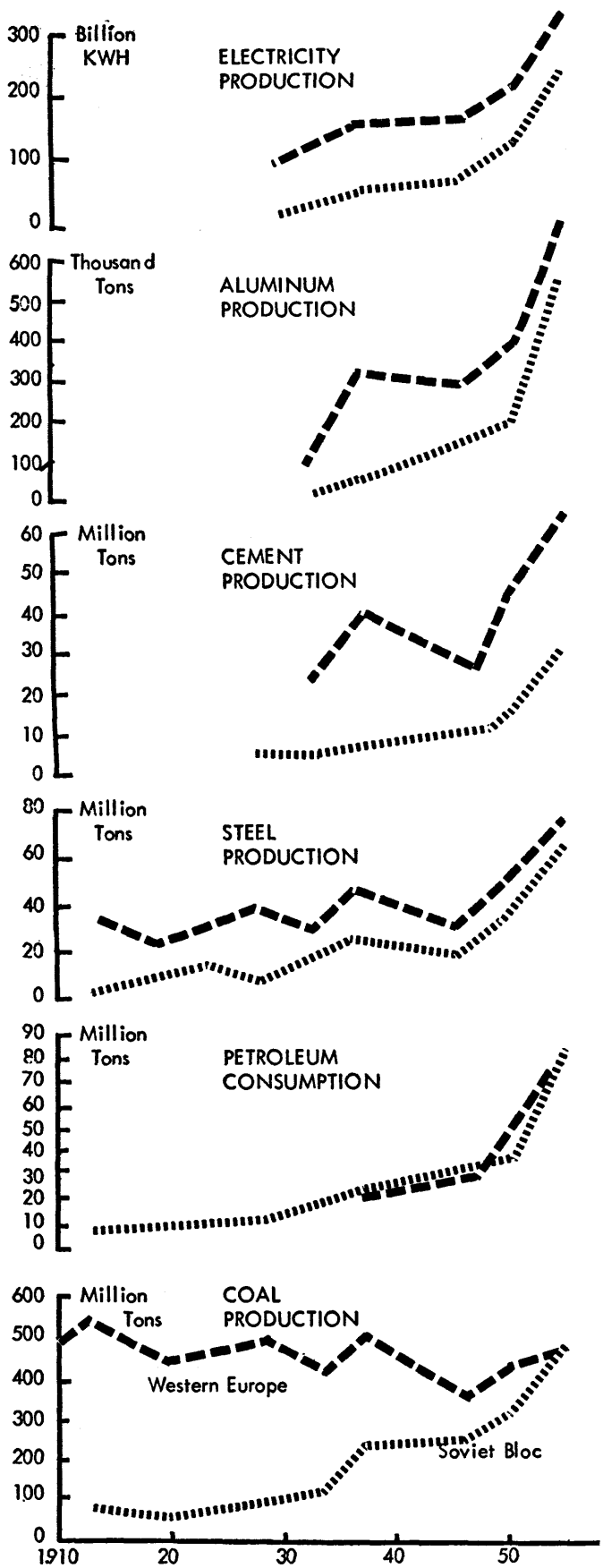
THE principles announced by the Executive Council of the AFL-CIO, spelling out the responsibilities of trade unionists in each community, make a clear-cut document.

We cannot, however, believe that the Executive Council can concur in the statement of Vice President Joe Beirne, who is Chairman of the Community Services Committee of the AFL-CIO, when he said, "This statement in itself is a departure from the traditional pattern of trade unionism in many countries, since it rejects the philosophy of isolation and class struggle."

To reject isolationism is commendable, but to deny the "class struggle" is another question. The great strikes of the workers against entrenched financial interests at Westinghouse Electric Company for the past six months, the Kohler Company in Wisconsin for the past two years, and the enslavement of organized labor in Southern states having phony "right-to-work" laws, certainly is proof enough that this is not a classless nation, and that the class struggle is still with us.

The great campaign of the Hotel and Restaurant Employee's International Union at Miami Beach, Florida, against the owners of those seeming Taj Mahal hostelries stretching along miles and miles of sandy beaches, at thirty and forty dollars per day rates, can never be told that the class struggle is not still running rampant, particularly with the miserably low wages paid these hotel employees.

The statement of Vice President Beirne ought to be clarified. Of course, there may be some distinction between the *philosophy* of the class struggle and the *existence* of the class struggle. The one point we desire to make, however, is that we may be sure that the class struggle will always be with us so long as selfish men assume the right to rule over the jobs and the lives of other men.



Mr. Haase, an economist, writes regularly for the American Socialist.

An examination of Russia's new five-year plan, and of the most recent production figures, shows that the Soviet bloc is very close to overtaking all Western Europe in per capita industrial production.

Capitalism vs. Socialism: The Score in Europe

by Henry Haase

IN February, the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union assembled. Among the chief items for consideration and discussion was the proposed Sixth Five-Year Plan, to run through 1960. Also during the first half of this year, the countries of Eastern Europe are beginning new five-year plans and so the whole socialist bloc excluding China will be in a position to launch their first coordinated five-year plan.

The plans for the future can only be devised on the basis of past development in the decade since the end of the war. This past development will be carefully examined and compared with the growth over the same period of the capitalist countries of Western Europe. But it will be not only they who make such a comparison, it will be the whole world.

The population of the seventeen countries included in the Organization for European Economic Cooperation—that is, those countries known as Western Europe—was, at the end of 1953, some 280 millions.* The population of the Soviet bloc was some 300 millions.** According to Harrison Salisbury of the *N. Y. Times* the population of the Soviet Union has been generally overestimated by some 20 millions, and if this is true, the population of the Soviet bloc would be some 280 millions. Capitalist Western Europe and the socialist Soviet bloc have thus a population of roughly the same order of size.

RECENTLY, in this country, there has been official concern about just how rapidly the socialist countries have been expanding their economies as against the capitalist countries. For there can be no doubt that Washington is well aware that the peoples of South America, of Africa, and of Asia are intently watching this aspect of developments. The U.S. Congressional Committee on the Economic Report had the legislative reference service of the Library of Congress prepare a 339-page report entitled "Trends in Economic Growth, a Comparison of

* Western Europe includes: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Federal Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Saar, Sweden, Switzerland, Trieste, Turkey, and the United Kingdom.

** The Soviet Bloc includes: Albania, Bulgaria, Czechslovakia, East Germany, Hungary, Poland, Rumania, and the U.S.S.R.

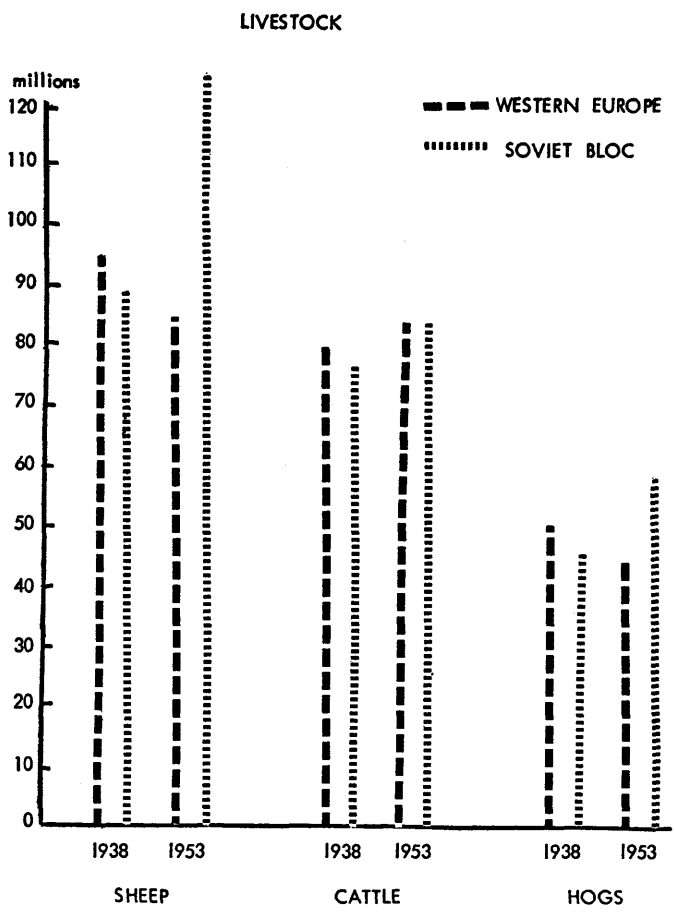
the Western Powers and the Soviet Bloc." The report as a whole is a sad commentary on the low estate to which responsible research has been brought by the demands of the cold war. The report is entirely evasive and through the deliberate disorganization in the presentation of its statistics the summary and conclusions are enabled to insinuate the wish-fulfillments of its authors. The comfortable conclusion implied by the report is that the socialist countries are thirty to forty years behind the West and continue to fall further behind. Actually if the statistics are assembled, that is, collected for each bloc as a whole and presented side by side and illustrated graphically, they tell a very different story.

While the balance of population has already shifted in favor of the Soviet bloc, it is still true that the balance of industrial production has not yet done so. But as the series of six charts on the production of basic industrial commodities show, the lag of the Soviet-bloc countries behind Western Europe is nothing like thirty to forty years. The charts all point up the same thing. Before the second world war the production of the countries now comprising the Soviet bloc generally moved in the same direction as the production of Western Europe, but at a much lower level. The constantly increasing output of the Soviet Union was still too small to overcome the severe fluctuations in output of the then capitalist economies of the countries of Eastern Europe.

BUT since the war, when all of Eastern Europe became socialist, the production increases of the Soviet bloc have been fast closing the gap between the two Europes. Indeed, in coal the Soviet bloc now outproduces Western Europe. Petroleum consumption has been for some years at about the same level in the Soviet bloc as in Western Europe. For steel, the lag of the Soviet bloc is only two years behind that of Western Europe. The level of production reached in Western Europe in 1953 will be attained in the Soviet bloc this year. In cement, the lag is five years. In electric power output the lag is three years. In aluminum, two years. And so on. The average lag in industrial production is about three years. Since the Soviet bloc countries, in the postwar period, have been expanding at slightly more than twice the rate of Western Europe, this means that in the next five years, that is, with the completion of the forthcoming five-year plan, the Soviet bloc will surpass Western Europe in the absolute level of industrial production.

Even on a per-capita basis, the Soviet bloc will need only five to seven years, depending on the population estimates one accepts, to surpass Western Europe. That is the extreme limit of the lag of socialist Europe behind capitalist Europe, for this projection presupposes that Western European capitalism can continue its phenomenal expansion of the postwar period. Should Western Europe suffer even a mild depression the gap could be closed in a shorter period. This is a measure of the terrific power of socialist development. It is no wonder then that the Soviets are becoming ever more willing for visitors to come to the U.S.S.R. and all of Eastern Europe to see and to compare the socialist European system with the capitalist European system.

It will probably surprise many who have imbibed too



long at the font of capitalist propaganda to learn that the Soviet bloc does not lag capitalist Western Europe in agricultural production and that the lag in the production of consumer non-durables is no greater than the lag in industrial production. Because of large West European imports, the pattern of consumption is different, especially for the Scandinavian countries, England, and Germany. There is no doubt that in these countries much higher levels of consumption of agricultural products and consumer non-durables prevail.

Although here the statistics are not as complete as for industrial production, they are quite ample. Charts on livestock numbers and on grain (wheat) production are shown. The livestock figures are not adjusted for differences in weight per animal, fat content, etc. The problems the socialist countries have been facing in agriculture have been problems chiefly of productivity, as a much larger proportion of the total population is engaged in agriculture in the Soviet bloc as against Western Europe.

IT is in the production of consumer durables and housing that the Soviet bloc lags the West to a great extent. Housing is the most serious problem and will take many years and much effort before it equals Western European standards. But even in the American economy, consumer durables account for no more than eight percent of the total Gross National Product. Once the socialist countries have laid the basis in industrial machines and factories for supremacy over capitalist Europe the expansion in the output of such commodities should be quite rapid. As of

now, the present output of consumer durables in the U.S.S.R. is small:

OUTPUT OF CONSUMER DURABLES IN THE SOVIET UNION, 1954

BICYCLES	2,510,000
WATCHES AND CLOCKS	16,800,000
RADIO RECEIVERS	2,861,000
TELEVISION SETS	325,000
WASHING MACHINES	111,000
REFRIGERATORS	207,000
SEWING MACHINES	1,335,000
VACUUM CLEANERS	243,000
MOTORCYCLES	190,000
ELECTRIC IRONS	3,550,000
KEROSENE BURNERS	2,966,000
METAL BEDS	13,500,000
PHONOGRAPHS	921,000
CAMERAS	765,000

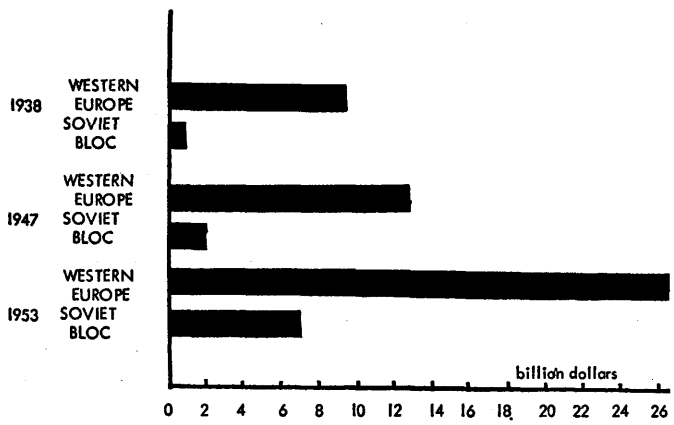
The exact goals the Soviet Union has set itself to accomplish in its new plan in certain basic industries may be compared with the output of these industries in the United States, and the United Kingdom, France, and West Germany during 1955:

	UNITED STATES 1955	U. K., FRANCE & W. GERMANY 1955	U. S. S. R. (PLAN) 1960
COAL (million tons)	448	415	593
ELECTRICITY (bill. kwh.)	545	200	320
CRUDE STEEL (million tons)	106	54	68

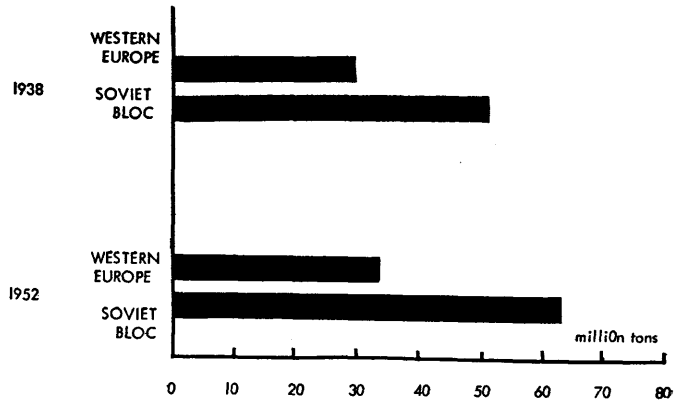
The goal of the forthcoming five-year plan for the Soviet Bloc is clear and judging from past performance capable of achievement. It is to surpass the output of Western Europe at all possible levels. It will be a remarkable accomplishment for socialism.

WHILE most people relate the industrial production of China to its vast population and emphasize industry's smallness and the overwhelming character of agriculture in the Chinese economy, still industry in China exists and under the direction of the communists has been growing rapidly. Eighty percent of the Chinese population is rural, but because the total population is a huge 600 million, the twenty percent of it that is urban comes out at about 120 million people living in urban areas, or about

FOREIGN TRADE



GRAIN (WHEAT) PRODUCTION



the same urban population as in the U.S. and an urban population fifty percent larger than in the Soviet Union. In 1955, China produced about 85 million tons of coal, about 12 billion kilowatt hours of electricity, about 3 million tons of steel, and about 5 million tons of cement. The 1957 goals are 113 million tons of coal, about half the present coal production of England; 16 billion kwh. of electricity, about half the present production of Italy; 4.1 million tons of steel, about the same as the present production of Italy or Poland; and 6 million tons of cement, about half of England's present production.

The Chinese are concentrating too, on creating the proper material environment for rapid economic growth. They are engaged in the construction of dikes and dams along their great rivers. Two huge hydro-electric dams, each one with a generating capacity of a million kws., are being built along the Yellow River alone. They are putting in also over 2,000 miles of new railroad trackage. One line through central China will be over 1,440 miles long, rivaling the construction of the first American transcontinental line. The Russians, too, are building new lines to the north of China.

With all these immense undertakings and the feverish economic activity going on in the lands of socialism, only the cold war policy of the capitalist countries, dictated in particular by the U.S., has prevented a concomitant growth in foreign trade. However, trade within the socialist bloc has grown up rapidly in the postwar era.

The chart on foreign trade shows the relatively higher level of total foreign trade in Western Europe as against the Soviet bloc. The possibilities of trade with the socialist countries are unexplored resources both for the development of socialism and for the efficient utilization of resources by capitalism. The total level of production in the Soviet-bloc countries is above eighty percent of the level in Western Europe; its trade is only at about a level of twenty percent of the West. While it is impossible to estimate the total increase in trade that would be possible if the artificial restraints were removed it would certainly run into billions. The socialist countries have a good many commodities which are eagerly desired in the West, such as wood-pulp, coal, gold, cotton, wool, and manganese; not to mention the products of the developing technology of the East. The socialist countries, on their part, are increasingly becoming good customers for a host of industrial and consumer products.

What is the religious revival all about? Congregations are growing, but the faddists and Babbitts of religion are in the van, and the social gospel is played down.

Babbitt Gets Religion

by Rev. Hugh Weston

AMERICAN religion has been distinguished by its "social gospel." The separating of church from state, and the democratic nature of many American churches, governed by the people and not by bishops, gave an impetus to this concern with the condition of the people. Today, a two-fold attack has been made upon progressive tendencies in the American churches. First, there is the negative attack, which I have described in a previous article, of smearing with the "communist" brush all churchmen trying honestly to follow the teachings of Jesus and the prophets. But this is not enough. The commercial powers in America must go further, and alter religion itself, turning it more completely into an other-worldly, escapist, type.

The present revival of religion is an ersatz revival of an ersatz religion. It is the revival of a certain type of religion that is devoid of social content. Behind this revival of escapist religion and behind the witch-hunt attacks upon all progressive religious tendencies is the crafty hand of Big Business. Wealthy "Christians" are publishing a magazine called *Christian Economics,* sent free of charge to all clergymen whose addresses they can secure. *Christian Economics* makes it plain that only a man supporting a reactionary form of "free enterprise" can be a good Christian. This is not a crackpot sheet, but a publication supported by some of the outstanding businessmen and clergymen of the nation. A laymen's committee (of businessmen) of the National Council of Churches of Christ in America has demanded that the churches of America stop talking about "politics" and stick to "religion."

The results for Big Business are encouraging: Dr. W. Norman Pettinger, writing in *Christian Century,* says, "One other reflection of the spirit of the times . . . is the diminished interest in what used to be called the 'social gospel.' Today . . . the average theological student is much more concerned with theological dialectic or with personal religion than with the imperative that the Christian spirit should prevail in the social relationships of men and women." *Christian Economics* comments: "That there is less interest in the 'social gospel' and more interest in 'personal religion' is cause for thankfulness on the part of those who believe that Christianity, freedom, self-government, and economic well-being are irrevocably tied together."

Thus, the first thing to note about the present "revival of religion" is that it is not just a revival of religion in general—it is the revival of a specific type of religion, called "personal religion." It is the revival of robes and clerical collars, of chasubles and amulets, of antiphonies and incantations. It is the systematic, planned revival of the very type of religion which Amos, Jesus, and most great religious teachers gave their lives opposing.

PROTESTS against this ersatz revival of an ersatz religion have come from individuals in all denominations. The great Presbyterian moderator, Dr. Eugene Carson Blake, declared in a recent sermon at a national conference of Presbyterians, "There is an anti-intellectual mood in our world today that has dangerously penetrated our churches. We saw its more horrible aspects in the nihilism of Hitler and the Nazis, but we do not recognize the danger in our churches of succumbing to the mood of the hour." Dr. Ernest Saunders, professor of New Testament at Garrett Biblical Institute in Evanston, Illinois, an Episcopalian center, put it this way: "A divinized *status quo* becomes the golden calf to many. For all too many the cause of Christianity and *laissez-faire* capitalism stand or fall together."

The revival of religion is reflected in crowded churches, but only certain types of churches are crowded. The churches sticking to the old social gospel are not infrequently half-empty. The healing cults are having a field day. Rev. Oral Roberts started a faith-healing magazine in 1947 with 500 subscribers. By 1955 it had 400,000. By 1956 it had 750,000 subscribers. Books on "peace of mind," "peace of soul," or any other form of empty-headed, opiate-like religion are automatic best-sellers. The trite tale, "A Man Called Peter," has set book-sales records.

WHY the revival of religion? The fear of war, the nervous anxiety of a senseless "cold war," create a need on the part of the people to do something to relieve the gnawing worries. They can struggle against the social system causing this situation, or, better from the standpoint of our rulers, they can go to a nice "pie-in-the-sky" church. People are growing weary of the humdrum meaninglessness of life under our present-day commercial system. Man was not born to rob and cheat and dribble away his time in trivialities. Man has evolved into a cooperative animal, and he resents having to conduct himself in the selfish manner expected of him. A type of religion is provided as a means of finding true happiness in the life to come, since it is denied him on earth.

Reverend Weston, who writes regularly for the American Socialist, *is minister of the First Parish Universalist Church, Saugus, Mass. A previous article by him on the topic, "Hunting Witches in the Church," appeared in December* 1954.

The manufacture of opiate-type religion by the government and the wealthy classes is not a new invention. Polybius (204-122 B.C.), one of the greatest historians of the ancient world, and for seventeen years a hostage in Rome, wrote at a time when he feared the masses were getting out of hand:

I venture to assert that the most of mankind holds in contempt the foundation of Roman greatness: namely, superstition. This superstition has been introduced into every aspect of their public and private life, with every artifice to awe the imagination. Possibly many will be at a loss to understand this policy. In my view it has been done to impress the masses. If a state were possible in which all the citizens were philosophers, maybe we could dispense with such methods. But, in every state the masses are unstable, full of lawless desires, of irrational anger, and violent passion. So we can no more hold them restrained by fears of the unseen, and similar shams. It is not for nought, but of set purpose, that the men of old introduced to the masses the ideas about the gods, and theories of life to come. It is folly and recklessness to attempt to dispel these illusions.

The United States Government is obediently backing the religion campaign. The words "under God" have been inserted into the pledge of allegiance to the flag. It is proposed to add the words "In God We Trust" to the paper currency of the United States. (Whether this move is intended to increase our faith in paper currency or in God, I shall not speculate.) When the Unitarian Ministers' Association in a resolution demanded the removal of the words "In God We Trust" from United States coins, on the ground that religious propaganda was the business of the churches and not of the government, the ministers were denounced as atheists and worse by some of the press.

In spite of the Vashti McCollum decision of the U.S. Supreme Court, outlawing the teaching of religion in public school buildings, a program of releasing students from school during school hours to learn religion in the churches goes on unabated. Bible passages, the Lord's Prayer, and similar religious rituals are part of the curriculum in public schools in a good many states. The Board of Superintendents of the New York City schools has advocated the teaching of belief in God in the public schools.

MUCH of the argument for teaching belief in God in public schools rests on the assumption that this would curb juvenile delinquency, increase good morality, etc. Actually, research by sociologists Mark May and Hugh Hartshorne, reported in "Studies in Deceit," and further studies made by sociologist Negley K. Teeters, indicate that there is as much dishonesty among church-goers as among non-church-goers. The notion that a simple repetition of Biblical words and phrases produces high morality has no foundation either in religious tradition or in scientific fact. In fact, people who pray regularly and get forgiven easily and often, frequently feel justified in some rather free-and-easy conduct. It was once said that there is "nothing so dangerous as a Presbyterian just off his knees." Religion has been used as the excuse to cover every manner of exploitation. The first whites to come to Hawaii were missionaries who grew very rich and the people there today say that when the missionaries arrived, the people had the land and the missionaries had the Bible, while today the missionaries have the land and the people have the Bible.

Religious propaganda carried on directly or indirectly by the public schools not only is of no help to morality, but is in violation of the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States, which reads: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion. . . ." And finally, such propaganda, giving only one side of the question, is a violation of academic freedom and a violation of the sacred, and I would say, God-given, right of a student to question the very existence of God.

Thomas Jefferson, who believed in God, wrote: "Fix reason firmly in her seat, and call to her tribunal every fact, every opinion. Question with boldness even the existence of God; because, if there be one, He must more approve of the homage of reason, than that of blindfolded fear. . . . Your own reason is the only oracle given you by heaven, and you are answerable, not for the rightness, but for the *uprightness* of the decision." Foisting this new God-concept upon any one—a God devoid of real definition, devoid of social content—is going to produce a reaction against God and against religion. The sad state of affairs in European and South American churches today is the direct result of the successful efforts of government and upper classes to use religion as an opiate. A state-supported, business-supported revival of religion may succeed a little for a time, but it will end with such an exodus from those churches as this land has never before seen. In the long run, people have no real love for or faith in a church that must get handouts from businessmen and politicians.

Aside from a few high spots, the recent Civil Rights Assembly in Washington was a dud. But it is an experience from which the active civil-rights fighters around the nation will learn, and they may try to force their leaders to do better.

The Civil Rights Assembly

by A Delegate

Washington

THE Civil Rights Assembly, which brought some 2,000 hopeful delegates to Washington on March 4, 5, and 6, did not produce very much in the way of action or guidance in the present national crisis over the fight of the Negro people for equality. Convened by more than 50 participating organizations joined together in the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, its sponsorship proved more impressive than its results.

The high point of the conference was undoubtedly the mass meeting conducted on Sunday evening at the Interdepartmental Auditorium of the Labor Department, with several thousands in attendance. (The right of the Civil Rights Assembly to use the auditorium had been unsuccessfully challenged by a group of 30 Southern Congressmen.) Roy Wilkins, executive secretary of the NAACP, made a keynote address, and had the meeting been dependent upon that for its inspiration it would have been sadly disappointed, for his speech fell flat. But, following that, a "court of inquiry" conducted by three interviewers —George Hunton, executive secretary of the Catholic Interracial Council; Shad Polier, vice-president of the American Jewish Congress; and Joseph Rauh, national chairman of Americans for Democratic Action—brought several front-line fighters from the South before the assembly. In question-and-answer form, the stories were told: Gus Courts of Belzoni, the only Negro in his county to remain on the voting registration lists, having stuck it out after his co-worker Rev. George Lee was shot to death and he himself seriously wounded; L. A. Blackman, NAACP president in Elloree, S. C., whose petition drive for integrated schools resulted in his having been forced out of the contracting business (he is now selling newspapers); and Rev. Ralph Abernathy, who told the story of the Montgomery bus boycott.

The presentation of these dramatic struggles carried a tremendous emotional wallop. It is difficult for me to recall any meeting in which I have ever participated which made so great an impact. But this moving and inspiring evening only helped provide the backdrop for the feeling of frustration and lack of accomplishment which appeared quite general by the conclusion of the conference.

EVERYTHING was organized to prevent the delegations that were there from unions, NAACP branches, and other bodies from asserting themselves and participating directly in any decision making. The delegates were subjected to a humiliating screening for "communists," and many delegates from the packinghouse union and other organizations spent the first day of the conference undergoing an inquisition. During the first day, Wilkins explained to the delegates that they were in Washington solely for the purpose of lobbying with the members of Congress for the passage of the eight-point program of civil rights legislation of the Leadership Conference, with special emphasis on the right to vote and the security and safety of the person. But, he emphasized, the limited agreement of the participating organizations made it impossible for the conference to work out any activities of its own, and the delegates were not even to be permitted to present any motions or resolutions.

The delegates were then instructed in the "do's and don'ts" of calling on Congressmen by a series of experts. A brief question period, in which some delegates protested that this program of action would leave much of the conference with nothing to do—since the Southern delegates could hardly visit with their Dixiecrat Congressmen and the delegates from the best organized Northern districts already had full commitments from their representatives—passed off without any serious answer being given.

On Monday morning and early afternoon, the lobbying was begun. An attempt by one delegate in the Michigan delegation, which was composed mainly of auto workers and which provided a good 30 percent of the entire conference, to get a large delegation to the White House and the Justice Department was brushed aside by Roy Reuther

on the platform with the comment: "We should not get diverted or side-tracked from the aims of this conference, and besides, the leadership has already talked to the White House and the Justice Department."

MONDAY afternoon, a session was held to hear partial reports on the results of the lobbying visits. The reports produced no great enthusiasm, as they reflected the pass-the-buck policy which has characterized the entire treatment of this issue since the crisis became acute. Democrats pointed the finger of responsibility at the Republicans and the administration "which has failed to act." Republicans pointed to the Democratic control of Congress, and the Southern Democrat control of key committees. Both Republicans and Democrats in the Senate pointed to the new difficulty with Eastland in the chairmanship of the Judiciary Committee and the likelihood of a filibuster. Any hopes or illusions that lobbying work of this kind would produce important new legislation with the present Congress were shaken or shattered by these first actual contacts and reports.

Efforts to intervene from the floor of the assembly with proposals for more aggressive action were treated roughly by Wilkins from the platform. A New York rabbi raised the question of visiting the White House and the Justice Department, because he understood much could be done even under existing legislation. Wilkins responded with the sarcastic question: "Rabbi, are you a lawyer as well as a rabbi?" Confronted with the apparent hostility of the delegates, Wilkins softened his remarks, but still evaded the issue.

A proposal from the floor by Delegate Dillard of Fleetwood local of the UAW that the conference be followed up with plans for a mass March on Washington similar to that projected by A. Philip Randolph during World War II was also brushed aside with a comment to the effect that we have our follow-up plans made but we cannot tip off our enemies.

THAT evening Emil Mazey, secretary-treasurer of the auto union, chaired a meeting at which Pennsylvania Republican Hugh Scott and Democratic National Committee Chairman Paul Butler engaged in an old-fashioned brawl on the alleged accomplishments of the two parties in the civil rights field. Scott's main claims were the elimination of segregation in the armed forces, elimination of hotel and restaurant segregation in Washington, the appointment of a number of minor Negro officials, and the fact that Ike invites more Negroes to White House "stag" parties than did his predecessors. He baited Butler continuously on the Dixiecrats and the role of Eastland.

Butler in his remarks upbraided the administration for its failure to act but refused to comment on Eastland in spite of repeated cries from the crowd: "What about Eastland?" While the audience reacted to the heated debate in much the same manner as one would at a sideshow, the general feeling seemed to be expressed by the comments of one delegate: "When they talk about each other they tell the truth. When they talk about their own party they lie like troopers."

Following Monday night's entertainment, the delegates turned their attention to continued visits on Capitol Hill.

Tuesday afternoon the final session was held to hear final reports on the lobbying. By this time attendance at the conference had dwindled to the hundreds and as the reports continued the audience melted away. By the time the meeting was adjourned and the last report received, less than two hundred persons remained in the hall.

AS ineffectual and hopeless as this enterprise proved to be, it was in my opinion an experience necessary to prepare the stage for the next round. Not many illusions can remain about the possibilities of pursuading Congress to measure up to its responsibility by the simple device of lobbying.

The experience of the Washington conference together with the new development within a week after the conference left town—that is, the manifesto of the southern Senators and Representatives on the Supreme Court decision—will produce broad support for the point of view most clearly expressed by Clarence Mitchell, director of the NAACP Washington office, when he said, "If they [the Democrats] are going to keep a stinking albatross like Senator Eastland around their neck, they've got to kiss our votes goodbye." His remark got enthusiastic response from the audience as the conference began, and most certainly found broader support when it concluded.

The Washington conference revealed that much heat must be generated from the ranks on up if the leadership of the participating organizations are to be pushed into playing a role which can be of real aid to the heroic fighters in the South.

A Review-Article

The Architect of the French People's Front Government

LEON BLUM OR THE POLITICS OF THE JUST, by Colette Audry. Julliard, Paris, 1955.

COLETTE Audry has written a remarkable political study of Leon Blum, whose career has marked the personality of French Socialism in the inter-war years as strongly as did Jean Jaurès before 1914. It is a kind of Baedeker to the present government under Guy Mollet and to the stormy events which are certain to follow. In a limited but highly concentrated way Colette Audry helps us understand the essential reason for the unbroken record of failure of the anti-communist, right-wing socialist movement in Western Europe.

In 1920, at the age of forty-eight, Leon Blum became the leader of the French Socialist Party, a position he was to maintain until a few years before his death in 1950. A talented, sensitive youth who grew up in a comfortably situated middle-class Jewish family, his preoccupations had first tended towards literature, which brought him in contact with contemporary illuminati such as Alain, André Gide, Charles Peguy, and through them with the flashing star of French socialism, Jean Jaurès. In 1902, he joined Jaurès' party.

At the 1920 Tours Congress of the Socialist Party, the left-wing forces, beginning in the midst of the war as an insignificant revolt against the wartime betrayal of the party leadership, had now won influence over a majority of the membership and become the Communist Party. It was at this congress that Blum made his debut as the leader of the right wing. Although he had not come up through the ladder of the party hierarchy, he was obviously chosen, as Colette Audry believes, because he was the least tarnished of the pro-war socialist leaders.

UNDER the influence of the Russian Revolution, Blum revealed a comprehension of the problems of the transition to socialism which present-day figures like Mollet or Gaitskell do not begin to approach. He firmly rejected the idea that there was anything criminal about a revolution in a country with democratic institutions or universal suffrage, or that socialism would emerge spontaneously from a gradual dosage of reforms. "There is a revolutionary technique," he said, "which derives from an ensemble of events with which we are all familiar. What, then, do these events prove? They prove that when a new regime, whether it be political or social, has overthrown the existing regime, this movement is doomed to defeat if, to justify and legitimize itself, it immediately places its trust in the political, economic, or social institutions which it has just abolished."

We find the same thought elaborated in one of his writings in 1927: "We are revolutionists in that we want to substitute for the existing society one founded on totally different principles. But history teaches us that every political revolution, that is the transition from one political regime to another, has almost always required what I will call a suspension of legality, as the new institutions are not yet in working order. These periods of suspension of legality are, by definition, periods of dictatorship."

The climate of opinion being so different today from the period which immediately followed the October Revolution, it must at first sight be difficult to understand how a man so apparently close in his political conceptions to those of the left wing should nevertheless have led the split to form a party based on diametrically opposite conceptions. Yet that act expressed the ambivalence of Leon Blum's socialism, the divorce between the Marxist "head" and the Socialist "head." For whatever the organizational controversies of the time, whatever Blum's political reservations—which Colette Audry ably diagnoses—the refusal to remain in the party and accept the discipline of its program meant that Blum refused to give practical effect to the basic principles to which he claimed to adhere. What separated him from Lenin was not, as is now vulgarly conceived, a predilection for democracy and peaceful change as against violence and dictatorship. It was the difference between the socialist of the deed and the socialist of the word. Events were to confirm this difference to the hilt.

DURING the twenties the Socialist Party recovered from the split, its membership grew and exceeded that of the Communists in numbers but not in combative spirit and revolutionary ardor. The Socialist representation in parliament also increased. This created difficulties, as a right wing of the party was impatient to enter into a coalition cabinet with the ruling Radical party. Blum resolved the problem by supporting the Radicals but not joining the government. In delineating his party from Radicalism (or liberalism), his reasoning was impeccable from the socialist point of view:

> *While radicalism is only a succession of slow and continuous reforms, we believe that the social transformation will not result from a series of accumulated reforms, and that some day it will be necessary, after having gradually reshaped the contours of present society, to come to grips by a decisive and categoric act with the principles which are the heart and substance of that society. In other words, we do not believe that we can go from the present property system to a new one by a series of transitions of almost imperceptible gradings. We believe that*

one day we will confront a broad problem of transition. And we are revolutionists because we are resolved to leap over the gulf."

But that was the program of a far-distant future and had no practical application. Because even when in power, Blum proclaimed in a speech in 1926, the Socialists would act "within existing institutions with energy, resolution, and decision to overcome the obstacles that often stop other governments, but always within the framework of the constitution, legally, loyally without indulging in *that kind of fraud which would consist in profiting from our presence within the government to transform the exercise of power into conquest of power."* Ten years later, Blum was even more precise. "In power," he said, "we do not seek either directly or insidiously to apply the Socialist program."

In Blum's mind, the revolution, as Colette Audry properly observes, was a kind of coming of the Messiah—at the milennium which would find all men, Socialists, liberals, conservatives, and all classes, the privileged as well as the disinherited, prepared to greet Him. Until that time, it follows, socialists could be only more consistent and more determined liberals. This idea that the attempt to transform the exercise of power into the conquest of power is "a fraud," was to be the guiding (and unlucky) star of the Popular Front government headed by Leon Blum and later on of the Labor Government in Britain. The question, let us repeat, is not whether the Russian pattern must be repeated in Western countries; is not even whether socialists can gain a constitutional majority —it is whether it is *moral* for socialists to use that majority for socialist ends! Blum's universal, super-class morality was actually, as Colette Audry perceives, a morality that salved Blum's conscience while serving the class he was supposed to be fighting at the expense of the class he was supposed to be serving.

THOUGHT and action were soon to meet. In January 1933 Hitler came to power in Germany. One year later, on February 6, 1934, the French government, discredited by corruption and by its inability to cope with the economic crisis, was attacked by a belligerent demonstration of fascist and

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royalist groups. The Radical premier, Daladier, buckled under the pressure and resigned. A government dominated by the Right took over. Everything was set for a reactionary coup d'etat until the workers intervened in a general strike and a powerful demonstration one week later. That turned the tide, and from then on the Left surged forward. Socialists and Communists signed a unity pact, the two trade union federations were merged into one, the *Front Populaire* were set up, and under the pressure of this movement governments fell in rapid succession.

The elections at the end of April 1936 gave the Socialists and Communists a resounding victory. Within a few days the workers occupied the factories and ran up the red flag. When Blum formed his government a month later some two million workers were on strike. The country was in full revolutionary effervescence. Blum was still determined, however, not to be pressured into what he had called a "fraud." The Communists having refused to join the government, Blum resisted the demand of the Left wing of his party for a purely Socialist cabinet. The new government was launched with a full complement of discredited Radicals who were obviously there to shipwreck the craft at the first opportunity. Blum had parried the danger of a revolutionary "fraud" but at the price of paralyzing the "energy, resolution and decision which overcomes the obstacles that often stop other governments."

IN July of that year Franco proclaimed the revolt against the legally constituted People's Front government of Spain headed by Socialists. The Spanish government turned to Blum for arms. His assent seemingly should have been obvious and immediate. A victory over fascism in Spain would have immeasurably strengthened the Socialists in France as well; it would have been a telling blow to Hitler and Mussolini, drastically altering the international situation. From a purely national viewpoint France had no interest in having a hostile power on the Pyrenees join the one which was facing it on the Rhine. Blum did not even have to act as a Socialist. The French government had a trade agreement with Spain which gave France the monopoly in supplying arms. But when Auriol in agreement with Blum proposed to release credits for this sale, Daladier, the Radical Defense Minister, vetoed the project. Daladier was joined by right-wing Socialists in the cabinet. Blum capitulated. He made a double choice; opting for his alliance with the Radicals (the allies of French Big Business and Big Brass) against the Communist and Socialist workers, and for Tory England (secretly supporting Franco to protect its mining investments in Spain) as against his fellow Socialists on the Iberian peninsula. Later on Blum concocted his notorious "non-intervention" treaty which strangled the anti-fascists while Hitler and Mussolini poured guns, planes, and troops into Spain to assure Franco's victory.

When the workers still shouted for "Guns and munitions to Spain!" Blum came to them with his heart on a platter—"it is no less torn than yours." "Yes, I know what I am saying, I know it better than you. Only there are two things for which you cannot reproach me: lack of courage, lack of loyality."

This was a peculiar type of "courage," for, as we learn later from Blum himself, he had sacrificed Spain to appease the factious generals in France who were threatening the country with civil war. He wrote in a letter to American critics of his non-intervention pol-

icy: "The Spanish crisis is situated between February 6 [1934] and the Armistice. It overlaps the social crisis. We know today better than ever. . .what the real power of a military rebellion could have been and what would have happened if the occasion for it had been furnished. Even a slight tensing of the situation would have confronted France with a Franco-type situation. In advance of a foreign war, France would have had civil war—with little chance of victory for the Republic. That is to say, Spain would not have been delivered, but France would have probably been made fascist before it. . ."

With the workers divided, disheartened by this ignominious retreat, reaction, buttressed by the fascist leagues, took the offensive. Blum retreated step by step. In the spring of 1937, Marx Dormoy, a Socialist member of the government, discovered the existence of a Cagoulard (fascist organization) conspiracy against the state. The threads led to the immediate entourage of Marshal Pétain and General Weygand. Raids uncovered important stocks of arms from foreign sources. An inquiry revealed that certain leaders were in relations with the chief of Hitler's espionage services. A dozen generals were found to be involved. The interests of the state itself demanded that the plot be exposed and smashed and the army purged. With the aid of labor, which would have rallied in great masses to his call for support, Blum could have used the occasion for a crushing—and probably final blow—to reaction. But Daladier, Minister of Defense, again imposed his veto. He even opposed publishing the list of names Dormoy demanded. Blum yielded. The affair was squelched. On the night of July 25, 1941, the Cagoulards took their revenge in the assassination of Dormoy.

LAST act and curtain. Panic had swept the employing class when the workers occupied the factories in June 1936. This to them was the revolution. And it well might have been but for Blum—and Maurice Thorez whose famous injunction, "You have to know when to end a strike," is strangely absent from this book. But when the magnates saw that the "revolution" was to be no more than a collective bargaining agreement providing routine wage increases and the 40-hour week, they quickly recovered their aggressive natures. Prices shot upwards; the workers were robbed of their victory soon

after they had won it; the effect on government employees and those living on fixed incomes was even more severe. Capital began to flee the country at an alarming rate. The government floated a loan for the purpose of launching a program of public works so as to stimulate purchasing power as a means of stabilizing the currency and to create employment. Big Business and financial interests sabotaged the loan so that, of an expected 10-15 billion francs, the government received only four billion. Blum pleaded from the bottom of his patriotic heart: "Are there really people who are seeking to strike at us through the vital interests of the nation? Are there people who think it is to their interest to prevent the reestablishment of economic stability and thereby prepare new social difficulties? I cannot believe it."

But there were. In fact Blum himself had predicted this some years before and had advised the most resolute action to break the resistance. After some hesitation, Auriol, his minister of finance, went before the Chamber of Deputies to ask for full executive power over finances. It was granted. But the Senate refused. This too had been envisaged by Blum, who knew that the Senate, because of the mode of its election, would be the stronghold of reaction in a social crisis. But now—confronted with the fact—he decided to resign. To the left wing of his party which demanded he summon the people into the streets to break the resistance of the Senate, he replied: "You know I have always done everything for my party. You know I am not a coward. But don't ask me that."

"That" was later to be explained by American ambassador Bullitt: "He confided to me when he had to give up the power under the sole pressure of the Senate that it would have been easy to break this opposition without even an appeal to the people, but merely by giving free rein to physical force. But, he added, he refused to assume such a responsibility out of fear of weakening his country in face of the growing menace of Germany, even to the detriment of his party, even at the price of power which he anyway considered a burden not an advantage."

Colette Audry points out that even this appeal to the people was not necessary, as the constitution provided the means for resolving the deadlock of the two houses by a dissolution of parliament and new elections. That too was now too extreme for Blum. He didn't want to lower the stature of the Senate, in which he suddenly found virtues he had never seen before. Nevertheless, the strong Seine Federation of the SP and the Revolutionary Left of the party organized—without the support of the party officially or of the CP—a demonstration of some ten thousands which almost scared the wits out of the Senate. Now the right-wing Socialists, who had just capitulated before the doddering Senators, rose up in arms to strike down their own left wing. Within a few months, with Blum's assent, the Left was expelled from the party.

THE Peoples Front slipped downwards rapidly and disappeared. What replaced it was not the national unity against German Nazism for which Blum had sacrificed all. It was the unity on the right, and the complicity of most of the center, to enlist the aid of Hitler to "restore order" in France. Betrayed by its own generals, the French army went down like ninepins before the blitzkrieg. Quislings were set up to rule in Paris, and a fascist government under Pétain was established at Vichy. On September 11, 1940, Blum was arrested, and the following year brought to trial at Riom by the Vichy government.

The trial was the apogee of Blum's career. At peace with himself, Blum faced his accusers with dignity and courage. He was charged with "having betrayed his trust"; with "tolerating or promoting working class discontent"; with "permitting an attack on the principle of authority"; with "curbing war production." Blum was innocent of these charges and proclaimed it openly. The trial was of the Republican regime which he had served without regard for party or class. "The circumstances," he declared, "were so agonizing, civil war was so close, that all that could be hoped for was a kind of divine intervention: I mean the coming to power of a man who had sufficient power of persuasion over the working class, whose stature would enable him to make reason prevail so that class would not use nor abuse its strength." Blum was that man. This was not the kind of trial the Nazis had expected, and at the first opportunity the German embassy prevailed on Pétain to call it off, and Blum was packed off to Buchenwald.

"More innocent even than Socrates," Colette Audry comments, "for while Socrates, innocent in his own eyes, knew he was not so in the eyes of his judges, Leon Blum knew himself innocent in the eyes of the judges. That is undoubtedly why he was not convicted, as merits a just man who has to force respect from his judges and to knock the weapons from the hands of those who raise them. Such is *personal* innocence in the light of universal morality. . . . But is such innocence fitting for the leader of a workers' party . . .?" Colette Audry answers: "Leon Blum's innocence derives from his political guilt."

At one point in her book Colette Audry quotes Blum as saying to the Socialist Party convention on June 1, 1936: "I hope that the government to be formed by the Socialist Party will not be a Kerensky government." She does not further pursue the point as it is obvious that Blum was a Kerensky who prepared the way for Pétain—the French Kornilov. But there is still a gaping question: Why did the Right triumph and not the Left? In other words, where was "Lenin"?

This would require a companion volume on Maurice Thorez. We can only hope Colette Audry will find her task half-done until she writes it.

G. C.

BOOK REVIEW

The Decline of Norman Thomas Socialism

THE SOCIALIST PARTY OF AMERICA by David A. Shannon. MacMillan Co., New York, 1955, $4.50.

IN the past few years, the university presses have issued a number of valuable works on American socialism: Princeton's two-volume symposium and extensive bibliography, Kipnis's excellent study up to 1912, and Quint's "Forging of American Socialism," a scholarly work dealing with the earlier period up to the formation of the Socialist Party. The latest work would be a welcome addition to this library, as much of it covers the post-war period which has not been adequately written up. Unfortunately, Shannon's is the poorest book of the three. He has little feel for the radical movement, and his surface-thin descriptions bristle with factual errors and misunderstandings.

A few examples: The Hillquit group ("the Kangaroos") that split from the Socialist Labor Party in 1899 is described as rejecting "completely the revolutionist argument that any reform of capitalism . . . only postponed the revolution," and the group is defined as a variety of "more conservative socialism." This college terminology muddles everything. Actually, the Hillquit group at the turn of the century represented a Kautskyian middle-of-the-road socialist tendency in line with most European socialists of the period, and split with De Leon primarily because of the latter's sectarianism. Next, we learn that De Leon captured the IWW, which will be news both to the De Leonists and the IWW. The later differences between Debs and Victor Berger and others, we are informed, "were differences of emphasis." Further on, the Washington State left-wingers, who were extremists, and distinctive in their opposition to immediate-reform demands, are falsely portrayed as representing the thinking of the SP left wing. Haywood is described as rejecting political action, which he most certainly did not. The inspired capitalist press rumor of 1918 that Debs had reversed his previous anti-war stand—a canard that Debs specifically exploded in his Canton speech—is here repeated all over again. And so forth.

The third chapter, entitled "Party Battles, 1909-1913," is supposed to correct the alleged errors in Kipnis's book, but just what Shannon corrects or how he improves on Kipnis is entirely unclear to this reviewer. His only cogent point is to take issue with Kipnis that after the 1912 party convention and Haywood's subsequent expulsion, the membership rolls declined as drastically as Kipnis makes out. Even here, where he may be right, and where Kipnis may have exaggerated the debilitating effects of the Left's defeat, he introduces no evidence or analysis, except to juggle with some of the monthly membership figures. It is indeed true that Kipnis's book is written from the vantage point of vague sympathy with the left wing, while Shannon is too bewildered by it all to do more than hand out credits and demerits as each issue comes along. A historian is entitled to write from one or another political viewpoint, but he is under obligation to state the facts correctly, and to try to delineate events and trends in line with the unfolding facts.

ONCE we get into the SP's post-war career, things pick up a bit, possibly because of the author's greater familiarity with the subject. Even here, the treatment of the Socialist development in isolation from that of the Communists, who had the more virile membership and after several years emerged as the mainstream of the radical movement, gives it a one-dimensional appearance.

The Socialist Party was shattered in the split of 1919. It went down to approximately 26,000 members, its right-wing leadership enjoyed little standing with the ranks, and after all the expulsions and secessions, a Left group still remained led by Engdahl and Kruse agitating for affiliation with the Third International. The party managed to pull itself together sufficiently to run the final Debs Presidential campaign, with its candidate issuing appeals from the Atlanta penitentiary. Debs polled almost a million votes in 1920, but the SP leaders could not kid themselves about its meaning: It was a personal tribute to the man, and a protest against the vindictive witch-hunting of the Wilson administration. It has practically nothing to do with the Socialist Party as an organization.

After the election a broad amnesty campaign got under way enlisting numerous prominent figures and labor leaders. But the SP continued to fall apart. In 1921 the membership dropped to 13,000 and the next year to 11,000. Radicalism of any and every variety had tough sledding in the twenties, but the SP was laboring under the special handicap that its guts had been ripped out with the split. Young radicals were increasingly attracted to the Communists because of their more aggressive methods, their more militant tone, and their association with the Soviet Union. As John Dos Passos wrote a little later, joining the Socialist Party would have "just about the same effect on anybody as drinking a bottle of near-beer."

IN 1922, the Railroad Brotherhoods and a few other labor unions were getting interested in some sort of independent politics. There was a lot of pressure coming from labor ranks at this time to do something, as the open-shop drive was gathering momentum and the unions were belabored with court injunctions, hostile court orders, and punitive Supreme Court decisions. The Socialist Party leaders, desperately hunting for allies, eagerly attached themselves to this movement known as the Conference for Progressive Political Action, hoping that a labor party might eventually come out of it. After the Republicans nominated Coolidge and the Democrats John W. Davis for the 1924 presidential elections, the CPPA got behind the third party candidacy of Senator Robert M. La Follette.

Although La Follette got almost five million votes, and about 850,000 of these were cast under the Socialist ticket on the ballot, the campaign did not result in the formation of a new party, as both La Follette and the rail union officials were opposed to such a move, and immediately after the election the AFL officials, who had endorsed La Follette, announced that the 1924 campaign "has been proved wasted effort" and that labor "must continue to follow its non-partisan policy." The flirtation with La Follette thus wound up as a debacle. The SP came out of the elections even weaker than it had been before, and the disintegration process was accelerated. The organization continued to vegetate until the depression. Then, with the new spirit that was abroad in the land, and with the emergence of a new dynamic personality, Norman Thomas, the party experienced a brief Indian summer prior to its final demise.

NORMAN Thomas, who became for the next quarter-century the party's outstanding spokesman, was born in 1884 in Marion, Ohio, the son of a Presbyterian minister. After his graduation from Princeton and the Union Theological Seminary, he was likewise ordained a Presbyterian minister, and took over a church in East Harlem, a slum neighborhood in New York City. It was his opposition to the World War based upon Christian ideals and pacifism that first drew Thomas to the Socialists and led him to support Hillquit's mayoralty campaign in 1917. Thomas shortly thereafter resigned his pastorate and joined the Socialist Party. He began to devote much of his time to the Fellowship of Reconciliation, and achieved notice in liberal and pacifist circles as the editor of its publication, *World Tomorrow*.

In 1928 the Socialist presidential nomination went to Thomas, as Shannon says, "largely by default; there was no one else for the job. The only Socialists of national reputation, Hillquit and Berger, were ineligible for the Presidency because of their foreign birth. Dan Hoan . . . was too busy as Socialist mayor of Milwaukee to make a campaign."

Thomas polled 267,000 votes, and while in percentages the vote was worse than what the Socialists had polled in their first campaign in 1900, the cold fact was that even this kind of vote for the rickety SP was excellent, and more of a tribute to the remarkable campaign that Thomas put on than to anything the organization was able to do. It was the first of many subsequent demonstrations that Thomas possessed a strong appeal to certain types of audiences. He was instrumental in bringing into the party a number of middle-class

NORMAN THOMAS

educators, social workers, publicists and pacifists, and he attracted around the party such noted liberals as John Dewey, the philosopher, Paul Douglas, the present Senator from Illinois, Oswald Garrison Villard, then publisher of the *Nation*, W. E. B. Du Bois, the Negro scholar, and many liberal Protestant ministers and Jewish rabbis. With Thomas, the Socialist Party got its new face. The old image of Debs was no more, and the organization became known around the country as a pink, essentially middle-class outfit of reformers, uplifters and pacifists.

AS the effects of the 1929 crisis made themselves felt, the Communist Party organized Unemployed Councils and was soon leading hundreds of thousands of jobless in huge demonstrations, and recruiting considerable numbers into its party ranks. By these and other militant activities, the Communists definitely gained the position of the major and most dynamic sector of the radical front. But the Socialists were also getting a trickle of new blood into the organization, and for a while it seemed as if the half-dead party might shake off its debilities and find a new lease on life.

There was a revival of life and activity with the influx of new younger members into the party. But the revival also thrust the organization into a new factional crisis. The younger members may not have been too clear as to precisely what it was they wanted, but they were united on what they did not want—and that was the Old Guard leadership of Hillquit and his cronies, who by this time constituted a clique of well-to-do, cynical and tired politicians with precious little faith left in socialism and even less in their organization. The opposition elements called themselves Militants, and put in their first bid for reforming the party at the Milwaukee convention in 1932.

The temper of insurgent America at that time is brought back to us when we recall that the first big showdown between the two sides was on what position to take regarding Soviet Russia, and consider some of the personalities involved in the battle, and their subsequent evolution. The Militants supported a resolution introduced by Paul Blanshard, Oscar Ameringer and Newman Jeffery, and amended by Norman Thomas, which carried the convention by 117 to 64. The resolution declared in part "that the Socialist Party, while not endorsing all policies of the Soviet government, and while emphatically urging the release of political prisoners and the restoration of civil liberties, endorses the efforts being made in Russia to create the economic foundations of a Socialist society, and calls on the workers to guard against capitalist attacks on Soviet Russia." Which sounds pretty good even today.

HOWEVER, the chaotic character of the convention, the absence of any stable groupings, and the general confusion as to who stood for what and why, was revealed immediately afterwards when the delegates voted down by almost as large a majority a mild resolution calling for the party to "stimulate and press the organizing of workers, especially in the basic industries, along industrial union lines." Many delegates didn't want to antagonize any AFL officials who were or might become friends of theirs. After a battle, Hillquit squeezed through for the national chairmanship by 108 to 81 votes.

But the fight of the younger elements for a more radical program developed a momentum of its own, and Norman Thomas's 1932 election campaign, which probably represented the high point of the SP's public activities, and in which he won 885,000 votes, further deepened the division. Shannon does not do justice to the main factors that were stoking the fires of the faction contest. There was of course the general radical mood around the country, especially among the youth, engendered by the terrible years of economic crisis, and the exploding NRA strike struggles—the heat lightning of the later CIO storm. There was the swing of many intellectuals and workers to the Communist ranks, and the conviction among the Militants that if only the Socialist Party—which didn't have to labor under the handicap of the CP's bad reputation of slavish adherence to whatever line came out of Russia—went sufficiently to the Left, it could again break through as the spokesman of the American working class. What tipped the scales finally in the Left's direction was the total discreditment of right-wing Socialism after Hitler took power in 1933, and the Fascist attack on the Austrian Socialists the year after. Left-wing currents blazed up in Socialist parties

throughout the world and powerfully affected the thinking of the Americans, as well.

BY the 1934 Detroit convention the Old Guard was isolated and the delegates proceeded to adopt a new Declaration of Principles written in fighting language and calling for general strikes and massed resistance against war "to convert the capitalist war crisis into a victory for socialism," and talked of "replacing the bogus democracy of capitalist parliamentarianism by a genuine workers' democracy." The Old Guard was livid with rage and threatened time and again to bolt, but the fight against them was pressed home—it appears incongruous today—by Norman Thomas, Devere Allen, Leo Krzycki, Frank Crosswaith, Dan Hoan; and Andy Biemiller, reporting for the committee, shouted at the right-wing delegates: "There is a philosophy involved in it [the Declaration of Principles], we make no bones about it; it is the philosophy of revolutionary socialism." The Declaration, after a fierce all-day debate, was carried 99 to 47, and subsequently endorsed by the membership by approximately 6,000 to 4,800.

The new majority that drove through the Declaration consisted of a bizarre combination of young left wingers, pacifists like Norman Thomas and Devere Allen, the Militant caucus leaders, who shortly afterwards founded the *Socialist Call* as an opposition paper to the Old Guard's *New Leader,* and the Wisconsin group, which stood, as one delegate put it, for "overhead sewers and steam-heated sidewalks." The fight between the two sides raged for the next two years, and after the Cleveland convention, when the Old Guard became convinced that the party had slipped from its grasp, it split and organized the Social Democratic Federation. While they did not take big numbers with them, most of the important and monied party institutions like the Rand School and the Jewish *Daily Forward* were in their hands, and most of the remaining trade union officials still around at this time left with the Old Guard or took the opportunity to drop out of the movement entirely.

THE split brought neither peace to the harassed party nor unity into its councils. The new majority, which had been held together more by what it was against than by what it was for, promptly split and a new left wing known as the *Clarity* group (after its periodical, *Socialist Clarity*), was set up. The Trotskyists, who had dissolved their own organization and entered the Socialist Party at the time of the Cleveland convention, promptly set up their own *Appeal* faction (named after their separate periodical, *Socialist Appeal*), and a three-way slugging-fest ensued as to what kind of a party the Socialist Party was to be. Many of the doctrinal debates had an air of unreality about them, slightly reminiscent of the infantile battles of American Communism in 1919.

Although none of the leaders realized it at the time, the SP had already missed the boat, and its chances of re-emerging as an important organization in America had disappeared. Roosevelt had successfully rallied the working class behind the New Deal. Even in New York State, where a large traditional Socialist vote existed, it had been successfully channelled behind Roosevelt through the instrumentality of the American Labor Party. Thomas's vote in 1936 dropped disastrously to 187,000, and the party membership rolls, declining since 1934, stood at the all-time low of 6,500. Where Socialists became prominent in the new CIO upsurge, as they did in a number of localities, their activities did not help build up the Socialist movement, but further shattered it. These members, caught up in the tide of the times, invariably deserted the SP to hook up with the Roosevelt forces in the labor movement. The Communist Party, in line with the international Peoples Front policy, was, under Browder's direction, aligning itself with Roosevelt, and under this banner, it won hegemony of the left-wing intellectuals, and was building up its position of strength inside the CIO. In the circumstances, the best the SP could by then have accomplished was to run an effective Socialist propaganda and educational organization, until the new turn of the situation came. But for that it needed dynamic ideas and unity of purpose. There it sorely lacked both collectively and in each of its three factions. By the end of 1937, the loose grouping of so-called progressives and the Militant and Clarity leaders decided that the internecine warfare could not go on any longer, and the National Executive Committee expelled the Trotskyists, who thereupon reconstituted themselves as the Socialist Workers Party. Thus ended the rather pathetic experiment to convert the dying reformist Socialist Party into what the Militant leaders, in their exuberance, had called in 1936 "the party of revolutionary unity."

Shannon states: "The whole Trotskyite affair hurt the Socialist Party rather badly. The Trotskyites had captured the whole California organization. To expel them there the NEC had to revoke the California charter and reorganize the state. The Appeal group was so large in New York City that expelling them presented serious administrative problems, and probably no one fully understood the complicated method the NEC adopted to rid the New York organization of the Trotskyites. But the Socialist Party was dying before its invasion by the followers of Trotsky. Their invasion was like a slight cerebral stroke for one already dying of malnutrition."

B. C.

When British Labor Went Independent

THE ORIGINS OF THE BRITISH LABOUR PARTY, by J. H. Stewart Reid. University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1955, $4.50.

THIS sympathetic account of the beginnings of British labor's present powerful party takes the story from the early beginnings in the eighties of the last century up through the first world war. Until the turn of the century, when the effort to secure an independent representation in parliament was endorsed by the trade union movement and took on a broad character, it was the property of various groupings of radicals, both middle class and working class. This first part of the story has been brilliantly told by Henry Pelling in his 1954 volume, "The Origins of the Labor Party, 1880-1900," reviewed in these pages in September 1954. Professor Reid's compressed and sketchy account of these early beginnings adds virtually nothing to Pelling's story, and is far inferior to it in comprehension of the conflicting policies of the various groups of the time. With the beginning of the period of labor's representation of several dozen in Parliament, his account improves in quality and interest.

Labor's parliamentary group in the pre-World War I period was not a very well-oriented proposition. On the one hand it was not a socialist party in program or perspective, although made up primarily of socialists. The Independent Labor Party, which was the major policy body behind the group, effectively prevented that, as it was going on the theory that an effort should be made to build a broad and non-partisan labor representation in alliance with the trade union leadership, and so withheld its own socialist program from the parliamentary body. On the other hand, its line of demarcation from the Liberal Party was often vague and blurred, as that party was then supporting social reform in the hope of heading off any challenge from labor.

HENCE in the period from 1906 up to the first World War, the labor group concentrated mainly upon the enactment of various reforms which the unions desired, and its clashes with the Liberals were over specific provisions of the laws rather than the laws themselves. There is no question that Labor met with a good deal of success. Even in that early day, labor in England was placed far ahead of its present-day American counterpart by the possession of a body of working-class representatives in the nation's legislative halls upon which it could rest directly. The unions were in an uproar over the Taff Vale decision, which had given the right to the Taff Vale Railway Company to sue its workers' union for damages because of a strike—a decision which struck at the very existence of the union movement. Labor's parliamentary group managed to secure a new Trades Disputes Act which reversed that decision and gave the unions safeguards. An Unemployed Workmen's Act, paying unemployment insurance of slightly less than one-third the average wage, was passed, the Workmen's Compensation Act was improved, a minimum wage law for sweated industries was passed, and an Education Act which provided meals for school children unable to afford proper nourishment; also an Old Age Pensions Act, which provided pensions of about one-fifth the aver-

age wage. Altogether, the record of achievement was not inferior to the gains during America's New Deal period a quarter-century later.

To trade union activists and militant socialists with a wider horizon, however, the period was anything but a happy one, despite the increasing labor representation in Parliament. The labor leadership, they felt, was too soft and compromising towards the Liberals, and the drift was towards a merging with the Liberal forces in Commons. The labor group at that time had fallen under the leadership of flashy Ramsay MacDonald, who, in contrast to the blunter worker's leader Keir Hardie whom he succeeded, was personally ambitious. By his own testimony, his respect for the cause of labor was far exceeded by his reverence for the rules of Parliament.

AS a result, the labor group split a number of times in the voting on various measures and amendments, and the leadership was increasingly subjected to left-wing assault at party conferences. During 1900-1914, the rise of wages was outstripped almost three times over by the rise in prices. A militant mood began to take possession of the unions. At the same time that a feeling of the inadequacy and ineffectiveness of purely parliamentary action mounted, the unions underwent a remarkable growth in numbers and strike activity. In many cases strike action was resorted to by the ranks against the advice of their leaders. In 1911, the transport workers and seamen paralyzed the ports of the country. In 1912, the Miners' Federation went on strike for a national minimum wage, which the parliamentary group had been discussing in Commons but had not done much about. The miners did win a system of minimums to be set by regional boards, and that gave an impetus to the union revolt against employers, government, and their own leaders.

At the same time, the militant elements opened fire against what they considered to be a *sub rosa* alliance with the Liberals. They denounced labor's leadership for passing up elections in which the Liberals would be the main adversary, they demanded an end to parliamentary agreements "behind the Speaker's chair," and they demanded that labor voting proceed without regard to whether it would bring the Liberal government tumbling down—a labor policy which the leaders defended on the novel ground that defeating the Liberals would only oust Tweedledee in favor of Tweedledum, to no good purpose.

MACDONALD'S drift was evident. He was heading towards a loose coalition with the Liberals against the Tories, a policy which would have reduced the Labor Party role to that of a pressure group, and effectively prevented it from ever forming a Labor Government. Labor representation in Parliament—only some 40 out of almost 700—was still small, and MacDonald might easily have had his way. But the new surge of labor militancy before, and later during, World War I prevented it.

The union upsurge was temporarily halted by the war. Despite the high-sounding pre-war pronouncements of the socialist leaders, most of them supported the war to one degree or another, and the union movement quickly concluded an agreement with the government where, in return for surrendering its strike weapon, it was given multiple guarantees that its interests would be guarded. Labor was soon taken into the Cabinet, and its leaders subjected to the standard treatment of flattery and given a big-shot status which soon had them bursting with "responsibility" and "statesmanship."

The new agreement was, Mr. Reid writes, "the source of much satisfaction in union circles," and he adds: "That its end result was to be much less satisfying no one at the moment could foresee." On the contrary, its results were fully predictable, as experience has repeatedly duplicated the inevitable course of development. Under the impact of war production, prices rose a whopping 35 percent in the first year of the war, and profits in the munitions industries soared even more. The employers, fully protected by the no-strike agreement, refused to bargain seriously, and embarked on a policy of shaving union conditions and threatening militants with the draft where they became too obstreperous.

THE bustling war expansion in industry, meanwhile, was swelling the ranks of the unions with new forces. Between 1914 and 1919, union membership doubled, from 3,919,000 to 7,926,000. At the same time, labor militancy, directed not so much against the war as against its consequences for labor, bubbled up and began to boil over the heads of the leaders and raise up new spokesmen. The Russian Revolution, with its calls for a peace conference and a revision of war aims, also had a marked effect, and Lloyd George noted that a "pacifist propaganda" which "might develop into a dangerous anti-war sentiment" was spreading and was demanding a new statement of war aims and an early conclusion to the war. In this situation, there arose the famous shop stewards' movement, which Mr. Reid describes:

"Suspicion and anger were very evident in trade union ranks by the middle of 1916, and led to a rapid growth of syndicalist [anti-political and direct-action] views during the last two years of the war. In its new form the movement was largely centered in the shop stewards' committees, or the Workers' Committees which grew up at this time. It was clear to most workingmen that by agreeing to the industrial truce in 1915, by surrendering the right to strike, and by accepting the government's plan for dilution [of the labor force], the leaders of the trade union movement had virtually abandoned the union's power to protect its members on such matters as wages and working conditions. In the Clydeside strike in 1915, the workers had therefore been forced to find another set of officials to do the bargaining for them. Committees of shop stewards were the answer. Originally minor officials whose job was principally to act as chairmen of local grievance committees for the union, the stewards now assumed a function they had never had before, that of negotiating with employers on the settlement of workers' demands.

"The shop stewards' committees in many cases refused to be bound by the agreements that had been concluded by the union leaders. Being on the spot, the stewards knew intimately the problems that faced the workers on the job. As a result, it often seemed that the stewards were able to represent the workers far better than could officials in the offices at union headquarters. The leaders of this new movement came largely from two camps, both of which had been critical of the present labor organization, of its parliamentary tactics, and of its reformist tendencies. On the Clyde, for example, syndicalists and militant socialists dominated the committees, and neither had much faith in political action in general or in the present Labor party in particular."

LABOR'S movement which emerged from the war was thus a far different proposition from the pre-war organization. Greatly increased in numbers and electoral potential, fortified by a strong left wing which had been inspired in part by its own experiences and in part by the message of militancy broadcast by the Russian Revolution, it could no longer be led along the path marked out by Ramsay MacDonald before the war. Much of the labor resentment was directed against the former "friend," the Lloyd George Liberals with whom the wartime coalition had been effected. In short order, the Labor Party made several major decisions, breaking the electoral truce, and adopting a new party constitution which for the first time set socialism as its aim.

Overriding the protests of the Labor representatives still sitting in the Cabinet, a special party conference immediately after the armistice implemented the previous decisions for an independent course, and in the election of 1918 the Labor party put up 361 candidates, as compared with the 50 which was all it could manage in the election of 1910, winning 25 percent of the vote and an increase in representation of 50 percent, from 40 to 60 members of Parliament.

Liberalism, in the meantime, which could never have been smothered in a Labor embrace, was fragmented by Labor's independent stand, and, as described by a former Liberal, was "crushed between truculent Labor and equally truculent wealth." The split between Lloyd George and Asquith was the beginning of the end, and put a stop to the hope of the "coalitionist" laborites of a continuation of their former policy. Many prominent ex-Liberals joined with Labor, and the political structure of the country was soon polarized between the two major class parties—Toryism and Laborism.

H. B.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Thirty Years is a Long Time

As an innocent man who spent twenty years in prison before being released by California's ex-Governor Olson, permit me to say that I'm glad that it didn't take twenty years for us to give James Kutcher a little justice. In spite of the fact that he was a severely wounded veteran, he might have been forgotten in my day, and left penniless and friendless.

He has his pension and now there is still the matter of his job to be returned to him. I'm going to guess that he will get that too. Meanwhile, innocent of any crime, he has to do the best he can. But it could be worse—he could be doing his waiting in prison as Tom Mooney and I did.

There's another innocent man in our U.S.A. today who *is* waiting it out in prison. That's Morton Sobell, accused of conspiracy to commit espionage. He's under a 30-year sentence. I've made a thorough study of his case, and it proves only one thing to me—that sometimes people will believe anything. Nowadays you can't find a corporal's guard to believe that Mooney and I threw a bomb into a Preparedness parade in 1916. The day will come when nobody will believe the one witness who, trying to dodge a perjury charge, accused Sobell of being a spy.

Sobell has been in prison since 1950, and in Alcatraz since Thanksgiving Day 1952. That's a lot of years to be without your family. It's long for a guilty man and even longer when you're innocent, as I can tell you.

Sobell is going into the courts again, asking for a new trial, charging that the prosecutors, including Roy Cohn, knowingly used perjured testimony to convict him. I hope the courts do the right thing, but it's a long road that goes through the courts. You can be a pretty old man by the time they decide that you were right after all.

Sobell ought to get the same consideration Mooney and I got, only a lot sooner. The President has the power to give him a pardon or commute his sentence to time served. I think the President ought to take that step now.

Thirty years is a long, long time.

Warren K. Billings *San Francisco*

Objection Taken

One of Dr. Du Bois' false statements in his article "Negro Voters Face 1956" [February 1956] demonstrates how this ex-leader of the Negro people is completely out of touch with the current scene. He wrote: "Probably nine-tenths of the Negro vote went to Eisenhower." The fact is that Negro districts across the nation gave Stevenson their support by a 3-1 margin. Negro neighborhoods in New York went 77 percent for Adlai, in Detroit 91 percent, in Denver 81 percent, in Philadelphia 70 percent, in New Orleans 80 percent, etc. Some people might find in Dr. Du Bois' misleading picture of the Negro people a peculiar sort of mistrust and rejection.

R. L. R. *New York City*

Dr. DuBois Replies

My statement that "Probably nine-tenths of the Negro vote went to Eisenhower" in 1952, was doubtless too sweeping. I based my conclusion on the general attitude of the Negro press, and on the fact that Stevenson appealed more to the white Southerner than to the Negro. I forgot that in certain centers of Negro population, Negro candidates appeared on the Democratic ticket. In Chicago, Detroit, and New York, they were elected by decisive majorities, and this fact was doubtless reflected in the Presidential vote. I am still convinced that a large majority of the Negro vote in general was cast for Eisenhower, but of course there are no exact statistics.

However, the division of the Negro vote between Democrats and Republicans in 1952 has little concern with my main thesis, and that is, that in either case the Negro voted for war, monopoly, and the rule of weath, instead of for peace, socialization of wealth, and democracy. Perhaps I should have made this argument clearer.

W. E. B. Du Bois

To my way of thinking, there is no power on earth to change the course of the march of mankind, even if every socialist were hanged tomorrow in the U.S. of A. Hence I think it is in order for the socialists to begin to think and talk about socialism and what it means. Certainly we have to keep capitalism constantly on the dissecting table, to expose its decaying vitals for the public view, but we must begin to discuss what socialism means in practical terms also.

S. D. *Penna.*

Inevitability in History

The American Socialist (February 1956) justly condemns Isaiah Berlin's "Historical Inevitability." Your reviewer, however, allowed the full force of the condemnation to slip from him by surreptitiously accepting Berlin's empiricist premises.

H. B., your reviewer, gives as examples of historical determinism certain isolated situations in the physical sciences. Hume devastatingly criticized this simple "billiard-ball" type of causality more than 200 years ago. But even if one discards the notion of necessary connection of cause and effect (as Hume urged), it still does not follow that *social* causation is analogous to this isolated model of physical causation (as Hume failed to see).

H. B. would substitute the bloodless abstraction of "Given certain antecedents, certain consequents will follow" for Berlin's scarcely different historical chaos. Berlin would, in fact, undoubtedly accept H. B.'s version of "determinism." This is simply the principle of the uniformity of nature with which every rationalist since Kant has concerned himself. As such, the principle has been used by a whole spate of critics (e.g., Popper, Mayo, Berlin) as a club with which to belabor Marxism.

Marx, on the other hand, would, if anything, deny the principle of the uniformity of nature, and such was clearly the purport of, for example, his doctoral dissertation. Historical determinism did not for him consist in the mere connection of antecedents and consequents. Quite to the contrary, man under capitalism has *no* freedom to choose his causal acts—unlike the physical paradigm of a doctor choosing his medicines. Freedom for Marx consists not in the uniformity (either necessary or probable) of causation, but "in the most complete possible understanding of necessity." This Marxist necessity is that of the inevitable expansion of the capitalist system and its attendant developments. The consequences of this expansion can be predicted only because of the determinate nature of surplus value. . . .

Richard DeHaan *Mass.*

Money: Root of the Evil?

I will say that you publish a very bright journal, but you make the same mistake as the *Call, National Guardian,* and the *Nation.* They all fail to feature the financial problem involved in the profit-and-interest economic system. If the people bought all of the goods and services on the market at profitable prices, they would have to spend more every year than they can earn or are paid, otherwise the enterprisers would make no profit. Only those who have heired some property can spend more than they earn, for a time, and that breaks them up. Thus the toilers must be made poorer to make the rich richer.

That system of economy broke down completely and permanently away back in 1929, and our government has kept it going ever since by putting all of us in debt to supply the financiers with profits.

So much of our money is borrowed at interest that the interest has to be paid out of the borrowed money; thus debt is piled on top of debt. This is the issue to keep before the people. . . .

O. B. B. *Illinois*

Would you be good enough to publish the following short announcement: Poets are invited to contribute to an anthology of the poetry on the Rosenberg case in the United States. Manuscripts should be sent to: Sierra Press, P. O. Box 96, Long Island City 4, N. Y.

M. M. *New York*

Now is the Time for All Good Men...

SOCIALISM and radicalism everywhere in the world are evidently in for a first-class shakeup, if the recent events in the Soviet Union and within Communist Parties around the globe are any index. Much dogma that has been long clung to will be discarded. For the first time in many a long year, many American leftists will be putting on their thinking caps and making an attempt to figure out both the past and the future of the movement to which they adhere.

The implications of all this are huge, and we believe all to the good, as American radicalism has not been in very good shape from the point of view of clarity and correctness of ideas.

From its very first issue, the AMERICAN SOCIALIST has been guided by the view that Russia is in a basic transition. While we have always believed and said that American socialists should be friendly to the countries trying to pioneer socialism under difficult conditions, and should publicize their successes and try to comprehend their problems, we have stood first and foremost for a policy of critical independence. Once you give up your right to judge for yourself the rights and wrongs of things as they are done in Russia, China and Eastern Europe, you are no longer a movement of socialists but a publicity agency, and liable at any moment to become a laughing stock, as the Communists are right now. Our point of view has been, we believe, completely verified.

THE point of all this is as follows: The role which a magazine like the AMERICAN SOCIALIST can play as a rallying point for a new radicalism and for clarification of socialist thinking is bound to be very important. It is not just issues about Russia that are up for re-consideration—it is the entire method of thinking, solving problems, and approaching the people of this country on behalf of socialism.

This gives added point to our repeated appeals in this space to readers to help spread the AMERICAN SOCIALIST. Show it to your friends, get it on new newsstands, send us lists of names for sample copies, sell introductory subscriptions (at $1 for six months)—all of these things can help. Readers are urged to get to work in the interest of independent socialism and the coming re-groupment and growth of American radicalism.

NEW YORK READERS: Two lectures on the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of Russia: 1. What is New? Friday, April 13, 8:15 P.M.; 2. Consequences and Aftermath—The Anti-Stalinist Campaign. Friday, April 20, 8:15 P.M.

SPEAKER: MICHAEL ZASLOW. Ample time will be allowed for questions and discussion. Both lectures at 229 Seventh Avenue, cor. 23 St., 2nd floor. Donation for each: 50 cents. Auspices American Socialist Forum of New York.