

Summer 1957

Doug Tennell

INTERNATIONAL SOCIALIST REVIEW

Review-Article

"The Roots of American Communism"

James P. Cannon

New Facts on Trotsky's Murder



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LEON TROTSKY 1879-1940

How to Build an Anti-Monopoly Coalition

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Ahead of the Dodgers

SINCE our last issue, we have moved our editorial office and place of publication to Los Angeles. The shift to the West Coast opens an opportunity for further improvements in the *International Socialist Review*, including, we hope, its expansion fairly soon. The new typographical outfit you see us dressed in is intended to help in this.

The fact is that the developments in the regroupment of socialist forces and the subsiding of the witch-hunt have given us promising new openings. These, plus articles on our editorial calendar crying for publication, demand an increase in the size of the *Review* or its frequency of publication.

What we need to ease the bottleneck is simply a little more of the ordinary lubricant known as money. Will all those who can do something about this please get in touch with our Business Office? The address remains 116 University Place, New York 3, N.Y. You can also help in Operation Finance by simply widening our circle of readers. Got any friends who ought to know more about the socialist alternative to capitalism?

* * *

AS *THE* baseball fans among our readers have no doubt already ob-

served, we beat the Brooklyn Dodgers out to the land of hot-rods, smog and sun glasses.

We did not try to beat the Dodgers to Los Angeles. It was pure coincidence, including the fact that we are now located near Chavez Ravine, the park-like area in the heart of the city which the generous-hearted mayor of Los Angeles is trying to ready for the profit-conscious manager of the Brooklyn stable. However, we considered the mayor's game with the Dodgers a fitting introduction to the politics of Los Angeles.

Before the recent mayoralty election, in the hard-sell style that Madison Avenue uses to blackjack the public into buying without investigating, the newspapers campaigned for city bond issues running into the tens of millions. The fund needed by the city officials was, naturally, for a worthy cause — to bring the public library system up to date, improve the parks and build a zoo in Chavez Ravine second to none, not even San Diego's famed animal collection.

Everyone felt good about civic improvements like that, especially a zoo. It was a case of voting for normalcy in the very teeth of the atom-bomb tests a few hundred miles away in Nevada. And so the bonds were approved by a big majority.

The day after the election the ar-

chitects' drawings of the zoo, the features on exotic animals, the maps of recreation areas and the like all vanished from the press like a mirage in Death Valley and the voters were hailed and congratulated for having made it possible to bring the Dodgers to Chavez Ravine. Thus a new chapter was added to the history of this undeveloped area.

Only a few years ago Chavez Ravine was occupied by Mexican-Americans. They were dispossessed from their homes by the city officials under excuse of utilizing the picturesque hills and gullies for a magnificent public housing project. Federal funds were earmarked for this purpose and the Mexican-Americans were given *written* promises of first choice of apartments as the bulldozers levelled the flower gardens, vegetable patches, and foundations of their destroyed homes.

The next spectacular move in the civic interest was made by the newly elected Mayor Poulson. This favorite of the oil barons and real-estate sharks took a special trip to Washington — not to seek more Federal funds for public housing, but to get cancellation of what had already been allocated. His efforts, despite some difficulties, were crowned with success. The public housing project was killed and Los Angeles saved from "socialism."

Today all that stands in the way of the proposed money-making ballpark concession is a legal proviso that Chavez Ravine must not be used for anything but "public purposes." However, with capitalist know-how, a zoo-minded mayor and the benign concern of some very big dough, including the TV monopolists whose slogan is a slot machine on every TV set that views baseball, this obstacle should not prove insuperable.

* * *

OUT OF our mail, we select one comment on the winter issue from J.G.B. of Alberta, Canada: "The articles in the *ISR* are very good. The one by A.S. 'Boom or Bust?' is very timely. But does A.S. have to use the language of the monetary reformers? What in hell does he mean by 'goods and services'? What services? This is the first time I have come across that term in Marxian literature."

For those interested in how Marx used the term "services" we suggest *A History of Economic Theories* by
(Continued on Page 103)

Planning for a Safe and Sane, If Not So Pleasurable, Future

In its *Science* column, under the heading "A Plan to Make 'Sure' of a Human Race," the June 17 *Newsweek* ran the following item:

In the old pre-atomic days, a few extreme eugenisists used to suggest mass artificial insemination using the sperm of geniuses in order to raise the IQ of the human race. Last week, an atomic physicist proposed a series of "sperm banks" — "lead-covered Fort Knoxes. . . dispersed throughout the nation." His purpose was simply, as he explained it, to preserve the human race in some recognizable form in the event of nuclear war.

At Congressional hearings in Washington on atomic radiation, Dr. Ralph E. Lapp, physicist and author. . . urged "a

stockpile of human sperm," presumably refrigerated in the manner commonly practiced with prize bulls. In the radioactive shambles following an all-out hydrogen-bomb war, female survivors would thus have a source of prewar unirradiated sperm to replace that of her irradiated husband.

"This would mean many children will have the same father, and even grandfather," Lapp pointed out. "But it would cut the genetic consequences of all-out war more than in half, since the female is less sensitive to radiation than the male in terms of the sperm versus the ovum."

Lapp quickly admitted that his suggestion might seem bizarre, but, he said, these "are the kind of things you come up against when you consider the awesome consequences of nuclear warfare."

New Evidence on Trotsky's Murder

An ex-Soviet agent reveals what he learned when Stalin's secret police made a slip and handed him their massive file on the dictator's arch-political foe

by the Editors

THE most direct confirmation to date that the Kremlin's secret agents planned and carried through the assassination of Stalin's archpolitical opponent, Leon Trotsky, has been presented by Vladimir Petrov in his recently published book *Empire of Fear*.^{*} Petrov was Third Secretary at the Soviet Embassy in Canberra and chief of the Soviet espionage organization in Australia. His defection caused an international sensation when he and his wife sought political asylum there in April 1954.

Both Petrovs were career officers in the MVD, variously named the OGPU, the NKVD and the MGB. He joined the OGPU in May 1933 as a cipher clerk handling the cable traffic at its headquarters in Moscow. He worked there during the great purges of 1936-38. Rising in the organization, he served in the Sinkiang Province of China during the elimination of "anti-Soviet elements" in 1937, at the Soviet Embassy in Stockholm during the Second World War, and finally in Australia.

Petrov had ample opportunity to become intimately familiar with the methods of operation, the leading personnel and secrets of Stalin's domestic and foreign terror machine. His authentic inside information on the OGPU's role in Trotsky's murder was obtained through an accidental perusal of the massive file on Trotsky which came into his hands in the archives of the Committee of Information at the Soviet capital.

Petrov relates: "I saw Trotsky's file by accident and through a defect in our Soviet records system. It happened in 1948, as follows:

"At that time there were two main Intelligence Registries, or Archives as they are called, in the Soviet Union. The first was in the basement of No. 2 Dzerzhinsky

Square and was the Registry of the First Special Department. There, on shelf after packed shelf, were housed the records of every person accused or suspected of political offenses inside the Soviet Union since the Revolution of 1917. These files numbered many millions; some were feet thick, others no more than a brief note on a single sheet of paper.

"A friend who worked there told me of the gigantic task of reviewing all these files, the majority of which consisted of old, useless, or unreliable reports. But all were graded Top Secret. Each time I visited the Registry I had to produce my Identity Card, and hand in my request slip through a window on the right-hand side of the stairs that led down from the street. All files had to be studied on the spot, in a special reading room. No files might be taken out of the building. Of course, authorized M.G.B. officers like myself, were permitted to keep working files, consisting of notes and summaries, in our various M.G.B. departments and sections.

"The other registry belonged to the K.I. (Communist International) and contained all the foreign files. It occupied three floors in a section of one of the Committee of Information buildings. This registry covered the whole field of foreign intelligence — Soviet agents abroad, Counter - Revolutionary organizations in foreign countries, dossiers of foreign politicians, scientific and technical intelligence. . . ."

Went There Often

Petrov's special task in 1948 was the supervision of Soviet merchant seamen on ships plying the lower Danube who might become infected with dissent through contact with foreigners. "I often went to this K.I. registry to check the records of sailors; the staff knew me

^{*}*Empire of Fear*, by Vladimir and Evdokia Petrov. Andre Deutsch, Publishers. London. 1956. 351 pp. 18s.

well," he goes on to say. "But our filing system was cumbersome. The files consisted of grey cardboard covers, containing papers which were permanently fastened together; as each new report came in, it was stitched on to the preceding mass of material, much of it irrelevant.

"When the Soviet armies invaded Germany and reached Berlin," we discovered the superiority of the German filing system in which pages which were required for reference could be detached from a file, and later reincorporated without difficulty. This made it possible to limit the access of any one person to secret material much more effectively than could be done under our system.

"But to reorganize our filing system would have been a mammoth task. Therefore, when I came across a reference to Trotsky on a seaman's dossier and wanted to check it, I was handed the whole volume of Trotsky's file.

"It did not take me long to clear up the point I was looking for and I should have returned the file, but curiosity was too strong. Though it was four or five inches thick I skimmed right through it. After all, Trotsky, though damned, was a legendary figure of Soviet history. Trotsky in the early days, stood second only to Lenin as the organizer of the Bolshevik Revolution and as the prophet of the new Russia. He was Lenin's Commissar for Foreign Affairs, then Minister for War when the Red Army defeated the Whites; later he organized the troops as 'labour armies' to restore vital

railway communications within the Soviet Union.

"Lenin's death seemed to leave him the natural successor, but that was when he clashed with the rising star of Stalin. As leader of the Left Wing of the Opposition, Trotsky was first expelled from the Communist Party and in 1929 banished from the Soviet Union. He lived in Turkey, France, and Norway, went to Mexico in 1937 and was assassinated there on the 20th of August 1940. . . ."

Petrov's account of what he saw—and did not see—in the dossier he examined is highly significant. Trotsky's archives had been broken into by OGPU agents in France who carried away with them, among other materials, his correspondence with his son Sedov. The defendants in the Moscow trials were accused of carrying on correspondence with Trotsky abroad, although no actual letters were ever produced.

On these points Petrov writes: "Trotsky's file was interesting, both for its disclosures and its omissions. It contained a mass of published articles by Trotsky in which he attacked and criticized Stalin's policy, and a series of letters between Trotsky and his son Sedov. One piece of evidence was conspicuous by its absence. According to Soviet official statements, Trotsky carried on a persistent correspondence with dissident groups inside the Soviet Union, inciting them to violent revolt against their government. If so, some of these letters would certainly have been intercepted and put on the file, along with Trotsky's other correspondence. In fact, I did not see one such letter.

"However, there were detailed descriptions of Trotsky's life as an exile in Norway and this reminded me that soon after I joined the O.G.P.U. in 1933 we used to get cypher telegrams from the O.G.P.U. Resident in Norway giving a very full account of Trotsky's life and behaviour and reporting the progress that had been made in getting the O.G.P.U. agents into his circle of intimate friends and admirers."

It might be added that Petrov saw nothing in the files to substantiate Trotsky's alleged connections with Hitler and Hess or with the Mikado of which he was falsely accused in the Moscow Trials. Neither was anything of the kind brought forward in the postwar Nuremberg trials of the Nazi leaders.

Petrov prefaces his confirmation of Stalin's plot against Trotsky's life with a summary of the circumstances in the case. "The facts of Trotsky's actual assassination are well known; indeed, the assassin, Jacques Mornard, readily re-enacted the whole crime for the Mexican police. I have recently read several newspaper reports speculating on whether Mornard will claim the parole to which he is now entitled, or whether he will be too afraid to come out of the security of his quarters in the Lecumberri prison, where he enjoys considerable comfort and affluence.*

"Investigations into the background of the crime have revealed that Mornard won the affections in Paris of a New York girl on holiday, Sylvia Ageloff, who was in-

*The Mexican courts recently denied Mornard's latest petition for parole and he must serve the full 20-year sentence for his crime.

**INTERNATIONAL
SOCIALIST
REVIEW**

Published quarterly. Business office, 116 University Pl., New York 3, N.Y. Editorial office, 1702 E. 4th St., Los Angeles, Calif. Reentered as second class matter April 20, 1954, at the Post Office at New York, N.Y., under the Act of March 3, 1879.

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Vol. 18 — No. 3 — Whole No. 140

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SUBSCRIPTION RATES: U.S.A. and Latin America, \$1.25 a year (four issues); single copies, 35 cents; bundles, 25 cents a copy for five copies or more. Foreign and Canada, \$1.50 a year (four issues); single copies, 35 cents; bundles, 26 cents a copy for five copies or more.

roduced to him by her travelling companion Julia Weill. Julia was then secretary to Louis Budenz, an American Communist who broke with the Party in 1948. In August 1939, Mornard followed Sylvia back to the United States, travelling on a Canadian passport as 'Frank Jacson.' It was found that this passport had been originally issued to a Yugoslav who was killed fighting in Spain with the International Brigade. All members of the International Brigade had to turn in their passports and the passports of the men who died were sent to Moscow. In this way the Soviet authorities obtained a fund of genuine foreign passports for the use of secret agents.

"Mornard went to Mexico and through Sylvia's sister, a member of Trotsky's circle, was introduced to Trotsky's friends and gained access to the fortress-villa where Trotsky lived under constant guard. Finally, posing as a devout disciple, he was introduced to the great man himself.

"At 5:30 p.m. on 20th August, Mornard walked past the guards, carrying a coat over his arm, though it was warm weather. Under the coat, slung from his wrist, he carried an ice-axe. He also had with him a dagger and a revolver. Trotsky's wife met him, conducted him to Trotsky's study and left them alone. As Trotsky bent over the table, studying a paper on French Trotskyists which Mornard had written, Mornard struck him with the ice-axe, but the first blow did not silence him. His screams brought his wife and the body-guard, who battered Mornard until Trotsky cried, 'Let him live! He must tell his story!' Trotsky died twenty-five hours later without regaining consciousness.

"It is also said that, when the guards attacked him, Mornard cried, 'They made me do it—they imprisoned my mother!' But from that day to this he has steadfastly refused to reveal his identity, his history and his associates. He insists that he committed the crime from purely personal motives, as a Trotskyist who became disillusioned with his leader."

Mornard's method of killing his victim had been practiced in similar cases known to him, Petrov declares. "I recall that the description of the actual killing said that the broad end, not the pointed end, of the ice-axe had been used. The crudeness of the instrument may seem strange, but if Mornard had been as skilful as my colleague Bokov, who [on OGPU instructions] killed the Soviet Ambassador (in Persia) with a single blow from an iron bar, he would have fulfilled his task with very little noise and might have walked out of the gate of Trotsky's villa quietly and unmolested."

Directed from New York

Petrov testifies that the NKVD under Stalin's orders prepared the assassination and the NKVD Resident in the Soviet Consulate-General in New York directed the operation on the American continent.

"That the crime was really a political assassination directed by Stalin has remained a speculation, in spite of

exhaustive police inquiries in many countries," he writes. "I read a recent article on the case (*The People*, 7th November 1954) which concluded: 'Despite what seem well-founded suspicions, the direct association [of Moscow with the crime] has never been established.'

"I can confirm those suspicions from the evidence of my own eyes. Trotsky's file, which I read in the K.I. Registry in 1948, contained the detailed planning by the N.K.V.D. experts over a period of years, which led up to the successful assassination.

"Though I read the file quickly, with a certain apprehensive speed, I remember clearly these planning papers. One of them had a footnote comment by a senior N.K.V.D. officer that Trotsky should never have been allowed to leave the U.S.S.R.

"There were also copies of instructions sent out from N.K.V.D. Headquarters in Moscow to the N.K.V.D. Residents in all the countries where Trotsky had lived at various times, including instructions to the N.K.V.D. Resident in the Soviet Consulate-General in New York, who directed the assassination operation on the American continent. There was complete photographic documentation of Trotsky's life, from the first days in the Soviet Union, before his banishment in 1928, right up to his last days in Mexico, after he had grown the pointed beard which features in his later pictures. There were numerous photographs taken inside his fortified villa, perhaps by Mornard himself, showing the guards, fences and courtyards, photos of Trotsky with his wife, Trotsky having tea with his friends, Trotsky's dog. . . .

"The secret department which organizes such operations outside the Soviet Union was at that time headed by Colonel Serebriansky, a quiet, stooping man with a brilliant planning brain. Later it was directed by Sudoplatov. Now it may be under the direction of Leonid Studnikov, the man who last year sent out Captain Khokhlov (who gave himself up to the Americans) with his poisoned bullets and noiseless camouflaged revolvers, to assassinate the leader of an anti-Soviet organization in Berlin. Khokhlov has reported that the direction of Trotsky's assassination, and the training of Mornard, was actually carried out by Serebriansky's deputy, Eittington, whom I remember seeing at N.K.V.D. Headquarters in Moscow."

* * *

The Petrovs' book contains much information of interest about other well-known personages associated with the Soviet regime. Petrov reveals the fate of the Old Bolshevik, Karl Radek, who was let off with a 10-year sentence after making a bargain with Stalin to fabricate false confessions implicating himself and others in the Second Moscow Trial of January 1937. Radek, who knew many of Stalin's most compromising secrets, did not live long after that. He was reportedly attacked and killed in a quarrel with a cell mate in 1938.

The Petrovs were sent to Sweden to keep surveillance on Madame Kollontai, the Soviet Ambassador and Lenin's friend, one of the few among the Old Guard Stalin

permitted to remain alive. Her husband, Dybenko, had been shot in 1936 on a charge of Trotskyist activities. Moscow feared that she was too sympathetic to the Swedes and critical of her own government. One of the tasks the Petrovs undertook on Moscow's orders was to photograph the notes and drafts of Madame Kollontai's memoirs without her knowledge.

Petrov decoded the cable from Madrid in July 1938 reporting that Alexander Orlov, chief OGPU Representative with the Republican forces in Spain, had deserted. Orlov published an account of his experiences in 1954. "I wondered," writes Petrov, "what would be the fate and fortune of such an important State Security official, who had decided to defy Stalin and had fled to the forbidden world of the West. I little guessed then that I myself was fated to take the same road fifteen years later."

Background of the Petrovs

The Petrovs' story of the events in their lives leading up to their break with the Stalinist regime is instructive on its own account. Both husband and wife were "second generation children of the Russian Revolution. We were both born into the primitive poverty of the Russian village; the Revolution gave both of us opportunities which we would never have enjoyed otherwise; we each rose to positions of comfort, prosperity and privilege in the Soviet service."

They entered the OGPU as convinced Communists and, despite terrifying experiences, remained loyal servants for 20 years. Petrov had an inside view of the massive internal purges of 1936-38 since he headed the section which handled communications within the USSR. "I can testify to this [indiscriminate mass terror against thousands and thousands of innocent persons] as an eye-witness, who myself coded and decoded the signals that passed between N.K.V.D. Headquarters in Moscow and the towns and provinces of the Soviet Union." He handled hundreds of messages couched in the following form: "To N.K.V.D., Frunze. You are charged with the task of exterminating 10,000 enemies of the people. Report results by signal. — Yezhov." (Yezhov, then Chief of the NKVD, was later liquidated by Stalin.)

And in due course the reply would come back:

"In reply to yours of such-and-such date, the following enemies of the Soviet people have been shot."

The quotas for each district and town were fixed at NKVD headquarters. Petrov estimates that two million Soviet citizens were wiped out in these nightmare years.

Why didn't he and others speak out in protest? Here is Petrov's explanation. "Fear ruled us all, and drove underground any murmurs of protest and revolt. When old Revolutionary heroes like Zinoviev, Kamenev, Bukharin and Rykov were executed, when my chief Boki and all his deputies were likewise shot as spies, I found it unbelievable that all these distinguished men, who had given their lives to serve the Revolution, were really traitors to their country. But I did not breathe a word of

my suspicions, except perhaps very tentatively in the close company of one or two old shipmates. And even that was a risk.

"All the same, in the depth of my being, as in the hearts of millions of my countrymen, there began to smoulder a hatred of the treachery, falsehood and injustice of the regime under which we lived, and which already seemed so remote from the hopes and ideals which the Revolution had set before the Russian people."

For a short time during the war Petrov was chief of the cipher section of Gulag, the organization controlling the Soviet Labor Camps. He estimates that there are from 12 to 15 millions in these camps and tells some things about the human degradation in them. Mrs. Petrov's first husband was framed up in 1937 and sent to one of these penal colonies.

The Petrovs lived most of the time in Moscow, the show city of the Soviet Union. Here is their description of its social stratifications:

"Three different classes existed in Moscow as we knew it. At the top were the notables, the great ones, a limited, privileged circle, who, so long as they maintained their position, lived in luxury, with town and country houses, servants, cars and chauffeurs and the best of everything. Such were Government Ministers, Department heads, Service chiefs and outstanding literary or theatrical figures. Apart from official occasions in the Red Square or at the Bolshoi Theatre, these great ones are never seen by the ordinary populace, except in fleeting glimpses as they sweep through cleared streets in guarded and escorted cars, or hurry from car to office and office to car. . . .

"Below this upper crust was a large but still privileged middle class of persons like ourselves, outside the ruling clique, but distinguished by Party membership and possession of good Government jobs, which enabled us to live comfortably so long as we made no slip which might enable jealous rivals to displace us. . . .

"But the mass of the Moscow people live without the privileges or obligations of Party membership." They suffer from extremely congested living quarters, the relentless struggle for the basic necessities of food and clothing, constant shortages which require them to stand for hours and days in queues. Any outward expression of discontent is forestalled by the ubiquitous informing system.

"It is very hard to say what the Soviet people think. Even the lowliest Soviet citizen knows that silence is safety and speech dangerous; that in every building and staircase there are people anxious to advance themselves by reporting criticisms and complaints to the authorities."

The psychology engendered in this atmosphere of mutual mistrust is illustrated by an incident involving Mrs. Petrov at the Soviet Embassy in Canberra. At a Communist party membership meeting she was accused by the Second Secretary of disloyalty because she had placed two amusing magazine photos, one of a Hollywood actress and the other of a dog playing the piano,

under the glass top of her work table where someone had previously placed a portrait of Stalin.

"I was very upset," she writes. "I knew very well that the minutes of every Party meeting went to the Central Committee of the Party in Moscow. In most countries such a charge would have been laughed out of court. But I did not take it lightly. I wrote to the Central Committee, insisting on the baselessness of the charge. I even enclosed a sketch of the lay-out of the top of my table. I knew only too well what a breath of suspicion, however baseless, can do on the file of a Soviet citizen."

Petrov remarks upon the irony of the fact that the "first person to escape from the Soviet Embassy to refuge in Australia was myself, the specialist in preventing such occurrences!"

What drove this Soviet functionary of proletarian origin and with an unblemished record in the Party and the MVD to defect? Here is his explanation of "the agonies, fear, doubt and conflict" which led up to his decision:

"I suppose it really began far back in my native Siberia, when, as I have described, I saw the sufferings of my own peasant folk under collectivization, and the ruin of my native village of Larikha. After that, the horrors of the purges, the victimization of innocent people, the desperate poverty of the Soviet masses, followed by the striking contrast of conditions in other countries—all these had destroyed my faith in the professions of our regime, long before I came near the point of action. I had reached a disillusionment, even cynicism, which today is general, though concealed, among Soviet officials who have seen the outside world and allow themselves to think honestly."

Actually Petrov reached the breaking point shortly after Beria was shot and it appeared that he was being recalled to the Soviet Union to suffer the same fate, since he had been accused of forming a "Beria group" in the Embassy. He contacted the Australian Security Service and in return for an assurance of asylum and £ 5,000 turned over important documents and information to them.

Petrov's MVD colleague in Japan, Yuri Pastvorov, turned himself over to the American Intelligence a little before his own break for the same reasons.

The Petrovs grossly idealize conditions in the West, disregarding the presence of exploitation, political reaction, colonialism and similar abominations of capitalism. Imperialism has its own "Empire of Fear," fear of insecurity, of oppression, of annihilation by nuclear weapons.

Khrushchev's Silence

But all this is no justification for the terror regime maintained under the name of "Socialism." This latest contribution to the growing literature of highly placed defectors from the Soviet officialdom emphasizes that at the Twentieth Congress Khrushchev lifted only a corner of the curtain concealing the crimes against socialism and

the Soviet peoples committed under Stalin's rule. He refrained, for example, from telling the truth about Trotsky and other leaders of the anti-Stalinist opposition. Petrov however discloses that the materials necessary for such "rehabilitation" exist in the MVD files. When and by whom will Stalin's successors be compelled to divulge more of the truth to the world?

For all its modifications and window trimming, the new regime maintains itself by the same methods. Petrov points out, for instance, that Beria was arrested on substantially the same charges as his predecessors Yezhov and Yagoda. He was charged with trying to put the State Security Service above Party and State in order to liquidate the present "Socialist" regime and restore capitalism; he was accused of being an agent of British and American Intelligence, together with a long list of other crimes and misdemeanors, including picking up women who caught his fancy from the streets of Moscow.

Beria committed countless genuine crimes—but he was not tried and shot for these. The charges against him were as preposterous as Krushchev's explanation that Beria alone was responsible for Moscow's break with Tito when he and every intelligent individual knew—as Khrushchev admitted later—that the policy decision was Stalin's.

The Petrovs show that such a regime based upon lies, fear and sycophancy cannot command loyalty even from its favorites. Still less, despite its concessions, promises and shifts, can it win the confidence and support of the Soviet masses.

Petrov reminds us that "the real Russia is not the shop-window selection of 'samples' shown to foreign visitors on their planned and conducted tours. It is not the picked features of Moscow, Kharkov, Stalingrad and other show places. It is the grim severity of towns like Sverdlovsk, Omsk, Novo-Sibirsk; the drab factory workers, driven remorsefully by an imposed production quota; the millions of peasants in the 300,000 collectivized villages of Russia; and the ten or fifteen million slave labourers in the camps which I knew of when I handled the N.K.V.D. telegrams between Moscow and the camp commandments. Nobody can deny the immense technical and industrial achievements of the Soviet Union. But anyone who talks about them needs to know the truth about the vast mountain of human misery on which these achievements are built."

It is this "real Russia" of the workers and peasants which has yet to settle accounts with the post-Stalin regime. These millions cannot defect; they confront their bureaucratic oppressors daily face to face.

The recent reports of revolts in the camps, of stirrings in the factories, and voices of criticism in the universities and among the intellectuals indicate that cracks have been opening in the totalitarian structure since Stalin's death. These will widen and deepen until the "real Russia" of the workers and peasants make itself felt as forcefully in Moscow and other Soviet centers as the real Poland and Hungary have already asserted themselves against the Stalinist overlords in Warsaw and Budapest.

Why Beck Is Not Their Real Target

For years the head of the Teamsters union was well regarded in business circles. Then he was suddenly singled out for crushing exposure. What is back of this astonishing reversal in top policy?

by Arne Swabeck

TWENTY years ago the great sit-down strikes and the rise of the CIO added a new and significant chapter to American labor history. Like a mighty battering ram union consciousness and union organization smashed all obstacles and conquered the open-shop fortress in basic industry. Never before had labor organization reached out so widely or deeply. In one tremendous sweep the American trade-union movement was transformed. From its backward craft-union status it became an advanced industrial organization. This regeneration was stimulated by the most powerful dynamic any movement can have; a high degree of confidence in its growing strength. But that was yesteryear.

Today we witness a sordid spectacle. The unified AFL-CIO has become a center of attention and publicity, but not because of its progress or achievements. It is the victim of attempts to reduce it to a mere fulcrum for exposure of racketeering and corruption of a section of its leadership.

Dave Beck and some of his co-officials of the Teamsters union were the first target. Let there be no mistake, however; these exposures are merely a convenient cover for far broader objectives. As always, social reaction in all forms is constrained to mask its real aims. And these exposures can be understood correctly only as a first step in a softening up process, directed against the whole labor movement, in preparation for more open attacks.

The Wall Street Journal opened its account of the Beck hearing with the observation: "Disclosures of un-

ion corruption are unloosing legislative demands to curb labor's powers." Arthur Krock, the Washington correspondent of *The New York Times*, spelled it out more clearly. One prominent reaction in the capital to the Beck revelations, according to Krock, was the "view that 'right to work' state laws should be adopted generally, or that the Taft-Hartley Act, which now permits the 'union shop' should be amended to prohibit it everywhere." And Senator McClellan did not even bother to conceal his indecent haste when he introduced a "right to work" amendment to the pending civil-rights bill, long before the hearings of his committee were well under way.

But one hardly need doubt that when the attacks are mounted, the labor movement will know how to reassert the militantly progressive tendency which has become an inextinguishable part of its history.

Like all other social forces the trade-union movement is subject to the changing conditions of the class struggle. It rises to progressive heights of militancy when the pressure of deteriorating material conditions provide the combination of conscious awareness and readiness to fight for the needs of the movement, together with a leadership that is adequate for the occasion. It sinks to the level of quiescence, and even apathy, and retreats when material conditions permit greater concessions to labor and the pressure of class antagonisms ease. During recent years this is the kind of ebb tide that has prevailed. It has provided abundant possibilities for the labor leaders to extend their bureaucratic powers and privileges. And corruption, even graft and rack-

eteering, is not an exceptional part of the usurpation of special privileges.

A Degenerate Bureaucrat

Among this parvenu caste, Beck proved to be an easy target for the sanctimonious senatorial exposure. His mercenary career is studded with corruption and shady deals. For outright racketeering and thievery, it must be conceded that his type of leadership furnishes a most degenerate example. Using the union treasury and union power as a base of operation, Beck engaged in the most fantastic and foul conniving over juke boxes, liquor, real estate, and union welfare and pension funds for the personal profit of himself, his family, his cousins and nephews. Some of his top associates were implicated in the same shady kind of business.

The McClellan hearings were carefully designed to create the impression that the trade unions are natural breeding grounds for corruption. This is entirely contrary to the facts of life. Corruption does not originate in the labor movement. It oozes out of every pore of the capitalist system. From this native habitat corruption seeps into the circles of the labor bureaucracy, primarily through collusion with the employers. In this field Dave Beck excelled. He became a most accomplished practitioner in the art. Teamster services were withheld to eliminate small business competitors, while the big ones were granted more generous contracts at the expense of the workers. Collusion served also to discipline recalcitrant union members. The marauding type of business unionism practiced by Beck and his associates epitomizes the worst evils of labor bureaucratism.

Dave Beck conceived union organization as a piratical business. Without compunction he proceeded to raid other unions in the spirit and practice of the buccaneering robber barons whose despoiling of the nation is a familiar part of American history. Most notorious was the attempt, in 1948, to break the Seattle strike of the Boeing aircraft workers union in hope of swallowing its membership. The attempt failed; but continual raiding tactics have brought the Teamsters into jurisdictional disputes with many other unions.

Early in his career Beck let it be known: "I have no use for class warfare." But he and his machine never hesitated to use goon-squad terrorism to rule the Teamsters union with an iron hand. Local unions that stepped "out of line" were put under trusteeship. Almost 12 percent of the Teamsters locals — 105 out of 897 — were under such trusteeship at the end of 1955.

When Beck was at the head of the West Coast Conference of Teamsters he told Joe Miller, a journalist who interviewed him, "I am paid \$25,000 a year to run this outfit. [Later he received \$50,000.] Unions are big business. Why should truck drivers and bottle washers be allowed to make big decisions affecting union policy. Would any corporation allow it?"

The Real Union Builders

Beck rose to top leadership in the aftermath of the great drive, initiated from Minneapolis, to build the Teamsters union into a mass organization. That initiative has been recalled recently by several commentators. Paul Jacobs made the following observation in *The Reporter* of January 24, 1957:

"But between 1933 and 1935 a remarkable change took place in a Teamsters local in Minneapolis, a change that fundamentally affected the nature of the entire union. Local 574 in that city had come under the control of a group of Trotskyists, who in the short span of a few years established a wholly new pattern for the organization of Teamster unionism, one that has guided it to its present size and success.

"The leaders of 574 during that period were the Dunne brothers — Vincent, Miles and Grant — and Farrell Dobbs, all Trotskyists."

In an article recently syndicated by the North American Newspaper Alliance, Sid Lens placed further emphasis on the Minneapolis initiative:

"Back in 1933 the Teamsters Union had only 70,000 members. The following year, however, a Trotskyist named Farrell Dobbs conceived the strategy which made the Teamsters what they are today. He organized the over-the-road drivers nationally, fanning out from Minneapolis, and used this economic power to rebuild the union.

"Any company which was recalcitrant faced the prospect of having its long distance hauling stalled. The union organizer was a militant and a radical, but there is no question that his unions were free of corruption. Had he remained in the Teamsters he probably would be in Beck's place today and Beck would be only a minor figure."

Lens described the government prosecution of Dobbs and 17 of his associates, under the Smith Act in 1940, and the rise of Beck's star in the Teamsters firmament. He ends his observation with the comment: "What Dobbs sowed, Beck reaped."

The corruption disclosures have reverberated through the AFL-CIO hierarchy. How did the high moguls meet the twofold challenge? No exception was taken to Beck's collusion with the employers. Nor did his peers object to his autocratic rule of the Teamsters union, for both of these practices form an inseparable part of the lamentable record of the whole labor bureaucracy. Bourgeois respectability proved once again to be their foremost concern. They felt outraged because Beck invoked his constitutional right of resort to the Fifth Amendment — an indispensable safeguard against all witch-hunts whether these are used to destroy civil liberties or to weaken and destroy the trade union movement. Stung by the inference of guilt by association, Meany pontificated in sonorous tones about "setting labor's house in order," and Reuther prescribed "high standards of ethical and moral conduct."

Alas, morality more than any other form of ideology has a class character. And the morality of the self-proclaimed paragons of virtue, sitting on top of the heap in labor's house, follows the imperialist credo everywhere, from fortification of Chiang Kai-shek's regime on Formosa to protection of the imperialist oil properties in the Middle East. In the name of this morality, the stalwart gentry affirm their allegiance to the prevailing order of capitalist rule and succumb to its implications. By the same precept every critical voice in the unions is stifled and refractory workers expelled. It is the morality that has class collaboration for its foundation.

The AFL-CIO hierarchy did not hesitate to offer Beck as a scapegoat

in the hope of appeasing the capitalist rulers. But the failure to meet the real challenge only stands out the more obviously. There is no sign of any serious preparation to resist the threat of an anti-labor drive that is so clearly implicit in this whole affair, let alone a recognition of its existence. Without this, the actions taken against Beck by the Executive Council become a mere token of surrender on the real issue, serving notice that class collaboration will continue in effect.

This is the contradiction that grips a trade - union movement whose only reason for existence is the class struggle. And whether or not the class struggle is recognized as a fact of life of capitalist society, the union officials can discharge their obligations to the members only by policies and actions that correspond to the needs imposed by this struggle. Class collaboration pursues the exact opposite course. Starting out from the illusory objective of class peace it leads inevitably to retreats and surrender, if not outright betrayal of the needs and the interests of the workers. As a result capitalist forces are strengthened and the power of the unions is undermined. But every surrender only resurrects and intensifies the contradiction at the next successive stage.

Any doubt about this will be quickly dissipated by a look at the record of the bureaucratic confederacy in relation to the Taft-Hartley Act. At the time of its introduction into Congress all the union leaders were under great pressure for some form of resistance from an aroused rank and file. In response they uttered some threats of general strike, or a march on Washington. To be sure, there was neither firmness nor conviction in their response. And they quickly retreated. Their whole attitude has been about as serious and as effective as the quack medical commercial telling us how to break the laxative habit: first take two Little Liver Pills, next take only one, and then nothing. Similarly these peerless bureaucrats: first they demanded repeal of the Taft-Hartley Act, next they reduced their demand to revision of the Act, and then nothing.

But the retreats did not produce appeasement. On the contrary, they served only to heighten the attacks on the labor movement and thus to intensify its contradictions. "Right to work" laws banning the union shop followed in quick succession in

one state after another. Qualitatively the labor movement has suffered greatly from these retreats.

In the trade-union movement there is a generally close interrelationship between quantity and quality. Mutually they react upon one another. During the stormy growth of the thirties a new quality made its immediate appearance. The whole movement rose to new heights of consciousness and militancy. The powerful internal dynamic — the confidence of growing strength — that was generated by these developments was still in evidence during the great strike wave of 1945-46. Numerically the trade-union membership reached its high point.

Stagnation Instead of Growth

Since then, what has been the record of organizational performance by the official stewardship? Has it been less sordid than its record on restrictive labor legislation? To be sure the fraternity of bureaucrats has gained vast extension of its privileges and correspondingly handsome emoluments. Never before have the members of this fraternity enjoyed such princely salaries and huge expense accounts. Union control has become much more firmly centralized in the hands of the top bureaucrats. In negotiation of union contracts, they appear in the role of mediators rather than champions of labor. They read-

ily give concessions, for they seek, above all, stable relations in their collaboration with management. Authorization for strikes is likewise centralized. And when strikes cannot be prevented they may often occur just at the right time to help management unload burdensome inventories. On the whole the effects have been quite well in harmony with the highest corporate aim of maximizing profits by holding labor costs to a minimum. In turn the labor leaders use centralized control as an instrument to tame the workers rather than to advance their economic interests. Thus on the fundamental issue of class collaboration there is no real difference between the leadership of the Beck type and that of the general trade-union bureaucracy. All perform the function of labor lieutenants of capitalism in the ranks of the workers.

By and large these servile leaders have succeeded in their efforts to reduce the activities of the unions to the purely business routine that accepts all restrictions as a lesser evil. True, they have had to contend with a good deal of what they consider a greater evil: militant rank-and-file action expressed in numerous wildcat strikes, and there have been some minor revolts. Nevertheless, the leaders have succeeded in maintaining a certain equilibrium sustained by crumbs of concessions that fall from the banquet table of lush profits from arms production enjoyed by monopoly capitalism. But this equilibrium has been maintained at the cost of destroying the internal dynamic that once made the movement great and powerful. Since 1946 the working population has expanded but union membership has remained stationary.

The failure to expand organizationally is a common feature of all present-day union leaders. Tiny advances made here and there are offset by losses of "runaway" shops. Most outstanding, however, is the failure to organize the South where less than one-fifth of the workers belong to unions. With the extensive industrialization of the Southern states during the last 15 years and the mechanization of agriculture, large segments of former sharecroppers and plantation hands have become transformed into modern wage workers. Simultaneously the Southern Negroes, on their own initiative and out of their own resources, have struck powerful blows against the main obstacle to union organization: the hated Jim Crow

segregation system. These developments cry out for organization. Besides, the Southern wage differential remains a threat to union conditions elsewhere. Yet, "Operation Dixie," the campaign to organize the South, launched in a blazing fanfare of publicity, is now but a faint memory. It died a-borning.

Following the unification of the AFL-CIO, another organization campaign was announced. This time it was to be "Operation White Collar." In this field there is a potential reservoir for organization of 13 to 14 million workers. Methods and objectives of the campaign are explained by John Livingston, the director of organization, in the *AFL-CIO American Federationist*. Referring to the effective organization achievements during the early years of this century and during the thirties, he invokes the spirits of Gompers, Green and Murray. It is no accident that the name of John L. Lewis is not mentioned. That could spell guilt by association with the spirit of militant struggle of the thirties. Therefore, as could be expected, "Operation White Collar" has not yet got off the ground. And to initiate an organization drive in the spirit of Gompers, Green and Murray, as the patron saints, is to condemn it to death in infancy.

Defensive Organs

Progress of the trade unions depends to a large extent on their ability to extend organization to all the workers in the various branches of our highly integrated system of production and distribution. The greater their success in this field, the more effective their function as mass organs in protecting the elementary rights and interests of the workers. In this sense unions are essentially defensive in character. Their main aims and activities are centered around maintaining the standard of living theoretically granted by the capitalist system. Generally this standard includes no more than an approximation of what is required to reproduce labor power.

But labor productivity tends to rise with every advance in the technique of production. As a result the profit from additional values created increases while the share received by the workers diminishes proportionately. At the same time the capitalist mode

They're Right

Sales of both "pep pills" and "tranquilizers" are going up, according to the June 23 New York Times.

In 1955 some 88,000 pounds of the "pep" variety were manufactured. "Divided into five-milligram tablets this would be enough to make 8,000,000,000 pills, or nearly fifty pills for each man, woman and child in the United States."

As for the "tranquilizers," the estimate is that in 1957 a total of 40,000,000 prescriptions will be written. "There is no good estimate of the total number of tranquilizer pills that 40,000,000 prescriptions represent: each prescription may be filled many times, for friends, for relatives, perhaps even to be crumbled into the ration of the family dog."

The Times concludes with the warning of practitioners "that tranquilizers reduce only symptoms (anxiety) and do nothing to solve the basic problems which cause the symptoms."

of production creates new needs and new wants, from automobiles to the tiniest kitchen gadget. All these wants enter into the requirements of modern living although they cannot be supplied to the workers within the share of value they get under the laws of capitalist production. And the unions become instruments of the workers in the fight for a greater share of the national income, arraying the workers against the bourgeoisie. In this sense the trade - union movement has revolutionary implications.

American labor history is replete with examples of these implications. They were clearly apparent in the great upheaval of the thirties. Challenging the bourgeoisie, the resurgent labor movement became a new powerful social force. It proclaimed and simultaneously established its independence as an organization. Still this great resurgence did not achieve political independence for labor. On the contrary. While the leadership of the time was adequate for the breakthrough of union organization, it established close ties with the capitalist state power. During the subsequent years these ties became more firmly knit, particularly through the Roosevelt and Truman administrations. In return for meager concessions to labor the leaders put themselves at the service of the capitalist state. Class collaboration was elevated from its earlier rudimentary stage of collusion with the employers to the higher level of collaboration with the capitalist political state.

However, while this collaboration serves the aims of the labor statesmen who are camp followers of the bourgeoisie, for the trade - union movement it creates serious contradictions, new disappointments and frustrations. These appear in the development of organization as well as in politics. One example will illustrate the point.

The chief medium of collaboration is the coalition of these labor statesmen with the Democratic party. But it remains in effect only through their subservience. Policies and actions of the unions are subordinated to this relationship, and this is precisely the reason why the much publicized campaign to organize the South was quietly shelved.

Racial segregation is still one of the pillars of the Southern social system. It forms the axis for the divide - and rule policy of the Dixiecrats. How could there be any effective union or-

"Talented" Clams

"Two 'killer' clams analyzed at the U.S. Naval Radiological Defense Laboratory showed an astonishing talent for concentrating cobalt," reports the June *Scientific American*. "The clams had been taken from one of the Marshall Islands in a nuclear-weapons test area as samples for tests of residual radioactivity. They proved to have substantial amounts of radioactive cobalt 60, although the bomb could not have produced more than a trace amount in the area (cobalt 60 is not a product of nuclear fission). Apparently the clams had accumulated their Co-60 from the water during the two years since the test.

"The Navy scientists emphasized the

enormous concentrating capacity the clam must have to accumulate cobalt 60 'from an environment which to all intents and purposes was infinitely dilute.' One clam contained one third of a microcurie of the isotope; the other had one tenth of a microcurie. The danger level for man is considered to be about three microcuries of cobalt 60.

"The Navy scientists wondered whether this talent was an exclusive property of killer clams. They tried putting clams from San Francisco Bay into water containing a little cobalt and found that these clams also collect the element."

ganization without unity in action of both white and colored workers? But this would not only clash with the rule of the Southern Bourbons, it would also endanger the labor - Democratic party coalition. And so the interests of preserving the coalition took precedence over the needs of the workers.

The Petty Stockholders

But the collaboration with the capitalist state is by no means confined to the Democratic party. In return for concessions to labor, monopoly capitalism, in control of state power, demands that the labor leaders serve directly as petty but active stockholders of the imperialist enterprise at home and abroad. On every question of basic issue they are no less bipartisan than are the representatives of both capitalist parties. They have given as unstinting support to the Eisenhower Doctrine as they did to the Truman Doctrine. And, eager to show how indispensable they are to the capitalist state, they become the most aggressive proponents of the cold war, and the foremost champions of the imperialist arms build-up. Any voice raised for moderation of world tensions is denounced as appeasing the Kremlin.

On the home front the labor bureaucrats adapt themselves to the demand of the capitalist government to hold the unions in line. This is the reason for the extreme centralization of power in the hands of the higher officials. Manifestations of worker militancy are stifled, wildcat strikes are outlawed, and, above all, any effort toward independent labor polit-

ical action is strangled in infancy.

To the bipartisan witch-hunt, unleashed by the government, the labor bureaucrats responded with parallel measures in the unions. Militant or radical workers accused of Communist taint were fired from jobs, in collusion with the employers, or eliminated from union office. Whole unions were expelled on the same grounds. But this collaboration with the capitalist state brought disastrous consequences. The labor bureaucrats could not circumvent the logic of the class struggle. The trade - union movement, whose only reason for existence is the class struggle, is now face to face with the contradiction of the class-collaborationist policy of its leadership.

With every move to stifle worker militancy the unions were laid increasingly open to attack. Step by step monopoly capitalism, in control of the government, followed up with legislation restricting the rights and independence of the unions. From the Taft-Hartley Act through the "right to work" state laws, the road is now being cleared for more sharply restrictive legislation. The witch-hunt technique is now turned directly against the trade-union movement. The form of the procedure has changed. There is no accusation of Communism or inquiry into political association; but the objective remains the same. Congressional hearings of this kind are held to smear organizations and isolate them for persecution. Beck and his fellow freebooters were singled out as the first exposure target because they were the most vulnerable. Revelations of their plunder and pil-

lage could be used most effectively to inflame public opinion.

The design of this game is clear to all who view it objectively except — the labor bureaucrats, the very ones who are supposed to defend the unions against such attacks. It is true that the leaders are dependent upon the working class which is the source of their positions of power. But they place their reliance and their trust in the capitalist system from which, in the final analysis, they draw their privileges. Their loyalty to this system is primary. Their loyalty to the working class is only secondary and residual. So instead of preparing to defend the unions, the labor bureaucrats capitulated.

Union Democracy Essential

There can be no question about the advisability of booting Beck and similar scoundrels out of the trade-union movement. But that can be done effectively and thoroughly only by the rank and file. Theirs is the task of eliminating all bureaucracy from the unions and replacing the corrupt and treacherous officials with leaders who are loyal to the unions and who identify their interests with those of the workers. An inseparable part of this task is the restoration of union democracy. For only the conditions of free expression, without fear of reprisals, will provide the unity of action that is so essential for the unions to be of genuine service to the working class.

But the real target of the attack initiated by the McClellan committee exposure is not the officials but the unions themselves. And the efforts of the AFL-CIO hierarchy to settle everything within the upper circle by eliminating Beck and effecting a quiet reshuffling of offices, will not buy immunity. The failure to center attention on the problem of how to meet the attack will serve only to confuse the workers about its real meaning. The attempt to duck this main issue does not attenuate the problem but aggravates it. Regardless of intentions, it serves the very objective that is clearly implicit in the whole affair; namely, to cripple in advance any resistance to the assault on the unions themselves.

Changing economic conditions are at the foundation of this onslaught on the labor movement. The boom,

long sustained by unprecedented arms expenditures, shows increasing signs of tapering off. Elements of crisis appear as a result of productive forces outstripping a market saturated with goods and deformed by inflation, high taxes and installment buying. Monopoly capitalism is apprehensive about diminishing profits. And, facing this dilemma, it resorts to its time-honored method of attempting to get out of the contradiction by unloading the consequences of economic decline on the backs of the workers. To do so, union opposition must be eliminated or at least reduced to a minimum. For this purpose the efforts of various governmental agencies have been coordinated so that the initial blow may set an impressive precedent for further attacks. From the McClellan committee comes the announcement that other unions besides the Teamsters will receive the exposure treatment. And, as part of the coordination, the Department of Labor timed a special report for this particular occasion. It implies that excessive wage increases have been the key cause of the rise of prices in the last decade. Following the specious type of reasoning that is so common in such reports, it insists that "real labor costs" have increased because average wages and salaries of working people as a whole have risen far faster in the last decade than has their productivity. This report has been submitted to the Congressional Joint Committee, which is making a study of the relationship of wages, prices and productivity. It can be expected that this study will concentrate on "excessive" wage increases, ignoring the fact that these have merely followed, and still lag behind, the excessive rise in the cost of living. To be sure, the combination of these developments marks the opening of a new stage of increasingly strained relations between the unions and the capitalist government.

Need New Political Policy

Within the trade unions these strained relations will be reproduced in growing antagonisms between the privileged bureaucracy and the rank and file. Whatever power and control over the unions the leaders possess is contingent essentially on their capacity to obtain concessions from capitalism and from its state machine. Conversely, as concessions diminish or disappear, the leaders are stripped of their power of arbitrary control. The

dilemma that will increasingly confront these labor bureaucrats is a reflection of the developing crisis of capitalism itself. They will face the alternative: either to cease their reliance upon and their support of the capitalist state, or bring relations with their own rank and file into jeopardy.

As the onslaught on the trade-union movement unfolds, the political character of the class struggle will be the more clearly demonstrated. But it is precisely in the field of political action that the class-collaboration policy of the leadership has brought the most disastrous consequences. Retreats and capitulation in face of anti-labor legislation have been rewarded with new kicks in the teeth. Labor's political demands have seldom got beyond the stage of a polite hearing. And, what is far more serious, through the alignment with the Democratic party and with bipartisan capitalist politics, labor's political influence has fallen to a new low, despite its power as a great social force. More than anything else, this is due to the bankrupt political policy of its leadership.

What is sorely needed now is a decisive political turn — the adoption of a political policy that is in harmony with the objective needs of the workers and their political class power. A ringing declaration of labor's independence from the capitalist parties would give serious pause to those who are engineering the assault. The formation of a labor party would provide the political weapon that has now become indispensable to the working class. Moreover, the real significance of such a step would be as far reaching as once explained by Trotsky:

"The class, taken by itself, is only material for exploitation. The proletariat assumes an independent role only at that moment when from a social class *in itself* it becomes a political class *for itself*. This cannot take place otherwise than through the medium of a party."

When this objective is translated into action another significant chapter will be added to American labor history. Once again the trade-union movement will be transformed; but this time from political backwardness to political consciousness. It will have resurrected the militantly progressive tendency which already forms an inextricable part of this history.

June 1957

1. The Rise and Fall of Progressivism

What can we learn from American history about building an anti-monopoly coalition? Some 75 years of experience suggests a number of valuable lessons for consideration

by William F. Warde

THE present political course of the Communist party of the United States is characterized, not only by the crassest opportunism, but by willful disregard for the lessons of our national past.

The main political task of progressive Americans, declare the CP leaders, is the building of an anti-monopoly coalition to curb the corporate interests and dislodge them from power. This is a praiseworthy objective, though it is hardly a new discovery. This same problem has faced the American people — and the socialist movement — ever since industrial capitalism acquired national supremacy and the trusts took over the economy following the Civil War.

From the 1870's on there have been no lack of attempts to assemble an alliance of forces enduring and strong enough to defeat the monopolists. The highway of protest from the Greenback party through the Poplists up to Wallace's Progressive party is littered with the wreckage of the political vehicles patched together to do that job. None of them succeeded.

The Communist party now proposes to succeed where all these failed by entering the Democratic party and working in its left wing with other progressive elements. According to its spokesmen, the desired "people's anti-monopoly coalition" may come about either by driving the reactionaries out of the Democratic party or through the formation of a new third-party movement opposed to the old parties.

Neither of these programs are as new as penicillin or color television, although they may seem so to inexperienced people unacquainted with the American politics of the past 75 years. The history of the traditional "Left"

since the 1870's has been marked by oscillations between the alternatives of reforming the Democratic party (and even, on occasion, the Republican) or challenging the "Gold-Dust Twins" with a "Progressive" third-party coalition on an anti-monopolist but not anti-capitalist program. Both confined themselves to the aim of reforming capitalism, not replacing it with a workers' government and a publicly owned economy.

The Communist party itself has gyrated from one of these positions to the other in the past two decades. From 1936 through 1944 it backed the Democratic candidates as the lesser evil and the more progressive hope in the national elections. Then in 1948 and 1952 it shifted a few degrees leftward by supporting the Progressive party. Repentant, the CP has now swung back to more unabashed allegiance to the Democratic party.

The CP leaders promise that the conditions are ripe this time for the realizations of big gains for the working people and the Negroes through pressure-politicking within the Democratic machine. Before leaping back into the party of the plutocrats and the Dixiecrats, it might be helpful to appraise the results of previous efforts along this line by reviewing the state of the nation today.

The reformers opposed the growth of monopoly in our economic system and defended small business. Today Big Business and High Finance are stronger than ever. In an editorial on May 13, 1957 *Life* magazine reports: "Big companies are getting bigger (the 50 biggest got 27% of all sales) and the smaller ones are having a tougher time, reflected at the moment in a rising rate of business failures."

Were the "Progressives" more effective in politics than in economics?

Their principal aim was to oust the plutocrats from Washington and place the power of deciding national policies in the hands of the people. Today the monopolists and militarists dominate the government completely, ruling through a coalition of the two capitalist parties, which differ on incidental domestic issues but have basic unity on foreign policy.

The liberals dedicated their movements to the defense and extension of democracy at home. Yet it was the most "liberal" Democratic Presidents: Wilson through the Palmer Raids, Roosevelt through the Smith Act, and Truman through the loyalty purge, who delivered the greatest blows to civil liberties.

Finally, the "Progressives" aimed to maintain peace within the framework of reforming capitalist imperialism. The United States has had three wars in this century. All of them were headed by Democratic Presidents, favorites of the liberals.

Such are the facts. How are they to be explained?

The CP leaders talk glibly nowadays of the need to "apply Marxism-Leninism creatively" to the problems of American politics. They ought to start by using the methods of Marxism to analyze why all previous efforts to capture the Democratic party for progressive purposes and to reform monopoly capitalism ended in bankruptcy. But they have reasons for refraining from such an investigation. For a Marxist examination of the rise and fall of the progressive movements would not only illuminate the causes of the failure of reformism but likewise expose the fallacies of the

current CP line which follows in their well-worn track.

Since they cannot be expected to perform this essential inquiry, we shall try to do it, not for the enlightenment of incorrigible opportunists, but for the education of the younger generation.

* * *

The last three decades of the nineteenth century were basically a period of tightening political reaction following the colossal revolutionary leap of the Civil War years and Reconstruction. This "Gilded Age" saw the impetuous, almost uninterrupted rise of capitalist forces in the United States and on a world scale. Despite minor and puffed-up reforms, the triumphant plutocracy was energetically consolidating its grip over the major spheres of our national life.

The ever harsher domination of the capitalist obligarchy encountered resistance all along the way from the masses. These were divided into three important sections: the agrarian producers, the urban middle classes, and the industrial workers. The currents of protest welling forth from the depths of the people were mostly movements of reform which aimed to curb, control or reverse the processes of capitalist concentration in economic, political and cultural life. Outright revolutionary voices were rare and working-class tendencies bent upon the abolition of capitalism were in their infancy.

The principal large-scale political struggles were waged between the agents of the plutocracy and the representatives of the liberal petty bourgeoisie who headed the plebian masses. Apart from industry, the proletariat was as yet a subordinate factor in most spheres of national affairs. The main stream of political opposition came from the Populist-Progressive movement which had its direct social bases in the middle-class elements of the country and city. The proletarian movements either ran parallel to this main stream, fed from it, or even emptied themselves at times into it.

The life cycle of the Progressive movement, its rises, its periodical fluctuations from effervescence to stagnation and back again, its decline and disintegration, can be charted in close connection with the economic development of American capitalism. The Progressive movement was a political product of the post-Civil War era. It was born during the hard times fol-

lowing the panic of 1873 and gained new impetus from each succeeding economic crisis.

The 1892 platform of the Populist party, as summarized by Charles Beard in *The Rise of American Civilization* (p. 210) made the following indictment of "The Gilded Age" of capitalism:

"... that America was ruled by a plutocracy, that impoverished labor was laid low under the tyranny of a hireling army, that houses were covered with mortgages, that the press was the tool of wealth, that corruption dominated the ballot box, that the fruits of the toil of millions are boldly stolen to build up colossal fortunes for a few unprecedented in the history of mankind; and the possessors of these in turn despise the republic and endanger liberty."

The movement reached the peak of its social energy and political influence in 1896 when its aims had ostensibly been adopted by the Democratic party and Bryan led the Progressive hosts in an attempt to dislodge the finance capitalists from power in Washington. After its defeat in 1896, the Spanish-American war and the ensuing prosperity, the Progressive movement died down except in the rural districts. It was revived by the crisis of 1907 and took on several new shapes culminating in Roosevelt's Bull Moose crusade and Wilson's New Freedom.

The entry of the United States into the First World War dealt a mortal blow to the Progressive cause but did not completely dispose of it. After a regional revival in the agrarian Northwest, the movement had a spasmodic national resurgence in the La Follette campaign of 1924 which was a belated response to the consequences of the postwar crisis of 1921. Even then the force of the movement, which had so many decades of struggle behind it and hopes deposited with it, was not spent. In his speeches against "the economic royalists," Roosevelt skillfully exploited Progressive sentiments and traditions to win support for his New Deal. His ex-Vice-President, Henry Wallace, aided by the Stalinists, sought in vain to resurrect the corpse of Progressivism as late as 1948.

In all these incarnations, the Progressive movement has been middle class in body and spirit. In the earlier stages of its career, in the Greenback, Grange, and Populist trends of the seventies and eighties, it was based upon the small farmers of the Middle

West and South, pulling behind it the radicalized workers and urban middle classes and effecting an alliance with them. The programs of the Greenback, Grange and Populist movements largely expressed the interests and formulated the demands of these aroused and oppressed small farmers and were led by rural leaders.

Later the Progressive movement came to lean more and more upon the city masses and the rising industrial workers. This shift in the base of the Progressive movement resulted from the diminishing importance of the rural population and the increasing power of labor in American society. This change in the social composition of the Progressive ranks was reflected in the character of its principal leaders. "Sockless" Jerry Simpson, General Weaver, Ignatius Donnelly, Mary Ellen Lease ("Let's raise less corn and more hell") and Tom Watson were representative figures of its Populist period. Robert La Follette Sr. may be regarded as a leader who bridged the country and the city, a link between organized labor and the rural sections of the movement.

In their heyday the Populist-Progressives constituted the left wing of the capitalist regime. As a loyal opposition, they did not desire to abolish but to moderate the despotism of the plutocracy, to curtail its powers, and reduce the privileges of the magnates of industry and finance. The principal planks in their economic platforms expressed the interests and put forward the demands of various sections of the middle classes from the farmers to the small business men. This was true of such Populist money-panaceas as Greenbackism and bimetallism and of such reforms as the graduated income tax and the regulation of the monopolies.

The Progressives did not dream of going beyond restricting the power of King Capital, his moneyed aristocracy, and his favorites. To dethrone this despot by expropriation and thereby end the rule of his nobles forever — that was regarded as Socialism, Anarchism, the end of Civilization!

Even at their most radical, the political ideas of Progressivism did not transgress the boundaries of that bourgeois democracy which had been built upon competitive capitalism. The Progressives restricted their proposed reforms within the constitutional framework of the regime which

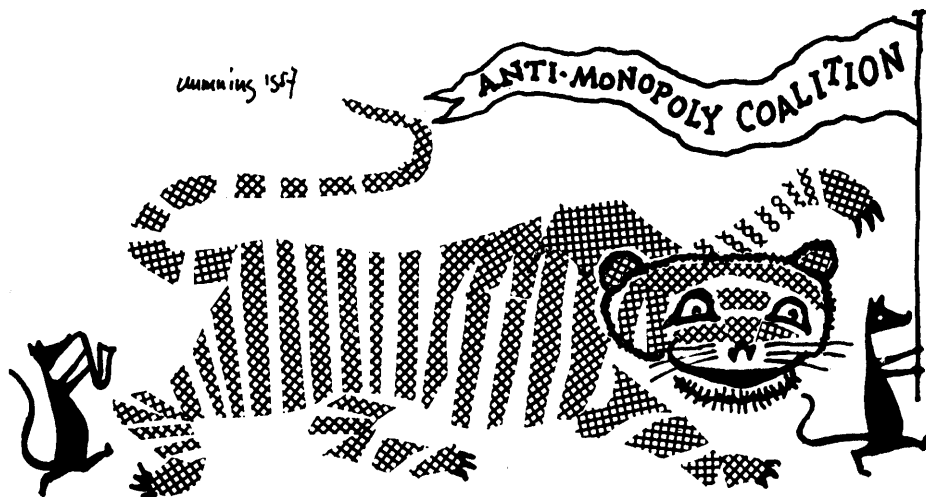
had been laid down by the architects of the Republic following the First American Revolution as defended and amended by the Second American Revolution.

The Progressives sincerely believed — and still do — that the capitalist republic of the United States is the highest and final form of political organization. They could not conceive that progressive mankind might desire or create any other or better kind of government. As a gauge of their provincial backwardness in this respect, when Robert La Follette went to the Soviet Union in 1922, he invited the Soviet leaders to come and repay his visit in the State of Wisconsin where, he assured them, they could see "a really progressive state!"

The Progressives wanted the machinery of the United States Government cleansed of its more glaring aristocratic vestiges and its democracy perfected by the introduction of such reforms as the direct election of Senators and judges, etc. They sometimes stopped halfway even in the direction of democratizing the state apparatus. They campaigned, for example, to abolish the Supreme Court's veto power over Congressional enactments but upheld the President's veto power which is a relic of monarchical rule; they asked for direct election of Senators on a state basis, but not the President on a national scale; they did not call for a single instead of a double system of national legislative bodies. Their demands for civil service reform and for cheap, honest, efficient administration even pleased a part of the ruling class which could get along without direct corruption or coercion of their political servitors.

Armed with these reform programs, the Progressives vainly stormed the fortresses of plutocratic power at periodic intervals from 1872 to 1924. They did manage by tremendous exertions to exact a number of concessions and reforms from successive administrations which felt their pressure. Occasionally, they even controlled some of the state governments.

Nevertheless, these reforms did not result in any basic changes in American life or reverse the processes of capitalist centralization and control. In some cases they even produced consequences contrary to those expected or promised. The laws curbing or breaking up the trusts did not halt but facilitated the growth of the monopolies; the income tax which was to make the rich pay more for the costs of running the government became



converted into an engine of extortion from the pay of the workers. The various electoral revisions failed to make the system more responsive to the voters' will; instead of breaking up the party machines, the primaries gave the bosses an additional instrument for hand-picking their candidates.

Why did the Progressive movement display such little stability and stamina and end up in futility and despair? First, because of its class basis and social composition. The small property owners and those imbued with their psychology could not conduct a fight to the end against the big bosses. That would have involved abolishing the economic and social ground upon which they themselves stood.

Their interests, their hopes and their outlooks were bound up with the maintenance of the capitalist system, whose prosperity they wanted to share. They showed this by dropping the struggle as a mass, time and again, whenever the system temporarily showed its smiling side to them. Just as every economic depression reanimated the fighting spirit of the Progressive forces, so every period of capitalist revival laid them low.

Moreover, whenever the fate of the capitalist regime was at stake, the Progressives did not intervene as a decisive and independent power, following their own line, but rallied to the side of the plutocratic rulers. This happened at every great historical turning point from the first imperialist venture of the Spanish-American War to the preparation for the Third World War. John Dewey's support of the Democratic administrations in all the war emergencies of the twentieth century was typical of the entire movement.

Progressivism, as a social movement

and a political product, belonged to the epoch of ascending competitive capitalism and was laid low by the subsequent epoch of monopolist capitalism in the United States. Its fortunes were bound up with the status of the middle classes which were now being uplifted by capitalist expansion (this gave them hope) and then being oppressed and ruined by the plutocracy (this gave them wrath and militancy).

As monopoly capitalism grew, the plutocracy heightened its power while the numbers and influence of the industrial proletariat expanded as well. But the economic, social and political power of the middle classes which were the backbone of the Progressive forces declined, dragging their movement down with them.

After every losing battle with the entrenched plutocracy or ignoble surrender to its war program, the Progressives lost more of their strength, self-confidence, and mass support. Without broad historical perspectives or bold revolutionary aims, unable to grasp the dynamics of the principal forces at work in the world and in American society, the Progressive movement progressively lost whatever progressive aspects it once possessed.

On the one hand, its traditions shriveled into empty phrases which served to cover the pro-capitalist policies of such Democratic demagogues as Roosevelt and Wallace. On the other hand, whatever was vital in them was absorbed by the Socialist, Communist and labor movements.

The fundamental reason for the failure of Progressivism lay in the fact that it was progressive only in its incidental features. At bottom it was a retrograde movement which aspired to turn back the wheel of history and reverse the development of modern society. The Progressives longed for a

return to the childhood of American capitalism while it was maturing into imperialism. This impotent yearning for an irrecoverable past gave the movement its basically reactionary direction and enveloped it in a Utopian atmosphere.

The Progressives demanded greater equality, wider opportunities, peace, the extension of democracy, the sharing and spreading of wealth — all within the boundaries of capitalism. They received in increasing measure more inequality, fewer opportunities for fewer people, wars, the growing concentration of wealth and political autocracy along with it. These were the natural fruits of monopolist rule launched upon its imperialist phase.

* * *

The Populist-Progressive movement had a colossal significance for the American people in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This many-sided, myriad-minded mass movement of protest against the reactionary rule of Big Business and High Finance made a deep impression upon cultural and intellectual activity, providing the impulse for many creative forces and ideas and giving support to advanced tendencies and causes in American thought. The rebellion of the oppressed against the ideas, attitudes and practices of the tyrannical money-masters was conducted on many fronts. This class struggle penetrated and modified, not only economics and politics, but the higher realms of education, morals,

religion, literature, art and philosophy.

This tremendous and sustained mass movement enlisted and engrossed the services of several generations of the best minds in many fields: politicians, economists, journalists, historians, writers, poets, philosophers. Indeed, in the balance sheet of the Progressive movement as a whole, its most fruitful and enduring work was accomplished in the field of general culture.

The Progressives didn't and couldn't create any lasting political party of their own. Nor did they make any substantial changes in American economy. They lacked the power and the will to revolutionize the political system and the economic structure of capitalism, or even to break with the basic ideas of bourgeois life. But they could and did strive to push the ideas and cultural institutions belonging to petty-bourgeois democracy to the limits of their development under the given conditions.

The expansion of free public education from the kindergarten to the state universities; the development of progressive education; the building of free public libraries; settlement houses; extending the franchise; prison reform; the renewal of realistic literature; the revision of American history; the creation of pragmatism — these were typical accomplishments of the leading figures of Progressivism.

The instrumentalist philosopher John Dewey, for example, belongs wholly to this Progressive movement. He was a foremost participant in many of its most important enterprises. In time he became the supreme and unchallenged theoretical head of the movement. Dewey was not a leader of its plebian masses, like Weaver or La Follette. He was rather the ideologist of the advanced intellectuals who worked out the theoretical premises and formulated the views corresponding to the mass movement in their respective spheres of professional activity. Dewey performed for the philosophy of Progressivism the same great work as Henry George and Veblen for its economics, Beard for its history, Parrington for its literary criticism, Holmes and Brandeis for its jurisprudence, Sandburg for its poetry.

* * *

This summary of the Progressive movement contains nothing essential-

ly new; it reproduces ideas and observations made by scores of socialist spokesmen in earlier decades which became commonplaces of radical thought. But all this is being obliterated by the new advocates of opportunism.

They argue that the Democratic party provides the best arena for political activity because the mass of workers and Negroes support it. But this was no less true in earlier decades. Only a small minority of workers in this country have ever yet supported socialism.

The CP policy not only flies in the face of the urgent needs of organized labor and its socialist vanguard; it nullifies the advances achieved by previous socialist movements; it even denies the significance of its own origins. For it was precisely the recognition of the inadequacies of the middle-class reform crusades in theory and in practice which provided the impetus and the pioneer forces for the formation of separate labor parties and socialist parties from the 1880's on.

If it was realistic to transform the Democratic party into an agency for working-class politics or to organize a "people's anti-monopolist coalition" in some other way, then what was the point of building a Socialist or Communist party on a working-class program? Why did Eugene Debs have to reject Populism and Bryanism and help launch the Socialist party at the beginning of this century? Why did the Left-Wing forces have to form a Communist party on an independent Marxist basis 20 years later? (We are not speaking of educational and propaganda groups spreading socialist ideas but of Marxist parties set up to challenge capitalist and reformist parties in elections, etc.)

We raise these questions to indicate that the uneasiness of so many Communist party members over its present political course is well founded. The policy of penetrating and transforming the Democratic party is unrealistic even on a pragmatic basis; it has been tried often enough before by other and more influential forces than the CP and found wanting.

If the conclusions of past experience do not suffice, then the fallacies of this project can be demonstrated on theoretical grounds by a Marxist analysis of the relations and requirements of the class forces at work in the United States today. That is the purpose of the article that follows.

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2. What the Job Takes

Can an anti-monopoly coalition succeed in the United States? Marxist theory offers an answer in the light of a problem that a socialist noticed and began considering in England in 1839

by Joseph Hansen

HISTORICAL experience in America demonstrates, as William F. Warde shows in the foregoing article, that no matter how desirable or necessary the struggle against the monopolies may be it is not so simple to defeat them. Despite the repeated efforts of "trust-busting" coalitions for almost three-quarters of a century, the giant corporations have continued to grow in industrial, financial and political power. Today these goliaths dominate American life.

It would seem that a new effort at constructing an anti-monopoly coalition might well profit from a study of the lessons offered by Marxist theory on the subject. Otherwise the risk, if not the certainty, of repeating previous disastrous errors of such coalitions would appear to be high, especially since the latest proposal as advanced by the Communist party of the United States centers the field of work in the Democratic party. On the other hand, a clear appreciation of the theory could prove decisive in achieving a successful solution of the difficult problem. The following considerations are offered as a contribution to this side of the discussion.

The key question faced by any anti-monopoly coalition is its *aim*. In other words, what do you propose to do with the monopolies? What's the coalition for? The specific answer will indicate which class — workers, farmers, or small businessmen — is leading the coalition. The answer will also say what means of struggle, what political tactics, will likely be used. These in turn will prove ultimately decisive for defeat or victory.

Under middle-class leadership, the characteristic aim of the coalition is to

"curb" or "reform" the monopolies. This aim, we recognize, appears important and even vital to small farmers and businessmen hard hit by exorbitant interest rates, loaded price structures and the cutthroat competition of the billion-dollar combines. But suppose this type of anti-monopoly drive were to succeed? Suppose the big corporations were shattered, making it possible for the small-time operators to engage in "free" competition with the pieces. All that would have been accomplished is to turn back history. As before, a new set of monopolies would rise out of the "free" competition, and the anti-monopoly movement would have to say, "This is where we came in."

The possibility of such an achievement, however, is purely speculative. It has never been done in the past and is far less likely to be done in the future. There are three reasons for this:

(1) The technical organization of the giant industries does not permit them to be sawed into bits. To take an industry integrated around the belt line or automated processes and cut it up like a hog in a butcher shop would destroy it.

(2) The historic trend in the development of the industrial complex is not toward atomization but toward increasing integration. What impels industry in this direction, and not the reverse, is the heightening of labor productivity that integration assures. To buck this trend leads to lower labor productivity and consequently a lower standard of living, an aim that is both reactionary and delusory.

(3) To aim at no more than "curbing" the monopolies plays the

political game of the monopolies themselves. The anti-monopoly movement becomes ripe for the first influential public figure who winks at the monopolies while taking over the leadership of the crusade against them. Since the monopolies control the Democratic and Republican parties, the legislatures, the executive agencies and the courts, the "reform" measures that are passed never affect their fundamental interests and in any case are beyond enforcement. The career of Theodore Roosevelt, the first "trust-buster" to be elected, is a perfect example. Under his Presidency, the trusts prospered as never before despite his demagogic fulminations in behalf of the anti-monopoly coalition. His record was surpassed only by that of the second Roosevelt who eloquently inveighed against the "economic royalists" while they rose to new heights of power during his terms in the White House.

In contrast to middle-class leadership of an anti-monopoly coalition, working-class leadership puts as the aim of the movement *expropriation* of the trusts. The word is not as bad as it may sound to some ears. It means converting them into public utilities. The aim corresponds with the economic interests of the working class which are to retain the industrial achievements of capitalism and to open up the possibility of their rapid expansion by transcending private ownership of the means of production.

At first sight this appears to contradict the interests of the middle class, since it enlarges and vastly strengthens the sectors of industry with which they are in competition. But under a Workers and Farmers Government,

the immense surge forward which society as a whole takes actually widens the field for middle-class enterprise.

It is true that this widening of the field is only in comparison to what they formerly occupied; relative to the public-utility sectors the role of the middle class is reduced. Moreover, the long-range trend will certainly be toward an ever greater *relative* reduction. In return, however, a benevolent world of enduring peace, lifetime security and a swiftly rising standard of living is assured. As great new projects are undertaken we may realistically expect that the middle class will find the attraction of participating in planned economy irresistible. The exciting future opening before everyone willing to join in construction of the new society will make the former middle-class outlook seem circumscribed and outmoded indeed.

Besides that, if we may refer to something surely of interest to everyone who counts himself a genuine opponent of Big Business, in expropriating them there is the solid satisfaction of having definitively won the war against the monopolies.

Do-It-Yourself Politics

An anti-monopoly coalition whose basic aim is the expropriation of the monopolies must calculate the *means* required to achieve the goal. This is a question of politics.

First of all, it ought to be recognized that it is a middle-class delusion to hope that either of the political parties of Big Business can be captured and converted into an instrument capable of expropriating the monopolies. Both the Republican and Democratic parties are political machines owned, constructed and operated by Big Business. They are an integral part of Wall Street like the legal system that keeps the fortunes of America's 60 ruling families from becoming public property. Labor might as well try to capture the stock exchange as the Democratic party.

Secondly, it ought to be recognized that, if it is fatuous to believe that organized labor can capture either the Republican or Democratic machines and turn them against the monopolies, it is at least naive to expect that an isolated "progressive" figure in these machines can do it. Personal integrity and sincerity are no match for

a powerful, corrupt gang of political hatchet men. The "progressive" ends up in the election race with a Wall Street jockey on his back. "Progressives" are, in fact, assets to the machines, enhancing their vote-catching capacity. They are such necessary assets that if "progressives" do not turn up on their own, the machines deliberately create them as a matter of routine political strategy.

These facts of life impose upon any coalition that is genuinely opposed to the monopolies a policy of independent political action. The anti-monopoly coalition must stand upon its own feet, declare its own aims, run its own candidates for office to put these aims into effect, and in general practice "do it yourself" politics. Since the principal force in an effective anti-monopoly coalition can only be the working class (because of their numbers, their strategic position in society and the historic trend that favors their development), this signifies running working-class representatives against the candidates of both the Republican and Democratic machines. Neither theory nor historical experience discloses any other road.

Thus one of the primary jobs in building an anti-monopoly coalition is to arouse the labor movement to the need for breaking from the Republican and Democratic machines and constructing its own party. Such a party can bring a Workers and Farmers Government to power in America. And that is the only kind of government capable of expropriating the monopolies.

Let us sum up our conclusions thus far. An anti-monopoly coalition, to avoid the fatal errors of the past, must take as its aim the expropriation of the monopolies and, as the means for achieving that aim, independent political action. These conclusions have been derived from an analysis of the class forces behind the monopolies and those in opposition to the monopolies. Whether your politics incline in favor of the working class or the capitalist class is shown by your attitude toward these conclusions.

What is the correct name for conclusions of such crucial character? I think Marxists will agree that they should be called *principles*, basic judgments reached through materialistic analysis of the class struggle. Theory shows that it is a matter of principle for the working class to struggle for

the expropriation of the monopolies through independent political action.

"Isolation of the Left"

At this point I hear the dissenting voice of a top official of the Communist party: "We must, of course, not lose sight of the right opportunist danger associated with working in the Democratic party for an anti-monopoly coalition. But you disregard the concrete problem that faces the left, how to break out of the isolation in which socialists find themselves today. By disregarding the concrete problem you end up with principles we all know about and with which we can all agree and which, of course, we must all push for as our ultimate goal. However, by sticking to this abstract level your position becomes false and one-sided. Your insistence on such commonplace socialist abstractions makes your position sectarian and dogmatic. You refuse to fight for partial gains. This left sectarian danger is much greater in the concrete circumstances of isolation in which we find ourselves today than the right opportunist danger that disturbs you."

Let's see. We were talking about how to build an anti-monopoly coalition with some hope of achieving its goals, weren't we? What's that got to do with (1) the isolation of the program of socialism or (2) the isolation of the Communist party from the masses?

We decided in principle what is required to bring success to an anti-monopoly coalition. Now, if our critic is correct, aren't we forced to say that we don't care about its success, provided that we have been able meanwhile to utilize it temporarily to help strengthen socialism or — the Communist party? Wouldn't it seem, then, that the real goals of socialism — or the real goals of the Communist party — are one thing and the goals of an anti-monopoly coalition something else again? If this is so, people interested solely in building an anti-monopoly coalition would be justified, wouldn't they, in concluding that Socialists and Communists are pretty treacherous allies who bear watching?

Something is evidently wrong here. What is it? Suppose we begin by separating things out. First let's take the isolation of the Communist

party. The major reason for this is the crimes and false policies intermeshed with Stalinism. It is true that the prolonged prosperity has affected the entire radical movement, including the Communist party. The witch-hunt has also taken a heavy toll. But what has happened to the Communist party goes far beyond what can be properly ascribed to the prosperity; and the witch-hunt should have attracted a new generation of rebels to the persecuted party as witch-hunts have in the past. The fact is that most militant workers in America today simply do not believe that the Soviet Union is a workers paradise as Stalinist propaganda has made out. They know about the forced labor camps, the mass purges, frame-up trials and murder of political opponents. They associate these facts with the Communist party which practiced the cult of deifying Stalin for decades and they want nothing to do with it. Moreover, they recall the CP's wartime support of the no-strike pledge, its years of backing candidates of the Democratic party and similar things marking its decline from the militancy that once made it attractive.

Can the Communist party somehow overcome the effect of this record by good work in building an anti-monopoly coalition, attractively packaged—in the Democratic party? The hope is delusory. In the end this course can only deepen the isolation of the Communist party. There is no way out except the truthful, honest way — to make a clean break with Stalinism, to explain from the Marxist point of view what is still worth defending in the Soviet Union such as the planned economy, how Stalinism could arise in the isolated workers state with its backward economy and Czarist heritage and, from the same point of view, how it can never arise in the United States with its tremendous industrial resources.

Now what about the isolation of the program of socialism from the working people? It must be clearly recognized, it seems to me, that a good deal of the responsibility here, too, lies with Stalinism. Unfortunately many workers do believe the propaganda of the Stalinist bureaucracy that socialism has been achieved in the Soviet Union. If that's "socialism," say these workers, they want to make damn sure it's never "achieved" here. In the early years, when Lenin and

Trotsky headed the first workers state, the Soviet Union enjoyed immense popularity among militant American workers as an example and an inspiration. After decades of Stalinist rule, the opposite is true. It is difficult nowadays to get recognition for even the big achievements clearly due to planned economy and just as clearly *not* due to the parasitic bureaucracy. In brief, the crimes of Stalinism have blackened the reputation of the Soviet Union and set back the whole socialist movement, including the Trotskyist vanguard who saw the danger of Stalinism from the beginning and who fought against it most consistently.

A socialist who thinks that not all is evil in the Soviet Union, but who finds disputes in the radical movement over such questions distasteful, hastens to intervene: "Stalinism is really a foreign issue; moreover one that has proved highly controversial and divisive in the left. Besides that, it's a dead duck. The fact that you keep raking over the coals of the past shows you've got a fixation on the old fight between Stalin and Trotsky. What difference does it make today who was right or wrong or why? It's about time we grew up and learned to drop things like that. What we need is to get down to American questions that affect American workers in their daily lives right here in the U.S.A. Let's get busy in our own backyard. Let's build an anti-monopoly coalition."

Can the question of the evil effects of Stalinism be left aside, at least in considering how to build an anti-monopoly coalition? I do not think so. The Communist party leaders themselves bring up the question of Stalinism by injecting the problem of their isolation in American politics. Isn't it the truth that what they really mean by "isolation" is the isolation of the Stalinist bureaucrats from the liberal and social-democratic labor bureaucrats of the Democratic party? Reinstatement in Democratic party circles as in the good old days of Yalta, Teheran and Earl Browder seems to be the real goal, fitting in with the diplomatic drive of the Kremlin, as in Stalin's time, for maintenance of the status quo in the international class struggle. The CP leaders seek to lift the quarantine imposed on them by the labor bureaucrats attached to the Democratic machine. They even go so far as to seek

ties with the so-called "moderate" wing of the Southern white supremacists in the Democratic party, including a figure like Senate majority leader Lyndon Johnson of Texas, as part of the prospective "anti-monopoly coalition." (See *Political Affairs*, June 1956.) Success in this endeavor would no doubt signify to the CP leadership actual formation of the sought-for "anti-monopoly coalition." But doesn't that show that they haven't really given up the Stalin cult? Their policy in relation to the Democratic party remains the same as it was before the unlamented generalissimo became a dead duck.

In respect to the membership of the Communist party, at least those in intimate touch with the working class, matters are different. It is not difficult here—since Khrushchev's famous revelations about Stalin's paranoia and the crimes of his regime—to get agreement about the need for a break from Stalinism. However, the question of "isolation" from the masses and how to overcome it still disturbs these convinced anti-capitalists. They feel that it will certainly take more than a break from Stalinism and opposition to its policies to win the working class to the program of socialism. They wonder if it isn't possible that the action of building an anti-monopoly coalition would help provide the positive approach that is needed.

The content of these considerations about breaking out of isolation are, we note, the opposite of those of the CP leadership. The Stalinist bureaucracy seeks a bloc with the social democracy, liberal capitalists, and "moderate" white supremacists to slow down the development of the class struggle. The CP rank and file who have transcended Stalinism seek working-class acceptance of the program of socialism to intensify the development of the class struggle. Their desire to leave aside, at least for the moment, the question of Stalinism and to consider in and of itself how building an anti-monopoly coalition might help to end the isolation of the program of socialism, is, therefore, completely legitimate: it demands the most serious response.

Before getting into this, however, two observations should be made:

(1) Among the rank and file, CP leaders will, of course, speak about the ultimate goal of socialism and

how building an anti-monopoly coalition is a step in that direction. In fact their assurances may have been what started many members thinking along these lines. However, the insistence of these same leaders on working in the *Democratic* party and in helping to elect *Democrats* shows that their talk about socialism is nothing but a diplomatic formula, a way of voicing the aspirations of the membership while inveigling them into supporting one of the political machines of monopoly capitalism.

(2) We began our discussion by considering what socialism had to offer toward the success of an anti-monopoly coalition. Now we are asked to discuss what an anti-monopoly coalition has to offer toward the success of socialism. This is really a different subject. But the two subjects are interrelated, I will admit. Moreover, those primarily concerned about an anti-monopoly coalition are entitled, certainly, to know what socialists expect to get out of the movement by participating in it, and why they would like to see it succeed.

Theoretical Basis Of the Socialist Approach

From the socialist viewpoint an anti-monopoly coalition can help solve what has become the most pressing problem of our times — how to overcome the disparity between the objective need for socialism and the readiness of the working class to lead society forward. That members of the Communist party could find their way to this problem testifies to the integrity of their socialist consciousness. It also testifies, unfortunately, to the low educational level in the Communist party, for the problem is not a new one nor one unknown to Marxist theory. As a general problem it was, in fact, considered even before the days of Marx and Engels.

In 1839 John Francis Bray, an English communist, published a book *Labour's Wrongs and Labour's Remedy* in which he drew radical conclusions from David Ricardo's economics. He saw the possibility of organizing society in a better way than that of capitalism. He also saw difficulties in reaching the superior form. One of them is that people are trained and indoctrinated by the current system. How are you to overcome this shaping of the human mind and get people to see the possibilities in better organ-

How's That Again?

The following intriguing extract is from George B. Boswell's explanation of the fall of Social Democrat Guy Mollet's cabinet in France as published in the *Social Democratic New Leader* of June 17:

"Mollet is a stubborn idealist steeped in the democratic principles of socialism. . .

"Instead of preparing the country psychologically for the realities of a fast-moving situation, he laid down inflexible policies which only helped to foster unrealistic myths about Algeria by appealing to French national pride. Censorship has even been extended to France, where it has become increasingly difficult to publish the truth about torture and repression in Algeria."

ization of the economy? Bray realized that a series of transition measures would be required, measures based on the capitalist system yet extending beyond it, a kind of economic ladder on which to climb from capitalism to socialism.*

Marx, writing in 1846-47, disagreed with Bray's specific proposals, considering them Utopian, but he noted that Bray "far from claiming the last word on behalf of humanity, proposes merely measures which he thinks good for a period of transition between existing society and a community regime." Marx considered Bray's book a "remarkable work."

Bray's merit is to have seen both the problem and the general outlines of its solution. To recognize that the human mind lags behind the possibilities opened up by the development of the productive process and to conceive of a transitional period as the way to bridge the gap shows a thinker of rare talent. That Bray went wrong

* "If then a changed character be essential to the success of the social system of community in its most perfect form — and if likewise the present system affords no circumstances and no facilities for effecting the requisite change of character and preparing man for the higher and better state desired — it is evident that these things must necessarily remain as they are, unless . . . some preparatory steps be discovered and made use of — some intermediate resting-place, to which society can go with all its faults and its follies and from which it may move forward, imbued with those qualities and attributes without which the system of community and equality cannot as such have existence." (Quoted by Karl Marx in *The Poverty of Philosophy*.)

on the actual transitional measures he thought up ("general and local boards of trade" to assure "equality of labour and exchange") does not detract from the credit due him. The theoretical basis for sounder measures had not yet been provided. This was to be the work of Marx and Engels.

A year after Marx's comments on Bray, the transitional period and what measures will be required in it received the attention of Marx and Engels in *The Communist Manifesto*:

" . . . the first step in the revolution by the working class is to raise the proletariat to the position of ruling class, to establish democracy.

"The proletariat will use its political supremacy to wrest, by degrees, all capital from the bourgeoisie, to centralize all instruments of production in the hands of the state, i.e., of the proletariat organized as the ruling class; and to increase the total of productive forces as rapidly as possible.

"Of course, in the beginning, this cannot be effected except by means of despotic inroads on the rights of property, and on the conditions of bourgeois production; by means of measures, therefore, which appear economically insufficient and untenable, but which, in the course of the movement outstrip themselves, necessitate further inroads upon the old social order, and are unavoidable as a means of entirely revolutionizing the mode of production."

"These measures," the authors declared, "will of course be different in different countries." They felt, nevertheless, that in "the most advanced countries" certain ones "will be pretty generally applicable." The list they drew up contained ten proposals. Monopolies, naturally, were not included; they did not become a major phenomenon until nearly the turn of the century.

The most significant difference between the measures advocated by Marx and Engels and those by Bray lies in the method by which they were derived. Bray started from a preconceived idea of what a model society should be like and then sought a bridge to it from the society in which he lived. Marx and Engels considered this method unscientific. In the final analysis, they held, such preconceived notions could not transcend the society of the times. At best they could only be Utopian dreams and at worst they represented efforts to return to an earlier stage of development, a reactionary enterprise. They showed that such an approach is typical of middle-class politicians. In contrast, they sought to find in the society of their times the forces

causing its evolution. This method enabled them to discover from what previous economic forms and classes capitalist society had evolved, to what succeeding forms the evolution itself pointed, and therefore what class today represents the society of tomorrow. They therefore correctly designated their approach as both *scientific* and *proletarian*.

One of the major theses of the *Manifesto* is the difference between these two methods and the results they give. For instance, where Bray called for "boards of trade" to bring about "equality of labour and exchange," Marx and Engels called for "centralization of credit . . . centralization of the means of communication and transport in the hands of the state" and "extension of factories and instruments of production owned by the state . . ."

Thus along with the whole problem of the transitional period, Marx and Engels considered the relationship between the working class and the middle class in the struggle for socialism and determined the necessity for the working class to differentiate its politics from the middle class. This general need has been stressed by Marxists ever since. But along with the differentiation, Marxists have also stressed the need for an alliance with the middle class, for it is an integral part of the problem of winning the majority of the people to acceptance of the socialist program. We can see in the light of these facts that the issue before us today — whose ideology shall shape the anti-monopoly coalition? — is only a current instance of a general problem that goes back to the beginnings of scientific socialism.

We may judge, therefore, how remarkable it is that the Communist party leadership advance their idea of an anti-monopoly coalition dominated by the Democratic party as something novel. One may find cause for even greater astonishment at the impression they seek to create that a "transitional" approach to socialism has come up only as an "American" problem — and for the first time!

The theory of the transitional period remained pretty much at this point for another 25 years. Then in 1872, reviewing the validity of the *Manifesto*, Marx and Engels said that they laid no "special stress" on the ten proposals, since the "practical ap-

plication of the principles will depend . . . everywhere and at all times, on the historical conditions for the time being existing. . . ." They added that the proposals "would, in many respects, be very differently worded today." Referring to the "gigantic strides of modern industry," the "improved and extended organization of the working class," and "the practical experience gained, first in the February [1848] revolution, and then, still more, in the Paris Commune [1871], where the proletariat for the first time held political power for two whole months," they concluded that "this program has in some details become antiquated."

What "especially was proved by the Commune," in the opinion of Marx and Engels, was the form political power could *not* take during the transition period if proletarian rule were to be stable. They also saw in the Commune "the political form at last discovered under which to work out the economical emancipation of Labour." Their intensive study of this political form has gained in importance, particularly since the Stalinist usurpation of power in the Soviet Union, for the democratic norms that Marx and Engels found in the Paris Commune stand in the most glaring contrast to Stalinist practices in the Soviet bloc.

The leaders of the Second International did not develop the theory of the transitional period. In fact they gave it a setback. They took the criticisms made of the *Manifesto* by Marx and Engels to mean that the ten proposals were completely outmoded, and they replaced them with a "minimum program." The concept of a transitional period between capitalism and socialism and of transitional measures to bridge the two economic systems was brushed aside. The social-democratic movement as a whole confined itself to fighting for partial reforms of capitalism and of talking about socialism as a distant goal.

Leon Trotsky, writing in 1937, had this to say about the turn: ". . . the ten demands of the *Manifesto*, which appeared 'archaic' in an epoch of peaceful parliamentary activity, have today regained completely their true significance. The social-democratic 'minimum program,' on the other hand, has become hopelessly antiquated." (See "90 Years of *The*

Communist Manifesto" in *The New Internationalist*, February 1938.)*

It was not until the practical experience of the 1905 revolution in Czarist Russia that the theory of the transitional period received further development. Trotsky, the outstanding young leader of that revolution, advanced the hypothesis that in backward countries like Russia where the proletariat has become a powerful class before the historic tasks of capitalism have been accomplished, the revolution, when it comes, will confront the proletariat with the need to take power despite the economic unripeness of the country for socialism. A working-class government, however, in the transitional period opening up before it will have to carry out the tasks logically belonging to the bourgeois revolution, although through the socialist forms at its command.

This hypothesis, which has many ramifications, became known as the theory of the Permanent Revolution. (Trotsky took the title from the same source as his original inspiration for the theory, an 1850 declaration by Marx and Engels.) Indelibly associated with the name of Trotsky, this theory brought new richness and insight into the wider theory of the transitional period, for it expanded the concept to include, in industrially backward countries, *capitalist* tasks within the transitional period between capitalism and socialism when the working class is exercising what Marx and Engels called "political supremacy."

The October 1917 revolution confirmed Trotsky's theory, for its actual course followed his forecasts virtually to the letter. The revolution did more than that. It offered for the first time the *experience* of the transitional period together with its influence on world politics. And this experience, which has lasted almost 40 years now, provides inexhaustible material for Marxist analysis. Trotsky himself was able to follow this development

*Trotsky did not mean that every point in the old "minimum program" of the social democracy is so "antiquated" that it must be rejected. The question goes deeper than that. What Trotsky stressed is the concept behind the ten proposals in the *Manifesto*, a dialectical concept in contrast to the rigid, pragmatic view behind the "minimum program."

for more than two decades before Stalin succeeded in having him assassinated. Trotsky's principal contribution in this field during these years was to analyze and combat the unexpected difficulties that arose in the transitional period in the Soviet Union, difficulties centered principally around the growth of a privileged caste. To go into that here would take us too far afield; I mention it only in passing, with the hope that the interested reader will check Trotsky's numerous writings on the subject for himself. (See especially *The Revolution Betrayed*.)

In the light of the experience of the Russian Revolution and the workers state in the Soviet Union, plus the new phenomenon of fascism and the threat of a series of world wars arising from fresh delays in the proletarian revolution due to the social-democracy and Stalinism, Trotsky extended the concept of transitional measures to include the period before the working class wins political supremacy, and he made specific suggestions for both backward and advanced countries as well as the Soviet Union. A summary of his views is contained in a compact pamphlet *The Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International*, which has come to be known more briefly as *The Transitional Program*. Anyone concerned about building an anti-monopoly coalition in the United States will find it well worth studying.

Trotsky begins with the main characteristic of the world political situation today which is "a historical crisis of the leadership of the proletariat." This crisis is reflected in the disparate proportions between the socialist movement and the ripeness of the economic prerequisites for socialism. A bridge is required here, a series of transitional demands that will bring socialists with their program into living contact with the working masses as they are today, since the proletariat can assume leadership of society only if it is conscious of what it is doing. The general lines of this consciousness are expressed in the socialist program.

Two examples will illustrate the concept of transitional measures in the pre-revolutionary period:

(1) In the fight against inflation, which undermines the working-class standard of living through repeated

price rises, Trotsky proposed, as one measure, a *sliding scale of wages*. Under this provision, wages would be tied to the prices of basic commodities and would follow their fluctuations. From a union point of view this is no more than a simple insurance measure, guaranteeing that a wage gain will not be dissipated by price boosts. As an insurance measure, it does not, of course, prevent the workers from increasing their real wages — that is a question of the class struggle. How well this proposal fits the objective reality of our times can be judged from the fact that many union contracts now include it to one degree or another in the form of an "escalator" clause.

The economic justification for the measure within the framework of *capitalism* lies in the fact that it safeguards the only commodity the worker has as a producer — his labor power. The justification from a *socialist* point of view is that the capitalist system today is incapable of providing a sliding scale of wages for the working class as a whole. But this incapacity demonstrates the need to transcend the capitalist system, to replace it by an economic system which can guarantee decent living conditions, and thereby the demand for the measure forms a bridge to the most radical political conclusions.

Similarly in the fight against unemployment, Trotsky proposed that the workers should fight for a *sliding scale of working hours*. Instead of layoffs, let the available work be shared — reduce the number of hours in the work week, but don't reduce weekly take-home pay. Again, within the framework of capitalism, this is a measure to preserve labor power as a saleable commodity and prevent its deterioration. However, the incapacity of capitalist society to grant this most elementary of all economic rights, the right to work, demonstrates, as in the previous example, the need to go beyond capitalism to a planned economy.

As can be seen, such simple but really far-reaching demands are based on the contradictions of capitalism as manifest in the daily lives of the working people in the world of here and now, the world of the "transitional epoch," as Trotsky put it.*

Enough has been said, I hope, to suggest where building an anti-monopoly coalition fits into the socialist perspective. The participation of so-

calists in such a limited and partial movement coincides with their efforts to overcome the crisis that the working class as a whole is experiencing in rising to the leadership of society in the transitional epoch to which capitalism has brought us.

Program for an Anti-Monopoly Coalition

Those who regard Marxism as a system of dogmas will, in all likelihood, expect me as a confirmed Marxist to proclaim a sure-fire recipe at this point for whipping up an anti-monopoly coalition. The sectarian recipe, they may feel safe in predicting, will include some exactly measured dogmas for success of both the coalition and the socialist movement. Unfortunately or not, Marxism does not happen to be that kind of system. Its theory can serve only as a general guide in actions that always have elements of newness — one might even say uniqueness — in which Marxists participate as members of the working class, most often with little choice as to the issues or the timing. As a general guide, however, Marxism is not at all vague or amorphous; it is quite definite in its indication of the main lines.

First of all, Marxism differentiates from the middle-class outlook and approach. Secondly, it brings to the fore the principal problem which, as I have sought to show, is to bridge the pressing objective tasks that the capitalist system has placed on the agenda and the lack of appreciation that the working class, especially in America, has for its own historic destiny in carrying out these tasks.

Within this context other broad lines can be indicated. For instance, socialists must center their activities in mass organizations of the working class — not the Democratic party!

Whatever the topical issues involving the monopolies may be — and these are not decided by the small

*Besides such measures, Trotsky included certain planks from the old "minimum program." These are primarily democratic demands that logically belong to the bourgeois revolution but have either not been achieved in some countries or, in decaying sections of the capitalist world, are under attack. The need to fight for such capitalist demands before coming to power parallels the need of the proletariat in backward countries to carry out capitalist economic tasks after they are in power.

minority in this country today who believe in socialism — socialists should raise the question of the country's expropriating these anti-public combines. Two examples can be suggested:

(1) Certain monopolists have pressed particularly hard in recent years to get their hands on our remaining resources — oil, timber, water power. . . Shouldn't the holdings of these big-time predators, who have demonstrated what a menace they are to the welfare of the people, be converted into public utilities?

(2) Some of the main monopolists depend on armament contracts for super-profits. Shouldn't the profits be taken out of these preparations for World War III? Wouldn't that be an effective way to reduce the belligerency of these partisans of the cold war? If they object too strenuously to such an acid test of their patriotism, shouldn't their enterprises be taken over by the government as a safety measure?

In both examples, socialists should, of course, explain that such measures affect only part of the capitalist class and alter only a portion of the capitalist economy. The main drives would still remain. For instance, taking the profits out of the armament contracts, even expropriating the major munition manufacturers, could at most only slow down the imperialist drift toward atomic war. Nevertheless, socialists could heartily support the good beginning.

The field of foreign policy is rich with possibilities. Abroad the monopolists seek to dominate the governments of the countries where they have investments. At home they view the State Department as an agency set up to trouble-shoot their interests. To help keep America from getting embroiled in new "little" wars that could touch off the atomic catastrophe everyone fears, these firebugs in the powder magazines of world politics should be expropriated and their affairs made of public concern in a way they never expected.

In domestic politics the issue arises naturally around every tough, drawn-out struggle between the unions and companies who insist on the open shop. It arises whenever the big corporations press for anti-labor legislation. Why let them range the country like gangsters with the law on their side? If the majority of the people

are not yet convinced that they should be converted into public property, let's at least have legislation requiring them to open up their books to public inspection. Publicizing company secrets should help considerably to demonstrate the need for expropriation.

Once you get the central idea of transitional phases, the specific manner in which the demand for expropriation is pressed depends only on what is timely.

Role of a Labor Party

But who is to raise such demands and fight for them in an organized way? The anti-monopolists need a party capable of meeting the political machines of the monopolists on the field of battle. Such a party can be built only through independent political action. Consequently, one of the main requirements in constructing an anti-monopoly coalition capable of accomplishing what it sets out to do is to press persistently for independent political action. Socialists can do this without any mental reservations, for the road is the same they are traveling on. They have just done a little advance scouting and understand better what's ahead on the pike.

The appearance in America of a union-based labor party in opposition to both Democrats and Republicans would signify the first great victory of an anti-monopoly coalition, for it would be a major step in constructing the means for ultimate success. The labor party would become the pivot for rallying the allies of the working class in the struggle, and the whole problem of cementing a solid coalition would be transferred from the field of talk to the field of party program and its translation into action. In other words, responsibility for political leadership in the anti-monopoly coalition would now be in the hands of the working class. Demonstration of its capacity to meet that responsibility would begin with the remedies that the labor party proposed for the evils that brought the middle class into action against the monopolies.

On the economic level, the labor party would have to guarantee that its demand for expropriation of the monopolies would in no case apply to the small farmers or small businessmen. In fact it would have to assure them that for a considerable time to come, perhaps several generations

their opportunities would increase under a nation-wide planned economy. In this connection the labor party would do well to underline its opposition to the disastrous policy of confiscation of small merchants and commodity producers practiced by the Stalinist bureaucracy in other lands.

On the social level, the labor party would have to put at the top of its program the struggle for full equality and demonstrate in its own internal regime the seriousness of its attitude toward the rights of the Negroes and other minorities, women and the youth.

On the political level, the labor party would have to do everything in its power to demonstrate the sincerity of its offer to share government responsibility, when the time came, with whatever political parties its allies created to participate in the anti-monopoly coalition. The internal democracy within the labor party would, of course, be a powerful demonstration of its real views on this question.

Would the middle class follow vigorous working-class political leadership of the type indicated? Theory answers in the affirmative, for it is characteristic of the middle class to vacillate between the two fundamentally powerful classes in capitalist society and to follow the one that seems to be the strongest. Theory declares that there is no other way for the working class to bring the middle class to its side except by displaying more dynamic leadership than the capitalist class. There is no other way, in fact, for the working class to organize its own tens of millions into the mighty crusade needed to really meet the challenge of the monopolies.

However, we do not need to rely on theory alone in this matter. On the positive side we have the historic experience of the Russian Revolution where the working class, offering a most radical program, did succeed in leading the peasantry although vastly outnumbered by its ally. On the negative side we have, among others, the instructive experience of the catastrophic defeat in Germany where a policy of passivity, followed by both the Communist party and the Social Democrats, ended in pushing the middle class into the arms of the Nazis. Both experiences have much to offer

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BOOKS

"The Roots of American Communism"

by James P. Cannon



THE ROOTS OF AMERICAN COMMUNISM, by Theodore Draper. Viking Press, New York, N.Y. 498 pp. 1957. \$6.75.

I.

In the present turmoil of American radicalism, churned up by the Khrushchev revelations and the Polish and Hungarian revolts against Stalinism — with clear indications of more of the same to come — this serious work about the beginnings of communist history in this country arrives at a good time to get the attention it deserves. After a year-long crisis, during which thousands of formerly devoted party members have been voting against it with their feet, and the old taboo on free discussion has been broken, the climate is more favorable for the circulation of unofficial literature. Theodore Draper's book is an important contribution to the discussion now going on in all circles of the more or less socialist-minded.

The Roots of American Communism is the first volume of a projected series of studies now in progress by a team of scholars who are undertaking to write a complete history of the Communist party. It is announced that Draper is to bring the story down to 1945; David A. Shannon is at work on a history of the party in the postwar years; and, in addition to that, a number of other scholars, exploring the party's record in various areas, will "attempt to assess the influence of communism in American life." The whole enterprise is backed by the Fund for the Republic which was set up by the Ford Foundation. There is irony in the circumstance that this rather formidable exploration of one aspect of American history has been made possible by an appropriation from money left behind by the rich eccentric who, for his part,

once stated his conviction that "history is bunk."

In this first volume Draper tells the story of the Communist party up to the end of 1922. Several introductory chapters provide the necessary background by tracing the evolution of the "historic" American left-wing movement out of which came the initiating forces for the new movement of communism in this country. American communism was directly inspired by the Russian Revolution; there is no doubt about that. But Draper's concise but graphic and factually accurate introductory chapters give conclusive proof at the start — if such proof is needed — that the Communist party, formally organized in 1919, did not appear out of thin air; the new party had deep roots in the earlier movements of American labor radicalism, and found its originating troops and leaders in the ranks of older organizations.

Draper, as he relates in his introduction, started to gather his material five years ago as an independent endeavor, and he has been working at it ever since. And, to judge by what he came up with, he must have put in a lot of overtime. The book itself is evidence of a stupendous labor of investigation and research into all aspects of the germinal days of American communism, a decisively important period that has long been misunderstood, obscured and even falsified. On this score the author's work must command the admiration and even the awe of those who consider the history of the workers' movement important in all its aspects, and value the scholarship that digs up the facts and reports them honestly.

The Communist party, or what is left of it at the present time, still bears the name of the original organization. But everything else is different. The party, at its inception, had grave faults which were in the main the hang-

overs from the American radical tradition, supplemented by its own groping ignorance and inexperience. But it was an honest party and it meant what it said. "There was a time," says Draper, "when everything was new, fresh, and spontaneous. Every crisis was the first crisis. Every move was unrehearsed." There was none of the cynical lying and weaseling double talk which have characterized the party in later years. In the formative period of the American communist movement "there was a minimum of mystery and reticence. . . . Oppositions functioned more or less freely. Communists were more contemptuous of outside opinion in the conduct of their own discussions. They were so confident of the future that they felt little need for mental reservations. In fact, they believed that the more frankly they made known their views, the sooner would they win over the masses of workers."

In its early period the party commanded the respect and support of the great majority of radical American workers, and eventually came to hold a virtual monopoly of leadership in this sphere, before the credit of its original integrity finally ran out. The story of the transformation of the Communist party is a story the disillusioned communist workers will have to know and understand before they can even begin to see daylight in the dark jungle of frustration and discouragement that surrounds them at the present time. By the same token, a new generation of social rebels, aspiring to create a new revolutionary political movement without previous experience of their own, will certainly need to inquire why and how the last one failed so ignobly. Such people can profit by a study of this book by Theodore Draper, which tells the truth about the communist pioneers and the movement they created.

It doesn't tell the whole story of the Communist party, only the beginning; but the beginning is a good place to start the study of the whole story. As its name implies, *The Roots of American Communism* deals only with the background, origin and formative period of the Communist party. But within that framework, it is a faithfully accurate account of what really happened in the early years when American communism was first taking shape, who the people were and what kind of people they were. Many who have tended to carry their own revulsion against the Communist party to the point of repudiating communism will have ample reason to reconsider that hasty and erroneous judgment when they read the story of what honest communists were actually like, and what the word communism signified, in the first years of the movement, as told by the author of this book.

The Communist party has been around for almost 40 years, but very few of its active participants of later times have known much about the origin and history of their own organization; and most of the little they have known isn't true. Since the Twentieth Congress of the Soviet CP and the publication of Khrushchev's revelations at one of its secret sessions, the world has been pretty well informed that, among its other crimes, such as frame-ups, "confessions" extracted by torture, and wholesale murders of the old Bolsheviks, the Stalin regime was also guilty of the systematic falsification of the history of the Russian Revolution and the Soviet Communist party — a crime against the inquiring youth.

The leaders of the American CP, who stuffed up the brains of several generations of young party members with Stalin's falsified version of Soviet party history, now piously confess Stalin's "mistakes" — in Russia; but they haven't said anything yet about their own "mistake" in falsifying the history of American communism. Foster's *History of the Communist Party of the United States* is just as crooked as Stalin's *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union*. Draper's book, in contrast, stands out as a truly remarkable work of honest scholarship which is certain to be the primary source for every serious student who really wants to know where the American communist movement came from and what happened in its

formative years. In passing, with the back of his hand, Draper knocks Foster's tendentious and falsified "History" into the waste basket.

The author of *The Roots of American Communism* does not conceal his own bias, which leads him to an interpretation that I cannot share and to which I will return later in this review. But when it comes to a recitation of the facts of American communist history from 1917 to 1923, no one will ever dare to challenge him; he tells what really happened with the objectivity of a conscientious scholar and nails down his story with documentary proof at every point. Even those who went through all the battles of the pioneer days without fully knowing or remembering everything they did, will stand amazed at the exhaustive thoroughness of his research and the journalistic skill with which he has recreated the events of that time.

II.

Especially illuminating is the fourth chapter on the "Influences and Influencers" which operated in the first years of the American communist movement. The Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 was the *action* that brought the American communist movement into existence. Everybody knows that, and it is usually taken for granted that the *ideas* of the Russian Bolsheviks shaped the new movement from the start. Draper proves conclusively — and this is one of his major contributions to an understanding of the period — that this was not really the case. It took quite a while for the influence of Bolshevik ideas to come up even with the authority of their action.

Other ideas were present, and even predominant, in the first fumbling years of the new movement. The half-baked theories, the fantastic unrealism, the sectarian tactics carried to the point of absurdity in the early days — which are all mercilessly listed and documented by Draper — were not imported from Russia. These flowers were home-grown — with some Dutch cultivation.

American communism grew directly out of the new left wing of the Socialist party which took shape in the struggle against the First World War, with some reinforcements from the IWW, the Socialist Labor party and the Anarchist groups, all of

which had been shaken up, first by the war and then by the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917. The strong points of all the forces in this new "regroupment," which was eventually to become the Communist party, were their revolutionary spirit and opposition to the war; their firm stand on the principle of the class struggle against the reformist wing of the Socialist party; and their support of industrial unionism, as against the conservative craft exclusiveness of the Gompersite labor aristocracy. This was a good start, but only a start, on the road to a rounded-out political program for a revolutionary party. Beyond that the American movement was not able to go on its own theoretical resources.

The "historic" American left wing had been dominated by syndicalist and semi-syndicalist conceptions. Even the "politicals" thought of the party mainly as a propaganda agency and an auxiliary to the unions in the economic struggle, rather than as the leading organization of the working class in all aspects of its struggle for socialism. The new left wing in its early years carried over this tradition. The traditional left wing had been pronouncedly sectarian, strongly influenced by De Leon's theories, even though De Leon's SLP was outside the main stream of the movement. The new left wing, even after it emerged as the Communist party in 1919, carried over this tradition too, for several years.

The old American movement had been predominantly isolationist; it was too "American" for its own good. Then, when it began to be influenced by ideas from abroad during the First World War, the first of such importations to make a strong impression on the movement came, not from the Russian Bolsheviks but from the Dutch theoreticians, Anton Pannekoek and Herman Gorter, who were at the same time influential in the left wing of the German Social Democratic party. These Dutch leaders were revolutionary in their opposition to the First World War and to the role of the Second International in it. But their conceptions in general were also semi-syndicalist and sectarian.

The American left wing found their ideas congenial; and their articles in the *International Socialist Review* and the *New Review*, the two left-wing organs of the time, did much to shape the ideology of the

Americans. The Dutch theorists made a particularly deep mark on the young American writer who was to become the chief ideologist and propagandist of the American left wing turning toward communism, and by all odds, the single person most responsible for the founding of the American Communist party. That man was Louis C. Fraina whom Foster, in his *History of the Communist Party of the United States*, forgot to mention even once. Maybe he never heard of him.

Fraina, who had been influenced first by De Leon, then by the Dutch theorists, and then later by Lenin and Trotsky, combined elements of all three influences in his own thinking. And he decisively put his own stamp on the American left wing, and on the Communist party at the time of its formal organization.

The ideas of the Russian Bolsheviks, as they eventually began to break through in the American press, primarily in some of the writings of Lenin and Trotsky, became known in America somewhat later. But it didn't take long for these ideas to make their way. The power the Russians exerted over the American movement in that early time was ideological, not administrative. They changed and reshaped the thinking of the young American communist by explanation and persuasion, not by command; and the effect was clarifying and enlightening, and altogether beneficial for the provincial American movement.

The traditional sectarianism of the Americans was expressed most glaringly in their attempt to construct revolutionary unions outside the existing labor movement; their refusal to fight for "immediate demands" in the course of the class struggle for the socialist goal; and their strongly entrenched anti-parliamentarism, which was only slightly modified in the first program of the Communist party. All that hodge-podge of ultra-radicalism was practically wiped out of the American movement in 1920-21 by Lenin. He did it, not by an administrative order backed up by police powers, but by the simple device of publishing a pamphlet called *Left-Wing Communism: An Infantile Disorder*. (This famous pamphlet was directed in part against the Dutch theoreticians who had exerted such a strong influence on the Americans and a section of the Germans.)

The "Theses and Resolutions" of the Second Congress of the Comintern in 1920 also cleared up the thinking of the American communists over a wide range of theoretical and political problems, and virtually eliminated the previously dominating influence exerted by the sectarian conceptions of De Leon and the Dutch leaders.

The old sectarianism, which by 1922 had been driven out of the other fields, finally took refuge, with dwindling support, in the theory of "undergroundism in principle." But by that time a strong group of native American leaders had taken the cure, and they waged a determined struggle to rout the old sectarianism from its last stronghold. It was a tough fight, and it needed the intervention of the Russian leaders of the Comintern for the victory at the end of 1922. To be sure, this time there was a Comintern decision. But it was a decision taken after the most thoroughgoing discussion in which the great majority of the American communists were convinced. The result was the unification of the movement for a new period of expanding activity in the class struggle, with realistic tactics adapted to the American conditions of the time.

III.

Draper's monumental study of the early years takes on all the more interest and liveliness because it is not the work of a library researcher cataloguing facts about a subject for which he has no feel. The author himself was deeply involved in the Communist party during the tragic era when Browder ruled as the pro-consul of Stalin, and the revolutionary party of the twenties was transformed into its opposite. Draper belonged to that betrayed generation of rebellious college youth who faced graduation in the midst of the economic crisis of the thirties with the prospect of no place to go.

These student rebels were different from the majority of their generation in that they were social-minded, fully committed and careless of personal consequences. These qualities of youth, which in my book are the best, propelled them toward the Communist party, behind which they saw the image of the Soviet Union and the Russian Revolution. Mistaking Stalinism for Communism, they

streamed into the party and made their careers in its service.

They were the young dynamos who found places in the party apparatus, staffed the publications, or became functionaries in the innumerable front organizations. A surprisingly large number of these recruits from the campus played leading parts in the CIO organizing campaigns and wound up as officials, of high and low degree, in the unions controlled and manipulated by the Communist party.

Draper was one whose youth was consumed in a career as a party journalist. Such an experience could not fail to leave its mark. He writes now, not as a mere observer of the movement but as a wounded participant. For all that, if one is to judge by the scholarly objectivity and scrupulous fairness with which he now records the history of a movement to which he no longer pays allegiance, he came out of the experience with his integrity intact. In that he is exceptional, for the apparatus of Stalinism has been a devourer not only of men but also of character.

Unfortunately, as his present work seems to testify, Draper finally recoiled against Stalinism without correcting the original error of identifying it with Bolshevism. This identification, which has no foundation in reality, blurs his political judgment and inspires an interpretation—in fact, a thesis, clearly intimated in his introduction and in his concluding paragraph—which cannot stand up under serious examination. (Stalin had to frame-up and murder the old Bolsheviks before the specific regime of *Stalinism* could be consolidated.) The result is a contradictory book, which is beyond praise as a source of authentic information, but without value as a political guide in the study of its meaning. The degeneration of the Communist party took a long time, and it did not come about automatically. Those who want to get to the heart of the mystery will have to evaluate the factual information by a different criterion than Draper's.

IV.

Draper's thesis is that the American Communist party's course was determined and its doom was sealed when it first yielded to Russian influence, and sought and secured Russian help in the solution of American

problems which the party had not been able to solve by itself; that the seeds of its destruction as an authentic expression of American radicalism were planted in the early years. He begins his book with an introductory statement that "the essential character of the movement was shaped at the beginning." And in his last chapter, which tells how the difficult task of lifting the party out of its underground isolation, and turning it toward the workers' mass movement, was accomplished with the help of the Russian leaders of the Comintern in 1922, he concludes that the victory thus gained cost more than it was worth.

The American party's dependence on the Russian leaders for political advice and help in the Lenin-Trotsky time of the Comintern was to lead — unavoidably, he seems to say — to the later subservience to Stalin in all respects. Thus, "something crucially important did happen to this movement in its infancy. It was transformed from a new expression of American radicalism to the American appendage of a Russian revolutionary power. Nothing else so important ever happened to it again."

V.

An attempt to give an exhaustive answer to this oversimplified assumption would take us far afield. Innumerable articles, pamphlets and a shelfful of books have been devoted to the subject of Stalinism and Bolshevism — the most difficult and probably the most important theoretical and political problem of our time. Students who want to read a serious political meaning into the factual information assembled by the scholars will do well to include this analytical literature in their studies.

But here I believe it would be worth-while and timely to touch on one aspect of this world-wide problem, as it relates to the current discussion in this country. It is the liveliest discussion, and it is due to go on for a long time. And again it must be pointed out, for the benefit of people who have decided late in life to swear off all things Russian, that the Russians started all the commotion this time too.

The Twentieth Congress of the Soviet CP, and Khrushchev's revelations about some of the horrors and

monstrosities of the Stalin regime in Russia, have stirred up almost as much interest, discussion and reappraisal in all circles of American radicalism as did the revolution of the Bolsheviks — an action of a different kind, but still a Russian action—in 1917. The reaction of many people, in their first shock of disillusionment, is to ask, this time, for a purely "American" party which will go it alone and erect customs barriers against the importation of foreign ideas and influences, including the Russian and especially the Russian.

Pathetic as this first reaction is in this day and age, and fleeting as it is bound to be, it nevertheless has created a temporary market for some fast-talking advocates of a new American socialist movement, somewhat on the pattern of what we had in this country "in the time of Debs." Leaving aside the fact that this idea is a half century out of date, it was not adequate even for the time of Debs, which was also the time of Berger and Hillquit, and the IWW, and the Anarchists, and the Socialist Labor party of De Leon. They did the best they could with what they had, but they didn't have enough. None of them, nor all of them together, were good enough for their own time, and a recreated movement of that kind wouldn't begin to fit the needs of the present time.

The fact of the matter is that the socialist and radical movement in this country, as in all other countries outside Russia, came to a dead end in 1914. When the largest and strongest socialist parties of Europe, along with the movements of the Anarchists and syndicalists, collapsed under the test of the First World War, a question mark was put over the perspectives of socialism everywhere. Socialists everywhere groped in darkness, questioning their previous assumptions.

Light came finally from the East. The Bolshevik party of Russia was the one party that demonstrated in action its capacity to cope with the problems of war and revolution. For that reason it became the inspiring center for a revival and regroupment of the revolutionary workers in all countries of the globe, including the United States whose previous movement had been the most primitive, isolationist, and politically backward of them all.

The young Communist party of the United States arose as the expression of a new socialist hope, generated by the Russian example. It was this party, and no other, that took root, grew and expanded, and commanded the allegiance of virtually the entire generation of newly awakening rebel youth in the shops and in the schools. It is true, the Communist party later succumbed to Stalinism — which also came from Russia — and ended up as a horrible caricature of its original self. This shows that bad things as well as good can be imported and that it is necessary to discriminate between them. But what happened to those organizations, groups and tendencies which rejected the influence of the Russian Revolution and the Bolsheviks in the first place? What have they to show for their isolationist wisdom?

The Socialist party, even while Debs was still alive, became a hollow shell of futility which the new generation of labor militants passed by; and it is poorer, feebler, and less attractive now than ever, unless one feels an attraction to "State Department socialism." The Socialist Labor party withered on the vine. The IWW, despite its heroic tradition and its magnificent cadres of working-class militants, declined into an impotent sect which was scarcely able to notice, still less to lead, the great upsurge of industrial unionism in the thirties. The Anarchists, who had played a role not without honor in opposition to the First World War, declined and finally disappeared from the scene in a shabby reconciliation with American imperialism in the Second World War.

There is not much in that record to build on for the future; not much to inspire a new generation to struggle for the socialist goal as the realistic perspective of their own time. If we are to look to the past for some inspiration in the present, the tradition of the young Communist party, as it was before it succumbed to the corruption of Stalinism, has more to offer than any other party. Allowing for all the mistakes and inadequacies of its leadership, the party that responded to the Russian Revolution was the first genuinely revolutionary political party in this country.

The pioneer communists proclaimed their belief that this country, too, needs a social revolution and a party fit to lead it; and that the sooner such

a party is started on its way the better. These propositions are still valid, and they are the necessary starting point for any regroupment in a new revolutionary party worthy of the name. The new party of revolutionary socialism, which will emerge in a regroupment of forces out of the present upheaval in all circles of American radicalism, will undoubtedly acknowledge the Communist party, of the heroic formative years, as its true ancestor.

The predominant characteristic of the Communist party in its later years of degeneration — and the basic cause for its degeneration — has been its implicit repudiation of the revolutionary program and perspective for America which the party stood for in its formative years. This is the rotten fruit of the Stalinist theory of "Socialism in One Country." This is the big "mistake" which has to be corrected before the damage can be repaired and a new start made. The Russian Bolsheviks who staked their

lives in the fight against the Stalinist degeneration in the Soviet Union, fought under the slogan: "Back to Lenin." The American translation of that same slogan is a call to go back to the pioneer revolutionary period of American communism and begin again and build from there.

Of course, there can be no question of simply going back to the past. Much has happened in the world and in this country in the intervening years. All these great events and experiences have to be studied and interpreted, conclusions must be drawn and incorporated in the new program. But, in my opinion, these conclusions will not be a substitute for the basic theses of the original Communist party, but rather a supplement to them, a development and a continuation.

The evidence to support this contention is amply provided in Theodore Draper's book. It belongs in the library of every socialist militant.

Paranoia, Yes; But Still a Genius

by John Liang

THE KHRUSHCHEV REPORT and the Crisis in the American Left, by Hershel D. Meyer. Independence Publishers, Brooklyn, New York. 1956. 111 pp. \$1.

This brochure may be described as a lawyer's brief. The author's ostensible purpose is to analyze and explain the Khrushchev revelations at the Twentieth Congress of the Communist party of the Soviet Union. His real aim is to provide a defense for the present leaders of the Soviet bureaucracy who stand accused as accomplices of the late Stalin in the commission of some of the most horrendous crimes of our age — and to provide, by extension, a defense of the Stalinist leadership of the American Communist party, which endorsed and applauded these crimes.

Meyer lets the reader infer that he considers himself a Marxist. He then proceeds to suspend basic Marxist law in a trickster effort to show that the "excesses" of the Stalin regime possessed no historico-materialist foundation but were the product, if you please, of a historical "accident" — Stalin's paranoia! Following is the key passage:

"For these cruel perversions of justice, there could not have been and was not any historical necessity. On the contrary, socialist development required, as Stalin himself repeatedly insisted, the most careful differentiation between friend and foe,

scrupulous observance of revolutionary justice and legality as well as the fullest expression of the people's creativity and inventiveness. Socialist development certainly did not require the extermination of innocent people or the depletion of the party of its best leaders. These crimes are related to an historical accident — Stalin's paranoia — a factor outside the realm of politics and economics or what is commonly referred to as objective historical circumstances."

One can readily agree that Stalin's crimes were not essential to socialist development. An honest Marxist, however, would immediately ask himself what or whose interests were served by these crimes. If Stalin was indeed a paranoid maniac, as seems likely, is it not incumbent upon a Marxist to ascertain *why* such a character stood at the head of the Soviet state, not for a year, but for a quarter of a century? Instead, in the interests of anonymous but well-known clients, Meyer resorts to the pitiful subterfuge of the "historical accident."

Trotsky explained the matter with crystal clarity when he said that Stalin personified the rule of the reactionary bureaucratic ruling caste that seized power in the Soviet Union during the ebb tide of the revolution, expressing its interests with a ruthless consistency. The enthronement of bureaucratic privilege

required the destruction of the Bolshevik party, the liquidation of the Soviets and the trade unions, and the physical extirpation of Lenin's Central Committee. This latter was the key to the whole operation, for with the authentic voices of Bolshevism silenced, none remained to challenge the usurpers.

Was Stalin just a paranoiac "accident" or did he serve a historical purpose, albeit a reactionary one? The record itself gives the answer. Who but a paranoid fiend could have ordered and supervised the frame-up and murder of Lenin's illustrious comrades — Trotsky, Zinoviev, Kamenev, Radek, Rakovsky and the others — on the fantastic charges that they had conspired with the German and Japanese imperialists to overthrow the Soviet Union? It was precisely because there was no basis in fact for the silencing of these men that Stalin resorted to the fraudulent method of the frame-up. At all costs these men, who could be counted on to fight for revolutionary internationalism as opposed to Stalin's theory of "socialism in one country," had to be silenced. In silencing them, Stalin performed an enormous service for the Soviet bureaucracy.

Meyer goes on to speak of Stalin's "popularity" with the people. A majority of them, he says, accepted Stalin's crimes ("draconian measures") as "necessary for the security and defense of their socialist homeland." It could just as falsely be said that the Italian people "accepted" Mussolini, that the Germans "accepted" Hitler, or the Spanish people, Franco. In a totalitarian dictatorship the people have almost no means of expressing anything *but* acceptance of the existing order. The bureaucratic rabble that really backs the rulers, that throngs the public squares to applaud the dictators on gala occasions, because it is the beneficiary of their rule — this, definitely, is not the people.

If, however, the Soviet people "accepted" Stalinism, must we not excuse the Stalinist leaders in this country for doing likewise? "Marxists at that time," says Meyer, "could not believe Stalin capable of ordering the executions of innocent people, for they could not conceive of themselves committing such crimes." How, then, did it happen that the Trotskyists were able to evaluate the Moscow trials as frame-ups (which Meyer is now forced to admit that they were) while his clients were praising them as models of proletarian justice? Did Meyer ever hear of the Dewey Commission and its report on the Moscow trials? Why did it take Meyer's "Marxists" 20 years to discover that the trials of 1937-38 were frame-ups? What kind of "Marxism" do Meyer and his friends live by? Why can't they come clean? Why does Meyer, even today, not dare mention Trotsky, the pre-eminent Bolshevik leader and close companion of Lenin, and the fact that he was killed by Stalin's hired assassin?

The more one confronts the "reasoning" of this Stalinist hack the more revolting he appears. He tells us that "murder committed under the deluded but firm conviction that it serves to prevent the murder of millions in war, and to preserve social gains, cannot be measured by the same moral yardstick as mur-

der committed in order to launch a war or to prevent social change." This would make the paranoid Stalin superior to the paranoid Hitler. Stalin defended the parasitic interests of the Soviet bureaucracy. Hitler defended the equally parasitic interests of the German bourgeoisie. Meyer would establish a qualitative distinction between the two. Might we suggest that he re-examine his own moral concepts?

Meyer not only has not liberated himself from the double-dealing and evasiveness of the Stalinist school of politics. He has not even freed himself from the influence of the "cult of the personality" that Khrushchev, tongue in cheek, denounced at the Twentieth Congress. Hence he is able to write:

"Stalin rose to eminence by virtue of his brilliant intellect. His writings attest his capacity for illuminating highly complex problems. He was a man of immense historical foresight. Every speech and article revealed his profound mastery of the application of Marxism-Leninism to practical problems of building socialism. The logic, simplicity and almost mathematical precision of his polemical writings, dispelling doubt and confusion, evoked almost universal admiration."

In other words, a leader-genius, Meyer might ask himself why the first thing to be toppled by angry workers in Budapest during last year's uprising in Hungary was the immense statue of Stalin. This, we might add, was just a foretaste of what will happen in the Soviet Union when the working people of that country settle scores with their bureaucratic oppressors.

But let us proceed. Khrushchev, as one of Stalin's principal hatchet men, was well aware of what his chief was up to. He and Stalin were both part of the system of bureaucratic

violence. Critics of Stalinism, following the revelations at the Twentieth Congress, very properly asked: Why did Khrushchev and Co., knowing, as they did, that Stalin was a paranoid maniac, knowing that he was a frame-up artist, knowing that he was hurting the Soviet Union and sullyng the name of socialism — why, why did they not seek his removal?

Lawyer Meyer springs to their defense with the assertion that "only unprincipled adventurers could have undertaken such a gamble." Why? Because capitalist counter-revolution was waiting to move in. By the same reasoning, workers should never try to cleanse their unions of crooked, grafting officials because the employers might seize on such an internal crisis to try and smash the unions.

The simple fact is that Khrushchev and Co. kept silent because they were part and parcel of Stalin's terror machine and because they were, among many others, the beneficiaries of Stalin's rule. That they were affrighted by Stalin's ruthlessness and feared for their own hides is undoubtedly true. That, too, explains their acquiescence. Such are the heroes for whom Meyer has drawn his brief!

On every page of Meyer's book there is a falsehood, a half-truth, an evasion of the real issue. Even the title of the book is false, for what Meyer calls the "crisis in the American Left" is in reality the crisis within the American Communist party. Ever since the Khrushchev revelations, members have been leaving the Communist party in droves. The party leadership is split between the old-line Stalinists led by Foster (whose particular lawyer Meyer appears to be) and the opposing right-wing Gates faction. Meyer's booklet, a weird, unscientific apologia written in the best tradition of Stalinist evasion and double talk, can only repel genuine rank-and-file Communists who are seeking the truth about their party and its policies.

izations devoted to the defense of constitutional guarantees of freedom and civil liberties as well as his own struggles for his rights qualify him as an outstanding authority in the field.

However, his proposals for finding ways and means to regain our civil liberties are open to question. He writes, "My suggested rule would cover not only crimes such as incitement to riot or murder, but also broader social dangers such as incitement to present acts of violent revolution against the state." He also writes, "I suggest, in addition, that government has the right to curb freedom of expression when the language used constitutes a clear, direct and wilful incitement to the present commission of dangerous violence or some other serious and overt criminal act."

Precisely such formulas are used by the witch-hunters as protective covering. They have interpreted any opposition to the capitalist system, expressed or implied, as a "conspiracy" to advocate unconstitutional methods of changing the government. Individuals and organizations that do not stand for any social change at all can be victimized under formulas like these. There is sufficient evidence of this in Dr. Lamont's study itself. To the witch-hunters, serious disagreement with their policies and views looks like revolution or at least like "broader social dangers" and, therefore, come under Dr. Lamont's formula.

Freedom to think, to band together in political parties or other organizations, to speak out freely and openly, these are rights guaranteed by the Constitution, particularly the Bill of Rights. If it is granted that exceptions may be made, the door is opened to abuses such as we have seen.

Who is to decide when and where the exceptional situation exists? The President or his Attorney General? The courts? Congressional committees? These have all been shown to be the principle violators of the Bill of Rights. No exceptions can be made; otherwise a possibly vital source of information and opinion is closed to the people, the final authority in all questions of public welfare.

Marxists look upon the curtailment of civil liberties in recent years as a reflection of the class struggle. The Democrats and Republicans alike have spread the witch-hunt in all directions as part of the preparation for World War III. The drive against civil liberties aims at preventing the development of domestic opposition to the projected war, at intimidating and terrorizing those who might be inclined to object to new adventures like the intervention in Korea. The imposition of thought control in America is sure proof that the ruling class feels itself unable to convince the people of the correctness of its projected war policies through open and free debate.

The relative quiescence of the class struggle due to the long prosperity has fostered an apathetic attitude toward civil liberties among wide sections of the population. In addition, the cumulative effects of the witch-hunt have created fear among many people that to defend the rights of others would make them suspect themselves. In many cases, for ex-

Lamont Surveys Civil Liberties

by Milton Alvin

FREEDOM IS AS FREEDOM DOES, by Corliss Lamont. Horizon Press, New York, 1956. 322 pp. \$3.95.

Corliss Lamont, himself a victim of the witch-hunt, has surveyed some of the many fields invaded in recent years by various government agencies seeking to impose thought-control in the United States.

Included are his personal clashes with the House Un-American Activities Committee, the McCarthyite Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations and the State Department as well as incidents of wider concern involving Congress, the President, the courts, the states, the schools and cultural fields in which he was not directly involved.

The extent of the pall thrown by the witch-hunt over free thought in the United States is shown impressively by Dr. Lamont. Mil-

lions of Americans in government service, in the schools, in industry and in other walks of life have been terrorized into acceptance of official creeds on pain of losing their livelihoods and being stigmatized as "subversives." Thousands have already fallen victim in the struggle.

It has certainly become dangerous, as Dr. Lamont points out, to think freely and even more so to speak out in the public forum, in the class room and on the job. However, the witch-hunt, despite its vast extent, has not turned up a single person engaged in any act which might truthfully be construed as unlawful. The campaign has been directed against thinking and expressing ideas, against individuals and groups who do not agree with the ruling capitalist class and its spokesmen and representatives.

Dr. Lamont's long association with organ-

ample, it has been extremely difficult for victims to obtain legal aid to say nothing of broad public support.

A big part of the guilt for the woeful success of the witch-hunt can be ascribed to the labor bureaucrats who at best are largely indifferent to the fate of the victims and at worst indulge in red-hunts in their own unions. This aspect of the state of civil liberties today, the right of unionists to hold their own views and to belong to other organizations of their own choice, is not treated in Dr. Lamont's book. This is to be regretted, for it must surely be agreed that the potentially decisive force in the struggle for civil liberties is the labor movement.

In the long run, it will be the workers' organizations that will save freedom in America. They have the numerical strength; the power; and, most important, the greatest need for an atmosphere of free thought and discussion. Under the present witch-hunt atmosphere they have not been able to grow and very likely will be unable to do so until the air is cleared of the present contamination.

In the meantime, certain gains in the strug-

gle to preserve civil liberties should be noted. Dr. Lamont sees an easing in the situation due to a lessening of tension in the cold war. In addition, there has been the welcome change of attitude on the part of the Communist party towards its working-class opponents. This organization has admitted that it was in error in supporting the government in the 1941 Smith Act trial of the Trotskyist and Minneapolis Teamsters' Union leaders and it has shifted from sabotage to support of the case of the Legless Veteran James Kutcher. These are steps in the right direction. They lay the basis for future cooperation on a broader basis in civil-liberties cases, and a revival of the fine old slogan that "An Injury to One Is an Injury to All."

In this connection, Dr. Lamont is to be commended for his principled stand, while a leader of the American Civil Liberties Union, in defense of all victims of the witch-hunt, including members of the Communist party. He takes note of the fact that while the current leadership of the ACLU has given up the principle of defending the rights of all, the branches throughout the country have taken a far better position in many instances.

against Jim Crow in Southern plants was launched. The union instructed all locals, North and South, to demand "immediate removal of discriminatory signs" requiring segregated use of locker rooms, cafeterias and other plant facilities.

Armour proceeded to comply with the new contract provisions. It took down partitions in the cafeterias in the Oklahoma City and Fort Worth plants, hired Negro women for the first time and placed them in locker rooms on an unsegregated basis. The Fort Worth local balked and demanded that management restore the "Negro" and "White" signs and leave the partition in the cafeteria. The union top leadership stepped in, and the contract provision was made to stick. As a sequel to this fight, the district director was subsequently defeated for re-election by a Negro member of the Fort Worth Armour local.

Tackled next by the union was discrimination in the sugar plants in Louisiana, including separate lockers and lunch rooms, and segregated pay lines. At issue also was the North-South wage differential. Five small locals disaffiliated over the integration issue, but again the union stuck to its policy. It was forced into lengthy strikes at the Colonial and Godchaux locals, but in the end won its contract demands.

An ugly situation developed in Moultrie, Ga., over the issue of an integrated union educational project. One of the teachers was a Negro. The opposition was so violent that the school was closed and the staff left town.

The issue was carried to the floor of the union convention in 1954, and a resolution was passed strongly condemning the union members "whose violent opposition to our equal rights program sabotaged the school," and ordering reinstatement of the school within four months. Rather than comply, the Moultrie local disaffiliated.

The United Packinghouse Workers in these and other instances set an example that could well be copied by other unions. Despite rough going in some instances, the union challenged the Jim Crow prejudices of its own members, and as a result of its firmness in carrying out a policy it knew to be right, has won acceptance of integration by the overwhelming majority of its members, including its white members in the South.

The history of these struggles merits extensive study, for the Packinghouse Workers have chartered the course that must be followed by the rest of the labor movement, unless labor is to continue to bow down before Eastland and the White Citizens Councils.

The union movement can become a strong force in the South, but only if it has the courage to meet the challenge of the white supremacists, including those within its own ranks.

One Union and Its Race Relations

by Lois Saunders

EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY, a Union Approach to Fair Employment, by John Hope II. Public Affairs Press, Washington, D.C. 1956. 142 pp. \$3.25.

This study by the director of industrial relations of the Race Relations Department of Fisk University deals with race relations within the various locals of the United Packinghouse Workers. It is based on a statistical "self-survey," and includes a brief — too brief — account of the union's attempts to implement its non-discrimination policy.

By far the most interesting section of the book is the description of actions by the union leadership to force into line locals in the Deep South — in such cities as Fort Worth, Texas; Birmingham, Ala.; Atlanta and Moultrie, Ga.; and in the sugar plants of Louisiana.

The self-survey was initiated in 1949. It involved sending out questionnaires to union members and leaders, holding personal interviews and painstakingly analyzing the replies, which give a graphic picture of race conditions, practices and prejudices which existed in a number of key locals of the union.

The statistical information, which comprises the bulk of the book, confirms for the most part facts that are pretty well known, but it also contains a number of other facts of considerable interest.

It was found, for instance, that Negro members of the union have a "considerably higher level of education than whites." It was also found that in the opinion of union leaders, Negro and Mexican-American workers generally rate "average or above average" in their quality as union members, and that their loyalty to the union was particularly

demonstrated during the 1948 industry-wide strike, a strike in which no minority issues were involved.

After giving the detailed statistical information, the author presents a quick review of some of the major struggles conducted by the union in an endeavor to implement its revitalized anti-discrimination policy.

The 1949 self-survey served as the basis of that policy, and the May 1952 convention gave the leaders the go-ahead signal.

As a result of that mandate, the union in its negotiations with the "Big Four" packers demanded the strengthening of non-discrimination clauses in its contracts. Under attack were the refusal of the packers to hire women, particularly Negro and Mexican-American women; the exclusion of non-whites from certain preferred jobs; and the segregated facilities in factories in the South. This was the first time this latter demand had been included in negotiations.

In October, 1952, Armour and Cudahy accepted the union demands, and the fight

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Dodgers

(Continued from Page 74)

Karl Marx, Vol. 1, (The Langland Press, New York) pp. 194-218 and 312-329. The same material in a different translation can be found in *Theories of Surplus Value* by Karl Marx (Lawrence & Wishart, London), pp. 148-197.

* * *

HARVEY O'CONNOR'S discussion in our spring issue of the low status of the socialist movement in America and the editorial reply suggesting that we must begin from where we are, attracted lively interest among our readers. The typical response was that publication in this way of clearly indicated differences facilitates the regroupment of socialist forces. Besides helping to clarify thinking on questions of program, it demonstrates that it is possible to keep things on a friendly basis even though the differences on some points are considerable.

* * *

"ANTHROPOLOGY TODAY" by Evelyn Reed likewise met with a warm response. One of our fans, who happens to be watching the progress of the socialist regroupment with intense concern, said that at first he wondered about the value of an article on a topic so far removed from the divisive issues in the radical movement. He changed his mind, however, "after thinking it over and asking around among the younger people. It seems that this sort of thing on general science interests them more."

To anyone who would like to read more by Evelyn Reed on the same general topic, we suggest "Sex and Labor in Primitive Society" in the summer 1954 issue of *Fourth International*. You can yet a copy by sending 35c to our Business Office at 116 University Place, New York 3.

* * *

WE HAVE been reading two new British publications with a good deal of pleasure.

Labour Review is a bi-monthly Marxist magazine edited by John Daniels and Robert Shaw. Its reports on the issues involved in the socialist

regroupment in England are excellent. The standards it sets in fields of more general interest are equally high. Some of the articles it has published are, in our opinion, genuine contributions to socialist thought. If you would like to see a sample copy our Business Office will be glad to send you one. Please enclose 50c.

The Newsletter is a weekly publication edited by Peter Fryer, who recently resigned from the staff of the London Daily Worker because of its reactionary attitude toward the revolution of the Hungarian people. *The Newsletter* is the best source of information we have seen for developments in and around the British Communist Party which is currently going through a deep crisis. Fryer also publishes informative material from var-

What Job Takes

(Continued from Page 95)

in the way of lessons to American socialists interested in building an anti-monopoly coalition.

We also have the instructive experience of the British Labour party. At the end of World War II, the middle class turned toward the working class for leadership and proved decisive in giving the Labour party a winning majority in a general election. However, in office the middle-class leadership of the Labour party vacillated and procrastinated, doing everything to avoid carrying out the mandate they had received from the people to expropriate all the major industries and institute the planned economy of socialism. In foreign policy they carried on for imperialism as if they were pinch-hitting for Churchill who had been kicked out of office. The result was a shift of the middle class away from the Labour party, the loss of the next general election and a comeback for the capitalist representative Churchill with his denationalization policy. The experience demonstrates pretty conclusively that it takes something more than a reformist leadership to win a lasting victory for an anti-monopoly coalition.

All those who have felt the importance of building an anti-monopoly coalition should make it a duty to examine what Marxism has to offer on the subject. I hope I have been able to indicate enough to invite further study and discussion.

ious foreign correspondents. The address of *The Newsletter* is Seymour Terrace, London, SE 20, and a subscription is \$2 for 12 issues.

* * *

WE WILL sign off by asking you to please let us know how you like this issue of the *International Socialist Review*.

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THIS BOOK IS STILL FORBIDDEN READING throughout the Soviet bloc, for it shows in the most convincing way the profound difference between Leninism and Stalinism. The book contains the famous program on which Trotsky stood in his political fight against the regime of Stalin. For an understanding of the issues that shook the Soviet Union after the death of Lenin, this book is **essential reading**.

It is also essential for an understanding of the mass pressure today on the Soviet government to "Go Back to Lenin."

The introduction is by George Lavan. Off the press soon. Paper \$2.50 cloth \$4.

Build Your Library

You can read them in the public library, of course; but if you want them for leisurely study or handy reference you need them on your own book shelves. The following works by Leon Trotsky are specially important today when the predictions and grave warnings of this socialist leader, who gave his life for the truth, are being borne out before our eyes.

Stalin's Frame-up System and the Moscow Trials	168 pp.	\$1.00
The Revolution Betrayed	308 pp.	2.00
The Kirov Assassination	32 pp.	.25
Stalinism and Bolshevism	32 pp.	.15
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