

# LABOR ACTION

MARCH 10, 1958

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# Politics and Economics of the Recession

## Why the Economy Is Declining; How Long and Deep Will It Go?

By HERMAN G. ROSEMAN

Here, in brief, is the prediction presented in this article: The current economic downswing, now six months old, will probably be checked by mid-year. However, unemployment at the end of the year will still be higher than the pre-recession level. The recession will likely continue into 1959, and perhaps deepen. The "recovery" will not turn into a boom.

In order to understand the current economic situation, we must first look at the history of the whole post-war period. This will point out by contrast the dominant features of the present period. Then we will consider prospects for the economy, sector by sector. The analysis is based on Keynesian theory which concentrates attention mainly on demand for durable goods (investment, housing, consumer durables), on inventory expansion or contraction, and on government spending.

It is clear now that the evolution of the post-war economy can be divided into three distinct periods. Each period was dominated by a boom, and each boom had a unique set of driving forces. The first period, 1946-49, saw a tremendous expansion in all sectors of the economy. The expansion was caused by a great pent-up demand backed up by enormous wartime savings. Housing, consumer durables, in-

vestment, were all at very high levels; government spending was moderate. This great demand on all fronts created an inflation; however, the rate at which demand increased was not as great as the rate at which productive capacity increased (precisely because the demand was a pent-up demand), and the boom culminated in a recession.

There is not much point in arguing what would have followed had there been no Korean War. There was a Korean War, and this fact dominated the second period, 1950-54. Not only were there the direct effects of the huge increase in government spending, but there were also important indirect effects. Investment was stimulated by actual and prospective military orders; inventory accumulation was inspired by a fear of war-induced inflation. Within a few months of the ending of the Korean War, the recession of 1953-54 began. What was important here was not so much that government spending declined, but that it stopped increasing. Booms are driven by expanding expenditures, not by high ex-  
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## Republicans' and Democrats' Reactions; How Is Labor Meeting the Challenge?

By GORDON HASKELL

The French have a saying: the more things change, the more they remain the same. And as we look over the political and ideological reactions to the recession, we get an almost overwhelming feeling of having been through it all before.

Of course, that feeling is not helped by Herbert Hoover's decision to repeat the identical speech he made at the beginning of the Great Depression. We have been through that before. And while the Democrats could hardly suppress their glee at this incredible political blunder, it simply proves beyond question that callous and reactionary though Hoover may be, he is and was a man of principle who's unshakeable belief in the divine ordination of the capitalist system and its workings was unmoved either by the plight of the millions of the unemployed or of his fellow Republicans during the years of political famine into which he led them.

### TYPICAL REACTION

The reaction of the Democrats is also typical. Harry Truman, one of the less inhibited members of the species, deliv-

ered a rip-snorting speech in which he called on the people to follow his party back into the happy days of prosperity which they had experienced during its two decades of rule. He did not find it necessary to mention, of course, that unemployment never fell much below 10 million during Roosevelt's first two terms, and it was only World War II, and after that the Korean war which created and then underpinned the years of Democratic prosperity.

But Truman's "oversight" in this matter still does not put him in the same category as Hoover, or Eisenhower, who on economic questions manages to sound about as much like the GOP's elder statesman as is possible for two persons of such different temperament. In one respect, the difference is this: in a situation like the present recession (or the Great Depression) the Democrat's talk on behalf of the victims of the recession will infinitely surpass their performance, though even the little they will do will, generally speaking, be a good deal more than one can expect from the Republicans. The latter, on the other hand, will generally talk and act like businessmen. That is, they will do the least possible for the unemployed, and do it grudgingly and grumblingly at that.

The attitude of a large section of the Republican Party is set forth even more clearly in an editorial by David Lawrence in the February 28 issue of *U.S. News and World Report* than by Herbert Hoover's re-run of his speech. Lawrence makes it clear that just about every single illness, shortcoming or defect to which the capitalist system is heir can be blamed fairly and squarely on the workers, and more precisely on the organized workers. That applies to inflation, recession, monopoly, the national debt, and who knows what all else.

Hard to believe, but there it is, in cold print:

"Labor Unions have utilized their stranglehold on business in recent years to extort higher and higher wages under penalty of strikes that would be so costly as to make it impractical for employers to resist the unions' demands. The only alternative for the companies was to raise prices. . . .

"Due to the monopoly exercised by national unions, the bigger businesses, with their large surpluses available to buy better machinery, can produce at a lower cost and can actually afford to pay the higher wages which many of their competitors cannot pay. . . . This kind of squeeze is largely responsible for the recent wave of mergers. It's the principle reason why big business gets bigger and small business suffers.

"Prices as well as wages must be

(Turn to last page)

# Arab Unity in the Mideast Its Prospects and Its Problems

BY BRIJEN GUPTA

The unification of Egypt and Syria has come so suddenly that at first it seems surprising, and to many in the West, frightening. But the haste with which the monarchs of Iraq and Jordan, the adversaries of the Syrio-Egyptian republican movement, have followed suit, and announced the federation of their kingdoms, stresses the deep sentiment of the Arab masses for the unification of their states into one single nation.

It need hardly be stressed that the driving force in this Syrio-Egyptian merger has not been Colonel Nasser but the left wing Ba'ath Socialist Party. The readers of *LABOR ACTION* may perhaps recall in this matter what I had pointed out a year ago: that the greatest impetus to Arab Unity comes not from Cairo but from Syria. (*LABOR ACTION* Feb. 18, 1957).

The reason is simple enough. Of all the political parties and personalities in the Middle East, the Ba'ath has been the only movement which took Arab

unity seriously. In the last three years it has constantly struggled for this unity, called the bluff of the other parties which preached Arab Unity but did nothing, and has now forced Colonel Nasser to either prove true to his slogans of Arab unity or shut up. No wonder that the Ba'ath has been maligned in the Western press as an ultra-nationalist party.

I do not believe there is any truth in the report that the Syrian socialists have delivered Syria to Nasser to save it from Communist influence. The Syrian socialists have allied themselves with Nasser (about whom they have plenty of reservations), not because they have any preference for the authoritarians of the right over the

dictators of the left, but because the social content, and to a lesser extent the ideological content, of Nasserism are identical with Ba'ath's socialism. Nasserists in Egypt and the Ba'athists in Syria both draw their supports from the landless and shirtless peasants, the students and the army. Both, in the absence of a well-developed proletarian movement and consciousness, look upon the army as a healthy and progressive element in national politics, especially as a weapon against the feudal landlords and the bourgeoisie.

One of the great differences between the Ba'athists and the Nasserists is the amount of internal democracy in the two movements: the Ba'ath essentially has been a democratic party, in which the constituencies and members have participated in the decision-making process, while in the Nasserist movement, the top leadership has decided for the masses and the constituencies.

However, both the Nasserists and the Ba'athists have a similar program: Arab

(Continued on page 4)

## ISL FUND DRIVE

## Give — For Socialism!

By GORDON HASKELL

In its first three weeks, this year's fund drive has been lagging. In recent years, this early lag has become a customary feature of our fund drives, and thus we in the national office have grown used to viewing it without alarm. This does not mean that we view it with any less distaste, or that it makes things any less difficult for us, both personally and politically.

As all the readers of LABOR ACTION know so well by now, the technical economics of the fund drive are that they permit us to pay off our internal and external creditors just enough to keep the former economically alive, and the latter as creditors rather than plaintiffs. The fact that the great bulk of the fund drive money goes to paying off past expenditures, however, is only its "technical" side. Actually, the political activity for which it pays is past, and a failure of the drive to be fulfilled in full would not affect the past one whit. So what the fund drive really does is to guarantee our future. And if it lags, or falls short, our future is damaged to that extent.

For instance: Should we fail to get a certain amount by the end of March, any possibility of the usual national tour by comrade Shachtman would be out. A thousand dollars short, and indispensable funds for our legal case would be lacking. Another thousand and a staff member would have to start looking for part or full-time work to supplement or replace the money he could no longer count on from the organization.

That is all ABC for members and close friends of the organization. But it is worth repeating. Just last year we were forced to retrench from a weekly to a bi-weekly newspaper because our over-all income simply no longer made the larger press schedule possible. If the money, or any significant part of it, should fail to come in during the drive this year, we shudder to think what further retrenchment might be forced on us.

But, some readers who may be thinking over the size and promptness of their fund-drive contribution may be saying to themselves this year: "We know about the ISL's proposal for unity with the Socialist Party-SDF. If such a unity is actually in the offing, is it really necessary to make the degree of financial

sacrifice to which we have become accustomed in the past?"

A moment's serious political reflection should convince anyone who may harbor such thoughts that they are inconsistent with a commitment to the rebuilding and revitalization of a unified democratic socialist movement. Whatever the prospects of such a unity may be, they will not be advanced if the vitality of our section of the movement is drained by financial anemia in the meantime. And from the point of view of the over-all relationship of the democratic socialist forces in this country to the rest of the political spectrum with which they are in contact, and in varying degrees in competition, (liberals, Stalinoids, etc.) a serious crisis in our press and our organization caused by any slacking off in fund drive contributions by our members and friends would be a real blow to the general cause of socialism.

So, whatever the immediate posture of our affairs may be, with respect to our case against the government, or with respect to the unity perspective, the basic reason for which we ask each and every one of our friends to give, and to give generously, is the same as it has been in years past. We want you to give because you are a socialist, and because you want to advance the cause of socialism.

After all, what better reason can there be for giving?

CONTRIBUTE TO  
THE ISL FUND DRIVEIndependent Socialist League  
114 West 14 Street, N.Y.C.Enclosed is \$.....as my  
contribution to the ISL's Fund  
Drive.

NAME

ADDRESS

CITY

STATE

(Make checks out to Albert Gates)

## Readers of Labor Action Take the Floor

## Critic of Articles on CP

To the Editor:

LABOR ACTION editors in their commentary on the John Gates articles and Perspectives for the ex-communists, (LABOR ACTION Feb. 10, 1958) set a public "tone" that is unrealistic in expectations, and an outlook towards those within the Gatesite tendency that is unduly passive.

The writer appears to demand of Gates that he make "startling revelations about the C.P.," write an "expose" of the party, show "intellectual and moral revulsion . . . towards the intellectual atmosphere," "repudiate his past," and not talk to Stalinoids. They insinuate that Gates should show clear evidence that he and the Gatesites are ashamed, embarrassed of their past, admit they played an illegitimate, unprogressive role, and were in reality as CPers betrayers of idealism and devotion of a whole generation—implying any attempt by Gates to stress those positive aspects of his past as irrelevant.

After noting the Gatesite grouping has attained a level of political clarity and gone no further, the editor's outlook then, is that we must wait until "new working class upsurges" push further awareness. This assumes a false homogeneity within the grouping for which it would be best to say there are various levels of clarity.

By disregarding the editor's passive perspective, it then becomes necessary and important to keep communication

open with the ex-CP left by criticizing policies in a constructive manner, and not with a self-righteous indignant attitude that could only serve to alienate and antagonize.

Fraternally,

H. W.

New York  
Independent Socialist Forum

Friday, March 14

## EDUCATION FOR WHAT?

Scholarship and Social Responsibility

Speaker: Joan Morris

Friday, March 21

## RECESSION AND INFLATION

The Economics of Capitalism

Speaker: A. Kimbly

Friday, March 28

SOCIALIST INTELLECTUALS  
OF THE DEBS ERA

Speaker: Bob Bone

8:30 p.m. at L. A. Hall, 114 West 14 Street, N.Y.C.

## CROSSCURRENTS

## SWP's 'Joint Socialist Ticket' Proposal

By LARRY O'CONNOR

At the beginning of February, the Socialist Workers Party ran a large ad in the *National Guardian*. It was the text of a proposal for a "joint socialist ticket" in the 1958 elections. In addition to the general argumentation for such a united ticket the SWP set down five propositions as their proposal for the platform on which the joint ticket should run.

The general approach and phraseology of these proposals were such as to give them the atmosphere and coloration common to the politics of the "pro-Soviet" or "Stalinoid" political groupings. This is usually achieved by discharging the heavy artillery against the capitalist camp, while reserving only praise for, or simply ignoring the Stalinist camp.

While the SWP is seeking to fish in Stalinoid waters, its politics prevent it from blending completely with the environment in which it seeks to live. Thus, in the text of their proposals, though relegated to very subordinate clauses, and made as vague and inoffensive as possible, were references to "the countries of the Soviet orbit . . . who are fighting for their freedom," and for "political freedom throughout the Soviet bloc."

Now, the *National Guardian* is vacillating on the question of electoral policy, or rather, its editors are not of a single mind on the question. They actually endorsed the SWP ticket in the last elections, and they are obviously interested in the present proposal. Thus, in their March 3 issue they carried a full page of letters commenting on it.

The most interesting thing about the response is the vigor with which so many of the writers take up the SWP's diplomatic references to Russian tyranny and attack them as disruptive of the "Left" or worse.

## HALF STRIKE OUT

If one subtracts the known members or supporters of the SWP (how many more of the letter writers actually fall in this category it is hard to say), fully half strike out at this point.

Says one writer "But it seems perfectly obvious to me that it would serve neither the cause of socialism as a world movement, nor the cause of socialist unity in the U. S. to join hands with the Dulles brothers, the Crusade for Freedom, Radio Free Europe and the Voice of America in an attempt to overthrow the socialist states of Eastern Europe and even the Soviet Union itself. I can see no other meaning in the SWP proposal to help the people under the 'Soviet Orbit' to 'free' themselves."

Writes another: "In Point 4, the SWP is self-contradictory. It says that socialism stands for a deepening and extension of democracy, and then says that it will fight for political freedom in the Soviet (i.e., socialist) bloc of nations. We are of the

opinion that the SWP is merely out to confuse the issues and the voters. Therefore, they won't get very far, before they are again discredited."

And again: "I differ with the SWP, so far as I can tell, on one question, only: I feel that the welfare of all peoples in the socialist countries may safely be left to such peoples themselves and to the various governments they have set up, and that we in America, while reserving the right to criticize policies or practices of such governments, should not under present circumstances engage in a campaign directed against the leadership of any such government, or seek to influence the people who support it to remove it."

There are others. Though some or most of the letter-writers are, in general, for a united ticket of some kind, those who pick up the points relating to Russia clearly indicate that as far as they are concerned no united ticket can have anything like that in its platform. (Those most inclined to the SWP's proposal simply suggest that foreign policy be left aside, and the united ticket confine itself to domestic issues. This in the era of H-Bombs and missiles!)

## NOT FOR UNITY!

Although the letters in the *Guardian* express only the opinions of individuals (and what standards of selection the editors used in making up their page we have no way of knowing), it is clear that they express a view widely, and very firmly held among *National Guardian-Monthly Review-American Socialist* readers and staffs. (We do not include *The Worker* in this list only because the departure of the vast majority of people who sympathized with the Gates tendency in the Communist Party has finally killed any possibility that this organization might go along with the SWP's proposal.)

The leadership of the SWP knew this before they made their proposal. Thus it is clear that whatever their proposal is designed to accomplish, it is not designed to unite the "left," even as they use this term, in the 1958 electoral campaign. Or to put it more precisely, if the SWP really puts as much store in the achievement of a "united" ticket this year as they claim they do, they will have to drop the "Russian question" from the program. Otherwise, the most they can achieve will be to attract to the support of their own ticket (and possibly to their organization) a sprinkling of people who are willing to swallow the attenuated dose of anti-Stalinism contained in the platform.

Of course, conducting a little raid under the cover of a "unity" slogan is nothing new to the SWP. Let us hope that this is all they are up to and that the thought that if sufficient interest is shown in their proposal in general they might be willing to further dilute or even omit completely the references to the struggle for freedom of the peoples of half the world from their program in the interest of "socialist unity," has never crossed their minds.

## "Dissent" Conference Planned

*Dissent*, a quarterly of socialist opinion, announces that it is planning its annual spring conference in New York City for Friday April 4 through Sunday the 6th.

The conference will open with a symposium on "Approaches to Socialism" on Friday, April 4 at the Hotel Diplomat's Palm Room. Participants in the forum will be Michael Harrington, Irving Howe, Erich Kahler, and Norman Thomas. Joseph Buttinger will chair the meeting.

On Saturday morning, April 5, Ben Seligman will discuss "American Economic Trends;" Fritz Sternberg, "The Issue of Automation;" and Seymour Melman, "Impact of New Industrial Forms." In the afternoon of the same day, Frank Marquart will talk on "Crisis in the American Labor Movement;" Stanley Plastrik on "Socialists Look at U.S. Education;" and Irving Howe and Bernard Rosenberg will discuss "Rebellion in the '50's: Poets, Hipsters & Angry Young Men."

The final session of the conference will take place on Sunday afternoon, April 6.

"Communism and the Communist World" will be discussed by Henry Pachter, and Milton Sacks and H. Brand will talk on "U. S. Foreign Policy and Communism."

The editors of *DISSENT* who are organizing this conference hope to get the widest possible attendance for the Friday symposium which will be in the nature of a public meeting. With regard to the Saturday and Sunday sessions, however, their aim is to conduct them in an "informal and relaxed" manner, and they state that "this necessarily means that attendance will have to be limited." They are therefore requesting that persons interested in attending write them in advance making their reservations so that they can get an idea of the number who will wish to participate. Interested persons are invited to write *DISSENT* at 509 Fifth Ave., N.Y.C. 17 (Attention: Spring Conference). Registration fee for all sessions will be \$1.00 and the same will be charged for attendance at the symposium. Student charge for the latter is 65c.

## LONDON LETTER

# Campaign Against H-Bomb Grows; New Left Wing in BLP Organized

By OWEN ROBERTS

In the few months that have passed since the last sheet was torn from the old 1957 calendar a number of significant developments have taken place in British politics; two of them stand out in clarity and merit attention because of their own importance and the effects they may have far beyond the confines of the British coastline.

The first of these is a continuation of the trend, dealt with in the last *London Letter*, of growing public hostility to the Tory government's involvement in the Western camp's nuclear war machine. The vague resentment against British-based planes of the United States air force flying patrols armed with hydrogen bombs and against American equipped rocket bases in the British Isles is now turning into something more positive. Slowly, but quite perceptibly, an organized campaign is building up which is aimed directly at the strategy of "massive retaliation" which forms the core of NATO military planning.

The fact that this opposition is taking

## ORGANIZED OPPOSITION

on an organized form is important in itself, because so far the Labour Party—the only effective political organization which could have given the lead to public opinion—has dithered on the edge of uncertainty. It has, therefore, been left to individuals within the party to cooperate with others outside of its ranks, who for one reason or another are in opposition to the bomb-happy policy of the Tories, in creating some form of instrument through which public opinion may be voiced.

It is not difficult to measure the degree of success. Last week the campaign was given its send-off with a monster meeting in London. Despite typical London winter weather more than 5,000 people flocked to the meeting. The historic Central Hall at Westminster, booked for the meeting, was filled to overflowing. So were three other halls hastily booked by the organisers to accommodate the human flood. Even the most enthusiastic had not dared to dream of such a response—particularly bearing in mind the fact that it had all been arranged by an assorted collection of individuals who only a few years ago would have been regarded as cranks had they attempted a similar venture.

An indication of the varied character of the audience was to be found on the platform itself. The chair was taken by Canon John Collins of St. Paul's Cathedral—and in a punching contribution he made it clear that he was not there merely to decorate the platform with a dog collar. With apparent small regard for the consequences he hit out at "the timid church leaders who fear to give offence to the established set-up." The Archbishop of Canterbury and others in the church who thought or spoke like him, said Canon Collins, appeared to think that it was fear that made the world go round. He said he had decided to act as chairman at the meeting because he believed the question of whether Britain armed itself with nuclear weapons was the supreme moral issue of the day. "That a so-called Christian nation could even contemplate using hydrogen bombs in defence of even the highest values, seems to me a cause of shame," he said.

## BRITAIN COMMITTED

An analysis of the Tory government's defense strategy was made by Michael Foot, one-time Labor Member of Parliament and currently editor of the left-wing weekly *Tribune*. Britain was now emphatically committed to the doctrine of massive retaliation, said Foot. When Dulles first invented this doctrine no one assumed that it would mean the inevitable destruction of Britain, but now the Government White Paper on defense admitted that it was impossible to defend the population of Britain against attack

by nuclear weapons. In Foot's opinion the campaign which he was helping to launch had its logical end in the renunciation of the use and manufacture of nuclear weapons by Britain.

An appeal for a militant stance was made by Alan J. P. Taylor—*noted Oxford historian—who said: "We should stop at nothing to bring this thing to an end. Let us ensure that no politician of any party can appear on a platform if he supports this military policy without being branded as a murderer." Writer and author J. B. Priestly said the policy of nuclear deterrence seemed to be a mixture of "fear, hysteria and a kind of collective madness." Philosopher Bertrand Russell said that the issue of nuclear disarmament was the most important that had ever arisen in the history of man. "If you do not manage to stop this whole hydrogen bomb horror you have got to expect that the human race will not continue," he said.*

Following this oratorical display from the platform the crowds gathered at the meetings took a hand. First they dug in their pockets and produced some 5,500 dollars to help the campaign on its way, and then the more determined spirits in its midst took it into their heads to pay a visit on Prime Minister MacMillan at his residence in Downing Street and tell him what they thought about it all. This, of course, is something which is always bound to fray the temper of the state machine and it was not long before police were swarming in from all directions and—a new crowd control technique—they were equipped with suitably wicked looking dogs. Arrests inevitably followed and sometime in the near future a number of people, whose crime in the eyes of the establishment is demanding peace, will be charged with disturbing the peace. And, lest any American reader goes for the tourist slogan that London policemen are wonderful, it must be recorded that in their actions against the anti-H-bomb demonstrators they surpassed themselves by dragging one man along Downing Street by his ankles.

## PRESS SHOWS COLORS

On the day after this successful opening of the campaign the British press showed its true colors. A couple of newspapers managed to report the Downing Street disturbances without getting around to telling their readers that the demonstrators had come from a 5,000 strong anti-H-bomb audience, thus they gave the impression that the rumpus around the prime minister's front door was the work of a few isolated cranks. But the real rock bottom was hit by *The Times* which managed to overlook the fact that any meeting or demonstration had taken place!

Despite this virtual black-out by the press the campaign has already spread well beyond the borders of London. It is estimated that there are now around 200 local groups participating in the campaign with a collective membership of more than 20,000 people. Large scale meetings have been (or are being) held in many provincial centres, ranging from academic Oxford to rural Norwich and industrial Birmingham and Manchester. Urging the campaign along is *Tribune*, which is telling its readers: "The Labor Party should have put itself at the head of this campaign. One of our tasks is to ensure that it is persuaded to do so."

If the public is being starved of facts about the anti-H-bomb campaign by a Tory biased press there is no doubt that Prime Minister MacMillan is being kept well in touch with events, and there is no

doubt that he is a very worried man. Worried not only by the growing number of public demonstrations against his nuclear policy but also by the knowledge that reaction against the H-bomb helped the Tories to get a decisive trouncing in a recent important by-election for the Parliamentary seat at Rochdale.

Held a couple of weeks ago, the by-election was caused by the death of the Tory MP who had won the seat with a 1,590 majority in the 1955 general election in a straight fight with the Labor Party. This time the Liberal Party put a candidate in the field so it was fairly certain the Tory would be beaten, the only question was: By how many votes? When the result was announced it shook the Tory Central Office to its very foundations. With 80 per cent of the registered electors going to the poll the Labor candidate, Joek McCann, netted 22,133 votes; behind him came the Liberal candidate with a handsome 17,603 votes; battered down to a very dismal third place was the Tory candidate, with only 9,827 votes as against the 26,518 secured by the Tory in the 1955 election.

Many theories have been built around

## New Left Wing in BLP Organized

The developing public feeling against the H-bomb provides a fertile ground in which to sow the seeds of a new left-wing within the Labor Party, and there are encouraging signs that the left is on the move again in a fashion which could have an important impact upon the whole Labor movement. Recently a wave of enthusiasm swept through the Labor rank and file as a 14-year old grouping of the left announced it was in business in a new way.

The group is Victory For Socialism which was born in 1944 and led an unspectacular life until the beginning of this year. Then rumors began to float around that Ian Mikardo (Labor MP for Reading and at one time one of Nye Bevan's staunchest supporters) along with *Tribune* editor Michael Foot and other notables on the left were seeking to inject fresh life into Victory For Socialism (commonly known as VFS). Mikardo, Foot and company, said the whispers, were alarmed at the turn of events following the Brighton conference of the Labor Party last October—so they planned to present a fresh focal point for the leftwing under the banner of VFS. It was, continued the rumors, a move designed to overcome the frustration of the left following Bevan's shift at the conference—it was to be Bevanism without Bevan.

## VFS TRANSFORMED

Now the speculation is at an end and the whole Labor Party has been presented with the result. The old VFS is now dead and a new body has taken over its name. As its president it has Fred Messer, MP for Tottenham, and as its chairman Stephen Swingler, MP for Newcastle-under-Lyme. The executive committee is a line up of a long list of Members of Parliament, a sprinkling of trade union leaders, and other notables such as Michael Foot, Benn Levy and Donald Soper. It intends to open up a recruiting campaign (with recruits restricted to individual members of the Labor Party) and to form local branches all over the country. The members will "have to pledge themselves to take an active part towards winning the next general election and the implementation of a forthright Socialist policy."

Just what this "forthright Socialist policy" is to be has yet to be decided, and VFS promises that as soon as possible "a democratic conference of members will be held to discuss these aims and to elect an executive committee to replace the present temporary body." (This later point is

this result—some of which don't stand up to a close examination—but one outstanding fact which has not escaped notice is that both the Labor and the Liberal candidates made the nuclear weapons issue one of the main planks in their election platforms. And they both came out in favor of Britain taking unilateral action to scrap both the testing and manufacture of hydrogen bombs. To give greater emphasis it must be underlined that in so doing they both went much further than their respective political parties official programs do. Thus nearly 40,000 Rochdale votes went on behalf of the H-bomb tickets against fewer than 10,000 on a ticket which gave full support to the Tory policy of nuclear deterrent and massive retaliation.

This fact has been largely smothered by the pro-Tory press, but when quizzed on the matter in a television interview Prime Minister MacMillan could not but agree that it gave him cause for concern. The Tory Lord Beaverbrook's *Daily Express*, forever blowing the gaff in pursuance of its own particular right-wing policy, commented: "The government is convinced that one big cause for the Rochdale defeat was that the public is fearful of its arms policy and does not understand the need for Britain to have the H-bomb and rocket sites." The *Sunday Observer*, probably the least biased of all the British press, also agreed that the H-bomb was a big feature in the election and said: "There was therefore an overwhelming vote against official policy." By "official policy" the *Observer* had in mind the official policy of the Labor Party as well as that of the government; and it added that the pressure to change the Labor Party line "may thus become much more serious."

probably intended to answer those who have criticised the manner in which Mikardo and his group moved in on the old VFS). However, the chairman Stephen Swingler gave a broad outline of where the VFS stands in a recent article in *Tribune*.

The Tories, he said, are discredited and likewise the Communists. But the Labor Party offers little attraction because of its "formidable respectability," hence the job is to win the mass of uncommitted people to the ideas of socialism and persuade them that the Labor Party is the vehicle for realising these ideas. "This cannot be done by leaving policy discussions to official committees or winning elections to the official machine."

Two prime issues, said Swingler, face the Labor Party. First the question of peace and second the question of how, and he quoted the Labor Party official object as entered in its constitution, "to secure for the workers by hand or brain the full fruits of their labour." This, asserted Swingler, holds good not only for Britain but for Cyprus, Kenya and Arabia as well "and for the Americans and the Russians."

## CHANGE PARTY POLICY

The Brighton conference of the Party, said Swingler, was a grave disappointment because it failed to take a clear stand against the H-bomb and because it apparently preferred state capitalism to common ownership. "While all members of the Party must accept the majority decisions on these questions as Labor policy," said Swingler, "we are entitled to stimulate discussion of these issues and to seek to change party policy in a democratic way."

"We intend to recruit thousands of active Labor Party members, form branches, stimulate fresh discussion about the application of socialist principles, and, above all, inspire renewed faith in the power of democratic action."

Coming at this moment of time, such a declaration provides the basis for the formation of a left-wing within the Labor Party the like of which has never before existed; it could be the logical follow-up on the chain of events which started when Bevan quit his cabinet post in 1951. And if VFS succeeds it could change the role of the Labor Party in British politics and, as a consequence, open up a new channel for the development of the European socialist movement.

## YUGOSLAVIA

# THIS TRIAL CONCERNS ALL FREE MEN

The following article is reprinted from Tribune (February 14), independent London labor weekly. It constitutes the fullest report we have seen to date on the recent "conspiracy" trial in Yugoslavia.

Readers of LABOR ACTION will be interested to know that the top committee of the Second International has sent strong protests to Tito over this trial, as have the leaderships of a number of the Social Democratic parties in Europe. Such vigorous intervention on the part of European socialists is specially gratifying in view of the widespread reluctance of the same circles to take a stand in defense of Milovan Djilas at the time of his first trial. That reluctance was in large part the product of equally widespread illusions about the character of the Tito regime, and much ambivalence and uncertainty about the attitude democratic socialists should assume toward it.

The gradual change of opinion among European socialists on this question has resulted from many developments, among them Tito's willingness to come to terms with the Kremlin, the reaction of his regime to the Hungarian Revolution, etc. But more than anything else it is the result of the spirit and determination of one man, Milovan Djilas, whose stubborn refusal to capitulate to Tito, or to compromise his views in any way, have done more than anything else to force the Yugoslav national-Stalinist regime to show its hand.—Ed.

By WALTER PADLEY

Reports which have appeared in the British, French and American press enable us to piece together the essential facts about the trial of two Socialists and a republican lawyer which took place recently in Belgrade.

Bogdan Krekic (aged 71), Dr. Alexander Pavlovic (73), and Professor Milan Zujovic (58), were condemned, after a mockery of a trial, to long periods of imprisonment.

## WROTE BOOK

The arrests were made early last December, and by the middle of that month a propaganda campaign against them had been released in the Yugoslav press. Along with allegations about contacts with emigré groups and hostile activities against the State, were plots to overthrow the regime.

One charge was that Krekic had writ-

ten a book, *The True Face of Tito's Yugoslavia*, which contained a "programme" and that he had sent a letter to London.

Asked if he wanted to overthrow the regime, Krekic defended his democratic Socialist convictions. He replied: "I am not a supporter of a one-party system. I support Social Democracy, that is my answer. The country is more important than the regime, because it is my Fatherland. The ideas expressed in my writings are the result of my Social Democratic convictions, which are opposed to all dictatorships."

Krekic agreed that he had written documents attacking Communism, but said that if they had been published where a free press existed, he would not have been blamed.

Krekic's alleged "plot" consisted of plans to smuggle his book out for publication in the West. Here the indictment rested on statements by the chief prosecution witness, Todic, and a confession by Professor Zujovic.

## "COWARD!"

On the first day of the trial Professor Zujovic (who was said to have confessed that he took documents to Paris in June and that the French professor, Gaston Leduc was an intermediary between himself and his exiled brother) repudiated his confession. He said that at the time of the confession he was psychologically disturbed and had fears for his family.

At this point the angry public prosecutor shouted "coward" at the prisoner and the defense lawyer demanded protection for his client from insult and

abuse. This caused uproar and the judge adjourned the court.

But when the second day opened the defense lawyer returned to the attack demanding that the public prosecutor be disqualified for insulting the prisoner.

## SECRET SESSION

Later the defense protested that the security police had violated "socialist legality" by interrogating Zujovic by night. It seems clear that his original confession had been obtained by customary secret police methods. The confession was also broken in Paris by an absolute denial from Professor Leduc and a group of French professors, including the well-known Socialist André Philip, sent a letter to Belgrade on Zujovic's behalf.

For the prosecution an even worse calamity followed. When the star witness, Todic, was called, he withdrew all he said in his previous statement, saying that he was drunk when he made it.

Apart from Todic, there were only two other witnesses, both Yugoslav employees of the American Embassy. In their cases the court went into secret session, and we are left to imagine what went on.

All we know on the point about which these witnesses were to testify is derived from the indictment and cross-examination of Dr. Pavlovic.

The *Manchester Guardian* describes the charges against Dr. Pavlovic as "ranging from the ludicrous to the fantastic."

He was charged with trying to contact U. S. Embassy officials to obtain funds

for building a railway from Belgrade to Bar on the Montenegrin coast, and Krekic is said to have been guilty of the crime of urging him to do so. Well may the *Manchester Guardian* comment! "Perhaps it was to be an invisible line with ghost trains for the secret police."

## NO EVIDENCE

How two old men over 70 were to establish contact with a foreign embassy and build a 200-mile railway over mountainous country with the aid of foreign funds is a problem which only the secret police could solve. So the witness were examined in secret.

Apart from this fantastic allegation, Pavlovic was accused of harboring a "hostile group" and "forming an organization" by meetings of four old men in his flat.

No evidence had been produced that Krekic and the others had desired a return to "the pre-war reactionary and anti-national regime." All they had done was to express their democratic socialist views.

Nonetheless, after the repudiation of the confession and the withdrawal of a drunken statement by a convicted criminal, the verdict of guilty was passed. Pavlovic was sentenced to eight and a half years imprisonment, Krekic to seven years and Zujovic to four years.

The fate of those who assert the freedom of the human mind against tyranny is the concern of free men everywhere. Those of us who admitted the courage of the Yugoslav peoples both during the war and at the time of the break with the Cominform may find even in these trials the qualities we admired—in the courageous assertion of democratic and socialist ideas by the victims and the gallant defense conducted by the women lawyers, Markovic and Nedeljkovic.

# Arab Unity in the Mideast —

(Continued from page 1)

Unity, struggle against all forms of foreign domination, a third campist outlook in foreign affairs, etc. In fact the Ba'ath has been so close to Nasser, ideologically, that Nasser felt safe some months ago in allowing the Ba'athists to open up a branch in Egypt, and to organize political and trade union activity.

One of the disappointing features of the merger will be the abolition of political parties in Syria. Syria, at present, has five active political parties: the right wing People's Party, which has stood for Syria's unification with Iraq; the right of centre Nationalist Party of the outgoing Syrian President Quwwatli and Premier Assali; the Ba'ath; the left-of-center National Democratic Front of the outgoing Defence Minister Khaled al Azm, which believes in having a positive orientation towards the Soviet Union in International affairs; and the Communist Party. Of these only the Ba'ath and the CP have been mass parties. In addition there are several neo-fascist and monarchist parties like the Moslem Brotherhood, the Syrian Popular Nationalists, and the Falangists, which have been under suppression because of their terrorist activities.

Instead of all these political parties, a National Front (Union) is to be created, whose core and leadership in Syria will be the Ba'ath, but which will embrace all political shadings from the right-of-center to the left-of-center, only excluding the extreme right and the extreme left. Within this National Front (Union), the individuals are to have freedom to criticise the government and the leadership, but not the right to form factions. Permission may, however, be given to political clubs to operate for political education, but again all political activity will have to be on the mercy of the ruling leadership, which may refuse to give any permission without assigning any reason.

The fact that in the last elections in Egypt, individuals were allowed to oppose official candidates, and in several cases won, indicates that the authoritarianism of the single party is not as repulsive as its name implies. The nationalists and the socialists in Syria and Egypt have tried to excuse the single

party system by pointing out that the social contents of the proposed National Front will come from the progressive forces of the society; that the present Middle Eastern situation requires national homogeneity which can not be secured under a multi-party system; and that political liberties will soon be restored. This argument is lacking in conviction, especially in the face of the demands of the Syrio-Egyptian nationalists for the restoration of a multiparty system in Jordan and Iraq.

## POSITIVE EFFECTS

Of course, there will be many positive effects of the merger. In the economic field, under the influence of Nasser and the weight of Egyptian power, there will probably be sweeping land reforms in Syria. So far in Syria, in spite of the struggle of the socialists, land reform has made, indeed, hardly any problems. The foreign policy of the United Arab Republic is most likely to be directed by the Ba'athists, who have as clear a concept of the Third Camp, and positive neutrality, in international affairs as any radical socialists that I know of. Another beneficial result may be the Ba'athists' attempts to organize the fellahins and the workers on a large-scale trade union basis. Whether these trade unions will become a tool of the state is still to be seen.

Outside the United Republic, the impact of the merger will be felt most acutely among the Palestinians in Jordan, who do not seem to have reconciled themselves to the Iraq-Jordanian monarchy, and whose republican sentiment in favor of the United Republic will make them a Trojan horse in the Iraqi-Jordanian federation. It is quite likely, that in a few months there will be a demand by these Palestinians that they be allowed to decide whether the areas of the defunct Arab Palestine west of the River Jordan, annexed by King Abdullah in 1948, should merge with the United Republic or remain in the Iraqi-Jordanian federation.

In Lebanon, the opposition leaders, Abdullah Yafi, Saeb Salem and the veteran socialist Kamal Djumblatt, have declared themselves in favor of a merger with the United Republic. Lebanon's destiny now is either to be absorbed in this

Republic or to become a Swiss type of neutral country.

The odds are in favor of a merger, even though a large Christian section of Lebanon may prefer a Swiss type of neutrality. A look at the map of Middle East, quickly shows the reason why. Syria and Egypt are separated geographically by Israel on the land route, and Lebanon on the sea route. Nothing short of a large scale war would secure the land route. And since there is a large section in Lebanon that favors unity with the United Republic, Lebanon's absorption may be only a matter of months. The thousands of Lebanese who travelled to Damsacus to hear Nasser speak two weeks ago, are indications of Lebanon's interest in Unity under Nasser.

The merger has taken Israel by a surprise, for even the most progressive elements in Israel did not anticipate a merger. What they anticipated at the most was a confederation. The United Republic is likely to maintain a policy of no-war no-peace with Israel, though there are elements in the United Republic who would want an early settlement of the Arab-Israeli dispute.

An Arab-Israeli settlement is well nigh impossible so long the United Republic is engaged in a battle with the monarchic federation of Iraq and Jordan. If there were negotiations between the United Republic and Israel, the charge of "sell-out" would immediately be hurled against the Nasser government. The Syrian socialists, and this is a hopeful sign, have indicated their willingness through Fenner Brockway to engage in discussions with those Israelis who would welcome Israel's absorption in the United Republic on a federative basis, and who would be willing to modify Israel's present attitude towards unlimited free immigration and Arab refugees.

As far as the world socialists are concerned, I think they should welcome the United Arab Republic warmly as a progressive trend in the Middle East, but with reservations on the Republic's policy towards a multiparty system. The fact that the Ba'athists are apologetic about the single party system of the Republic, and aware of the need of development of political parties and civil liberties is a healthy sign.

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## LABOR ACTION 18th YEAR

March 10, 1958 Vol. 22, No. 5

Published every other week by Labor Action Publishing Company, 114 West 14th Street, New York 11, N. Y.—Telephone WATKINS 4-4222—Re-entered as second-class matter July 26, 1957 under the act of March 3, 1874.—Subscription: \$2 a year; \$1 for 6 months.—Opinions and policies expressed in signed articles by contributors do not necessarily represent the views of Labor Action, which are given in editorial statements.

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# Young Socialist CHALLENGE

March 10, 1958

Edited and Published by the YOUNG SOCIALIST LEAGUE

TEN CENTS

## "Midwest Conference of Young Socialists"

# Politics of "Broad" Youth Group Excludes Democratic Socialists

By MICHAEL HARRINGTON

On February 1st and 2nd, a "Midwest Conference of Young Socialists" was held in Chicago. It represented a significant organizational manifestation of a tendency in the American youth movement and deserves comment.

From a numerical point of view, the Conference was a success. Some 150 attended, of whom about a third represented older people and members of adult parties. The hundred youth present came from one end of the political spectrum, and this showed itself in the resolutions adopted by the Conference. They were, for the most part, members or sympathizers of the Socialist Workers Party, and former members and former sympathizers of the Labor Youth League. In short, the common political bond of the assemblage was defined in terms of the question of Communism. On this issue, opinion generally ranged from support of Russia as "socialist" to the SWP theory of Russia as a "degenerated workers state."

### POLITICAL COMPOSITION

The political composition of the delegates was reflected in the work of the Conference. For example, the major emphasis in the sphere of Civil Liberties was upon cases involving Communist or those close to the Communists: Smith Act cases, the Cleveland Taft-Hartley case, the Sobell case, etc. Needless to say, these cases all demand the support of democratic socialists. But their presentation in the Conference was a one-sided affair, abstracted from the whole broader question of civil liberties in the world.

A case in point was the resolution on the "right to travel." This centered around the seizure by the State Department of the passports of the 41 American youth who went to China in defiance of a government order. The case, of course, should be supported by all civil libertarians. But during the debate, a speaker from the floor asked that the motion be amended so as to apply to a "right to travel" for all the people of the world and not just for "all Americans." There was hardly any discussion on the pro-

posal—and it was defeated. Politically, this was revealing of the underlying attitudes of a majority of those present at the Sunday afternoon session: that they would refuse to endorse, in the most general fashion, the rights of those under Communist tyranny as well as those in the United States. Freedom to travel TO China for Americans—yes; freedom to travel FROM China for the Chinese—well that was another question.

But we need not confine ourselves to even such a striking and symptomatic case. The mood of adaptation to Communist and pro-Communist prejudices was explicitly revealed in the Conference resolution on banning H-Bomb tests. Again, this is a demand which deserves the support of all democratic socialists. But then, why insert in the middle of a resolution on the subject, "We recognize that the government of the USSR has proposed the immediate cessation of nuclear tests by all powers"? Does this indicate that the Conference accepted the Russian proposal at face value, i.e., that no one there was capable of analyzing it as an element in the demagogic campaign of the Russian rulers? Not quite. The resolution only "recognizes" the Russian offer.

### WHAT MEAN THESE WORDS

This ambiguity is characteristic of the political direction of the Conference. As in the case of the "right to travel" dispute, it leans toward those who have strong illusions about Communism. It blunts an essential element of the socialist critique (not a peripheral, but a fundamental and key point) in order to achieve a spurious "unity." In other words, the Conference exhibited a "broadness," but only a one-way broadness. These resolutions were such as to exclude the entire democratic socialist movement and to attract the remnants of the Communist and pro-Communist movement. They represented a political concession on the part of those members and sympathizers of the Socialist Workers Party who were present which is surprising even to opponents of the SWP like ourselves.

This point relates in turn to the central slogan of the Conference: that it is for an "independent, broad and militant" youth organization. We can see the meaning of these words when we place them in the context of the Conference.

By "independence" the Conference meant an organization which is not related to any of the adult socialist organizations. This, as the YSL has pointed out for some time, is an impossibility. Organizationally, financially and politically a youth group must rely on the aid of an adult group, through affiliation or fraternal relation. Take a concrete point. To publish a newspaper, to maintain an office, to pay a phone bill, all of these simple necessities of a youth organization, are generally beyond the financial resources of all youth organizations in America today. This means that direct or indirect support from an adult group is necessary. In the case of the Mid-West Conference, and the major groups which constituted it, the Socialist Workers Party plays this role.

Take "broadness." The Mid-West Conference was broad enough to win the non-cooperation of four socialist and radical youth groups at the University of Chicago: the Young Socialist League, the Young People's Socialist League, the club of supporters of the publication *The American Socialist*, and the Politics Club. Indeed, this was inevitable, for one can proclaim "broadness" as an abstract goal all day long, but the political basis of a group will define its real appeal. In the case of the Mid-West Conference, this political basis was heavily oriented toward adaptation to pro-Communism. The whole mood of the affair was one designed not to offend a person with LYL politics. And this means that the Conference was based on an implicit principle of excluding the democratic socialist youth movement in the United States.

"Militancy" is, of course, a catch-word

without particular political content.

Thus, we are able to define the political tendency which manifested itself at the Chicago Conference. It is committed to the notion that a serious socialist youth movement can be built in the United States out of the remnants of the Communist and pro-Communist youth organizations. Consequently, its "broadness" is of an exclusive character, guaranteed to alienate the already organized democratic socialist groups and the mass of unaffiliated and anti-Communist American youth. Its "independence" is a euphemism for relying heavily upon one particular adult organization, the Socialist Workers Party. And its "militancy" is an unobjectionable call for dedication and activity.

The Young Socialist League looks to the reconstruction of the American socialist youth movement, but in an entirely different way. As democratic socialists, we cannot compromise on issues of freedom on either side of the iron curtain. For us, that is a matter of principle. But more than that, we realize that any group which attempts to build a base by adapting itself to one of the most discredited ideologies in American today, that of pro-Communism, is doomed to organizational failure. It can call itself "broad," but the realities of the situation flowing from the limitations of its political appeal, will make it quite exclusive and isolated.

Finally, we recognize that a youth group must be affiliated or fraternally related to an adult group. We don't want to disguise this by receiving indirect, or covert, aid. The YSL has always proclaimed its fraternal but unaffiliated relation to the ISL and has expressed its gratitude for the aid received. And in terms of regroupment, we envision a broad, democratic socialist youth organization affiliated to a Socialist Party containing a range of democratic socialist tendencies.

Unfortunately, not a few of the young socialists at the Chicago Conference know better. They did not hesitate in times past on the issue of freedom behind the Iron Curtain. We are saddened that their organizational perspective has led them down the blind alley of adaptation to pro-Communism and ambiguity toward totalitarianism. Such a policy is both unworthy of the principles of democratic socialism and doomed to failure in the United States today.

## Give to YSL Fund Drive!

The Young Socialist League's fund drive is in its fourth week. We are again calling upon all our members, friends, and sympathizers to contribute. The quota is \$1450 and the money is sorely needed.

Not only is the YSL planning a most ambitious publication schedule this year: two more editions of the pamphlet "What is the YSL?", a civil rights booklet, a pamphlet on democratic socialism, in ad-

dition to maintaining the Young Socialist Challenge. But we have also projected more tours so that young socialist speakers will be heard on more campuses than ever before in our history.

There is no need belaboring a point: the funds are indispensable if we are to fulfill these plans. No donation is unwelcome or too small. Just clip the coupon below and mail it in.

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# The Venezuelan Revolution—II

## The General Strike — Peoples Military Tactics Fall of the Dictatorship — Future Perspectives

On these two pages we print the second installment of Juan Parao's article on the Venezuelan Revolution. In LABOR ACTION for February 24 Comrade Parao discussed the economic and political background of the revolution; the political parties and movements which participated in it; and described its first, bourgeois-military phase which took place from January 1-10 of this year.—Ed.

By JUAN PARAO

### III. The General Strike And the Democratic Phase

After the defeat of the military insurrection, the University Front went into action. Day after day, the students demonstrated and fought the police. They spread mimeographed leaflets in all proletarian and petty bourgeois districts of the town, proclaiming that the dictatorship was weakened to a point where a slight push would suffice to bring about its downfall.

At the same time, 600 Venezuelan intellectuals belonging to different political tendencies, from the democratic Right to the extreme Left, openly signed a manifesto calling for the end of the Pérez Jiménez dictatorship.

Other manifestos to the same effect were signed by the physicians, lawyers and engineers of Venezuela. Finally, an anti-government manifesto signed by chiefs of industry and finance proved that the bourgeoisie had joined the intellectuals, the petty bourgeoisie and the proletariat in demanding a democratic regime. The tyrant was condemned, but his downfall could only be brought about by violence.

The Patriotic Junta was the main organizer of the revolution, but much was contributed by small groups and individuals, who had no contact with the Junta whatsoever. All resistance groups and democratic individuals knew that the revolution would have to be fought by the masses and not by military conspirators.

Thousands of professors, lawyers, and other professional people spontaneously joined the revolutionary movement, by establishing contact with a few trusted students, counselling them, drafting programs and manifestos, and transmitting messages. These were unforgettable and heroic days for thousands of men and women, who, often independently from each other, went to work day and night for the same great cause. Liberals, democrats and socialists, in their agitation sheets, in their conversations, and their hopes spontaneously collaborated to create one great national fact: the revolutionary general strike.

And hundreds of thousands throughout the land, who did not have the privilege and opportunity to share in the active preparation of the liberation, waited breathlessly for the outbreak of the popular uprising.

The dictatorship launched a hysterical wave of repression. Thousands were arrested and tortured. Estrada's men beat their prisoners to bloody pulp, hanged women by their thumbs, burned their breasts, crushed the testicles of the men, to extract confessions. Some confessed; hundreds remained in heroic silence. The arrests continued; others promptly took the place of those who disappeared. Students and professors, workers and employees, teachers and clerks and priests, doctors and engineers, men, women and even children spent night after night without sleep, preparing the revolutionary general strike.

### An Open Conspiracy

It was an open conspiracy, under the very eyes of the government.

On January 16, 17, 18, 19 and 20, the students spread leaflets, signed by the Patriotic Junta, all over the factories, offices and working class districts of Caracas, announcing that the revolutionary general strike would start on Tuesday, January 21, at noon.

On the morning of the 21st, no newspaper appeared. The typographers and journalists had gone on strike at midnight.

At noon groups of students, professional people and

employees stood gathered in the center of Caracas, waiting. At 12 o'clock sharp, the bells of all churches began to ring wildly—the priests were announcing the general strike. At the same moment, the gates of the workshops and offices were closed. The factory whistles blew. The automobiles which were still circulating began to blow their horns. The student groups, yelling "long live the general strike; death to the dictatorship," spread in different directions, to join other groups, which had already begun to build barricades in the narrow streets of the popular districts. Eighty-nine buses, whose drivers had failed to join in the strike were set afire within a few minutes. The police opened fire. They had received personal orders from Pérez Jiménez not to waste ammunition by shooting into the air. The first dead and wounded fell. At this the roar "Death to the Dictatorship!" spread to all parts of the city, and thousands of men, women and children rushed into the streets with stones and bottles in their hands. Within fifteen minutes, the general strike had become a general revolution.

### IV. The People's Military Tactics

The tactics of the revolutionary struggle in Caracas, and in the cities of Valencia, Maturín, Valera, Puerto La Cruz, Villa de Cura, Carúpano, Cumaná and Puerto Fijo, where the general strike and the revolution broke out at the same time as in the capital, were simple. Fighting squads of four to ten students or workers raided the police patrols from different directions, throwing stones and bottles, and setting jeeps and armored cars afire with homemade Molotov cocktails. In chasing after the fighting squads, the police were dispersed. At the same time, each fighting squad served as a nucleus around which large groups of men and women gathered, armed with stones, sticks and bottles. Women stood on the roofs of their houses signaling to the different fighting squads, and warning them whenever a police patrol was about to attack from a side street.

The advantage of the revolutionaries lay in their mobility, and in the fact that nearly every house offered them shelter. The police split into small groups, chased around block after block, and exhausted their strength, while the revolutionaries would hide inside houses. All doors were open to the revolutionaries, scarcely a houseowner failed to hide them until the police had passed. The houseowners who were hiding fighting squads, sent the police on a wild goose chase by screaming "they went that way!" and pointing in some impossible direction. As soon as the police had passed, the revolutionaries would dash out of cover again, set up barricades behind the police's backs, gather more stones and bottles. Housewives provided the fighters with fresh kerosene for Molotov cocktails.

The role of the women was particularly admirable in the fighting. Females aged between fifteen and fifty, clad in slacks or wide-skirted dresses ran from fighting squad to fighting squad, bearing messages. They helped to build barricades; they cared for the wounded. Girls and women shouted encouragement to the workers and students, and led them into battle, waving the national flag or the white\* banner of revolution, singing the national anthem, the Hymn of the Liberals of 1854, or the Internationale. The Venezuelan working class and lower middle class woman, victims of three forms of exploitation—political, economic and social—stood in the forefront of the liberation struggle, outdoing the men in terms of bravery, determination and enthusiasm.

The children also took part in the battle. Squads of schoolboys and bootblacks threw stones and bottles at the police, and built barricades.

### Police Become Panicky

As the hours wore on, the police became increasingly panicky and, therefore, ferocious. They fired on every man, woman or child in sight. They gave no quarter; the wounded revolutionaries were finished off with bayonets or rifle butts. On the 21st and 22nd of January, approximately 350 civilians were killed and 2000 wound-

\*In Venezuela, unlike most other countries, white (symbolizing the frock of the peasant and peón) is a revolutionary color. It has been chosen by Acción Democrática as its party color. White flags, sometimes spattered with the blood of fallen comrades, were raised by the revolutionary people everywhere. The lumpen proletarian terrorist groups used black flags as well, as a spontaneous and elemental sign of downtrodden humanity's suffering and hatred.

ed in Caracas. Some 50 policemen lost their lives and more than 200 were injured.

In the night from the 21st to the 22nd, some of Pérez Jiménez' most trusted army troops occupied the streets during the curfew, which lasted from 6 p.m. to 5 a.m. The soldiers stood as a barrier between the people and the police. None of them fired on the people; a unit of the National Guard (internal security and frontier guards) actually turned its arms against the police. Fraternization between soldiers and workers occurred in several parts of the capital. The workers showered the soldiers with leaflets of the Patriotic Junta.

During that day and night, 1500 persons were arrested by the secret police. Almost without exception, the country's outstanding intellectuals were marched off to Pedro Estrada's dungeons. The secret police beat and tortured the arrested students and workers.

The morning of January 22nd was relatively calm. But at noon the revolutionary wave rose again, higher and stronger than the day before.

### The Wave Rises Higher

In the afternoon of the 22nd, all sections of the working class, and also the lumpen proletariat joined in the struggle. While the workers, armed with stones, crowbars and bottles, attacked the police, terrorist gangs, made up of lumpen proletarian elements attacked the houses of wealthy supporters of the dictatorship. A large part of the police had to be shifted from the main centers of battle to the residential districts of the capital, to fight terrorists and plunderers. Thus the lumpen proletariat, composed of inhumanly oppressed, ragged, desperate beings, unconscious of real working class solidarity, but convulsed with inarticulate hate toward all oppressors, terrible behind its blood-spattered black or white flags, screaming for revenge, liberty and food, came to the aid of its brothers of the organized working class.

The main center of battle shifted to the huge proletarian housing blocks which the Pérez Jiménez government had built. On January 21, the struggle had been mobile, with many small fighting groups wreaking havoc and forcing the police to disperse their forces all over Caracas. But on January 22, all the revolutionary forces became centered around the great housing blocks. The housing blocks were transformed into fortresses. From every window, men, women and children, unafraid of the machine guns of the besieging police, threw stones, bottles and boiling water. Dozens of policemen were killed. In the meantime, inside the corridors of the housing blocks, meetings were held, fighting squads were organized, tactical plans were made.

### V. Fall of the Dictatorship

The fiercest fighting went on around the workers' settlement "Second of December," near the presidential palace of Miraflores. "Second of December" was one of Pérez Jiménez' proudest achievements. 30,000 proletarians had been concentrated within its gigantic concrete walls, for the greater glory of the "master builder" and the greater convenience of the recruiters of cheap labor. On this day, "Second of December" raised the white flag of revolution and made ready to spring at its "benefactor's" throat.

At a certain point, the revolutionary workers emerged from the housing blocks and, chasing the police before them, marched toward the presidential palace. Dozens fell dead or wounded, but the throng continued advancing. Women led the assault, carrying the national tricolor and the white flag.

Tanks, infantry and artillery stood guard around Miraflores.

Pérez Jiménez ordered the army to help the police, and to open fire on the people. The people called on the soldiers to join them against the tyrant.

Not a single shot was fired from army rifles or cannons against the masses. A wave of fraternization between workers and soldiers spread through the city. Fighting ceased for several hours, as darkness came. Only the terrorist groups of the proletariat continued rioting on the outskirts of Caracas.

### The Army Is Won Over

At eleven o'clock in the evening, the army troops had made up their minds. Slowly the tanks and mortar batteries turned away from the people, toward Miraflores.

The national broadcasting station, which had spat forth counter-revolutionary proclamation all day long, suddenly went dead.

In the barracks of the Caracas garrison, where the vast majority of the troops had been confined to quarters for a week, the few remaining counter-revolutionary officers were placed under arrest by the lieutenants and sergeants. Then, from all camps and barracks, marching columns and armored cars began to emerge.

At 2 a.m. a small caravan of Cadillac cars went dashing out to the military airport of La Carlota at high speed. Shortly afterwards, the silence of the night was broken by the engine-roar of a DC-4. Awakened by the noise,

\*Named after December 2, when Pérez Jiménez had made himself "constitutional president," after suppressing the opposition. After the liberation, the name "Second of December" was changed to the glorious one of "Twenty-Third of January."

# The Revolution Continues: Dangers... and Prospects

most citizens of Caracas got up and switched on their radios.

And at three a.m. an exultant voice came on the air and announced that the tyrant had fled and that Venezuela was free.

Caracas exploded into ecstasy. The people ran into the street and embraced each other, screaming and weeping with joy, while the church bells rang and rang, and all automobile horns of the city were blown in a discordant but overwhelming symphony of triumph, relief and solidarity.

## VI. Revolution Continues

The first reaction of the workers of Caracas consisted in gathering to storm the heart of the tyranny, the bastille which had not yet surrendered: the headquarters of the "National Security Service" (Secret Police), a huge, grey, sinister-looking structure, in which most of the recently arrested revolutionaries were imprisoned. Soldiers and workers converged on the secret police building at the same time. The people arrived by the thousands, waving the flags of the revolution, and screaming their love for the prisoners and their boundless hate for the torturers.

The secret police officials, knowing that they could expect no mercy, put up a desperate resistance. Firing from the windows of their building, they succeeded in killing some of the assailants. But soon the people had broken into the part of the building where the prisoners were kept. The prisoners, bearded, gaunt, covered with wounds from recent tortures, were carried out in triumph on the shoulders of the people. Forty secret police officials, who fell into the hands of the people, were lynched. They disappeared under a mass of roaring, hitting, kicking, tearing men and women, and their lifeless, mutilated bodies were dragged through the streets, hung from trees, or sprayed with gasoline and set afire.

Throughout Caracas, the people were hunting down the "Security" agents and informers. Whenever one was caught, he was either lynched on the spot, or beaten badly and handed over to the police. The most disciplined elements of the working class joined the students and soldiers in putting an end to the lynchings, especially after it was learned that three innocent men had been mistaken for secret police and torn to pieces.

In the meantime, the Patriotic Junta sent around trucks throughout Caracas, to bid the revolutionary people to gather on the huge square of El Silencio. Approximately 6,000 men and women of the working class stood in the square and listened to the leaders of the Patriotic Junta, who addressed them from a balcony.

The leaders of the Patriotic Junta, representing all political tendencies from COPEI to AD, from the liberal bourgeoisie to the socialist proletariat, explained to the people that the struggle for democracy had only begun. The military junta which had taken over after the fall of Pérez Jiménez represented a sort of aristocratic liberalism, and not democracy.

Furthermore, the danger of counter-revolution was still great, inasmuch as the military junta included the reactionary Colonel Casanova and the equally reactionary chief of staff of the air force. These two men, who had defended Pérez Jiménez' regime during its last, fascist phase, had changed sides at the eleventh hour. To make Venezuela safe for democracy, the workers gathered in El Silencio were asked to march to the palace of Miraflores, and to present the military junta, firmly but without violence, with the following demands:

### Program of the Revolution

1. Inclusion of democratic civilians in the governing junta.
2. Expulsion of Casanova and the chief of the airforce from the junta and from the country.
3. Immediate liberation of all political prisoners and immediate freedom of return for all persons whom the dictatorship had forced into exile.
4. Freedom of speech, press, assembly; freedom of association for all political parties and trade unions.
5. Abolition of the "National Security Service" (secret police), and dismissal of all municipal policemen who had defended the dictatorship.
6. Thorough purge of the public administration; criminal trials for all torturers, police spies, and corrupt officials; democratic control of the administration through the Patriotic Junta.
7. Preparation of free elections, with participation of all political parties.

The speakers of the Patriotic Junta exhorted the masses to avoid violence, but to stand firm until all these demands had been fulfilled. They added that the whole future of the nation was at stake, and that this democratic program was worth dying for, if an open conflict should break out.

Singing the national anthem, the six thousand marched to Miraflores. And now began one of the most astounding and magnificent features of the revolution, a debate between the army and the people in a gigantic open forum. The proceedings were those of spontaneous, di-

rect and total democracy, and the Venezuelan people—mainly the working class—proved in this debate that it was mature and capable of self-government. It proved once more—as though any more proof were necessary!—that the North American and European bourgeoisie's talk about the "childishness" and "savagery" of Indians and Negroes is a vicious and preposterous lie.

## Debate in the Public Square

The army spokesman began with vague phrases about liberty and dignity. The masses, shouting in spontaneous chorus of hundreds of voices, replied that they had come to discuss concrete demands and not to listen to pretty phrases. From that point on, the people stood firm, sweating under the tropical sun, with tired legs, thirsty and hungry, but insisting time after time on the adoption by the governing junta of the democratic program. In the early afternoon, the governing junta gave in on all points. It invited the Patriotic Junta into Miraflores to discuss the details. Only after they saw the Patriotic Junta move into Miraflores did the people go home.

The next day it was announced that democratic civilians had entered the governing junta, complete freedom of speech, press, and association was guaranteed, that Casanova and the air force chief had flown off to Curaraco, that the "National Security" was abolished, that the attorney-general of the Republic was opening penal proceedings against all secret policemen and corrupt officials, that all political prisoners were free, and that the Venezuelan Consuls abroad had received instructions to pay out of government funds the return fare of all persons exiled by the dictatorship. Free elections, from which no party or group would be excluded, would be held within the year.

## VII. Dangers to the Revolutionary Order

Unrest continued for several days after the victory of the revolution. Special agents of Pedro Estrada, trained in the art of provocation and terrorism by Perón's henchman Kelly (who, together with his master, had enjoyed Pérez Jiménez' hospitality in Caracas) went around Caracas seeking contact with the lumpen proletarian gangs which were still active. They did their best to incite these demoralized and hate-drenched people to acts of pillage and murder, in order to discredit the revolution and bring about a foreign intervention. They particularly encouraged the gangs to undertake pogroms against the Italian shopkeepers and workers. Some stores and houses, belonging to Italians and other foreigners, were robbed by groups of criminals and irrational semi-anarchist elements. Several Italian workers were murdered.

The Patriotic Junta, the Student Front, and the working class promptly reacted against the robbers. The fighting squads of the Student Front, special brigades of doctors, lawyers, engineers and teachers, boy scout patrols, and workers' brigades promptly joined the army in suppressing pillage, and in hunting down the agents provocateurs. Posters of the Patriotic Junta, saying: "The plunderers are enemies of the people," were spread all over Caracas. For a week after the 23rd, the curfew continued from 5 p.m. to 5 a.m.

The student, worker and professional brigades handled many cases of attempted looting peacefully, by convincing the lumpen proletarians that the interests of the poor could only be safeguarded by the disciplined and democratic unity of action of all democratic forces. Those plunderers who could not be brought to reason were dealt with severely by the armed army patrols.

A more serious danger to the revolution was that of economic sabotage. Alarmed at the danger of "communism," native and foreign capitalists began to send their money abroad. The stock exchange took a sharp downward plunge. The flight of capital continues, while the governing junta hesitates, and fails to decree measures of state control over the economy.

## The Enemies of the Revolution

The Venezuelan democratic revolution has bitter enemies. The most reactionary, feudal sectors of the economy; foreign investors for whom Venezuela was nothing but a supply of cheap labor; the semi-fascist feudal dictatorships of Santo-Domingo, of Nicaragua, and of Paraguay; the fascist International constituted by Franco, by the right wing of Peronism, and by small groups of European immigrant nazis, fascists, falangists, iron guardists and arrow crossers, the former lackies of the dictator and of his retinue; pimps, owners of certain night clubs and bars; the building contractors for whom Pérez Jiménez' megalomania was an unlimited source of wealth; the corrupt officials of the fallen regime, who are now jobless—all these are conspiring or ready to conspire against Venezuelan democracy.

The United States government, which considers Venezuela to lie within its innermost sphere of influence, has, for the moment, taken a benevolent attitude toward the new regime. The leaders of the three democratic parties

—Rómulo Betancourt of AD, Jóvito Villalba of URD and Rafael Caldera of COPEI—have promised Washington at least tacitly that they will not bring the Communists into the new government. The secretary-general of the PCV, Dr. Gustavo Machado, stated, on his arrival from exile, that his party would support the Patriotic Junta and the government for the sake of democratic unity. It is unlikely that Washington will undertake a "Guatemalan" type of action.

On the other hand, it remains to be seen how the great oil companies will react to the reestablishment of free and militant trade unions, and to the policy of "no more concessions" which the democratic government has pledged itself to follow.

Rómulo Betancourt has stated that AD, if it should return to power, will not ask for the nationalization of the oil industry, but simply for the Italo-Iranian formula of "75 percent" (75 per cent of all oil profits to the Venezuelan government, instead of the present 50 per cent). Naturally such a demand will cause almost as much conflict between Venezuela and the oil companies as would a demand for out-and-out nationalization.

## VIII. Future Perspectives

To protect Venezuela against the danger of counter-revolution, and to counterbalance the excessive leniency of the governing junta, the working class must remain vigilant and united. During the revolution, which was fought and won mainly by the working class, but which brought the liberal bourgeoisie to power, rudimentary soviets were created (factory councils, fighting committees, housing block self-government councils, etc.). But since Venezuela is far from ripe for a soviet system, these councils are bound to be absorbed by the reconstituted trade unions.

The future of the Venezuelan people hinges on the trade unions. The victory of the bourgeois-democratic revolution represents an immense progress and victory for the working class as well. Even now, all surviving trade union leaders (mostly of the AD tendency) are at work, organizing and uniting the unions. The new, free Confederation of Venezuelan Workers (CTV) is joining the ORIT (Interamerican regional section of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions). The bitter experience of ten years of despotism has taught the working class as well as the political parties that unity over and beyond ideological differences is the condition for freedom, for a better life, and even for any sort of life at all.

The coming ten-month period of non-partisan, pre-electoral, provisional government should enable the Venezuelan working class to build up a powerful and independent trade union movement, which will stand on its own feet, not controlled from above by the left political parties, but fighting in partnership with them, constituting their true and concrete mass basis, and keeping them on a correct working-class line of action. Now is the time for all Venezuelan socialist economists, lawyers and sociologists, as well as for honest and efficient foreign delegates of the ORIT and ICFTU, to serve as advisors to the Venezuelan workers in the building of a powerful and lasting CTV.

## Democratic Consolidation

On the political level, Venezuela will probably pass through several years of bourgeois democratic consolidation. In the coming elections, all parties will probably agree on a single democratic candidate. Within the framework of capitalist democracy, AD will be in the forefront of the struggle for working-class ascendancy.

AD, as a revolutionary mass party, has made great progress during the years of clandestine resistance. Young cadres have risen through the resistance, from student groups and from the working class. A new AD, constituted from below, grown organically out of the liberation struggle of the lower classes, completely democratic in its organization, has taken the place of the somewhat bureaucratic and top-heavy AD of the period 1945-1948.

AD is the strongest party in Venezuela. In the student and working class movement, it produces the most active and devoted leaders. It expresses with the greatest clarity the general socialist orientation of the students.\* It formulates with the greatest consciousness the aspirations of the working class, the peasantry and the petty bourgeoisie. Independent revolutionary socialists should work within AD, seeking to strengthen its Marxist and proletarian wing, and to direct the education of its cadres.

In a few years from now, after the end of the period of the national-democratic party bloc, AD will probably be brought to power by legal elections. When that time comes, the party's left wing should be ready to provide the leadership for a gradual transition from bourgeois to workers' and peasants' democracy.

\*The vast majority of the organized students seem to be socialists in some form or another. Even the COPEI students accept the ideal of a labor state, and differ from the Marxists only on philosophical grounds.

# Recession: Its Economics — —

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penditures; and when the economy stops booming it directly starts "busting."

The third period, 1955-57, was characterized by a very rapid rise in industrial investment, the purchase of new plant and equipment. Other sectors of the economy which had given great impetus to previous booms — housing, government, consumer durables—now advanced slowly or even declined. (In 1955, the sales of autos and numerous other consumer durables hit post-war peaks, from which they subsequently declined.)

This boom was abnormal in that there was an extremely rapid rise in industrial investment while other sectors of the economy moved forward hesitantly, if at all. This could only lead to the development of considerable overcapacity and to a decline in the rate of profit. In 1955, manufacturers were operating at 92 per cent of capacity, but by September, 1957, the average operating rate was down to 82 per cent. Since the preferred rate, i.e., the profit maximizing rate, is about 92 per cent, the drop to 82 per cent represented a fall in the profit rate. (Figures taken from *Business Week*, 11-9-57.) And indeed, all through 1957 businessmen complained about the "profit squeeze." Thus the rapid increase in investment was self-defeating and had to come to an end soon.

The current recession is feeding on two factors: a decline in investment and a reduction of inventories. When inventories are cut, sales are for a while at a higher level than production. Thus inventory reductions tend to aggravate a decline. But there is a limit to the level to which inventories can be allowed to fall; and once inventories stop falling, production must increase even if sales do not. In the previous post-war recessions, inventories were reduced by two to three billion dollars. Since inventories have been falling at the rate of 300 million dollars a month since October, it seems reasonable to conclude that inventory reduction will cease sometime in the spring, and that as a result there will be some increase in production and employment.

## PARTIAL RECOVERY

Most published predictions have been based on precisely this reasoning, which is impeccable as far as it goes. (Eisenhower's prediction of a turning point in March is probably based on seasonal factors; whether the seasonally adjusted data will show any improvement is very questionable. His prediction is quite safe, and indeed a bit dishonest.)

The prediction of a spring "recovery" is quite good as far as it goes. But many economists are rather coy about predicting that the recovery will lead to full-employment boom. In the following sector-by-sector analysis of the economy, it will be argued that the recovery will only be partial and temporary.

It is widely agreed that for numerous economic, social, and demographic reasons, a resumption of the housing boom is quite unlikely for a number of years. Forecasts for 1958, based on builders' estimates, indicate that homebuilding will be at about the same level as in 1957, somewhat lower than the post-war peak. Since the credit situation is changing from very tight to fairly loose, there may be an unexpected increase in homebuilding; such an increase could only be temporary (wiping up any backlog of demand that accumulated in the last two tight money years) and not of great magnitude. Building may remain at a high level despite unemployment, but it won't rise much—which is what is needed.

## INVESTMENT DOWN

The demand for consumer durables is now largely a depreciation demand or else is connected with the purchase of new homes. The last really good year for the automobile industry was 1955; now they can only hope for an "echo effect" in 1959 or 1960. The industry may have, from time to time, a single good year, but it will not again experience the great expansion of the immediate post-war period. Much the same could be said of the other consumer durables industries: television had its peak sales in 1955, refrigerators in 1950, ranges in 1950, woven carpets in

1948, etc. No boom can originate in these markets.

Forecasts of investment are based on two annual surveys—one by McGraw-Hill Publishers and one by the Department of Commerce—to which more than a thousand of the largest industrial firms in the country report their plans to purchase new plant and equipment in the coming year. The forecasts of investment based on these surveys have in the past proved very accurate. According to the McGraw-Hill survey, manufacturing investment, which rose 9 per cent in 1957, will fall 16 per cent in 1958. The Department of Commerce will not publish its annual forecast until mid-March, but its prediction for the first quarter of 1958 also indicates a decline, though not one as great as shown by the McGraw-Hill annual data. This probably means that investment will fall at an increasing rate through the year. Thus the main support of the previous boom is now in a state of collapse.

That investment will decline still more in 1959 seems more likely than that it will rise. Even with conditions of almost full employment such as existed a few months ago, industry had considerable overcapacity which it had developed af-

ter only two years of heavy investment. The decline may, for example, spread to the petroleum industry, whose investment rose 7 per cent in 1957 but now plans a rise of only 1 per cent; or it may spread to the electric and gas utilities whose investment rose almost 30 per cent in 1957 but is scheduled to rise only 3 per cent in 1958. (These two industries between them invested in 1957 over 12 billion dollars!)

## WHAT FROM WASHINGTON?

Finally, we must consider government spending. Contrary to popular expectations, the growing armaments race is not likely to entail any momentous increase in military spending. The most ambitious missile programs envisage additional spending of about 3 billion dollars a year. By contrast, arms expenditures nearly tripled between 1950 and 1954: annual expenditures rose about 25 billion dollars. A certain amount of economic relief may come from this additional spending, but hardly enough to launch a new boom.

One main question remains to be considered: what can we expect from Washington in the way of anti-recession policy. At one time, various "Marxist" econo-

mists argued that Keynesian policies were so profoundly anti-capitalist in their implications (that is really how they talked!) that no bourgeois government would ever implement them. Perhaps they have read of Senator Knowland's recent advocacy of a sizable program of public works to combat unemployment (*N. Y. Times*, February 15). This must class Knowland as a very avant-garde reactionary indeed. In fact, however, Keynesian economics is today orthodox economics, and there are precious few economists, if any, whose views parallel those of George Humphrey.

Thus we may expect that unless conditions improve considerably the government will expand its spending on public works (this has already begun in a small way) and will probably also reduce income taxes. It is doubtful that full employment will be restored, but catastrophic levels of unemployment will probably be avoided. Conservative opinion which rules in Washington, still retains an anti-Keynesian bias, but this bias is now expressed by optimism and by sermons about inflation. They will say: "We want to relieve unemployment, but we don't want to overshoot the mark." They won't.

# Recession: Its Politics — —

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stabilized if we are to get out of the recession. They cannot be stabilized unless labor unions are willing to sign two- or three-year contracts without wage increases so that the workers may be given a chance to increase productivity.

## RIGHT-WING GOP

There is no point to discussing the inconsistencies, fallacies, and misstatements of fact and conclusion contained in these paragraphs. They are presented as a specimen, almost a clinical specimen, of the approach and mentality of right-wing Republicanism, even after its reluctant acceptance of the reforms of the New Deal era as irreversible.

And Lawrence goes on:

"Government cannot help us out of the recession by artificial measures, such as their reduction of taxes in the low-income groups. . . . It is not a time for strikes or threats of strikes. It is not a time for raising prices. It is not a time for huge deficits in the Treasury.

"The way out of the current recession is to persuade the organized groups in our economic system to give us an assurance of stability in wages and prices. Only an enlightened public opinion can achieve that result."

Political Republicanism can hardly be expected to reflect this variety of ideological Republicanism to perfection. Though Hoover may be more interested in historic vindication than in this fall's votes, that cannot be said of most of the senators, congressmen, governors and others whose political fortunes are tied to the GOP. They remember all too well the last twenty years of Democratic rule, and they hope not to repeat them. Yet, though Republicans like Knowland and others may urge public works and other anti-recession measures, the chances are that even the instinct for political self-preservation is not strong enough in the political make-up of most powerful Republicans to overcome their congenital and environmentally re-inforced tendency to do too little, too grudgingly and too late.

## COMPARISON

Of course, it all remains a matter of comparison. In Michigan, where unemployment has reached crisis proportions, and where it has now lasted so long that workers by the tens of thousands no longer have even the inadequate cushion of unemployment compensation, Governor Williams has done little more than howl for federal aid. On the whole, the Democrats seem more inclined to savor the discomfiture of the Republicans than to lead a crusade for the hard-pressed unemployed. Bills for various forms of counter-recession actions go into the hoppers,

speeches are made, assurances of good will and good intentions given. But it is all for the record, for dusting off and using next fall in the campaign. As to the unemployed, they are expected pretty much to fend for themselves, and when worse comes to worst, to go on city relief. As we said at the beginning, haven't we been through all this before?

But where are the unions in this whole picture? Well, they have been pretty quiet. After all, it is a long time since the labor movement in this country has been compelled to cope with a really serious economic crisis. Union leaders and members at all levels have become accustomed to the tough but routine problems of enforcing contracts, settling grievances, wrestling with seniority problems, and the like. The memories of the depression days are still vivid in the minds of many an old-timer, but a whole generation of workers has grown up since then, and the union officers' memories have, for the most part, put those days and those struggles far behind them.

And politically, where the real battle against the victimization of the workers by the recession has to be fought, the labor movement is poorly armed for the fray. Its alliance with and reliance on the Democratic Party now faces an acid test. Once the stage of big talk is over, can this party's performance meet the minimum requirements of the working people, both employed and unemployed, organized and unorganized?

## POLITICAL DYNAMITE

The recession is still young, and the full weight of its impact is still to be felt. This is true whether or not the downturn ends this summer or fall. For with every week which passes more people become unemployed, those who became unemployed earlier become more hopeless or more desperate, and addi-

tional thousands exhaust their unemployment compensation. Even if unemployment rises to "only" six or seven millions, and then levels off at four or five millions, it would amount to a charge of political dynamite.

The AFL-CIO is planning a conference in Washington, D. C. this week. It proposes to assemble representatives from the labor movement on a national scale for the purpose of putting some real heat on congressmen, senators and the administration in general to move quickly with anti-recession measures. The demands which the leadership has prepared for the delegates are reasonable enough, perhaps too much so. The leadership has tried to create a degree of excitement and urgency about this conference by giving it a large play in the labor press. To what extent it has succeeded, only the attendance and mood of the delegates at the conference will tell. But it is clear that to date, at least, the mass political action on a national scale has not been developed which could make this conference the powerful and natural culmination of a real campaign.

## CIO CONFERENCE

The Illinois CIO held a preliminary conference in Chicago a couple of weeks ago, and from all accounts it was a rousing affair. Such state and local conferences blanketing the nation before the one in Washington could have greatly added to its impact and significance. But even that is one step removed from the real grass roots of union politics in a time of growing unemployment. Perhaps the words of George Burton of the United Rubber Workers at the Illinois conference point up a growing mood among the unionists:

"We've had enough of statistics," he declared. "It's time we got off the gravy train. Let's start the mass meetings; let's start the parading again; let's start fighting for our people."

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