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EDITORIAL:

A WON CAUSE

When the Berkeley City Council moved unanimously to refer the ordinances back to the city attorney's office, it was saving face for George A. Pettitt, city councilman and assistant to the president of the University of California. Pettitt in his two-headed function had become the leading supporter and sole voice for two ordinances to prohibit effective political meetings in Berkeley. He had stirred up a hornet's nest of indignant opposition. It was he, not the council who was branded with the attempt to extend the University's Iron Curtain - Rule 17 - into the city of Berkeley. It was also he, not the council, who was flouted for "doing what had been done in Russia, Germany and Italy." So, regardless of his face, Pettitt and his ordinances went down to defeat.

Two months before, when the Socialist Youth League first unearthed the issue buried in the back pages of the local press, it looked as though opposition to it was just another lost cause. The city council had just barreled through rent decontrol over the resentment of a turbulent but disorganized tenantry. The council's common practice of smuggling in its unpopular legislation during the slack summer months was proving successful. Liberal oppositional forces were in retreat. To muster any telling strength against the proposed crippling of free speech by time of the scheduled council on September 11 seemed impossible.

Yet the first step, if the ordinances were to be fought, was to postpone the hearing until the student,

liberal and political opinion could be mobilized in opposition. Fortunately Prof. Ira Cross of the Economics department undertook this task when others thought it too difficult. Under his proddings the council granted another hearing for October 9. Even at that early date it could be seen that the council as a whole was not strong behind the proposed ordinances. But although the first skirmish was won, prospects still looked bleak.

The next task was to set up a campus united front committee. But who would help form such a committee? Since the days of the loyalty oath fight campus liberals had crawled up a rope and disappeared. Thus at best the committee never anticipated more than a narrow base. In the end only the Socialist Youth League and the Young People's Socialist League were directly involved, while the Students for Democratic Action and the World Federalists participated through observers. Several non-affiliated students, however, volunteered their services, and at times sparked the committee's activity.

But even a narrow committee operating by consensus and pointing toward a limited goal can achieve commendable results. The Daily Californian responded splendidly to the issues, and its columns publicized the work of the committee. Even the Ex-com of the ASUC departed from its usual hands off policy in non-campus situations and struck out against the ordinances. Finally on the day of the council hearing the committee called a Sather Gate rally where spokesmen from the SYL, YPSL and SDA addressed an irate audience. The fact that over a hundred indignant students assembled that noon and later packed the council chambers indicates the extent to which it is possible to mobilize campus response over such civil liberties issues.

That students alone would never be able to carry successful battle to the council was understood from the beginning. The council's anti-student orientation

has become a Berkeley tradition. So the committee turned to other areas to muster additional opposition to the ordinances. In this respect the committee served primarily in an informational and liason capacity. The American Civil Liberties Union was notified of the city council plans. Defeated Democratic Party candidates were contacted. They immediately saw the council's effort to undermine election campaigning in Berkeley. The AFL county council also saw its right of organizing and picketing infringed. Sound equipment and radio men spoke out in dissent at least on technical grounds. And even the Shattuck Avenue Business Men's Ass'n. opposed the ordinance restricting the use of sound equipment.

At last the whole community was aroused. At the council hearing not one person supported the street meeting ordinance, and only two brief statements were made for the sound equipment bill. Pettitt's machinations crumbled about his ears. His professed motivation in terms of solving a traffic problem was laughed out of court when he was asked to produce the traffic expert who would testify in behalf of the ordinances. His effort to beg the issue by asking that a better ordinance be proposed was repudiated by a citizenry which refused to restrict its own right of free speech. And finally he was exposed by Councilman Richards for having foisted these proposed ordinances on a city council which never even held a policy discussion on the matter. Thus a seemingly lost cause was won.

But Berkeley has not seen the last of "Pettitt's folly" so long as Pettitt remains on the city council to try again. The role of this assistant prexy to Robert Gordon Sproul should be investigated, and the fight carried to him. Was he an authorized spokesman for the university administration or was he bringing disrespect and unfavorable publicity to the university on his own? Who will stand up and give an accounting for him? In the meantime the Berkeley electorate can settle accounts with Pettitt at the next city election.#

'AGAINST THE STREAM'

It has become a commonplace to say that freedom of thought is rapidly disappearing from the American campus. Even the New York Times has become concerned with the lack of spirit of free inquiry manifest in the great centers of learning.

It has never been true that "higher education in America" was an outstanding example of independent thinking. In the bulk of small colleges and privately endowed institutions there have always been boards of trustees or legislative investigating committees willing to stamp out any spark of radicalism on the faculty or political militancy among students. Yet up to a few years ago, and above all during the depression '30's, there were a few places where adherence to a status quo ideology was not a condition of employment on a teaching faculty, and where students were more or less free to engage in political activity of their choice.

Today even the large state universities and smaller colleges with liberal traditions are succumbing to the attacks on academic freedom which pervade our whole educational system. Loyalty oaths, in themselves a disloyal and hypocritical attack on the personal integrity of faculty and students, are used to rid the campus of longstanding "embarrassments." And where membership in the Communist Party can be proven against a professor, he is summarily dismissed.

The results of loyalty purges, anti-subversive legislation, firings and political discrimination has been to create a real "fear-psychology" on the campus. And the consequences have not been confined to the ostensible targets of the drive against academic freedom, the Stalinists. Liberal movements like AVC and ADA, the Student Federalists, socialist tendencies, all have felt the effects of this intellectual terror.

Political activity on the part of students has declined almost to nothing, thus facilitating the suspicion and rejection of all social and political ideology. It has become fashionable to be "safe."

That is why the publication of an organ like the Student Socialist, which openly and outspokenly challenges the fear-psychology which affects students today is an encouraging sign. It gives hope that resources can be found and courage mustered to oppose the general drift. For the greatest danger today comes not only from the McCarthys, the Tenneys and their FBI agents, but also from our reaction to their persecutions. A real danger is that these may induce us to capitulate, to go along with reaction, to retire from the struggle for democratic rights and socialist ideals with the rationalization that these struggles are either hopeless or impossible of victory.

It was in a period somewhat similar to this, at least in certain aspects, that Trotsky wrote, "in a period of reaction, it is necessary for us to swim against the stream." And that is our task today, to swim against the stream of reaction, of fear, of indifference, apathy and resignation. Therefore, I want to congratulate your publication and wish it a long and vigorous life.

Don Harris,
SYL National Secretary.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Saturday, Nov. 10, 8:00 PM. SYL Party at 2308 Durant St., Berkeley.
- Sunday, 8:00 PM. Four weekly SYL seminars on Marxism, held on Oct. 21, Oct. 28, Nov. 4, Nov. 11, at 2308 Durant St.
- Tuesday, Nov. 20, Max Shachtman, National Chairman of the ISL will speak in Berkeley. Time and place will be announced later.

DISCUSSION

Chinese Stalinism

The rise of Stalinism in China is probably the most significant event of the post-war epoch. Although previous illusions as to its naively "agrarian democratic character" have been largely dispelled, there is still confusion and much wishful thinking about the new regime and the direction in which it is going. Some of this confusion is caused by a lack of knowledge of Chinese history without which an essential element is missing in modern analyses.

An acquaintance with the Chinese past is not an antiquarian interest for the Chinese communist theoreticians are busy rewriting this history to justify the necessity of their own regime. Consider their revision of Marx's writings on the nature of Asiatic society. Marx clearly saw that Asiatic society was a distinct type separate and apart from either chattel slavery or feudalism. The official Stalinist historians, insisting that the present regime replaced "feudalism," have completely dropped the conception of an Asiatic type. Thus they are able to prevent any invidious comparisons between their regime and the centralized, bureaucratic state despotism which ruled China for so many centuries. By falsifying the past they can justify the "inevitability" of the present.

China, however, never went through a real feudal development. Feudalism was an agrarian society in which there was a lack of centralized government. The manor, not the nation, was the political unit. The land was completely controlled by a lord who lived luxuriously on the excess labor of a depressed class of serfs who were bound to the soil. Sometimes exploitation took the form of a grain tax the peasant paid to

the landlord of the state, wherever a landlord-tenant relationship existed. In any case, European feudalism was characterized by a complete lack of any centralized administrative apparatus.

Mao's theorizers (who feel obliged to show that Stalinism will somehow lead to socialism), compared Chinese society to European feudalism. They insisted that a peasant revolution in China would smash the "feudal land relations" as it did in Europe and would pave the way for a capitalist development. They went on to say that since capitalism in the 20th Century was reactionary, the capitalists could not lead this revolution; therefore China would take a new road.

They correctly saw that among the vast Chinese peasantry the capitalists were merely an adjunct of foreign imperialism implanted of the Chinese seaboard. The people were exploited, the capital was reinvested in land rather than industry and thus the role of the capitalists was to perpetuate the feudal land relationships. The role of the Communist Party, then, was to lead the peasant revolt, capture the state and establish a "new democratic coalition" composed of the CP, the peasants, and the national bourgeoisie. The CP was to play the leading role in the new state by curbing and controlling the capitalists, building up industry and increasing the importance of the working class in the economy. Thus the CP theoreticians.

Unfortunately, China has seen many peasant revolts which actually took power in the nation and implanted a new dynasty without in the least changing the social order. Time after time the dynastic cycle ran its weary course without bringing either hope or progress to China's population. Mao's spokesmen wish to forget China's past for it evokes a too familiar image of China's present.

Asiatic society differed from European feudalism first in that it was characterized by a centralized

political state. The difference in geographical and climatic conditions made this form of government an absolute necessity. In Asia, rain does not fall during the greater part of the year as in Europe. Extensive artificial irrigation and a complex canal system are an economic necessity if agriculture is to advance beyond the most primitive levels. Such vast and complicated public works could not be sustained without a comparatively centralized governing agency. Forced labor, fed with the agricultural surplus, was used to maintain these great and expensive public works and thus little was left to aid the growth of trade and industry as in Europe.

This lack of saleable products accounts for the static almost unchanging nature of Chinese society. The peasant owned his own land but had to pay a rent-tax to this centralized, despotic and powerful state. Unlike European feudal society the state and not the landlord (rural nobility) was the supreme power. The ruling class was a highly trained group of priestly officials who held their social position because they held political control and not because they had an independent economic position.

Thus, unlike European feudalism, the state did not represent the landlords as a class. State officials collected taxes from the landlords and were in turn paid out of tax revenue money. They were separated from any intimate contact with local landowners by decrees forbidding them to acquire land in the province in which they held office and limiting their service to a few years in any one place. The Bureau of Censors, Emperor's secret police, kept a constant surveillance on all officials and acted as overseer. This great massive bureaucracy was unlike anything seen during European feudalism.

The dynastic cycle was a constant part of Chinese history. When a province was in a state of depopulation

and soil depletion because there was a degenerate bureaucracy, a new dynasty would assume power. The state would then rebuild the public works, give tax-free land to the homeless and turn desolate areas into pasture lands in order to restore prosperity. Increased population necessitated more public works which in turn demanded higher taxes from the peasants who would revolt under the increasing burdens. These revolts would create havoc and lead to a diminution of income needed to repair and maintain the public works. The dynasty was thus weakened and the peasants, led by military leaders, would take over the state and establish a new dynasty. The new state would rebuild the public works and restore prosperity while the military leaders would become a new ruling caste. Thus economic and class power would come to those who had military-political power and the whole process would begin all over again.

During the periods of dynastic decline the impoverished peasants were forced to sell their lands and big landowners would appear and become more and more powerful. The gentry could thus gain enough power to defy the state. The government was forced to take counter-measures such as the law forbidding primogeniture, but the bitterest struggles continued to be between the peasants and the gentry. Led by the village clan leaders, the farmers would depose the old enfeebled dynasty only to be saddled by a new one.

Western imperialism eliminated this old order but failed to build a strong Chinese government to take its place. China in the twentieth century lacked a developed capitalism as a unifying force. Even the Kuomintang took the road of degeneration like all past Chinese governments. The Chiang Kai Shek dictatorship, unpopular and despotic, was ripe for overthrow when Stalinism appeared on the scene.

A new military-political group put itself at the head of the discontented peasantry. The land was

divided and the power of the Kuomintang broken. This group, the Communist Party, has all the economic power and privileges of a ruling class in China today by virtue of the fact that it now holds supreme political power. The CP never relied on the working class to come to power and, on the contrary, has increasingly tied the workers to its centralized and despotic regime. The analogy between the ancient Asiatic state and present-day Stalinist China (and to a certain extent Stalinist Russia) is striking. No wonder Mao's servile pamphleteers prefer not to recognize the existence of "Asiatic society" as a distinct social order!

The new Chinese constitution provides for an amount of centralization that far exceeds anything in past history. Even the minor officials are responsible to, and can be removed by the state. An Associated Press release dated October 9, 1949, states that the ruling group "is empowered to run the country in the minutest detail, even down to appointment of administrative personnel of the country and municipal level and above." The Chinese GPU replaces the old Bureau of Censors as the omnipotent secret police.

Forced labor is also being used in China today. In 1949, Business Week noted "The new Chinese regime will adopt another Russian custom -- slave labor. One could guess this would be in the cards. There is no other way a Communist government can quickly consolidate its position in an economically backward country. Reports from China tell this story: The decline of Shanghai's trade has put tens of thousands of people out of work in that port city. They are being enrolled in labor armies . . . on irrigation projects in Central China."

The new regime, in its attempts to industrialize and to fight a war is constantly increasing taxes on the peasants. The burden has been so heavy on the greatly populated areas that many of the residents are fleeing to the hills to become guerrillas or bandits. This constant resistance to authoritarianism is cutting

down state revenue and is forcing the regime to expand into new areas as a means to obtaining new sources of manpower and material. The present-day aggressive tendencies of Stalinist China give credence to this fact. Stalinist China has become a definite menace to the countries of Indo-China, Burma, Siam and Indonesia.

Opposition to the West will probably forestall any "Titoist" development for some time although there are many disputes between Russian and Chinese Stalinism. The Chinese peasant is far from satisfied with his present status but he holds no brief for Chiang Kai Shek or a "liberation" via American imperialism as in Korea. It is difficult to tell what the internal developments are today for the working class has not yet given birth to an oppositionist movement. As a matter of fact the Chinese proletariat, ever since the failure of the revolution of 1927 has hardly made an impression on Chinese life. It is however, with this class alone that any progressive development in China must begin.

If the analogy with ancient China is valid the present Stalinist regime is fated to a rapid and complete degeneration. The backwardness of Chinese economy as a whole, however poses problems that even a victorious working class could not solve. International socialism is the only answer to the problems of backward, poverty stricken China. Once in power, the workers of the advanced countries will be able to render material, moral and technical aid on a scale far exceeding "Point 4" or the Marshall Plan. Modern farming techniques will reduce the pressure of population on the land and release millions for work in industry. Only then can the Chinese people break out of the blind alley of Stalinism. - V.R.#

The above article is presented for discussion. Although it does not necessarily represent the views of the editors, it is hoped that it will stimulate further inquiry into this vital subject.-Ed.

KOREA snafu

The sparring at Munsan goes on. And both sides, at various times, have broken off armistice negotiations while angrily denouncing each other to the world. Thus far, after dramatic exchanges of notes, ultimatums and obtrusive comments the two sides have resumed talks once again. However, by this time the most gullible observer must realize that this maneuvering blocks a mutual and urgent desire to end the futile war in Korea.

Despite the wishes of American and Chinese statesmen, the nature of the conference has been determined by the outcome of the military struggle. A decisive victory by either side would have cut short the peace negotiations, but no such victory has been achieved.

More than a year ago North Korea launched an attack across the Thirty-Eighth Parallel into South Korea. America was immediately and actively involved, and soon crushed the North Korean armies. With the addition of Chinese armies the battle lines see-sawed up and down the peninsula. The casualty lists mounted, and the Korean people were made a nation of displaced persons. Today, the battle line is but a few miles from the original boundary between the two Koreas.

The armistice conference then becomes the battleground on which the US and China try to salvage some lost prestige. The US representatives hope to force unfavorable terms on the Chinese, thereby demonstrating to the world that the Korean War was, after all, an American victory. In contrast to this monumental task Stalinist China has contented herself with demonstrating to Asia that America is protecting white rule in Asia, thereby cloaking her own more dangerous imperialism. The demand that all foreign troops be withdrawn from Korea is a phase of this policy. There is little doubt that the people of Asia, accustomed as they are

to white rule and all it stands for, are a sympathetic audience.

The Stalinist success at Munsan parallels the growth of this new and vicious exploitative system throughout Asia. It springs from the same source, Western policies. The American and European attitude that the nations of the East are pawns in a vast economic game has alienated every popular democratic movement in Asia. Western politicians have grabbed frantically for the spoils of Asia and now hold up their winnings for rivals to see. Such reactionary and unpopular figures as Chiang Kai Shek, Bao Dai and Sygman Rhee characterize the "free worlds" policies. The result is that democratic rulers like Nehru are forced farther and farther away.

This political impotence has already abandoned China, the greatest population block in the world, to Stalinism. But merely to point out the reactionary character of Stalinism is meaningless, without offering a progressive alternative. To promise a Chinese peasant "American democracy and the right to vote," is empty gesture when it is accompanied by nothing more concrete than treaties signed by war lords with American generals.

Thus it is probable that, regardless of the terms of the final armistice, Stalinism will win the political victory. The American objective of demonstrating its military superiority by concessions gained from China will not greatly impress Asiatics. And their problems are too desperate, too urgent for indecision.

Our problem is to present Asia with a sincere and attractive program for its betterment. In this way, Stalinism can be halted and finally defeated. But for America, concerned with the maintenance and spread of capitalism, a system which means exploitation and poverty to all backward nations, to formulate such a progressive program is impossible.#

NO PLACE TO SLEEP

Students returning to Berkeley this fall may well wonder why their rents are so much higher than last semester. The answer is that the Berkeley City Council under pressure from landlord groups voted decontrol.

In a hearing before the council, the date for which was conveniently set before the return of students, the real estate interests who helped place the present council in office asked for a return on their investment. The landlord minority, powerful and well organized, spoke in favor of free enterprise and the American way of life. A battery of tenant speakers including representatives from the CIO, AFL, ADA, the Young Democrats, Socialist Youth League and the Auto Mechanics Union, protested an attempt to lift controls. But the Apartment House Association, Berkeley Real Estate Board and the Committee for Decontrol apparently swung more weight. Rent decontrol was passed at the next council meeting.

Immediately following the hearing, representatives from labor, political, church and social groups set up an informal organization, the Berkeley Council for Controls. The committee has plans to get controls re-imposed and needs support from all interested parties and organizations. Thus the group is gathering concrete information on the extent of rent raises and is discussing several initiative measures which can be placed before the voters of Berkeley.

Many have been hit and hit hard by the action of the City Council. Here is a way of fighting back, by supporting this committee now. Those who are interested should watch the Daily Californian for announcements of future meetings of the united front committees.

WORLD FEDS ADOPT 3RD CAMP

On September 1st and 2nd the California Youth Federalists met in Berkeley to discuss program and organization for the founding convention this year. The youth were faced with this problem after the split from the United World Federalists which occurred last June. The decisions that were made are of significance to those who look forward to an anti-war third camp federalist organization.

The conference was permeated by an emphasis on the necessity for mass work in the population. In addition there was a recognition of the usefulness of cooperative action with other radical and labor groups. One resolution called for "...an alliance of socialist, labor and wage groups on large points of agreement...." By this action the ground work has been prepared for many excellent united front activities on issues such as academic freedom, civil rights and liberties. The Stanford group has already acted by holding a meeting for the Indian Socialist, Lohia.

The most important political battle at the conference was waged over the question of international orientation. It was resolved by the group adoption of a resolution which simply proposed "...a world government that is not identified with the governments of either bloc...." The passing of this resolution by the California group dealt a blow to both pro-American and pro-Stalinist forces in the organization.

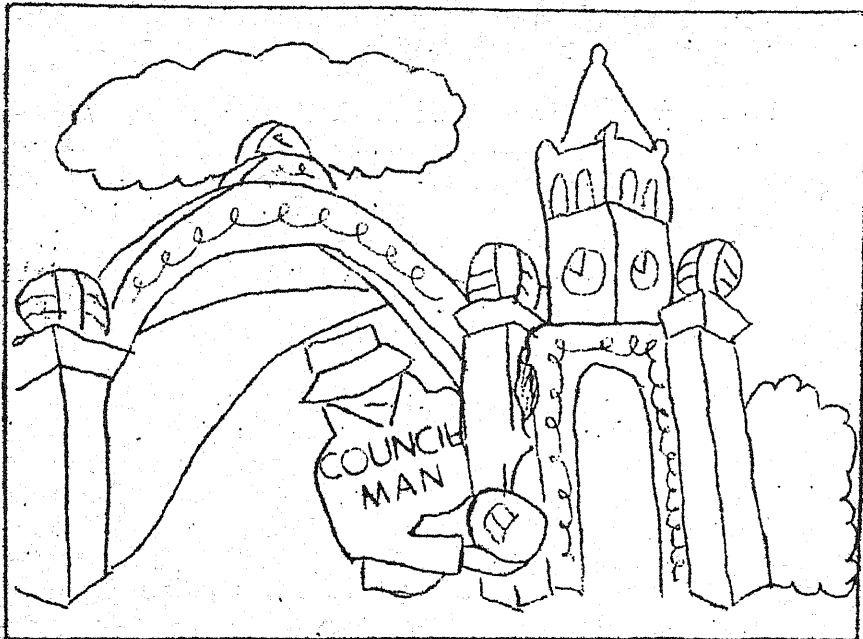
The acceptance of a third camp orientation opens great opportunities to the young federalists. Now it is possible to campaign against war from a correct position which gives no aid whatsoever to Stalinist totalitarianism. If the third camp progressive views of the California group are pressed at the founding convention there is hope for a real, militant world government organization in America.#

Max Shachtman,

national chairman of the Independent Socialist League and editor of the New International, is touring the country lecturing on topics of current world interest. He will be in Berkeley on November 20-23.

On Tuesday, Nov. 20, a debate is being planned for Shachtman at the University of California. Wednesday, Nov. 21, he will speak before the World Federalists at Stanford, and on Friday night, Nov. 23, he will lecture at Norway Hall in Oakland.

Shachtman, author and translator of Trotsky's works, and formerly editor of the Daily Worker was secretary to Leon Trotsky. Shachtman is well remembered at UC for his debate last year with Prof. Carl Landauer of the Economics department. #



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