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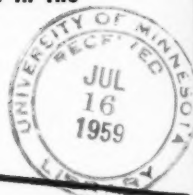
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**THE ECONOMIC RECOVERY IN THE
UNITED STATES**

By Hyman Lumer

[1-12]

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A Theoretical and Political Magazine of Scientific Socialism

Editor: HERBERT APTHEKER

The Economic Recovery in the U.S.

By Hyman Lumer

Glowing economic predictions are once again in order. The recession, say the economic analysts and the spokesmen of big business generally, is a thing of the past. Recovery is general and complete, and a fresh boom is under way. Once more, the economy has proved itself impregnable to severe crisis.

To be sure, the economy has recovered from its recent slump. Upon sober examination, however, the economic picture proves to be somewhat less glowing than that painted by these observers. In the following pages, we undertake an examination of the extent and nature of the recovery which has taken place.

EXTENT OF RECOVERY

From a low of 126 in April, 1958, the Federal Reserve Board index of industrial production rose to 152 by May of this year—six points above the pre-depression peak reached in December, 1956. Durable goods

production rose more than twice as much as that of non-durables; however, by May the former had barely regained the pre-depression high, while the latter (which had fallen relatively little) had substantially surpassed it. The gross national product, having declined from an annual rate of \$453.7 billion in the second quarter of 1957 to a low of \$427 billion in the first quarter of 1958, rose to a new high of \$467 in the first three months of this year.

In the basic industries, the rise was especially pronounced. Auto production increased by about one-third, and in May, 1959 was running at a yearly rate of close to 6 million cars, approximating the 1957 output. The steel industry was operating at nearly 93% of capacity, compared to less than 50% a year earlier. Output for the first five months of 1959 was 53.4 million tons, 74% above the same period in 1958.

New construction increased nearly 16% between April, 1958 and April, 1959, and housing starts were

up more than 38%, both reaching new peaks. Commercial and residential building were well above the 1958 level. Only industrial construction remained in the doldrums, although a rising volume of contract awards indicated that this, too, would soon increase.

These developments have been accompanied by a steady rise in personal income to new record levels. At the same time, consumer prices, after a prolonged climb, have remained fairly steady for the past year. Real per capita disposable income rose to a yearly rate of \$1,818 in the first quarter of this year, only slightly below the 1957 peak. And real net spendable weekly earnings in manufacturing, after falling between 1956 and 1958, have increased during the past year by 9%—a rise due principally to increased weekly hours of work.

In these areas, the degree of recovery has been truly impressive. Less impressive, however, has been the trend in agriculture. Net farm income, which had been falling since 1951, showed an increase from \$10.8 billion in 1957 to \$13.1 billion in 1958, when the rest of the economy was on the downgrade. And rising prices for a number of farm products pushed the parity ratio up to 87 in the early part of 1958. But this year farm income has declined somewhat, and a reversal of price trends has lowered the parity ratio to an average of 82 in the first four months of 1959.

UNEMPLOYMENT HANGS ON

Still less impressive is the trend in employment. In fact, one of the most striking features of the current economic picture is the persistence of a relatively high rate of joblessness.

At the bottom of the decline in April, 1958, the number of unemployed was officially estimated at 5.1 million or 7.5% of the labor force, allowing for seasonal factors. By May of this year, despite the recovery in production, it had fallen only to 3.4 million or 4.9% of the labor force, as against a rate of 4.1% in May, 1957. This represents a significant lag in reduction of unemployment.

The extent of this lag is not fully revealed by the official statistics. Thus, the United Steelworkers reported in June that its due payments under checkoff contracts were still 300,000 below the pre-depression peak of 1,250,000. The UAW reported an equal drop in its membership.

Equally noteworthy is the growth in the number of "distressed areas." In May, 1957, of the 149 major industrial areas regularly surveyed by the Department of Labor, there were 21 with more than 6% of the labor force out of work. By May, 1958, the number had jumped to 86. A year later, in spite of the recovery, there were still 60 in existence. Included in these were not only the chronically blighted areas—

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coal mining and textile—but also such a national auto center as Detroit, and major centers of steel production. In addition, there were in May, 172 smaller industrial centers with unemployment exceeding 6%, an actual increase over May, 1958.

Among Negro workers, the rate of unemployment is officially estimated as being approximately twice that among white workers, although in many of the big industrial centers it has been much higher. With declining unemployment, this ratio has tended to increase—a reflection of the greater lag in rehiring of Negroes and an indication of the relative worsening of their economic situation in the period of recovery.

THE DECLINE IN FOREIGN TRADE

An important feature of the economic slump was a marked drop in exports. From \$19.5 billion in 1957, these fell to \$16.3 billion in 1958, a decrease of more than 16%. This decline has continued; in the first quarter of 1959 the volume of commercial exports was 6% lower than in the same part of 1958. And the outlook is for little if any pickup during the rest of 1959.

At the same time, imports have risen. In 1958, these totalled \$13 billion, only slightly less than in 1957. But in the first quarter of this year

they rose 14% to reach an annual rate of \$14.3 billion.

Some of the export decline was due to the disappearance of certain special factors, such as the closing of the Suez Canal in early 1957, which boosted the demand for American exports. This was not, however, the main cause.

Chief among the reasons for the decline is the completion of the post-war economic reconstruction in Europe and the extended boom of recent years, which has expanded the productive capacity of the Western European countries to the point where they are much less dependent than before on imports of capital goods and other manufactures from this country. In fact, they are able, thanks to modernization and increased efficiency of production, to compete more successfully with American products in a growing number of fields.

An added factor in reducing American exports to these countries is the recent European recession. This, however, has turned out to be a very mild one. After some declines in 1958, production has begun, though slowly and unevenly, to rise again.

Another major cause of the drop in exports is the crisis in the raw materials-producing countries, where the drop in the prices of the primary commodities which they export has compelled them to reduce imports. This crisis has been a severe one, from which these countries are bare-

ly beginning to recuperate. Of this, the United Nations *World Economic Survey*, 1958 (Columbia Univ. Press, \$3) writes:

One of the most disturbing aspects of the recent industrial downturn is that it has once again highlighted the vulnerability of under-developed countries to even moderate shifts in world economic activity. . . . Though the total volume of net imports of primary commodities into the industrial areas was barely affected, the sensitivity of commodity markets to the changing economic climate in the major buying countries was sufficient to reduce prices and export earnings of the under-developed countries by 7 to 8% from mid-1957 to mid-1958. This drop, reinforced by a continuing, albeit slight, rise in the import prices of manufactured goods in the face of the industrial recession, represents a loss in import capacity equivalent to about six years' lending to the under-developed countries by the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development at 1956-1957 rates.

The changed import-export balance has resulted in a sharp decline in the export surplus which the United States has enjoyed for a number of years. For total commercial exports, the surplus in the first quarter of 1959 was \$271 million, less than one-third of that in the corresponding part of 1958. And according to *Barron's* (May, 1959), if we count only paid-for merchandise and exclude such items as the giveaway of farm surpluses, the balance

of trade ran against the United States by nearly \$500 million.*

THE EXPORT OF JOBS

American manufacturers have reacted to the increased competition from foreign manufactures by stepping up investment in foreign-owned plants and the building of branch plants in Europe and elsewhere. This is reflected in a considerable growth in United States investments in Western Europe, which have increased 2½ times between 1950 and 1959.

This practice enables American firms both to get around import restrictions and duties and to compete on more favorable terms with the domestically-owned firms in the countries in question. In this country, it results in a decline in the production of goods for export on the one hand, and a rise in the already high proportion of imports emanating from American-owned subsidiaries and branch plants abroad. Of this, *U. S. News and World Report* wrote (December 26, 1958):

* The outflow of gold from the United States during the past year, a reversal of the previous trend, is due only in part to the drop in exports relative to imports. According to a study by the New York economist E. M. Bernstein (reported in the *New York Times* of June 8, 1959), this stems primarily from other causes. Chief among these are: a growth of American foreign investments, which rose from about \$1.3 billion in 1950 to a yearly average of about \$3 billion in the period 1956-58; and a rise of total government expenditures and grants abroad from \$4.7 billion in 1950 to \$8.5 billion in 1958.

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European-based subsidiaries of U. S. firms are sending office equipment, earth movers, even ordinary electric irons back to the U. S. for sale. An American elevator company has intricate parts made in plants overseas and shipped back. An American lock company does the same thing. Costs are lower abroad.

Commenting on the reaction of the London *Sunday Express* to the flooding of British markets by products of American-controlled factories in Britain, the same magazine stated (January 23, 1959):

"To the *Sunday Express*, this is a frightening trend, because it indicates a spreading American hold on Britain. For a different reason, it may also be a frightening trend for the American workingman. Jobs are going overseas.

These developments are especially marked in the auto industry. The top American companies have for years been building branch plants overseas. They have also acquired partial or complete control of a number of European companies (for example, General Motors' outright ownership of Opel in Germany and Vauxhall in Britain). In recent years, with the growing market for the small European models, the process has been accelerated and American firms have increasingly devoted themselves to supplying this market, both here and abroad, with the products of their foreign subsidiaries and affiliates.

While exports of American cars have drastically declined and are expected to total only 100,000 cars in 1959, imports of small cars have skyrocketed in the past few years. From 58,000 or 0.8% of the American market in 1955, they jumped to 432,000 or 9% of the market in 1958, and are expected to exceed 600,000 in 1959. With this, a growing share of the American market will be filled by foreign products of American manufacturers at the expense of domestic production—and at the expense of jobs of American workers.

To be sure, the Big Three plan to produce small models this fall. But these are designed to compete most directly not with the smaller imports, but with the somewhat larger American-made Rambler and Lark, which have captured 7% of the domestic market.

In the steel industry, there has also been a rise in imports accompanied by a drop in exports. Imports rose 45% in 1958 to a total of 1.7 million tons, and some products have captured a significant part of the American market (nails, one-third, barbed wire, one-half).

American steel companies have sought to use this as propaganda against wage increases, arguing that excessively high wages here are pricing American steel out of the market in favor of the cheaper foreign products. However, total imports are still less than 2% of American steel output, hardly enough to be a

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major factor in current unemployment in the industry. And though steel exports fell 50% last year, these also comprise a small share of total output—4% in 1957 and 3.2% in 1958.

In general, the crisis has contributed to the sharpening of competition and rivalries among the leading capitalist countries and has stimulated the penetration of the economies of other capitalist countries by American monopoly capital. For American workers, the runaway shop evil is emerging on a new level, and the question of foreign trade and jobs is being posed with increasing sharpness.

WHY THE UPTURN?

The factors responsible for the timing and speed of the recovery merit detailed analysis. Here we can only touch on some of the main ones.

The AFL-CIO, in the November, 1958 issue of *Economic Trends and Outlook*, gives as the main reasons: a) union strength which helped keep consumer incomes strong; b) unemployment compensation which made up part of the income lost through unemployment; c) Congressional measures providing more money for mortgage supports, unemployment compensation, road building, federal pay hikes and other purposes; d) increased state and local government spending; and e) an eased money supply.

These were undoubtedly factors

in easing the crisis, but they do not alone account for the recovery. The role of increased government spending—and its limitations—has been dealt with in a previous article ("The Economic Outlook Today," *Political Affairs*, January, 1959). Suffice it to point out here that the AFL-CIO analysis omits one item in this category which outweighs any of the others, namely the impressive increases in military outlays during this period. This remains the main "anti-crisis" measure.

Another important factor was the stimulus to housing construction through easier credit and increased availability of mortgage money. As a result, mortgage debt rose nearly \$10.5 billion during 1958, compared with a rise of only \$6.5 billion in consumer disposable income. Along with this, consumer credit, which increased only slightly in 1958, has begun to grow much more rapidly. In the first four months of 1959, instalment debt rose nearly \$1.5 billion and non-instalment debt another \$389 million. This presages an upsurge comparable to 1955's record—something which was regarded as quite unlikely a year ago.

Another factor which contributed materially to the recovery was the extreme mildness of the decline in the Western European economies. And no doubt the reverse trend in farm income at the time of the decline in industrial output helped somewhat to lessen the degree and duration of the slump.

A basic stimulus to expansion of production is the big increase in profits during the past year. From an annual rate of \$23.0 billion in the first quarter of 1957, net corporate profits after taxes fell to \$15.5 billion in the first quarter of 1958. By the final quarter, however, they had grown to a yearly rate of \$22.4 billion. The increase is continuing in 1959, with official estimates of pre-tax profits of \$50 billion for the year, 37% above 1958. This represents an imposing growth in profit rates.

A rise in the rate of profit is, of course, a feature of periods of economic recovery generally. What is important is the specific factors underlying the present increase, among them such things as the high degree of rationalization and speedup achieved during the decline, as well as the ability of monopoly capital to depress the prices of raw materials which has been noted above. These merit further examination.

THE IMMEDIATE OUTLOOK

In late April, the National Industrial Conference Board held its annual meeting, a gathering at which top representatives of big business offer their economic forecasts. Indicative of the outlook expressed in these circles was the prediction by former U. S. Steel president Clifford B. Hood that, barring a strike, steel ingot production for 1959 would reach 115 million tons, 35% above the 1958 output, and almost equal

to the 1955 figure of 117 million tons.

Also indicative was the forecast of L. L. Colbert, president of Chrysler Corporation, that 1959 would see sales of 6 million cars, including half a million imported vehicles. This compares favorably with 1957; however, it falls considerably short of the record of some 8 million cars in 1955. In all other major industries, marked increases over 1958 were predicted, and in a number of them new production records were expected.

Generally, business spokesmen and economists forecast a rise in the economy continuing well into 1960 and even into 1961. Included in such forecasts, however, is the definite expectation of a slowdown in the third quarter of 1959. This is based in large measure on the fact that steel production, bolstered in the first half of the year by extensive inventory building in anticipation of a strike, is virtually certain to decrease after midyear, whether or not the strike materializes.

Similarly, auto production can be expected to slow down as sales of 1959 models taper off later in the year and preparations for the changeover to the 1960 models begin. This expectation is strengthened by the abnormal inventory of one million cars in the hands of dealers at midyear.

Moreover, inventory accumulation generally is likely to slow up later in the year. Inventories began to grow toward the end of 1958 after

a large drop during the preceding year, and this rise has been a major factor in the recovery, accounting at midyear for fully half of the total increase in output. But this initial spurt, it is generally conceded, cannot long continue at the same pace, especially in view of its inclusion of the heavy building of steel and auto inventories noted above.

All indications, therefore, point to a third-quarter slowdown. It is widely predicted, however, that this will constitute no more than an interruption in the upward trend, to be followed by a second phase of recovery based on a growth in expenditures for new plant and equipment. These expenditures fell from \$37 billion in 1957 to \$30.5 billion in 1958. For 1959, according to mid-year estimates, they are expected to rise to \$32.6 billion. This entails an anticipated increase from an annual rate of \$30.6 billion in the first quarter of 1959 to \$34 billion in the last quarter.

These estimates, however, are based on the outlook of businessmen in the light of the present pace of recovery, and may well be scaled downward with the occurrence of a slowdown. And even the increase now projected falls much short of the 1957 level. In addition, it should be noted that an unusually high proportion of present outlays (two-thirds, as against the usual ratio of one-half) is for modernization of existing plant rather than the addition of new capacity.

There is thus a legitimate question as to whether a lull would necessarily be followed by a new upsurge, a question which is being raised by a number of observers. A *New York Times* editorial, on April 25, stated:

It is true that business spending for plant and equipment assumed the role of carrying the economy forward after the first phase of recovery ended in 1955. But there is little evidence to date that the boom of 1956 and 1957 is necessarily going to repeat itself in this area. . . .

The Labor Research Association's publication, *Economic Notes* (June, 1959) poses the question as follows:

Historically most recovery periods on the average last about 27 months. But in this one the loss of momentum in the third quarter might, in the absence of any real resurgence in capital investment, result in dissipation of the expansive role of the upward movement.

Investments are not the only question mark. There are others, such as how much of a spurt the production of the new small cars will give to the auto industry, or the prospects for a continued rise in housing construction. In view of these and other questions, the possibility is not at all excluded that a slowdown may lead to stagnation or a decline rather than a fresh upsurge, even though past experience suggests that the lat-

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ter is distinctly more likely. We do not propose to speculate on this point; what is important to note is the limited and uncertain base of the current expansion and the consequent uncertainty of the future.

THE HARD CORE OF UNEMPLOYMENT

In particular, there is every reason to expect the stubborn persistence of a substantial residue of unemployment in the foreseeable future. The displacement of workers through technological advance and increased productivity, though partially cloaked by the boom of 1955-57, has been increasingly making itself felt. Now, although unemployment can be expected to decline further in the period immediately ahead, it is widely recognized that a significant hard core of joblessness will remain even if the most optimistic predictions as to production trends materialize. As the AFL-CIO's *Economic Trends and Outlook* warned in April, "there is a real danger that the number of jobless will settle at 3½ to 4 million, or 5% to 5½% of the labor force."

There has been a progressive rise in the rate of unemployment in successive boom periods since the war. During the war years, joblessness was at a minimum, fluctuating between 1 and 2%. In the boom year of 1953 it was 2.9%. In 1956 it was 4.2%. Now it threatens to settle at

a level in the neighborhood of 5%.

A recent AFL-CIO pamphlet, *Policies for Economic Growth*, pictures this trend in another aspect. The ratio of recovery of loss in production to recovery of loss in employment is computed for an eight-month period following the low point of each of the postwar slumps. In the period beginning October, 1949, for each one percent of recovery in job loss, there was a recovery of 1.78% in production loss. In the period beginning August, 1954, the corresponding figure was 2.33%, and in that beginning April, 1958, it was 3.23%. In other words, the lag in decline of unemployment has grown greater in each successive recovery period.

This is accompanied by the spread of blighted areas described above—areas of chronic unemployment produced by the displacement of workers through automation and other technological advances, combined with growing decentralization and the spread of the runaway shop evil.

The development of chronic mass unemployment persisting even in boom periods, a feature of the general crisis of capitalism, though temporarily obliterated by World War II and its immediate effects, is again becoming evident. The "full employment" which Keynesian economists and others assert has been achieved through "built-in stabilizers" and government economic "regulation" is once again in the process of being exposed as a myth.

NATURE OF THE CRISIS

Of the three postwar slumps, the 1957-58 crisis was the most severe and most extensive in its effects. We have characterized it as different from the first two—as being a cyclical rather than an interim crisis (*Political Affairs*, January, 1959).

It was also anticipated that the decline would, unlike the first two, be followed by a period of depression or stagnation. Instead, it was followed by an immediate upturn, comparable in speed and extent to the two previous recoveries. In an earlier appraisal ("The Economic Situation Today," *Political Affairs*, March, 1958), we had expressed the opinion that the economy stood on the threshold of a major depression. Such an eventuality clearly did not materialize, even though the crisis proved to be appreciably worse than its predecessors.

It is evident that these appraisals tended to underestimate the recuperative capacity of the economy and did not adequately take into account the effects which increased government spending, whatever its limitations, exercised on the course of the crisis.

At the same time, the 1957-58 crisis did differ in important respects from the other two, and approached more closely the classical cyclical pattern. Some recognition of this is expressed in the United Nations *World Economic Survey*, 1958, which states that unlike the first

two, this slump is not to be explained by special factors such as, for example, the reduction of military expenditures and inventories after the Korean War. Hence, "the setback raises problems of major importance for long-term economic growth." And contrary to the illusions generated by the earlier declines, "it is evident that the world has not yet learned how to avoid the costs of recurrent industrial slumps."

But if the recent slump did not develop into a major crisis, says the *Survey*, this does not rule out the possibility of more severe downturns in the future. It states:

Nor would it be wise to assume, on the basis of post-war experience, that in the future all recessions are bound to be short and mild. It is true that an array of automatic stabilizers, including progressive tax systems, social security, and farm support programs, has considerably strengthened the industrial economies since the depression of the nineteen thirties. It is important to bear in mind, however that stabilizers can only slow down a rate of decline; they cannot in themselves initiate an upturn. Unless, therefore, other forces are actively at work to reverse a downturn, economic activity could continue to decline over a relatively long period and by sizeable amounts.

Furthermore, it is important not to underestimate the impact of even the relatively mild slumps which have occurred. The American economists, W. S. and E. S. Woytinski,

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estimate that the three declines resulted in a direct loss of \$113 billion in national production, and an indirect loss in retarded economic growth of no less than \$300 billion.*

Hidden in these figures is the loss of income and the economic hardship suffered by the millions thrown out of work. Hidden in them, too, is the frustration of millions of young people in their efforts to find decent employment or secure an education. And hidden in them is the exceptional degree of suffering inflicted on the Negro, Puerto Rican and Mexican working people.

The fact is that despite the much-touted prosperity of the postwar years, the average American worker has led a highly insecure existence. Every few years he has been confronted with an economic slump and the threat of short work weeks or unemployment for prolonged periods. And today the outlook is at best uncertain. Underneath the facade of the postwar booms is the basic instability of the American economy, an instability which is growing and with it the economic insecurity of the American workers.

The economy has emerged from the 1957-58 crisis with an increased burden of military spending, a rise in the national debt and a considerable growth in the interest burden on the debt. It has emerged with a large increase in personal debt, amounting to more than 60% of

consumer disposable income at the end of 1958, as against 40% in 1951 and 26% in 1946. It has emerged with a substantial amount of excess industrial capacity, persisting in spite of the rise in production. And it has emerged with an increased residue of unemployment. All of these developments add to economic instability and pave the way for a worse crisis in the not too distant future.

OUTLOOK AND PROGRAM

The economic outlook for 1960 is a matter of particular importance, since the state of the economy at that time will weigh heavily in the outcome of the presidential and congressional elections. If the predictions most widely current today should materialize, the economy would be either levelling off or entering a decline at the time of the elections. It would be futile, however, to speculate on this or to attempt to base a program of action on such predictions.

Nevertheless, certain things seem reasonably clear. The chief one is that the fight for jobs will retain a prominent position in the period ahead, and will be an important issue in the 1960 elections. This entails a heightened struggle for drastic improvements in unemployment compensation and other measures for assistance to the jobless, as well as special measures for aid to distressed

* W. S. and E. S. Woytinski, *Lessons of the Recessions*, Public Affairs Institute, Washington, 1959.

areas. It means, too, that the crusade for the thirty-hour week, the need for which becomes increasingly imperative, will continue to gain momentum. And the special problems of unemployment among Negro and other minority-group workers demand that the fight against job discrimination and for the economic welfare of these workers maintain a high priority.

It is necessary to strengthen the fight against increased arms production as an answer to unemployment, and to step up the campaign for trade with the socialist world as a source of jobs. This becomes all the more vital as big business proceeds to eliminate a growing number of jobs of American workers by shifting production to overseas plants. So, too, does the fight for solidarity between American workers and the workers of other countries, whom big business strives to pit against one another, a fight which American workers must direct against American monopoly capital as a common oppressor.

The Eisenhower Administration, in characteristic fashion, has completely wiped its hand of the prob-

lems of the unemployed and has embarked on a holy crusade against inflation for the benefit of the big banking and financial interests. The Democrats have vigorously attacked the Administration's policies; however, despite the popular mandate of last November, their record in Congress has been one of almost total inaction.

The labor movement has a clearly-defined program to "put America back to work," a program which includes such demands as aid to distressed areas, an increased minimum wage, minimum federal standards of unemployment insurance, a shorter work week, and FEPC legislation. Though it has some serious deficiencies, it is a program which offers a basis for effective mass struggle. What is required is the pressure and initiative of the rank and file and the progressive forces, to compel action by the labor leadership and by the liberal Democrats in Congress.

Whatever the exact course of the economy during the next year or two, it is the development of such mass struggles which is of paramount importance.

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The Cold War and the People's Welfare

By William Z. Foster

THE COLD WAR has roots running back to the earlier phases of the class struggle, notably the capitalist opposition to the Russian Revolution of 1917. Formally, the Cold War, as such, began about 1947, the date when the Marshall Plan was initiated. Its main purpose is to prepare for an all-out war against the socialist and progressive world. Its specific aims are to infringe upon and injure world peace, prosperity, democracy, organized labor, national liberation, and socialism. Its greatest champions are the monopolists of the United States (helped by the conservative labor leaders), and they are out to boss the whole world and to prolong everywhere by military force the obsolete and antiquated capitalist system. Their chief opposition is the socialist sector of the world, principally the Soviet Union and People's China, and the working and toiling masses, and the progressive forces generally, of all countries, who jointly counterpose to the war-like Cold War the perspective of the peaceful coexistence of all nations.

The Cold War is a malignant war threat which is kept hanging over the world chiefly by American imperialism and its partners, the monopolists and sword-rattlers of the world. Its vast war munitions production is immensely profitable to the em-

ployers. Although it has many war features and constantly presses in the direction of war, it is not now actual war itself. It is the longest and most militant war-scare in history, and is pregnant with war danger. It has kept the world so much on edge with its many war crises, that large numbers of people have come inadvisedly to look upon it and its institutions as a sort of unavoidable way of life. "Brinkmanship," a term that originated in Dulles' boasts of the many times he had brought the world to the very edge of general war, is coming to be accepted by them as the normal type of diplomacy. Undoubtedly, however, had it not been for the powerful struggle of the peace and progressive forces over the years, and the breaking of the atomic bomb monopoly of the United States, the world long since would have been plunged into a terrible atomic war. The monopolists have become afraid of revealing outright their war goals, as this would scare off large numbers of their followers; but their deceit about it does not destroy the reality of the war threat which they present.

Under the Cold War, the imperialists are definitely, although cunningly, preaching the inevitability of war. This is not an easy thing to do, after the many defeats the warmongers

have suffered at the hands of the workers and other peace forces, who do not believe in the inevitability of war. So the advocates of war's inevitability are forced to do so by roundabout methods, by indirection, as at present. The warmongers seek to plant the idea that war is inevitable, and when they cannot do this directly, they try at least to create certain confused moods to this effect. This is the situation at the present time. Although there are relatively few who will argue militantly that there inevitably will be war, on the other hand, prominent capitalist spokesmen are quick to deny that the socialist countries are peace-loving. Thus they leave the matter hanging, but usually they become more definite about war's "inevitability" when matters take, however temporarily, a turn to the worse. The answer is to do away with the Cold War.

During the Cold War period, many dangerous developments have taken place. There has been a large number of "small" shooting wars (which have not always been so "small"), and all of them have borne the seeds of a general imperialist war. And they have left millions of poverty-stricken refugees in their wake. In practically every case, the imperialists have tried to extend these wars; this has forced the masses to struggle to restrict them. Among these "small" wars, along with other gross military provocations, are those of Korea, Indo-China, Hungary, Tai-

wan, East Germany, Tunisia, Morocco, Algeria, Lebanon, Israel, Jordan, Guatemala, Quemoy-Matsu, Tibet, Laos, etc., besides various other small wars in Asia, Africa and Latin America. In those countries where revolutions have occurred, the imperialists, in the first place those of Wall Street, have seen to it that by military provocations they were forced to take on the character of violent armed struggles. In addition to all these wars, the Cold War has produced several breath-taking crises, all manipulated by Washington. In fact, there has been almost a permanent crisis over the past decade in various communities. The Communist Party of the United States, at its special convention of 1945, which repudiated Browder's revisionism, was the first organization to point out the immediate approach of this broad imperialist war period.

MILITARIZATION

The most characteristic and dangerous feature of the Cold War is that, during the years of its existence, the United States has built for itself a super-powerful offensive military machine of unheard of dimensions and danger. It has air bases everywhere, possessing all over the world a mighty air force, navy, and army. More than that, it has been instrumental in the building of military forces on the part of its innumerable capitalist allies. Insolently, American and other imperialists have built

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air bases and rocket launching sites all around the countries of socialism. In doing this, they have put practically the whole capitalist world on the American dole and in its debt. The United States has become, very largely, the boss of the capitalist world, and it hopes, quite vainly, to run the socialist part of the world as well. Such imperialist war provocations lie at the very heart of the Cold War and are to be found in every corner of the globe.

A particularly devilish feature of the Cold War is the continued manufacture and testing of bombs and rockets. The United States is arming NATO and all its main allies with these murderous devices. These fiendish machines are being made to shoot one-fourth of the way around the world. A very bad aspect is the invariable accompaniment of the bomb and rocket blasts with malignant radioactive fall-out. The imperialist militarists have thus far successfully resisted the limitation or abolition of the bombs and rockets, as well as the abolition of testing. Above all, the forces of peace must find the way to put a stop or limitation to these murderous devices. There are forces of imperialism that would rather destroy the planet—if they could—than to lose the monster graft of the capitalist system. But the workers and their allies will stop such murderous impulses and desires, with the abolition of the atomic and hydrogen bombs and the fiendish rockets.

One of the worst of the current features of the Cold War is its enormous cost to the peoples. The fabulous outlay of our government for military expenditures, and everything connected with the Cold War, has been such as to impoverish the masses of people more and more. The government is squandering at present at least 50 billion dollars a year for war preparations; and its imperialist partners throughout the world, collectively, are getting rid of about the same amount. President Eisenhower has stated recently that the cost of war munitions has mounted so greatly that many airplanes now cost their weight in gold.

The national debt has also climbed out of sight, and is still mounting. The same is also true of tax rates, which are being forced sky high, with the main burden being thrust upon the workers and the toiling masses. The people have paid dearly in their living standards for the Cold War. Nor is there any sign that the government will voluntarily decrease these war (misnamed "defense") expenditures. Of course, the employers are reaping enormous profits; in fact, profits on war munitions are now being taken as one of the mainstays of the entire capitalist system. Since the end of World War II, about 500 billion dollars have been thrown away for this useless purpose. It is highly significant that it is only the capitalist employers and the war-making governments that have their hands on the coun-

try's real source of money supplies. In the ceaseless quest for funds to pay for the ever-mounting cost of munitions, no real criticism is directed against the cause of it all—the Cold War. The social services and public conveniences (schools, hospitals, housing, roads, municipal transportation, etc.) are constantly deteriorating, and yet they are still further being bled of resources, to feed the insatiable Moloch of Cold War. Other capitalist countries are about as bad off in this respect, or even worse off than we are.

IMPACT ON SOCIALIST LANDS

Another bad feature of the Cold War situation is that it has deeply injured the industrial potentiality of the countries of socialism. These countries are straining every nerve to amass resources with which to build a new society, and on top of this strain they are forced, in self-defense, also to waste vast funds on non-productive military equipment. World experience has shown, however, that the capitalists, by means of their Cold War, may somewhat hinder, but they cannot stop, the building of socialism by forcing these tremendous military expenditures upon the socialist countries; but it would be sheer foolishness, nevertheless, to believe that they thus do not do considerable damage. The peoples, however, can build socialism, and heavily arm themselves, at the same time. All this sabotage, in the

spirit of Project X, and the forced military spending of the socialist countries, is in line with the general purposes of the imperialists and their Cold War, to slow down the growth of socialism and finally to destroy it altogether.

One of the most provocative and war-like features of the Cold War situation is the economic blockade which the imperialist countries, led by the United States, are trying to enforce against all socialist lands, particularly the Soviet Union and People's China. This blockade, if it is only partially effective at the present time, is principally because it lacks world mass support, even of certain capitalist countries, and because the socialist lands are effective in breaking it. Thus, Great Britain does ten times as much trade yearly with the USSR as does the United States. The economic boycott is a disruptive factor on the international scene. It tends to hinder the building of world socialism, and increases the war danger; it should be abolished. The imperialist governments are pushing it very hard; this is particularly the case with the United States, which has made the economic boycott a key factor in the Cold War. The aggressive opposition, however, of all the socialist countries is taking much of the sting out of it. Actually, about the worst sufferers from it are the imperialist countries themselves, who through the blockade deny their own industries a great deal of much-needed trade.

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International proletarian unity is another vital factor that is infringed upon by the restrictive policies of the Cold War. It is a well-known fact, for example, that the American Negro people are receiving a great deal, if not most, of their support from progressive international forces. Yet, it is a common occurrence in the United States situation to find some Negro leaders, who have been badly corrupted by the Cold War, taking a position that the Negro people in America are little, if at all, persecuted. They thus are cutting off valuable international support that the Negro people of this country need very much. This could also be a powerful factor for the interests of the workers in many fields, but everywhere it runs up against the poisonous influence of the Cold War, which makes a special attack against proletarian internationalism on all fronts.

"NATIONAL UNITY"

The Cold War also generates a false tendency toward "national unity." In most war times, this national unity is a very definite and damaging thing; we do not have war at the present time, but the employers are able, nevertheless, to develop harmful moods towards a false national unity. This means to paralyze the workers from various militant activities, by forcing them into a form of unity with the employers. The influence of this is very consid-

erable, and the conservative, slow-down, effects of such national unity tendencies and moods must be combated. In World War II, a certain measure of national unity was justified, as this was a progressive war against fascism; but there are no grounds for this in the present situation.

Another of the favorite capitalist devices under the Cold War is a strong tendency towards no-strike regulations. It is a tremendous advantage to the employers to tie up the workers, in one way or another, so they cannot, or in any event, do not, strike effectively. Consequently, in the present situation, when a war is repeatedly made to seem to loom on the horizon, they adopt all possible means to establish no-strike conditions. They cannot openly put across such a proposition, despite all their war shouting, but they always seek to accomplish it at least partially. That they do much damage in slowing down strikes, in creating fewer strikes, and in general injuring the strike action of the working class, is indisputable. Never in the history of the labor movement were the trade unions so bound about with restrictive hindrances to effective strike action as they are now.

IMPACT ON LABOR

The Cold War, with its constant threat of a world war, is decidedly detrimental to many forms of freedom of the labor movement. Let

us not forget that the Taft-Hartley Act, which former President Murray of the CIO called fascist legislation, is a product of the Cold War. The deadly McCarthyism, another Cold War product, threatened the United States with fascism. Everybody was gagged with hysterical shouting that we were just about to go into a war, and of course it was lyingly presented as a progressive war. Similar legislation, of much that could be cited, were the McCarran Acts, for the regulation of immigration, restriction of passports, outlawing of the Communist Party, etc. The Cold War served very well to promote such reactionary types of legislation, until the people here, and especially abroad, rose against it and condemned it. There are still, however, many lingering effects of McCarthyism. The Cold War disadvantageously affects every form of labor progress. Characteristic of this period are the evil Eisenhower and Kennedy labor "reform" bills.

Class collaboration is also highly favored by the Cold War. It, too, reaches its highest development in periods of war, especially a justified war; but in the present false situation, the bourgeoisie are able to create many class-collaboration conditions, which normally approach a war situation. This, too, weakens the efficiency and the fighting strength of the working class, in strikes, demonstrations, political action, and so forth. All tendencies toward class collaboration in the Cold

War, implied as well as actual, should be combatted in the interests (both immediate and long-range) of a militant and effective labor movement.

The Cold War definitely has deleterious effects, too, on the struggle of the oppressed colonial peoples for national liberation. The imperialist countries, with the United States in the lead, are busily building air bases in all countries which will admit them, which they direct against the socialist and anti-imperialist world. They habitually make their plans for industrialization or trade in any country dependent upon definite programs of militarization. Therefore, the number one enemy of the erstwhile colonial lands is the leading imperialist power, the United States. Yet, some colonial countries are enticed or bribed into at least partial support of the imperialist powers under the Cold War conditions. This is a grave injury to the people's progress in every field.

The Cold War also creates conditions that make it very difficult to build up the various branches of the labor movement. It is no accident that revisionism, one of the most detrimental influences in the labor movement, received its greatest impulse in this and other countries during the Cold War. It is characteristic, too, that the trade-union organizing campaign in the South has been let go by the boards, with nothing substantial being done. It is also a fact that although organized labor has

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increased its membership and united strength through amalgamation, it has made no real progress at organizing a political party of the working class. The United States still has the unwelcome notoriety of having the only large labor movement in the world that does not have its own political party. For this, the Cold War, in all its ramifications, is largely responsible. The sword-rattlers are so busy telling the workers that not the monopolists but the Russian people are their main enemies, that they successfully block the achievement of the most elementary tasks in the labor movement.

The Cold War also unfavorably affects the living and working conditions of the masses. Its enormous emphasis upon military expenditures, and its constant threat of war, upset and distort the whole economic order. Capitalist economics are bad enough, but they are made even worse when the most vital social expenditures are thrust aside for useless military outlays. It especially does great harm when the labor movement is twisted into supporting such military expenditures, instead of the normal outlays. This not only makes for unemployment in the long run, but it is also lining up the labor movement on the side of the sabre-rattlers. Some of our labor leaders, in fact, can more than compete with the professional militarists when it comes to plumping for government expenditures (for military ends) under the false pretext that they are indispen-

sable for the making of jobs to take up the slack caused by unemployment in general.

There is constant pressure by monopolists who find it very profitable to continue the Cold War, to oppose every effort to put a stop to this monstrosity. Due to the ceaseless peace activities of the Soviet Union, People's China, and the other peace-loving forces of the world, several world peace conferences have been held in recent years to try to end the Cold War. These peace conferences have done no little good, but they have been bitterly opposed by the imperialists, especially by the United States government. If this country has participated reluctantly in such conferences, it has been only under the pressure of the militant peace activities of the socialist countries, the former colonies, the World Peace Council, and the common people of the world who want peace.

Many times, America's allies, to Washington's displeasure, have been the open advocates of these peace conferences, and have helped to drag this country's government into them. At the present time, a series of conferences has begun in Geneva, looking towards a Big Four Summit Meeting later this year. This situation has been marked by the usual reluctance on the part of the authorities in Washington: open opposition to the holding of any kind of a conference, quibbles over its agenda and representation, the presenta-

tion of conference proposals which are known beforehand to be unacceptable, and the like. The aim of the advocates of the Cold War is to reduce these international peace conferences to the lowest possible level or to abolish them altogether.

END THE COLD WAR

The time is over-ripe to end the Cold War, with its constant implication of a shooting imperialist war. For generations people have rejected, rebelled at, and condemned such wars; but never have they had such a good opportunity as now to be done with the terrible war monster for good. The great mass of the people, including many genuine leaders in politics, science, and religion, find themselves convinced that humanity must not be permitted to tear itself to pieces with atomic and hydrogen bombs. The working class, however, is the main force against war. We are living in an age when the abolition of imperialist war has become a burning necessity and practically realizable for the people of the world.

A basic need, in the abolition of the Cold War, is to explode the nonsensical "national defense" argument, on which the modern agitation for war is based. There is no real national defense problem in the world, except that created by the various capitalist powers in their eagerness to possess themselves of each other's

wealth by violence; by their need to repress the undeveloped peoples; and by their determination to destroy the socialist world. As for the socialist countries, they are peace-loving in their very structure. Their historical role is to abolish war, not to wage it. A special danger in the Cold War situation is the constant reiteration on the part of many people that there is no real danger in the present world conditions. They pass off the pro-war agitation as only so much terror talk, in spite of the many wars the imperialists have waged during the Cold War period. Such passivity and blindness to danger is just what the warmongers want in order to initiate their much-wanted war. The persistent propagation of war under hypocritical Cold War slogans, which takes place in every capitalist country, must be counteracted by determined moves on the part of the workers and their allies to abolish the Cold War altogether. Especially must we be done with the manufacture and testing of nuclear weapons.

The means for ending imperialist war are now at hand, more so than ever before. For one thing, there are the ceaseless and highly organized activities that are being carried on against every manifestation of the capitalist war spirit by the peoples of the socialist lands. They are unendingly opposed to war in all its forms, and their diplomatic and other international activities spell the eventual end to this murderous

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dream of the war-makers. Then there are such organizations of the peace-loving peoples, covering both the capitalist and socialist sectors of the world, as the World Peace Council. This body was formed in Prague and Paris in 1949, just about the time the Cold War got under way. It originally consisted of delegates of 560 organizations from 72 countries, embodying about 600 million people. Among its principal activities were the Stockholm, Vienna, and Helsinki Appeals, which did much to arouse masses of the world to the war danger. The Peace Council has since come to embrace fully a billion people, and it is a real power in the world for peace. Then there are innumerable other individual, scattered and unaffiliated, organizations, totalling up to many scores of millions, which, in their respective spheres, including the United States, keep up a never-ending agitation against war. They want especially to reduce armaments, and eventually to abolish them, together with the war threat. We must support the work of all these organizations. This is the way to world peace. There must be no imperialist atomic or hydrogen bomb warfare, or war menace.

The real issue behind the war danger is whether or not the industries and the land of the world shall be owned privately or by the people at large who use them. The basic issue is the fundamental one of capitalism versus socialism. Bound up

with this is the matter of workers in every branch of activity being able to gain a decent living without paying the masters their usual profits. The capitalists and their followers, who are the agitators of war, hold to the absurd idea that the industries of the world should be privately owned, and that the people should pay through the nose for the privilege of using them to produce the necessities of life. And what industries of their neighbors the employers do not already possess, they are ready to grab through international war. The hoary conception of war, which is now doubly indefensible, is the very soul and backbone of the capitalist system. Upon it the capitalists, and above all the monopolists, base their entire society and its many institutions--government, industry, science, education, religion, and all the rest. The main task of the people is to limit and abolish this exploitation principle and practice, root and branch, and with it the whole capitalist system, including the institution of imperialist war. What is happening in the world now is the wiping out of capitalism and war, and the irresistible growth of world socialism. The Cold War, with all its hypocrisy and violence, will not be able to prevent this process.

One of the major points in the struggle to abolish the Cold War is to oppose all those labor leaders, who under the false flag of "national defense," seek to protect the capi-

talist system and the profits of the bosses. It is impossible to make a real defense of the workers' interests, and at the same time to advance policies like the Cold War, that the employers consider indispensable to the maintenance of their profits system. The trade-union leaders who distinguish themselves by their advocacy of war, or what could lead to war—wholesale military preparations and vicious anti-socialist propaganda—by these very acts sacrifice and betray the interests of the working class and of the whole people.

The Communist parties of the world have many great issues to fight for and win in their relentless struggle for the emancipation of the workers. One of the most essential and important of these issues is the ending of the Cold War with all its implications of active, shooting, imperialist war. Let us not forget the criminal and unnecessary use that was made of the atomic bomb in Japan, by the same people who are today advocating its use against the socialist nations of the world. They defend their previous use of the atomic bombs, and they would be only too glad to use these bombs once more, if they got a chance to do so, and thought they could accomplish it without being destroyed in the process. We must be very intolerant, also, of the whole idea that imperialist war is a legitimate instrument to use in international disputes. We

must settle all such international quarrels by negotiations, and where these involve different social regimes, generally by a policy of peaceful co-existence. We must insist upon the current peace conferences in Geneva following these general lines. These conferences must be made by the peoples to do their anti-war will, and under no circumstances should the imperialist diplomats be allowed to sabotage them to failure.

In this period that we are now living through, the socialist countries, anti-imperialist governments of erstwhile colonial peoples, communist organizations, and organizations of the people generally, have two basic tasks. First, they must prevent war; and second, while preventing war, they must carry on without relaxation the struggle of the unions and other mass democratic bodies, the national liberation movements, and the building of socialism with all its ramifications. These elementary things the workers and their allies can, will, and are doing. And all the power and desperation of the sabre-rattlers, with their Cold War cannot stop them. The abolition of the Cold War, however, will speed up this whole constructive development. It is imperative for the further progress of humanity. Geneva and ensuing summit conferences must take important steps forward in this historic task of abolishing the Cold War.

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IDEAS IN OUR TIME

BY HERBERT APTHEKER

HISTORICAL WRITING AND THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

In reviewing "Scaramouche," a Hollywood product of the early 1950's, *Variety*, leading trade journal of the entertainment industry, remarked:

The highly complex Sabatini plot has been greatly simplified for present purposes. It finds the French Revolution all but eliminated from the story, because of the inevitable Red analogy were the hero allowed to spout the 1789 theme of "Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity."

Some American historians have sought to accomplish an even more heroic feat than cleansing *Scaramouche* of the French Revolution; they would rid the American Revolution of—revolution.

Among the more explicit of this school is Professor Daniel J. Boorstin, whose work (*The Genius of American Politics*, 1953) may be used as characteristic of its views. Boorstin finds: "The most obvious peculiarity of our American Revolution is that, in the modern European sense of the word, it was hardly a revolution at all." He notes that this view is the one promulgated for generations by the Daughters of the American Revolution; but he refuses to allow anything, even this coincidence, to keep him from announcing the result of his scholarly pursuits. Hence: "The more I have looked into the subject, the more convinced I have become of the wisdom of their [the Daughters'] naivete."

As a matter of fact, Boorstin ends up slightly to the Right of the Daughters, for while they had always insisted that the American Revolution was not a revolution but merely a colonial rebellion, Boorstin adds that it was a "conservative colonial rebellion" since it was "notably lacking in cultural self-consciousness and in any passion for national unity."

The new feature in this conservative revisionism, of which Boorstin's work is so striking an example, is its abundance and its starkness. Its essence may be found in the observations of De Tocqueville, made a century ago, to the effect that the United States was democratic without ever having had a democratic revolution. It is present, too, in the writings of some professional historians of earlier generations; for example, in the writings of John Fiske, in the late 19th century, and of G. A. Koch and Reginald Coupland, in the 1930's. The latter, an English historian, in his stimulating study of *The American Revolution and the British Empire* (1930), found

the Revolution remarkable in that it was made by a "prosperous, not on the whole ill-governed, largely indeed self-governing people" and so he could only explain it as being "almost entirely a matter of theories and principles."

Similarly, in the present period, writers like Louis Hartz and Robert E. Brown see the revolution as coming not because of oppression but because of freedom; the American revolutionists sought stability, not change. Indeed, if there were any "revolutionists"—*i.e.*, any who sought drastic change—they were the inept, deluded and misinformed British King and his Ministry. Hence, as Hartz says in *The Liberal Tradition in America* (1955) "this makes radicalism irrelevant to the American Revolution." The Americans did not "join in the great Enlightenment enterprise of shattering the Christian concept of sin" and "did not share the crusading spirit" that one finds in real revolutionists as those of France and Russia.

This, again, is similar to the earlier view of Charles M. Andrews who insisted that the Americans were seeking nothing but the "rights of Englishmen," that these rights "had nothing to do with democracy and represented nothing that was in advance of the age in which colonists lived" and that therefore the (so-called?) revolutionists "contributed little or nothing to the cause of progressive liberalism or to the advancement of those democratic ideals. . . ."

Robert E. Brown, in his effort to prove that the colonists sought to preserve and not to change, made of colonial society an advanced "middle-class democracy" and so pictured the Revolution purely in terms of separation from an England which was seeking to destroy an already existent democratic social order. Where he offered detailed evidences of the considerable advances that had been made towards elementary political democratic forms in some of the colonies, Brown's study, *Middle-Class Democracy and the Revolution in Massachusetts* (1955), is important—though hardly as new as he would have the reader believe, for very much the same point may be found in Edward Channing's study of the Revolution published in 1912, and even earlier in W. E. H. Lecky's work on 18th century English history.

But in affirming the "middle-class democratic" character of colonial America, Brown exaggerates to the point of absurdity:

Except for the inhabitants of a few towns, the people from Nova Scotia to West Florida were farmers. They were motivated by a spirit of industry which was unfettered and unrestrained because each person worked for himself, not for others.

Such a view is remarkable not only for its ignoring of such basic colonial enterprises as commercial trading, fishing, fur-trading and land-engrossing; it is even more remarkable for its ignoring of the entire Indian population

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and the 35 per cent of the non-Indian population which consisted of chattel slaves and of indentured servants. Surely they would have been astonished to learn that they were "unfettered and unrestrained" and that they "worked for themselves." And, of course, ignoring the unfree ignores the classes that owned them and profited from their labor.

A variant in the effort to take the revolution out of the American revolution consists of ascribing the outbreak to errors in judgment and failings in temperament. That is an essential thesis of Charles R. Ritcheson's *British Politics and the American Revolution* (1954)—mutual misunderstanding and bungling by the respective leaders produced the fighting. Similarly, Richard B. Morris, in his *The American Revolution* (1955), after announcing that his subject "refuses to conform to the Marxist pattern," makes its occurrence depend upon the existence in Britain of an insufficiently astute administration which did not know how "to reconcile the demands of imperial security with that measure of self-government which colonial maturity justified. . . ."

Another reflection of the impact of conservative revisionism is writing which does not go so far as to deny the revolutionary content of the Revolution, but which apologizes for its existence. John Richard Alden, for example, in his *The American Revolution* (1954), guardedly writes that "he believes that the thought and conduct of the American patriots are ultimately defensible, that the Declaration of Independence is in the last analysis justifiable." And Max Savelle described the event in 1952 as though it were a supreme example of human failure:

The American Revolution was one of the great tragic events of human history. Two societies, each led by a body of able and sincere men, and each motivated by the highest ideas it knew, came to an impasse over the question of the true nature of the Imperial constitution. When they finally arrived at this impasse neither side could retreat without the sacrifice of its highest political ideal. It is difficult to imagine a more colossal example of the tragic consequences of sheer misunderstanding and stubborn unwillingness, in the name of principle, to compromise.

No matter how the Revolution is evaluated, however, there remains the related, but yet distinct problem of accounting for its occurrence. On this question there is truly an enormous literature, the most significant features of which we shall now summarize.

Why a Revolution?

A still widely prevalent view is that which may be characterized as economic determinist, a view subjected to severe buffeting in the past gen-

eration and one which, in its time, made distinct contributions. Emory R. Johnson, in his *History of Domestic and Foreign Commerce of the United States* (1915) expressed this concept clearly and succinctly:

The Revolution in America was fought to secure commercial and industrial freedom through the establishment of political liberty. . . . The Revolutionary War was fought to secure freedom of trade and to obtain home rule in the levying of taxes for the support of the government.

Similar is the conclusion of J. Franklin Jameson in his very significant study, *The American Revolution Considered as a Social Movement* (1926):

. . . of the deep underlying causes, which for a generation had been moving the American in the direction of independence, none was so potent, according to all the best testimony, as the parliamentary restrictions on the trade of the colonies.

Other writers, taking the same economic determinist view, add emphasis on different economic conflicts, as those involving heavily indebted planters, threatened land speculators, thwarted manufacturers, and harassed investors in fur, fish or forest.

A view very much like that of Johnson and Jameson was held by Edward Channing, the young Charles A. Beard and the young Louis M. Hacker. Here the essence remained economic determinist but the expression was Madisonian and redolent with terms suggesting conflicts between different propertied groups and classes. Thus, Channing opened the third volume of his monumental *History of the United States* with these words:

Commericalism, the desire for advantage and profit in trade and industry, was at the bottom of the struggle between England and America; the immutable principles of human association were brought forward to justify colonial resistance to British selfishness. The governing classes of the old country wished to exploit the American colonists for their own use and behoof; the Americans desired to work their lands and carry on their trade for themselves.

The Beard-Hacker version did not differ substantially from this, though its use of words like bourgeoisie and its concentration upon conflicting needs of British mercantalism and rising American capitalism led some, like Charles M. Andrews, to confuse their views with the outlook of historical materialism—a confusion expedited, at least in the case of Hacker's work, by the fact that the author himself then fell victim to such confusion.

There is also a substantial body of literature, clustering about the names

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of scholars like George L. Beer, Lawrence H. Gipson, Lawrence A. Harper, Oliver M. Dickerson, and Curtis P. Nettels, which offers differing views as to the actual impact of the Navigation and Trade Acts, the weight of restrictions upon manufacturing and currency, the period when these and other mercantile measures began to adversely affect the colonial economy. These writings are of great consequence, but in terms of fundamental causative analysis, similarities are greater than differences and in that sense they add little to the schools already sketched.

Economics Unimportant?

Some historians deny that economic conflict between the propertied groups of England and the colonies was significant in producing the break-away. A good example is Eric Robson's posthumously published study of *The American Revolution* (1955). This scholar found himself unable to discover "any inexorable economic forces which were inevitably drawing the colonies towards revolution"; he thought, rather, that "conflicting political ideas, not tea or taxes, caused the secession of the colonial peoples from the British Empire."

In rather lonely splendor stands Thomas J. Wertenbaker. He found in his study of the Revolution in New York (*Father Knickerbocker Rebels*, 1948), that:

When the colonists placed themselves outside the British Empire they were sacrificing far more in an economic sense than they gained, and they all knew it. In other words, the Americans rebelled in spite of the economic situation, not because of it.

Wertenbaker joins some other historians in his view that the revolution was due to politics—"the Americans rebelled against Great Britain because they insisted upon governing themselves"; but he is unique in maintaining that the economic pull was all the other way.

There are many scholars who take an eclectic approach to the origins of the Revolution and attribute it to the existence of a myriad of discrete and separate "factors"—the economic, the political, the social, the religious, the climatic, the psychological, etc. Through the infinite multiplication of "causes," cause itself is liquidated.

Fresh Insights

On the other hand, there have been some scholars who have taken a more dialectical view and in doing so have offered fresh insights. A pioneer

work in this regard was Charles H. Lincoln's *Revolutionary Movement in Pennsylvania*, published in 1901. Lincoln noted—and this fact was especially marked in Pennsylvania—that the revolutionists “were more eager to obtain independence within their own state than to throw off the British connection.” He continued:

The national movement furnished the opportunity for which the dissatisfied people throughout the province had been waiting, and the result was a double change of government. . . . The purpose of this work has been to show the interdependence of the colonial and national revolutions.

Elsewhere in the same volume, Mr. Lincoln added another component, though he nowhere developed this thought, namely, that in the 17th and 18th centuries a highly variegated peoples, although predominantly English, came to the colonies and that they found here “utterly dissimilar environments” from those at home and so developed needs and institutions unlike those in Europe.

Mr. Lincoln did see clearly, however, an inter-imperial struggle and an intra-colonial struggle and he sensed the merging of the two in the nature of the Revolution—at least so far as Pennsylvania was concerned—and this marked a pushing forward of historical comprehension.

This thesis was stated more pointedly and applied more generally in the first book from the creative pen of the late Carl L. Becker. In his *History of Political Parties in the Province of New York, 1760-1776*, published in 1909, Becker pointed out that there were two questions central to the revolutionary ferment prior to 1776: (1) the question of home rule; (2) the question of who was to rule at home. Later writers, notably Arthur M. Schlesinger in his *Colonial Merchants and the American Revolution* (1918), and the more recent work of Merrill Jensen, have added fresh evidence and substantiation of this view, which, despite some attacks in the past and most recently in the work of Robert E. Brown, remains illuminating and basically sound.

In the enormous range of writing of Charles M. Andrews, dealing with the colonial and revolutionary periods, one can find significant expressions of the dialectical quality of history. Though, as we have seen, Andrews insisted—mistakenly, I think—that the Revolutionary effort had nothing to do with the question of democracy, he did express discerning views as to the nature and origin of that effort.

Thus, in an article in the *American Historical Review* (January, 1926) he found an inherent contradiction in the position of England and its colonies as at the root of the separation:

On one side was the immutable, stereotyped system of the mother country, based on precedent and tradition and designed to keep things comfortably as they were; on the other, a vital dynamic organism, containing the seed of a great nation, its forces untried, still to be proved. It is inconceivable that a connection should have continued long between two such yoke-fellows, one static, the other dynamic, separated by an ocean and bound only by the ties of a legal relationship.

Though Andrews does not spell out here why one system was "static" and the other "dynamic," he does, in this passage, suggest the maturing of a revolutionary social process which is more helpful than the "infinite-factor" school of narration, and much richer than the mechanical, economic determinist views.

Again, certain analytical passages in his *magnum opus* reflect the same awareness of social-developmental processes. Thus, in the second volume of Andrews' *Colonial Period of American History* there is this paragraph:

The separation from the mother country was more than a matter of revolutionary warfare for eight years. It was a century long process, without dates and without boundaries, whereby, little by little, features of English law, constituted authority and precedent, land tenure, and other conditions ingrained in the minds and habits of Englishmen at home, such as were neither needed nor wanted in the colonies, were being one by one altered, reduced, or eliminated altogether. In that way and for that reason independence of the mother country had been won in many directions before the Treaty of Paris of 1783.

In the fourth volume of his work, Andrews has more exposition of the details of this "separation." Furthermore, he places the matter more clearly in terms of social contradiction and antagonistic interests, though he one-sidedly confines the matter exclusively to the question of England versus the colonies:

England's determination to centralize authority at Whitehall and Westminster; to maintain her colonies in a permanent state of subordination, politically as well as commercially; to deny them the status of self-governing communities, refusing privileges asked for and denying many that were already enjoyed; to consider her own prosperity and security before the welfare of her outlying dependencies, whose "rights" as we call them today, she neither recognized nor understood; and to belittle protests from America as the work only of agitators and radicals—all these things must be taken into consideration by anyone who wishes to understand the circumstances that brought on the American Revolution.

Andrews clearly felt that ideas and considerations such as are expressed in the paragraphs that I have quoted were beyond the ken of the Marxist writer. This was due to the fact that he did not comprehend historical materialism—a failing made crystal-clear in the concluding sentences of the last volume of his *Colonial History*.

There Andrews attacked what he thought was "the Marxian doctrine" as enunciated by Beard and Hacker, but actually was an economic determinist view. Andrews felt it was "untrue to fact to say that there was any one grievance common to all [colonies] and that grievance solely commercial or industrial." He saw more to history than "a clash of economic interests" and concluded:

To emphasize the economic aspects to the exclusion of all else is to interpret human affairs in terms of material things only, to say nothing of the spiritual power necessary to use these material resources for human welfare, to ignore the influence of sentiment and morality, and to underestimate the rich and varied stuff of human nature, the distractions of statesmen, and the waywardness and uncertainty of events.

The Marxist View

Marxism ignores none of the forces mentioned by Andrews. Marxism does not see the American Revolution "exclusively" in terms of "commercial or industrial," or, one might add, agrarian, grievances. Marxism does deal with "England" more realistically than did Andrews, for even Disraeli acknowledged that there was more than one "England" and the class differences in England were certainly of the greatest consequence in the origins, conduct, and conclusion of the American Revolution. Marxism sees "the colonies," also, more realistically than did Andrews, for these colonies were themselves class-stratified societies (as so much of Andrews' own *narrative* makes clear) and this fact, too, is of decisive consequence in comprehending the nature of that society and the changes therein and the demands raised by different classes and groups within the colonies. Without this as a base, nothing in colonial history, and certainly not the struggle to achieve independence from Great Britain, makes sense.

Marxism, in viewing the economic factor as ultimately decisive, does not think of "economic factor" in the narrow sense as this or that particular economic conflict or economic interest. The economic factor in the Marxist outlook, is itself the offshoot of the basic economic foundation—the mode of production, the resulting relations of production, and the social superstructure arising from them, bulwarking them, and effecting them. In this

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sense, is the economic factor ultimately the decisive one in the historical process, a process which manifests itself, of course, through the activities of human beings. This lies at the heart of historical materialism, its view of class roles and of historical dynamics. It is quite different from considering any particular economic item or "factor" as determinant; and it insists upon the interpenetrating, complex—dialectical—quality of life and history.

The most notable recent sustained efforts to deal with the American Revolution from a Marxist viewpoint have come from Herbert M. Morais and William Z. Foster. In both cases very much more richness is apparent than Andrews would grant could come from this outlook.

Morais, in his splendid brief survey of the first two-hundred years of American history (*The Struggle for American Freedom*, 1944) devotes eighty pages specifically to the Revolutionary War. His analysis is summarized in this paragraph:

The first American Revolution was the product of two general movements: the struggle for self-government and national independence and the struggle among the American people themselves for a more democratic order. The Revolution therefore had an external aspect, the colonial war of liberation against Britain, and an internal aspect, the mass upsurge against anti-democratic elements. It ushered in the modern era of revolutionary struggles and became the prototype of a whole series of bourgeois-democratic upheavals in Europe and colonial uprisings throughout the world.

Foster's views are given, with somewhat different emphases, in his two volumes, *The Negro People in American History* (1954) and *Outline Political History of the Americas* (1951).

In the later volume, Foster quotes the well-known estimate of Lenin—in his *Letter to American Workers* (1920)—that the American War for Independence was "one of those great . . . really revolutionary wars of which there have been so few." Foster goes on to say that the revolution "dealt a mighty blow to feudal reaction and greatly stimulated democracy all over the world." He characterizes the Revolution as "a bourgeois revolution, with strong democratic currents within it." Earlier, in the same book, he spells out certain of its features in this manner: "The first American Revolution was a violent economic, political, and military collision between the young colonial capitalism striving to grow and acquire independence, and the dominant British capitalism, which sought to stifle and restrict it."

In his earlier volume, Foster had added the very stimulating view that the American Revolution was the first and the major one of "the American hemispheric revolution" that continued on into the next century. He

presented it as a revolt for colonial national liberation, against burdensome domestic conditions and pressing grievances; and he emphasized its international character. Moreover, Foster placed this hemispheric revolution within the larger world revolution against feudalism, or the world-wide movement from feudalism to capitalism, and he saw as a central feature of such a change, the development of political democracy. He recognized, of course, national differences in revolutionary development, depending upon local variations in conditions, but saw the above aspects as basic and present to a greater or lesser degree throughout the Americas.

The American Revolution was the result of the interpenetration of three currents: the fundamental conflict in interest between the rulers of the colonizing power and the vast majority of the colonists; the class stratification within the colonies themselves and the resulting class struggles that marked colonial history which almost always found the British imperial power as a bulwark of the reactionary or the conservative interests in such struggles; and the developing sense of American nationality, transcending class lines, which resulted from the varied origins of the colonies' peoples, their physical separation from England, the different fauna and flora and climate of their surroundings, their different problems and interests, their own developing culture and psychology and even language, their own common history, and from their own experience of common hostility—varying in degree with place and time—towards the powers-that-be in England.

These currents were inter-related; each reacted upon the other. Of course, to have a colonial revolt one must have a colony and in this sense the American Revolution, which was centrally a war against the colonizing power, rested ultimately upon the antagonism of interests between the rulers of England and the American colonists as a whole. And basic to that antagonism was the conflict between a rising bourgeoisie (commercial, landed and manufacturing) in the colonies and a restraining bourgeoisie in England.

Adam Smith, in his classical *Wealth of Nations* (1776) put the matter this way:

To prohibit a great people from making all that they can of every part of their own produce, or from employing their stock and industry in a way that they may judge most advantageous to themselves, is a manifest violation of the most sacred rights of mankind.

This struggle between two conflicting national propertied interests is not one to which the Marxist can be indifferent. The colonial bourgeoisie

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was the young and straining one which sought control of its national market as a necessary preliminary to its growth; it was exactly this control and this growth which the British rulers would deny. They would deny it because they themselves had control through a monopoly on trade, the processing of finished goods, credit facilities and world-wide marketing know-how.

The denial inhibited the fullest growth of productive forces and was therefore reactionary. In this sense, also, the banner of the young, colonialy-restrained American propertied interests bore the democratic emblem.

Again, in democratic mass struggles which were so central a feature of colonial life, it was characteristic—from Bacon's Revolt in 1676 to the Massachusetts Land Bank War of the 1740's—to find the British power as the last resort of home-grown and British-fed reaction. Hence in these struggles, of such great concern to large numbers and involving questions of bread and butter—civil liberties, taxes, debts, suffrage, representation—invariably there developed a dual aspect, against England and against home-based tyranny, and invariably these were intertwined.

Furthermore, as the 18th century proceeded, a definite sense of American nationality appeared and developed; this encompassed all classes. The desire for the right of self-determination of this new nationality, which was at the heart of the revolutionary effort, was confined to no class, and most certainly was not a monopoly of the well-to-do. On the contrary, in the American Revolution, because of its nature, and because of the progressive character of the American bourgeoisie then, the active involvement of the masses of workers and farmers was notable. Again, one has an inter-related phenomenon—the progressive and democratic content of the effort attracted the masses; the participation of the masses helped guarantee and enhance the democratic content of the effort.

True it is, of course, that the American Revolution was fundamentally a colonial one, and hence it did not have the profoundly transforming quality that more basically social ones have—as, for example, the deep anti-feudal upheavals of the English and French Revolutions of the 17th and 18th centuries, not to speak of the anti-capitalist revolutions of our own century. And its thorough-going nature was limited further by its failure to deal decisively with the pre-feudal form that did characterize American colonial society, namely, chattel slavery—something to be undone in a future revolution. Nevertheless, the American revolution, in its opposition to colonial fetters, in its impetus to democratic political and social innovations, and in its assertion of the right of national self-determination, carried along with it enough to justify Lenin's characterization as "one of those great . . . really revolutionary wars. . . ."

It is necessary to emphasize, too, the radical quality of the dominant revolutionary ideology. Here space permits only the remark that that ideology represented a fundamental break with feudal and monarchical thinking and in this respect had the widest international repercussions as it had had the widest international sources.

In evaluating the quality of the Revolution it is important to bear in mind, if one is to get its full contemporaneous impact, that it was the first successful colonial revolution in modern history. The imperial powers from Spain to France to Holland to Portugal had all faced colonial insurrections and they had all been put down. But the American succeeded and that fact itself, quite apart from the resulting political and social institutions, had an enormously revolutionary influence upon the peoples of the world.

Conclusion

Mr. Dean Acheson, the former Secretary of State, writes in the current *Yale Review* (Summer, 1959), that the months before July 4, 1776 constituted a "prelude to independence"; it would be wrong, he contends, to speak of this period as a prelude to revolution. The mis-named "American Revolution", it seems, was only "a political act, not a social revolution or a nationalist uprising, or a combination of the two, with which we are so familiar today." In the Declaration of Independence, hitherto erroneously considered a manifesto of revolution, the authors "were stating nothing new"; and our revolutionary forefathers simply "were preserving old rights, not asserting new ones."

From this reading of the past, Mr. Acheson draws support for the present U.S. foreign policy of bulwarking a decrepit status quo. His article is of interest in that it displays with particular plainness the connection between the New Conservatism in historical writing and imperialist functioning in world affairs.

Mr. Acheson has been an apt pupil, (he undoubtedly was an eager one) in the New Conservatism school, but his lessons concerning the past were as false as his activities in the present were pernicious.

Our nation begins with a transforming and precedent-shattering Revolution; the true greatness of our country largely has depended, in the past, upon the efforts of our people to realize fully the promises of that noble beginning. Today, too, on this 183rd anniversary of our Declaration of Independence, patriotism requires a break with the Acheson-Eisenhower "Free World" fraud and Cold War diplomacy; it requires a re-dedication to winning for these United States "a decent respect from the opinions of mankind."

By Sid

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Art and Ideology

By Sidney Finkelstein

THE ENTHUSIASTIC appreciation here in the United States for the gifted musicians and dance groups that have visited us from the Soviet Union, along with the rising respect for Soviet achievements in science—two fields that to some minds are mutually exclusive—has aroused considerable interest in the Marxist approach to the arts and culture. For the visitors possessed not only a consummate technical equipment, but also a quality known as “heart,” together with a veneration for a cultural past which the West likes to consider peculiarly its own. It would be hard to prove at this moment that this humanist tradition and heritage is as secure in the West. Travelers report that “Russia has more musicians of one kind or another than any country in the world.” (Faubion Bowers, in the *Saturday Review*, February 28, 1959). They also report that it is a country of book readers, who are familiar with American writers and the classics of world literature.

An apparently baffling question arises. Why should the Soviet Union proclaim that the arts must aid in the building of socialism, and as part of this, bring to its populace the riches of art created under feudal, landlord and capitalist society?

Just as the Marxist view of history is most commonly confused with economic determinism, so the

Marxist view of the arts is most often confused with the sociological view. And so an examination of the sociological approach, differentiating it from the Marxist, is of special importance today, not so much to explain the cultural life of the Soviet Union as to help clarify some basic questions as to what art itself is and its place in society.

HAUSER'S "SOCIAL HISTORY"

An exponent of the sociological approach to the arts who has won considerable American prestige is the Hungarian-born, German-educated art historian, Arnold Hauser. In 1951 the publication of his two-volume, *The Social History of Art* (A. A. Knopf), aroused reviews here ranging from the respectful to the enthusiastic. In this book Hauser showed how the arts are a mirror of the ways of life, customs and manners of each age, and change their style as society changes. He showed that art has an economic life, for the artist must make a living, sell his work or talents, and find patrons. He recognized that a ruling class in society imposes on the arts its own tastes, views, prejudices and politics. The book was permeated with the gratifying rationality which springs from a materialist approach to society and history. And implied throughout was the truth

from which so much of United States intellectual life flees with fear or horror; it is that one cannot be a truly educated person today without knowing Marx, and that Marx's discoveries are central to an understanding of modern society.

If the praise for the book seems strange in the light of the virtual and hostile conspiracy of silence that existed then, and exists now, in the commercial press, regarding Marxist literature, it may be explained by the fact that in addition to the author's impressive erudition and pungency of style, he clearly disassociated himself from what was going on culturally in the lands where Marxism was being put into practice and socialism was actually being built. There was some brief mention, in the closing chapter, of the Soviet Union. He said, "the film is the only art in which Soviet Russia has any important achievements to its credit," including in this accomplishment only the early documentary-style films of Eisenstein and Pudovkin. He ignored wholly a colossal cultural revolution, the abolition of illiteracy, the creation of a mass popular audience for the fine arts and literature, the production of some great novels and of a remarkably rich and creative music. Instead he presented this sweeping generalization: "They would prefer to put back the historical standing of art to the level of the July monarchy," or in other words to the European 1830's and 1840's. Another reason for the wel-

come of the book is that it did not offer any effective challenge to the prevalent views, which today are fostering among artists a combination of anti-social self-centeredness and preoccupation with formal techniques. His approach to this was basically the sociological; namely that it is a necessary reflection of our times.

HAUSER'S "PHILOSOPHY OF ART"

In 1957 Hauser came to the United States, taking the post of professor of art history at Brandeis University. And now he has published another book, *The Philosophy of Art History* (Knopf, N. Y., \$6). It is a much more theoretical treatise, taking up how art history itself should be approached. Crucial questions are raised, such as the relation of the arts to the ideological superstructure of society, the judgment of greatness, the nature of progress in the arts, and indeed whether there is any such thing as progress in this realm. To face up squarely to these problems brings about a crisis in the sociological approach. And in both the preface and the introductory chapter, Hauser offers a criticism of the sociological approach, and an affirmation that despite its limitations, it must have a place in art theory along with various non-social views.

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sociological terms. Above all, artistic excellence is not so definable; it has no sociological equivalent. The same social conditions can give rise to valuable or to utterly valueless works, and such works have nothing in common but tendencies more or less irrelevant from the artistic point of view. . . . If sociology is unable to penetrate to the ultimate secret of the art of a Rembrandt, are we to refuse to probe into the social preconditions of his art, and so of the stylistic peculiarities that distinguish it from the art of the contemporary Flemish painters, notably Rubens?

What this is saying is that the sociological approach cannot explain the unique and central quality of a work of art, its beauty, and therefore its appeal to audiences far beyond those that sponsored its birth and whose tastes are reflected in it. It cannot explain greatness. In its description of changing styles, the minor artist can serve for illustration as effectively as and sometimes more so than the giant creator. Since both to Hauser and perhaps most of his readers, the sociological approach coincides with Marxism, his self-criticism becomes a criticism of the Marxist view as well. This essay will attempt to show the difference between the sociological and the Marxist view of the arts. And in both the introductory chapters and the first main section of the book, "The Sociological Approach: The Concept of Ideology in the History of Art," a central problem is raised. It is the relation of art to the eco-

nomie base and superstructure of ideas in society.

ART AND SUPERSTRUCTURE

The famous statement of Marx on base and superstructure, in the *Preface to a Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, is as follows:

In the social production which men carry on they enter into definite relations that are indispensable and independent of their will, relations of production which correspond to a definite stage of development of their material productive forces. The sum total of these relations of production constitute the economic structure of society, the real foundation, on which rises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. The mode of production of material life conditions the social, political and intellectual life process in general. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but, on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness. . . . With the change of the economic foundation, the entire immense superstructure is more or less rapidly transformed.

This Hauser develops into a theory of art. He says that art was first "a tool of magic." Then it became, "an instrument of animistic religion, used to influence good and bad spirits in the interest of the community." Then it exalted gods and kings. And so,

Finally, in the form of more or less

open propaganda, it is employed in the interests of a close group, a clique, a political party, a social class. . . . The artist, whose livelihood, with all his hopes and prospects, depends upon such a social class, becomes quite unintentionally and unconsciously the mouthpiece of his customers and patrons. . . . Marx, however, was the first to formulate explicitly the conception that spiritual values are political weapons. He taught that every spiritual creation, every scientific notion, every portrayal of reality derives from a certain particular aspect of truth, viewed from a perspective of social interest, and is accordingly restricted and distorted.

What Hauser offers is a subtle distortion of Marx's thought, leading to the conclusion that since everyone must see reality in a "distorted" way, nobody can know what truth really is. As a result, a contradiction arises, for works of art certainly arrive at realities, and often disclose truths which clash with the prejudices of a ruling class. And so Hauser "corrects" Marx by inventing a mystical "critical power" in the human mind.

But Marx neglected to note that we wage a continual war against such distorting tendencies in our thought, that in spite of the inevitable partialities of our mental outlook, we do possess the power of examining our own thought critically, and so correcting to a certain extent the one-sidedness and error of our views.

To bolster this, Hauser quotes Engels against Marx, referring to the

much quoted (and abused) letter in which Engels spoke of Balzac's "triumph of realism;" namely that although Balzac was politically a legitimist, he portrayed critically and accurately the weaknesses of the nobles whose cause he took up, and the strength of the republicans who were on the opposite side.

What Hauser does not see is that to Marx and Marxism, the discovery of reality and the "distortions" of ideologies are not the same thing. On the contrary, they are in persistent opposition to one another. In the same passage from Marx quoted above, on the formation of superstructure, Marx says that when the economic foundation of society—in other words, reality—changes, it comes into conflict with the superstructure, and "men become conscious of this conflict and fight it out." A new ideology replaces the old, but the new has embraced certain realities. There is a real world made up of non-human nature and of people in society. It is a knowable world. People can discover its makeup and its laws, which are the laws of its motion and change. There is such a thing as truth, although the process of discovering it will never be complete. Each problem solved brings up new ones to solve. But truth is established by the fact that the laws of reality, when they are discovered and become a social possession, enable people to change reality. When the discovery of the structure of the atom makes it possible for the atom to

be split, releasing tremendous stores of energy, then the truth of the discovery is established. When the Marxist discovery of the economic laws of capitalism enable the continuing capitalist crises to be predicted, and make it possible for socialism to develop new laws that allow it to flourish without crises, then the truth of these laws is established, even though their very application by society brings about changes that demand further theoretical investigation. Throughout history the penetration of reality and the formation of ideological systems have been opposites, moving hand in hand for relatively short periods. Inevitably sharp antagonisms must arise between them, and it is the discovery of reality which is the motive force in progress. These discoveries are passed down from one age to the next. Ideologies perish or are transformed when the social foundation changes.

ON CRITICAL REALISM

Balzac's critical realism sprang not, as Hauser puts it, from some mysterious critical power in the mind, but out of the contrast between ideology and the movement of real life, especially apparent to one who is actively engaged in the social currents and class struggles of real life. In the past, such a conflict between ideology and reality had always arisen after an exploiting ruling class consolidated its rule, with the con-

flict finally reaching a breaking point. And so a sweeping criticism arose of the old superstructure, with its ideas and institutions. The rising class carrying on this criticism, did not formulate the new ideology of a future society. It expressed its awareness of realities, and struggle against exploitation, by re-interpreting the existing ideology, or drawing upon past ideologies. Thus even the bourgeois-democratic revolutionaries of the 18th century drew upon the authority of the Roman republic; or in the American colonies, they demanded the "rights of Englishmen." It is when a rising class begins to take power and is faced with the task of reshaping society, replacing old institutions with new ones, that its full ideology takes shape. And then this ideology comes into conflict with the realities of a changing world. With the 19th century victories of capitalism, bringing about more rapid changes than had ever taken place in society before, the conflict between ideology and reality appeared almost immediately; between the lofty principles with which the bourgeoisie had abolished the privileges of the feudal aristocracy, wiped out a monarchy, proclaimed a republic, and the realities of the world the bourgeoisie had brought into being. And it is this contrast that lies behind Balzac's critical realism. Thus in the first chapter of *Eugénie Grandet*, he describes how the well-to-do cooper, Grandet, purchased at a song some fine vineyards

that had been confiscated from the clergy, after 1789.

Since the people of Saumur were far from being ardent revolutionaries, Monsieur Grandet was regarded as a daring man, a republican, a man with a propensity for new ideas; actually, however, he merely had a propensity for vineyards. He was appointed a member of the administration of the district of Saumur, and his pacific influence made itself felt both politically and commercially. Politically, he protected the former aristocrats and did everything in his power to prevent the sale of the property of those who had left the country; commercially, he sold the republican armies one or two thousand barrels of white wine, in exchange for which he received some superb meadows belonging to a community of nuns, which the government had been keeping in reserve.

Clearly Balzac is contrasting the high principles of republicanism, raised in 1789-93, with the bourgeois chicanery and self-aggrandizement that followed almost immediately. And *Eugénie Grandet*, along with his other novels, shows how in a generation this became a dominant way of bourgeois life. Balzac himself was in the midst of the marketplace war, becoming a publisher and going bankrupt.

IDEOLOGY VS REALITY

Throughout the 19th century under capitalism the conflict rises in intensity between ideology and reality. The upper bourgeoisie try to solve it by raising a pragmatic prin-

ciple, asserting their noble "ideals" when it profits them to do so, and at other times asserting that one has to be "practical" or "realistic." Others reflect this conflict by raising counter ideologies, such as reform movements—requesting the bourgeoisie to live up to their principles—and Utopian socialism, or even an idealization of the old aristocratic order. The main importance of such counter ideologies lies in the real documentation they give of the profound dissatisfaction that exists. If Balzac also raises such a flimsy ideology, a visionary image of a return of a "principled" aristocracy, he does it only to castigate further his own class, which like so many of the other bourgeoisie, he hates because he is involved in its perpetual inner war. Such politically conservative ideas enter his novels through the form of speeches and asides. Thus in *Eugénie Grandet* he mentions, in describing an old villa, "a time when men and things still had that quality of simplicity which French manners and morals are losing day by day." What he is saying is that since the big bourgeoisie, seeking titles of nobility, putting their sons and daughters on the marriage auction block to consolidate their fortunes and estates, are acting like a grotesque perversion of the aristocracy, one might as well have the real thing. His novels show of course that he had no respect at all for this old aristocracy as he saw it in actual life. The greatness of his novels

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lies in his real and critical documentation of bourgeois life, doing this as an artist; that is, he showed how the new social and economic conditions were reshaping human psychology and personality down to the most intimate relations of love, marriage and family, creating a new kind of people.

The contrast between the present realities of bourgeois life and the lofty principles advanced when it came to power, is the essence of critical realism. It is found in a host of 19th century writers, including, in our country, Cooper, Melville, Mark Twain and Dreiser, all of whom arrived at times at illusory and even backward philosophical or political conclusions, without this eliminating the documentation they gave of real life.

Hauser does not touch upon socialist realism in either of his books. A grasp of this and its possibilities rests upon an understanding which he does not seem to have of the relation between ideology and reality. For socialist realism is radically different. It employs the view of dialectic and historical materialism. And the essence of this is that it is not an ideology but opposed to all ideologies.

Hauser, in discussing superstructure and ideology, refers to the passage on "false consciousness" in a letter by Engels to Mehring (July 14, 1893):

Ideology is a process accomplished

by the so-called thinker consciously, indeed, but with a false consciousness. The real motives impelling him remain unknown to him, otherwise it would not be an ideological process at all. Hence he imagines false or apparent motives. Because it is a process of thought he derives both its form and its content from pure thought, either his own or that of his predecessors.

Engels is not saying here what Hauser thinks he is, namely that everybody sees things distortedly or falsely. He is saying that every ideology, by its very nature, ignores the actual relation between reality and thought. An ideology is formed not as a depiction of reality in its change and movement, but as a self-contained system, which those who hold it regard as confirmed because of its apparent inner consistency and logic. The character of every ideology is that it attempts to be such a consistent, static, all-embracing, unchanging system. It may be a philosophical system. It may be a religious theology. It may be a moral system that claims it has an absolute touchstone for whether an act is good or evil, regardless of the changing conditions of life; a legal system which claims that it has an absolute touchstone for "perfect justice," regardless of classes and class antagonism; a governmental system which claims that it has attained a perfect harmony of interests, and so need no longer be subject to alterations; an aesthetic system which claims that it has found, in such

principles as "design," "balance," "unity," "the relation of parts to the whole," a perfect touchstone with which to decide whether a work of art is good or not. An ideology offers itself as eternal truth, just as a ruling class in each stage of society regards its status as the summation of all human progress and its rule as ordained for all time.

To Marxism, there is always a distinction between ideologies and "real, positive knowledge of the world." The discoveries of science, for example, are not ideologies, or super-structural. They may be woven into ideologies. Thus the discoveries of science, culminating in the physics of Isaac Newton, helped explode the medieval theology with its belief in miracles and witchcraft. Newton and his contemporaries projected a different theology, which conceived the universe as a gigantic machine set up by God and running itself. Each new ideology, or revision of an old one, has to embrace the commonly accepted discoveries of reality, for only thus can it appear to be "true." But out of the very use of these discoveries, others are made, which come into conflict with the new ideology as well.

Just as in social thought Hauser does not carry his historical materialism so far as socialism, he similarly carries his dialectical thought just so far and no further. The effect is like a wave striking a barrier and recoiling back. Beginning with what appears to be a valid posi-

tion, he refuses to carry it to its conclusion, and ends with a compromise. Thus in respect to ideology, he first describes it as "distortion" and ends by accepting it as necessary and good.

Is a work of art not a Utopia, the gratification of a need that finds expression in an ideology? . . . Such (sociological) analysis reminds us that the ideological entanglement of our consciousness also has its good side. It confirms the suspicion that desire to be free of all ideology is just a variant of the old idea of philosophical salvation, which promised the human spirit access to a meta-historical, supernatural, secure world of absolute, eternal values. . . . History is a dialectical controversy between ideology and the ideal of truth, between willing and knowing, the desire to alter things and the awareness of the inertia of things.

The statement about the "desire to be free of all ideologies" seems to be inspired by a passage in Engel's *Feuerbach*:

With all philosophers it is precisely the "system" which is perishable; and for the simple reason that it springs from an imperishable desire of the human mind—the desire to overcome all contradictions. But if all contradictions are once and for all disposed of, we shall have arrived at so-called absolute truth. World history will be at an end.

And so to Marxism, humanity will never arrive at absolute, final truth. Every contradiction resolved will bring up new contradictions. But

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how different Engels' view is from Hauser's dreary picture of an endless shuttling back and forth, between false ideologies and unattainable "ideal truths." Thus Engels proceeds:

As soon as we have once realized that the task of philosophy thus stated means nothing but the task that a single philosopher should accomplish that which can only be accomplished by the entire human race in its progressive development—as soon as we realize that, there is an end to all philosophy in the hitherto accepted sense of the word. One leaves alone "absolute truth," which is unattainable along this path by any single individual; instead one pursues attainable relative truths along the path of the positive sciences, and the summation of their results by means of dialectical thinking. . . . He (Hegel) showed us the way out of the labyrinth of systems to real positive knowledge of the world.

ON DIALECTICS

And so when Marxism foresees the end of ideology, it does not mean, as Hauser thinks, the attainment of "absolute truth." It means the end of static, closed systems. In this sense dialectical materialist philosophy is not a system or an ideology but an enemy of systems and ideologies. It enables people to think in terms of the laws of movement and change that generate in the real world. Already in the socialist countries this is an integral part of education. And while one cannot say that this way of

thought is the possession of all the population, the fact remains that a criticism of itself and its institutions is built into the very processes of socialist thought. An integral part of its legal, governmental and economic structure is the provision made for its continual change, with the replacement of old by new. Socialist society in its short history, despite the great burden of economic backwardness with which it started, and despite two invasions, has gone through more rapid, progressive changes than any other society in a comparable time, has produced a flourishing science and art, and now projects confidently new vistas of change and growth.

Truth lies only in living reality and its process of change. Thus, dialectical materialism embodies truth, in that it is an accurate description of the laws of changing reality, not standing above but coinciding with the sciences, bringing them together into an over-all view, helping them to move forward, enabling people to act with a consciousness of the make-up and movement of the real world. It brings a real body of knowledge to the possession of people, and provides for the continual expansion of this knowledge. What happens in the real world is primary to it. To ideologists, however, truth lies in the closed system of thought itself.

Thus, different religions claim to be "true religious"; different philosophies claim to be "true philoso-

phies." Familiar is the outcry of the bewildered young student, presented with rival systems: "What shall I believe?"

Marxism may take on this aspect of an ideology when, as has sometimes happened, it is turned into dogma. Engels, however, referring to Marx and himself, said, of course: "Our doctrine is not a dogma but a guide to action." Lenin quoted this and added: "This classical statement stresses with remarkable force and expressiveness that aspect of Marxism which is constantly being lost sight of. And by losing sight of it, we turn Marxism into something one-sided, disfigured and lifeless; we deprive it of its living soul" (*Certain Features of the Historical Development of Marxism.*)

Marxists sometimes will think of Marxism, of dialectical materialism, as a "true ideology." It is, however, a guide and a method to the discovery of a truth which is constantly unfolding new aspects and problems. Thus, Mao Tse-tung has written:

Practice, knowledge, more practice, more knowledge, and the repetition *ad infinitum* of this cyclic pattern, and with each cycle the elevation of the content of practice and knowledge to a higher level—such is the whole epistemology of dialectical materialism, such is its theory of the unity of knowledge and action (*On Practice*).

ART AND TRUTH

Hauser admits a certain amount of truth in art. "It would be wrong

to deny art all claim of achieving truth, to deny that it can make a valuable contribution to our knowledge of the world and of man." But from this point on he flounders, for to explain what the truths of art are, he would have to enter the non-sociological realm of beauty and form. And so he falls into a compromise, by which the truths of art have a unique quality of being valid for one person, and not for another, and so are beyond any kind of argument.

The fact that the insights gained by art often so quickly go out of currency and never really secure universal acceptance does not trouble us in the least. We regard them as uncommonly, often indeed uniquely, valuable interpretations of life, not as objectively compulsive, demonstrable or even, properly speaking, arguable propositions. . . . We can be completely overwhelmed by a work of art, and yet quite reconciled to the fact that it leaves other men, who are our spiritual neighbors, unmoved.

But this is only a half-truth. Certainly people will always differ as to their preferences among artists and works of art. And each age rewrites the history of the arts, with a certain shifting of values and discovery of hitherto unrecognized greatness. But the great artists, from a Sophocles, Shakespeare and Michelangelo to a Beethoven, Dickens and Tolstoi, remain great. There are objective standards.

To understand artistic truth we

have to see that reality does not consist of a definite "outer world" on the one hand and a perceiving, reflecting human being, recording this outer world, on the other. Reality consists of people actively and socially engaged in working with the world of nature, and transforming it. As they carry on the labor process, changing the world, adapting it to human use, they both discover the make-up of the world and change themselves. Marx writes on the labor process in *Capital*: "By thus acting on the external world and changing it, he (man) at the same time changes his own nature. He develops his powers and compels them to act in obedience to his sway."

Art is a product of human beings in society. It employs all the socially created means for reflecting or thinking about reality, such as spoken or written language, the shaping or modelling of clay, stone, metal and wood, drawing and the handling of color, the organization of human movement, the arrangement of patterns of sound, in order to give objective form to man's consciousness of himself and his changing relations to the outer world of people and nature. Its special and essential quality is its beauty. Beauty is the awareness of the development of the senses, as they have grown in response to the continually advancing discovery of the richness of the external world. We can call this development of the senses a product of the humanization of the real

world. There is first the humanization of nature. Through the labor process the secrets of nature are progressively discovered, its laws are revealed to become instruments for human progress, and the mind is enriched by the disclosure of its manifold sensuous qualities.

There is secondly the humanization of human relations. With the progressive conflicts in and reorganizations of society carried on by people, there is a progressive discovery, understanding and mastery of the laws governing the organization of society. Human relations become more "human" in the sense that destructive antagonisms are replaced by kinship and understanding, and through cooperation the individual is enabled to develop more freely.

Each stage in the humanization of the external world, including both non-human nature and society, is a stage in the growth of the human being, an enlargement of the scope of individual life, an awareness of a step towards freedom, and a growth of the senses. The eyes "open up," so to speak. The individual grows by continually rediscovering himself in the outer world and in other people. The esthetic emotion, the recognition of beauty, is the consciousness of this leap in human powers. The history of the arts is a record of the successive stages in the humanization of reality, revealing the constant change and expansion of the awareness of beauty to include ever new subject

matter and new aspects of familiar subject matter.

RECOGNIZING BEAUTY

The recognition of beauty is a peculiarly human response, but it is at the same time a response to something real, existing in the world, and material. The work of art itself, once it is created, becomes an "object," part of the external world. But it is a unique kind of object, different from something found in nature, and not intended as a replica, pictorial or otherwise, of something in nature. It is an object every part of which has been shaped by the human hand and mind, and the recognition of it as a thing of beauty is at the same time a recognition of the human presence implicit in it. It represents the consciousness of the humanization of the external world, taking concrete, crystallized shape. By saying that we recognize a human presence within it, we mean that it involves a human image. Even a piece of pottery, a landscape painting, a work of music, embodies thus a human image, or human portrait, for it presents a peculiarly human growth and response to nature and social life.

The essential quality of a human image or portrait in art is that it is both individual and typical. It appears to be a distinctive aspect of individual life. But at the same time it reveals what people share in common due to the fact that they live

in the same world and are faced with the same problems. The typicality of a human image in art tells us that people are shaped not only by their desires and by their dealings with life but by life's dealings with them. And since art works with languages and skills that in their simple, basic form are a common social possession, the audiences can "read" the work of art and make its discovery, its "humanization" process, their own.

Once art has opened people's eyes and mind to the qualities of people and nature, this revelation can be permanently theirs. It becomes part of their thoughts and perceptions, and serves to create a greater intimacy between themselves and the real world about them. The revelations provided by art thus become a common social possession. Society in the long run accepts only what serves it, only what is real and true, only what enables it to live and grow, for otherwise it perishes. And so, with the passage of time, greatness, seemingly a capricious or subjective judgment in its own time, takes on the character of objective truth.

The transformations which art has brought about in people are a stage in growth which cannot be turned backward without destruction. Once a deeper, more liberating view of human beings becomes established, any statement of a less advanced view becomes obviously false and backward, or grotesque. like a per-

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son today mouthing racism, proclaiming that those who work with their hands are not human beings, or denying the preciousness of human life. The content of art is its discovered truth of life, or in other words, its contribution to social consciousness. The form of art is the structure of the work of art itself. It employs all the special skills, materials and sensuous reflections of the outer world that are part of its tools and techniques. The unity of content and form is established by the fact that every step in the all-over construction of a work is guided and controlled by the artist's thinking about the special problem which he has taken up from life and which he illuminates in his work.

In the development of the arts, there has been a constant opposition between the forward movement of the exploration of reality and the pressure of ideologies. The further the work of art is removed from reality, the weaker becomes its artistic quality. In any single work of art, it is impossible physically to separate the truths from the ideological elements. This can be done only by critical appreciation, the audience bringing to bear its own knowledge of real life and history. Thus in viewing today a classic Greek drama like Sophocles' *King Oedipus*, an audience is not likely to be moved by the ideology, with its portrayal of gods shaping human affairs, and their cryptic oracles and prophecies, their pestilences and caprices. Also

ideologically inspired, dictated by the religious institutions of the time out of which drama grew, are certain of the dramatic conventions, which seem dated to a later age. What remain valid are the realisms; such things as the portrait of Oedipus the king, dedicated to the welfare of his people but dominating them like a tyrant, arrogant, contemptuous of others, confident in his own powers, suspicious of plots and conspiracies against him, strong in will, certain that the unaided can solve everything, defeated by forces which he himself has set in motion with entirely different intentions, and preserving his dignity in defeat. He is a typical figure of the kind that led and shaped Greek society in Sophocles' own age, and he is part of our social ancestry. For Greek society to be able to see itself objectively even to this extent indicates how great a leap in freedom was taken in real life, with the discovery that human beings could begin to wrestle consciously with the problems of shaping society, if not able to solve them.

FREEDOM AND ART

A weakness of the sociological approach is that it is not social enough. It does not keep its eye fixed on the underlying drama of the development of human freedom. A stage of freedom can be seen in primitive society, in the first steps to master the forces of nature. It takes a new

form in antagonistic class society. A rising class carries forward the productive forces, but as it consolidates its rule, it sees its own freedom as dependent on the slavery or exploitation of others, and cannot see those it exploits as human, kin to itself. And the struggles of the exploited for freedom appear to the rulers as their frustration. When there are no antagonistic classes, each stage in the social conquest of nature will bring a further leap in freedom for all society. It is on this level, that of the development of human freedom, that the social content of art is made most clear. On this level the deepest drives, yearnings, frustrations and victories of the human being—the complex forces making up psychology—unite with the complicated surface manifestations of social life, with its changes of governments, its political factions, wars, and ideological combats. On this level “private” and “public” life join hands, and inner conflicts are seen as reflections of outer ones.

Thus in discussing Rembrandt, in *The Social History of Art*, Hauser writes about the conditions which affected Rembrandt as well as the other 17th century Dutch painters; the rise to power in the state of the commercial middle class, the preference for smaller paintings and for unpretentious scenes of everyday life, the new marketplace insecurity of the artist, the growing subjectivism characteristic of the “baroque” style. All this is true.

But what made Rembrandt so gigantic a figure? To answer this we must plunge deeper into the underlying movement and conflict in society. Hauser writes about the “increasing affluence of the population” but misses the other side of this, the increasing poverty and exploitation of the working people on land and in town. He misses both the exaltation of the national revolutionary struggle for Dutch independence, uniting all social classes but the top feudal lords, and the moral crisis brought about by Dutch mercantile capitalism, with its mercenary trade wars, colonial plunder and slave trade. What lifts Rembrandt above the main body of talented contemporary Dutch painters is that he is conscious of these deeper social problems. And so he stops painting portraits that flatter the wealthy. Instead, when he paints them at all, he shows them as deeply troubled in psychology. And he turns to the “nobodies” of society, the poor, the common people, the beggars, showing them as people equal to the rich in psychological depth and humanity. In his recreations of bible story, done solely after his own interpretations, he discovers the same lessons. And this profound discovery of the humanity and kinship to all people of the poor and “nobodies” is Rembrandt’s great revelation of a humanization of human relations born out of the Dutch revolution, that has impressed itself on subsequent social consciousness. The power to turn

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all the technique of color and drawing, recreating the interplay of light and shade, organizing every element of imagery, to disclose these psychological conflicts, showing people with all the hard lines that life has engraved on their faces and bodies, yet strong, monumental, kin to the onlooker and in this sense beautiful, makes for his greatness of form.

OBJECTIVITY IN ART

If there is truth in art, there must also be falsity. Since Hauser does not see clearly what artistic truth is, he denies that it has any objective character. "A work of art is not 'correct' or 'incorrect' in the way a scientific theory is; it cannot properly speaking be termed either true or false." What he alludes to is the fact that an artist is "true to himself." But falsity enters art in many ways. It enters when the artist allows an ideology to stand in the way of his own investigations of reality. The ideology presents him with set procedures, with fixed subjects or ways of doing things, that are really fixed ways of seeing life.

Falsity also enters when an artist ignores what society has made it possible for him to know, makes subjectivity a philosophy of life and art, sees reality as unreal, chaotic, formless and irrational, and describes the entire world as if it were the walls of his own lonely, self-erected prison. As against an academic or formalist art which seems clear and

understandable but really does not say anything, does not illuminate any sides of life, change its beholders and add to their growth, the subjectivist art can speak from the heart, but repeats its own questions and its own unrest, over and over. This has reached a dead end, both of subjectivity and formlessness, in figures like T. S. Eliot, Kafka, Kandinsky, Schoenberg, Webern, Mondrian, Gertrude Stein, the American abstract-expressionist painters. Nor is the weakness of form made any different by the fact that Eliot, in *Four Quartets*, will repeat motifs in imitation of a fugue in music, Mondrian will create a seemingly logical form out of rectangles that leave out everything of real life, and Schoenberg will develop the arbitrary techniques of the twelve-tone system. What happens is only that subjectivity becomes an ideology, a militant irrationality and world view, producing its own formalisms.

In the art of both past and present, one cannot set up an absolute separation between true and false works of art. There are many mixtures. But this only means that there must also be a body of living criticism, not idolatry, which acts as an intermediary between the artist and the real life of the public. The purpose of criticism is to accelerate the process by which society takes from art what it finds to be true and therefore useful, a contribution to its own consciousness of its real existence.

On Communist Party History

By R. Palme Dutt

A significant part of the anti-Marxist battle that reaction wages, is the campaign to discredit Communist Parties by various "objective histories"; in this country there have been several, as those from the pens of Theodore Draper, Irving Howe, Record Wilson. Abroad, too, this phenomenon appears, and now Great Britain has been blessed with one of these products. It is analyzed below by the distinguished British Communist scholar and leader, R. Palme Dutt, editor of The Labour Monthly, where this essay first appeared. Comrade Dutt recently underwent operations on his eyes; our readers will be happy to know that his recovery has been very good.—The Editor.

THE TRUE HISTORY of Socialism and the Socialist working-class movement in Britain is not likely to be written before the final victory. When that time comes, values will be changed. Men and women in all parts of the country who have fought truly without reward or recognition will receive a respect which will be denied to many who today may strut more large upon the stage.

At the time when this book* of Mr. Pelling, purporting to give a history of the Communist Party, was read to me (for I had not yet recovered the use of my eyes), I also had the *Daily Worker* and asked first, as always, to be read the classified advertisements, from which one can learn of what goes on in the movement. There was the following:

Death. The Blackburn Branch C.P. regrets to announce the passing of Tom Catlow (at 75 years). Foundation member of the Communist Party and a lifelong member and executive member of the local Weavers'

Union. He always said: "Future generations would reap a rich reward from what we did today."

I did not have the privilege of personally knowing Tom Catlow. But I have known hundreds of men and women in every part of the country like this comrade. Their life history has been in every way a moving record of courage, honesty, loyalty to their fellow human beings, hardship, victimization and deprivation, borne without complaining—unepic and unsung. For them there have been no rewards save to serve: no easy careers, parliamentary prospects, office or pickings or press glorification, though all awaiting in abundance any one of them who would only say the word of betrayal and pass over. The glory of the record of such men and women in our time, who have been the heart of the old Socialist movement, and who have composed the strength of the Communist Party, or in the militant movement alongside it, has been the streak of light which has illuminated an otherwise sordid and cynical period of a corrupt society in decay.

* *The British Communist Party: An Historical Profile*, by Henry Pelling, Macmillan, N. Y., 204 pp. \$3.75.

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Consider the record of these forty years. All that is remembered and celebrated with pride and honor by the entire labor movement today, during these past four decades of the foundation and existence of the Communist Party, such as the *Jolly George* which prepared the way for the Councils of Action; or Red Friday and the industrial militant upsurge which prepared the heroic class solidarity of the General Strike; the Unemployed Hunger Marches (banned at the time by the T.U.C. and Labor Party until the support of the movement compelled a change); the barring of the road to Mosley; the first for Spanish democracy and the role of the International Brigade; the at first lone stand against Munich; the campaign for the Second Front; the smashing of the wage-freeze after the war; or the at first almost isolated battle against the American military domination of Britain and nuclear warfare now taken up on a widely extended front but still to be won; all these have time and again sprung—not in terms of some sectional claim, but by the demonstrable facts and dates of the record—from the initiative of the Communists and the Communist Party.

Similarly all that is today remembered with shame and anger by the whole labor movement: the betrayal of the General Strike; the ignominious collapse of the second Labor Government and the passing over of the principal Labor leaders to Toryism;

the support of the ban on arms to Spanish democracy; the god-speed to Munich; or Bevin's sell-out of Britain to the United States: all these have stemmed from those who have been most prominent in opposing and denouncing Communism.

Such is the already proved historical record during these forty years of the long-term significance of communism and anti-communism in the British working-class movement, even in this initial phase—for we are still in the phase of the advance to the socialist revolution in Britain—while the Communist Party is still small, still universally execrated, derided and regularly declared at the point of death by all the representatives of wealth and privilege and their paid servants and scribes.

A CARICATURE OF HISTORY

Of this living reality of the Communist Party, whether in its human terms, or in its political and historical significance, no trace will be found in this narrow conventional police novelette, industriously compiled from the standpoint of Transport House and Scotland Yard, with the aid of the fictions and garbage of all the informers, agents and kindred sources solemnly treated as gospel, by this academic Don, remote from any contact with the working-class struggle or understanding of Socialism or Revolution.

John Gordon, editor of the *Sunday Express*, told the Press Commission that it was a remarkable thing that if you had an item in a paper

about an event in which you had taken part, the item always got the facts wrong. If this happens to ordinary reporting on every-day events, how much more must it be expected to happen on a subject on which normal standards of accuracy or verifying evidence are regarded as superfluous, and the attitude of superior contempt and scorn by pygmies is regarded as obligatory in the polite orthodox world? Simple confusions and errors of facts or dates, such as could be freely cited from the pages of this book, can happen to any historian. But when I read in Mr. Pelling the account of any episode in which I might happen to have had some direct knowledge and connection, I found myself transported into a strange new world which bore little relation to the elementary facts.

FOUNDATION OF THE PARTY

A few simple examples. First, the foundation of the Party. It might have seemed natural and obvious that, since the strongholds of the organized industrial working class, of working-class socialist consciousness and militancy, were at that time in the centers of mining and heavy industry in Scotland and South Wales, these should provide the main initial basis and leading elements of a revolutionary proletarian party. But such simple explanations would never be sufficient to satisfy the detective ingenuity of Mr. Pelling, for whom these elements represent "the Celtic fringe."

Similarly with regard to the young-

er revolutionary intellectuals who joined in the foundation of the new Party. These "joined of course for no other reason than that they admired the success of the Russian Bolsheviks in accomplishing their revolution" (p. 17). Nonsense, Mr. Pelling. These youngsters were certainly representative of a section of a new generation highly disrespectful to established institutions and their leaders, including the dominant sections of the labor movement. But they had already broken their infant teeth in the old socialist movement, whether in the semi-revolutionary upsurge before the first world war, the old rebel pre-1914 *Daily Herald*, or the battle of the socialist minority which remained faithful to the principles of socialist internationalism in the first world war. Personally, I had had experience of one military and two civil prisons and had been sent down (expelled) from Oxford for the crime of propaganda for Marxism before any Bolshevik Revolution had taken place. Indeed, in June, 1917, I had moved and carried a resolution at a joint meeting of Student Societies that a second Socialist Revolution would be necessary in Russia, if the counter-revolution were not to conquer, and that we should pledge support to the coming second Socialist Revolution. We called ourselves communists and proclaimed the aim of the dictatorship of the proletariat before most of us had anything but the most fragmentary knowledge about Lenin or the Bolsheviks. We did not become

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communists because we supported the Russian Revolution. We supported the Russian Revolution because we were already communists.

EARLY YEARS

Then the early years of the Party. The political leadership and campaigning of these years disappears from view. Attention is concentrated on the internal Party development, which had its importance, but only in a wider context. These were the years of the transition from the initial basis of the amalgamation of the old Socialist sects to a more effective basis of organized mass work, facing outwards to the broad labor movement, with development of democratic machinery for the election of the Executive by the Congress, organized unity of action alongside democratic discussion, and similar innovations.

Mr. Pelling tries to transform this development into a kind of mysterious Comintern plot operated by a special Comintern representative acting through a Commission of three. He states that "at a special conference of the British Party in March, 1922, a Commission of three members was appointed to translate the Comintern instructions into recommendations for re-shaping the British Party" and that "to assist them in their work they had, as Comintern special representative in Britain, Michael Borodin" (p. 21).

Wrong in every particular. The Commission of three was not appointed by the St. Pancras Confer-

ence in March, 1922. What happened at the St. Pancras Conference was very different. A resolution, or rather amendment, was carried against the Executive for the appointment of such a Commission from non-E.C. and non-official members of the Party ("should be elected by the Executive not from its own members or Head Office staff"), with full powers to go into all questions of the Party's work. This resolution was the expression of an insurgent rank-and-file dissatisfied with the existing situation and with the majority of the existing leadership regarded as mainly representative of the old sects. The resolution was carried at the Congress against the opposition of the Executive by 87 votes to 38.

It was of course a preposterous and outrageous Congress decision to carry in any mature and developed Party, and was in fact equivalent to a declaration of war on the existing Executive. But these were still the teething times of the Party. The battle between the Commission and the representatives of the older leadership continued for some time, and was even intensified when the next Congress at Battersea in October, 1922, not only adopted all the Commission's recommendations but also elected two of its members at the head of the poll for the first nationally elected Executive in front of the older and better-known leaders. There may well have been some natural resentment and a little conservatism from the side of some

of the older leaders, and a good deal of crudeness and intolerance from the side of the young insurgents, especially when they saw the measures they advocated sweep forward with the beginning of organized work to assist the advance of the broad labor movement, and an accompanying sixfold increase in the circulation of the Party organ within a few months, thus laying the foundation for a broad leftward advance in the general labor movement. But Borodin? Between Borodin and the Commission there was no contact whatever. Very much on the contrary. The sudden eruption of this revolt from below, with its apparent demagogic success in sweeping the Party, and that certain measure of conflict with the older and tested leadership, may have aroused some apprehension among the more experienced heads in other Parties in the international movement. And indeed the succeeding international conference in 1923, to consider the "English crisis" with the aid of representatives of other Parties, served to restore the balance and save the old leadership who had begun to be openly threatened with wholesale removal.

All this is long past now. The true history of parties especially in the early stages, can sometimes go through such mixed episodes, in the course of which the personal element appears emphasized at the time, but through which the Party all the time goes forward. But poor Mr. Pelling, with his one *idée fixe* that

everything that happens in the British Party is dictated by Moscow, is a hundred miles away from what really happened.

MORE FICTIONS

In the same way every episode recorded in this book could be instructively contrasted with the actual facts. One gem worth noting is when he describes the Workers' and Peasants' Party of India, built up by the Indian Communists and also with Indian militant trade union leaders and left Congressmen, as a "satellite" of the British Communist Party. He ignores the fact that the Indian Communists had already been through their baptism of fire in the Cawnpore conspiracy trial launched against them by the first Labor Government, just as the Meerut trial was launched by the second Labor Government. The role of an honored working-class fighter like Ben Bradley who, after serving on the London District Committee of the Amalgamated Engineering Union, and with all the responsibilities of a leading official career before him, preferred to go where the battle was hardest and hottest, to assist the young Indian trade union movement, and stood in the dock with the Indian working-class leaders to receive his sentence of 12 years' transportation from a British judge, was an immortal example of international working-class solidarity, still loved and cherished by the Indian workers, which would be a closed book to Mr. Pelling.

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It would take too long to chase all the plain errors of fact, confusions or distortions which litter the pages of Mr. Pelling's book. De Leon did not found the I.W.W. (or Industrial Workers of the World) (p. 2). The account of "two British Communist Parties" in the summer of 1920 (p. 11) is unaware of the role of the Communist Labor Party in Scotland. The capture of two secret police agents hiding under the platform in the Rehearsal Theatre, Bedford Street, in 1924 did not take place "where the Party Executive was due to hold a meeting" (p. 29), but where a London District Conference of the Party was in session. It did not precede the Labor Government (p. 29) but took place under Arthur Henderson as Home Secretary, and the Party organ published copies of extracts of the secret police notebooks (containing laborious notes of private talks of Party members marked "Official Secret"), and challenged Henderson to prosecute. The description of the formation of the United Mineworkers of Scotland as a "breakaway" (p. 56) ignores the preceding action of the reformist officials in refusing to accept the result of democratic elections. The solid mass resistance of the working people of East London, which saved London from Mosley and his thugs, with police aid, dominating the streets of London as Hitler had dominated Berlin, is described as a policy to "match disorder with disorder." The membership of the Party in June, 1941, was not "probably

an imaginary figure from the writer's inner consciousness (p. 120), but 19,000, representing the first stage of the rise from 17,700 before the war to 22,700 by the end of 1941. Gallacher was never General Secretary of the Party (p. 113). The statement that the defeat of revisionism at the 25th Congress was due to the fact that "with the representation of the Executive and of the District Committees Congress was always heavily weighted in the direction of the official line" (p. 178) ignores the plain fact that E.C. members had no voting powers, the twenty-one District Committees 2 votes each, and that of the 547 delegates with voting powers 505 or 92 per cent were branch delegates directly elected by the branches. It would require a very odd mentality to regard this as "weighting" of the votes in favor of the leading committees. If the representation and voting power at Labor Party Conferences were similarly based, in respect of over nine-tenths of the delegates, on direct election of delegates by the local organizations of the rank and file membership from below, it is probable that the resulting policy and leadership of the Labor Party would be very different from what it is today.

FIVE FATAL FLAWS

More important than pursuing detail errors or distortions is to consider why Mr. Pelling has so signally failed, despite all his industrious documentation, to understand his

subject or give anything approaching a correct record. In his previous work on the Labor Party he had shown capacity. Something else has got in the way. Five fatal flaws, arising from a hopelessly indoctrinated cold war outlook accepting all the dogmas of the Foreign Office and Transport House as gospel truth, have paralyzed his faculties.

First Fatal Flaw. His blind acceptance of the official dogma that the British Communist Party, like all Communist Parties, must be regarded as an offshoot and instrument of the Soviet state and Soviet foreign policy, and that all its activities must be interpreted in terms of Russian instructions. He has not realized that the international communist movement existed before the Russian Revolution, and that the British Communist Party is the direct successor of the original socialist movement in Britain, inheriting all its characteristics, virtues and vices, weaknesses and problems, but entering into and learning from the experience of the era of the world socialist revolution. Communism is no more the product of Moscow machinations than the class struggle is the product of agitators. Where this folly leads Mr. Pelling in misinterpreting facts to fit his preconceived dogma we have shown in concrete examples.

Mr. Pelling is probably too young to know from experience that those of us who fought in the old socialist movement before the Russian Revolution were accused of being "Ger-

man agents" rioting on "German gold." He repeats all the stories about "Russian gold," and then merely remarks on the odd fact that, despite the "Russian gold," "the members remained individually on the verge of destitution . . . tuberculosis seemed to be endemic among them, killing several of their leaders and crippling others." If facts do not fit a theory, so much the worse for the facts.

Second Fatal Flaw. Arising from the first, everything that happens in the Party must be interpreted as a trick, a maneuver, the opposite of what might appear. Does Pollitt resign the secretaryship on grounds of health? Of course it is only "ostensibly" on grounds of health, but really because he "felt it wise in the political situation to retire" (p. 171). This kind of speculation is the conventional small change of all political gossips and wiseacres. But for a serious historian a simple attempt to check the medical records would have ruled out this repetition of idle chatter. What Mr. Pelling could not know is that, when the doctors' peremptory orders came, the problem was in fact discussed that retirement at this moment would inevitably be interpreted by critics as a political decision; and that Pollitt himself cut the Gordian knot by declaring that postponement would make no difference, since, whenever it came, it would automatically be interpreted in the same way in terms of the current political situation. Therefore, in the best Marxist tra-

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dition, "*lascia dir le genti*"—let the Crankshaws and the Pellings prattle.

Third Fatal Flaw. The third cause of falsification is the dependence on the most dubious and suspect sources—police files, Tory Blue Books on Communism, informers, or the self-inflating legends and malice of minor deserters. On this kind of foundation a marvelous "Historical Profile" of Chartism could be written. Any historian has necessarily to take into account all types of sources, but he has also to be capable of weighing them. The type of renegade who in the United States or Britain rushes to pour out "confessions" or highly paid "sensational revelations" in the more vulgar organs of the millionaire press, is usually the lowest of the low; and the historian who trusts to such sources for his information damns himself.

Fourth Fatal Flaw. The fourth obstacle which rules out any attempt at a serious history of the militant working class movement is the bland police outlook which regards any revolutionary working class agitation and organization as a conspiracy to be put down by all means, and against which all means, such as police action or bans and proscriptions, are legitimate. The repeated police attacks and prosecutions are related, not even with the normal mild depreciation of a moderate liberal, but with unconcealed sympathy for the problems and difficulties of the police in suppressing the evil thing. Thus the nearest approach to criticism is the judgment that the Tory

Government's prosecution of the twelve Communist leaders in 1925, and their sentencing to prison, which was in fact the preparation for breaking the General Strike, was "on the whole, a mistake," not because the author expresses any objection to sending Communist leaders to prison, but because "it provided them with a golden opportunity for the advertisement of their views" (p. 23). The "abnormally high proportion of Communists arrested" during the General Strike was "principally because the Communists enjoyed the martyrdom of arrest and imprisonment" (p. 36). The Tory Blue Book against Communism "provided useful information for the leaders of the Labor Party and the trade unions" (p. 35); and in 1926 "a Labor Party circular was published quoting from the Government Blue Book," *i.e.*, from the Tory Government's official propaganda to make the case against Communism (p. 37). Black Circular methods to deprive trade unionists of their democratic rights in order to prevent Communist majorities are described with obvious approval. Thus for example the disruption of the historic London Trades Council by the General Council is justified on the basis of a distorted picture presenting it as losing members during the period of Communist active participation in the leadership ("had fallen so fully under Party control that non-Communist unions had begun to disaffiliate from it," p. 158). In fact the membership rose during this period from 600,000 in 1945 to

850,000 in 1952 when the T.U.C. deregistered the historic London Trades Council (far older than the T.U.C.); not a single trade union disaffiliation took place until after the T.U.C. intervened, and then only under pressure from the head offices; and the subsequent decline in membership followed the T.U.C. intervention and disruption. Similarly the extension of Communism among students and in the universities during the 'thirties is explained by the fact that at that time "the University Labor Federation did not discriminate against Communists," *i.e.*, failed to operate the necessary Black Circular methods (p. 105).

Fifth Fatal Flaw. The fifth and most serious weakness of Mr. Pelling's book is the separation of the history of the Communist Party from the history of the British Labor Movement. The two are inseparable. The whole life and activity of the Communist Party is related to the struggle of the working class against capitalism, both in the industrial and the political fields; the fight for militant policies against reactionary policies in the labor movement; for democracy against fascism; for national liberation against colonialism; for peace against war; for socialism against the repudiation of socialism. To empty out in this way the content is to destroy the meaning: to present, in place of history, "a tale, told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing." It is as if a cinematograph film

were to be made of a wrestling match and then all the representation of one opponent blanked out from the film, so that by this means all the violent exertions, writhings and contortions of the single figure in a vacuum could be presented as something highly absurd and purposeless.

Of course Mr. Pelling, given his aim of proving a preconceived doctrine and prejudice, in place of following the path of history, could not do otherwise. For if he had given the true record of the policies of capitalism, of Toryism and of the Right wing Labor leadership at each stage during this period, and in this context set out alongside the policies of the Communist Party, it is inevitable that such a contrast would produce an inescapable conclusion in the reader's mind, however hostile the narrator, and demonstrate the repeated historical vindication, in the light of events, of the policies for which the Communist Party has fought during these forty years.

A CONCLUDING WORD

These basic flaws, quite apart from any mistakes or inaccuracies of detail, disqualify Mr. Pelling from any claim to have written a "Historical Profile" of the Communist Party. A serious history, or a first attempt at a serious history, is in course of preparation on behalf of the Communist Party. But a serious history will require more careful research and judgment of sources, more respect for facts, and above all

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more political understanding of the elementary realities of classes and the class struggle, as well as a little more sympathy and closeness to the spirit of militant workers and militant socialists than Mr. Pelling possesses.

For there is one thing which is most conspicuously missing in the narrative of Mr. Pelling, but which it would be vain to look for in him. That is an understanding of the honor of a Communist. When we consider the stature of a Tom Mann, a Gallacher or a Pollitt, and their record in the working-class movement, and compare it with the role of a MacDonald, a J. H. Thomas or a Gaitskell, we see not only the confrontation of two class outlooks, but of two conceptions of life. It is precisely because Communism represents that political force in Britain which can never be won over or turned aside by the ruling class, which can never be bought, intimidated, silenced or broken, that all the hatred of the ruling class, and all the arsenal of denunciation of the servants of capitalism, is most unceasingly and unswervingly directed against the Communist Party.

In his final conclusion Mr. Pelling confesses himself baffled by "the problem of how it came to pass that a band of British citizens could sacrifice themselves so completely over a period of almost forty years to the service of a dictatorship in another country" (p. 191). Not the service of a foreign dictatorship, Mr. Pelling. In this to him insoluble problem his bankruptcy is revealed. Such

service could never win the limitless loyalty, devotion, enthusiasm, and sacrifice which no other party or political organization in Britain has been able to show over these forty years. This limitless loyalty, devotion, enthusiasm and sacrifice is inspired, and can only be inspired, in Britain, as in all the countries of the world, in the service of the highest cause of all, the cause of human emancipation, of the world victory of communism.

The Twenty-Sixth Congress of the Communist Party at Easter has demonstrated that the Communist Party in this country, through the outcome of these forty years, despite all mistakes and weaknesses, despite all limitations, has established itself as a serious and organized political force. It has established itself as a party united in political outlook and understanding, and strongly based in the industrial working class and in every phase of the daily mass struggle. It has established itself as the only party with a program for the fulfillment of socialism in the conditions of Britain and with a policy to tackle the problems of Britain in extreme imperialist decline. It is for all these reasons that to those with understanding of the deeper political forces of our time the Communist Party can already be confidently declared, visibly and demonstrably by all these signs and tests, and through the further advance which can now be achieved, the party of the future in Britain, as in the rest of the world.

A New Midwife in the New China

By Chin Yueh-ying

OUR VILLAGE LIES tucked away in the mountains of the Kwangsi Chuang Autonomous Region in Southwest China. Most of us belong to the Chuang nationality. Oppression, poverty and ignorance were the lot of all our people in days gone by and bitterest of all were the sufferings of women. The village gained its liberation in 1949 and after we had carried out the land reform, I, an illiterate peasant woman, was elected to the township government as "women's representative" with special responsibility to look after feminine problems. Later on, in 1952, my work was extended to the whole county.

It was one evening in the spring of that year that someone came to tell me that a neighbor was giving birth to a child and was in desperate agony. I ran to her home to try and help. But after saying a few words to me, she died. The village elders thought this was nothing unusual, that certain women were fated to die in childbirth. Once there had been five such deaths in a single year in our village, and the newborn infants perished with their mothers.

But I kept saying to myself, "Perhaps my neighbor need not have died if I had known what to do for her." I heard that our gov-

ernment was training women in new, up-to-date methods of delivering children. So next time I went to a meeting at the county seat I said that to fulfill my responsibilities towards women I would like to learn myself.

The county government immediately arranged for me to take a course at its health center. Back again in the village, besides working in our mutual-aid farming team, I announced that I was now a qualified midwife, ready to go wherever I was needed.

SCIENCE VS. SUPERSTITION

Five days afterwards I was called out to a case. When I got home after seeing the new baby into the world, my mother-in-law refused to let me enter until she had lit a fire across my path to "burn away the evil." She clung to the old superstitious beliefs of our people, and would not allow me to go near the stove, saying that my hands were "unclean." "There are so many things you could do," she reproached me. "Why must you choose this?"

There were old-fashioned midwives in our villages, but they kept apart from the people, surrounded themselves with mystery, and

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China charged big fees. I worked in the fields just as before, and took only the small payment fixed by the government, or even less. At first, most of the neighbors still had doubts, and called in the old practitioners when their time came.

One night in May 1952 I heard that Wei Yi-ying, in Red Temple Village, was having a long and difficult labor. Hurrying to her home, I found everything decked out according to the "magic" ritual of the Chuang people. Red paper flowers were pasted on the door. Beside the entrance lay a cock, some money, three rice-shoots and three bowls of water. Wei Yi-ying was sitting bolt upright in a chair, the traditional midwife standing behind her. When her pains came, the old woman took a mouthful of water, stamped her foot and blew the water all over the terrified girl. She was making matters worse, and scaring the family too.

"If this girl dies," I said to the old woman forcefully, "you'll have to answer for it." That scared her, and she left. I made the patient lie down, gave her a drink, and told her not to worry. At dawn the baby was born.

A year later the same midwife's own daughter-in-law was brought to bed with her first baby. It was a complicated birth and the old woman was helpless. The girl's husband came running to me and I was able to save the mother's life. This incident impressed the other

villagers. They began to see that scientific methods were best.

GAINING COURAGE

Working in the fields, eating or sleeping, I could never tell when I'd be called out. My mother-in-law continued to call me a fool. I did not mind. I was happy.

But there was one occasion when I did get downcast. That was the day old Mrs. Li came all the way from another village to shout insults at me. It happened that her daughter, recently confined, had had a very difficult time and I'd been obliged to take her to the hospital in the city for surgical help. Once the baby was born and her daughter back home, Mrs. Li came to my house cursing and shouting that the operation had been unnecessary and I'd caused her to waste a lot of money. Nothing I said would pacify her.

When she had gone at last, I sat down and muttered to myself angrily: "Tomorrow morning I'll pack up my instruments and take them back to the county health center. Why should I work so hard just to be cursed for it!" Then I started to think more calmly. Who was it that had flown at me? She was the wife of a local despot who had killed many of our people in the past and been punished for his crimes after the liberation. Why did she hate me? Because I was a poor peasant who had risen up from my knees

when such oppressors were put down. Why be troubled by such a person's spite—her feelings were not those of the people at all!

I thought of how it had been with us Chuangs before liberation—how bandits used to come down from the mountains and kill people in broad daylight. I remembered the hard time I'd had after the death of my husband, trying to keep my son, daughter and mother-in-law from going hungry. I recalled how once I beat my son—who was only twelve then—for refusing to drive the plough because he couldn't bear to see his mother pulling it like a draught animal; and how we had both wept together. . . .

And now here I was, elected by my neighbors as a people's delegate to the county government, honored year after year with the title of "model worker." I said to myself, "I'll carry on with this job even if the sky falls down!"

CONCERN FOR WOMEN

In 1955 our mutual-aid team joined with several others to form a farmers' cooperative and I was elected its head. Liao Yi-lin, one of the other leading members, tried her best to persuade me to give up my midwifery and devote full time to the co-op.

"I can manage both jobs," I assured him. "One of the reasons why the Party wants women as well as men in leading posts is that we un-

derstand women's special problems and men don't."

"You're always trying to get something special for women," he retorted. "In the old days they used to work right up till the day their children were born and start again directly afterwards."

"That was before liberation," I said. "And what were you yourself then? You were a hawker, trying to make a living selling brooms. Now you're the deputy head of a cooperative. I haven't heard you suggest that you should go back to the old days?"

When next we went to the township government, everyone criticized Liao's attitude. "You're a good man, working day in and day out to help the people grow more food," they said, "and that's praiseworthy. But why don't you let Chin Yueh-ying serve the women? You ought to be helping, not hindering."

Last summer all the farm cooperatives in our county were getting organized in one big people's commune. Yang Chen-chiao, a member of the Communist Party committee for our township, spoke to me about setting up a maternity home. "The commune must do its very best for the women," he said.

After talking things over, we sent a letter to the health department of the county government asking its advice and suggesting that the maternity home should be attached to the government clinic in our township. The proposal was quickly ap-

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proved. The principal medical worker at the clinic, Tan I-shih, thought we were flying too high.

"It isn't as simple as you think," he said. "You need at least a middle-school graduate to take charge of the work. Chin Yueh-ying? She's never gone to school in her life! If you can get this place going without help, you can chop off my head!"

There was an old, tumbledown house at the back of the clinic and we decided that it would make a very suitable maternity home—if repaired. But this was just the period when everyone was rushing off with tremendous enthusiasm to volunteer for our newly-opened coal mine, a big water-conservancy project and the small factories the commune had started up. Where to get the labor?

The problem was left to me, since I was to remain behind in charge of welfare—which included seeing that the service in the new public dining-rooms and nurseries was the best possible.

Having been a widow for so many years, I'd had to learn to do all sorts of "men's" jobs. My knowledge came in handy now, and I soon began to get the house in shape. The village carpenter made window frames, and helped me fix up the labor ward. I had earned a lot of money in the cooperative the previous year, so I took some of it out of the bank and bought mosquito nets, pillows, mats, wash-basins,

thermos bottles and towels. I felt as excited as if I were furnishing the bridal chamber for my son's wedding.

But we still had no beds. Each of the 24 villages in our township has its women's representatives, and I put the problem before them at a joint meeting. They agreed to go back and talk it over with the neighbors in their own villages.

And what happened? The very next day, people started streaming in from the different villages bringing gifts for the maternity home. We got all the timber we needed, and all the bed-linen. Every place contributed money to buy equipment and the material for baby-clothes. When Tan-I-shih saw it he exclaimed: "I never thought of mobilizing the people!" A woman who had just brought in some bed-planks put them down and said to him proudly: "You don't know the people!"

THE NEW SERVICE

After twenty days' preparation our maternity home opened, bright and speckless, with twelve beds. Four young women, all of them trained in midwifery, joined the staff. The five of us live on the premises so that we can be available at all times, but we work in the fields when things are quiet.

At regular intervals I go round all the production teams in the township and register the names of

expectant mothers. We list them on the blackboard in our office, and fix the dates for each woman to come in for her prenatal examination. When a woman's time comes, if there is no one to take care of her other children we bring the younger ones to the hospital and look after them there so that the mother can get a good rest and not be worried.

There hasn't been a single case of puerperal fever or tetanus of the newborn in the township since our maternity home was started and it has been presented with a red banner for this. Still more rewarding is the joy we are able to bring to mothers who lost their babies in the past for lack of the knowledge and care we can give today.

Chin Chin-mei was 43 years old when I delivered her son. She had given birth to twelve children before

liberation and none had lived. "I offered up 24 pigs' heads, and countless chickens and eggs in the temple, praying for a baby in the past," she told me. "If the Communist Party had liberated us two years earlier I'd have three sons now!"

Tan Su-lan, from Laya village came to us three days before her child was born, bringing her two little girls, one six and the other three. Su-lan had borne six boys in the past, but all died in infancy, so she believed she was fated never to have a son. This time it was a fine healthy boy. She still brings the baby to visit me from time to time.

"Look how well he is coming on," she says to me. "When he grows up he'll be a son to you because you brought him into the world."

"When he grows up, he'll be a son of the people," I tell her.

Readers will be interested in a new pamphlet, James T. Rapier, Negro Congressman from Alabama, by Eugene Feldman. It tells the vital story of a Negro labor organizer, editor, and Reconstruction Congressman, who lived from 1839 to 1884—an exciting and important publication, obtainable, for 25c, from Southern Newsletter, P.O. Box 1307, Louisville 1, Kentucky—The Editor.

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