The New
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# The Case for Socialist Regroupment

## *For a New Movement in the Debsian Tradition*

The Krushchev "revelations" which undoubtedly provided a measure of legality to the dramatic outburst of discussions in the Stalinist movement of the world were merely symptomatic of the underlying pressures within it. Since the close of the war, the totalitarian vise of the system tightened on the vast populations of the Russian and satellite nations. In each of these countries, and particularly Russia, the depth of dissatisfaction must have been enormous to have produced the dangerous medium which Khrushchev chose to allay the feelings of the people, for he surely knew before hand that he had taken a calculated risk in his unprecedented attack on Stalin, the demigod of the new order.

The discussions that followed in all Stalinist parties and movements under its control and influence and the infinitely more significant revolts in Poland and Hungary revealed that if the world at large was unaware of the burgeoning crisis of Stalinism, the leadership of the Russian despotism was uneasily conscious of it. Khrushchev's tactic was designed to mitigate an inevitable explosion even at a stiff cost. For his speech, if taken to its logical conclusion, was dangerous to the whole Stalinist system. The discussions which followed were only initial signs of the crisis.

Stalinist expansion, imperialist in aim and practice, has enormously increased the contradictions of the system. The significant economic advance of the Russian state has taken place on the basis of an unprecedented exploitation of the Russian masses, and since the war, of a similar exploitation of the masses of the satellite states. The severe economic exploitation at home and the ruthless economic exploitation of the satellite countries, joined to the dictatorial political systems, emphasized the greyness of life in the "new peoples' democracies." In a system so devoid of the simple democratic rights of the people and the rights of the individual, so devoid of the most elementary forms of democracy, the Khrushchev speech took the form of a catalyst in disturbing the three-decades-long inner-quiet of world Stalinism. The Russian leaders probably expected, and in a sense looked forward to, a "fundamental" discussion inside Russia and all other countries. What they did not calculate accurately, circumscribed as they are in their thinking by their totalitarian tradition, was the depth and extent of the dissatisfaction of the masses in and out of the Communist Parties, and the scope of the explosion.

Although that explosion which reached its height in the Polish and

Hungarian revolts has been momentarily resolved, in the one by reluctant political compromise and in the other by the vicious military suppression through the Russian army, new and even more severe repercussions will be heard from the Russian domination of the nationally-suppressed satellite countries. The discussions of "basic questions" within the Communist Parties which seem to have run their course in most countries and which ended with the reassertion of the domination of the Stalinist leaderships has, notwithstanding all of that, opened up a new era for these parties. It is still the Stalinist system but with a difference. The element of doubt about the infallibility of the leadership and the eternal truth of its doctrine has been permanently installed within the movement; the desire for internal freedom, the right of discussion, and all of that, spills over into the broader desire for democracy. These questions will continue to press within the movement and produce further conflict. The door to these conflicts has been opened.

Of all the countries in which a discussion of Russia and Stalinism took place, none has reached proportions such as in America. Here, the leadership of the Communist Party fell apart. The brutal suppression of the Hungarian revolt, the openness of the Stalinist anti-Semitism, life in a bourgeois-democratic nation far distant from the borders of the dominant Russian state, are some of the causes which served to move the discussion further than elsewhere. The emergence of the Gates tendency and the struggle it undertook was the most expressive evidence of the collapse of the American Communist Party. Overnight, this once powerful organization which held itself fairly strong in face of severe governmental prosecution and persecution ,faced schismatic disintegration. The membership has disappeared in the hundreds and thousands, so that at its convention held in February, the party, which once dominated the radical movement in the United States, appeared as it really is: decimated, disunted and isolated from the main streams of American life, and most particularly, from the American labor movement.

While it has an independent validity on the basis of American historical developments, the discussion of socialist unification and regroupment in the United States, was brought to a head by the crisis of Stalinism here and abroad. In an important sense, though the movement is tiny in this country, the problem of socialist unification and regroupment is part of a world process in the struggle against Stalinism and capitalism. The crisis of Stalinism in this country and the discussion of unification and regroupment, had therefore, by its nature, to involve all socialist, dissident Stalinist and Stalinoidal groups. Even those who sought to avoid the problem by some ultimatistic declaration have found it impossible to escape the demands of the current political situation in the small and isolated radical movement.

Given the situation created by the Stalinist crisis in this country, what do we mean by saying that the question of unification and regroupment has an independent validity in the United States? The nature of the problem is illustrated by the fact that this country is the only major capitalist nation without a mass socialist party, and on another plane, even a labor party reflecting the elementary economic interests of the working class in a political manner. The socialist movements in this country are small, indeed, they are sects, largely isolated from the vast



labor movement. The old socialist traditions that did exist in this country are no longer vivid. What does remain of them is hardly perceptible. Bourgeois politics continues to dominate the American labor movement and the working class.

American socialism which once developed strong roots in the nation was the first victim of the vastly-expanding economy and prosperity, of New Dealism and the long existing war economy. The socialist movement which is linked forever with the name of Eugene V. Debs, has not been able to reclaim its early glory primarily because of the objective factors of American social growth. The historical prosperity of the United States, resting on a series of peculiar but favorable conjunctures in the world economy and the unusually fortunate results of two world wars, produced a conservative working class disoriented as to its own needs and interests by the influence of bourgeois ideology.

During the economic crisis of the Thirties, this conservative political state of the working class was interrupted. Then, the working class demonstrated what it had in common with the working classes of all countries: militancy, the will to struggle, the desire for organization and the readiness to pass beyond mere economic battle to a defense and advance of its social position as the most important productive class in society. This promising development was halted by the war and post-war developments. Underneath the present quiet, however, are important social factors which promise, in the not too distant future, to alter the course in the social development of the American working class. A radicalization of the American working class appears on the horizon and the socialists of this country must first of all recognize its signs and then prepare for such a development.

THE POLITICAL COMMITTEE of the Independent Socialist League in its "Memorandum on Our Perspective and Orientation in the Matter of Socialist Unity" sought to give direction to this problem. In stating why it believed the next stage of development to be a political one, the Memorandum said:

> The unification of the AFL and CIO has brought the American working class to its highest point in strength and made it the most numerous and powerful social movement in the country. . . . The unification of the labor movement in this way is an historic turning-point for the American working class. At the same time, an historic turning point is being recorded by another section of the working people, the Negroes in the South, in the irreversible movement for equality that embraces virtually all of them. Not only are the two movements historically linked but, despite the insignificant organizational ties between them at present, they are already linked politically and socially in the significance and consequences of their development.

Almost all socialists in the United States believe that the basic political development of the American working class will be reflected in the emergence of an independent labor party. Given the fact that the working people of this country have little or no independent political tradition, i.e., have no lasting, operating and effective independent political tradition, the creation of an independent labor party on the broad foundations of the labor movement, encompassing even broader millions of the population for whom the labor movement must learn to speak, would be the expression of a most radical political development of the American people, even though it would not yet be socialist. The task of socialists in this country is to work

faithfully to assist in the creation of such a party, to establish their roots in it and to seek to influence its ideological development toward socialism. In our view, the future of American socialism is linked to this development of the American working class; Socialists must first of all be conscious of the problem and then do everything they can to realize these perspectives.

American socialists must learn to speak the language of the American people, to avoid the deadly trap of sectarian ultimatism and theoretical dogmatism which talks down to the working class and isolates them from the labor movement. They must be in the very center of the labor movement, working with and for the working class and assisting in the political education and experience of the masses. But before they can even do that elementary thing, socialists have to organize themselves effectively for the tasks that lie ahead in this country.

For many years the Stalinist movement dominated the radical working class; the Russian state commanded the allegiance of tens of thousands through the activities of the American Communist Party in its various formations and guises. But by the very fact that it constituted the ideological, political and organizational leadership of the radical movement, the American Communist Party was the principal source of the ideological disorientation and confusion of the radicalized masses; more than anything else it was responsible for the distortion of the meaning and aim of socialism. Socialism became identified in the minds of other tens of thousands with Stalinism and Russian totalitarianism.

The increasing disappointment in reactionary Stalinism and, even more important than that, the mass opposition of the American people to it, became in effect an opposition to socialism itself. This is the tremendous burden of which socialists in this country must be relieved. It will not be an easy task in any case, but it is made even more difficult by the fact that while Stalinism in its crisis and the American Communist Party has lost its vitality and power, the ideology of Stalinism, which has perverted so much of socialist thought and practice, is not at all dead. It continues under various masquerades. Yet, no socialist regroupment is possible unless the movement is freed without reservation from Stalinist influence so that it can truly appear before the American working class as "an alternative pole of attraction to that constituted by Stalinism."

Taking into acount the objective conditions in this country, so roughly and generally drawn here, the real ideological and organizational development of the working class, any discussion of socialist unification and regroupment dictates to socialists the need for the creation of the broadest socialist movement with the broadest socialist program so that it may not only become more nearly attuned to the realities of American life, but also be in the best position to embrace all socialists within such a movement. The warnings against sectarianism and ultimatism with Friedrich Engels sent to the Socialist Labor Party near the end of the last century remain appropriate to this very day. American socialism contributed to its isolation from the working class by ideological and political programs beyond the comprehension or ability of the class to respond to them. A new start has to be made; it is imperative if the vacuum produced by the Stalinist crisis and the general crisis of socialism is to be filled with the hope of a socialist future. With this in mind, the Memorandum referred to above, stated:



> Our decisions must facilitate, not in some unreliazable ideal of abstract sense, but in the sense of the maximum possible under the concrete circumstances, the advancement of our ideas of democratic socialism in the ranks of labor and Negro movements, and the corresponding growth of a socialist movement based on these broad mass movements and exercising and increasing influence among them. Any decision taken in the matter of socialist unity, or in relations with other groups, must serve this objective. Any decision, no matter what successes it seems to yield of a temporary or isolated nature, but which conflicts with this objective, which does not serve it, or which is not conceived and carried on in a way which is consciously subordinated to the attainment of the objective, is wrong.

The premise for this thinking has already been indicated in our references to the role of Stalinism and its influence in this country. The great issue of modern socialism is: totalitarianism or democracy. Stalinism, in all or any of its forms, is a cancerous growth and influence in the working class. It is not merely a political or organizational evil; it is above all a social evil that has served to distort and blacken the socialist ideal of human liberty in all its forms and has substituted a modern slavery for socialist freedom; it has created a contempt and distortion of the meaning of democracy and destroyed the integrity and freedom of the individual which is of the essence of socialism.

If socialist regroupment is to have any meaning at all and any promise, it can only take place under the banner of *democratic socialism*. No socialist movement in this cuuntry can hope to win favor with, not to speak of leadership of, the American working class, if it equivocates or refuses to speak out plainly on this question. It is not enough, and never was, for socialists to carry on the struggle for democracy in this country; they must champion democracy everywhere and support the democratic struggles of the people in all countries. That means in Asia as in Africa, in Europe of the East as well as of the West; it means to fight for democracy in China as in India, in Russia as in Algeria. It means to fight for the same rights of the exploited and oppressed of the Stalinist states as in any other country.

Any movement, any organization, and institution, any temporary coalition of people, whether it is for the purpose of working for socialist unification or the holding of permanent socialist forums, which refuses to take a clear position on this, or haggles over it, is guaranteed to stamp itself in advance either as Stalinist, Stalinoid, or under the influence of one or several of its ideas. The American working class has a healthy hatred of totalitarianism and no socialist can afford to be muddy-minded about it. Democratic socialism, by which is meant forthright opposition to totalitarianism everywhere, has to be the watchword on the banner of any hopeful socialist movement that must emerge in this country out of the ruins of the present.

THERE IS ANOTHER VITAL reason why it is wrong to equivocate on this question. If it is true that there are thousands of disaffected, disoriented and disappointed former members of the Communist Party, of whom there must be a considerable number who have not permanently abandoned socialism, then it is the responsibility of those who do understand the problem to cooperate with such elements in developing the democratic socialist position. This cannot and will not be done by hiding the problem, confusing it, or distorting it in a fictitious allusion to unity. Nor will it be done by caterng to the political prejudices

of those who not yet have broken with the ideology of Stalinism.

When it is objected that this is an ultimatistic demand on certain groupings in the general socialist movement, the objection is an evasion of the problem. For example, all groups, ex-Stalinist, ex-Progressive Party, Socialist Workers Party, the Gates tendency, the *Daily Worker,* and others have denounced the Russian intervention in Hungary and have declared themselves to be, in one fashion or another, against totalitarianism and for democratic socialism. To be sure, not all who say they are for democratic socialism mean the same thing by it. The test is not a complicated one: we are for democracy here; we are not less for democracy in Russia, Poland, Hungary, Bulgaria and Rumania, as we are for all countries. For the ISL this is the crux of the question of socialist unification and regroupment and that's why in its Memorandum it stated:

"For us to declare that collaboration with other groups requires their acceptance of all our theoretical positions, including our position on the nature of Stalinism and of Stalinist society, or that such acceptance is required for coexistence in one socialist organization, would be wrong, ultimatistic and contrary to our conception of the socialist unificaton that is now required. We make no such declaration and we reject it when made by anyone else. We regard the theoretical differences on the Russian question, on Staliinsm, which were the main cause of the splits in the past, as 'frozen' for the present as regards the groups now discussing unity. We do not refrain from advancing our own theoretical position, but we do not make it, or the position of any other tendency, the pre-condition for unity. The pre-condition for unity is acceptance of the general principles of democratic socialism, agreement upon a democratic life for the united organization and support of the democraitc struggle against the totalitarian Stalinism regime. This does not encompass the full position of the ISL, to whose tendency we reserve the democratic right of advocacy in a responsible and not disruptive way in a united socialist organization, which is the right of any other tendency as well. This viewpoint indicates that we do not regard or put forward the ISL as the basis of the reunification of the socialist movement ,but do consider it as an indispensable element of the unity and as a tendency in it enjoying full equality with all others."

If this is not the basis for a socialist unification, then the condition for regroupment would have to be posed on the narrowest ideological and programmatic grounds. To begin the discussion of regroupment on those grounds means to preclude its achievement in advance. Our view, since it proceeds from an analysis of the development of the American working class, the needs of socialism under American conditions, and on the basis of an abundant experience, holds that the ideological, theoretical and programmatic questions will be resolved under the conditions of a unified socialist movement, as the result of a process of development and a coalescence of socialist forces and not beforehand. For those who live by "finished programs," for those who believe that everything ideologically and theoretically necessary has already been determined for all time, the above is certainly absurd. But then, they are not ready for socialist regroupment. They have everything they need; yes, and just about everything they want except political influence. And they will continue to live their well-satisfied sectarian lives in the eternal certainty that the masses will come to them because they have been proved correct all the time.



As we view the real situation in relation to the socialist organizations in the country we believe the best framework for socialist unification is the Socialist Party, or rather, that it can become that farmework, provided it understands the enormous role it can play in the situation and responds to it intelligently and with agility. So far as the ISL is concerned, we are ready to unite with the SP under the broad conceptions stated above. The question of socialist unity in this country, chronologically at least, arose in the Socialist Party Convention of last year in the form of a resolution favoring unification of the SP with the Social-Democratic Federation and a resolution including the ISL in such a unification. This proposal for unification involving the ISL did not carry in the convention but almost a third of the delegates supported it. In response to the proposal made by advocates of unity with the ISL, the latter made it known that it favored such unity and defined the basis upon which it hoped to see it take place. In a resolution of the Political Committee of the ISL, printed in the November 5, 1956 issue of *Labor Action,* it said, among other things:

> 2. We are for such unity, as a step toward revitalizing a militant socialist movement in this country against both capitalism and Stalinism.
>
> 3. We are ready at any time to enter into discussion with representatives of the Socialist Party to explore the possibilities of such unity, without laying down any conditions in advance of such a discussion, programmatic or organizational. . . . Our attitude in favor of unity is not conditioned on any change in the program or leadership in the SP; what we have in view is not unification exclusively with the left wing or any other single section of the SP. We are in favor of unity with the SP as a whole as it is now.
>
> 4. The socialist unity we stand for is intended to further a lasting regroupment of socialist forces, and must be the antithesis of any kind of "raid" by one socialist group on another. We are for such an organizational merger as promises to lead to a stable and lasting coexistence of the merged forces on a healthy and mutually agreed basis. . . .
>
> 5. This statement is, therefore, not put forward as a temporary or conjunctural expedient, but as a statement of continuing policy for the Independent Socialist movement, to make clear that among the tenets of Independent Socialism is also this one: that we stand for *socialist unity.* . . .

This basic position of the ISL did not change with the actual unification of the SP and a section of the SDF. On the contrary, that unification made even more pertinent the position of the ISL, since it regards that development as only a part of the process of socialist regroupment in the United States. For the first time in a number of years a unification, rather than a split, has taken place between two adult socialist organizations.

It should be abundantly clear from the foregoing analysis which we have made of the problem of socialist unification and regroupment that the ISL is totally uninterested in the question of "capturing" the SP. Our general perspectives do not permit even thinking in such terms. Capturing the Socialist Party today will not only not create a mass socialist movement, but will militate against the prospects of unification and regroupment and defeat the perspectives which we do have vis-a-vis the future political development of the American working class. What we do want to see is the development of the SP-SDF into an "effective, influential, broad democratic socialist movement in the best traditions of the Debs period. . . . Without for a

moment abandoning our support of the principles and practices of democratic socialism, but rather by insisting upon these principles, we aim to build a socialist party which successfully takes up the challenge offered by the existence of great numbers of radicals who have already broken with Stalinism or are in the course of doing so, and seek a vigorous socialist organization which rejects sectarianism and aims at becoming a living movement . . . the ISL favors unity with the SP as the organization which it is possible to build up as a serious pole of attraction to all radicals of yesterday, today and tomorrow, which offers a significant alternative to Stalinism in the struggle against capitalism and imperialism."

AT ITS UNITY CONVENTION, the SP-SDF adopted a resolution "Toward Socialist Organization" which indicates an awareness of the problem. The resolution said in part:

> This Unity Convention marks a first step in the rejuvenation of the socialist movement in the United States. But while socialist unity is vital, unless this historic meeting is followed by an intensive campaign to gather together all democratic socialists into our organization our present enthusiasm may be wasted.

Everything in this quotation is correct and wise. But we feel that the occupation of the new organization with this question has not been "intensive" enough, nor has it participated in the many discussions taking place within all organizations nearly enough in relation to the importance of the problem. The SP-SDF should be playing a leading part in the present process of clarification occurring in the many discussions which take place all over the country. That it hasn't done so formally and officially is, of course, regrettable, but we are still in the period of discussion and one way or another, the new organization's participation in this process is unavoidable.

In all the efforts of the ISL it has sought to prevent the discussion from being a mere removal of the conflict over ideology and program, for reasons already stated. As an example of what this can mean, are the references that emerge in all discussions over "left wing" and "right wing." That these terms contribute to political confusion, certainly not to any clarity, is easily demonstrated by the fact that "left wing" is applied to Stalinism (read totalitarianism), to those who defend the Stalinist regimes or the "degenerated workers' states," and "right wing" to those who fight for democratic socialism.

No one best illustrates the futility of this approach to socialist unification and regroupment than the Socialist Workers Party. When it became aware that the discussions which were taking place between socialist organizations, these self-styled orthodox Trotskyist leaders acknowledged their existence and explained the basis for them in the events of the Twentieth Congress and the general world Stalinist Crisis. But for the SWP socialist unification and regroupment in the United States is predicated on support to the "defense of the Soviet Union." So it was in the beginning. In the Fall of 1956, its "International Socialist Review" described the problem in part in this way:

> Up to now, the Shachtmanites, who were once defenders of the Soviet Union, have commented on this development but have proved incapable of intervening actively and participating in the discussion that is now going on in the American radical movement about making a fresh start [ahem]. *The reason for this is the refusal of the Shachtmanites to defend the Soviet Union. They thus exclude themselves at the ground level from serious consideration.* Their position on the "Russian" question, as has been the case in the radical movement since 1917, determines the limits of their effectiveness in answering the "American" question. (Emphasis mine—A. G.)

If you refuse to defend the Soviet Union you exclude yourself "at ground level" from any discussion of or participation in, regroupment. How ultimatistic; how sectarian! The ISL is not alone, however:

> Similarly with the Socialist Party, unreasoning opposition to the Soviet Union, without discrimination between the good and bad, discredits what they have to say. What radical-minded worker cares to consider the opinions of Norman Thomas on this subject when you can get it straight from the State Department.

This is the way the SWP reacted in the beginning. In fact, it is not at all concerned with a broad regroupment of socialists that has any relationship to this country. Its perspective, in general, is the same today as it was twenty years ago. For although the discussion is "a most important one" it does not occur, "it must be emphasized in response to a wave of radicalization among the American workers. . . . Consequently it will largely be confined to the class-conscious vanguard, those who are already convinced socialists and *supporters of the Soviet Union.* . . . A thorough discussion of theoretical positions in this period of relative quiescence in America will help regroup the radical forces and build the revolutionary leadership needed for success when the next wave of mass radicalization brings with it the opportunity for action on a big scale." (My emphasis—A. G.)

It might be said that this was written some months ago and that things have changed some since then. Surely, the SWP cannot be totally oblivious to life as it really is. But no. In the current issue of the ISR, the SWP, through its new political pundit, emphasizes these views in another form. Murray Weiss poses the question exclusively as a problem of theory and program. Says Weiss:

> We think the circumstances call for a thorough discussion of program as the prelude to organizational steps leading toward actual regroupment. The question of program, in our opinion, is decisive. . . . The task of regroupment, in our view, does not consist of ignoring or watering down the programmatic differences between revolutionary Marxism on the one hand and Stalinism and Social Democracy on the other. On the contrary, the task is to regroup the radical workers around the program of revolutionary Marxism and thereby create the class-conscious vanguard that will enter the mainstream of the working class to bring militant socialist consciousness to its struggle.

Apart from the stale phrasemongering, the unyielding cliches that have really nothing to do with the problems in this country, Weiss equates revolutionary Marxism with the "defense of the Soviet Union." This, indeed, is the unique contribution of the SWP. Most important, however, is that this kind of an approach to the question of socialist unification, is designed to prevent unification. For unification in the mind of the SWP means accepting the "finished program" of the SWP and joining it.

Weiss would of course build the new movement around the conceptions against which we warn. He is opposed to the ISL position because it implies, in the context of the world and American situation that social democracy, in the broadest sense of the term is progressive in relation to Stalinism and in relation to the present stage of development of the American working class, and, finally, he rejects the view of the ISL that no one interested in reconstructing a broad socialist movement in the United States can have a perspective of splitting the new movement.

The whole radical movement now knows from the public statement of its spokesman and its practical activity, that the SWP regards the present situation ripe for "raiding" all organizations in the name of its programmatic intransigence and purity, based upon the position of the need of all radicals to "defend the Soviet Union." So that of all tendencies in the socialist movement, the SWP is least interested in socialist regroupment unless, of course, it takes place under the dogma of its "finished program." The SWP hovers like a hawk over all groups waiting its change to pick up a stray individual here and there.

WE DO NOT BELIEVE that this is the period of splits or raids; that any movement can even begin to make progress with such conceptions and practices. Either the unification of socialists will take place on a broad, general program of democratic socialism, free of the stigma of Stalinism and embrace many, many forces, or it will not take place at all. Socialist reunification based upon the SP-SDF, or SP-SDF and ISL alone will not be all-deciding, by any means. The hope of such unification lies in the promise that it holds out. That is why the Memorandum of the ISL summarizes its views in the following way:

"Our aim with regard to the Socialist Party must serve in turn our wider long-range aim with regard to the labor movement, as the most important of the mass movements in the country. The present period is a long interlude between the last radicalization wave and the one to come. In such a period it is not possible to think in terms of a genuinely powerful socialist movement numbering many tens of thousands and influencing many hundreds of thousands and more. But it is possible and necessary to utilize to the maximum all the possibilities now at hand to consolidate during this interlude the kind of socialist movement that will be best able to assist the working class in its further economic and political progress and be assisted in turn by the most conscious elements from its ranks who join and build the socialist wing of the labor movement."

And finally:

The ISL has no grandiloquent illusions about the immediate possibilities for a powerful socailist movement. It is, however, anxious to do all in its power to utilize present concrete possibilities, no matter how modest, in conscious preparation for the much greater possibilities of the future. It is also in this sense that the ISL is prepared to unite with the Socialist Party and to pursue a course of building it up that will best advance the cause and influence of socialism in the labor movement, now and later. It is in the same sense that we refuse to support any movement which equivocates on the key question of the Stalinist regimes, for, among other reasons,.it is precisely the identification of Stalinism with socialism in the minds of the American working class that has militated so strongly against the progress of socialism in this country.

ALBERT GATES

April 25, 1957





# Prospects for the British Labor Party

## . . . Brightened by the Crises in Toryism and Stalinism

Eighteen months ago the British political scene was dominated by the figure of a smug, successful and supremely confident Conservative Party. In a comparatively easy general election campaign it had succeeded in stepping up its majority in the House of Commons to the comfortable figure of 60 seats over the combined total of all other parties; a few months earlier it had managed to remove the ageing Sir Winston Churchill from his position as Tory Leader and install in his place the glamor boy of British politics, Sir Anthony Eden. These factors, coupled with an apparent easing of international tension and the possibility of a fairly calm period in the domestic economy, had raised the Tory Party's morale sky high and given to it a sense of security and satisfaction.

By way of contrast the Labor Party presented a sorrowful picture. Demoralized by its election defeat and the prospects of another five years in opposition—facing a Tory Government which was both numerically and politically stronger than its predecessor—the Labor Party was further handicapped by a lack of positive leadership, a weak policy and a rank and file which was rapidly becoming disillusioned with what leadership and policy there was. The discomfort of the Labor Party was increased by the way in which the entire press of Britain began to probe into its failures and, in many cases, to conduct premature post-mortems on what appeared to be a lifeless corpse. Even newspapers which had given considerable support to the Labor right-wing in the past joined in the examination; as, for instance, the *Daily Mirror* which in a series of searing articles wrote: "Labor lost the general election because its leaders are too old. Labor's aged leaders failed to unite the Party. Failed to inspire it. Failed to organize it for victory. The chief architect of defeat was Mr. Clement Attlee." The right-wing itself, very conscious of the fact that something had to be done very quickly to pull the Party together again, endeavored to focus attention on the necessity to overhaul and reshape the Party's organizational machinery. But, while doing this, it was forced to admit that the Party's policy also needed attention. For example, Herbert Morrison—then deputy leader of the Parliamentary Labor Party and leading right-winger on the National Executive Committee—wrote in *Fact,* the official Party monthly journal: "The Labor Party now faces one of those major tasks which the Party has not hesitated to face in the past. . . . We must re-examine, not the fundamental principles of the Party, but the exposition of Party policies in the light of modern conditions."

Now, less than two years later, the British political scene is alost unrecognizable when looked at in the light of what existed just after the 1955 general election. The Tory Party has lost its sense of confidence and security and is in the throes of violent in-

ternal squabbles. The Tory Government has fumbled one thing after another and even the most optimistic Tory commentators are now doubtful whether it could command the backing of the voters were the issue put to a test at a general election. On the other hand the Labor Party's fortunes have swung in the opposite direction. The "aged leaders" attacked by the *Daily Mirror* are no longer in control; Party policy is being re-shaped—and while it is not necessarily falling into the pattern demanded by many left-wingers it is at least being re-shaped in a democratic fashion which gives ample opportunity for rank and file participation before any final attitude is taken. In the trade union base of the Labor Party, which for years provided the sheet anchor of the right-wing, there is definite evidence of a shift to a more militant attitude—particularly in relation to industrial affairs. The stifling atmosphere of rigid orthodoxy, which only a few years ago cramped left-wing expression and threatened to bring about a major split within the Party, is now clearing and those holding left-wing opinions are now more able to state their case and have it listened to without being treated as alien elements and threatened with disciplinary action on the slightest pretext.

The reasons for this about-face in British politics are many, and to trace their origins and follow their progress in detail would require a major work of political analysis. For the purposes of this brief review only the major points will be touched upon in an endeavor to trace the fortunes of various political tendencies in Britain during the past eighteen months or so.

ONE OF THE MOST important events which affected the Labor Party immediately after the 1955 general election was the resignation of Clement Attlee as Leader of the Parliamentary Labor Party. After holding this position for 20 years, Attlee finally decided to quit in the face of growing demands for such action both within the Parliamentary Party and the national Party outside of Parliament; as he gracefully made his way to the House of Lords—having had an earldom bestowed upon his shoulders—Attlee left the field open for a fight to develop over who should take over his old job. The fight turned out to be a tough one. It not only installed a new Leader of the Parliamentary Labor Party but also ended the career of Herbert Morrison, a man who had acted for a long period as Number Two to Attlee as Deputy Leader and who appeared to hold the impression that Attlee's mantle was his by virtue of long service to the right-wing.

There were three contestants for Attlee's old job. Hugh Gaitskell—an economist educated at Winchester public school and New College Oxford, ex-civil servant with only ten years in Parliament to his record, one-time Labor Chancellor of the Exchequer and responsible for introducing the 1951 budget which placed charges on the National Health Service and so sparked off the Bevanite resignations from the Government. Herbert Morrison—who after scant elementary education started work as an errand boy in a shop and thence progressed to a telephone switchboard operator in a brewery and by various stages to a full-time job for the labor movement; one time a member of the old Social Democratic Federation and alleged Marxist he had many years earlier turned his back on his past and gone completely over to the right-wing of the Labor Party. The third contestant was Aneurin Bevan—who left school at the age of thirteen to become a miner, was first elected to Parliament on a Labor ticket in 1929, was Minister of Health in the 1945 Labor Government and, after his resignation, focal point around which the various elements of the Labor left-wing gathered.



The result of the elections for the Leader's job (voting being confined to Labor MPs) caused some surprise. Gaitskell romped home with 157 votes, Bevan followed with 70 and Morrison, thought by many to be favorite, trailed way behind with only 40 votes. Gaitskell was elated by his victory, Bevan was encouraged by the vote he received and Morrison, the most outspoken of right wing propagandists, retired from the scene of Labor's front ranks and is now seldom seen or heard.

Gaitskell's election was an event of great importance for the Labor Party for, while by no means a left-winger, his position was such that he was unable to make any fierce attacks upon the left-wing. The position was neatly summed up at the time by *The Economist,* a weekly journal which describes itself as "independent conservative." "The decision to elevate Mr. Gaitskell to the leadership is also a risky one," *The Economist* said, because it may be the start of "an unprofitable slide to the Left." Gaitskell, it continued, was "a moderate, sensible and agreeable man," but he was also a right winger without any large degree of backing and foundation in the trade union movement. The Leader of the Labor Party, according to the article, should be either a middle-of-the-roader or a right-winger able to "whistle up" a faithful trade union bodyguard to control the "wild men" of the left. As he fitted neither of these categories *The Economist* foresaw that Gaitskell would have to make concessions to the left-wing in order to maintain his position as leader. Gaitskell, it said, "can rule only by persuasion, and persuasion means conciliation."

To a large extent *The Economist's* predictions have been realized. With Attlee in the House of Lords, Morrison sulking on the Labor back benches and Gaitskell poised in his delicate position, the pressure on the left-wing from the right has considerably eased in recent years. One result of this easing of tension between right and left has been the "promotion" of Bevan to one of the most important posts in Labor's "Shadow Cabinet" in the House of Commons. This body is more or less a duplicate of the Government Cabinet and various Labor members of Parliament are assigned to certain tasks which, in theory at least, they would take over in the event of Labor being returned as the majority party in a future general election. To act as his spokesman on foreign affairs Gaitskell has chosen none other than Aneurin Bevan, and by doing so gave him the job which ranks Number Three in the Labor Parliamentary hierarchy after the Leader and Deputy Leader. Whether or not Bevan acted wisely in allowing himself to be placed in what could become a very difficult position is open to debate, but the point to be stressed here is that Gaitskell obviously feels that his own position is such that he cannot afford to follow the old right-wing tactics of deliberately giving Bevan the cold shoulder when it comes to handing out official functions.

But the way in which Gaitskell is forced to pay careful attention to the general mood of the Party has much more importance than rationing out posts within the leadership; it also means that when issues of policy arise he has to tread very carefully when making on-the-spot observations lest

he get out of step with the current mood of the Party rank and file and thus place his own position in great danger. A real, and important, example of just what this means for the left-wing of the Party was contained in the events leading up to the Tory war against Egypt.

THE DAY AFTER NASSER announced that the Suez Canal Company had been nationalized Gaitskell said in the House of Commons that the Labor Opposition "deeply deplore this high-handed and totally unjustifiable step by the Egyptian Government." He went on to ask: "In view of the seizure of the property of the Suez Canal Company and the vague statement about future compensation, will the Prime Minister bear in mind the desirability of blocking the sterling balances of the Egyptian Government?" A few days later Gaitskell, taking part in a full scale debate in the House of Commons, elaborated on his views. He was not, he said, of the opinion that the mere act of nationalization was wrong; what he was concerned with were three points. First, the Suez Canal Company was not an ordinary concern but was of immense importance to the whole world, and therefore it was a matter of international concern when it changed hands. Secondly, he said that he took strong exception to the arbitrary manner in which the Egyptians had acted, "without discussion, without negotiation, by force." Thirdly, he could not ignore the political background and the repercussions of the whole episode in the Middle East; and he mentioned with approval Guy Mollet's statements which likened Nasser to Hitler. "The fact is," said Gaitskell, "this episode must be recognized as part of the struggle for mastery of the Middle East."

This line of Gaitskell's was speedily echoed by the *Daily Herald,* the daily newspaper which is committed to support the official political line of the Labor Party in its editorial pronouncements and always takes a right-wing attitude for safety's sake. In an editorial headed: "NO MORE ADOLF HITLERS!," it said that Nasser was acting like a Hitler in the Middle East and that Britain and other powers should act swiftly to show Nasser that they were not going to tolerate any more Hitlers. "There is no room for appeasement," bellowed the concluding note of this bellicose editorial. The prospects that the Labor Party would trail along behind the Tory Government delighted the Tories and their press organs. The *Daily Telegraph,* a newspaper which expresses the views of extreme right wing Toryism, said in an editorial: "Any attempt to describe the Western powers' firm stand over Suez as further evidence of Tory imperialism has been nipped in the bud by Mr. Gaitskell's courageous support in the House of Commons." And it went on to congratulate Mollet and Pineau, "both staunch Socialists," for also being "consistent advocates of the firmest possible measures to meet the Egyptian challenge." But the delighted Tories had overlooked one important factor, up to that time only Gaitskell's voice had been heard—and its echo in the *Daily Herald.* The left-wing of the Labor Party had yet to express its opinion, and when it did the blast set both the Tories and Gaitskell back on their heels.

The voice of Labor's left-wing was first heard through the pages of the Bevanite weekly newspaper, *Tribune.* Gaitskell, it said, outdid the Tories in suggesting ways of putting pressure on Egypt, and his proposal to block Egypt's sterling balances was indefensible in law or morality. "Mr. Gaitskell's reactions to the crisis were those of the most orthodox Tory," said *Tribune.* "The rank and file, by every means open to them, must speak for Britain. Labor's duty is clear. It must oppose the hysterical campaign against Nasser and his nation, to which at present some Labor politicians and the *Daily Herald* are making a disgraceful contribution." This sharp criticism by *Tribune* was followed, five days later, by a statement issued over the names of 28 Laborite Members of Parliament expressing opposition to the Tory line on Egypt and opposing the use of armed force to try and settle the matter. Very soon critics of the Party line were making their voices heard in local Party organizations and in the columns of the Party press. As the storm grew Gaitskell began to waver and the first signs of his capitulation appeared when he summoned a special meeting of Labor's "Shadow Cabinet" which subsequently demanded that the Government recall Parliament, then on summer vacation, to discuss the situation in Egypt. Commented Lord Beaverbrook's Tory *Sunday Express,* Mr. Gaitskell "has decided to rally smartly behind his party" since he could not rally his party behind himself. By the time the Labor Party annual conference arrived, a few weeks later, Gaitskell's conversion was complete and a resolution expressing opposition to Tory sabre rattling was passed after Gaitskell had made a speech during which he sought to prove that he was a much misunderstood man and that he had, in reality, been opposed to the Tory attitude on Egypt right from the very start. The final chapter in this story was written soon after when the Tory Government joined France and Israel in launching an attack upon Egypt: pushed hard by the rank and file the leadership of the Labor Party and trade unions organized mass protest demonstrations against the Tory action. At these demonstrations the full depth of feeling of the rank and file became apparent—such as in London when demonstrators made an unplanned march on the Prime Minister's residence in Downing Street—and it seems clear that had the Tory Government not called off its action against Egypt when it did the rank-and-file militants of the Labor Party would have pressed for more drastic action in the form of strikes against the war.

During this campaign against the Tory war in Egypt, Gaitskell, having been more or less forced to lead it by the left wing of the Party, really began hammering the Government—much to the annoyance of many Conservatives who had expected something different from him. In press articles and speeches he hit the Tories where it hurt with the result that his standing went up in the eyes of the average Labor supporter and caused a Tory Cabinet Minister to acidly comment: "As long as Mr. Gaitskell remains leader of the opposition it will never be possible to return to bipartisanship between the main parties on foreign affairs."

While Gaitskell, because of his unstable position, has been forced to move temporarily slightly over to the left with the result that the whole mood of the Labor Party has become more militant and aggressive, Bevan himself has been restrained and he has, in fact, moved toward the right. On the Suez issue, for instance, while *Tribune* and the left wing hit out against Gaitskell's initial stand and the Tory policy, Bevan shot off at a tangent and devoted most of his comments in the early stages to criticisms of Nasser and to proposals for the

"internationalization" of the canal. The correspondence columns of *Tribune* began to carry letters from readers which, while whole-heartedly supporting *Tribune's* stand, pointed out that Bevan himself was taking an altogether different attitude—a fact which led many people to the conclusion that a difference of opinion existed between *Tribune* editor Michael Foot and Bevan.

ANOTHER MANIFESTATION of Bevan's move to the right was his comparative silence at last year's annual conference of the Labor Party. With debate flowing fast and furious on many controversial matters, Bevan spoke only once during the whole of the conference—and then on a matter which was non-controversial and of only minor importance. His role at the conference was minute when measured up against the part played by others of the left-wing who are centered around *Tribune;* many rank and file left-wingers—who are unknowns compared to Bevan—made a much more important contribution to the conference. One possible reason for this attitude was the fact that Bevan was once again trying for the job of Party Treasurer—a post for which he had fought on previous occasions against Gaitskell and had each time been beaten. With Gaitskell Party Leader and consequently out of the running, Bevan last year had a new opponent from the right-wing—George Brown—and it was common knowledge that his chances were much improved because of a general dislike (personal as well as political) of Brown. In the outcome Bevan was elected as treasurer and many observers expressed the opinion that Bevan's silence was a concession on his part in order to pull in doubtful votes which he might have antagonized had he engaged in polemics with the right-wing. His election, in other words, was the reward for his silence.

Such speculations may contain a fair element of the truth, because they are entirely in keeping with Bevan's big weakness of looking at the right versus left conflict within the Party in personal terms, as they affect Bevan himself. A glaring example of this weakness, and one which caused left-wingers to gnash their teeth in fury, occurred during the election for Party Leader. The contestants, as stated earlier, were Gaitskell, Morrison and Bevan. After the nominations had been made left-wingers were dismayed when Bevan issued a statement saying that he was prepared to withdraw his nomination if Gaitskell did likewise and left a clear field for Morrison to take the position without contest. What motives prompted Bevan to make this fantastic offer are still not known, but his willingness to give Morrison (a far more rabid right-winger than Gaitskell) a walk over victory was a clear sign of his lack of responsibility towards the left-wing forces of the Party as a whole. Gaitskell declined to make the deal offered by Bevan and the subsequent voting figures showed that he acted wisely for Morrison was beaten to the bottom of the poll; had Gaitskell accepted Bevan's offer the Parliamentary Party would have pushed upon it the least acceptable of the three candidates. Speculation again has it that by making such an offer Bevan hoped to win support and secure the position of Deputy Leader as Number Two to Morrison — and he would have also kept his old enemy of the 1951 split out in the cold. The fact that the Party would have had at its head one of the most unpopular right-wingers did not seem to have entered into Bevan's calculations, nor did the fact that Morrison would have proved much more inelastic than Gaitskell seem to have been considered by Bevan. For him the whole matter appeared to be one of personalities rather than political principles.

But, in spite of Bevan's weaknesses, the fact remains that the Labor Party as a whole has adopted a much more militant stance in the past eighteen months and has shifted away from the extreme right-wing position it had held for several years previously. In the trade unions, too, the center of balance has moved over several degrees, due to both a change in the leadership of a couple of important unions and the reaction of rank and file union members to the economic policies of the Tory Government. Wage restraint, having weighed down heavily on the trade unions for some years, has now been officially buried by the Trades Union Congress; on the Suez question the trade unions generally took up a firm stand against the Tories and political issues, having been pushed into the background for a long time by the trade union right-wing leaders, are now coming more to the forefront. Throughout the Labor movement aggressiveness coupled with a desire to push forward is the prevalent mood.

THE CHANGE OF MOOD and shift of emphasis within the Labor movement is heightened and encouraged by the sorry plight at present existing within the Tory and Communist Parties, both of which are divided by deep internal divisions. While the discomforts and troubles of the Tory Party give encouragement to the Labor Party as a whole, the splitting up of the Communist Party is giving a fresh impetus to the left-wing of the Labor Party and spurring it to fresh efforts in order to win over rank and file militants of the C.P. who have become disillusioned with their Stalinist leadership.

The Tory Party's troubles have their origin largely in the struggle between those in its ranks who wish to push on with the tougher policies adopted since the 1955 election and those who wish to return to the "new look" Toryism developed by R. A. Butler in order to win over support from the top strata of the working class and to consolidate Conservative support among the middle class. The result so far has been that the "get tough" section has had most of its way and has introduced economic policies which have not only hit the workers but have also created a great deal of dissatisfaction among the middle class. The Suez war, with its economic repercussions, has made things even tougher with the consequence that the divisions within the Tory ranks have deepened and opposition to the Government has grown.

At two important by-elections for Members of Parliament the Government has received clear indications of its falling support—and in both cases the middle-class voters were responsible for a drastic drop in the Tory majorities. At Tonbridge, a traditional Tory constituency in South East England, a by-election last June sliced away the Tory majority from 10,196 in the general election to a mere 1,602. In December a by-election in Melton Mowbray knocked the Tory majority of 10,780 in the general election down to 2,632. In both of these elections the significant feature was the large number of Tory supporters who stayed away from the polling booths; they were not prepared to vote Labor but at the same time they were not prepared to give support to a Tory Government which, in their

eyes, had given the middle-classes a raw deal.

The reasons for this dissatisfaction of the middle classes stem from the Tory Government's policies of credit squeeze, high interest rates on bank loans and similar measures which—although primarily designed to put pressure on industry to create "mobility of labor"—also have an adverse affect upon small shopkeepers, professional men and the like. In reaction to this some sections of the middle class, instead of following the normal pattern of temporarily withdrawing support from the Tory Party, are seeking a solution in other organizations which have sprung up to express extreme middle class feeling and to put pressure on the Tory Party. Two such bodies are the Middle Class Alliance, led by a Tory MP, and the People's League for the Defense of Freedom, led by a renegade civil service trade union leader. These bodies are presenting general demands for the reduction of taxation on the middle class, a reduction in Government spending, a peg on working class wages to stop inflation and a tougher policy towards trade unions. The People's League in particular is extremely anti-trade union and consistently seeks to influence the course of industrial disputes and boasts of the machinery it has set up to carry out strike-breaking operations.

These bitter feelings, coupled with clashes of personality, move upwards through the whole of the Tory Party into the Cabinet itself. During the war in Egypt they were, in part, responsible for the fumbling of Anthony Eden and his decision to end the war in circumstances least favorable to his Government. Eden's resignation, officially due to ill health, doubtless has its real origin in the factions fights of the Tory Party. The Tory Party is now demoralized and completely at a loss as to which move to make next; it would like to send the country to the polls in a demonstration of support but is afraid to because the election would more likely turn out to be a complete repudiation of all the policies at present pursued by the government. It would like to settle, for once and for all, the question of its leadership—but deep seated rivalries make this impossible. And, to further complicate matters, the Tory Party all the time is confronted with a Labor Party which is more militant than for many years past and is ever anxious to take advantage of Tory weaknesses.

IF THE TORY PARTY is in a mess there are no words which can precisely describe the situation of the British Communist Party. Always microscopic— it had around 30,000 members at the last count— the CP has never had a great deal of mass influence on the British working class. It relied instead on capturing points of power within the trade union movement and then using these points of power to influence the course of events within the Labor Party itself. But now the events of the 20th Congress and Hungary have deprived the CP of many of these points of power as members occupying leading positions in the unions have quit. This walk-out of many CP members in the trade unions has been accompanied by similar acts by rank and file members, intellectuals and students in CP groups at universities. Many who violently disagree with the CP line on Hungary are still within the Communist Party, where they say they intend to stay and fight it out, so the full effect of the divisions within the party ranks are yet to be seen.

When the news of the first "revelations" at the 20th Congress reached Britain the CP leadership tried to play the matter down. After a few brief articles and letters had appeared in the *Daily Worker* the editor appealed to members to forget the "cult of the individual" and concentrate on the more "positive aspects" of the Congress. But the lid had already been lifted and dissatisfied CP rank and filers were not going to be so easily put off. As further news reached Britain, and then the U. S. Government released documents which allowed British Communists to see what Khrushchev had told their Russian comrades, the storm within the British Communist Party grew. First criticism was confined to the way in which the British CP leaders had accepted without question everything they had been told in the past by the Kremlin bosses; but then criticism broadened out and the British CP leaders started coming under fire for their own bureaucratic conduct and the undemocratic practices within the Party. Letters in the *Daily Worker* complained that discussion in CP branches was stifled; that those who disagreed with the Party line were abused by the leadership and that in general the situation within the British CP contained all the germs from which a full scale Stalinist terror could grow should the Party ever take over in Britain. The 24th Congress of the British Communist Party, held in March of last year, gave elements in opposition a further opportunity to show where they stood and to try to win further support.

The CP leadership, however, had learned a lesson from the 20th Congress, that dealing with the situation disclosed by Khrushchev's speech, should take place in secret session behind locked doors. But even so several delegates made sharp attacks upon the leaders of the British CP while the Congress was still in open session. Such as the delegate who complained: "When we get a decent branch the leadership comes and beats it down. We are told to go off and form more branches, even though some of them consist of only one man." The leadership met such criticisms by warning of "Trotskyist" elements within the Labor Party who were seeking to influence the Bevanites and at the same time cause disruption inside the CP.

Some weeks after the Congress the political committee of the British CP published a statement which said that the 20th Congress of the C.P.S.U. was correct in condemning the cult of the individual but at the same time it was regrettable that the Central Committee of the Russian CP had not issued a public statement on the question and as a consequence Communists in Britain and elsewhere had to rely on unofficial sources "hostile to socialism," and in the absence of an official statement the unofficial text published by the U. S. Government must be regarded as more or less authentic. The evils revealed by Khrushchev, continued the British CP statement, arose out of the period of "abnormal strain" between 1934 and 1953, such as the rise of fascism, the preparation for the Second World War and the growth of the cold war. But, in spite of the grave abuses now revealed, the Soviet people has "established socialism, withstood and defeated the Nazi onslaught, and reconstructed their country after the unparalleled devastation of the war. This achievement shows the superiority of the Socialist system over capitalism and the creative possibilities it opens up for the people."

After calling for a "profound Marxist analysis" of the causes of degeneration in the functioning of Soviet so-

ciety and a more adequate estimate of both the "positive and negative" aspects of Stalin's role, the statement promised: "Within our own party we shall need to carry forward and encourage the widest and most thorough discussion, as already begun, of our political and organizational methods, the functioning of party democracy and the tackling of problems before us, our relations with other sections of the Labor Movement, and the aims of unity." It warned, however; "The enemies of our party hope that this discussion will weaken the party and open the way for attempts to smuggle anti-Marxist and anti-Communist bourgeois conceptions into the party striking at the roots of Communist principles and organization." Communists, it said, must conduct the discussion so as to strengthen every aspect of the party's work and activity.

The CP leaders' chants about democracy were put to the test soon afterwards when, for the first time in nearly twenty years, an opposition paper began to circulate within the ranks of the British Communist Party. Entitled *The Reasoner,* it was edited by two Yorkshire university lecturers, John Saville and E. P. Thompson. In its very first issue *The Reasoner* took to task most of the leading members of the CP. John Gollan, the new CP secretary who had taken over when Harry Pollitt retired because of "bad eyesight" (he had visited Russia 50 times and failed to notice anything wrong until Khrushchev made his speech), was attacked because of his slavish adherence to the Soviet line; George Mathews, the assistant secretary, was accused of trying to cover the cracks in the walls of CP theory with soiled wallpaper; R. Palme Dutt, CP president and chief theoretical appologist for the Kremlin in Britain, was given a broadside because of an article he had written in the CP *Labour Monthly* and which, according to *The Reasoner,* did not match the seriousness of the situation by its understanding. The policy of *The Reasoner,* and those associated with it, was stated to be complete freedom of discussion within the ranks of the CP and it appealed to those of a like mind to support it and stay inside the CP and fight it out with the "monolith."

The appearance of *The Reasoner* caused the Party leadership great concern for it presented a focal point around which elements opposed to the line could rally—and were in fact rallying in increasing numbers particularly in intellectual spheres. Thompson and Saville were presented with an ultimatum by the CP leaders that either they cease publication of their paper, and conduct their discussion within the limits of "democracy" defined by the CP leaders, or else they would be expelled from the party. But before the next move in this battle could be made events in Hungary sparked off a fresh wave of feeling and the crisis within the ranks of the CP began to mount.

When the news of the Hungarian revolution broke the British Communist Party showed no hesitation in deciding what line to follow. "Counter-revolution in Hungary," the *Daily Worker* told its readers in an editorial on October 25, "staged an uprising in the hours of darkness." Then, for a few days, the *Daily Worker* hesitated and began to make plans for a retreat. It spoke of the "justified grievances" of the Hungarian people and criticized the Hungarian Government for not paying attention to these grievances. But when the Russians launched their second onslaught against Budapest the *Daily Worker* and the British Communist Party immediately drew back and faithfully followed the Kremlin line by denouncing the Hungarian revolutionaries as "fascists" who were unleashing a "white terror." The repercussions were swift and violent. Five members of the editorial staff of the *Daily Worker,* including its Budapest correspondent, Peter Fryer, quit in protest. John Horner and Jack Grahl, secretary and assistant secretary of the CP dominated Fire Brigades Union, turned in their Party cards. They were rapidly followed by other leading Communists who were key men in the trade union movement. The CP student group at Oxford University dissolved and area, district, branch officials and ordinary rank and file members walked away from the party by the score. Thompson and Saville, after publishing a searing attack against this latest crime of the British CP leaders in *The Reasoner,* also quit; but they urged all who like themselves had broken away from the CP leadership, "not to lose faith in Socialism and to find ways of keeping together."

Many who broke with the CP have followed this advice with the result that in places all over Britain small Marxist Groups and Marxist clubs are springing up composed of ex-members of the Communist Party. Typical of these is a group in Nottingham which was formed when 12 Party members—including four members of the CP area committee, 3 branch secretaries and two members of the district committee of the Young Communist League—walked out and formed a Marxist Group. In a pamphlet they explained that they could not remain members because: "The Party leaders are no more than agents of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The anti-democratic nature of the Party structure makes it impossible for the rank and file to influence its basic policies or change its leadership. The Party is a despised sect. It is despised not because it is loyal to the principles of Socialism, but because it has betrayed them." The indignation expressed by these ex-Communist Party members in this denunciation of the British CP exists throughout the Party. Many holding such opinions are awaiting the outcome of a special congress which has been called and at which they intend to have one final try at turning out the present CP leadership and swinging the policy around. Their chances of doing this appear remote and the most likely course of events is that more members will quit the CP and leave it as a minute and politically sterile sect with only a very small nuisance value to the Labor movement.

THE BIG PROBLEM FOR the Labor Party is not those who remain in the Communist Party, but those who leave. The official Labor Party attitude is characteristic of the right-wing and was contained in a circular which went to all local Labor Parties advising them not to accept into membership ex-Communist Party members except in special circumstances, and then only after reference to the higher regional bodies of the Labor Party. Needless to say most local Labor Parties, at least those in which the left-wing is dominant, have decided to reject this advice and to follow the usual practice of accepting all who agree with the aims of the Labor Party and who do not belong to a body which makes them ineligible for membership. The job is, however, to get the ex-CP'ers into the Labor Party where they can work in a positive fashion with the left-wing rather than fritter away their energies in isolated Marx-

ist Groups which, by the very nature of things, will be divorced from the main stream of the Labor movement and degenerate into sectarian debating societies exercising no influence on the course of political events.

Some success in this direction has already been achieved. The group at Nottingham, for instance, has joined the Labor Party—notably due to lengthy discussions with members of the Labor Party who are promoting the circulation and influence of the *Socialist Review,* a monthly journal maintained by various Third Camp currents of socialist opinion. In other instances, too, ex-members of the Communist Party have entered the Labor Party after encouragement by the left wing and, in many of these cases, it is noticeable how they are linking up with the orthodox Trotskyist elements which operate within the Labor Party. This is perhaps an indication that their political education is really only just beginning and that they still hold illusions about the class and social character of Russia. But, this notwithstanding, they are within the Labor Party and as such they cannot possibly remain outside of the constant arguments and discussions which are in progress within the Party and there is the distinct possibility that, given time, the contradictions of orthodox Trotskyism can be explained to them and they can be won over to a Third Camp position. This, in fact, has already happened in some cases where ex-CP members found that they had exchanged the stiffling and bureaucratic atmosphere of the CP for the bureaucratic atmosphere which characterizes the Trotskyist grouping within the Labor Party.

It is easy, in the light of the occurences outlined above, to see why the Labor Party's right wing is so reluctant to take into membership ex-members of the CP. It sees them, quite correctly, as potential allies of the left wing. Sam Watson, a leader of the miner's union and right-wing member of the Labor Party executive committee, is said to have remarked in a private conversation that the worst thing that could happen was for the Communist Party to either collapse or dissolve itself. In such a situation, he is reported to have said, Communists will come into the Labor Party and be absorbed by the Bevanites. The circular advising local Labor Parties not to accept ex-CP members into membership obviously has its origins in the same line of thought, and it has been strengthened by the way in which left wing Labor journals, such as the *Tribune* and *Socialist Review,* have been hammering at the CP and doing all they possibly can to widen the split and pull more and more members out of the CP into the Labor Party.

The crisis within the CP is thus likely, sometime in the future, to have repercussions within the ranks of the Labor Party itself; indeed it is already having an effect to the extent that it is propelling the left wing into considerable activity in order to win over people who have broken with the CP. When this first phase of the activity is over, and all those who can be gathered into the Labor Party are established, the second phase will begin. This will consist of trying to clarify the views of ex-Communist Party members on fundamental issues, such as the nature of the Soviet Union and the role of the Labor Party in the struggle for Socialism. Complementing these two phases will be the general clash between the various currents of left wing opinion, such as the Bevanites, Trotskyists and Third Camp Socialists, and the broader battle between the left forces in total and the right wing.



THE CRISIS OF TORYISM will also produce reactions within the Labor Party, particularly insofar as they concern the dissatisfied elements of the middle class. About seven years ago, and primarily at the instigation of Herbert Morrison, serious attempts began to be made to dilute the class character of the Labor Party by broadening its program so as to draw in support from the middle class. This meant the playing down of the Socialist content of the Labor Party and the magnification of petty bourgeois tendencies. With a large proportion of the middle class now wavering in its support for Toryism it is very likely that elements of the Labor Party right wing will make fresh attempts to pursue a policy of making the Labor Party what they choose to call a "national party"—in other words a party of liberal reformism which bases its appeal to the electorate on the fact that it is better able to manage the affairs of a capitalist economy than the Tory Party in the interests of "the community as a whole." Such moves will, naturally enough, meet with strong resistance from the rank and file of the Party which consists to a very large degree of working class elements. Resistance might also be forthcoming from the trade unions because, in order to hold out the carrot to the middle class, the right wing would probably find it necessary to use a stick on the trade unions.

The future for the Labor Party, then, is full of promise if it can but avoid the many traps which are in its path. With the Tory Party's confidence and prestige shaken the Labor Party can, if it follows the correct tactics and policies, demonstrate to the people of Britain that England's unstability is not merely the aftermath of Tory incompetence but the result of the fundamental characteristics of capitalism and imperialism. At the same time it can, because of the havoc wrecked upon the CP by events in Hungary and at the 20th Congress, win over the best elements of the CP and allow them to use their energies for Socialism rather than Stalinism. But to follow both of these courses a change is needed in the general outlook and policy of the Party. Over the past few years it has swung over to the left somewhat but still remains many degrees off course. To take full advantage of all its new possibilities the Labor Party must pursue a consistent socialist policy. And not only does the Labor Party need such a policy for its own sake or the sake of the workers in Britain; it needs it also for the whole working class of Europe which, sickened by the latest crimes of Stalinism and further disillusioned by social democracy as illustrated by Mollet's support for imperialism in the Middle East, is desperately looking for a lead. It is the responsibility of the left wing of the Labor Party to exert all its energies in order to turn the Labor Party into a movement which can provide such a lead.

OWEN ROBERTS

London, January 1957

# The Labor Movement In Tropical Africa—III

## *Concluding a Study of the African Working Class*

### Social and Economic Problems

IN THE PRECEDING PAGES, we have attempted to draw a general outline of trade-unionism in the main territories of Tropical Africa. Brief and fragmentary though this survey may be, it still provides the elements for a tentative evaluation of African trade-unionism.

We have seen how African trade-unionism has developed from small nuclei of militants to a mass movement that has become a decisive force on the continent, that has given shape to an amorphous proletariat, as well as a consciousness and a perspective. We should now turn to some of the problems and difficulties that subsist, before we can concern ourselves with the task of the labor movement in Africa and its place in the world labor movement.

We have seen earlier how migratory labor and the instability of the urban proletariat inhibited the development of labor unions in the early stages of the change from a subsistence economy to a market economy. Hand in hand with the problems that arise from the existence of a floating, amorphous "new" proletariat, go problems of inexperience and of scarcity of cadres. The lack of organizational experience, in routine matters as well as in tactical and political questions, which contributed to destroy the South African ICU, now plagues contemporary African unionism, particularly in regions such as French Equatorial Africa, East Africa or Madagascar.

Georges Balandier writes the following about French Equatorial Africa:

> ...the district towards the "elites" who formed the labor unions, rivalries which lead to fragmentation, the difficulty of submitting to the payment of dues, the lack of confidence in the efficiency of such organizations (of which extraordinary and immediate results were expected), also explain the mediocrity of trade-unionism at the present time.

Balandier also mentions "the clumsy use of the strike, which is often decided on without precise demands, without clear aims; the labor inspector, in certain cases, must seek for the cause of the strike by questioning each striker *individually*. Let us take note, during the year 1949, in industry, of a 'solidarity strike': it shows the rise, among a better organized and more conscious group, of a certain sense of trade union tactics.[70]

A trade-unionist from Madagascar confirms this, even as he describes the recent growth of trade-unionism in the island:

> In spite of this development and of the effort of the leaders, it must be recognized that the trade-unions still lack a qualified cadre, familiar with trade-union discipline and action, conscious of the importance of its task, militant in the struggle and completely disinterested. Several scandals brought about by the dishonesty of certain organizers cooled off much of the interest of those who hesitated to join trade-unions; in 1946 the failure of the strikes called by the CGT did not contribute to dispel the indifference or the pessimism of the workers.[71]

Naturally, the lack of cadres is also a result of all kinds of restrictions and discriminatory measures imposed by the local administration. As soon as a new union threatens to become important, it may be dissolved on any pretext. For example, the Uganda Association of Car Drivers was dissolved in 1949 for failure to register its members with the authorities since 1945, when its secretary was deported.[72] In French territories, African trade-union leaders must have a certificate showing they have finished grammar school—this in countries where 90 per cent of the population is illiterate and only 18.2 per cent of school-age children actually attended school.* Moreover, a person can be barred from holding functions in a labor union if he has been condemned for a "criminal offence."

The lack of experience and the lack of cadres is also reflected in the excessive fragmentation of the trade-union movement. There are very few great, industrial unions, such as the African Mineworkers' Union of Northern Rhodesia or the Federation of African Railwaymen in French West Africa: too often unions are formed on the enterprise level only, even when the enterprise is quite small. The example of Nigeria is instructive in this respect, especially considering that Nigeria has one of the oldest trade-union moveemnts in Africa. The following shows the structure of the Nigerian unions in 1948: (source: Naville, "Note sur le syndicalisme"; see reference [32]).

| | No. of Unions | Membership (total) |
|---|---|---|
| Less than 50 members ..... | 264 | 694 |
| 50 to 250 members ..... | 42 | 5,699 |
| 250 to 1,000 members ..... | 24 | 11,025 |
| 1,000 to 5,000 members ..... | 7 | 12,319 |
| Over 5,000 members ..... | 6 | 61,127 |

All the preceding weaknesses may be considered as "infantile disorders" of African trade-unionism. In part, they are of a type that all working-class organizations had to face in the early stages of their development; some of them are tied to the structure of the colonial economy in Africa. Obviously, too, the problems that arise from migratory and unstable labor—also the prevalence of small-scale undertakings—accounts to some extent for the great number of tiny unions. Finally, social, ethnic, and cultural differences, still play a role—less and less so, however, for trade-unions have succeeded in doing what "neither politics nor religion" could do: create a sense of unity, not only among the wage-earning working class of various tribes and languages, but also among it and the peasantry.

A second important category of problems arises from the relations between European and African workers. Two things should be noted here from the outset: first, that this problem is more important for the European workers and that it is mostly their task to settle it. If for no other reason, then because the African workers will soon be able to afford to ignore their attitude, and will be in a position to proceed regardless, if necessary against them.

Secondly, that the problem is one which occurs in its sharpest form in the British territories. In the territories under French rule, the "assimilation" policy of the government has made possible a much greater degree of co-operation between European and African workers, especially in the ranks of the CGT where it was made a matter of official policy. In the Belgian Congo, the policy of the government, enabling Africans to learn skilled trades, will also help the action of a unified labor movement when it arises, as it must.

*The percentage is an average of all African territories under French rule. The minimum was French West Africa with 7.6 per cent, the maximum Madagascar with 41.31 per cent. (73)

In the Portuguese territories, prejudice did not exist up to now in a form that would have segregated the lives and the work of the different races. Today, however, the Salazar government is importing "poor whites" from Portugal into the colonies, as it is unable to provide adequate living standards for them at home. The existence of this new mass of poor white labor is creating a situation where prejudice may become powerful.

In the British territories, on the other hand, we have a traditional and deliberate policy of fostering racial divisions in order to make co-operation against the colonial regime impossible. In all territories of East and Central Africa there are separate trade-unions for Europeans, Asians and Africans, just as in Cyprus there are separate unions for Greek and Turkish workers.

But administrative policy is just one of the reasons for the hostility of European trade-unions against the African workers. The other, more important, reason is the policy of the mining companies who, in effect, bought the support of a small group of European workers in order to be able to exploit more easily a vastly larger group of African workers. We have seen that in 1953 the 5,879 Europeans on the copper belt had a payroll that was twice as large as the payroll of 36,147 Africans. In South Africa, 50,579 European mineworkers were paid £28.9 million, while 411,563, Africans were paid £18.3 million [74] Pierre Naville writes:

> As (the whites) enjoy a dominating and exclusive position on the labor market (higher wages, better jobs, social legislation, favorable prices, etc.) they have an evident tendency to refuse to associate their fate to the fate of slaves, whose exploitation benefits them indirectly. It would have required a great deal of heroism on the part of the white workers (whether "little" or not) to sacrifice voluntarily the considerable advantages which capitalism grants them.[75]

These purely economic reasons for prejudice have become complicated in time by social and psychological factors. The task of counter-acting these and of fighting the official policy of the majority of European unions, devolves mainly on the minority of advanced European workers who have understood two things: (1) that their lasting interests demand co-operation with the people who make up the majority in the country that they have chosen as their homeland; (2) that their lasting interests are identified with the destruction of colonialism, a system that has proved itself incapable of seriously developing and industrializing a country that is theirs, as well as the Africans.

By the example of South Africa, it has become abundantly clear that the policy of discrimination and "apartheid" not only leads to the destruction of the African trade-unions, but of the European labor movement as well, and to the stagnation of the whole economy for want of skilled labor. Colonialism under all its forms is blocking the future of the European working-class as well as the future of the Africans—even though it grants to the former immense and concrete advantages at the present time.

The racist leadership of the European unions has usually identified the "cheap labor" policy of the large mining companies, which tends to replace higher-paid European labor with lower-paid African labor for the same jobs, with any policy that would lead to an advancement of the African workers, including a socialist approach. Yet the differences are essential. The policy of the companies is against the interests of both African and European workers: the African unions are not interested in having a small number of their members advance into underpaid skilled work. Neither are they interested in a variation of the Belgian formula of creating a small "middle-class" of Africans in skilled and technical jobs that may be used as a buffer between the administration and the mass of unskilled, underpaid and undernourished workers. Such is the policy that the *Economist* suggested at the time of the Rhodesian miners' strike in 1955:

> The constructive issue is for the Africans to get a ladder of advancement to take the minds of the best of them off their ill-directed strike. That would not be rewarding irresponsibility but a shrewd investment in African privilege.[76]

What the African workers are interested in is a radical change in their living standard, not a position of privilege for a few among them. This is the policy the AMU of Northern Rhodesia has been trying to apply. This is also the policy that deserves support by the European workers: only a massive increase in the wages of the great mass of unskilled African workers can provide the basis for "equal pay for equal work" in the skilled jobs. By increasing the purchasing power of the African workers, it also makes possible the development of a significant internal market and of an industry of consumers' goods, in short, it makes possible the development of the country.

The companies and the administration, however, think differently. A Board of Inquiry of the Northern Rhodesian government has recently "recommended a policy of advancement of African workers in the copper mines to better jobs and has concluded that the establishment of the principle of awarding to promoted Africans the European rate of remuneration would be an effective bar to the advancement of Africans in industry and would disrupt the African wage structure throughout the Federation and seriously threaten the national economy."[77]

In short, in spite of the tremendous wealth of the country, and in spite of the fabulous profit of the mining companies, the economy of Northern Rhodesia is organized in such a way that to pay decent wages to the vast majority of the wage-earning population would "seriously threaten" it! This is a statement well worth meditating for both European and African workers, along with the question of how an economy could be organized that could develop the country while ensuring a fair living standard for all.

On the international level, important problems have always been raised by the relations of the African unions with the trade-union movement of the colonizing countries. Invariably, these movements would take the same attitude as the European unions in Africa: ill-concealed hostility, mistrust, at best, neutrality towards the new African labor movement, which would, on the contrary, need every form of assistance more experienced labor movements could give. Almost all tendencies in the European labor movement, each in its own way, would seek to impose its own aims on African trade-unionism, trying to turn the African unions into passive auxiliaries of policies often determined by the colonial administrators. What, for instance, is an African worker to think of this startling piece of information which was distributed after the war with the approval of the British TUC:

> It must be understood that Trade Unions exist only to try to get the best possible working and living conditions for their members. If a government brings

about these conditions itself, then you will see that unions become unnecessary. But if a country is poor, neither a government nor the Trade Unions can make it richer except by trying to make its production bigger and better.

The theory of the "unnecessary unions" is a perfect rationale as much for Haile Selassie's Ethiopia as for Stalinist Russia—the only question is who is to decide when a government brings about the "best possible working and living conditions." As to the country's wealth, could it perhaps be increased by stopping the flow of profits to foreign capitalists and see that the profits are invested in the country's industry? No, that would be meddling in politics and, as everybody knows, "politics are not of the first importance to a trade union. Officials who use a union for politics should be removed as quickly as possible."

Elsewhere, the author of this stupid and patronizing little pamphlet writes: "We repeat, because we cannot say it too often, that Trade-Unions are meant to avoid and not to bring about strikes." In short, "It is clear that one of the first aims of Trade-Unions is to see what they can do to increase production. In that they will be trying to do the same thing as the management and the two should be able to work well together."[78]

This is only a striking instance among many—when the European unions were trying to be helpful.

The reputation of European reformism is one which the ICFTU managed to live down only in recent years: not because the European reformists had a change of heart* but because the rising strength of Asian and African trade-unionism makes the international body more dependent on their support.

*The scandalous attitude of FO towards the new Algerian union federations again proves that they didn't



The Stalinists soon attempted to utilize the headstart the revolutionary policy of the early Comintern and of the Red Trade-Union International gave them over the reformists, who had no such past to appropriate. Before the war, Stalinist influence existed only in South Africa, where social-democrats and revolutionary socialist tendencies were also represented. After the war, Stalinist influence became predominant in French West Africa through the channel of the French CGT. The Secretary-general of the CGT in the French Sudan, Abdoullaye Diallo, became one of the vice-presidents of the WFTU, while the CFTC (which also includes Moslem workers in Africa) became the only non-Stalinist federation of any importance.

However, remote as Russia and China may be and close as capitalist imperialism may be, the African workers have nevertheless had occasions to experience Stalinism as an enemy of their real needs and interests. In South Africa, as elsewhere, the CP supported the war and all measures that were justified by its prosecution, including all restrictive measures on the labor movement. In the Cameroons, the civil-servants of the CGT soon found themselves called upon to strike for demands such as "the release of Alain Le Lép."[79] More recently, the contrast between the uncompromising struggle waged against colonialism by labor unions such as the Tunisian UGTT, the Moroccan UMT or the Algerian USTA, and the treasonable position of the French Communist Party in the Assembly and in the labor movement, has greatly contributed to enlighten the African workers as to the real nature of Stalinist "help."

The first consequence of these experiences occurred in February 1956



in the African stronghold of Stalinism, French West Africa, where a group of trade-unionists left the CGT to set up their own, independent trade-union, the "Union Générale des Travailleurs Africains." The group was led by the Secretary-General of the old CGT, Sekou Touré, and took more than half of the old CGT with it. The Stalinists have maintained their influence only over the Sudanese CGT and over half of the Senegalese CGT.[80] The new union is actually only the juridical expression of a reality that has always existed: the African workers of the CGT have never been Stalinists, nor have they belonged to the CFTC. Claude Gérard writes that "if unity of action does not exist between the leaderships of the different federations, it unquestionably exists at the base. The African workers find almost always in a strike, or when another occasion appears in the course of their action, the traditional African community spirit which makes the strength of their country. For this reason, any leader who allows himself to be indoctrinated at an international congress must, after his return, align himself on the positions taken by the mass of African workers, who know how to keep their common sense and their freedom."[82]

An increasingly independent African labor movement has arisen: the Catholic unions are compelled to admit non-Christian workers and to loosen their ties with the Catholic Church; the Stalinist unions are losing strength; the unions that grew up under the tutelage of reformism develop a new, militant class-consciousness. These trends all point in the same direction: towards a unified, independent African trade-union movement.

This is as yet a long-term perspective: African workers still lack information about their movement in other parts of the continent, as communication is difficult and information is suppressed by each government. But the trend is determined by the fact that in each territory the trade-union movement faces the same problems as in the others. Although French and English policies differ, segregation in the British territories has fostered a national consciousness that has developed in the French territories through a demand for equality within the same system; migratory labor has made organization difficult in all territories, but has also favored the spreading of information and news; the unstable and mixed character of the urban labor force has been an obstacle to trade-unionism but even more so a means of turning the trade-unions also into parties, co-ops, schools, thereby establishing their social and political leadersehip over all other classes in the population.

## Conclusion.

THE AFRICAN LABOR MOVEMENT is about to be thrown into crucial battles just as it reaches maturity. It will have to battle against all kinds of outfits that overrun Africa today and that seek to replace the traditional colonial systems with more streamlined forms of exploitation.

For powerful sections of the European bourgeoisie, the exploitation of Africa is the last means of maintaining a certain independence from American capitalism. This is the origin of various "Eurafrican" schemes, aiming to establish a condominium of European capital over the French, the Belgian and the Portuguese colonies.

"To lose Africa and to decay politically and economically—or to keep it by integrating it to an increasing extent with Europe, and thereby to re-

conquer economic independence and future possibilities"—this is the problem as seen by the spokesmen of that group.[83]

Another scheme would establish an Anglo-American condominium over the British colonies, which would be shared with the Union of South Africa. This is a plan that took shape during the Second World War, and was described by Padmore as early as 1944.[84] It has an economic basis in the participation of American capital in mining (South Africa, Rhodesia, Belgian Congo, Gabon, Cameroons), in oil (Ethiopia, Mozambique), in rubber plantations (Liberia), etc.

A third conception, based on the preceding one, is that of Africa as a vital strategic link in the NATO defense system. There have been five international conferences since 1950 to discuss the use of Africa as a base for the defense of Europe. At the present time, the continent is studded with American bases: Robertsfield in Liberia, Wheelus Field in Libya, Nouaceur in Morocco. In the Belgian Congo two bases have been built at Kamina and Kiton which, in case of war, would become part of the "Atlantic" defense system. Only recently, the Union of South Africa leased a naval and air base to the U. S. Armed Forces.

Neither should it be forgotten that Tropical Africa possesses all the raw materials that are indispensable for the prosecution of modern wars, in particular over half of the world's production of uranium in the Belgian Congo and in the Union of South Africa.

Finally, Russia has tried to get into the act by recent offers of technical and military assistance to Libya and to Liberia—a propaganda move, perhaps, but its significance is that of staking out a claim.

It is hardly necessary to draw attention on the dangers that the rivalry of these imperialist enterprises represents for the African peoples. The last war earned them conscription of labor in Kenya, the prohibition from striking and from assembling in South Africa, and other repressive measures. It is clear that if Africa is to be a base for the defense of Europe, both economically and politically, the populations that inhabit it will have to be weapons to any part of the Congo and kept quiet, if necessary by force. In his description of the air base at Kamina, the reporter of the *New York Herald Tribune* wrote:

> The base maintains transport aircraft capable of lifting any complement of airborne troops with jeeps and automatic probably, should the occasion warrant, outside that territory.

The base has two "global missions," one of which is "to protect Belgium's rich uranium mines at Shinkolobwe, 85 miles southeast of here, and its rich copper deposits in the same general area." The other is "to form a nucleus for the protection of the entire southern half of Africa, and probably extend that protection even further, should another world war occur." Kamina, Kitona and "a rapidly growing naval installation at Banan, on the cost" wil lcontrol the mouth of the Congo river. "No one needs to tell a military geographer how this will contribute to the control of all Africa, except the Nile basin and the northern frontier."[85]

"Control" and "protection" against whom? Surely not against the Russian army, especially not in the southern half of the continent. These bases, as the others, are sharp points directed against the African people's efforts to gain control of its own countries and destiny.



The struggle against the military and economic might of imperialism will require a union of all labor organizations on the whole continent, an All-African Federation of Labor, forming the basis for a united and independent revolutionary-nationalist movement.

Even though the African labor movement is small, it is alone in a position to lead the struggle for political independence and for social and economic emancipation. Its task today is one of co-ordination and unification on the basis of a common program.

The task of the European and American labor movements is, above all, to stop the repression campaigns their own governments are preparing even today. The helicopters that will be used against the coming African revolutions will be American-made, and will perhaps belong to the American army. It is the responsibility of the American labor movement to see, even today, that the American army should not become the policeman of colonialism.

A. GIACOMETTI

*March 1956.*

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# BOOKS IN REVIEW

## A Search for Essentials

FRANCE AGAINST HERSELF, *by Herbert Leuthy.* Praeger, $6.50.

It might be established from the start that there is no intention, in this review, of breaking the almost uniform pattern of praise that has been heaped on Leuthy's book. Undeniably, *France Against Herself* is a good book, well worth anyone's time.

It is not that Leuthy's analysis of France is markedly original: that the "classic country of revolution is, in reality, the most conservative country in the world" will hardly be a revelation to those who have followed the miserable career of the Fourth Republic. Certainly, his imperative for France, the overhaul of her economy within the framework of European union, is a clear and much discussed necessity. And Leuthy's own proposed solutions—if they can be so called—that France might find a last hope in "liberal capitalism," sparked by a "fresh air of competition" from her European partners, are so vaguely formed that even he seems aware of their unreality.

Leuthy's real service is in presenting an amazingly thorough and perceptive background of the French nation, in explaining and illuminating problems in France that have baffled and frustrated even her best friends. Why is it that this nation, so rich in resources and skilled manpower, cannot achieve any sort of a satisfying level of production? What happened to the high hopes of the post-war era, and why were the governments that emerged only pitiful caricatures of those of the 1930s? And why do the French hang on to a disintegrating colonial empire, desperately pursuing policies that can end only in complete catastrophe? In handling questions such as these, *France Against Herself* is, indeed, "the best book on France in ten years."

According to Leuthy, France has perhaps a "more compact and self-contained personality" than any other nation, yet she presents herself as a confused, and confusing, jumble of contradictions. She possesses both a messianic spirit and a narrow provincialism, a highly developed national consciousness and a complete disregard for the state; she combines an absolute structure with democratic ideals, centralism with individualism, order with anarchy; and the rationalism she exalts is reconciled with an utter contempt for all reason. The obvious necessity is to find in this mass of inconsistencies some essential principles of the real France, the France that endures.

In this search for the essentials of France, Leuthy turns to her past, to the roots of traditions and institutions that exist today. As the French monarchy slowly absorbed and unified the nation, working through patient, legalistic methods to strengthen the principle of a single sovereignty, its most useful assistance came from the bureaucracy, the routinized, professional civil service. After the Revolution, the bureaucracy provided a refuge for Rightist or monarchial elements, and thus it has continued through the years, the institutional backbone of conservatism in France. Through political crises, rebellion, and revolution, the bureaucracy has survived, its foundations unscathed by



disaster, providing national continuity, sabotaging all reforms, an absolute structure leftover from the monarchial state.

FRANCE, THEN, IS NOT GOVERNED, but administered. The political fireworks that enliven the Western press never touch the real life of the state—they are, in fact, a relatively harmless façade. The surface struggles among ideologies are actually the heritage of the Revolution, which, while it gave to the French a set of sanctified Jacobin ideals, and a sense of being the revolutionary elite of Western civilization, never established a permanent political system. France has had, since the Revolution, absolute monarchy, limited monarchy, dictatorship, two empires, and three republics, all of which still have their passionate adherents. Thus the political battle goes on, for nothing has ever been decided; and, in the background, the persistent bureaucracy exercises the real power.

The Revolution, then, increased the power of the bureaucracy, as well as the engrained principle of centralization. The civil service, holding economic power, handed out privileges to the bourgeoisie, as the king had distributed favors to the landed aristocracy. The French economy was atomized, fragmented into small holdings, most of them under the protection of the state. Thus were the foundations laid for the modern French economy, that is even today dominated by thousands of peasants, shopkeepers, and owners of tiny factories —scattered productive agencies that are still largely protected by the central administration. The "real, conservative" French work ceaselessly to preserve their favored positions, resisting social planning, or any attempts at modern organization, with paralyzing weapons. The fragmented economy is almost able to exist without market outlets, and when threatened, it withdraws into its own ancient pattern, into a kind of "organized anarchy." And all of this is reflected in the *immobilisme* of the national Parliament, that results from the weird maneuvering of the 600 representatives of these petty, selfish interests.

This creaking system—the rigid bureaucratic stability, the topheavy centralization, the archaic economy—is buttressed by the national myths, which insist that change or modern efficiency would threaten the greatness of France, would destroy the "painfully acquired human values," and the absolute individual freedom achieved by *la civilisation supreme.* This is the spirit behind French rejection of mass organizational techniques, her contempt for the "neo-barbarians" of highly industrialized nations. France, in this myth, is complete, her culture a model of finished perfection, that she could enjoy in idyllic leisure if the world would but leave her alone.

FRENCH COLONIALISM FITS into this picture of conservatism—and into the national myth. The acquisition of the Empire is a story of the "machinations of high finance, the Church, and the military caste, which tirelessly re-erected overseas the Bastilles which had been overthrown in France." But the colonial picture is complicated by the ubiquitous French myth, which emerges as the *mission civilisatrice,* the profound belief in the French destiny to carry light and rationalism to the remote corners of the earth. Thus the French ideologists have found it inconceivable that Arabs or Asians could reject an invitation to become part of an unequaled culture; thus they have never been able to admit

that their dark-skinned brothers might prefer their own groping national autonomy. Through this combination of reactionary colonial interests and stubborn, blind idealism, French imperialism continues its sordid—and futile—repression.

The French problem, then, throughout this century, has been the progressive deterioration, the stagnation of her cherished way of life. A declining population, an agriculture and industry which lives on low turnover and high profits, a government anchored to a bureaucratic deadweight, an explosive and unmanageable colonialism—all these things point to the dead end of the existing system. France had one chance, in the hope and enthusiasm that came with the end of the war, and in the blueprint for dynamic change that was formulated by the members of the war-time Resistance. All this has been lost; the multitude of small interests rallied to halt any economic change, demanding to be left alone to go back to "the good old days," while the Communist Party added its inimitable assistance, paralyzing the government and betraying the hopes of the workers.

Thus France has, since 1946, drifted farther toward national self-destruction. Industrial workers, who should be a dynamic force in the social body, are isolated and mute; the joint actions of employers, terrified of the most reasonable demands, and the Communist Party, which serves only itself, have scaled the workers off into powerless pockets of discontent, five million voiceless citizens who have, in effect, been alienated from the rest of the nation. Groups with piecemeal reforms—left wing governments, Socialists, "technocrats" — have been wholely ineffectual. All efforts to build a future for France, through technical progress, through greater production, through any modification of her ancient traditions, have failed to crack the hard nut of French conservatism.

It is on such firm ground as this that Leuthy performs ably, sometimes brilliantly, as a diagnostician of the new "sick man of Europe." But as to where France is going, and how she can solve her insoluble mess, he doesn't say. He does suggest that France might try liberal capitalism—the "humanistic" variety—that would, somehow, work in conjunction with the technocrats. It is left to the reader to wonder how this peculiar arrangement would work, or—more importantly—why the French bourgeoisie, which has brought the nation to collapse, should be trusted to reform and regenerate itself.

A LONG TIME AGO, Lenin noted the indestructibility of the French bureaucracy; later, Trotsky observed that French capitalism could only go from crisis to crisis, from bad to worse; in the 1940's, even Leon Blum wrote of the total corruption of the bourgeoisie, its unfitness and its incapability for leadership. All of these analysts saw the same situation that Leuthy has described; while he stops short, casting forlornly about for some solution within the existing system, Lenin and Trotsky, at least, carried their analysis to its only logical conclusion. The necessity that they saw, then, has an even more urgent validity today. If France has a future, it lies in revolutionary socialism.

FRANCES WRIGHT





## Karolyi's Aspirations And Failures

MEMOIRS OF MICHAEL KAROLYI, *translated by Catherine Karolyi*. E. P. Dutton and Co., Inc. 1957.

In Karolyi's life were reflected three important stages of our era. He was importantly involved in the period of revolution and counter-revolution after World War I which saw the overthrow of monarchy; he was exiled for a quarter of a century while Horthyite fascism tyrannized his native Hungary; and he returned to Hungary and experienced its Stalinist rule. An active life spanning such tremendous events are the stuff of which magnificent memoirs can be shaped. If Karolyi's style and theoretical sweep fall far short of the magnificent, he has nevertheless fashioned an earnest document as interesting as the events involved. The record of Karolyi's own political evolution, symptomatic as it is of an era, and the events he describes as a participant make his work as indispensable to an understanding of Hungarian history as it is interesting as a personal testament.

THE FIRST SECTION of the book is a marvelously detailed and dramatic account of the corrupt and cynical feudal aristocracy, the fall of the Hapsburg monarchy, the October Republic and the unique revolution of 1919. Karolyi himself was one of the richest landowners in all of Hungary. Flesh of the flesh of the Hungarian aristocracy, he developed a supreme contempt for his own class. His sense of personal responsibility and moral involvement is illustrated by his enlistment in the army despite his opposition to the war. Being over-age, of precarious health and an owner of property, he could have honorably stayed out of the war. Yet he felt that he must share the experience of the soldiers if he was to get to know the people and play a role in any future democratic Hungary. His picture of the life of the aristocratic officer class in the army shows life doing a fair imitation of burlesque:

> Brother Joseph, who in civil life possessed a wardrobe of 860 suits, brought with him all his "indispensable" belongings, such as Persian carpets, a dozen special uniforms, hot-water bottles, electric contraptions and his cook. Each time headquarters moved, the large private van with my brother's belongings followed. General Apor, who preferred fresh milk to tinned, had a pet cow for his own and his favorite's supply. It was like a family party but defeated the purpose for which I had joined the army.

Revolted by this situation, Karolyi volunteered for the front to the dismay of his colleagues and family. But

> Even in the trenches, living in mud and snow, we members of Parliament were not in as much danger as the others, for each time an offensive started, Parliament was convoked and we were automatically given leave.

The accounts of anti-Semitism in the Army, the picture of fraternization between the Hungarian and Russian soldiers make an engrossing story.

It was the impact of Wilsonian idealism which started Karolyi in the direction of socialist thinking. "His pacifism and his Fourteen Points determined our internal struggles, just as later his defeat decided the fate of Hungary. . . . His failure proved that on the present social basis every pacifist effort must fail. People came to realize that responsibility for war did not rest on one nation only, and that capitalism and imperialism were among its causes." His loathing for the old social order led him in the direction of "Marxism." It was with this generalized socialistic orientation to poli-

tics that he entered the fateful post-war periods of revolution and counter-revolution.

The monarchy was overthrown by that leaderless, spontaneous uprising of people which never fails to terrify its liberal opponents by its thoroughness and seriousness. Having toppled the old order with magnificent timing and spirit, the people yield the initiative to the parties at hand that strive to place themselves at its head, or in some instances, are dragged by the masses to head the movement. Thus the leadership of the Republic was formed out of a "half-hearted alliance between the Karolyi Party and the Social Democrats." Having been sucked into power by the vacuum of leadership, these parties were doomed to failure for having neither plan nor determination to solve the problem of the revolution. The revolution followed the classic pattern of irresistible confidence and power of the masses matched only by the fearful vacillation of the liberals. Karolyi writes:

At 5:30 a.m. on the morning of the 30th I was awakened by an unknown officer who declared himself to be the President of the Soldier's Council, an association recently formed and having nothing to do with the National Council. He informed me that they would seize all the public buildings, occupy the town and demand my appointment. The sailors of the "men-of-war" were ready to fire on the Archducal palace. I had the greatest difficulty in dissuading him from this project. We were not yet prepared to take over under revolutionary conditions.

Late in the afternoon of the same day we got the news that the garrisons had been seized by the Soldiers' Council. We were appalled. Events were moving independently of us. By the evening the Revolution had gained momentum. One after the other, the garrison posts, the public buildings, the barracks, the General Post Office were occupied without the slightest resistance.

The mutinous soldiers, after occupying the garrison headquarters, brought the commander, General Varkonyi, prisoner to the Astoria. The General stood stiffly saluting before me and with a theatrical gesture unbuckled his sword, with the intention of handing it over to me. I told him there was no such necessity. Suddenly there came a bang, followed by several others. The General's face lit up and, turning to his aide-to-camp, who had been arrested with him, he said: "The troops are on their way to set us free. There is no deceiving my practised ear. I can tell machine-gun fire from a long way off." The bangs proved to be the slamming of doors—the General seemed not to have heard much gun-fire during the five years of war!

If the rumor was correct that the army could not be relied on to shoot at the people, we had won the battle; if not, we were lost and would most probably be court-martialled next morning. The deserting soldiers had taken the initiative and we were now forced to follow. We had not sufficient armed forces at our disposal to resist Lukasic's regular troops. We could not call on the workers until the following morning as they had by now left their factories and workshops.

Few members of the Council were aware of the critical situation. Most of them had returned home and only a small bunch of us remained, waiting for the incalculable morrow. About 1 a.m. I returned to the *Egyetem utca* with some sailors to mount guard over my children and my wife, who had just returned from Vienna. A machine-gun was placed in one of the windows of the ballroom. I asked the officer in charge if the fleet on the Danube was reliable? The sailor clicked his heels, and saluting martially, said: "Yes, sir. Sailors are in all circumstances on the side of rebellion."

Two hours later, a pale and breathless messenger brought the alarming news that the telephone exchange had tapped a conversation between Lukasics and the King, in which the General asked for permission to attack the Astoria with his troops. Immediately I rang up the Archduke, requesting him to prevent Lukasics from carrying out his intention and reminded him that all over the Monarchy the independent National States had been formed without bloodshed. He promised to talk to Lukasics without delay and to let me know the result.

I hurried back to the Astoria with Katus, who refused to stay at home. Approaching the Astoria, we were met with a volley of rifle fire. The nearer we came, the more violent grew the firing and we were convinced that the dreaded attack had started. The darkness and the dense fog made it impossible to see what was actually going on. A mass of people in panic, yelling and cursing, were pushing at the revolving door of the Astoria, which, getting jammed, let none in. Eventually we discovered that a battalion of soldiers, ordered to leave for the front had turned back at the station and marced to the Astoria, shooting off their guns in an ecstasy of joy. Upstairs the remaining members of the Council sat dejected and weary, resolved to hold out to the last. Professor Jaszi. Louis Hatvany and Keri declared the battle lost. It was raining incessantly; the small garrison gradually dwindled, more and more of the men stealing home. We sat silently, waiting for the dawn of October 31st. Suddenly the telephone rang. The Prime Minister was ready to see me. We all breathed again.

Thus the revolution which made Karolyi Prime Minister and forced the abdication of the last Habsburg in the next two weeks. But revolution only makes possible and does not guarantee the solution of old problems. Pacifism and philosophical liberalism do not solve the problems of bread and land. Karolyi, unlike Kerensky who is convinced of the correctness of all that he did and the perversity of history which interfered with him, is remarkably candid and objective in his self-appraisal. This evaluaton is no doubt due to his subsequent involvement with socialist thought. He says:

Aware that the majority of the country had granted its help to us on the basis of our peace programme, and counting on the support of the historical classes of Hungary, we dared not adopt revolutionary tactics. Our Manifesto was strictly constitutional, and had not even the courage to mention what the peasantry was expecting to hear—that the land was to be theirs. It declared instead: "We have won the battle, we have obtained eevrything we desired, we have no reason to continue to fight. We are preparing a law on universal suffrage."

This attitude was typical of a bourgeois uprising which, as soon as power has changed hands, endeavors to stop the revolution before it has even started on its programme, and to restore the old-time order.

The failure of the new government to attack the tasks of the revolution led to what was certainly a unique development in that era of revolutionary uprisings. The Social Democrats requested that the Communists take power. This was not due to any sudden conversion of Social Democracy to Bolshevism but rather to the recognition of the overwhelming fact in the relationship of forces that the people could be restrained only by a revolutionary government. The forces of reaction had not yet mustered enough strength to force the issue of power. This was to come after the Kun interlude. One of the more fascinating details of the account is how the "Social Democrat executive, the leaders, scared by the heated atmosphere of the country and fearing that the Communist revolution would break out and sweep them away, sent a delegation to the Marko utca prison, to open negotiations with Bela Kun. The prisoner, who still bore on his body the marks of police cudgels, was now the dictator and the Socialist Ministers took his orders. . . . Bela Kun, as he admitted later, was completely taken aback by this unexpected victory. He had demanded the maximum but had never expected to get it. Power fell into his lap." While Karolyi himself disclaims responsibility for this, he does concede that his policy was to hand over power to the Social Democrats. The Kun government succeeded no better than the Republic in meeting the needs of the country nor did it chart any road for such a develop-

ment. Some credit for this failure, though not all by any means, can be given to the extraordinaryly unstable, clinically neurotic personality of Kun of which Karolyi gives ample illustration. Some responsibility must also be allocated to the Big Four powers, who having just finished a war to save the world for democracy conspired to see the defeat of any liberal or socialistic regime in Hungary.

> The United States food relief under Herbert Hoover and the food relief of Holland were denied to the entire country as long as the Liberals, Social Democrats or Communists were in power. Later under the Horthy Dictatorship . . . food relief was denied to any organization or party which could be accused of left-wing tendencies.

The victory of the Horthy regime and the White Terror ended the first period in Karolyi's life as it marked the end of a chapter in Hungarian history. Karolyi went into an exile that was to last twenty-six years. The middle section of these memoirs tells many an interesting tale of his experiences in many countries. His political activity consisted in carrying on propaganda and continuous negotiations with all accessible sympathetic diplomats for eventual establishment of a Danubian Federation as the only solution to the problems of Eastern Europe. While these chapters speak a great deal for the political naivete of Karolyi, they do highlight Karolyi's personal courage, his perseverence under the most oppressive of personal situations and the subordination of all other interests to the realization of his political ideal. There is no gainsaying this heroic idealism, but any appreciation of Karolyi would be terribly distorted if it did not account for the decisive fact that this idealism fell into the historic trap of Stalinism and became its ardent supporter.

A RIDER OF EVENTS rather than their shaper, a man who chose among the forces that were rather than strove to create forces of his own, a Realpolitiker whose essential methods were conversation and negotiation at the top, Karolyi saw the might of Russia as the overriding single fact in Europe and decisive for the future of Eastern Europe:

> In the controversy between Trotsky and Stalin, I agreed with Stalin, since I cherished no illusions about the strength of the working classes in the West. . . . As far as human suffering was concerned, was that not inevitably linked up with progress? And why did those who assailed the Soviets on grounds of inhumanity accept the cruelty of modern warfare?

This point of view expressed in 1931, remained relatively intact despite momentary shocks due to the tremendous pressures of Stalinism's great crimes. He became a full-fledged fellow traveler, among the first ranks of the apologists of Stalinism. "The Soviets seemed to have solved the intricate problem of minorities." There is a laudatory tribute to Duranty who "helped to dispel existing prejudices." Under the general attitude of praise and support there "were disquieting symptoms," but this disquietude never led to criticism or failure to support Russia. He adhered to the position that "Russia was all-important because it was the only "Worker's State" and could properly "sacrifice international labor rather than let Russia run risks." The Moscow Trials moved him to write a letter to Romain Rolland "unfolding to him my deeply felt objections" but he still did not abandon support of Russia. With the Nazi-Soviet Pact, he became "more critical of Stalinism and convinced that Western Socialism had to find a new way, emancipating itself from Russian leadership. Trotsky's warnings had seemed



to me, until then, the exaggeration of a vain and bitter man. I thought that his so-called Thermidor was a mighty over-statement. But now everything seemed to crumble. . . . The purge trials and now the pact made me realize more than ever how right I had been not to join the party, for there was a time when I had come very near doing so . . . the best elements in the worker's movements were bewildered and many lost their faith in Russia." But despite this confession of distress, Karolyi still does not indicate that *he* had lost faith in Russia. As with so many others, the rationale of Stalinism reasserted itself. "Our grudge against Stalin's methods, which did not accomplish Socialism in our fashion had to be stored up for later on" and what justified this was the "industrialization of such a vast continent in such a short time." Thus the staple ideological premises of Stalinism remained Karolyi's mainstay, Moscow Trials and Pact notwithstanding.

WHEN THE STALINISTS took over Hungary after the war, Karolyi's political function assumed a special form. "All through the years I had never attacked the Soviet Union in spite of continual prompting of my followers to do so." One should pause at this for a moment to realize that this highly moral and sensitive idealist who had been moved to private doubts and letter writing by the monstrous mutilations of socialism and the extermination of socialists in Russia for over two decades had the will and fortitude to resist the pressure of even his own followers. To emerge after all those years politically clean! "I was persona grata to the Soviets." This is indeed a triumph, especially for a person who is given to posing problems in moral terms, but a triumph of what?

He returned to Hungary in 1946, a national hero. "Some urged me to forf a party, a request I categorically refused. I had made up my mind to keep a free hand and not touch party politics." While he does not specify what he hoped to do with this "free hand," is soon became obvious. The population of Hungary, Karolyi the Hungarian patriot noted, hated the Red Army. "It was alarming to meet this hatred in all quarters, and any time I mentioned the 'Liberating' Red Army in public, a hostile silence followed." "Alarming" to hate the instrument of a foreign oppressor? Alarming for whom? For the Stalinists and for Karolyi as well. This "abstention" from actual politics (while apparently making speeches about the Liberating Red Army), the devotion and respect he commanded among the people illuminated the role he actively played in those days, a role he does not seem to be aware of. He was the symbol of the October Republic, and Rakosi, Gero, Szoltan Vas used him as a cloak of legitimacy over their detested regime. His defense of the Mindszenty imprisonment is pure Stalinist thinking at work. His character sketches of Rakosi and Gero show a sympathetic appreciation of these hangmen which turn the stomach, even if they come from a moral idealist. When he called the attention of Gero to the fact that someone whom he personally knew to be perfectly loyal had been arrested by the secret police "Gero showed surprise and assured me that he would look into the matter. I got the impression he was not deceiving me, for the secret police had authority to act on their own. One of the worst features of totalitarian States is that people in the highest positions are not always informed of what is happening." The individual in question was not released, despite Gero's "looking into

the matter" and Karolyi leaves the subject without comment.

At long last, Karolyi was moved to protest against the regime in the trial of Rajk. His motivation was to make "the instigators of the trial realize that they were losing their most loyal friends and risking a split in the party." The trial of Rajk was thus a serious tactical error of the leading Stalinists criticized by a fundamentally loyal Stalinist. In a short epilogue entitled Faith Without Illusion, written in 1954, Karolyi affirms his faith in Stalinism. "Although aware that Stalinism was not Socialism, I believed that it was the first step towards it as it had done away with the exploitation of man by man, the State having taken over the means of production." That democracy is in some way related to the development of socialism does not even get the consideration of being rejected for it is a thought that is totally irrelevant to his approach. It is incredible that writing in 1954, he has virtually nothing to say about the oppression of his people. How could this "great Hungarian patriot" have resisted comment about this regime, so detested by the people, that it inspired the incomparable Hungarian uprising? The answer is simply that Karolyi remained firmly in the trap of Stalinist thinking, despite his tactical break with the regime over theRajk Trial. "I fell willingly and consciously between two stools, the only place I could honorably take." But this sensitivity to honorable postures that pervades the book is dulled when it comes to Stalinism. A position between two stools is more futile and ridiculous than honorable especially when the times demand that everybody take a seat. But even the dubious "honor" of sitting between stools must be denied Karolyi, for it is pure self-deception. His memoirs are sufficient testimony to the fact that his entire political life, after the short period of the Republic, was seated, uncertainly and uncomfortably at times, but seated nevertheless, on the stool of Stalinism.

The central impression of Karolyi that emerges from his memoirs is that of a fumbling, futile politician who nevertheless solicits the esteem of men for his idealism, self-sacrifice and moral sensitivity. It is an earnest confession of tremendous aspirations and monumental failure. While the record shows that Karolyi's "moral sensitivity" had rather dubious standards of morality, there is no question that he had a sharp sensitivity to the judgment of history and his contemporaries. The sincerity and passion of the slaughterers have never justified the slaughter. The needle on the sincerity-meter is an interesting personal fact but does not help historical judgments. Karolyi made his contribution to the strength of Stalinism, and if his claim to attention is his political life, it is the political consequences of his actions by which he must be judged.

STAN GREY





# Academic Freedom In Review

THE DEVELOPMENT OF ACADEMIC FREEDOM IN THE UNITED STATES, *by Richard Hofstadter* and *Walter P. Metzger*. Published by Columbia University Press.

ACADEMIC FREEDOM IN OUR TIME, *by Robert H. MacIver*. Published by Columbia University Press.

The reaction of those directly affected by the witchhunting attacks on academic freedom has not, on the whole, been a particularly commendable one. Now and then, a courageous teacher or group of faculty members speaks out sharply in defense of academic freedom. For the most part, however, the nation's teachers have restricted themselves to vague statements on the "importance of academic freedom" while retreating in both theory and practice on specific academic freedom questions and cases.

In general, the fight has been left to others: to students who have conducted struggles even when it was the rights of their teachers only which were directly violated at the moment; and to the socialists and civil libertarians who defend civil liberties generally. Except for the pompous rhetoric which is standard in many speeches made during commencement exercises, the academic institutions have not really shown any concern with the danger which constantly threatens them.

If only for this reason, the establishment of an Academic Freedom Project by Columbia University deserves commendation. This project was carried on by a committee of scholars headed by Dean Louis Hacker and Professor MacIver who studied the question of academic freedom and published their findings, after receiving a grant in 1951 for this purpose from the Louis M. Rabinowitz Foundation. The Hofstadter-Metzger volume and the MacIver work have resulted from it.

*The Development of Academic Freedom in the United States* is primarily an historical review of its subject. The long opening chapter of the book discusses the medieval European university, tracing both the limitations upon freedom of teaching and learning found in lay and church-controlled schools and the degree of liberty which existed. This is followed by chapters on the American college during colonial days and what the authors like to call the "old time college," the period from 1800 to 1860. The origin and development of Harvard and the emergence of "Harvard liberalism" are dealt with at length, as are, also, the development of academic government in the United States and the competition between secular and religious-sponsored schools, with the secular establishing its dominance. The impact of the abolitionist movement upon the academic community is described in a subsequent chapter.

Part II of the work, "The Age of the University" concerns itself with the period from the end of the Civil War to World War 1. In these years the major conflict in the colleges and universities centered on the disputes between science and religion, as the importance of the former in the school curriculm grew and as realization of the implications of scientific thought for religion, philosophy and for the social sciences developed. One of the major dramas of this dispute consisted of the impact of the work of Darwin.

In an extremely interesting and

informative chapter, Hofstadter and Metzger examine the emergence of that relationship between big business and the university which prevails today. The authors reveal that from the very beginning of this relationship the academic community feared the dangerous implications for academic freedom inherent in big business control of education. They discuss many cases of academic freedom disputes in which the role of big business was a factor but conclude that no definite judgment can be established on whether this business control in general impedes liberty on the campus. The very evidence which they marshall, however, as well as important considerations which they ignore make their conclusion untenable. In a final chapter, they review the effect of the first world war on the campus. A number of case histories where patriotic pressures led to a decline of campus freedom are presented. Also discussed is the organization and role of the American Association of University Professors.

This book obviously is background material for the MacIver volumes and most of the civil liberties issues discussed in it are no longer controversial. For these reasons, and because the authors discuss their material in a less impassioned manner than MacIver treats his, it has received praise from even those who subjected Professor MacIver's study to bitter attack. One can understand this: who will retroactively condemn the defenders of academic freedom in the nineteenth century? Not even those who attack it today. It is for precisely this reason that MacIver's book is the more interesting and important of the two.

Reviewing *Academic Freedom in our Time* presents problems for consistent defenders of democracy. There can be no doubt that MacIver "is on the side of the angels" when one considers his intentions and his generally libertarian outlook. That he supports and defends academic freedom is obvious on every page. But on the vital issue which separates consistent civil libertarians from those who have retreated on civil liberties questions—the issue of whether Stalinists should be judged like all other teachers, on their competence and their meeting of professional standards, or whether membership in the Communist Party disqualifies them from teaching—MacIver makes an important concession to the witchhunters in theory, even if a lesser concession in practice.

MacIver begins by analyzing his conception of the university and then by defining academic freedom. For him, the University must offer the right to search for truth no matter where it leads and the "right to interpret his findings and communicate his conclusions without . . . interference, molestation or penalization because the conclusions are unacceptable to some authority within or beyond the academy." Outside the academy scholars and teachers must have the same freedoms other men enjoy, though they should not associate the school with their views and activities. The appointment and promotion of educators must not be conditioned on the congeniality of their views to authority, nor subject to control by forces outside of the academic community.

Academic freedom, he believes, is inherently bound up with one's conception of the university. If the university is regarded as an institution whose task is the extension and imparting of knowlege then freedom will reign in it. The fact that a secondary task of the university consists of training young people for the



professions results in the possibility of pressure for curtailing freedom. Such attitudes as call upon the colleges to prepare the student "to fit in with life," "be a leader in society," "to adjust;" views that the university must "build character," even that it "must educate for democracy"—these result in a perversion of the principles of academic freedom.

Before arriving at the question of Stalinist teachers, MacIver considers the three main lines of traditional attack on civil liberties in the academic world: the economic-political, the religious and the social. With detailed reference to individual cases, he shows how teachers who were non-conformists in each of the three fields have been subject to gross penalization and insists that competence and only competence can be the democratic criteria by which teachers are judged as teachers.

MacIver retreats from this approach when he comes to discuss Stalinist teachers. He starts by saying that to discuss the question of the "rights" of CP educators clouds the issue, that a more fruitful approach would be to judge on the basis of the overall desirabilty—from the view of the academy—of permitting or not permitting Stalinists to teach. Moreover, he submits, it is useful to bear in mind a certain distinction—that between appointing Stalinists and dismissing those who already have teaching posts.

He takes up three charges adduced for the proposition that Stalinists should not be allowed to teach: that they are intellectually subservient to the Communist Party and therefore not free to search for the truth, that they are committed to the destruction of fundamental liberties and agree with the use of force against ideological opponents—a view incompatible with membership in the academic community which is based on respect for the rights of all views to be heard, and, finally, the charge that they are prepared to use force and violence to overthrow the government for which leading Stalinists have been convicted under the Smith Act.

On charge 1 MacIver renders the old Scottish verdict of *Not Proven*. He points out that everybody is subject to outside ideological authority and that many are subject to outside organizational authority. Such as each practicing Catholic.

Under the head of the second charge, he states that teachers who accept Stalinism thereby approve the Stalinist use of violence against opponents in those countries in which they exercise power, as well as in the instances of Stalinist violence against opponents in countries in which they do not hold power. How, then, can those who accept it be permitted to teach? Don't they necessarily believe in destroying by force their opponent colleagues with whom they may now be discussing differences? To these queries there is no effective rebuttal, argues MacIver, although there may be some Stalinist teachers who would desist from using violence against University colleagues. Hence, the verdict: Guilty, with possible extenuating circumstances in individual cases.

And on charge three: that the Stalinists wish to overthrow the government by force and violence. *Guilty*, period! Incredible as it may seem, MacIver, who at least to some extent recognizes the spuriousness of some of the reasons offered by sophisticated advocates of the "Stalinists do not have the right to teach" line, simply caves in before the Smith Act convictions of the CP leaders and allows that to decide the question for him. He states that whatever doubts one

may have about other charges brought against CP teachers, no defense is possible on this score. It is clearly the strongest of all, in his opinion, although he later claims that the cumulative weight of all three arguments settles the matter, and not any single one.

Therefore, concludes MacIver, it is no violation of academic freedom if a college refuses to hire a Stalinist teacher on that ground alone. But having made this concession to the witchhunt, MacIver, aware of the dangerous implications of his retreat, begins to qualify it in a civil libertarion direction. In the first place, he argues, this applies only to *hiring* Stalinist teachers; it is not legitimate to *dismiss* Stalinists currently employed on the grounds of their CP membership. One's reputation is not destroyed if not hired for a job. Firing a teacher, however, is public and will result in a blasted reputation and the creation of a situation in which the ex-teacher will not be able to get another job.

This is obviously MacIver's attempt to extricate himself from his concession to the witchhunt. Recognizing the dangers in the position he has adopted, he tries to draw back, and not only through his distinction between appointment and dismissal. For he also qualifies the legitimacy of not hiring Stalinist teachers in the following ways: 1) it applies to CP members and only CP members, not to Stalinist sympathizers, independent Stalinists, and of course, anti-Stalinist radicals or Marxists, 2) if the effort to exclude Stalinists from obtaining teaching jobs entails any kind of witchhunt or purge or investigation which will stir up an anti-libertarian atmosphere, then it is better to hire a Stalinist teacher, 3) A decision not to appoint a Stalinist teacher must be arrived at by the faculty, itself, not one dictated by a Board of Trustees, a witchhunting committee or any outside authority, 4) Finally, it is best that even CP members who apply for teaching jobs be judged on their individual merits, for there might be a few CP teachers to whom the general charges against the Communist Party do not automatically apply.

Were schools to apply all of the qualifications which MacIver appends to his theoretical endorsement that CP members are disqualified from obtaining teaching positions, probably not a single Stalinist would have his rights violated.

MacIver's book offers no real comfort to the witchhunters. Its general defense of academic freedom—excellently shown in his attitude towards the right of students, including Stalinist students, to organize what campus clubs they wish, to hear speakers of their own choosing, to control the student press, etc. — have already earned him the bitter attacks of not only the more reactionary witchhunters, but even of "Sidney Hook liberals."

MacIver's concern with civil liberties reveals little understanding of the origin of that atmosphere on the nation's campuses which he deplores. He offers two explanations of this atmosphere. First, there is the form of academic government in the United States in which the teaching body has few powers, and control resides in powerful administrations—the university President, in particular—and Boards of Trustees (primarily composed of people who are not educators and who do not understand the university's need for academic freedom.) The second factor he points to consists of certain peculiar elements in American life. The racial and ethnic heterogeneity of the population results in the absence of a common "consensus of opinion" on "Americanism" and other important ideas of the society. The desire of the various immigrant groups to achieve "Americanization" leads to ultra-patriotic feelings, as various groups vie with each other for the honor of being the most patriotic and "American." The fact that Americans are "joiners" has led to the creation of a multiplicity of social, professional, fraternal, patriotic and "special interests" organizations, societies and groups, each having a staff of professional functionaries who are divorced from checks by the members and who feel the need of commenting on all public affairs. Under such circumstances, right-wing demagogues can play an influential role in exerting pressure, and intolerence and heresey-hunting have a clear field.

Valid as some of MacIver's ideas may be for understanding certain xenophobic and super-patriotic tendencies in American life, they obviously do not explain why "waves of intolerance" arise at particular times and not in others. The Cold War, the role of the national government in initiating and sustaining the witchhunt: these are minor factors for him, which barely receive consideration. Valuable as MacIver's book is as a defense of academic freedom, despite his theoretical retreat from the defense of the rights of Stalinist teachers,— and it is valuable as such—one need not look to him for understanding of the anti-democratic crusade.

MAX MARTIN



## A Valuable Compilation

ECRITS 1928-1940, VOLUME 1, *by Leon Trotsky. Edited by Pierre Frank.* 369 pp, Marcel Rivière, Paris, 1955.

It is not often that the followers of Pablo in the Fourth International do something useful; the publication, under the editorship of Pierre Frank, of the first volume of Trotsky's collected writings, from the period of his third exile to his death, is one of these rare surprises.

This edition of Trotsky's collected works is not planned to be a definitive historical and critical edition, but a popular edition, designed not for scholars primarily but for a broader circle of readers in the labor movement. For this reason, it will not include the major works of this period which are for the most part easily available, at least in French (thus the "History of the Russian Revolution," which was published by the Editions du Seuil in 1950 in two volumes (1), "My Life," which was re-published by Gallimard late in 1954 with excellent commentaries by Rosmer; (2), "The Revolution Betrayed," which is fairly easily available second-hand, etc.). For the same reason, instead they have been gathered under broad headings, each related to a particular question or situation.

The present volume contains over thirty articles and documents written between 1929 and 1932; most of them were published in the *Bulletin of the Opposition* during 1929. The articles collected in the first chapters (Exile; Economic Problems of the Soviet Union; Socialism in One Country or

(1) Leon Trotsky, **Histoire de la Révolution Russe.** Vol. 1: Février; 448 pp., Price: 600.-ffrs.; Vol. 2: Octobre; 640 pp., Price: 900-ffrs. Editions du Seuil, Paris, 1950.

(2) Leon Trotsky, **Ma vie.** Preface and appendix by A. Rosmer. 655 pp., Gallimard, 1954. Price: 1,200.-ffrs.

Permanent Revolution; the Struggle of the Bolshevik-Leninists in the USSR) are mainly concerned with the internal problems of the Soviet Union. They explain the background of the Left Opposition's struggle against the rising Stalinist counter-revolution between 1923 and 1928; some are critical studies of the first five years' plan, of the agrarian policy of Stalin-Bukharin and of the relations between peasantry, working-class and party. The discussion of "socialism in one country" versus permanent revolution has been published in English as a preface to the American edition of the "Permanent Revolution"; it is followed by several articles and letters concerning the struggle of the Left Opposition in Russia.

The articles in the last chapters concern questions of international policy: the defense of the USSR in connection with the Chinese claims on the Manchurian railroad, the relations between Europe and America and the questions of European federation, the crisis in Austria and the policy of Austrian social-democracy, organizational and political problems of the International Left Opposition.

Trotsky's articles dealing with the "third period" policy of the Communist International have not been included in this volume, excepting two on its application in China. The editor announced that most of them will be included in the second volume, in particular those concerning the political situation in France, Spain and Germany.

There are biographical notes—insufficient in many cases—and an index of names.

MANY OF THE WRITINGS in the present volume are striking in their timeliness. The articles on Austria and on the United States of Europe, for example, could have been written for today. The articles on the situation in Russia are timely in another way: they explain the genesis of the Stalinist bureaucratic regime, remaining true to the reactionary social force which it represents, in spite of the sudden changes in its policy and its "tone." They also show the firm, principled basis of the Left Opposition's struggle:

> One must be politically light-minded to believe that the question is resolved ... because, instead of the old five years' plan directed against "Trotskyism and the super-industrializers," the same functionaries have now established a new five years' plan based on the previously condemned principles of "super-industrialization" and directed, for the time being, against the right-wingers. We have so far always considered that all five years' plans have a value only insofar as they are rooted in correct methods of directing the economy, and especially in a correct policy of the party and of the Communist International. What is therefore decisive for a Marxist is the principled basis of the party, and the political methods of the party, not the "concrete figures of the five years' plan," the fate of which still belongs entirely to the future.

In his polemics against the capitulators, Trotsky showed that the struggle of the Left Opposition had to be aimed at the power and at the very existence of the bureaucracy, not at one or the other of the latter's policies. This political and social content of Trotskyism could only become clearer during Trotsky's lifetime, as the bureaucracy consolidated itself as a ruling class.

The mistaken appraisal by Trotsky of the nature of the bureaucracy and of its long-range perspectives (much less excusable in his present-day "orthodox" followers) has been frequently used to obscure this fundamental meaning of his struggle, particularly by the Pablo-Deutscher school which has made this its specialty.



Thus, in a deplorable passage of the introduction to this volume, Pierre Frank explains how Mao Tse-tung has been recruited, if not yet to the Fourth International, then at least to the Pabloite ideology. It seems that Mao Tse-Tung is now applying the theory of the permanent revolution in China; Pierre Frank notes that no finer birthday-present for the 50th birthday of this theory could be imagined. The Chinese Stalinist regime, which had first proclaimed its intention to establish a regime of "new democracy," and to proceed only later to the stage of a "socialist revolution," has been forced, within five years of this statement, to engage in the "construction of socialism."

The content of these terms, of course, is completely unrelated to the policies that were discussed in the communist movement in the 1920's: the frame of reference of the regime is not that of the socialist movement, nor even that of the Stalinist movement in its beginnings. What subsists of the Marxist vocabulary in the jargon of the Chinese Stalinists, is a terminological cloak for two aspects of a policy inspired by class-interests deeply foreign and hostile to those of both working-class and peasantry.

Yet the crude, formalistic exploitation of this terminological confusion enables Pierre Frank to cover his capitulation to Stalinism by representing Mao Tse-tung as an involuntary Pabloite. If you can't beat them, join them; if they won't let you, pretend it's them who are joining you.

In recent months, American policy as well as the Stalinist regime have entered a crisis. The "thaw" of the rival military and political blocs has provided the independent working-class movement with breathing-space; time has been gained, and the prospects for a reconstruction of the revolutionary movement look more favorable than they have for years.

Yet, at the same time, terminological sleight of hands based on formalistic analogies, political disorientation, confusion of all sorts, come fully into their own. While Mao Tse-tung becomes a Pabloite, Khrushchev becomes a Titoist and the Cominform is once more dissolved, while well-intentioned comrades (of the New Left among others) prepare to slaughter the fattened calf, urging us to forgive and forget.

More than ever, it is necessary to keep a clear political line, not to confuse general trends of social evolution with changes in policy, and not to lose sight of the aim of our struggle. In this, the example of Trotsky's political thinking is no doubt one of the firmest and clearest. In a period of shifting policies, sudden "switches" and ideological confusion, let us remember that "the revolutionary party is the memory of the working-class. To learn not to forget the past in order to foresee the future, this is our first and most important task."

A. G.

## A Complete Bibiliography Of Marx's Witing

BIBLIOGRAPHIE DES OEUVRES DE KARL MARX, *by Maximilien Rubel.* 279 pages, Marcel Rivière, Paris, 1956. Price: 1,800 French francs.

A capital contribution to the study of Marxism has just been published in France: the first complete bibliography of Marx's work, by Maximilien Rubel, an independent Marx scholar living in Paris.

It is a sad comment on the state of Marxism as a movement and as a

science that this basic working instrument should be the first of its kind, in spite of the tremendous means at the disposal of powerful countries and movements claiming a monopoly over the administration of the Marxist heritage. The performance of this author, working in isolation and deprived of access to many important sources and documents, deserves respect, not only because of its intrinsic value, but as a political act: this man has accomplished single-handed a long overdue work which neither the Stalinist empire, nor the reformist mass parties, intellectually paralyzed each in their own way, have been able to complete.

The first attempt at establishing a bibliography of Marx's writings goes back to 1920. It was compiled by Ernst Drahn, archivist of the German Social-Democratic Party. It was simply a list of titles in chronological order, and contained many omissions. The "Chronology of Marx's Life" prepared by D. Riazanov, then director of the Marx-Engels Institute in Moscow, and published in 1934, conformed more closely to the standards of scientific research. Unfortunately, Riazanov was no longer present to supervise the publication of his work, having been arrested and deported in 1931.

The present bibliography lists more than 900 items under four headings: books and articles published during Marx's lifetime or posthumously; correspondence, unpublished manuscripts; dubiosa. The titles are given in the original language and are followed by a French translation. The date and place of first publication are indicated; new editions are mentioned whenever they contain important commentaries. Translations into other languages are also listed. Most items have been briefly annotated, giving an indication of contents and of their historical background.

The work is completed by a bibliography of Engels (over 150 items) and an index of names.

IN THE VIEW of its author, this bibliography is to be the first step towards a systematic edition of Marx's collected works. He therefore recalls, in his introduction, the history of the fate of Marx's literary heritage.

At Marx's death, Engels assumed the task of editing and publishing the manuscripts that Marx had left behind. Between 1884 and 1894 he thus published, among other works, the second and the third volume of "Capital," the "Origin of the Family," the "Misery of Philosophy," the "Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte" and the "Theses on Feuerbach." A few months before his death, he wrote to a director of the German socialist party's publishing house of his intent to publish a complete edition of Marx's and his own collected works, but he was unfortunately unable to start this project.

In his testament, Engels named Eleanor Marx, Bernstein and Bebel as his and Marx's literary executors. In fact, Bernstein and Kautsky became the real executors, but the battle over the question of revisionism soon made collaboration between them impossible. From Engels' death to 1914, Marx's and Engels' work was not published according to a methodical plan. The main publications were Mehring's four volumes "Aus dem literarischen Nachlass von Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels und Ferdinand Lassalle" in 1902, containing little known writings of the period between 1841 and 1850, in particular "Die Heilige Familie"; Kautsky's three volumes of the "Theories of Surplus Value" in 1905-1910; a manuscript on Max Stirner published by Bernstein in his review *Dokumente des Sozialismus;* various writings published in *Die Neue Zeit,* and the correspondence between Marx and Engels, four volumes of 1900 pages altogether published by Bernstein and Bebel.



The victory of the Russian revolution in October 1917 seemed to open new possibilities for assembling and publishing the collected works of the two founders of scientific socialism. For the first time a socialist government, led by Marxists, disposed of the means and of the determination needed to replace the scattered efforts of isolated scholars with a systematic edition. This work was undertaken by D. Riazanov, who had already published two volumes of "Collected Writings of Marx and Engels 1852-1856" in 1920. In 1928, a bibliographical note in Lenin's "Collected Writings" describ d Riazanov in the following terms·

Riazanov, D. B. (Born 1870). One of the earliest Russian social-democrats. Participated in the organization of the first workers' circles in Odessa, soon after 1890. After five years of prison and three years of close surveillance, he emigrated. Attempted to conciliate the tendencies of the first *Iskra* and of economism; was one of the founders of the *Borba* (Struggle) group. During the revolution of 1905, he participated in the organization of trade-unions in Odessa and in St. Petersburg. Had to emigrate again and was active in the Western socialist movement. The German social-democracy entrusted him with the study of the literary heritage of Marx and Engels and of the history of the First International; internationalist (centrist) during the war. Returned to Russia in 1917 and joined the Bolshevik Party; participated in the preparation of the October insurrection. R. is one of the organizers of the Communist Academy in Moscow and of the Marx-Engels Institute, of which he is the director. Member of the Executive Committee of the Soviets of the USSR.

The Soviet government granted Riazanov considerable funds, and in short time the most valuable and varied documents were collected at the Marx-Engels Institute. In 1925, the Institute negotiated an agreement with the German Social-Democratic Party and the Institute of Sociology in Frankfurt, directed by Carl Grünberg, for the publication of an edition of Marx's and Engels' collected works according to Riazanov's plan. The complete edition was to include 40 volumes, and was divided in three sections: 17 volumes of philosophical, economic, historical and political writings other than "Capital"; 13 volumes of Marx's economic writings, including the four volumes of "Capital"; 10 volumes including the complete correspondence of Marx and Engels. Two supplementary volumes would have included an index of names, of subjects and of works, as well as a detailed chronology of Marx's life and works.

By 1930 a close collaborator of Riazanov was able to declare that "today the whole heritage of Marx and Engels is deciphered and typed." Between 1926 and 1930, Riazanov published, in Russian and in German, 5 volumes of the "Marx-Engels Gesamtausgabe" (MEGA), including three volumes of correspondence, as well as two volumes of the "Marx-Engels Archiv," containing historical and critical documents by Russian scholars, including Riazanov, unpublished writings and correspondence by Marx and the plan of the MEGA.

In 1931 Riazanov was arrested, without any reason being publicly given, and deported to Saratov, where he seems to have died shortly before the outbreak of the Second World War.

In the course of the Stalinist counter-revolution, his work was first deformed, then destroyed. Under the

supervision of the far less competent Adoratsky, seven more volumes were published from 1932 to 1935. These volumes fail to conform to the standards set by Riazanov; the introductions of the new editor are "timid . . . devoid of any interest and scientific value." In addition, Marx's own work was censored. In volume XI of the new edition ("Articles and Correspondence from 1856 to 1859"), eleven articles published by Marx in the London *Free Press* under the title "Secret Diplomatic History of the Eighteenth Century" are missing. This detailed analysis of Russian foreign policy from Ivan Kalita to Peter the Great conflicted radically with the nationalist mythology resurrected by the Stalinist regime, aiming to justify the imperialist policy of the tsars as a justfication of its own imperialist conquests. In 1935, all work on the MEGA was stopped by top-level decision. Various writings by Marx and Engels which should have been part of the MEGA appeared after 1935 without any relation to the complete edition. All references to Riazanov's and his collaborator's activity was eliminated from later publications; the volumes which had been published under Riazanov's editorship were stamped in and disappeared from Russian and foreign libraries.

In 1947, Rubel wrote to the Marx-Engels-Lenin Institute in Moscow to enquire about the fate of the MEGA, and was told that "the publication of the following volumes had been temporarily stopped." It remains to be seen whether Stalin's heirs, who so clamorously denounce the terror of his reign, will resume publication of the "temporarily" suspended edition, including the writings in which Marx condemns a policy that is not only Stalin's but also their own.

The archives of German social-democracy were hurriedly sent abroad after the national-socialist regime had come to power; most of them are in the possession of the International Institute for Social History in Amsterdam. However, the Institute does not possess all of the materials that Riazanov was able to assemble in Moscow. Thus, no complete edition of Marx's and Engels' work will be possible as long as the archives of the Marx-Engels-Lenin Institute in Moscow remain inaccessible to socialist scholars.

As Rubel remarks, the problem of a complete, historical and critical edition of Marx is very different today from what it was when Riazanov undertook the work thirty years ago. However, it does not seem insoluble: Rubel's bibliography is the first step toward a new attempt in this direction.

A.G

## An Evasive Dissent

THE FUNCTIONS OF SOCIAL CONFLICT, *by Lewis Coser.* Free Press, $3.50.

The very fact that this book by Lewis Coser is published is important. For over a decade now, the theme of "conflict" has been becoming more and more tabooed. Part of the conservative mood has been an ideology of class collaboration, an image of America as a unified society in which there is a give and take of "interest-groups," but never a struggle between classes.

In the introduction, Coser records how this has affected the academic community. After a description of the past, in which American sociologists did concern themselves with the problem of social conflict, he writes, ". . the majority of sociologists who dominate contemporary sociology, far from seeing themselves as reformers and addressing themselves to an audience of reformers, either have oriented themselves toward purely academic and professional audiences, or have attempted to find a hearing among decision-makers in public or private bureaucracies. They center attention predominantly upon problems of adjustment rather than upon conflict; upon social statics rather than upon dynamics. Of key problematic importance to them has been the maintenance of existing structures and the ways and means of insuring their smooth functioning."

Coser's description is apt, and his determination to break with this academic mood merits praise. His method is to discuss various propositions which arise out of a reading of Georg Simmel's *Conflict.* However, he does not limit himself in any sense to a scholarly discussion of Simmel. Rather, he uses Simmel's classic work as a point of departure, and introduces his own insights gained from Marx, Freud, contemporary political history, and from a wide range of historical and sociological reading.

Coser's conclusions are as important as his determination to write this book in the first place. He thinks of conflict as having positive (but not necessarily positive) results. And he attempts to handle it in terms of rational description, dealing with labor, the army, the family and so on. Indeed, much of what he writes is extremely relevant to current politics—his thesis, for example, that rigid, totalitarian structures lead to an internal development of strong conflicts is obviously related to the current events in Russia.

But one serious criticism must be made, and it is a difficult one to handle. It is not so much a question of what Coser did write, but what he didn't write. And in making such a charge, one is always open to the counter-assertion on the part of the author that it is unfair to take him to task for not having done the book which the reviewer would like to read. And yet, I think the criticism still has to be made.

Precisely because Coser is dissenting from a dominant mood, I think that he is under a responsibility to deal with some of the questions which that mood raises even if they are on a tangent from his scholarly purpose. The point should be obvious: a crucial focus of the whole problem of social conflict is the issue of class conflict in America. It is here that the lines have been drawn (a point which Coser recognizes in the section quoted from his introduction). And yet Coser, though often referring to the struggle of the working class, does not meet the issue head on.

There are, to be sure, occasional theoretical references, but they are not developed. For example, Coser writes, "It may be that one reason for the relative absence of 'class struggle' in this country is the fact that the American worker, far from restricting his allegiance to class-conflict groupings and associations, is a member of a number of associations and groupings which represent him in diverse conflicts with different religious, ethnic, status and political groups." One can't quarrel with such a statement since it is too fragmentary. If Coser intends the description of "the relative absence of 'class struggle' " to refer to the last decade, and if his other qualifications can be taken as an assertion of the theory that, in times of prosperity, "status conflicts" take on a greater significance relative to "class conflicts," then I would tend to agree with him. But if his "relative absence" is an account of American his-

tory, or a projection of the future, then I would emphatically disagree.

The point is that Coser doesn't take the question up in systematic fashion. And I think he was obliged to do so, that it was an error to conceive a book on "The Functions of Social Conflict" without an open confrontation of this crucial point. And this, as was mentioned before, is all the more true because of the situation in the academic community today.

My criticism is a serious one, yet it should not obscure the value of Coser's book. There is a wide range of evidence cited here, and it is handled in a sane, calm fashion. That is certainly to the good, and it makes Coser's book worthwhile. I only wish that he had gone into the underlying problem, or that he will in the near future.

MICHAEL HARRINGTON

## From Russian Biology To Stalinism

CONTINUITY AND CHANGE IN RUSSIAN AND SOVIET THOUGHT. *Edited by E. J. Simons.* Harvard University Press. 1955.

This volume is a collection of essays, mainly by leading academicians of the Russian Institutes of Columbia and Harvard Universities. The articles presume to cover in their total 554 pages all of Russian history and almost every artifact that that society could produce. Articles on Chernov and agrarian socialism before 1918 as on Pobedonostsev and his authoritarian theory of the state, Khomiakshov's idea of the Christian commune followed by Vyshinsky's ideas on collectivism, with discussions on biology, Russian literary criticism from Belinski to Lunacharsky, dialectics, reason, faith, Dostoyevsky and Danilevsky, the Third International (between 1935-9) and many other topics.

The volume falls into two major areas of study: continuity and change in socio-political life in Russia, and in aesthetics.

In the first area, only Marcusse's article on "Dialectics and Logic Since the War" is of merit and has interesting points to make, with careful documentation, on the hypostatization of dialectics by the Stalinists, their making of the Marxist method a rigid, dogmatic, dead code with which everything can be justified. Notwithstanding Marcusse's own interpolations as to the causes and results of this charge ("the intensified effort to improve living conditions in the Soviet Union and to stabilize the international situation"), the article is valuable and worth reading.

One other article in this section also deserves mention, mainly for those with a natural-science bent, although those who appreciate a well-written, witty, and informative piece will also be interested in reading it. T. Dobzhansky, in "The Crisis of Soviet Biology," takes on Lysenko and his peculiar role in Stalinist Russia. The way in which Dobzhansky relates the story of this obvious charlatan and the story itself is quite witty (only when we think of the killing of those scientists who easily recognized what madness Lysenko was proposing does the matter become serious and tragic). All that Lysenko had to propose was a return to views of the Russian pioneer in biology, Timiriazev, and to Michurin. Along with his famous ideas on wheat and acquired characteristics in general, Lysenko, having denounced Darwin and as a second thought modern gene theory, announced that all "cells arise from mysterious 'granules' contained in the protoplasm" and that due to their mysterious behavior wheat could be transformed into rye, pine into fir, and so on (literally!). As Dobzhansky says, "Is this at last an original idea of Lysenko, however fantastic it may sound? Or is this only a disguised version of spontaneous generation. . . . The Michurinists have evidently 'progressed' back to the prescientific stage." In fact some of Lysenko's gyrations on this subject are just fantastic: in 1953 he announced to the world a new theory on the cuckoo bird. Dobzhansky reports, "It would seem that the cuckoo produces no eggs of its own, and cuckoo birds arise through the same process which allegedly transforms wheat into rye and pine into fir!" The Stalinists certainly produce good material for satire—we can say that much for them.

THE ARTICLES ON LITERATURE and literary criticism are mainly the ones worth reading.

An interesting examination is made by R. W. Mathewson, Jr. on "The Hero and Society: The Literary Definitions (1855-1865, 1934-39)." The "hero" of the early 19th century Russian writers was the "superfluous man"—the idle, frustrated, self-centered, self-pitying, alienated, dissenting individual. In reaction to this, the mid-century writers looked to the "new man"—the man of iron who would transform the world. As Dobroliubov said of Turgenev's hero, the Bulgarian revolutionary, Insarov, he "is concentrated and resolute, undeviatingly loyal to the sense of natural truth, imbued with faith in new ideals and is self-sacrificing in the sense that [he] prefers death to life under a system which . . . [he] detests." Chernyshevskii broadened the picture in his novel *"What's to Be Done?,"* where Rakhmetov represents the "new man'." Rakhmetov is the devoted professional revolutionary, with all the romantic connotations that the words carry. As Mathewson points out, "his regime of gymnastics, hard physical labor, raw beefsteak diet, voracious though selective reading, and sexual contitinence reaches heights of absurdity when he rises one morning soaked in blood from head to foot after a night spent on a bed of nails." Impersonal and remote, free from doubt and internal struggle, he is in truth the embodiment of Nietzsche's ideal, or the Freudian father symbol for revolutionary zealots.

Nearly 80 years later, the Stalinists resurrected, or so they said, the idea of the "new man." Davidov, the hero of Sholokhov's *Virgin Soil Upturned,* is the best example of this type of "new man." The similarities are obvious. He also is the hard mechanical man, devoid of emotional life, ready to carry out the Stalinist collectivization program even if the entire town must be "dekulakized." He, too, is the "moral monolith" combining both theory and practice in one human being. He stands above the rest of humanity and by following the orders of the party without question leads those blinder than himself to salvation.

But there is one essential difference in the two types of "new man" which Mathewson does not perceive. Granted that the hero of Turgenev, Chernyshevskii, etc., was a committed, but emotionally undeveloped, individual, in a sense above other mortals and yet also below them; he was not at all the Stalinist prototype of the authoritarian man. He was willing to sacrifice much for his revolutionary ideal, but not to the extent of liquidating all basic human ideals. He would have

been horrified at the inhuman steps the Stalinists used in dealing with their opponents and destroying the remnants of the workers' state. He was hard, yes; but he also corresponded to the humanitarianism and intellectual honesty as represented by his creators, Turgenev and Chernyshevskii. Thus with all the similarities between him and the Stalinist "new man," they are basically diametrically opposed personalities.

The other article of note is by V. Erlich, entitled "Social and Aesthetic Criteria in Soviet Russian Criticism." The ferment on the Russian cultural scene after the October Revolution was tremendous. Literary criticism was not spared. Because of the role that both literature and criticism play in directly molding the consciousness of large segments of a modern society, what one writes and the way in which it is written is very important to the rulers of the society, and this was especially true in the case of the early Russian workers' state with its extremely conscious ruling class. Naturally then the debate between the spokesmen for varying theories of literary criticism was heated.

The camps on the literary front were many but we will deal with only three, as Erlich mainly does. The Formalists comprised the major non-Marxist approach to literature, calling almost for the complete separation of art from social life. One could almost call them the forerunners of New Criticism with their emphasis on the internal structure of literature as the decisive aspect of its quality.

The attack on the Formalists was mainly by the Marxists, but in two sharply divergent forms. On the one hand Trotsky, Bukharin, Lunacharsky and Voronskii, in varying degrees, attacked the Formalists for their cult of the Word; but at the same time agreed that the laws of aesthetics do not have a one-to-one correspondence with social life.

Therefore, they said, no Marxist, simply because he is a Marxist, has a magical formula for judging the merit of some work of art. Also, because of this relative independence of art from society, no Marxist party has the right to determine the subject-matter, the style, or the criteria for judging art. Independence of artistic expression and freedom of development were the best guarantees for a great art to flourish. At the same time one could denounce the Formalists for being "the last refuge of the unreconstructed intelligentsia looking furtively toward bourgeois Europe" as Lunacharsky did, but this was not in the sense of laying down a party line to be followed by all artists; it was only a legitimate judgment on the part of one literary critic.

On the other hand, were the champions of what later, with the consolidation of Stalinist rule, became the gospel of "Socialist Realism." Here, everything was quite simple. Art is a weapon of the class struggle; it is either on the side of the proletariat or the bourgeoisie; therefore the Party has the right and the duty to direct it into "proper" channels. Later the argument was extended so that only vulgar realism was allowed; only those dull, arid "production novels" fell under the favor of the Party and everything else was written under the fear of the GPU's pistol or Siberia. What started out as a serious intellectual theory of literary criticism had degenerated by the middle '30s into another ideological weapon in the hands of the Stalinist state.

Taking *Continuity and Change* as a whole, it is clear that certain articles are worth reading. One will not find any point of view represented, except for a vulgar anti-Stalinism; for as usual with academicians they like to present what they call the "facts," thinking this is the height of a scientific approach. It will be difficult, dry reading on the whole with much nonsense to boot. But there are those few little articles which are interesting and have useful information.

MEL BECKER

## The Post World War I Witchhunt

RED SCARE, A Study in National Hysteria, 1919-1920, *by Robert K. Murray*. Minneapolis; University of Minnesota Press.

The red scare which followed World War I is not only an integral part of the history of American socialism—a background against which the development of the early Communist movement must be pictured—but also a measure of the brittle quality of bourgeois democracy in the face of social conflict. For both of these reasons it is ordinarily given less importance than it merits by historians who wish to gloss over the role of socialism and the imperfections of American democracy. The more contemporary phenomena of McCarthyism was the obvious inspiration of this first full-length study of the Red Scare, which indeed set precedents upon which its successor has built. The 1919-1920 red scare produced the forerunner of all congressional investigative committees in the New York State Lusk Committee on Revolutionary Radicalism; it saw the widespread introduction of teacher's loyalty oaths and attacks upon the liberal professions; and it marked the introduction of laws for limiting freedom of speech and the use of such laws against socialists, communists and anarchists. Even more important, the red scare served as the means of mobilizing the fears and force of the middle classes behind the drive to break the hold of the labor movement over its newly-won positions, and to reinforce the preponderant role of business over national politics. As such it served as the political source of the conservatism which dominated the entire decade of the twenties.

Mr. Murray's book recounts in adequate detail all of the major events of the Red Scare, including the labor struggles, the race riots, and the bomb incidents, as well as the deportations, prosecutions and lynchings, which marked its anti-radical aspect. Mr. Murray's viewpoint with respect both to the phenomena itself and the specific events remains throughout that of a conservative democrat, untinged by sympathy toward the victims of the witchhunt, and more particularly their social views, tempered only by the civil libertarians consciousness of the consequences of the application of curbs on freedom.

The author's bias against social radicalism, however, is far less of a deficit than the inadequacy of his comprehension of the source of the events of 1919-20. For by identifying "public opinion" with the expressions of opinion by major newspapers, Mr. Murray makes the red scare into a matter of popular hysteria, in which all but a few negligible and maniacal radicals participated. Thus it is easy for him to interpret the behavior of legislatures and government agencies as the reflection of widespread demands for the suppression of radicalism.

Insofar as the middle classes, together with groups like the American Legion, were actually permeated with widespread fear and hostility toward the "reds," the press and the government can hardly be assigned a minor

role in creating this hysteria. The various agencies of government continued the process begun during the war of "mobilizing" public opinion. The attorney general's office in particular played a major role in the attitude of the press by widely circulating general anti-radical and superpatriotic material. More important, the newspapers merely reflected the public statements and anti-Bolshevik diatribes of leading public figures.

Far from being the source of the hysteria, "the average American" had first to be infected with the hysteria of America's ruling circles. For the American bourgeoisie, then as now, *does* tend to become hysterial when faced with social threats. It is far too simple to imply, as Murray does, that insofar as business interests were concerned, anti-radicalism was a convenient tool with which to discredit and destroy the budding labor movement in the mass industries. The period of the Red Scare coincided with the first widespread expression of the class struggle. During the years 1919-20, as Murray indicates, not only did almost every segment of the organized labor movement embark upon strikes, but these strikes embraced millions of hitherto unorganized workers in basic industries. In addition, it witnessed such innovations and "characteristically un-American" forms as the general strike in Seattle, the police strike in Boston, and violent race riots in Washington and Chicago.

The exceptional form of development which enabled American capitalism for decades to avoid the class struggle, also left it unprepared to deal with it when it erupted on a massive scale. The almost direct control of government by business; its adherance to unalloyed laissez faire economic and social policies; and the absence of any social reformist movement, left the American bourgeoisie unskilled and unprepared in the face of serious social challenges. The capitalist class was unwilling to accept the class struggle as anything less than the harbinger of revolution.

DON HARRIS





## An Uneven Study

THE AMERICAN CLASS STRUCTURE, *by Joseph A. Kahl,* Rinehart, $4.50

The question of class structure confronts one with a crucial paradox of the Marxist movement. The Marxists are, of course, fundamentally concerned with the analysis of social classes. And yet, in the hundred or so years of Marxism, little has been produced in the way of empirical, scientific studies of actual class relationships. And this becomes all the more curious when one realizes how much time academic sociologists have given to the subject in the last decade in the United States.

Marx's own discussion of social classes was fragmentary, largely confined to a few comments at the end of the third volume of *Capital.* In some of his political writings—on French politics, for instance—he made a detailed analysis of the political relations between classes, yet he never really generalized his insights into a worked-out theory. And since his time, there has been very little done to fill in this tremendous lack. In his *Historical Materialism,* Bucharin tried to develop a more rounded Marxian view of the question, yet his work was forced to rely upon the insufficient data available to him at the time. And the strange fact remains in force: that the Marxists have hardly made a really scientific contribution to class analysis in over a century.

This is not to deny that there have been many brilliant Marxian discussions of particular situations, even of historical tendencies of classes in a variety of societies. Yet, the definitions, the basic method, remain unclarified. Ultimately, almost everyone will agree that the skeletal definition of the social class in terms of how individuals stand in relation to the means of production requires considerable amendment before it can become a really useful analytic tool, and this is often done on an *ad hoc* basis, but rarely in a consistent, theoretical manner. Or, to cite another familiar example, Marxists will regularly make a sharp distinction between objective and subjective social classes, between class and class consciousness. It is widely recognized that there is no one-to-one correspondence between the two. And still, there is no developed study of the inter-relationship. You will not even find it (beyond a few generalities) in a book like Lukacs' *Geschichte und Klassenbewustsein* which places a tremendous emphasis on the emergence of consciousness from the social situation.

All of this places a Marxist at a disadvantage when he approaches an academic work on the subject. There is no difficulty in making negative criticisms, of pointing out how a particular sociologist does not understand this or that political element in his own book. And yet, the critique must be tempered with a certain humility. For the sociologists are providing us with a wealth of data, they are accomplishing the empirical work which the Marxists have failed to do. And if their empiricism often issues into an inability to integrate their findings into a conception of society in motion, it nevertheless retains a great value. And it should be something of a scandal to the Marxists that they have produced so little in terms of actual, concrete studies.

Joseph Kahl's *The American Class Structure* is in many ways a typical book. It is filled with the charts and

data which American sociology has been amassing on this subject over a period of a decade or two. Kahl speaks in terms of a real familiarity with the literature of his field. More, he is not prone to the out and out simplification and vulgarization of his opponents that one finds in some of his colleague's work. And, also typically, he really doesn't concern himself with the most basic question: of how his data relates to an understanding of American society in motion.

Kahl, for example, makes the following comment on the political situation in 1954: " We have approached a stalemate and politics has lost the strong ethnic and class flavor it had for a space of one generation. As long as prosperity continues, the other issues are likely to predominate. Only one ethnic group, the Negroes, still feel underprivileged and actively use politics as a weapon for reform." Leaving aside the obviously questionable historical generalization (that American politics became class politics only in the 1930's), the main point is clear enough. It was noted, for instance, by the contributors to the book on the American right edited by Daniel Bell: that in a decade and a half of relative prosperity, "status" considerations have acquired a particular importance, that class consciousness has not, in the recent period, played the role which it did during the depression.

The point is obvious enough and hardly debatable. Having said this, having noted that the situation depends upon prosperity continuing, one's predictions about the movement of social classes in the immediate future becomes inextricably involved in a judgment of the general direction of American society in the next period. But this is what Kahl, and the other academicians, refuse to do. They are true to their empiricism, and as a result, they limit the usefulness of the facts which they themselves have so painstakingly discovered.

Kahl's comment on C. Wright Mills is a striking case in point of this phenomenon. He writes of *White Collar,* "The book usefully organizes the available data on the shift from the old to the new middle classes, and gives vivid portraits of some of the new types. But its interpretations suffer from Mills' lack of sympathy for the new white-collar people: he sees them as automatons with false and empty lives. He writes from the disillusion of the thirties; he fails, in my opinion, to catch the spirit of the fifties. *However, it must be admitted that we may now be living in a fool's paradise; if major war or economic collapse should come, the thirties may live again."* (my emphasis)

But this comment indicates, to say the least, a disturbing procedure. An enormous variable is left indeterminant, one so crucial that it includes the possibility that the sociologists are living in a "fool's paradise." If that is the case, if a basic change in the economic conditions could vitiate all of the discussion on social classes today, then, if the writer is going to make full use of his material, it is crucial for him to have some view on the probabilities of basic change. Mills does. The fact that he integrates his empirical study into an over-all conception of American capitalism is what differentiates him from almost all of the sociologists. And Kahl can, in a footnote, consider the possibility that his whole study may be a description, not of the American class structure, but of a momentary configuration of social classes under certain conditions. This places a real limit upon the value of his work.

But again, there is a very real value in this study and in others like it. Although there is a fundamental failure of method, there is an abundance of solid empirical material. Here, for example, is recorded in precise statistics the disappearance of the entrepreneur, the growth of the huge corporate bureaucracy. As a result of centering on this phenomenon, Kahl places a great emphasis on the importance of education, and he brings forth some very interesting data on the class factors involved in a college degree. But again, he does not project his findings. Currently, young engineers are being taken into the corporate bureaucracy at very high starting salaries. But at the same time, the opportunity for advancement, the ceiling, is closing in. The young engineer may begin at five or six thousand, yet he will find himself in the very frustrating situation of being condemned to a very slow progress from that point and he may early encounter the fact that he is not going anyplace. This places the brute fact that there are more college degrees in a certain perspective: it indicates a concomitant devaluation of the degree itself. In terms of class consciousness, such a pattern may well have a very important effect. In some cases, it has already led to the formation of crypto-unions in the field (crypto because of an unwillingness on the part of the trained white-collar worker to consider himself as part of the labor movement), in other cases, to unionism itself.

Thus, one has an ambiguous attitude toward a study like *The American Class Structure.* The Marxist cannot help but welcome such a book in so far as it provides real empirical material for the analysis of social classes. And at the same time, this work, and the many like it, suffers from the lack of a basic theoretical orientation. It is flawed by its own empiricism. The challenge remains: for the Marxists to produce studies which are as scientifically grounded and which combine the wealth of factual information integrated with the necessary conception of social dynamics.

Michael Harrington

## A One-Sided View

BLACK BOURGEOISIE, by E. *Franklin Frazier. The Free Press.* 264 pp, 1957.

The "black bourgeoisie" rejects any identification with the Negro masses, according to Mr. Frazier, and strives more than any other element among Negroes to make itself over in the image of the white man; but it, in turn, is rejected by the white ruling classes. "As a consequence of their isolation, the majority of the black bourgeoisie live in a cultural vacuum and their lives are devoted largely to fatuities." This is the running theme of Mr. Frazier's account, one which comes forward in different variations and in each of his ten chapters.

The characteristics he describes are presumably based upon and derived from this unique contradiction of a black bourgeoisie in a white world; yet, the picture he draws can describe the white middle class without much adjustment. And in the end he, too, notices it. What gives the "black bourgeoisie" its basic stamp, its Negro or its middle class character? The author swings between the two halves of this question.

In any case, Mr. Frazier, who has written several books on the Negro and is chairman of the Department of Sociology at Howard University, has assembled a wealth of background detail and current facts on Negro life. It is surprising what he can pack into so few pages on fraternal organizations, churches, schools, business ventures, newspapers. For this alone, it is a rewarding work.

The term "bourgeoisie" is used without precision, not that we necessarily expect Mr. Frazier to hold to Marxian terminology; for him the concept of bourgeoisie is elusive and elastic, changing its meaning from one discussion to the next. Sometimes it seems to include all educated Negroes; or all white collar workers and professionals; or all businessmen. At times it takes in all but the mass of unskilled laborers counting as "bourgeois" the skilled Negro labor force. Most frequently and consistently, however, it simply refers to those who have a lot of money.

He does an impressive job of debunking the myth of "Negro business," the concept that "a solution to the Negro's economic problems" lies in Negroes owning their own enterprises. He documents the insignificant share of Negro industry in the American economy and its trivial importance in the Negro community.

In sum, he offers a thoroughly unattractive portrait of the Negro upper strata. Unrelieved pettiness, narrow social outlook, an unwillingness and therefore an incapacity to lead the Negro people in the fight for a better life, self-centeredness . . . all under the ideological influence and sway of the white bourgeoisie. ". . . the black bourgeoisie have shown no interest in the 'liberation' of Negroes except as it affected their own status or acceptance by the white community. . . . Because of its struggles to gain acceptance by whites, the black bourgeoisie has failed to play the role of a responsible elite in the Negro community." In five pages on the NAACP, he gives it credit for "significant victories for the Negro in his struggle for equal citizenship" but with severe qualifications. "From this analysis of the various intellectual elements in the black bourgeoisie," he writes, "it is clear that they are dependent primarily upon the white propertied classes. Even the NAACP, which has stood for 'racial radicalism' and has received a large part of its support from Negroes, has been influenced by the middle-class outlook of its white supporters and has sought support primarily from Negroes with a middle-class outlook."

At all times, the book is absorbing and provocative but when it is finished, the reader will be unsatisfied. One of the key facts in American life today is the rise of a militant, mass Negro movement for equality; yet this occupies very little of the author's attention. If the condition of the Negro professional and educated strata is as one-sided and bleak as Mr. Frazier maintains, where has the modern Negro movement come from; who leads and stimulates it? ". . . instead of their old resignation toward the world, the Negro masses are acquiring a confidence in the efficacy of their efforts through the use of the ballot and in joining with fellow-workers in the labor unions." So he writes, but only in a passing sentence without examining the impact of this fact upon the black "bourgeoisie."

H.W.B.





# The Metaphysical Revolt

THE FALL, by Albert Camus, Alfred Knoff, New York. $3.50.

Albert Camus' latest novel, *The Fall* consists solely of a monologue—a voice throwing out epigrammatic ideas. There is little character development or unfolding of plot. Thus even with Camus' expert craftsmanship and wry humor, the action begins to lag after a few dozen pages. The reason for the novel's form, however, resides in the ideas Camus holds as an existentialist.

It is most important to realize that Camus is unique among existentialist writers. Camus is primarily a great creative artist, a moralist, without much interest in the more academic philosophic discussions that other existentialists — Kierkegaard, Herzen, Nietzche, Heidegger, Jaspers, Marcel, Sartre—were and are concerned with: language, knowledge, Being, time, consciousness, etc. Thus there is no basic work in which to find Camus' existentialist philosophy; one must extract it from his novels and essays.

His first major essay, *The Myth of Sisyphus,* states the fundamental problem which he has since refined and attempted to solve. The world is chaotic, not governed by law, hostile. Man, on the other hand, is reasonable; and, further, he is always trying to instill his reason into the unreasonable universe. This relationship is an absurd one, because strive as man will he can never succeed in ordering the world.

What to do in the face of this absurdity? That is the problem that must forever haunt man. Can suicide or murder solve anything in their respective protest and anger? Camus thinks not, because they escape, evade the absurd relationship by destroying one of its terms, man. Camus in working the problem out, rejects other solutions—hope, despair, longing for the eternal—all because they, too, turn out to be escapes from the absurd situation.

Then what can be the solution? Surely, man is not to mope along without any comment on this madness of his, this impossible attempt to structure a world that can never be structured. No, Camus thinks that by a passioned revolt against this primary condition of man, man can rise above his condition. This means facing the absurd relationship defiantly, with full knowledge of its absurdity, and, even while aware of the impossibility of overcoming the chaos of the world, constantly striving to usher in the reign of order and justice.

Now, the obvious fact in the analysis of Camus' is its supra-historical approach; it is above classes, social movements, history. That is its peculiarity. Camus' heroes move within history, his justifications lie outside its realm. Later we shall see how this methodology contributes to the technique and mood of *The Fall.* Let us continue with "metaphysical revolt."

This description of "metaphysical revolt" may seem esoteric, but this is because Camus never even attempts to define it. He only indicates by example, by describing various types of revolt in the Kierkegaardian indirect communitive method. Don Juan and the conqueror in *The Myth of Sisyphus,* the St. Justs of history in *The Rebel, The Stranger* and *The Plague,* and the judge-penitent of *The Fall*—every one, in a particular way and in varying degrees, represents the absurd hero. And this makes it difficult indeed to extrapolate a scientific defini-

tion in a short piece of literary criticism.

Yet, if we investigate Camus' examples more closely, we will find a shifting meaning in that "metaphysical revolt." From the defiant, proud, unconquerable heroes that Camus wrote about in the middle '40s, his illustrative characters today have become more subdued, less objectionable; and likewise the *tone* is more "pessimistic," approaching "despair."

Camus' original hero is Sisyphus himself — tragic, but overpoweringly majestic in his tragedy:

> His scorn of the gods, his hatred of death, and his passion for life won him that unspeakable penalty in which his whole being is exerted toward accomplishing nothing. . . . Sisyphus, proletarian of the gods, powerless and rebellious, knows the whole extent of his wretched condition. . . . The lucidity that was to constitute his torture at the same time crowns his victory. . . . Sisyphus teaches the higher fidelity that negates the gods and raises rocks. He too concludes that all is well. This universe henceforth without a master seems to him neither sterile nor futile. . . . The struggle itself toward the heights is enough to fill a man's heart.

And the modern Sisyphus is the working class (although this is only hinted at in the section dealing with Sisyphus: "the workman of today works every day in his life at the same tasks. . . . It is tragic only at the rare moments when it becomes conscious"). The hero is powerful and deeply rooted in social life; he comes alive, vibrant and self-confident in the struggle to scale the heights.

Incidentally, only once again, in *The Plague*, does this proud nobility emerge as the dominant tone. That allegory concerning a town doomed by the Black Plague can be interpreted on many levels, from a description of absurd life to a denunciation of the penal system and the death penalty to a scathing indictment of modern capitalist society. On all levels, one finishes the book with the feeling that the struggle is still ennobling, worthwhile, good, even while being tragic.

A decade has passed since the heroic stage of the Resistance days and the immediate post-war period. A decade in which Camus has honestly tried to live up to his ideas as a creative artist and as a socialist. But it has been very trying. He has seen his close collaborator Sartre cynically toying with the Stalinists (he reacted violently over this, breaking with his friend in a bitter exchange over Sartre's refusal to publicize the existence of concentration camps in Russia); he has also deeply felt the absence of the expected awakening of the masses. As a result he has retreated further and further into his shell. To paraphrase one of Camus' sayings: not that he has been unfaithful to the humiliated; only he has tended to concentrate mainly on the beautiful. And his last novel, *The Fall*, shows the tiredness, the retreat.

At the same time, there are still flashes of the old combativeness, skill and moral indignation in *The Fall*. Like this:

> Have you at least heard of the spitting-cell, which a nation recently thought up to prove itself the greatest on earth? A walled-up box in which the prisoner can stand without moving. The solid door that locks him in his cement cell stops at chin level. Hence only his face is visible and every passing jailer spits copiously on it. The prisoner, wedged into his cell, cannot wipe his face, though he is allowed, it is true, to close his eyes. Well that, *mon chere*, is a human invention. They didn't need God for that little masterpiece.

But in general, the mood of *The Fall* is more resigned and less concerned



with the struggle for social justice. The voice that speaks to you is of a former well-known Parisian lawyer who has gained the insight that his whole life was self-deception, all his good acts and kind deeds a sham, covering his cowardly self-love. He has moved to Amsterdam to reign as the judge-penitent of confessors at the Mexico City bar. This is a far cry from Sisyphus.

This shift in tone is closely related to the idea of the absurd relationship, or rather, it tends to develop out of that idea. To simply state that we live in a hostile and strange world is a platitude, not even necessarily an existentialist platitude. It only becomes the basic existentialist category when extended to making the world *ungoverned by law*. Once this is done, the path leads straight to obscurantism and withdrawal, and there is no turning back.

First, in an unlawful way there is no longer any logical way in the long run to relate to society and the flow of social change; you are left rootless, aimless, able to move in any old direction. There cannot be any consistent connection between your philosophy and politics; any attempt being wholly arbitrary and unstable. A random example: Heidegger flirted with the Nazi movement, Marcel was baptized a Roman Catholic in mature life, Sartre began rationalizing Stalinist barbarities, Camus alone remained a staunch moral defender of democracy. If the world isn't governed by law, then how can you tell whether Heidegger or Marcel or Sartre or Camus is right? There is no way except appeal to the spirit.

Further, there arises an inseparable division between the isolated individual in a social setting and social man. How can you relate to the social matrix and social change if we are all mere objects one to the other? All the groping subjects facing this mad world do not fit into a social grouping and the tendency is to reject the concept of social grouping. As Sartre once put it, "Hell is other people." But by a saving grace, Camus holds back. He compartmentalizes the problem: in one compartment is the lonely individual and the chaotic world; in the other niche is the social struggle for a better world. By creating the dichotomy and not recognizing it, Camus does not have to bother solving it. He merely forgets one or the other, depending on his mood. During the Resistance Days he was the social man; today he is the Creative Artist with his judge-penitents.

The philosophers of existentialism have even gone one step further. They, of course, also reject all notion of a lawful world where past and present have an influence on determining future events, where one can predict developments, causally explain events, and participate in the flow of things. And they turned to phenomonology, to describing Being in its ahistorical context, concentrating on universal constant conditions which they believe make up the structure of human experience as such.

Camus has not formally gone this far. But the same methodology underlies all his works. And even though he maintains a critical attitude towards present life, even though he views history as a struggle where instrumentality, choice, and pragmatic tests rule, this methodology, in its denial of social determinism, leads the existentialist toward a hostile attitude in regard to social man. The existentialist is lead back towards nihilism. And that is the real danger. It is also where Camus' *The Fall* is pointed.

MEL STACK

## The Fight for Freedom

AN ALMANAC OF LIBERTY, *by William Douglas.* Doubleday & Company, Inc., Garden City, N. Y., 1954.

This book gives a short account of each of the incidents in the hard fight for individual liberty in the history of England and America and how these rights are being restricted now.

As the title indicates, the book is in almanac form, so that there is often no connection between one page and the next, making for difficult reading. You may be reading about, say, yellow dog contracts on page 118 when you are suddenly confronted with an account of the Charter of the United Nations on page 119. It is not until you get to page 276 that the subject of yellow dog contracts pops up again. One wonders about the reason for this strange form, so unsuited to the subject matter.

Nevertheless, this book is worthwhile. In it are some of Dougla's most quoted remarks, such as those on "faceless and unknown accusers" and his statement that "wire tapping is a blight on the civil liberties of the citizen."

Indeed he is sound in his conclusions on almost every subject he tackles:

*On the Smith Act,* he quotes approvingly from Mill: " 'If all mankind minus one, were of one opinion, and only one person were of the contrary opinion, mankind would be no more justified in silencing that one person than he, if he had the power, would be justified in silencing mankind.' "

*On foreign policy*: "We stood *against* the independence of Indonesia from 1945 to 1949, favoring the Dutch against a subjugated people.

"We connived with Britain to salvage an infamous British oil concession in Iran, aligning ourselves *against* Iran's democratic forces.

"We became underwriters of French colonial policy in Indochina and Morocco, helping to *crush* and *subdue* nationalist movements that were anti-communist."

*On informers*: "Not until recent years did an informer enjoy such acclaim as [Titus] Oates knew."

*On the federal judiciary*: "But its [The Sherman Act] total impact has been slight. From the beginning it has been applied by judges hostile to its purposes, friendly to the empire builders who wanted it emasculated. . . . But trusts that were dissolved reintegrated in new forms. When one monopolistic device was outlawed, a new one was invented. Trusts began to be classified as either 'good' or 'bad' and most seemed to be labeled 'good.' The judiciary was not wholly responsible for emasculating the Sherman Act. But it deserves the greatest share of blame. . . ."

J. PARRIS