The New
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A New Stage in The Russian Crisis

by Max Shachtman

Unions, Racketeers and Senators

by H. W. Benson

An Amalgam of Marx and Keynes

by T. N. Vance

- Magazine Chronicle
- Books in Review

What Is Orthodox Marxism?

by George Lukacs

50c

THE NEW INTERNATIONAL
A Marxist Review

Vol. XXIII, No. 3 **Whole No. 176**
SUMMER 1957

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Articles:

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A New Stage in The Russian Crisis

New Trends and Weaknesses Revealed in Purge

The eruption of the latest purge in the Russian leadership has precipitated a new discussion in the political world. What is the meaning of the expulsion of Malenkov, Molotov, Kaganovich and Shepilov from the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party and from its Presidium? Does it presage a political reform, a democratization, of the regime in the country to be carried out by the new leadership? Is it a step backward to the kind of personal dictatorship represented by the now officially abjured rule of Stalin? Is it a step toward a new kind of regime in Russia, a military dictatorship, under which the army officers replace the Party officials? Or is it an unmeant prologue to a revolutionary intervention in the affairs of state by the millions who have till now been throttled and shackled by their rulers?

It is not a single one of these alone. But it is all four of them, combined in an interplay of conflicting forces and trends unleashed since the death of Stalin. Not one of the forces is reconcilable with any of the others. If one seems to be dominant for a moment, it would be well to bear in mind that the situation in Russia is now *exceptionally* fluid and unstable. It would be hard to make a bigger mistake than to assume that the kind of final decision has been made which clearly indicates the course of development for a whole period. The disturbances and rearrangements at the summits of Russian society have their greatest importance in signaling the turbulence that is warming up at the foundations. The ruling class is sitting nervously on a vast accumulation of powder kegs. That much is absolutely certain. The only important element of uncertainty is how long it will take for the attached fuses to burn to the kegs. It should not surprise even the most optimistic if it takes less time than anyone expects.

THE QUICKENING OF THE tempo of events is indicated in the first place, as is usually the case in despotic societies, by the rapidity of the changes made in the composition of the ruling personnel. If we do not forget that stability and instability are relative terms it can be said that the Bolshevik revolution, in the course of its victory and its establishment of order in the country, produced a stable leadership. It took no less than fifteen years for the Stalinist counterrevolution to exhaust and annihilate this leadership, politically and physically, leaving only a tiny handful to give a simulacrum, utterly illusionary, of continuity from the past. At the time of Stalin's death

in 1953, he had succeeded in establishing an entirely new leadership which appeared to have far greater power and solidity than the Lenin leadership had in the five years of its rule. Outwardly, for the first five minutes, so to speak, the succession seemed to establish itself as pre-arranged and foreseen. Malenkov, ostentatiously groomed as heir apparent by Stalin at the last Party congress he allowed to take place, became Prime Minister. He was associated with four deputies: Molotov as minister of foreign affairs, Bulganin as minister of defense, Beria as head of all the police, and Kaganovich as chief of industry. The pre-arrangement was even fortified by lifting Voroshilov, who had for a time been in the light shadows, to the position of President of the republic.

In four short years, there is nothing, or next to nothing, left of this team. Its stability, its "collectiveness" as distinguished from Stalin's personal rule, proved to have only an external character.

Beria was the first to go, executed in secret, without a trial worthy of the name, without the public knowing how he defended himself against what were undoubtedly the justified but after all long-known charges against him, or how he in turn accused his accusers. He is now officially known, in the words of Khrushchev's sensational speech last year, as "the provocateur and vile enemy, Beria, who had murdered thousands of Communists and loyal Soviet people," in other words, as a man perfectly suited for a part in the collective leadership of his compeers.

Even before Beria was disposed of totally, Malenkov was launched on a greased slide. Less than a fortnight after being named Prime Minister and secretary of the party, he resigned from (i.e., he was jerked out of) the latter position and the lesser-known figure of Khrushchev was named in his place. The solemn specialists all over the world nodded wisely at this move as an indication of the dispersal of power among the new "collective leadership" as against the reconcentration of power into the hands of a new Stalin. Malenkov rapidly became touted as the leader of the "reformers," of the "peace party," of the "consumer public," of the relaxation and the thaw. There was no end to the blessings, according to the specialists, that the condescending but affable savior would vouchsafe to the masses without their having to lift a finger of their own to achieve them. His gallant presentation of a flower to a gentlelady at a British garden party removed all doubts as to his character.

All doubts as to his future were also soon removed. He lost his post as party secretary less than two weeks after assuming pre-eminent power in the regime. Less than two years afterward, he lost his power as head of the government, accompanied by an extorted confession that he knew nothing about the problems he was assigned to resolve, as if to underline the insight and foresight of the colleagues so long associated with him. Bulganin took his place. That was in February, 1955. Twelve months later, at the party congress, Khrushchev drove a broader blade into Malenkov by his dark description of him as the very right bower of Stalin in the days of his ugliest capriciousness. At the June, 1957, Central Committee Plenum, Malenkov was expelled from the body as an anti-Leninist, an enemy of world peace, relaxation and welfare of the people, and a plotter against the party, its leadership and its integrity. A month later, Shvernik, now returning to the prominence he lost when Voroshilov replaced him in the presidency of the republic, informed the public in passing that the same Malenkov, among others, had been active in framing the notorious "Leningrad affair" ten years earlier and was guilty, in general, of "breaches of revolutionary legality committed . . . during the period of mass repressions." In a word, Malenkov now seems to have just enough time in which to count the remaining number of his days.

Molotov, the best-known party leader next to Stalin, and his unwavering faction lieutenant for thirty years, was eliminated from the post of foreign minister in May, 1955, about the time the treaty with Austria, which he is now accused of having opposed, was signed by the Kremlin. He is now named as the chief of the "secret anti-party factional group" and as the only one who was impertinent enough to vote against his expulsion from the Central Committee (more exactly, who abstained from the voting—did his co-factionalists therefore vote dutifully for their own ouster?) at its June, 1957, meeting. Thrown out with him was his successor as foreign minister two years earlier, Shepilov. Kaganovich suffered the same punishment.

Of the ruling quintet installed in 1953, only one remains—Bulganin. But he failed to jump to Khrushchev's defense as instantaneously as Mikoyan did at the meeting of the Presidium (the former Political Bureau) where, according to all the obviously authorized reports, the "anti-party" faction all but succeeded in crushing the new party secretary. Bulganin is, at this writing, plainly in disgrace. A conservative insurance company would be ill-advised to take his account. Below the uppermost ledge of party leadership to which he now clings with only one hand is the familiar oblivion or worse. Voroshilov, already an official nonentity, from whom Khrushchev last year openly demanded a denunciation of Stalin for which "even his grandsons will thank him," shares Bulganin's precarious position.

In sum, the bulk of the first post-Stalin leader-team has been wiped out in four years. In any country, a change of this kind would be regarded as clear manifestation of a crisis of the regime. Russia is no exception. What has happened in the past four years, culminating in the June purge, marks the opening of a new stage in a crisis of much longer duration whose roots reach deep into the soil of Stalinist society. Khrushchev seems to have triumphed over all possible or visible rivals. Some take this to demonstrate that the new stage will be dominated by him, that he will be able to determine the course of its development, that his rise to power will be similar to Stalin's. A comparison will be instructive.

STALIN STARTED HIS REAL rise to dictatorial power with advantages that, especially now that we are able to look backward upon them, were extraordinarily great. He had the task of destroying the achievements of a revolution. The fact that it could no longer maintain itself by its isolated efforts alone, that it could not solve its fundamental economic problems on socialist foundations and in a socialist way, was his greatest advantage. The revolution's utter destruction of a native bourgeoisie that might have been able to solve the economic problems on capitalist foundations and in a capitalist way, and the inability of the foreign bourgeoisie to undertake such a solution, was an accompanying advantage. Where basic social problems are not solved in a progressive way, they are solved (ex-

cept where society lapses into utter moribundity) in a reactionary way. In Russia they were solved—by which is simply meant that the country was completely modernized and brought one step from the very top of the world ladder economically—in a reactionary, unique and never foreseen way. All the hugger-mugger about the progressive role of Stalinism "in the economic field" overlooks the fundamental and overwhelmingly decisive fact that in order to play this role Stalinism established over the nation the rule of a new and more ruthlesslp exploitive class than any known in history. The establishment of the social power of a new exploiting class in the epoch of the decay of capitalist society and its overripeness for socialist reorganization is a phenomenon of reactionary significance and consequences. Its reactionary character is confirmed by the fact that the only serious resistance offered to the rise of Stalinism came from the working classes and the revolutionary socialists of Russia, and that this resistance had to be curbed, cheated and crushed before the new rulers could achieve a real measure of consolidation, economic and political. The dilemma of the more earnest apologists of Stalinism, especially those who try to think or write in Marxian terms, is two-fold: one, either the social role played by those who resisted Stalinism was reactionary or the social role played by those who crushed this resistance in the course of establishing, expanding and consolidating the "progressive economy" was reactionary; or two, either the struggle against the Stalinist regime carried on by the proletarian elements in Russia was utopian, similar to the workers' struggles against capitalism in the days before modern socialist theory and movement were established because the bourgeois social order, and therefore exploitive class rule, was the then historical and necessary bearer of social progress, or the "progress" achieved under Stalinism was correspondingly the work that could be performed only by a historically necessary exploitive class and its class rule. The indicated answer in either case leaves little to be said for the progressive, let alone the socialist, character of Stalinism.

Stalin was able to lead to power this new exploitive class, the bureaucracy, which, it is well to add, we for our part do not regard as a historically progressive social formation, or "historically necessary" in any sense comparable to the role played in its time by the bourgeoisie. To the advantages mentioned, was added the fact that Stalin was, from the beginning of his new career, an outstanding and established leader. He was not, to be sure, known to the masses in 1923-1924, but then again, it was not to the masses that he directed his appeal. He was known to the party bureaucracy and was already well entrenched in its midst. His ability was widely underrated, but not by Lenin who named him, along with Trotsky, as the "two most able leaders of the present Central Committee"—which was itself not made up of nobodies. In the course of ten-twelve years of bitter, dogged, merciless struggles, he disposed of all the able and articulate representatives of the socialist revolution of 1917 and its ideals; in the course of another five years, he wiped them out physically. In the course of the same period, he destroyed completely the revolutionary party without permitting any other to take its place—he supplanted it with a compliant *apparatus,* which is something else again (all talk of a Communist *party,* under Stalin or since his death

is, basically and literally, nonsense); and along with the destruction of the party went the destruction of the remnants of the Soviets, the entire trade-union movement, the factory councils, as well as any and every form of free and independent organization and expression.

Back in 1928 Trotsky wrote that "the socialist character of industry is determined and secured in a decisive measure by the role of the party, the voluntary internal cohesion of the proletarian vanguard, the conscious discipline of the administrators, trade-union functionaries, members of the shop nuclei, etc. If we allow that this web is weakening, disintegrating and ripping, then it becomes absolutely self-evident that within a brief period nothing will remain of the socialist character of state industry, transport, etc." In this he proved to be fundamentally correct, even though the subsequent development took a historically unexpected turn. The "web" was weakened, ripped and destroyed; with it went the socialist character of the statified economy.

That is what Stalin was called upon to achieve. An apparent paradox: the rule of the working class is absolutely indispensable to the development of a *socialist* economy, but in isolated Russia the rule of the working class was an obstacle to the solution of the economic problem by an exploiting class. Stalinism eliminated the obstacle. In doing so, he attracted the enthusiastic support of the elements required to make up the new bureaucratic class. It was not that they were indifferent to Stalin's crushing of all opponents—they were ardently satisfied with it. It was not simply that he provided them with the mantle of the authority of a revolution in whose name he always spoke—he provided them with an apparatus to maintain their rule, with an unparalled police machine to smash all resistance to their rule. He fashioned a shameless but Marxistically couched theory to give ideological justification for their class privileges over the working classes, namely, that Marxism rejects equalitarianism. No ruling class ever owed so much to one man. Stalin was strategist and tactician, theorist and political leader, ideologist and hangman for the collectivist bureaucracy. In the obscene welter of extollment to "the greatest genius of all ages," so revolting to any civilized ear and eye, the bureaucracy, at least, expressed at bottom a sincere, heartfelt gratitude to a man who lavishly deserved it from them. In outlawing socialism, its principles, ideals and aims from Russia, he gained not merely an obligatory but a genuine and veritably immense authority from the beneficiaries of his leadership.

THERE IS, HOWEVER, A fatal and ever exasperating flaw in the rule of the bureaucracy. Every step required for the consolidation of its power over society led inexorably to a greater centralization of state power until it reached its peak in the establishment of the personal despotism of Stalin. No other way was possible, and no other way is possible now. The bureaucracy was enabled to exercise every liberty over the working classes, ruling them with an arbitrariness unknown in any other modern country. But it was not and is not able to rule itself. Self-rule is possible for the ruling class in capitalist society, has long been exercised there, and it still is. For the ruling class in Stalinist society, self-rule is impossible. To whom shall it submit the differences of opinions which reflect the conflict of interests, economic, political and even personal? To the objective decision of the

market, that "blind regulator" to which all capitalist producers of commodities are fundamentally subjevted? The Stalinist economy knows no market and it is not based upon the production of commodities. To the democratic decision of the people? But the moment it invites the people to make any decisions that are binding on the economic or political regime, is the moment when the rule of the bureaucracy comes, as it is perfectly aware, to an end. To its own ruling ranks? But that is a practical impossibility from a dozen standpoints. Even if it were possible to organize its ranks for such a purpose, the open discussion of its disputes would be tantamount to an invitation to the masses to intervene in the decision. It is not for nothing that Khrushchev closed his speech at the 20th Congress with the warning that "we should know the limits; we should not give ammunition to the enemy; we should not wash our dirty linen before their eyes." (Who "the enemy" really is, is sufficiently indicated by the fact that the speech has not been published inside Russia to this day; and by the fact that the Russian people are always informed only of the *conclusions* reached by the victors in any dispute that arises in the ranks of the bureaucracy.) In actual fact, disputes of *any* kind, even if not openly conducted, are a menace to the bureaucracy, and there is an excellent reason why it forbids factions ("parties") in its midst. What ground is there for the belief among the bureaucracy, whose rule is a perpetual defiance of the majority, that a defeated minority will abide by the "democratic decisions" of the whole and resist the temptation to seek support for its interests and views outside the ranks of the ruling class, that is, among the ruled, thus throwing the entire social structure into jeopardy?

By its very nature this class, which is unique in the long history of ruling classes, must abandon all thought of self-rule and, however reluctantly, raise up above itself, as well as above the nation as a whole, a supreme arbiter to whose decisions the rulers bow by common consent. In turn, it can justify his omnipotence only by ascribing to him omniscience. The megalomania which Khrushchev attributed to Stalin may have been a psychic disturbance. But the power of this megalomania was systematically stimulated and nurtured by the bureaucracy itself in its own interests. Stalin presents a problem in social analysis, not in psychoanalysis.

In concentrating all power into his hands, Stalin was able to assure order in the country. Translated, this means: to defend the rule of the bureaucracy from the masses at home and from enemies abroad. But if the power to make all decisions on differences and conflicts of interests in the bureaucracy was transferred to him, it does not mean that the differences no longer existed, that the conflicts were eliminated, or that his decisions were accepted with equal satisfaction by all. The further the country advanced toward modernization and the more critical the international situation became, the more complex, diversified and multitudinous became the problems they posed. Stalin's purely personal decisions on the vast and complicated problems could not but arouse increasing hatred and increasing fear in all sections of Russian society, the bureaucracy itself not excluded. He could assure order, but he could not assure security. The capitalist who is interested in a general or an abstract way in the "social rule of the capitalist class," rapidly loses this interest if his personal position

as an owner of a share in the total capital is wiped out. The bureaucrat is after all interested in the "social rule of the bureaucracy" only abstractly, but is most intensely concerned with his own position in the bureaucracy. If, overnight, he finds he has been cast out of the job of regional party secretary or of director of a trust, without recourse, and lucky to be alive for the moment, he may very well find little consolation in the assurance that the incumbents still rule society "as a class." He wants security in his position and, better still, sure prospects of advancement. Stalin offered the bureaucracy everything, but not security.

The regime was coiled around the whole nation like hoops of iron riveted at every point by the G.P.U. At the height of his power and the adulation he was bathed in, Stalin was universally detested and feared, even by his closest coadjutors. There is no reason whatever to doubt the description that Khrushchev gives in this regard of the feelings that filled the manly breasts of himself and the other intimates of Stalin. He still praises Stalin for having crushed the Trotskyists, Bukharinists and all the others who in one way or another represented the ideas of the socialist revolution—"a stubborn and a difficult fight but a necessary one." By that fight, Stalin made it possible for the bureaucracy to live. He condemns Stalin for having crushed his own supporters and threatened the political, if not the physical existence, of all of them. By that fight, Stalin made it all but impossible for the bureaucracy to live. But it is equally important to note that while the bureaucrats hated Stalin, they were not in opposition to him. *They had no political alternative to the megalomaniacal supreme arbiter who was their authentic creation.*

THE TOTALITARIAN REGIME IS not the absolute monarchy, although it has many features in common with it. The succession in the former is not so simply indicated and effected as in the latter. With the death of Stalin, a new situation was created. It was obviously impossible merely to put forward another Stalin who would continue where the other left off. Stalin acquired his enormous power and authority only after many years of bitter and arduous struggle for it, in which he not only wiped out all opponents and rivals but reduced his own supporters to the position of subordinates with so little power and authority of their own that they lived, toward the end, in daily trepidation. The bureaucracy, in March, 1953, presented any number of alternatives for the succession, but not one of them with Stalin's authority or anything comparable to it. In fact, the one who had been implicitly nominated by Stalin as his candidate, speedily found out that the recommendation did not guarantee him the sword of power in the hand but the stab of the dagger in the back. Indeed, the race for the succession started with the candidates vying for prominence, first in the implicit disavowal of Stalin's regime and then in disavowing and even violently denouncing the man to whom they owed whatever position they had. This proves not merely that there is no gratitude in politics, but that the process of recreating the kind of despotism that Stalin ultimately represented is unfolding under radically different conditions than those prevalent in the days of Stalin's own rise to power.

All of Stalin's work, all of his

achievements, have combined in a complex way to make the continuation of his regime, if not downright impossible, then extraordinarily difficult, and in any case to burden every attempt to stabilize the regime with convulsing crises.

Stalin did not appeal to the people against his opponents or his rivals. He scarcely pretended to appeal to them. On the contrary, the masses were, generally speaking, disinherited, disfranchized and driven into silent drudgery like oxen. Stalin appealed to the bureaucracy, led them to power for which, in exchange, they surrendered to him all authority. With Stalin dead, the bureaucracy is left with little or no authority of its own and with a tremendous uncertainty about its own position. One of the accomplishments over which Stalin presided was the establishment of a tremendous working class which hardly existed at all at the beginning of his rise. Another accomplishment was the establishment of a huge industry now capable of satisfying the still unfulfilled needs and aspirations of the working class. The bureaucracy can now acquire authority, and confidence in itself, only by appealing for the support of the people. It will not confer full power, that is, place all reliance upon any leader or leadership who cannot assure the position of the bureaucracy among the people. It does not dare to make a definitive choice among the candidates for leadership until one of them has demonstrated by his policy that he can assure this position. The whole past regime in which the bureaucracy was the basic social force is so discredited in the eyes of the people, and the bureaucracy itself is so disoriented, that it feels it is risking its very existence unless it finds a broad base of support or at least acquiescence for its continued rule among the working classes. The demonstration of this fact is given by the words and deeds of every candidate for the succession to Stalin.

Beria, immediately after the death of Stalin, was the first to present himself as a reformer of the regime, seeking to enlist popular support by promising the national minorities and the minority nations a change for the better from the chauvinistic and oppressive policy pursued so brutally by Stalin. He followed the promise by announcing that the "doctor's plot" invented by Stalin (surely with the complicity of Beria himself!) had proved to be a frame-up. He was given no chance by his rivals to expand on his role as reformer and friend of the people. His position as head of the detested G.P.U. not only made such a role incongruous, but made it easier for his rivals to appear as reformers themselves by arrest, defamation, secret trial and execution of Beria as the man who "murdered thousands of Communists and loyal Soviet people."

In their own eagerness to win the people, the remainder of the post-Stalin leadership placed Serov, a secondary figure, at the head of the G.P.U. and rigorously reduced the powers of the G.P.U. itself without, of course, abolishing the secret police completely. At one stroke, the leadership made a concession to three forces: to the masses who hated the G.P.U. even more than they feared it; to the bureaucracy which had been perpetually subjected to the insufferable intervention of the till then omnipresent and omnipotent secret police; and to the regular army officer corps which suffered not only from the same intervention but also from the existence of an army-within-the-army constituted by the externally-controlled and independent G.P.U. troops—Stalin's own combination of S.S. divisions and Gestapo.

The rivalry among the would-be dictators was given pause for a moment by the first big manifestation of open struggle of the masses against the Stalinist regime, the June 17 rising of the workers of East Germany. But only for a moment. Malenkov, who had begun with an announcement that the hypertrophied horde of bureaucrats and bureaucratic institutions would be reduced, proclaimed the doctrine, unknown under Stalin, that the successes in heavy industry had now produced all the conditions "for organizing a rapid rise in the production of consumers' goods" and that "it is indispensable to increase substantially the investments devoted to the light and food industries." In that sentence he unquestionably voiced the deepest conviction of the overwhelming majority of the Russian people. On Malenkov's lips, this pledge was anxious demagoguery, not unknown on both sides of the Iron Curtain, and calculated above all other things to promote his own political interests. That did not prevent the rise of the most excited predictions about the worthy intentions of the new regime and its apparent spokesman. One observer (he turned out to be Isaac Deutscher), reminded his readers that Trotsky had once advocated a "limited political revolution" against Stalinism, and that although he was tragically ahead of his time, "he could not imagine that Stalin's closest associates would act in accordance with his scheme. What Malenkov's government is carrying out now is precisely the 'limited revolution' envisaged by Trotsky." That did not turn out to be precisely the case. The "limited revolution" was not carried out, but in little more than a year the "Malenkov government" was kicked out. The over-eager observers consoled themselves with the thought that Malenkov, after all, had not been, or had not yet been executed by the now rising Khrushchev, forgetting that Stalin, too, did not begin by executing the opponents he removed or expelled.

KHRUSHCHEV BECAME THE MOST spectacular and in his conduct, at least, the most self-assured of the candidates. He best reflects—not represents, but reflects—the conflicting forces whose interplay is the outstanding characteristic of the new stage.

He appeals for support to the masses more outspokenly, one might almost say more recklessly, than Beria or Malenkov did, or than any of the others who are now in the official leadership. Even though his 20th Congress speech has not yet been published in Russia, it is safe to believe that virtually everybody knows of its substance. In effect, he has told the Russian people: "This is what the mad tyrant was in reality and in detail, and I feared and hated him no less than you did. The thoroughness and vehemence with which I exposed and denounced his evils are the best proof I can give that under my leadership the dread regime of terror and caprice will come to an end." It is hard to overrate the importance of the fact that Stalin started his rise to power with the oath that he would be nothing but a faithful disciple of Lenin, the leader of the preceding regime; whereas Khrushchev starts with a bitter denunciation and renunciation of the leadership and regime of his predecessor.

Khrushchev must know that the successor regime cannot even think of maintaining itself without popular

support. To gain it, not even the curbing of the G.P.U. was enough. The monstrous slave camps had to be largely liquidated. The release of millions of only half or one-third productive workers from the camps served to satisfy the increasingly desperate need for industrial manpower, and that was not the least of the reasons for the grand gesture. But it was skillfully made to invest the leadership with the mantle of reformers. Nobody has been heartier than Khrushchev in promising that, now at last (or at any rate in the not distant future!) the people, and not merely the bureaucrats, will eat their fill, as much as the Americans eat and maybe even more.

He gives whatever bond he deems it safe to give in order to show that his promises are being implemented. It is not only Stalin who is disavowed and at least as a cadaver, dethroned. It is the whole despised gang around him who are being repudiated, except for a few worthy exceptions among whom Khrushchev nominates himself as the worthiest. With the expulsion of his three opponents from the Central Committee, he not only strengthens his own position but assures the people that it is now rid of practically the last of the outstanding members of Stalin's immediate circle: Malenkov the heir apparent and for that reason alone the most personal embodiment of Stalin's regime; Molotov, reputed the "hardest" of the Stalinists, the most unyielding in seeking to maintain the old regime, and now, above all, the opponent of relaxation of international tension that might break out into a war which the Russian people (and not they alone) dread more than anything else; and Kaganovich, the very incarnation of the Simon Legrees of Stalin's harshest exploitation of the toilers.

But the whole point of all the reforms, the real as well as the sham and apparent, those already vouchsafed and those that will in all probability be granted in addition, is that they must be *safe* reforms. They cannot and will not go beyond what is required to restore that adequate measure of stability to the foundations of the regime which it has lost since Stalin's death, or more exactly, which it has lost to such an extent that the regime is in a state of crisis. The foundations of the regime are the totalitarian powers of the bureaucracy, guaranteed by the abolition of all representative institutions of the people, without which democracy, above all workers' democracy, exists only in the imagination. And while Khrushchev appeals and must appeal for the support of the people, he cannot, *and he will not under any circumstances,* allow that support to be asserted and tested in the *only* meaningful way, namely, by enfranchising the disfranchised masses, by universal suffrage and with it, necessarily, all the other elementary democratic rights without which voting ceases to be voting and becomes nothing more than a classical Bonapartist plebiscite. Unless you live in the dream-world where one luminous day the bureaucracy announces to the masses, "Ekh, you are now old or bold enough to be granted all the power to determine our own fate," the inherent limitations upon reforms are plainly indicated. Anything and everything is possible from the bureaucracy now, in its days of indecision and apprehension, but not the freedom of the people expressed in the self-maintained machinery of representative government. Ruling classes in the past have fought like tigers against the attempt to deprive them of their power, and in some cases they have

yielded to the will of the people without offering armed resistance. But there is no recorded case of a ruling class committing suicide in deference to the popular will. There is no indication that the Stalinist bureaucracy will offer itself as the first case in history.

BUT IF KHRUSHCHEV, or a restored Malenkov (he is after all still alive and therefore still available if the bureaucratic wheel should turn) or any other candidate at present not visible, cannot rule through the machinery of representative government, what machinery is left? It is not possible to rule without a machinery of rule to enforce sovereignty and authority, to see to the execution of decisions, or if it is preferred, an apparatus. Can Khrushchev rule through the rule of the bureaucracy, the party bureaucracy in the first place? Stalin ruled through the rule of the party apparatus, indispensably supplemented by the G.P.U. The G.P.U. is not presently available to Khrushchev, and with its former powers, at least, it is not likely to be available for some time. Is the party apparatus, the party bureaucracy, available to him? It is not. And therein lies another decisive change from the days of Stalin's despotic power.

There are two important reasons why it is not simply at his disposal, at least not yet.

The bureaucracy is not to be had in a day by the first one to come along with the demand that it surrender its favors. Malenkov, has learned this, despite the advantage of having been for years at the central control point of the party bureaucracy under Stalin and of having been designated by Stalin as his successor. He was discarded by machinations and intrigue at the very top without the bureaucracy lifting a finger to protect him. Stalin, we recall again, had to fight tough and numerous battles before the bureaucracy entrusted him with full power, and even then it was only after he had succeeded in reorganizing and replacing the bureaucracy literally from top to bottom. He won out with them and over them only after having demonstrated over a long period of time and in a whole series of vital questions, that his policies and his leadership sufficed to satisfy their basic requirement, the stability of their rule. Why should the present bureaucracy, overnight, as it were, turn over full power to Khrushchev, place itself completely at his disposal? He has relieved them of the unendurable terror of Stalin's days, and that is welcome. But it is far from enough. Stability, order—that is enough, or at any rate, it is adequate. The bureaucracy is in its nature obsessed with the fear of self-rule. It has no way of discussing and deciding freely the policies it requires for its preservation. Indeed, it does not want any such way, for inherent in it are the open divisions in its ranks, the cracks in the monolithic structure through which the masses can so easily pour and wash away all the obstacles to popular sovereignty. The inexorable trend toward extruding a supreme arbiter, even though it has slowed down in the present crisis, is still in operation. The bureaucracy, without a clear course of its own, disoriented by events, can tolerate a Khrushchev while he demonstrates what his capacities are and what they can yield, but it is far from ready to give him full confidence and blind obedience. It does not, or does not yet, oppose Khrushchev; but neither is it committed to him. In the crucial hours when—as all the reports agree—the "anti-party faction" of Molotov, Malenkov and Kaganovich tried a

coup de palais against Khrushchev, they seemed to manage without too much difficulty to get a majority in the uppermost circle of the bureaucracy, the Presidium, to favor the ouster of the apparent party boss, and even Bulganin was won to their side for a moment. The *coup* did not, to be sure, succeed; and on that point, more later. But it is preposterous to assume that the bureaucracy as a whole has attached itself slavishly and irretraceably to Khrushchev's claim to supremacy when its most authoritative representatives at the top were ready to challenge the claim so rudely.

On his side, in turn, Khrushchev has little reason to submit his claim for endorsement by the bureaucracy. In the very first place, he has no guarantee of the outcome, since he cannot but know the position and the state of mind of the bureaucracy. He was able, two years ago, to oust Malenkov from the position of Prime Minister, but Malenkov remained in the Presidium. Even at the June, 1957, meeting of the Central Committee where he succeeded in having Malenkov-Molotov-Kaganovich-Shepilov expelled from the Central Committee, they were not expelled from the party even though the resolution makes a significant allusion to the threat of such expulsion. To attribute such restraint to Khrushchev's oath to avoid Stalin's road or to a passion for the principle of collective leadership, is absurd. The all-but-successful attempt of the Presidium members, who incarnated the "collective leadership," to vote Khrushchev out of his post, just as Malenkov was voted out of his post two years earlier, is sure to have cooled any passion he may have had for the famous principle. In the second place, there is a sharp conflict between the attempt to gain popularity among the masses and the attempt to rule through the bureaucratic apparatus as before. The bureaucracy is enormously discredited among the people. When Khrushchev delivered his massive blows at Stalin, the bureaucracy as a whole was morally shattered. It is inconceivable that the people would thereafter retain any respect for the representatives of a regime guilty not merely of failing to resist the frightful abominations of Stalin but of defending and participating in them with enthusiasm and praise. The Russian people are not cattle. There is not a country in the world whose government would last five minutes after it was shown that its entire officialdom had been the active or passive accomplices of such monstrous crimes as Khrushchev catalogued at the 20th Congress, provided the people were free to act. The only difference here is that the Russian people are not yet free to act. But they are free to think to themselves. Their thoughts cannot be consoling to the bureaucracy which was stripped to revolting nakedness by Khrushchev himself. And he would have to be the biggest dolt of all to entertain illusions on this score. And, in the third place, Khrushchev finds himself compelled to undertake such actions against the bureaucracy as are guaranteed to achieve anything but its enthusiastic support.

The pores of the Russian economy are choking with bureaucracy. There is *no* regime possible in Russia today or tomorrow that could any longer tolerate such a condition. Since Stalin's death, *almost a million bureaucrats* have had to be sacked from their posts, according to Khrushchev's own report earlier this year. Almost half a million other superfluous bureaucrats, he added, should be up for discharge. These two figures alone are enough to give the appalling

picture of the waste, inefficiency and downright parasitism spawned by bureaucratic collectivism, the vertical super-centralization of industry has multiplied the waste and inefficiency of the economy in grotesque ways. In a situation where the still enormous bureaucracy must be maintained, where the wretched conditions of the workers and peasants must be alleviated to some degree at least, where yesterday's exploitation of the economy of the satellite countries for the benefit of the Russian economy is no longer so easy to pursue, and where the international situation demands strenuous efforts to achieve industrial and military equality and even superiority over the United States—a change in the economic structure is an unpostponable elementary necessity. Khrushchev is trying to undertake the change. The central Moscow ministries of most industries (but not of war industry!) have been eliminated, and Russia has been divided into 92 regions with 92 Economic Councils to manage the industrial establishments of their respective areas, with restricted rights of local planning and of local inter-industrial and inter-factory transactions.

This is not the place to evaluate the economic prospects of the new economic arrangement, except, perhaps, to note that in general, in capitalist economy, too, where industrial and technological rationalization is not unknown, observers tend to abstract their evaluations from what turns out to be decisive in the long run, the influence of the social relations which develop out of the structural changes, and the political consequences that follow. But it is in place to point out that the "horizontal" reorganization of industry, the "decentralization," will not result in greater power for the local bureaucracy and a corresponding "withering away" of the omnipotence of the central state power. This is now the claim of over-enthusiastic observers who expect the early flowering of socialist democracy in Russia as an organic outgrowth of a benevolent bureaucracy. But it is the contrary that is indicated. Despotism and decentralization are not mutually exclusive. On the contrary, atomization is often the essential precondition for the preservation of despotism. It is worth noting a relevant passage in the well-known official Russian government organ, *Economic Problems* (April, 1957): "It is obvious that the division of the territory not only does not diminish the centralization of the economy by the state throughout the country as a whole, but on the contrary, requires its reinforcement. The economic role of the state is not only not relaxed under present conditions [the conditions created by the establishment of the 92 regional Economic Councils.—M. S.], but acquires a greater reality, becomes more effective." So that, apart from the objective conditions that dictate the "horizontal reform" of the economy, the change has the effect of *dispersing* the bureaucracy, of reducing its possibilities for cohesion and mutual contact to a local level, and of concentrating the power to make unobstructed decisions on the most vital and fundamental questions in the hands of the uppermost ranks of the centralized state bureaucracy.

WHAT IS LEFT? THE ARMY, or to be precise, the army apparatus, the officer corps. Khrushchev may inveigh against bureaucrats twice as much as he does in order to elicit the sympathy of the masses. But he needs something stronger than their sympathy to assure the continued domination of the regime over them. The army ma-

chine is stronger. Its rise is *entirely* picture of the waste, inefficiency and downright parasitism spawned by bureaucratic collectivism, the main respect in which it has caught up with, if it has not outstripped, the vices of capitalism. In addition, the vertical super-centralization of industry has multiplied the waste and inefficiency of the economy in grotesque ways. In a situation where the still enormous bureaucracy must be maintained, new in the history of the Stalinist regime, and it constitutes an important new element of the latest stage in the crisis of the regime.

Throughout Stalin's career, he employed political means against his opponents and to solve political problems; he employed bureaucratic means of all sorts toward the same ends; from 1927 onward, he supplemented these increasingly with the employment of the G.P.U. But the military machine was kept apart. Even when it was decimated in the Tukhachevsky purge, it did not lift a finger to intervene in the situation. Politically, it was inert, except to the extent that the party bureaucracy kept it under rigorous surveillance and control through political commissars and G.P.U. spies. There is little doubt that the officer corps, in its own way, shared the growing general apprehensions and discontent over Stalin's policies and despotism, and that is certainly all that Tukhachevsky and his colleagues were guilty of. But so long as the party bureaucracy was intact and capable of ruling the country and maintaining order, the officer corps remained in its own field and obeyed orders. Even at the end of the war, after the army, and with it its leadership, had acquired a tremendous moral prestige among the people, Stalin was able to keep it in its allotted place and even to banish to the provinces the most popular of the Marshals, Zhukov (under "socialism" there are, of course, Marshals).

Since Stalin's death, a radical change has been in process. There is a crisis of the regime—the rulers can no longer rule in the old way, the ruled do not want to be ruled in the old way. The bureaucracy is no longer intact, no longer solid, no longer self-confident, and order is in jeopardy. The military machine now has to play, dares to play, and is even called to play an increasingly active and direct political role.

Immediately after Stalin's death, Zhukov was brought back to Moscow from his banishment to resume leadership of the army, although still under the civilian control of the minister of defense, "Marshal" Bulganin (Bulganin is as much a military man as Zhukov is a party man). A few months later the Beria crisis supervened. The reports then current that Zhukov mobilized regular army troops to invest Moscow in order to prevent a possible *coup d'etat* by Beria at the head of his G.P.U. divisions, ring with verisimilitude. In any case, Beria was executed after a secret trial presided over by Marshal Koniev, in whose person the officer corps took revenge upon its rival and tormentor, the G.P.U. From that moment on, the exceptional power and prerogatives of the G.P.U. were drastically reduced. Less than two years later, in the Malenkov crisis, Bulganin replaced Stalin's heir, and his own position as war minister was given to Zhukov. It was *the first time,* under Lenin or under Stalin, that this post (or for that matter any other post of cabinet rank) was given to a military man, or to anyone but a party leader. However, it was still only a government post, whereas the real governing body of the country is the Political Bureau

or as it is now called the Presidium. At the 20th Congress, the advance of the new element in the situation was further and more clearly manifested. The more violently Khrushchev denigrated Stalin, the more lyrically did he sing the praises of the army chiefs, of Zhukov in particular. He ridiculed and riddled Stalin's reputation as a military strategist, laughed at him because he "planned operations on a globe," cited case after case of his "nervousness and hysteria" during the war, and topped it all by claiming that Stalin's orders caused numerous defeats at the hands of the Germans, untold and unnecessary deaths of troops, and all but utter disaster in the war. For the military, he had only the most lavish praise. Everything went calamitously in the first period of the war "until our generals, on whose shoulders rested the whole weight of conducting the war, succeeded in changing the situation." To Stalin's contemptuous remarks about Zhukov, Khrushchev reported in 1956 that he had answered stoutly: "I have known Zhukov for a long time; he is a good general and a good military man." At the Congress Zhukov was elected an alternate member of the party Presidium, again an act without precedent in the history of the Stalinist regime, let alone of Lenin's.

Early in 1957, the "anti-party faction" tried its *coup* against Khrushchev, and in his absence, in the meeting of the Presidium. Only Mikoyan stood by Khrushchev; Bulganin wavered. Krushchev returned precipitately to Moscow; so did Zhukov. All the unofficial newspaper reports agree, and it should be obvious that the account was deliberately "leaked" from an authoritative source, that it was Zhukov who turned the momentary Presidium majority into a minority with the ominous warning that the army stood by Khrushchev. It is true that Khrushchev called an emergency meeting of the Central Committee to call the Presidium to account. By this act, he violated a fundamental precept of Stalinist rule which had always been not to appeal to a lower body against the decision of a higher one, and no body is higher in the bureaucratic hierarchy than the Presidium. In the unwritten rules of the totalitarian hierarchy, this is an unprecedented, inadmissible and dangerous procedure, which can lead to appealing to a party congress against the Central Committee and God alone knows how much further from there. But Khrushchev was able to venture on this procedure not so much because he was sure that the wider group of the bureaucracy had confidence in him, but because of the crucial and decisive support he had from Zhukov as the authentic representative of the officer corps. He was saved not by the party bureaucracy but by the military. In return, Zhukov was elevated by the Central Committee from alternate member to full member of the Presidium. It has never happened before. For the first time the military occupy not merely decorative positions at Congresses or in government posts, but a full position in the real ruling body of the party and the country as a whole.

Is the road now opening up to a Bonapartist dictatorship of the classical military type? It is. It does not follow that the road will be travelled to the end, but it has opened up. The officer corps, too, wants order and stability in the country. Professional soldiers, officers in particular, are notorious for their contempt of "politicians," that is, of the civilian authorities and even of the civilian population as a whole. When all goes well "at home," the contempt is in check;

when there is trouble, difficulty, incompetence and bungling in the civilian government, the contempt becomes more active, outspoken and even defiant; and when the social order itself seems imperilled without anyone being able to stabilize it, the contempt is idealized into the call they feel to intervene to save society with a strong and firm hand.

The party apparatus is not in a position to end the crisis of the regime by stabilizing it. It does not have a consolidated leadership or a clearly-set policy, it has lost heavily in cohesion, and even more heavily in prestige among the people. Can the army apparatus substitute for it? Unlike the party bureaucracy, the officer corps unquestionably enjoys immense popularity, not only because of its successful defense of the country in the war but also because it is not regarded as sharing in complicity and responsibility for the Stalin regime. Indeed, it bears the aura of heroically silent victims and even martyrs of Stalinism, as well as the laurels of heros in the war victory. The huge popular demonstration reported for Zhukov in Leningrad after the June Plenum bears the marks of authentic spontaneity, in contrast to the dreary, manufactured, enforced "ovations" exacted from the people by the bureaucracy. The military has that advantage, and Khrushchev's exceptional efforts to associate himself with it shows that it is not a trifle. On the other hand, however, that the military has a greater cohesiveness than the disoriented party machine, a greater capacity for decisive political action and the resolve to take the risks of assuming power or trying to—and they would certainly prove to be great risks—is still only a hypothesis, a strongly-indicated hypothesis without which any analysis would be faulty, but still only a hypothesis. It has not yet given sufficient proof in action of the necessary qualities. It cannot be equated, for example, with the Prussian Junkers, who had a long and practiced tradition not only of military but also of political leadership and on top of that a long and strong class bond. The Russian army corps is appearing on the political scene for the first time. This is a phenomenon of first-rate importance, but as yet its importance is more symptomatic than effective. In its first appearance, it is likely to proceed with the greatest caution, feeling its way gradually and resorting only to minor tests of strenghth and acceptability — *unless* the crisis suddenly sharpens and compels it, in the absence of any other force for "law and order" to make precipitate decisions.

THE COMPLEXITY and fluidity of the situation permits of no certain answer for the next period. To forestall the inevitable, the regime, while it is wrestling with the crisis, may alleviate it by more and more concessions to the masses. To master the bureaucracy, Khrushchev (this one or another one) may invoke the prestige and power of the military as the only means of cowing the party apparatus, an initial indication of which was given by the June crisis. The officer corps may move to the seizure of political power as the savior of the country as a whole and the benevolent protector of the people from the rule and vices of the quarrelsome and incompetent "politicians"; or it may smash the party bureaucracy and try to administer the economy of the country through the medium of a subordinated industrial bureaucracy. These are all real possibilities, and unexpected combinations are not excluded. But anything between or outside of the re-consolidation of the dictatorship over the masses in the old form or in a new one, and the smashing of the dictatorship by a revolutionary people, that is not a real possibility.

And the people, the Russian workers and peasants—and students? Is it really possible for them to undertake a revolution? After the series of demonstrations, strikes, local uprisings and in one case a national revolution that have marked the post-Stalin period in East Germany, Czechoslovakia, Poland and Hungary, not to mention isolated outbreaks in Russia itself, the skepticism implied in the question should at least be modified. It is not a matter of whether or not the Russian masses want a revolution. They did not want one in 1916 or even in the first month of 1917. It is a question of what they are being driven to in order to solve the crisis of the regime and establish their own law and their own order. The fact that the uprisings against Stalinism started at the ends of the new Russian empire should not disorient the conclusions about the possibilities of an uprising in Russia. Because a decaying organism so often shows the first manifestations of weakness and even paralysis at its extremities does not warrant the diagnosis that the heart is therefore sound. It is certain that the Russian regime itself does not have confidence in such a diagnosis. It is not at all excluded that one of the considerations of the bureaucrats in bringing or allowing the army into such unprecedented prominence and association with the regime is to ward off a revolutionary intervention from below which they take with far greater seriousness than do the gullible visitors from abroad. The Russian people is a revolutionary people with living revolutionary traditions and very recent revolutionary examples on their borders to remind them of these traditions. The working class in particular is a new, vastly more numerous and compact, more self-confident and more demanding mass than any working class known in Stalin's days. So are the peasants and the students, each in their own way. It was Chesterton who is supposed to have said long ago: "We don't know what the British working classes think because they haven't spoken yet." Neither have the Russian working classes. Not yet. When they do, they will speak with the voice of the revolution whose aim it is, in the forgotten but ever-timely words of Marx, to establish democracy.

Max Shachtman

Bureaucratic Collectivism: Two Eras

The Limitations of Reform in Post-Stalin Russia

The following article was written by Comrade Shachtman shortly after Stalin's death in 1953, as an introduction to a second edition of his debate with Earl Browder in 1950 published in pamphlet form. Although written four years ago, it is nonetheless excellent as a concise analysis of bureaucratic collectivism and interesting for its accurate predictions of concessions—and their limitations—that would be made by the post-Stalin Kremlin bureaucracy.—J. F.

The publishers, in their notification that a second edition of this booklet is being prepared, have invited me to write a foreword.

The theme of our debate can be even more clearly considered in the light of the many important events that have occurred since it took place. Outstanding among them is unquestionably the death of Stalin. It marks the point of separation between two eras in the evolution of Stalinism.

Both eras have, and will have, so much in common that a quick glance can easily overlook the difference between them. Yet the difference between the two is most important. One was broadly the era of the rise to power and the consolidation of the Stalinist regime; the other will be the era of crises, decomposition and death.

The difference lies least of all in the fact that the unique personal qualities of Stalin are no longer in operation; it lies in the nature of the regime and above all of the conditions in which it rises and falls.

The distinctive birthmark of the Stalinist bureaucracy in Russia is this: it made its first appearance when the revolutionary working class of that country was making its last appearance. Indeed, it is no exaggeration to say that Stalinism could begin its rise to power only because there no longer existed a proletariat in the classic sense of the term. In the absence, further, of the relieving revolution in the advanced countries, the resistance offered by the Trotskyist and other oppositions, however heroic, justified and necessary it was, was doomed to succumb to the relentless drive of the new bureaucracy.

This bureaucracy was not, however, a neutral reflector of the stagnation and distortion of the class or the remnants of the class that had led the great Russian revolution. It became an active and effective agency for maintaining the working classes, including the new one it was compelled to bring into existence, in a state of confusion, demoralization and paralysis. Under no other condition could it have consolidated its position as the new ruling class in Russia and completed the work of expropriating the workers of all political power. In a society where the state owns all the means of production and distribution, those who are in absolute control of the political power are thereby and therewith likewise in absolute control of all economic and social, that is, all class power. This should be perfectly clear to all minds save those insulated by a dense coating of fuzz.

We are inclined to forget that the new Stalinist bureaucracy had a long and arduous time in reaching power even though the socialist resistance to it came only from a small but silent and passive working class and a much tinier minority of intransigent revolutionists. It took years of unremitting struggle, of crude advances and frightened retreats, before it could look down upon a population subjected at last to totalitarian disfranchisement, and during those years its own fate quivered more than once on the edge of the knife.

We are inclined to ignore that in order to subject this population and keep it subjected, the bureaucracy had to transform itself and its own form of rule. The mass even when under despotic political leash, is a permanent nightmare to the bureaucracy. The same mass, politically unleashed, would end the bureaucracy's nightmare only by ending the bureaucracy itself. To deprive the working mass of all the means by which it can assert itself politically by word and deed, is therefore an absolute precondition for the total rule of the bureaucracy.

But it is only one of the essential preconditions for this rule. The other requires that the bureaucracy deprive itself of all the means by which any one part of it can, in the course of an internal disagreement, appeal to the mass to intervene for it against any other part of it, the bureaucracy. To submit such a disagreement to the arbitrament of the enchained mass would be even more dangerus than to submit a theological disputation in the College of Cardinals to the decision of scientists.

A democratic vote in the ranks of the ruling bureaucracy cannot be expected to settle a given dispute, either. The rule of the bureaucracy became possible only because it usurped the democratic rights of the vast majority; indeed, its existence is the organized and successful rebellion of the oppressing minority against the oppressed majority. Why then should any minority within the bureaucracy automatically resign itself to the voting victory of a majority?

Under such conditions, a powerful tendency makes its way and is eventually realized, namely to elevate out of the ranks of the bureaucracy itself a supreme arbiter who is granted unlimited political power.

If it is borne in mind that complete political power in the Russian state is equal to complete power in all fields of life, it is plain that the unlimited power of the supreme arbiter becomes greater than that enjoyed by any ruler of any land at any time in history. Corresponding to such unprecedented power, and in order to give it justification, the supreme arbiter is surrounded with the massively cultivated myth of his unparalleled intellectual and spiritual capacities, in most of which he soon rivals the better known of the world's deities and in all of which he easily surpasses all mortals. It is in the course of the unfoldment of this inexorable process that Stalin, renegade from socialism but by far the ablest incarnator of the bureaucratic counterrevolution, was transformed first into the Greatest Genius of Our Time and then into the Greatest Genius of All Time.

But above all things, he was the omnipitent ruler of the rulers as well as of the ruled.

That too took more than a day and more than a year. It took more than a generation—a good three dacades of bitter struggle, including struggle in the bureaucracy itself. Large sections of the bureaucracy resisted the working out of the process and in the course of this resistance it more than once imperiled the very existence of its own regime. But it found that it could not reverse the process; it could

not escape it; paradoxically enough, it owed its very position of power to the unhampered unfolding of the process. For it turned out that the only way it could assure its rule over the masses was to abandon rule over itself. It had to accord supreme power to the supreme arbiter.

The apparent unshakability of the political structure thus created for a long time paralyzed the will not only of a legion of the opponents of Stalinism but of no smaller a legion of its supporters. The result was such a large-scale flight from the struggle for socialism as had not been known in the worst depressions of the modern proletarian movement. The first group looked upon Stalinism as the insurmountable obstacle on the road to socialism; the other regarded it as the only practical, even if unattractive vehicle that could ever traverse the road.

In actuality, the structure was exceedingly fragile. Stalin's death is laying bare this truth about the Stalinist regime. The bureaucracy has, as if at one stroke, been hurled back into a position of the gravest peril: it faces the danger of self-rule.

Again, as in the first beginnings of its rise, it has the problem of depriving itself of the normal means of self-rule as the only way of assuring itself that it can rule over the masses to any degree at all, in any way at all. Only, this time the process of creating and elevating out of its ranks a supreme arbiter begins under conditions that makes its unfoldment a hundred times more difficult than it was thirty years ago.

First of all and most of all, the bureaucracy stands before a different working class in Russia. It created this class as a by-product in order to expand, consolidate and protect its own power. The new Russian working class is the most formidable the country has ever known. It is not only far more numerous than ever before but it represents a far more important social force than any of its forebears.

The hatred of the bureaucracy which this working class feels is unlimited; it cannot be overrated. Nobody knows this better than the bureaucracy itself. It remembers only too vividly the hatred of the Stalinist despotism which was displayed by the people in general and by those of the super-subjected nations (like the Ukraine) during the Second World War. The hatred was of such extraordinary violence that no other country could match it. It went to such lengths that the enemy, the German Nazis, could benefit from it in the outright military support on a scale that no other people gave it and which only the incredible outrages and brute stupidity of the Nazis themselves could transform again into reluctant cooperation with the bureaucracy.

In the second place, the bureaucracy faces a new situation in the vast new empire which it conquered in the course of the war and afterward.

In the countries dominated by the Kremlin, the Russian regime faces a three-fold threat. One is from the workers who hate the regime as only the working class can hate a class that exploits it with such inhuman cruelty. The other is from these same workers and all other toilers in their capacity as sons and daughters of the nation that feels the yoke of a foreign oppressor who has stolen their national independence. The third is from the native Stalinist bureaucracies of the satellites who dream of nothing so much as their freedom to tyrannize over their own nation without having the main fruits of their rule taken from them by their patrons of the Kremlin.

The Hitlerites discovered during the Second World War that the combination of class exploitation and national oppression generates a popular resistance of irrepressible explosive power. The Stalinists are discovering the same thing in the foreign lands they rule today. The very expansion of Stalinism has brought it face to face with the greatest menace not only to its growth but to its very existence.

It is astonishing, after all, how little each new exploiting class learns from the disasters of its forerunners. The Stalinist overlords cannot get it into their heads that this is the epoch of the destruction of all the old empires; that the old imperialist rule faces the most active and conscious resistance of hundreds of millions who have risen from a historic slumber; and that the idea of replacing the old empires with the new, even if in the guise of a "liberation of the peoples" by Stalinism, is an anachronistic absurdity.

BOTH THE MASSES AND THE bureaucracy understand, each in its own way, the new situation created by the death of Stalin. The mass senses the role that Stalin played in maintaining an iron-clad front of the bureaucracy which the people could not think of breaching. It senses that the now automatically divided, mutually suspicious and antagonistic sectors of the bureaucracy need time, a good deal of time, before they can again face the population like a (more or less) self-confident and a (more or less) single-headed and single-armed force.

The problem of the bureaucracy is to determine which sector will impose its specific interests on the ruling machine as a whole, and which of the many equally ambitious and equally intolerant candidates for the supreme arbitership will succeed in suppressing and eliminating all the other candidates. Both sides in the revived class struggle in Russia—the rulers as well as the ruled—know that right now the most precious factor of all is at stake: time.

All the concessions made so precipitously and desperately by the new regime have one objective: to gain time, to throw dust in the opening eyes of the people, to sow illusion and confound confusion in order to gain more and more time. The silent but unrelenting and ubiquitous pressure of the Russian masses has already extracted from the bureaucracy all sorts of concessions, all of them of far less substance than appears on the surface, yet all of them revealing far more about the reactionary, oppressive and precarious nature of the regime than ever before in its history. (The release of the condemned Moscow doctors, and the acknowledgment that their "voluntary confessions" were fantastic falsehoods concocted and imposed by the police, tells us everything we ever needed to know about the "purges" and "confessions" of the past, that is about the frame-ups and mass murders perpetrated by the regime against its opponents. What a self-revelation by this "socialist" regime!)

Outside of Russia, however, the pressure is no longer silent. The veritable unarmed uprising of the East Berlin proletariat against the rule of Stalinism is a landmark of history, heralding the beginning of the end of the great iniquity. Its spread to cities outside of Berlin, and countries outside of Germany, only underlines the fact that the uprising was neither an isolated nor accidental phenomenon. It is a product and a producer of the crisis of the regime. The regime needs time and more time and still more time; the masses, with increasing consciousness, are determined that it should get less time and still less time in which to reorganize and reconstitute itself over their backs.

Who will prevail? For our part, we who never had any doubt of the final outcome, have, if anything, less reason than ever to feel doubt today. The days—or for the more literal-minded, the years—of Stalinism are numbered. Even though capitalist imperialism and capitalist reaction, organized and led by Washington, would seem to be doing everything in their power to prolong the rule of Stalinism, its doom is sealed—and with it is doomed world capitalism as well.

We do not for a moment entertain the preposterous notion, now so sedulously disseminated by ignoramuses and all sorts of volunteer as well as professional apologists for Stalinism, that somehow, sometime, the bureaucracy will organically and peaceable transmogrify itself into the democratic servant of an all-powerful people. Not for a moment! It will have to be overturned, crushed and extirpated by the revolutionary democratic upheaval which genuinely establishes the political and economic supremacy of the masses.

Before that happens, the bureaucracy, in Russia as well as in the satellite states, will give and will have to give more than one concession to appease the growing fury of the people, concessions that are real and valuable as well as the trivial kind of concessions it has granted up to now. But one concession it will never grant: the power to determine by itself whether or not to grant concessions, whether to grant one and not another, the power—in a word—to rule, exploit and oppress the people.

We shall yet see with our own eyes the frenzied savagery and bloodthirstiness with which the bureaucracy will fight to keep this power from being wrested by the people. And yet, the very concessions it is obliged to grant will only increase the appetite of the people, will only fortify their determination to wrest all power from the totalitarian despots and enhance their confidence that it can be done.

And when it is done, the masses will truly come into their own. Progress can triumph over the Stalinist reaction not in the name of capitalism, but only in the name of socialist freedom, and with its real substance. The idea that Stalinist states are "socialist communities" or are socialist in any sense at all, is grotesque. But the idea that the Stalinist tyrannies will be transformed into socialist regimes by the revolutionary assaults of the newly rising proletariat—that will materialize, it is already materializing, into the outstanding political phenomenon of the whole era we are now entering.

Max Shachtman

Unions, Racketeers and Senators

Background, Motives and Effects of Labor Hearings

There has been no sudden eruption of racketeering in the labor movement. The tale, dripping with crime, deceit and betrayal, and rehearsed at the Senate hearing was known in outline and sometimes in detail for a long time. It reaches back many years in a long uninterrupted line, sometimes new names, less often new methods. Yet, the discovery of what everyone knew becomes the occasion for the first big national, public investigation of unions; the first attempt at an "expose" of organized labor.

Every period in our country's recent history has had its own celebrated investigations, each corresponding to some strong current of public opinion: investigations of monopoly, recording widespread resentment against domination of economic life by big business; of munitions makers, reflecting disillusionment with the first World War and a distrust of the pious slogans that were used to justify it; of violence against labor and the denial of the right to organize, revealing sympathy with labor's underdog struggle against a ruthless enemy; and most recently, of Communism, flowing from a hysterical fear of Russian power and a feeling of utter helplessness before its social appeal. And now, the Senate labor hearings.

There is no doubt that the revelations of widespread corruption provided a setback to unionism; every union reports the same thing: resistance to organization has risen; it is almost impossible to join new shops. Yet, in the end the union movement will regain all that was lost, and more. The 1929 crisis and with it the investigations of the sordid machinations of big business finally destroyed the dream of a "business government" and implanted in the American people a permanent distrust not of capitalism as a system but of the capitalists as a governing class. Business man's rule was repudiated. But there can be no corresponding repudiation of unionism now. For unionism today enjoys the fierce loyalty of millions. Union consciousness is deep and ineradicable, instilled in America's working class after 25 years of organization and strikes. In the end it will be reinforced by getting rid of crooks and grafters—something that has just begun.

But is is the very strength and influence of unions which now brings them under public scrutiny. With the ability to affect the lives of the whole population comes a new responsibility: to use this power to further peace, democracy, rising living standards for all. Is labor using its mighty power for good or for evil? That is the question that arises in the minds of all. One answer, or at least the shadowy outlines of a mood, can be summarized this way:

"Big capital has its evils and they had to be curbed. Now Big Labor has its evils and we must curb them too." Such is the mood which makes the hearings possible, a mood which ranges all the way from outright hostility to labor, to resentment and misgivings, down to friendly criticism from its friends. Mixed together are opposition to the legitimate labor activities by its enemies, pique at labor's ability to shut down industry, fear that high wages have something

to do with prices, resentment of the unions political power, suspicion of its "communistic" purpose, hostility to closed shops. It is not a question of the justice or validity of any of these reactions; the fact is that they exist.

Joseph Loftus, comments in the *New York Times,* "Labor's decline in the public esteem is traceable to more than criminal acts. There are contributing factors, from unethical (though legal) practices to bad manners; a disregard of the fact that the labor movement received public support as a force for social justice not as a business. This view happens to be held quite widely among the friends of labor, even those on the inside."

He goes on to quote *The Practice of Unionism* a recent book by Jack Barbash, staff member of the AFL-CIO Industrial Union Department who says, "I find it more difficult to defend what may well be an inevitable outcome of 'bigness'—a bigness perhaps made necessary to cope with the bigness of the problems. I miss most of all the kind of personal humility—a consciousness of doing God's work, as it were—on the part of many union leaders, that, for me, is a necessary quality of human movement, whether it is a labor movement or any other kind." *The Carpenter* paraphrases a speech by Andy Beimiller, AFL-CIO legislative representative:

> Labor is no longer the underdog. The day when we could automatically expect some sympathy from liberal jurists or politicians or public figures is long since gone. The general public no longer sees those of us who work in the labor movement as champions of the oppressed and exploited. The union members of today enjoy working conditions as good or better than most white collar workers and even some professional people. Under the circumstances, the climate of sympathy for labor that existed even 15 years ago is gone. What we win from now on we must win by merit and merit alone. The sooner we face that fact, the better.

Here then is the liberal-laborite calling labor to account. What he does in his way, millions do in theirs. In politics, the unions come forward as a force that speaks for social justice but acts with prudent expediency, as it ties in with suspect elements. In civil rights they call for equality but act with gingerly caution. Despite all defects, however, it is plain that their motives, at least, are the best. But in the sphere of racketeering, their arrant neglect has been especially damaging and it is for this that they are first called before the bar of public opinion.

THOSE WHO PRESSED MOST insistently for the investigations were the extreme right-wing elements who want to undermine the prestige of the union movement at the very least and at best, to curb its political and social rights. Unionism is basically a progressive, democratic social force; in their distorting mirrors, the rock-ribbed conservatives see it as nothing short of subversive, an unpredictable assemblage of rabble that must be quelled and controlled. For them, the look at racketeering is merely a convenient start . . . but not as a dirty maneuver or dishonest trick. All unionism, to them, has the aspects of a "racket" which merely takes on different forms, some legal and some illegal. In every strike, in every big wage boost they see the workings of "labor monopoly" forcing its will upon helpless employers. Morally, it is hardly more legitimate in their eyes for labor to "extort" higher pay from their employers than it is for a thug to extort "protection" money from his victim. In fact, they would admit that in some ways the thug is less dangerous to them; he only threatens an individual while the honest labor leader, a dangerous radical, threatens our whole way of life. Even Senator Ives of New York, a "modern" Republican, declared that the way to deal with irresponsible labor leaders would be to put unions under the anti-trust law . . . echoing the opinions of his fellow Committee member Mundt who is a not-so-modern Republican.

But it would be misleading to interpret the hearings simply as the product of a plot by reactionaries to knife labor. After all, the crude rantings of political scissorbills are no more of a novelty than the labor rackets they choose to discover. At other times, they might have been laughed to death; at least, ignored; or denounced in chorus by liberals, laborites and plain realistic politicians with a feel for what is expedient. If they can have their way now, at least to the extent of getting their show on the road, it is because everyone senses somehow that the issues raised cannot be swept under the rug; that public opinion, that elusive guide to aspiring politicians, is ready for a thorough airing of the inner life of union leadership.

It is upon this background that the unions confront the Senate hearings. The motives of the bourgeois right-wing conservatives are transparent enough: to prepare public opinion for restraints on unionism. Knowing that, however, what are the unions to do? They might denounce the committee as anti-labor and refuse to appear before it. That might have sufficed when the labor movement appeared weak, on the defensive, and fighting for elementary rights; then, it might have aroused sympathy by a refusal to submit to investigation. Perhaps. But now the labor movement is powerful; it proposes not merely to defend the living standards of its membership but claims the right to influence all social policies, domestic and international. Such a force cannot claim exemption from public scrutiny and to do so would play into the hands of those who are in ambush against labor. To the Committee, the official labor movement has, in effect, replied: if you uncover criminal activities or even unethical practices within the labor movement we will act against them; but we warn against trying to smear labor and we will fight all laws against our legitimate rights. With this in mind, Reuther has challenged the Committee to call representatives of the UAW before it, but so far in vain.

There are some who argue that Dave Beck and his similars who refuse to testify, pleading the Fifth Amendment, are standing up to the witchhunt against labor. From this curious premise, it follows that union militants should busy themselves with a public campaign to defend Beck against his Senate inquisitors: meanwhile, they reserve some of their most thunderous blasts of reverberating wind against Reuther and Meany for "capitulating" to the employers by acting against Beck! This is a novel twist. For decades, union progressives have demanded action by the labor movement against crooks and have been withering in their criticism of the complacent labor officials who passively tolerated the rackets. At last, with labor unity it has become possible to push for a real campaign to clean out the grafters. At this juncture, it is suggested, we must rise to defend Beck's right to conceal his sordid record. It is the incredible conclusion of a contorted policy.

But what of the Fifth Amendment? In the *Daily Worker* Sept 8, George Morris writes, "progressives would far sooner accept the position of the

Teamsters on the Fifth Amendment than Reuther's although not overlooking the fact the former's leaders use the Fifth to conceal corruption." He appears to draw a parallel between the use of the Fifth by those charged with "communism" and by those who refuse to answer charges of racketeering. But it is the difference, not the similarity, which is decisive. The communist or former communist appeals to the Fifth for protection against persecution and prosecution, against jailing or blacklisting for his political opinions and activities. He truly faces a witchhunt. But the racketeer, not in theory but in plain simple fact, uses the Constitution in general and the Fifth Amendment in particular to ward off legal punishment for ordinary crime. That is his right; it is necessary to protect that right in order to protect innocent men. That is one thing. It is quite another to portray him as the innocent victim of a witchhunt. Beck uses the Fifth Amendment to dodge an investigation of his unusual practices as union president. Shall the labor movement itself demand an accounting from him or shall it demand that the Senate Committee cease its "persecution" of him. That is what the whole argument boils down to.

It has been widely stated that AFL-CIO policy demands the automatic removal of any union official who resorts to the Fifth Amendment. But this is simply not so. By now the policy is clear: the right to take the Fifth is recognized; but any union official charged with personal corruption who refuses to testify on the basis of the Fifth Amendment must explain his action to his union. The union must investigate *why* he took the Fifth. If he did so for legitimate reasons, it takes no action; if, however, it concludes that he did so merely to cover up for crimes, he must be removed. It is a policy that is designed to protect the union against the racketeer as a union official while conceding his right to take the Fifth as an individual.

We are dealing not with labor officials who are being hounded for their defense of the workingman but with grafters who use the labor movement as a base of operations for private rackets. Let that fact be clear to all.

RACKETEERING IS NOT SPREADING inside the union movement. The clatter and clamor comes from the crash of the racket principalities. It will take a long time to eradicate them completely. But they are on the way out.

One reason why the Senate Committee can proceed with ease against crooks in the labor officialdom is because they had already been isolated in the labor movement. The Hoffas, and their lesser known imitators, still have influential, if silent, allies but they can no longer find refuge behind the banner of legitimate unionism. Yesterday, they might count upon the official AFL speaking up on their behalf but today they stand alone. That was one of the first achievements of labor unity. In the September issue of *The International Teamster* Dave Beck appeals to the spirit of Samuel Gompers. "In effect, Samuel Gompers was enunciating at El Paso a doctrine of freedom for the individual union member. He was telling that convention that democracy must reign in the labor movement to make it effective; that autonomy and home rule are the cornerstones of its strength and the hallmark of its endurability." Not long ago, Beck's appeal to "autonomy" would have won him nods of sympathy. But no one listens any more.

The CIO was launched in the struggle against grafters, thugs, racketeers, corruptionists, bosses' agents and plain bureaucrats and had to triumph over them. In many ways, the idealism and political consciousness of the CIO declined as its influence rose and its scope widened to include new millions. But one achievement was permanent. It brought into existence a new socially conscious type of unionism free of corruption and so it remained. But once the boundaries of its domain were staked in its early victories, it remained constrained within its borders. The AFL crafts remained dominant in their own spheres and grew more so as the labor movement as a whole rose. Where rackets were entrenched they remained, spreading into some of the more powerful AFL unions; the independent CIO was unable to carry the fight into the old established unions and was impotent before entrenched rackets within them.

The AFL remained basically united in its battle to contain the CIO. Except for the Ladies Garment Workers Union, the racket-ridden outfits were left in peace by the AFL majority. In fact, in the struggle against the radical CIO, racketeers infiltrated the AFL. In the ILA, Joe Ryan built a machine of thugs under the cover of defending the AFL against "Communism." On the West Coast, the Beck machine became respectable in the fight against Harry Bridges. In the Teamsters Union, the entry of thugs was facilitated by the prosecutions of Trotskyist Teamster leaders in Minneapolis under the Smith Act: with the help of the government, the Midwest teamsters were turned over to the mercies of a rotten machine which was installed firmly in power. When Minneapolis teamsters tried to join the CIO in an effort to save union democracy, they were blocked, again by government intervention. The rise of racketeering in labor undoubtedly has its deep sociological causes and explanations, like everything else. Concretely, however, it is linked to the fight of the right wing in the labor movement against progressives and radicals.

But the same historic factors that in one burst had created the CIO slowly made their impact on the AFL. As unionism expanded it was thrust into politics. Its arena was no longer some out of the way crossroads but the stage of national life. During the war, laws were proposed, some passed, to curb union freedom; after the war, unions fought to solidify the gains of the past decade. But big business campaigned to illegalize some traditional union practices winning their greatest success in the Taft-Hartley Law. The AFL had to be transformed. The propaganda of anti-unionism was feeding upon its defects. It was easy enough to make the plunge into national politics by endorisng Adlai Stevenson. But did the Federation come into court with clean hands? Millions of Negroes knew that it tolerated Jim Crow; millions knew that it tolerated racketeers. Something had to be done. But little was possible given a balance of power where racketeers controlled big unions and could count on the moral aid of conservatives against interference in their corrupt affairs.

It was the impulse for change inside the AFL which made unity with the CIO possible. Merger was a victory for the CIO; we see it now far more clearly than a year ago. In one year, the powerful Teamsters Union which had treated its fellow AFL affiliates with scorn, which raided and broke strikes with utter contempt for labor opinion . . . this officialdom was reduced instantly, at the merger convention, to a position of cautious defense. With unity the balance of power shift-

ed; the racketeer elements were reduced to a hopelessly minority position. The stage was set to move against them.

Before merger, Meany quizzed United Textile Workers leaders on corrupt practices. It came to nothing and he was ignored. Later, he succeeded in expelling the racket-ridden International Longshoremen's Association but couldn't give it the *coup de grace*. The ILA, he discovered, was aided secretly and publicly by powerful forces inside the AFL, above all by New York State AFL leaders and Teamster local officials. (And in the end by John L. Lewis and Joe Curran of the National Maritime Union.) Ironically, it was Dave Beck, none other, as a member of the top AFL longshore committee, who was assigned to help clean up the New York waterfront for the AFL. That was just a few years ago but it seems longer.

However, it came too late; it was too slow. Even now, with everything that is being done by the Executive Council it is belated.

The official leadership deserves rebuke, *not* because it refuses to defend crooks at the hearings; not because it demands an accounting by those who refuse to answer questions about corruption; not because it uses every public revelation as a club to smash the rackets; not because of what it is trying to do now; but for what it has not done and for what it refuses to do even now.

The top leadership employs the slow, tedious official action from above to clear labor's good name. That is in order. But it is not enough. It is not enough to expel the Teamsters' union —it is necessary to rescue more than a million Teamster unionists from the control of the crooked leaders. And that cannot be done so easily, if at all, merely from above.

How have racketeers managed to hold on? A favorite explanation of those who are cynical about the capacities of union members is that the ranks take no interest in decent unionism so long as their ordinary human and animal needs are satisfied. But in every racket-ridden union, men have been fired, terrorized, expelled, killed for fighting against crooked union dictators. Usually, they and their rank and file supporters were alone; ignored, like Peter Panto, ILA rank and file leader whose scarred body was dug out of a New Jersey ditch—no big campaign, no fanfare, no inner union investigations. To fight the rackets from below, when they may be tied in with government officials or police, without whose collusion they could not continue, requires more than good citizenship. It calls for real personal courage; for facing death to self and loved ones. The CIO found thousands with such courage; everywhere and always there are others like them. But men are not heroes without inspiration. To take such risks they must feel deeply that it is really worthwhile; that they are not alone; that their actions are respected and spurred on by those whom they in turn respect. But that is what they do not find.

Our union movement, our labor leadership, since the CIO, have never called upon the ranks to rise, never given moral aid or encouragement to them, never urged ordinary unionists to organize inside their own unions against bureaucratic officials; never defended them against terror and expulsions. Never. Even when the CIO expelled the CP-controlled unions, Phil Murray would not call upon the ranks of these unions to organize against their leaders. No. Quite the opposite. The mood, the code has been that there is something illicit in any movement of the ranks against their leaders. When Reuther, even as president of the UAW, led a rank and file struggle against the majority of his Executive Board he had to do it against the opposition of Phil Murray.

It is this lack of a democratic spirit; this essentially bureaucratic approach that is indubitably the worst single feature of American unionism and it is this that has permitted racketeering to rise. The labor movement is paying for it today in a giant public spectacle.

But so far this is only one side of the story. The unions are on the defensive. Yet, the racket exposures will create a vexing problem for those who are dancing with delight at labor's discomfiture. For, in the end, labor will emerge free of crooks. What then?

HENRY FORD IS NOT HAPPY over the type of labor leader he confronts at the bargaining table. In this, he speaks for big business whom he aptly symbolizes and for those ultra-right wing politicians who represent it; precisely for those who are eager to use the hearings against unions. In a recent exchange with Reuther, Mr. Ford observed, "True labor leadership today would consist, it seems to us, in labor leaders resisting pressures from whatever source, for excessive and inflationary wage increases. It would consist in union leaders acting for the common good and refraining from the use of the extraordinary leverage and monopolistic power of today's big industrial labor union. We commend this course of action to you." But where to find such leaders when the choice is so very limited. Mr. Ford and his friends have to pick their lesser of two evils.

The big line of division in the labor movement at this juncture is between Reuther-Meany, on the one hand and Beck, Hoffa *et al.* on the other. It was Reuther and Meany who made labor unity possible and with it a drive against the corruptionists. It was not only the crooked elements who felt uneasy but that whole layer of conservative officials who view any stirring and change as suspect.

Walter Reuther is rising more and more as the ideological leader and symbol of the modern American labor movement whose union, the progressive-minded UAW, gives him a prominent public platform. He has strayed away from the socialism of his youth and compared to his own views of yesterday, his outlook has become moderate and liberal. But measured against his contemporaries in public life he appears radical indeed and speaks for a radical kind of union. True, he professes his admiration for the virtues of capitalism; and periodically, he and his adversaries engage in lofty disquisitions on the mutual interests of labor and management, social engineering, and mutual cooperation. Regrettably, these philosophic discourses break down in fits of vituperation and invective. Trust in a permanent state of fraternity between labor and capital is as vain as a hope for the end, under capitalism, of the class conflicts which have produced a Reuther. As the representative of modern unionism, he agitates and presses continually for new social gains. His confidence in our social system is displayed by insistent demands upon it: steadily rising wages, lower prices, guaranteed wages, full employment, shorter hours. And he wants a larger role for labor in politics. He presumes to speak out for a democratic foreign policy, for peace. He expects so much from capitalism that its authentic representatives, the capitalists, become uneasy. Latest of all, he demands an immediate reduction of car prices and when the auto companies reject this simple formula to cut inflation, he denounces them as conscienceless, selfish, irresponsible

monopolies. Worse: he criticizes their profits. His lectures on the glories of free enterprise scarcely make up for all this. It is very vexing and we can understand Mr. Ford's desire to meet a labor leader with a somewhat different approach. But, increasingly, labor's progressive wing gathers around Reuther as it did when he won the presidency of the CIO.

If business would like an alternative to Reutherism, they are not alone. In a few years, there have been several attempts to mobilize and organize a more conservative section as a counterweight to growing influence of labor's progressive wing. Dave Beck, Dave McDonald, and John L. Lewis went through mysterious motions of setting up some new outfit. They promptly forgot when the AFL and CIO united. The Hod Carriers, Carpenters, Teamsters and Operating Engineers formed a joint committee to protect their common interests but without noticeable effect on the balance of power. Building Trades Councils work together with Teamster locals to sabotage the merger of AFL and CIO local councils. But every effort to organize labor's right wing into an effective force has foundered. Most dismal was the fiasco of the invention of Dave Beck.

It sounds farcical now but not long ago a new star was rising. It was a man of social vision, a new type; a real American who was elbowing Reuther aside; he was a labor leader's businessman and a businessman's labor leader combining in his own person the common interests of labor and capital; a millionaire in his own right; a man who could parlay a few thousand dollars into a huge personal fortune. His exploits were recorded in admiring detail in the leading periodicals. It was a full scale effort to invent a new conservative labor leader as a buffer against Reuther. That was Dave Beck before it was discovered that his peculiar talent lay in borrowing union money without notice or interest and in profiteering from a trust fund he handled for his pal's widow. And, assorted rackets, too. Even then, one Senator would not give up the attempt to manufacture a rival to Reuther. In a Chamber of Commerce speech, Goldwater said that Reuther and the UAW "have done more damage to freedom than the peculiar financial transactions of Dave Besk." But his transgressions were too crass.

When Beck fell there was Hoffa. For one strange moment it seemed as if even he was being groomed to supplant Reuther. When he appeared for the first session of his hearing before the Senate committee, he was treated with proper deference. He was encouraged to expound his broad philosophy of labor relations and when he had finished lecturing, Senator Goldwater was inspired. For the full flavor, we quote from the *New York Times* account: "Senator Goldwater asked some questions too and got along fine with the witness. 'We have labor leaders in the country—labor leaders who would like to get control of the teamsters', the Arizonian said. The colloquy veered to unionism and politics as Hoffa said he was not going into a room and be told what to do 'without consulting my members.' In a related context a moment later, Senator Goldwater remarked, 'riding in the clouds is an individual who would like to see that happen. I am very hopeful your philosophy prevails.'" It was Reuther whom the Senator disliked.

Later, Hoffa met Senator Ives at lunch. Ives told him "You're a good witness. I may disagree with you on a lot of things but I think you're honest." It was a remarkable testimonial for a man whose fame was to be far more ephemeral than Beck's. A day later, his "philosophy" was examined in sordid detail. Exit Hoffa as a great new labor leader! The difficulty for Goldwater and his friends lies in this: the very elements in the labor leadership to whom they look with respect turn out to be allies, at least, of racketeers. Beck boasted of voting for Eisenhower. Hutcheson of the Carpenters, now in difficulties over land deals in Indiana, is a well known Republican. On a lower level, Hoffa's New York aide, John O'Rourke, served as labor adviser to Thomas E. Dewey when he ran for president and for governor of New York. Hoffa started out as a Democrat but the exigencies of politics drove him toward the Republican Party. In Michigan, he supported Republican Homer Ferguson for Senate; Republicans nominated a Hoffa lieutenant for membership on the state Board of Education in 1957 and a Republican appointed Hoffa himself to membership on the Wayne County [Detroit area] board of supervisors. And in November 1953, a Congressional investigation of Hoffa ended mysteriously when pressure came from high sources in the Republican Party to end the probe.

FOR ITS PRIME MOVERS, one unhappy by-product of the hearings has been the public exposure and weakening of labor's ultra-right wing. Soon Mr. Goldwater and his friends would like to turn to other things; but it is not easy. They are interested not so much in exposing the Becks as in reaching the Reuthers. They want to know whether workers are coerced into joining unions; they want to know whether unions violate the Taft-Hartley laws by boycotts, as at Kohler; they want to know if it is illegal for unions to support candidates for office; they want to know if labor causes violence as at Perfect Circle (where strikers were shot by scabs from within the plant). They want to know? Not exactly. For they are already convinced that labor is responsible for these "crimes" but they have to try to convince others. Let them try! They will be amazed by what follows.

Meanwhile, they make their start by exposing not the labor movement but its rotten elements, the crooks and grafters. The racketeers are on the run; the unions will get rid of them in one way or another and will be strengthened by it. Perhaps some new laws will make organizing more difficult but no one can wipe out the power of modern unionism. In the end, labor's antagonists will hit up against that force which makes unionism invulnerable and which guarantees the end of racketeering: the union conscious millions who constitute the organized working class.

H. W. BENSON

An Amalgam of Marx and Keynes

John Strachey's View of Contemporary Capitalism

If capitalism (i.e. advanced capitalisms such as Britain and America) can through the exercise of non-economic democratic political pressures be reformed or so controlled in its operations that progressively the average standard of living is raised, the capacity of the productive forces increased, and some type of peace maintained, then what is the need for any type of socialist movement? This question insistently intrudes itself after a reading of John Strachey's *Contemporary Capitalism*,* despite the fact that at the end of his Acknowledgments, the author states: *"Contemporary Capitalism* is the first volume of a projected series of studies on the principles of democratic socialism."

In fact, so many projected studies are indicated in the course of this one volume, that one must wish Strachey an exceptionally long life in order that he may set forth in writing his *magnum opus*. For, despite numerous disagreements that this writer has with many ideas expressed by Strachey, he is discussing questions of fundamental importance in a serious manner. Moreover, Strachey is aware that capitalism through a process of mutation, as he calls it, has changed fundamentally. In addition, while rejecting many of Marx's principles, others are accepted. There are far too few analyses of contemporary society from the standpoint of democratic socialism to ignore Strachey because his economics are based on a curious amalgam of Marx and Keynes or because his politics appear to be acceptable to Bevan.

*Contemporary Capitalism by John Strachey, 1956, published by Random House, Inc., 374 pp., $5.00.

Contemporary capitalism, according to Strachey, has succeeded in raising the average standard of living because of trade union and leftist (democratic) pressures. Now, however, with the stage of oligopoly having been reached, there is a conflict between capitalism and democracy. "Capitalism in its latest stage, when it is progressively outgrowing the forms of ownership which were once appropriate to it, threatens to turn upon what was once its own political counterpart, namely, democracy." (p. 344). It is the fact that capitalism, through ever-increasing centralization, constantly undermines the foundations of democracy that necessitates the struggle for socialism, according to Strachey It is his belief that only democratic socialists are the true fighters for democracy. The struggle for socialism is in reality the struggle for democracy. And, despite Strachey's failure to distinguish clearly between democracy and democratic rights, and between bourgeois and socialist democracy, it must be admitted that there is much truth in this dichotomy.

If all classes in modern society, both capitalist and Stalinist, were prepared to accept indefinitely the absence of democratic rights, then it is theoretically conceivable that a precarious international equilibrium could be maintained indefinitely. The apposition between capitalism and democracy is, in reality, the basic constructive theme of Strachey's work. Among many quotable sentences of the author's thesis is the following (p. 323): "Thus the continuance of effective democracy depends upon the prevention of big capital's control of the media of expression becoming absolute. And upon the continuance of effective democracy in two or three key societies of the world everything else will be found to depend."

It is interesting to note Paul Homan's evaluation of Strachey in a review article in the June, 1957 issue of *The American Economic Review,* entitled "Socialist Thought in Great Britain":

> Strachey has now taken time out for reflective thought; his book is a restatement of his philosophical position and a reinterpretation of the process of social change. The title is somewhat misleading, since the book contains very little on the institutional characteristics of contemporary economic organization—in fact, hardly more than a stereotype of oligopoly. What he does, essentially, is to set up two abstract creatures, capitalism and democracy, put them in the prize ring, and let them fight it out, while he cheers in the corner of democracy. Capitalism is a sort of brutal monstrosity—the apotheosis of every inhumane, antisocial pursuit of private self-interest. Democracy is the champion of all generous-hearted efforts to attain general well-being and communal interest. The complete victory of democracy would usher in socialism.

The professor's sarcasm is not well taken, for Strachey does have an analysis of the laws of motion of contemporary capitalism. Even if one disagrees with Strachey, which this reviewer does in certain fundamental respects that will be set forth below, the fact of the matter is that Strachey is thinking about important problems, which is more than most professors of economics permit themselves to do these days.

Strachey is also to be commended for realizing the importance of theory. He knows that capitalism has altered in certain of its basic characteristics and in certain aspects of its functioning. He is not content with superficial description of these structural alterations, important though they may be. He wants to know "why." He wants to be able to predict. In short, he seeks a theory of the latest stage of capitalism that will serve as a guide to action. Again, the fact that Strachey has exchanged his prewar Stalinist theories for his current amalgamation of Marx and Keynes, is hardly justification for rejecting him out of hand. In fact, how immeasurably superior is Strachey's crude analysis of contemporary capitalism to the apologetics of bourgeois professors!

Strachey's beginning is most encouraging, for he realizes that the wholesale modifications of the market that have occurred in recent years have led capitalism into a new stage. As he says, "The first and decisive reason why an economy of large and few units exhibits new characteristics is because at a certain point in the increase of their size and decrease of their number, the managers of the remaining units begin to be able to affect prices instead of being exclusively affected by them. *It is impossible to exaggerate the importance of this transformation.*" (p. 22, italics mine—T. N. V.)

While he uses different terms, Strachey is aware of the development of state monopoly capitalism and the era of administered prices that it has ushered in, and to a certain extent of its consequences. For example (p. 31): "Accordingly, the State has come, in the advanced industrial nations, to feel that it must, and can, control such basic things as the pattern of the distribution of income between social classes and individual citizens, instead of leaving that pattern to the consequences of the play of the market."

To examine each and every argument presented by Strachey, both those with which we concur as well

as those with which we disagree, as well as to indicate significant areas of omission, would require a book rather than a review article. Suffice it to say that we believe Strachey to be fundamentally correct in his emphasis on the importance of prices now being administered in large measure, rather than determined competitively in the market. The "essence of the mutation," as the author describes it, is (p. 39): "the ability of the producers in some, but not in all, of the spheres of production to affect prices, instead of merely being affected by them. . . . Thus the ability to influence prices will inevitably sap the automatic, self-regulating character of the economy. It will consequently provoke and require more and more State intervention, and will lead to an intensified struggle for the now all-important levers of economic power which will be in the hands of the State. . . . Thus the characteristics of the latest stage of capitalism both make possible a much higher degree of social control and at the same time make such control imperative." This is insight and understanding of a high order.

STRACHEY DEVOTES AN IMPORTANT section of his book to value theory in economics. While he accepts Marx's analysis of the centralization of capital, accepting as he does the term "oligopoly" from modern bourgeois economists, he rejects the labor theory of value as faulty and the theory of ever-increasing misery as Marx's cardinal error. Strachey notes that from Ricardo on increasing disparities occurred between the price and value of many commodities. He feels that the labor theory of value has neglected to take into account the role of capital in the determination of prices. He states (p. 67): *"In other words, in real life not only man-hours of socially necessary labor but also a reward of some sort for capital entered into the determination of the points round which prices fluctuated."* (Italics in original)

Why Strachey is under the mistaken notion that Marx ignored the role of constant capital in the determination of the price of production and henceforth of market price is a complete mystery, since he merely makes the assertion, whereas Marx devoted a large part of Volume III of *Capital* to an explanation of these interrelationships in connection with capitalist production as a whole. The skeptics are referred merely to Chapter I of Volume III, although Kautsky will serve as a good introduction. Consider just the following two paragraphs from the first chapter on Cost Price and Profit (*Capital,* Kerr edition, Volume III, pp 38-39):

> However, the cost of this commodity to the capitalist, and the actual cost of this commodity, are two vastly different amounts. That portion of the value of the commodity which consists of surplus-value does not cost the capitalist anything for the reason that it costs the laborer unpaid labor. But on the basis of capitalist production, the laborer plays the role of an ingredient of productive capital as soon as he has been incorporated in the process of production. Under these circumstances the capitalist poses as the actual producer of the commodity. For this reason the cost price of the commodity to the capitalist producer necessarily appears to him as the actual cost of the commodity. If we designate the cost-price by k, we can transcribe the formula C=c+v+s into the formula C=k+s, that is to say, the value of a commodity is equal to the cost price plus the surplus-value.
>
> In this way the classification of the various values making good the value of the capital consumed in the production of the commodity under the term of cost price expresses, on the one hand, the specific character of capitalist production. The capitalist cost of the commodity is measured by the *expenditure of capital,* while the actual cost of the commodity is measured by the *expenditure of labor.* The capitalist cost-price of the commodity, then, is a quantity different from its value, or its actual cost-price. It is smaller than the value of the commodity. For since C=k+s, it is evident that k=C—s. On the other hand, the cost-price of a commodity is by no means a mere heading in capitalist bookkeeping. The actual existence of this portion of value continually exerts its practical influence in the actual production of the commodity, because *it must be ever reconverted from its commodity-form, by way of the process of circulation, into the form of productive capital, so the cost-price of the commodity must always buy anew the elements of production consumed in its creation.* (Italics in last sentence only mine.—T. N. V.)

How could the originator of the theory of the increasing organic composition of capital ignore the role of capital in the determination of price? Strachey ought to acquire his economics first-hand rather than through the courtesy of Joan Robinson. Implicitly, Strachey has fallen into the common bourgeois fallacy of "productivity of capital" as distinct from "productivity of labor." And, if he thinks he can explain the origin of profit without recourse to the labor theory of value, the bourgeoisie have been trying unsuccessfully for a hundred years to develop a theory that would both explain the origin of and justify profit, and at the same time correspond to reality. It might be added that the absence of a theory of profit creates numerous difficulties for Strachey, of which he seems to be totally unaware. He does understand that the accumulation of capital is the mainspring of capitalism (cf. Chapter 10), but why capital is accumulated or the laws governing its accumulation he doesn't know because Mrs. Joan Robinson, his mentor, does not know.

It is sufficient to quote the following (from p. 247): "What in the world, then, determines the level of investment? Mrs. Joan Robinson, in a striking passage (from her *The Accumulation of Capital),* declares simply that we do not know! She writes: '. . .as to what governs the level at which it' (investment) 'gets itself established we know very little. . . .' Mrs. Robinson is here feeling the need of some kind of *summa,* transcending, although including, economics and laying the basis of an inclusive science of human society, a *summa* at which Marxism is at present the sole attempt. She is confronted with the fact that her analysis has led her to conclude that the true prime mover of a capitalist economy—the decision to invest—is determined by causes which are largely outside the scope of economic analysis.

The absence of a theory, even a much-abused Marxist theory, leads to all kinds of difficulties. Above all, if the government, through fear of the electorate or whatever motivation one wants, decides that slumps must be avoided at all costs, and that consequently the decisions to invest (i.e. the determination of the rate and mass of capital accumulation) cannot be left in the hands of profit-seeking private capitalists, and if further this can be achieved under bourgeois democracy or under a "labor" government, then why is there a need for socialism?

Intuitively, Strachey feels that he must reject the labor theory of value, not because he (Strachey) does not understand it, but because he wishes to attribute to Marx an "iron law" or subsistence theory of wages as an outgrowth of the labor theory of value, and hence a failure to allow for increasing productivity of labor and consequently to deny the possibility and the actuality of increasing the national product and the average standard of living. The original sin

of the labor theory of value thus becomes the source of the disastrous theory of ever-increasing misery.

Strachey puts it this way (p. 70): *"Reckoning in terms of man-hours of socially necessary labor, the total national product is a given figure: all that can really be considered is its division between the social classes."* (Italics in original). Why this should be so when the amount of socially necessary labor required to produce the means of sustenance of labor or for labor to reproduce itself, i.e. the value of labor-power, is clearly dependent on the general historical and specific geographic environment, is not explained by Strachey. He merely asserts it. It is as if he never bothered to read Marx, for just reading the first few hundred pages of Volume I of *Capital* would have destroyed his entire fallacious attack on Marx's development of the labor theory of value and surplus value.

Let Marx speak for himself (Volume I, pp. 189-190):

> The value of labor-power is determined, as in the case of every other commodity, by the labor-time necessary for the production, and consequently also the reproduction, of this special article. So far as it has value, it represents no more than a definite quantity of the average labor of society incorporated in it. Labor-power exists only as a capacity, or power of the living individual. Its production consequently presupposes his existence. Given the individual, the production of labor-power consists in his reproduction of himself or his maintenance. For his maintenance he requires a given quantity of the means of subsistence . . . the value of labor-power is the value of the means of subsistence necessary for the maintenance of the laborer. . . . His means of subsistence must therefore be sufficient to maintain him in his normal state as a laboring individual. His natural wants, such as food, clothing, fuel, and housing, vary according to the climatic and other physical conditions of his country. On the other hand, *the number and extent of his so-called necessary wants, as also the modes of satisfying them, are themselves the product of historical development, and depend therefore to a great extent on the degree of civilization of a country, more particularly on the conditions under which, and consequently on the habits and degree of comfort in which, the class of free laborers has been formed. In contradistinction therefore to the case of other commodities, there enters into the determination of the value of labor-power a historical and moral element.* (Italics mine—T. N. V.)

In other words, since, by way of illustration, England is more civilized than, let us say, South Africa, and Strachey is accustomed to a greater degree of comfort than the South African miner, presumably the value of Strachey's means of subsistence (or of the British miner) exceeds that of the South African. And the value of the means of subsistence required for Mr. John Strachey today, or the British miner today, clearly is far greater than the value of the means of subsistence required for, say, Mr. Lytton Strachey some decades ago or that of a British miner a generation or more ago.

Marx was certainly guilty of many mistakes. He certainly didn't forsee that capitalism would survive decades beyond the point where it clearly outlived its social usefulness. He also could not have been expected to have forseen the Bolshevik revolution and the Stalinist counter-revolution. But surely before his basic thoughts are twisted and distorted, he has the right to assume that his critics (friendly as they may be in the case of Strachey) will at least have made an effort to read and understand his works!

Strachey, however, is not concerned with what Marx wrote. He has a point to make: "Therefore a subsistence theory of wages has always been, implicitly for Ricardo, explicitly for Marx, an essential part of the labor theory of value. *But wages have not remained at subsistence.* Therefore one vitally important commodity, namely, labor power, has not even tended to sell at its value. This formidable fact has driven a great hole not only in the labor theory of value, but also in the associated Ricardian-Marxian diagram of what the distribution of the national product will be among the classes. *It is the fact of rising real wages which has above all done the damage to the whole schema."* (Italics mine–T.N.V.)

It would be pretty difficult to crowd more errors into one short paragraph than Strachey does in the above. To be sure, the very next two sentences read (p. 71): "Nevertheless we shall find that it has by no means destroyed its importance as an elucidation of what would happen unless tireless and drastic steps were taken to prevent it. That, I repeat, is one of the reasons why it is still indispensable to master the labor theory of value." (sic!) It is a pity that Strachey has not followed his own advice, for one thing he cannot be accused of is having mastered the labor theory of value.

In passing, it should be obvious that Strachey's attributing to Marx an "iron law" of wages requires him also to ignore the fact that Marx developed the theory of the class struggle. To summarize Marx's central message, as does Strachey (p. 102): "This is the statement that wages will in all capitalist societies tend towards what is for that time and phase a subsistence level"—which implies the influence of historical forces upon the determination of wages—and to deny the influence of the class struggle upon the level of wages, is to perpetrate an absurdity. To be sure, the forces of the class struggle cannot drive wages up to the point where for any length of time the profits of the capitalist class disappear without at the same time destroying capitalism.

To assert that Marx ignored the possibility that the productivity of labor could alter or increase is enough to make Marx turn over in his grave. Marx even devotes an entire chapter of Volume I of *Capital* to Changes of Magnitude in the Price of Labor-Power and in Surplus-Value (Chapter XVII), wherein he considers as the three decisive forces in determining these changes: "(1) the length of the working day, or the extensive magnitude of labor; (2) the normal intensity of labor, its intensive magnitude, whereby a given quantity of labor is expended in a given time; (3) the productiveness of labor, whereby the same quantum of labor yields, in a given time, a greater or less quantum of product, dependent on the degree of development in the conditions of production." (p. 569).

WHILE STRACHEY PAYS HOMAGE to Marx for being the first to throw light on the business cycle, with his theory of crisis, Marx's basic achievement was to analyze the conditions that led to, and to predict, the centralization of capital. His basic error was to assert the labor theory of value as a law rather than as a tendency. And the thing which destroys Marxism as a valid social theory is that from this labor theory of value, instead of merely asserting a tendency toward a polarization of classes, Marx predicted "ever-increasing misery" for the mass of the population. And it was this "ever-increasing misery" that would lead the masses to the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism.

Since, according to Strachey, in the advanced capitalist nations, the average standard of living has increased, there is no ever-increasing misery and, consequently, Marxism is outmoded as a scientific basis for socialism. There is, says Strachey, to be perfectly

fair to Marx, a *tendency* under capitalism for the entire increase in production to accrue to the benefit of the capitalist class, *"But this tendency has been overruled, in the advanced capitalist societies, but not elsewhere, by essentially non-economic forces, the existence of which Marx overlooked."* (Strachey's emphasis, p. 129.)

What Marx meant by the increasing pauperization of labor (a thought which cannot be found in *Capital,* but only in *The Communist Manifesto* and certain propagandistic works) is not quite as simple as Strachey thinks. The evidence would seem to indicate that Marx based this prediction on his basic law of capital accumulation; namely, that an increase in capital accumulation leads to an increase in the industrial reserve army (unemployment). That this tendency still exists, even under the Permanent War Economy, we have shown in our original series of articles on the Permanent Ware Economy (cf. *The New International,* Vol XVII). Nevertheless, as we have already demonstrated, the development of the Permanent War Economy stage of capitalism has altered Marx's fundamental law of capitalist accumulation. To this extent, the doctrine of ever-increasing misery is in need of revision. Marx, so far as we can determine, never stated that the standards of living of the employed working class would deteriorate. He expected that the weight of the *lazarus-layers* of the working class (the unemployed) would carry down the average standard of living of the entire working class. Only in this sense is it proper to speak of ever-increasing misery.

And until the last decade, or until the development of the Permanent War Economy, it looked, as Strachey tacitly admits, that Marx was more or less correct. If, however, we are to admit that the average standard of living of the employed working class is higher today than, let us say, it was two, three or four decades ago, we might try to include in this total evaluation, for surely it is part of total misery, the casualties of wartime, both in war and peace, and the psychological impact on want satisfactions of a world that lives under the constant threat of total annihilation. Moreover, as Strachey stresses, the major egalitarian trends that are truly significant occurred mainly *during* World War II.

AS WE STATED AT THE OUTSET, if capitalism can progressively raise average standards of living, and at the same time maintain a relatively peaceful international equilibrium, then it is still a viable historical system. We then need neither Marx nor Strachey, but it is suggested that before everyone joins the capitalist band-wagon, we wait another decade, or even less, to see if capitalism has really solved the problems of economic and political stability and progress.

The real significance of Strachey's present volume is that he recognizes that we have entered a new stage of capitalism, that capitalism no longer is self-regulating, that it is (and must, in order to survive) be controlled. He gives Keynes great credit for recognizing that capitalism was no longer self-regulating. What he fails to see is that Keynes was the great bourgeois economist of the depression. His views on state intervention were acceptable only so long as the Great Depression prevailed. Once World War II and the ensuing Permanent War Economy developed, Keynes went into considerable decline, especially within American governmental circles.

It is interesting to note that "The Merchant's View" column in *The New York Times* of August 11, 1957 poses the question: "Can the national economy be controlled? It would appear that Government officials are experimenting with this problem in ways, perhaps, that appear to be baffling to the average business man." Apparently, even *The New York Times* is not aware of the fact that *the economy has been controlled for the past decade and more.* The nature of the controls, their success and their impact on capitalism are necessarily the subject of a future article. Suffice it to say, that we are of the opinion that under the Permanent War Economy the capitalist state must control the economy. How long-lasting and successful this type of state intervention will be is a separate question. The permanent peace-and-prosperity school ought to wait a few years before they declare the present precarious equilibrium to be permanent.

After all, capitalist planning is not quite the same thing as socialist planning. Moreover, the capitalist world is in a curious dilemma with respect to the Stalinist sector of the world. Capitalism needs Stalinism to help maintain the existing international equilibrium and to provide a socially acceptable *raison d'etre* for the huge war outlays that alone provide the current decisive underpinnings of the entire economic system. Yet, the maintenance of Stalinism can lead to its strengthening, and the further whittling away of the capitalist market, not to mention the ever-present danger that Stalinist political-military maneuvers will be successful and that, as a consequence, the physical dimensions of the capitalist world will be reduced still further.

Strachey would like to believe that a marriage of Keynesianism and social democracy can solve the problems of the world. In any event, he rejects any concept of the Permanent War Economy. He states (p. 295 et sequitur):

> There is another and less palatable reason why it would be a great mistake to dismiss the Keynesian techniques as illusory. As we noted, those Marxians [Stalinists?] who are unable any longer to deny that capitalism in the nineteen-fifties is behaving very differently from what it did in the nineteen-thirties, explain that this is simply due to vast expenditures upon armaments. . . .
>
> The case of these—mainly communist—critics is, briefly, as follows: "No doubt it is true that *if* a capitalist government supplements the activities of its profit-seeking entrepreneurs by itself spending or investing sufficiently massive sums, it can sustain the economy at a level of full employment. But a capitalist government will be intensely unwilling to do this *for peaceful purposes.* . . . Such (military) government expenditure fits into the generally aggressive policies of capitalist governments of the latest stage. It is this kind of government expenditure and this kind alone which the capitalist governments have undertaken on a scale sufficient to be economically significant since 1945."...
>
> Such an explanation is a crude caricature of the complex realities of the contemporary situation. . . . The American economy had, it is true, suffered a very shallow depression in 1948-49. But the figures show incontrovertibly (they will be given in a later part of this study) that this depression was over and the progress of full employment had been resumed before the outbreak of the Korean war and long before the American rearmament program began.

It is a pity that Strachey does not submit his figures on the American situation in the current volume, for the future of capitalism depends on the United States, not on Britain. This provides us with an opportunity, without any elaborate explanation, to present our latest figures on the relationship of war outlays to total output in the United States during the past ten years of the Permanent War Economy.

DIRECT AND INDIRECT WAR OUTLAYS, 1947-1956 AND THEIR RELATIONSHIP TO TOTAL OUTPUT
(Dollar Figures in Billions)

Year	Net National Product (1)	WAR OUTLAYS Direct (2)	Indirect (3)	Total (4)	Ratio of War Outlays to Total Production; Col. (4) As % of Col. (1) (5)
1947	$218.1	$12.3	$13.1	$25.4	11.6%
1948	240.8	11.6	12.9	24.5	10.2
1949	238.9	13.6	13.7	27.3	11.4
1950	264.6	14.3	11.7	26.0	9.8
1951	304.8	33.9	9.3	43.2	14.2
1952	321.6	46.4	8.0	54.4	16.9
1953	336.7	49.3	7.2	56.5	16.8
1954	331.9	41.2	6.9	48.1	14.5
1955	359.5	39.1	7.6	46.7	13.0
1956	378.4	40.4	7.6	48.0	12.7

Source: July, 1957 *Survey of Current Business* for net national product and direct war outlays. Indirect war outlays calculated as explained in Part I of The Permanent War Economy (Jan.-Feb. 1951 issue of *The New International*) and the March-April 1953 issue of *The New International*, pp. 94-95.

While many of our prior actuals are herewith revised, the only important change is for the year 1947 where our present figures are considerably lower and the ratio of war outlays to total production is revised downwards from the previous 13.7% to the present 11.6%. It will be seen that in the year 1950, in the middle of which the Korean war broke out, the ratio declined below 10% to 9.8%. It should be remembered that at that point official unemployment statistics in the United States reached a total of 4,700,000. It was only the rapid increase in the ratio of war outlays to total production that prevented a serious unemployment situation from having far-reaching political effects; and, of course, it was the sharp rise in the war outlays ratio to a peak of almost 17% in 1952 and 1953 that reduced the level of unemployment to politically tolerable and relatively minor levels.

The gradual reduction and leveling off in war outlays in the post-Korean period has brought about a decline in the ratio of war outlays to total production. Attrition begins to set in. The big bourgeoisie demand a halt to inflation, or rather they use the concern of the working classes to prevent inflation as a device for getting the government to raise interest rates and to place a squeeze on small and medium-size business. The "battle of the budget" has all kinds of political motivations and overtones, but it is already clear that to the extent the government succeeds in halting inflation, the ratio of war outlays will continue to inch downward and unemployment will continue to creep upwards.

That the government is not entirely unaware of the economic implications of reductions in military outlays is graphically revealed by Marquis Childs in his widely syndicated column of August 20, 1957, wherein he comments on "Jobs and Defense" by stating, in part: "The aviation industry is beginning to feel the effects of

cutbacks in competing missile programs and in military aircraft production. *The resulting unemployment,* when it is put together with other pockets of joblessness, *has raised the fear in the administration that the rising spiral of prices may eventually—and sooner rather than later—bring deflation. As a result, Sherman Adams, the assistant to the President, has instructed Clarence Randall, White House adviser on trade and economic affairs, to review every government cutback that might adversely affect a plant having more than 5,000 employees.*

"Randall is confident the economy can absorb this unemployment and continue at the present high level. But there are others not so optimistic." (Italics mine—T.N.V.)

We belong in the latter group. Strachey presumably would side with the optimists. In any case, it should already be clear (and, if not, it will become increasingly so) that contemporary capitalism, while a new stage (the Permanent War Economy), has achieved only the most precarious of equilibria, both domestically and internationally. The continual production of ever-increasing amounts of the means of consumption depends not only on constantly increasing production of the means of production, but on maintenance of the high level of production of the means of destruction. The impossibility of continuing to expand in all three departments of production will lead to a deteriorating economic situation and in the relatively near future to the beginnings of a first-rate political crisis.

August, 1957 T. N. Vance

What Is Orthodox Marxism?

The First English Translation of a Marxist Classic

INTRODUCTION

George Lukacs, the author of "What is Orthodox Marxism," is one of the strangest figures of twentieth century socialism. For he is simultaneously one of the few really creative Marxist minds of his time and a man who has betrayed the ideals of the revolution to the Stalinist regime. The many paradoxes of his life were brought to a fitting climax in October 1956, when, after thirty one years of faithful service to totalitarianism, he emerged as one of the central intellectual leaders of the Hungarian Revolution.

Lukacs was born in Hungary in 1885 of a well-to-do family. As a young man, he was drawn to Kantian philosophy, and a little later to the sociology of Max Weber. Lukacs' reputation developed early. A book of his published when he was in his mid-twenties caught the eye of Thomas Mann and the two developed a personal relationship. Later, according to Jean Duvignaud, this friendship was the source of Mann's portrait of Naphta, the strange theological communist, in the *Magic Mountain.*

During the first War, Lukacs personal world fell to pieces under the strain of the social carnage. His work of this period, such as the *Theory of the Novel,* is marked by a sort of expressionist despair, and is filled with descriptions of the "unbridgeable abyss" between the "I" and the world. And yet, in 1919, Lukacs participated in the Soviet Hungarian Government of Bela Kun. In this period, he was decisively drawn to Marxism, and though he submitted his convictions to the terrible distortions of Stalinist ideology, this commitment persisted up to the present.

"What is Orthodox Marxism" is an essay taken from the collection, "*Geschichte und Klassenbewusstsein*" (*History and Class Consciousness*). These essays, written during the period of the revolutionary wave after World War I, were condemned at the Fifth Congress

of the Communist International by Zinoviev as "idealistic." At that time, Lukacs made a complete and total submission to the Party. He lived in Moscow for years, and when called upon made sharp "self-criticisms" of himself in the most classic Stalinist fashion (the most recent was only some seven or eight years ago; the confession of not having been sufficiently aware of contemporary Russian literature).

And yet, even during the period of Lukacs' most abject submission to the Party line, he continued to write brilliant Marxist literary criticism. This was smuggled in past the required statements that Stalin was the most brilliant aesthetician of the epoch, the continuator of the work of Marx, Engels and Lenin. He was, of course, most affected by his Stalinist commitment in his discussion of current writers—he denounced Franz Mehring, for example, as a "literary Trotskyist," and found the historical novels of the German popular front to be a major turning point in the history of that country's literature.

Then a change took place. In the period before the Hungarian Revolution, Lukacs was one of the central leaders of the intellectual ferment. Indeed, his influence was not confined to Hungary. Wolfgang Hairich, the young German academician who was recently sentenced to jail for his oppositional activities was a "Lukacsian," and his authority is great in Communist circles in various Communist Parties. Lukacs went into exile along with Imre Nagy. Since then, there have been reports that he was going to support the Kadar regime (mainly in *France-Observateur*), or that he was going to be tried, but there has been no substantiation.

This is not the place to go into an extended criticism of Lukacs' work. Suffice it to say that the ideas in "What is Marxism" represent a brilliant study of the Marxian dialectic, though modified by a certain tendency toward the more Hegelian aspects of Marxist thought. This latter point raises various difficulties for a translator. Where there is a real ambiguity, I have placed the German word in parenthesis after the English translation of it.

MICHAEL HARRINGTON

> Up until now the philosophers have merely interpreted the world in various fashions; today, the point is to change it.

This question, actually a simple one, has become the object of wide discussion, in the bourgeois as well as in the worker's milieu. It has become the scientific fashion to ridicule all pretensions of faith in a Marxist orthodoxy. For there is little agreement in the "socialist" camp as to what constitutes the quintessence of Marxism, and what theses one can attack, or even reject, without surrendering the title to "orthodox Marxism." As a result, it has come to seem more and more non-scientific to make scholastic exegeses of old books as in the tradition of Biblical scholarship, books which the modern criticism has "gone beyond." It is considered wrong to seek in these texts, and only there, the source of truth. The tendency is to turn toward the study of the "facts," and this "without any prejudices."

If these two approaches were the real alternatives, then the best response would be a simple smile of pity. But the question isn't as easy as all that, and never has been. Admit for the sake of argument that all of the particular affirmations of Marx have been shown to be factually inaccurate by modern scholarship. A serious Marxist can recognize all this new evidence, reject all of the particular theses of Marx, and yet not be forced for an instant to renounce his Marxist orthodoxy. For orthodox Marxism does not mean an uncritical acceptance of the results of Marx' research, it is not the exegeses of a "sacred book" or "faith" in this or that thesis. In Marxism, orthodoxy refers solely and exclusively to the question of *method*. It implies the scientific conviction that the Marxist dialectic is the right method of investigation, and that this method cannot be developed, perfected, or made more profound except in the tradition of its founders. Further, Marxist orthodoxy understands that all attempts to go beyond this method, or to "improve" it, necessarily trivialize it and end up in eclecticism.

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THE MATERIALIST DIALECTIC is a revolutionary dialectic. This is so crucial for its understanding that, if we want to pose the issue sharply, we must confront this essential point even before we can treat of the dialectic method itself. The problem is that of theory and practice. But we cannot limit it to the sense of Marx' first critique of Hegel that "the theory becomes a material force when it takes hold among the masses." More than that, we must study each element, each determination of the theory which makes it a vehicle for revolution; we cannot concern ourselves only with the way in which it penetrates the masses. In short, we must develop the practical essence from the point of view of the theory and the relation which it establishes with its object. Otherwise, this "taking hold of the masses" would be an empty idea. It could then be that the masses are moved by a range of motives and are impelled toward various ends—and that the theory has only an accidental relation to the movement, that it is only the form under which the consciousness of the socially necessary or contingent action develops, and that without the theory the action would be essentially and actually related to the consciousness.

Marx, in the passage quoted from, clearly expressed the conditions under which a relation between theory and practice is possible.

"It is not enough that the thought tends toward reality," he wrote, "the reality itself must move in the direction of the thought." Or, in another context, "it will be demonstrated that the world has had for a long time the dream of a thing which it has failed to possess in reality solely because it lacks the consciousness." Only such a relation between consciousness and reality makes possible the unity of theory and "praxis." It is only when consciousness coincides with the *decisive course* which the historical process must take toward its proper end (an end which is constituted by human freedom but which does not depend upon arbitrary human freedom, an end which is not an invention of the human spirit), that theory can serve its historic role and make this course actually possible. When one confronts a situation where the exact knowledge of society becomes, for a class, the immediate condition of its self-affirmation in struggle; when, for this class, self consciousness means simultaneously the accurate consciousness of all society; when this class is, by its consciousness, both the subject and object of consciousness; then the theory is in an immediate, direct and adequate relation with the process of the social revolution, then the unity of theory and practice, that pre-condition of the revolutionary function of the theory, becomes possible.

Such a situation has emerged with the appearance of the proletariat in history. "When the proletariat," writes Marx, "announces the dissolution of the existing social order, it reveals the secret of its proper existence, which itself constitutes the effective dissolution of this social or-

der." The theory which makes this statement is not related to the revolution in a more or less contingent way, it is not bound loosely to it, or through a "misunderstanding." Rather, it is, in its very essence, nothing more than the thinking expression of the revolutionary process itself. Each stage of this process is fixed deeply in theory so as to become, by its generalization, communicable, useful, susceptible to development. And just as it is the consciousness of a necessary development, so it becomes at the same time the necessary precondition of the development which must follow.

The clarification of this function of the theory opens up the way to a knowledge of its very essence: that is, of the dialectic method. Ignoring this simple and decisive point has introduced a tremendous confusion into the discussion of the dialectic. For whether one criticizes Engels' formulations in *Anti-Dühring* (crucial for the further development of theory), or whether one conceives the book as incomplete, even as inadequate, or considers it as a classic, it must be generally recognized that it is deficient in precisely this aspect. In effect, Engles conceptualizes the dialectic by opposing it to the "metaphysical" conceptulation. He emphasizes with penetration the fact that, in the dialectic method, the rigidity of concepts (and of the objects which correspond to them) is dissolved, that the dialectic is the continuous process of the continuous transformation of one determination into another, resolving contraries which pass into each other. And he argues that, consequently, the unilateral, rigid causality must be replaced by reciprocal action. But the most essential interaction, *the dialectical relation of subject and object in the process of history,* is not even mentioned, not to say placed in the very center of the methodological consideration where it belongs. Abstracted from this determination the dialectic method, in spite of any affirmation in the last instance of "fluid" concepts, ceased to be a revolutionary method. The difference between the dialectic and "metaphysics" should not then be sought in the fact that all metaphysical studies require the object of investigation to be untouched and unchanging, and that the conception consequently remains "contemplative'" (*anschauende*) and cannot become practical, but in the fact that for the dialectic the central problem is the *transformation of reality.*

If one neglects this central function of the theory, then the advantage of a "fluid" conception becomes problematic, a purely "scientific" affair. The method can be accepted or rejected in accord with the state of science, but without changing one's attitude toward the question of whether reality is changeable or immutable. The inpenetrability of reality, its "fatal" and unchanging character, its conformity to law in the sense of bourgeois, contemplative materialism and its classical economics, this can even be reinforced as it was among those Machians who were adepts at Marxism. The fact that Mach's thought could produce voluntarism—equally bourgeois—does not contradict this point. Fatalism and voluntarism are only contradictory in a non-dialectic, non-historic perspective. In the dialectic conception of history, these are polarities united by a single bond, they are the simple play of purely intellectual reflections which express the antagonism of the capitalist order and its inability of resolving its own problems on its own terms.

This is why all attempts to deepen the dialectic method in a "critical" manner necessarily end up as a degradation. In effect, the methodological point of departure for the "critical" position consists precisely in separating method and reality, thought and being. In this separation, this point of view sees a valuable progress, the attainment of an authentically scientific science which is opposed to the gross and non-critical method of Marxism. These people are free, of course, to make their point. But then it must be recognized that they are not moving in the direction which leads to the very essence of the dialectic method.

Marx and Engels have expressed this unambiguously. Engels wrote, "By this, the dialectic was reduced to the science of general laws of movement, laws of the exterior world as well as of human thought—to two series of laws . . . identical in substance." And Marx put it even more precisely, "As in all social and historical sciences, one must always realize when considering the movement of economic categories, that the categories express the forms and conditions of existence . . ." [1] When this sense of the dialectic is obscured, then it necessarily appears as a useless supplement, an ornament to the "sociology" or the "economics" of Marxism. It seems to be an obstacle to the "sober and impartial" study of the "facts," as an empty construction by means of which Marxism does violence to the facts. Bernstein has expressed this objection to the dialectic method in the most precise and clear fashion, in the name of his "impartiality," a concept untroubled by any philosophic comprehension. Still he shows us the very real political and economic consequences which he deduces from this desire to liberate method from the "dialectic trap" of Hegelianism; he indicates where his approach leads. For Bernstein demonstrates that one must separate the dialectic from historical materialism if one wishes to originate a serious theory of the opportunities of "evolution" without revolution, of a transition to socialism without struggle.

1. K. Marx, **Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy.** This limitation of the method to the historical and social reality is extremely important. The misunderstandings which Engels' treatment of the matter have produced developed because Engels—following Hegel—understood the dialectic as applying to the understanding of nature. But the decisive determinations of the dialectic—the reciprocal action of object and subject, the unity of theory and "praxis," the historic modification of the substratum of categories as the foundation of modifications in thought, etc., are not found in the natural sciences. Unfortunately, this is not the place to discuss this question in detail.

2

BUT THIS IMMEDIATELY raises a question: what is the meaning from the point of view of method of these facts which are so adored in revisionist literature? In what measure can one see in them the factors for the orientation of the revolutionary proletariat? Obviously, all knowledge of reality starts with facts. But then the problem is: which data (and in which methodological context must it be placed), should be considered relevant for our understanding? A narrow empiricism denies that a fact does not really become a fact except in the course of an elaboration according to a method. It finds in each bit of data, in each statistic, in each "factum brutus" of the economic life, an important fact. It does not understand that the simplest enumeration of "facts," an ordering of them completely devoid of commentary, is already an interpretation, that at this stage the facts are already examined from a point of view, a method, that they have been abstracted from the living context in which they were found and introduced into a theory. The opportunists are more refined despite their repugnance to theory. They do not deny all this, but rather base themselves upon the method of

natural science, the manner in which it investigates the "pure" fact through observation, abstraction and experimentation, its ability to discover interrelations. And they oppose this as an ideal of knowledge to the violent constructions of the dialectic.

The insidious character of such a method is that capitalism itself, in the course of its development, produces a social structure which meets it half-way. And here, we must have recourse to the dialectic method so that we will not be taken in by this social illusion, so that we will be able to go behind the facade and discover the real essence of the matter. The "pure" facts of the natural sciences come into being in the following manner: a phenomenon is transported from life into a context which permits us to study the laws which it obeys without the disturbing intervention of other phenomenon (this is done either actually, or in the mind); this procedure is then reinforced by the fact that the phenomena are reduced to their quantative essence, to their numerical expression and relations. And what the opportunists do not understand is that it is of the very essence of capitalism to produce phenomena in such a way. Marx described a "process of abstraction" from existance in his treatment of labor, but he did not forget to insist vigorously that in this case he was dealing with a characteristic of capitalist society: "Thus, the most general abstractions do not commonly develop except in the course of the richest, most concrete evolution where one feature seems to be jointly possessed by many things, and is common to all of them. Then it ceases to be thought of uniquely, under its particular form." This tendency of capitalist evolution has now developed considerably. The fetishistic character of economic forms, the re-ification of all human relations, the increasing extention of a division of labor which, with an abstract rationality, atomizes the process of production without regard for the human capacities and potentialities of the actual producers, etc., this process transforms the phenomena of society and with them our perceptions of them. Now "isolated" facts appear, there are groups of isolated facts and specific sectors which have their own laws (economic theory, law, etc), and these seem to have paved the way, in their very immediate reality, for this kind of scientific study. Thus, it appears to be "scientific" to raise to the level of science a tendency which is inherent in the facts themselves. But the dialectic insists upon the concrete unity of the whole in opposition to all of these isolated facts and partial systems, it unmasks this illusion of appearances which is necessarily produced by capitalism.

The unscientific nature of this seemingly scientific method resides in the fact that it does not perceive the *historical character* of the facts which it uses as its basis, indeed that it ignores this historical character. But we do not have here simply that source of error which Engels called to our attention. The essence of this source of error is located in the fact that statistics, and the "exact" economic theory which are built upon them, lag behind actual developments. "For contemporary history, one will often be forced to treat the most decisive factor as constant, assuming that the economic situation which is found at the beginning of the period continues throughout the period without variation, or else take notice of such changes in this situation as arise out of patently manifest events themselves and are, therefore,

quite obvious." [2] But in the fact that capitalist society meets the natural sciences halfway, that it is the social precondition of its exactitude, in this state of affairs, there is something completely problematic. If, then, the internal structure of "facts" and their relations is essentially known in a historic manner, if they are seen as implicated in a process of uninterrupted revolution, we must ask where the greatest inexactitude lies. It is when the "facts" are perceived under a form of objectivity wherein they are dominated by laws which I know with a methodological certainty (or at least, probability) are not valid for these facts? Or is it when I consciously recognize the consequences of this situation and therefore adopt a critical attitude toward the certitude which is achieved, concentrating upon the moments in which this historic character, this decisive modification, actually manifests itself?

Thus, the historical character of the "facts" which science believes it perceives in their "purity" is fatal to this illusion. As products of historical evolution, these facts are not only involved in continual change. More than that, they are—*precisely in the structure of their objectivity – the product of a specific historic epoch: that of capitalism.* Consequently, a "science" which takes the immediacy of the facts as its basis, which sees this form of their objectivity as the point of departure for scientific conceptualization, places itself simply and dogmatically upon the terrain of capitalist society. Essentially, it accepts uncritically the structure of the object as it is given, and it takes its laws as the immutable fundament of "science."

2. **Introduction to the Class Struggles in France.** But one should not forget that exactness in the natural sciences presupposes precisely this "constancy" of elements. This methodological exigency has already been posed by Galileo.

To move from such "facts" to facts in the true sense of the word, one must penetrate behind the historic conditioning of the facts; one cannot accept them as given and immediate. In short, the facts must be submitted to a historical dialectical treatment, for as Marx has noted, "The finished form which economic relations manifest upon their surface in their actual existence, and consequently the representations of them out of which the bearers and agents of these relations seek to develop a clear idea of them, these are quite different from the inner form which is essential but hidden, they are different from the concept which really corresponds to the form." [3] If the facts are to be known accurately, we must understand the difference between their immediate appearance and inner core (*kern*) with clarity and precision; we must distinguish between the representation of the fact, and the concept of it. This distinction is the first pre-condition of scientific study which, as Marx pointed out, 'would be superfluous if the phenomenal manifestation and the essence of things were immediately identical." Thus, we must go behind the immediate appearance of facts and discover the core, the essence. In doing so, we will understand their appearance as the necessary form which their inner core takes—neccessary because of the historic character of facts, because they are posed on the terrain of capitalist society. This double determination which simultaneously recognizes and goes beyond the immediate fact, this is precisely the dialectical relation.

The internal structure of *Capital* thus causes precisely the greatest dif-

3. Capital, III, 1. This distinction (which is analyzed into the dialectical moments of appearance, manifestation and reality) comes from Hegel's Logic. Unfortunately, we cannot develop here how basic this distinction is to the ideas of The Capital. The distinction between representation and concept also comes from Hegel.

ficulty to the superficial reader who uncritically accepts the categories of thought proper to capitalist development. On the one hand the exposition pushes the capitalist character of the economic forms to its extreme limit and constitutes a perspective in which these categories are pure and describe a society which "corresponds to theory," indeed, a society completely capitalist, composed only of proletarians and capitalists. But on the other hand, as soon as this conception is worked out, as soon as the world of phenomena seems to be crystallized theoretically, this result itself dissolves into a simple appearance, it is seen as a simple inverted selection of a group of facts which are themselves inverted, a selection which is nothing but "the conscious expression of the apparent movement."

Only in this context can one integrate the different facts of social life (in as much as they are elements of a historic becoming) into a *totality,* only in this way does the knowledge of facts become the knowledge of *reality.* This knowledge begins with simple determinations which are pure, immediate and natural (to the capitalist world). It goes from them to a knowledge of the concrete totality as the conceptual reproduction of reality. This concrete totality is, of course, never immediately apparent. "The concrete is concrete," Marx writes, "because it is the synthesis of many determinations, i.e, the unity of diverse elements"

But at this point, idealism falls into the error of confusing the conceptual reproduction of reality with the structural process of reality itself. For "in our thought, reality appears as a process of synthesis, as a result, and not as a starting point, although it is the real starting point and, therefore, also the starting point of observation and conception." On the other hand, vulgar materialism—even, as in the case of Bernstein and others, it is most modern in form—is content to reproduce the most immediate and simple determinations of social life. It feels that it is particularly "exact" in accepting these determinations without any serious analysis, without relating them to the concrete totality, it takes the facts in an abstract isolation and attempts to explain them by abstract scientific laws which are not a part of the concrete totality. "The crudity and shortcomings of this conception," wrote Marx, "lie in the tendency to see but an accidental, reflexive connection in that which is really an organic union."[4]

The conceptual grossness and emptiness of such an approach is located, above all, in the fact that it obscures the historic and transitory character of capitalist society. In it, its determinations appear as timeless and eternal categories common to all social orders. This was apparent in its most obvious form in bourgeois economics, but vulgar Marxism soon took the same path. The dialectic method, with its methodological dominance of the totality over the patricular aspect was destroyed, the part no longer found its conception and reality in the whole but, on the contrary, the whole was eliminated from investigation as an unscientific element (or was reduced to a simple "idea," to a sum of the parts). And as soon as this was done, the reflexive relations of isolated elements appeared to be the eternal law of all human society. Marx' formulation that "the relations of production of a given society form a whole" is, in opposition to this approach, the methodological point of departure, it is the key to the *historica understanding* of social relations. All isolated and partial categories can be conceived (in their isolation) as having always been present during the evolution of human society. (If one doesn't find them in a particular social form, then that is the exception that proves the rule.) Thus, the real stages of social evolution are unclear and ambiguous when they are viewed as changes which take place among isolated, partial elements. And they are most clear when seen in terms of the *change in function* of the various elements in the whole process of history, in the alterations of their relations to the totality of society.

4. Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy. The category of the reflexive connection also comes from Hegel's Logic.

3

This dialectical conception of reality seems to be far distant from the immediate reality, it appears to construct its relations in a nonscientific fashion. Yet it is, in fact, the only method of conceptually knowing and reproducing reality.

The concrete totality is thus the fundamental category of reality.[5] The correctness of this perspective becomes apparent when we place the real, material substratum of our method—capitalist society with its internal antagonism between the forces and relations of production—at the very center of our study. The method of the natural sciences, the ideal method of all reflexive science and of all revisionism, does not recognize contradiction and antagonism in its object. If it nevertheless encounters a contradiction between different theories, it conceives this situation as a consequence of the incompleteness of knowledge which has been achieved. Thus, theories which seem to be in contradiction are thought to have the limits of their validity established by that fact, and they are modified and subsumed under more general theories in which these contradictions decisively disappear. But in the case of the social reality, these contradictions are not a result of insufficient scientific comprehension. *They belong, rather to the very essence of reality, to the essence of capitalist society.* And they will not be subsumed under the knowledge of the totality so as to suppress the contradiction. On the contrary, they will be understood as a necessary development out of the antagonistic capitalist order of production.

Thus, when theory, (taken as the knowledge of the whole) opens up the way to a resolution of the contradictions, it does so by showing *real tendencies* of social development which must *actually* resolve these contradictions which emerge in the course of social evolution.

In this perspective, the opposition between the "critical" method (or vulgar materialism, Machism, etc.) is a social problem. The method of the natural sciences can only serve the progress of science when it is applied to nature. But used to understand the evolution of society, it is an instrument of the ideological struggle of the bourgeoisie. It is vital for the bourgeoisie to conceive of its own order of production in terms of categories which have a timeless validity; it must see capitalism as destined to an eternal existence because of the laws of nature and reason. Conversely, it judges the contradictions which are inevitably imposed upon its thought as surface facts and not as phenomena which belong to the very essence of capitalism.

The method of classical economy is

5. For those readers who are particularly interested in this methodological point, it should be noted that in Hegel's logic the relation between the whole and the parts constitutes the dialectic passage from existance to reality. And it should be emphasized that the problem which we have discussed, that of the relation between the interior and the exterior, is for Hegel also a problem of totality.

a product of this ideological function of bourgeois thought. And its limitations as a scientific approach are a consequence of the social reality, of the antagonistic character of capitalist production. If a thinker of the stature of a Ricardo denied the "necessity of the expansion of the market corresponding to the augmentation of production and the increase of capital," he did so (unconsciously, to be sure) in order to escape recognizing the necessity of crises. For these crises reveal in the most obvious and fundamental fashion the basic antagonism of capitalist production and the fact that "the bourgeois mode of production implies a limitation of the free development of the productive forces." But then Ricardo's error in good faith became the consciously misleading analysis of bourgeois society put forward by the vulgar economists.

Vulgar Marxism came to the very same pass—whether it was trying to eliminate the dialectic method from proletarian science in a systematic fashion, or was affirming the dialectic "critically." Thus, to cite a grotesque case, Max Adler attempted to separate the dialectic as method, as the movement of thought, from the dialectic of being, as a metaphysic. At the very summit of his "critique," he comes up with the dialectic in so far as it is "a matter of positive science," which "one thinks of in the first place when one speaks of a real dialectic in Marxism." Then he terms this dialectic more accurately as an "antagonism . . . which simply demonstrates that an opposition exists between the egoistic interest of the individual and the social forms in which he finds himself." By this stroke, the objective economic antagonism which expresses itself in the *class struggle* is dissolved into a conflict between the *individual and society*. On such a basis, one cannot understand the necessity of the emergence, internal problems and decline of capitalist society. The end result is, willy-nilly, a Kantian philosophy of history. And conversely, this approach makes the structure of bourgeois society universal, the form of society in general, because the central problem which Max Adler attacks, that of the "dialectic, or rather the antagonism," is none other than a typical ideological form of the capitalist social order. Thus it matters little in the final analysis whether the eternalization of capitalism takes place in terms of economics or of philosophy, whether it is done naively and with innocence or with extreme critical refinement.

In this perspective, the rejection or destruction of the dialectic method means that history looses its intelligebility. This doesn't imply, of course, that an exact description of certain personalities, or historic epochs, is impossible outside of the dialectic method. It does mean that one cannot understand history as a unitary process without the dialectic method. (This impossibility is expressed in bourgeois science. On the one hand, there are the abstract and sociological constructions of historical development of the type of Spence or August Compte—whose internal contradictions have been exposed by modern bourgeois historians, particularly by Rickert. And on the other hand, there are the exigencies of a "philosophy of history" whove very relation to historical reality appears as a methodologically insoluble problem.)

This opposition between a particular aspect of history and history conceived as a unitary process is not a simple matter of differing scope, as for example it is in the case of the difference between particular and universal history. Rather it involves

methodological contradiction, it counterposes points of view. The problem of the unitary understanding of the historic process is necessarily posed at the very center of the study of each epoch, of each partial sector of history, etc. And it is here that the decisive importance of the dialectic conception of reality reveals itself for we see that it is possible to describe a historical event with essential accuracy without being able to understand the event as it actually happened, without comprehending its real function in the historic whole, in the unity of the historic process. A typical example of such a development is that of Sismondi's treatment of the problem of crisis. He understands the immanent evolutionary tendencies of production as well as of distribution, he makes a penetrating critique of capitalism. And yet, he is ultimately stranded. For he remains nevertheless a prisoner of capitalist objectivity and must conceive of the two immanent tendencies as independent of each other. "He does not understand that the relations of distribution are nothing but the relations of production sub alia specie." And thus, he is the victim of the same fate which overtook the false dialectic of Proudhon: "he transforms the different partial elements of society into so many societies in themselves."

WE REPEAT: the category of totality does not suppress the consituent elements and dissolve them into an undifferentiated unity, into an identity. The manifest form of their independence, of their autonomy (an autonomy which they possess in the order of capitalist production) will seem to be a pure appearance only if they are not conceived of dialectically, as the dynamic moments of a whole which is, itself, equally dialectic and dynamic. "The result which we move toward," wrote Marx, "is not that we say that production, exchange and consumption are identical, but rather that they are the members which form a totality, the difference at the center of a unity. . . . A certain form of production thus determines certain forms of consumption, distribution and exchange and *certain mutual relations between these different aspects.* . . . There is a reciporcal influence between these different aspects at the same time as the problam is one of an organic totality."

But then, we cannot stop at the category of reciprocal action. For one can think of reciprocal action as the simple, reciprocal causal action of two objects which are otherwise unchangeable, and not advance a single stop toward the understanding of social reality. This is the case with the univocal causality of vulgar materialism (or the functional relations of Machism, etc.). There is, for example, a reciprocal action when a billiard ball at rest is pushed by another ball into movement. The first is placed in movement; the second modifies its direction because of the contact, etc. . . . But the reciprocal action of which we speak goes far beyond such a case, beyond that which takes place between objects which are otherwise unchaining. And to do so, we must speak in terms of a relation to the whole. This relation to the whole becomes the determination which conditions the form of objectivity of each object, and every relevant and essential change manifest itself in terms of a change in relation to the whole and, through this, as a change in the form of objectivity itself.[6]

6. The particularly refined opportunism of Cunow reveals itself in that he changes the concept of the whole (of the ensemble, of the totality) into that of the sum, thus suppressing all dialectic relation, and that he does this despite his well-rounded knowledge of the Marxist texts. See his Marxist Theory of History, Society and the State.

Marx made this point in many places. Let me cite only one of the best known texts: "A Negro is a Negro, but only under certain conditions does he become a slave. A machine to weave cotton is a machine to weave cotton; but only under certain conditions is it Capital. Separated from these conditions, it is as little capital as gold is, in itself, money or sugar is the price of sugar." Consequently, the forms of objectivity of all social phenomena change constantly. The intelligibility of an object develops in terms of the object's function in the whole, and only the conception of totality makes it possible for us to comprehend this *reality as a social process.* It is only in this context that the fetishistic forms necessarily engendered by capitalism dissolve and become the more appearances which they are (even though they are necessary appearances). Thus, the reflexive relation of fetishistic forms, their "conformity to law," develops necesssarily within capitalist society and conceals the real relation between objects. These relations we now understand as the necessary representation of the object made by those who participate in capitalist production. They are, then, an object of understanding, but known only under fetishistic forms; they reveal, not the capitalist order itself, but the ideology of the dominant class.

Only when this veil of fetishistic categories has been ripped aside can one come to historical understanding. For the function of these fetishistic forms is to make capitalist society appear as super-historic, and a real knowledge of the objective character of phenomenon, a knowledge of their historic character and actual function in the totality of society, forms an undivided act of the understanding. But the psuedo-scientific method shatters this unity. Thus, the distinction between constant and variable capital, crucial for economics, became possible through the dialectic method. Classical economics was unable to go beyond the distinction between fixed and circulating capital. This was not accidental. For "variable capital is nothing but a particular form of the historic appearance of the means of subsistance, that is of the labor which the worker requires for his maintenance and reproduction and which he must produce and reproduce in all systems of social production. This labor is only returned to the worker under the form of payment for his work, while his own product is always alienated from him under the form of capital. . . . The commodity form of the product and the money form of the sale hid this transaction."

Thus, the fetishistic forms hide relationships, they envelop all of capitalist phenomena so as to mask their transitory, historic character. This is possible because the forms of objectivity under which capitalist society necessarily and immediately appears to the man living in it to conceal economic categories, their own essence as a form of objectivity, the fact that it is a category expressing *relations* between men. Consequently, the forms of objectivity appear as things and as relations between thing. And at the same time that the dialectic unmasks the eternal appearance of these categories, it also reveals their "re-ified" character in order to open up the way to a knowledge of reality. Economics, writes Engels in his *Commentary on the Critique of Political Economy,* "does not treat of things, but of the relations between persons and, in the last instances, between classes; but these relations are always *bound to things and appear as things.*"

It is in this context that the total character of the dialectic method manifests itself as a knowledge of the reality of historic process. It might seem that this dialectic relation of part to whole is a simple reflexive determination in which the actual categories of social reality are no more present than in bourgeois economics. It might seem that the superiority of dialectics over bourgeois economics is only methodological. But the real difference is more profound, it is a matter of principle. Each economic category reveals a determined relation between men at a specific level of historic evolution, a relation which is made conscious and developed as an idea. Consequently, the movement of human society itself can be known in its inner meaning as the product of men themselves, as the result of forces which emerge out of their relations and escape their control. The categories of economics then become dialectic and dynamic in a double sense. They are in a vital interaction with one another as "purely economic" categories and aid us to understand various sections of social evolution. But also, since they have their origins in human relations, since they function in the process of the transformation of human relations, they lay bare the process of evolution in the reciprocal action which they themselves have with the actual substratum of their operation.

This is to say that the production and reproduction of a specific economic totality which science must understand necessarily transforms itself in the course of the production and reproduction of a given, whole society (transcending "pure" economics, but without invoking any transcendtal force). Marx often insisted upon this point. For example: "The capitalist process of production considered in its continuity, or as a process of reproduction, does not only produce merchandise, or even surplus value; it produces and reproduces the social relation between capitalist and employe."

TO POSE ONE'S SELF, to produce and reproduce one's self—this is, precisely, what *reality* consists of. Hegel recognized this, expressing it almost as Marx did, but abstractly, in a way that could lead to misunderstanding. "That which is real is necessary in itself," he wrote in the *Philosophy of Right.* "Necessity here means that the totality is divided into the distinctions of concepts, and that this division reveals a solid, resistant determination (*bestimmtheit*) and not a deadly solidity; it reveals that which continually reconstitutes itself in the midst of dissolution." But here, even as we remark the closeness of historical materialism and Hegel's philosophy—both conceiving theory as the self-knowledge of reality—we must be concerned with the decisive difference between the two theories. This is found in the treatment of the problem of reality and of the unity of the historic process.

Marx reproached Hegel (and even more his successors who turned back to Fichte and Kant) for not having really surmounted the duality of thought and being, of theory and practice, of subject and object. He argued that Hegel had not gone beyond Kant on this decisive point, that his dialectic was a simple appearance and not the actual, interior dialectic of the historic process. He held that Hegel's knowledge of matter was *in the subject* and not the self-acknowledgment of matter, as in society. "Already in Hegel's case," the crucial section of his critique notes, "the absolute spirit has its content in the masses, but its expression is restricted to philosophy. This is why philosophy seems to be the organ through which the absolute spirit makes history, emerging into

consciousness after the unfolding of the movement, after the fact. The participation of philosophy in history is thus limited to a consciousness after the event, for the absolute spirit accomplishes the real movement unconsciously. Thus, philosophy comes "post festum" Thus, Hegel does not allow the "absolute spirit," as absolute spirit, to make history, except in appearance For in effect, the absolute spirit does not become conscious of itself as creator of the world until after the event, and its making of history only exists in the consciousness, in the opinion and representation of the philosophers, in the speculative imagination" This conceptual mythology was definitively eliminated by the critical activity of the young Marx.

It is not accidental that Marx arrived at his own view in the course of opposing a movement which was already recoiling from Hegel, which was going back to Kant. This movement seized upon all of the obscurities and internal ambiguities of Hegel in order to eliminate all the revolutionary elements from his thought; it harmonized the vestiges of the contemplative duality of thought and being, the conceptual mythology, with the completely reactionary philosophy of Germany at that time. By becoming a partisan of the progressive in the Hegelian method, Marx not only separated himself from these successors of Hegel—he created a schism in the Hegelian philosophy itself. For Marx took the historic tendency which he found in Hegel to its limits. He transformed all social phenomena, all aspects of social man, into historic problems, he showed the real substratum of historic evolution and developed a fertile method in the doing.

Marx applied the measure which he had discovered and methodically developed to the Hegelian philosophy, and he found it wanting. Indeed, the myth-making vestiges of "eternal values" which he eliminated from the dialectic were similar to the philosophic elements which Hegel himself fought ceaselessly throughout his life, and against which he had marshalled his entire philosophic method, with its process and concrete reality, its dialectic and history. In this context, the Marxist critique of Hegel is thus the direct continuation of Hegel's own critique of Kant and Fichte.[7]

Thus, the dialectic method of Marx is the continuation of that which Hegel sought but did not attain. While, on the other hand, the dead body of the Hegelian texts has become the prey of the philologists and makers of systems.

But the point of rupture between Marx and Hegel is the question of reality. Hegel was unable to see the real motor force of history. In part, this was the case because these forces were not sufficiently visible during the period of the genesis of his philosophy. Consequently, he did not recognize that the people and their consciousness were the effective bearers of historic development; he did not see the real substratum, in all its variousness, but instead put forward the mythology of the "Spirit of the people." Yet Hegel failed for another reason: that, despite all his tremendous efforts to the contrary, he remained caught in Platonic and Kantian forms of thought continuing the duality of

7. It is not surprising that Cunow attempts to correct Marx by reference to a Kant-oriented Hegel on the very point where Marx surpassed Hegel radically. He opposes the Hegelian state (as an eternal value) to the purely historic conception of the state in Marx, and claims that the "faults" of the Hegelian state—its function as an instrument of class oppression—are only "historic things" and do not determine its essence and direction.

For Cunow, Marx is here a retrogression from Hegel because he considers the question "from a political, and not a sociological, point of view." Thus, there is no such thing as going beyond Hegel for the opportunists. If they do not go back to the vulgar materialism of Kant, then they use the reactionary content of the Hegelian philosophy of the state in order to eliminate the revolutionary dialectic of Marxism and thus eternalize bourgeois society.

thought and being, of form and matter. Even though he was the discoverer of the significance of the concrete reality, even though he sought to go beyond all abstractions, matter nevertheless remained for him (and in this, he was quite Platonic) sullied by the "stain of being specific" (*makel der bestimmtheit*)

Because of these contradictory tendencies, Hegel was unable to clarify his own system. Often, he juxtaposes contraries without mediation, they are presented contradictorily and without any possibility of internal recirpocity. And consequently, his system looks to the past as much as toward the future.[8] It is thus hardly surprising that bourgeois science very early borrowed from Hegel. And were it not for the Marxists, the very core of Hegel's thought, its revolutionary content, would have been obscured.

CONCEPTUAL MYTHOLOGIES always signify that some fundamental fact of man's existance has eluded him, a fact so basic that is consequences cannot be repressed. This inability to penetrate the object then results in an appeal to transcendental motor forces which construct and structure reality, the relations between objects, our relations with them and the modification of the historic process, in a mythological fashion. The recognition that "the production and reproduction of real life is, in the last instant, the determining element in history," meant that Marx and Engels had, for the first time, found the possibility of liquidating all mythology, that they had reached solid ground for the accomplishment of this task. The absolute spirit of Hegel was thus the last of those grandiose mythological forms in which the totality and its movement expressed itself in a way that was unconscious of its true essence. Thus, that reason "which had always existed, but not always under a reasonable form" achieved its "reasonable" form in historical materialism through the discovery of its basic substratum. And the program of the Hegelian philosophy of history was achieved through the destruction of Hegelianism. For in opposition to nature in which, as Hegel emphasizes, "change is circular, a repetition," change in history is not simply produced "on the surface, but in the concept." And the concept itself is corrected by the change of history.

Only in this context can the viewpoint of dialectic materialism ("that it is not the consciousness of men which determines their being, but o nthe contrary, their social being which determines their consciousness) pass beyond the purely theoretical and pose the problem of "praxis." For its is only when the core (*kern*) of being is revealed as social process that being appears as the product, in the past unconscious, of human activity, and this activity is seen as the decisive element in the transformation of being. Purely natural relations, or social forms mystified into natural relations, oppose themselves to man. They seem to be fixed, achieved, unchangeable and given, an essence which can be known but not transformed. And such a conception places the possibility of "praxis" in the individual consciousness. "Praxis" becomes a form of activity of the isolated individual, an ethic. The attempt of Fuerbach to go beyond Hegel came to grief on this very point: he did not go beyond the isolated individual of

8. The position of Hegel vis-a-vis the national economy is quite characteristic of this fact (cf. Philosophy of Right). He recognizes clearly that the fundamental methodological problem is that of contingency and necessity (as, in a way, Engels did), but he is unable to comprehend the fundamental meaning of the material substratum of the economy, the relation of men to each other. This remains for him a "swarm of anarchcic wills," and laws resembles a "plantary system."

"bourgeois society" and in this he was at one with German idealism and Hegel himself.

Marx demanded that we understand "sensuousness," the object, the reality and the sensuous human activity. This implied that man had reached a consciousness of himself as a social being, similtaneously conceived as the subject and object of the historic-social becoming. Feudal man could not achieve a consciousness of himself as a social being since his social relations themselves had a natural character—society itself was so little organized, it was so little a unity of the totality of human relations, that it could not appear to consciousness as *the* human reality. (The question of the structure and unity of feudal society cannot be taken up here.) Bourgeois society accomplished the socialization of society. Capitalism destroyed all spatial and temporal barriers between the different countries and places, as it shattered the juridical wall of separation which maintained the stability of "estates." In a universe of formal equality among men, the economic relations which ruled the immediate material exchange between man and nature disappeared. Man became—in the true sense of the world—a social being, society became *the* reality for man.

Thus, it is only on the terrain of capitalism, of bourgeois society, that it is possible to recognize society as reality. However the bourgeoisie, the class which was the historic agent of this revolution, accomplished its function without consciousness. The very social forces which it liberated, which it brought to power, seemed to the bourgeoisie to be a second nature, more soul-less and impenetrable than that of feudalism. It is only with the appearance of the proletariat that the consciousness of the social reality finds its achievement. And this is because the point of view of the proletariat is one from which the totality of society becomes visible. Consequently as the doctrine of historical materialism emerged it was both the "condition for the liberation of the proletariat," and the doctrine of the reality of the total process of historic development. This was true precisely because it was a matter of vital need, a question of life or death, for the proletariat to attain a perfectly clear vision of its situation as a class. This knowledge was only comprehensible in terms of the knowledge of the totality of society, and the resultant consciousness was the inevitable precondition of proletarian action. The unity of theory and "praxis" is, then, only the other face of the historic social situation of the proletariat, a situation which makes self-knowledge and knowledge of the totality co-incide. Thus, the proletariat is both the subject and object of its proper knowledge.

For the vocation of leading humanity to a higher level of development requires, as Hegel rightly remarked (though he applied his insight to "peoples"), the fact that "these stages of evolution present themselves as immediate, natural principles," and that "the people" (that is, the class) "who receive such an element as a natural principle have the mission of applying it." Marx concretized this idea with a clarity that extends to all of social evolution: "when socialist writers attribute a world-historical role to the proletariat, it is not because they consider the proletarian god-like. Far from it. Because the abstraction of humanity from itself is achieved in the fully-formed proletariat; because the paroxysms of the most inhuman of all the conditions of life are subsumed in the life

of the proletariat; because in this existance, man is not only lost but theoretically conscious of this fact and is impelled by the imperious, unavoidable and immediate misery—the practical expression of this necessity—to revolt against this inhumanity; because of this the proletariat can and must necessarily liberate itself. But it cannot liberate itself without surpressing its proper conditions of life. And it cannot end its proper conditions of life without ending all the inhuman conditions of the society around it."

Thus, the methodological essence of historical materialism cannot be separated from the "practical-critical activity" of the proletariat. The two are aspects of the same evolutionary process of society. Consequently, the knowledge of reality which is at the center of the dialectic cannot be separated from the point of view of the proletariat. To raise, as the "Austro-Marxists" do, the question of methodologically separating the pure science of Marxism from its socialism is to pose a false problem. For the Marxist method, the dialectical materialist knowledge of reality is only possible from the class point of view, from the vantage point of class struggle. To abandon this point of view is to leave just as to reach this point of view is to enter directly into the struggle of the proletariat.

Historical materialism thus emerges as a vital, "immediate, natural" principle of the proletariat, and the total knowledge of reality is made possible by this class point of view. But this does not mean that this knowledge, and the methodology behind it, is innate or natural to the proletariat as a class (and even less so to the proletarian individual). On the contrary. Certainly the proletariat is the knowing subject, but not in the Kantian sense where the subject is defined as that which can never become an object. The proletariat is not an impartial spectator of the historic process. It is not merely a partisan, active and passive, part of the whole. The increase and development of its knowledge, on the one hand, and its increase and development as a class in the course of history on the other, are but two sides of the same real process. This is not simply because the class itself does not become "formed into a class" except through incessant struggle beginning with the spontaneous desperation of immediate acts (the destruction of machines is a simple example of these beginnings). More than that, the consciousness of social reality achieved by the proletariat, its understanding of its proper position as a class and its historic vocation—the method of the materialist conception of history—are also the products of this same process of evolution which historical materialism comprehends adequately and in its reality for the first time in history.

In this context, the revisionist separation of the movement from the final goal represents a retrogression to a primitive level of the worker's movement. The final goal is not a state which awaits the proletariat at the end of a process, it is not independent of the process and of the path which it takes, it is not a "state of the future." Consequently, one cannot forget the final goal during the course of daily struggle and remember it only as an ideal which is stated in a Sunday sermon. It is not a "duty," not an idea which plays a regulative role in the "real" process. The final goal is precisely *the relation to the totality* (to the totality of society considered as a historic process) through which, and only through which, each moment of struggle acquires its revolutionary content. It takes the daily

struggle from a level of facility, of simpleness, to that of reality. Therefore, one must never forget that every effort to preserve the "final goal," or the "essence of the proletariat, in a state of purity while the sordid reation with the existence takes place ends up by making the comprehension of reality more distant. And then, the "critical-practical" activity falls back into a utopian duality of subject and object, of theory and "praxis" just as surely as revisonism itself leads to this pass.

The practical danger of all dualistic conceptions of this type is that they spirit away the very element which gives action its direction. For as soon as one goes to the "natural" terrain of existance, to the pure, simple and vulgar "empirical"—as soon as one abandons the terrain of reality where dialectical materialism conquers and reconquers—then the subject of the action is opposed to the milieu of "facts" in which the action must develop. There is no mediation between the subject and the fact, they are two separate principles. And it is as little possible to impose the will, the product of subjective decision, upon the objective facts as it is to discover a direction for action in the facts themselves. For a situation in which the "facts" speak unamibuously for or against a specific action has never existed, cannot exist, and will never exist. The more the facts are taken in their isolation (that is, in their reflexive relation), the less are they able to point toward a specific orientation. And it is obvious that the power of unmastered facts which automatically act "according to plan" will shatter the subjective decision.

Thus, the fashion in which the dialectic method approaches reality reveals itself precisely when one turns to the problem of action, for it alone is capable of orienting action. The self-consciousness of the proletariat, both objective and subjective, at a given moment of its evolution is, at the same time, an understanding of the level which the epoch has attained in social evolution. The facts are no longer "strange" when they are seen in the coherence of the real, in the rootedness of each particular moment in the totality (a rootedness which is immanent, and not simply revealed). And thus the tendencies which drive reality become visible—or, in other words, the final goal becomes visible.

The final goal is not, therefore, counterposed to the process as an abstract ideal. It is, on the contrary, the very sense of the process which is immanent at a given stage, and the comprehension of it is preciselp a knowledge of the (unconscious) tendencies which lead toward totality. As a result, the orientation of a specific action is made in terms of the interest of the entire process, of the liberation of the proletariat.

Yet, the social evolution ceasely develops a tensilon between the partial moment and the totality. Precisely because the immanent sense of reality radiates with increasing sharpness, the sense of process becomes ever more immanent in the daily action, totality permeates the momentary, spatial-temporal character of phenomenon. But the way of consciousness does not become easier in the course of the historic process. On the contrary, it always becomes more arduous and demands greater and greater responsibility. This is why the function of orthodox Marxism, its going beyond revisionism and utopia, is not a final liquidation of these false tendencies, but a ceaseless, ever-renewed struggle against the perverting influence of bourgeois ideology in proletarian thought. This orthodoxy is not the guardian of tradition, but rather the herald which must always proclaim the relation between the instant and its tactics to the totality of the his toric process. And thus, the words of the Communist Manifesto on the tasks of orthodoxy and of its partisans are not outdated, but always remain crucial: "The Communist differentiate themselves from other proletararian parties on two points: on the one hand, that in the various struggles of the workers they place in the fore and defend the interests which are common to the proletariat and independent of nationality; and on the other hand, that in the various phases of the struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, they constantly represent the interest of the total movement."

GEORGE LUKACS

MAGAZINE CHRONICLE

Confusion by Admission

Dwight MacDonald's reminiscences of his days in the socialist movement were published some time ago (In the March and April, 1957, issues of *Encounter*), yet there is a certain fitness in taking them up in these pages, even if belatedly. For part of MacDonald's experience was as a writer for the *New International.*

In his own way, MacDonald stands for a generation. He moved toward socialism while a writer for Henry Luce's *Fortune,* flirted briefly with the Stalinists, and then gravitated toward the Trotskyist movement in the late thirties. During the war, he founded *Politics,* a magazine which began as more or less Marxist and developed rapidly toward anarchism and pacifism. By the time of the Berlin air-lift, Macdonald found himself in a dilemma. Typically, he shared it with his readers in a burst of candor. Pacifism, he felt, offered no hope for actually dealing with Stalinist totalitarianism, but neither did militarism. The conclusion? In a revised reprint of his "Root Is Man," Macdonald decided to tend his own garden. No political theory appealed to him; all were somehow repugnant. Since then, he has periodically announced that he hankers after some form of conservativism, but he has never taken that particular plunge.

Now Macdonald looks back on his radical past. He finds it simultaneously fascinating and other-worldly, intellectual but insanely abstract, and in the doing he proves that he has not lost his own deft sense of irony. Yet Macdonald's "Politics Past" is more than a memoir. For it also purports to be an account of why American radicalism failed.

The older, more mature Macdonald finds that radicalism in the United States had its hey-day during the Debsian period, and never again became a serious force. "The radical tradition never came back," he writes, "except among the intelligentsia. Not even at the lowest point of the depression, in 1932-3, were the Communists or the Socialists a serious political force. The CIO in a few years subsided from youthful rebellion into bureaucratic conservativism, a devolution that had taken generations in the German and British labour movements."

By a curious inversion, such a restrospective view of the past is based

on the very ultimatistic kind of reasoning which today's chastened Macdonald now rejects. There was no revolutionary transformation of American society in the thirties, he seems to be saying, and *therefore* nothing much really happened. The CIO? That was a summer storm. And the real criterion is that the people did not buy the finished program; that is what proves that the thirties were untouched by radical politics. And yet, if one goes back to that period, the amazing point remains how much of a leap forward the American working class took, and how much of a role the American radicals were able to play.

UP UNTIL THE THIRTIES, only a thin stratum of skilled workers in America were organized. The immense thrust of the CIO achieved an incredible and decisive accomplishment: it laid the basis for the organization of the most important sections of the American working class. True enough, this movement did not organize a mass political party of the working class. But the reasons for that are not mysterious, they are not a function of some law of a radical wave inevitably spending itself. The new social conditions of World War 11 intervened to forestall more significant changes.

But what of the radicals? Did they influence these events? The answer is both yes and no. The long tradition of working class militancy and agitation for industrial unionism was an essential element in the creation of the CIO and the surge of the American working class. In union after union—the Auto workers, the Coal Miners, the NMU, to name but a few—socialists played a significant role. The Communist Party, which in the thirties established its hegemony over American radicalism, was able to attract members precisely because it was involved in the very real work of organizing the American working class.

On the other hand, it would be foolish to think that all was well with the radicals. The left socialist and Trotskyist movements did not understand fully the enormous importance of the unionization of the working class. Their perspective was more grounded in the idea that the world in general, and the United States in particular, was in a pre-revolutionary situation. Paradoxically, it was through their betrayal of socialist principles that the Communists were able to make such great headway. By the end of World War II, fully a third of the CIO was under the heavy influence or control of those who acted *in the name of* Marxism, radicalism and socialism. In this sense, there is no doubt that the anti-Stalinist revolutionary movement failed to make full use of the tremendous opportunities of the period. Yet this is no basis for Macdonald's conception that radicalism was impotent. His exaggeration is as false as the ultra-left hopes of many of his generation.

Still, Macdonald stands for a generation. And that raises an extremely important point. With a few exceptions like James Burnham, the bulk of the intellectuals and workers who were attracted to the socialist movement in the thirties and who have left it in the period of reaction, have not moved over to some far-right position. The initial impulse which led them to socialism is still operative, even if in a confused and distorted way. Many of them have found jobs in the labor movement or in the various civil liberties and civil rights organizations. And there, they usually represent the best, the most advanced section of the bureaucracy. Their position is not, to be sure, one of socialist principle; but then neither can it be dismissed as that of the "renegade." These, and many like them, are capable of being attracted once more to the socialist movement.

And reading Macdonald's articles, the striking thought is not how far he and others like him have moved from their earlier radicalism. It is the other way around. They have become, not so much hardened anti-socialists, as confused by their own admission. Their plight is part of the price our society pays for its current period of social peace, yet it is not an irrevocable thing. If a socialist must have sharp criticisms of Macdonald's remembrance of radicalism past, if one must differ with his retrospective sociology, that is not to engage in a foolish and useless villification. Macdonald lost his way, and rather spectacularly from a socialist point of view. So did many like him.

And many of them will return.

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The Algerian Revolution

FOR SOME TIME NOW, the European socialist press has been involved in a sharp conflict over the various tendencies in the Algerian resistance movement. The question is not so much one of which program is better, that of the Front of National Liberation (FLN) or the Algerian National Movement of Messali Hadj (MNA); rather it turns on the facts themselves. Which tendency is the strongest?

The June 6th issue of *France Observateur* carried a long article by Giles Martinet on the relative strength of the two organizations. According to Martinet, 80 per cent of the forces in Algeria itself are under the control of the FLN. At the same time, he points out that among the ranks the distinction between the FLN and MNA is not as marked as in the leadership: many who fight in units of the FLN look to Messali as the great leader of the Algerian revolutionary movement. Still, Martinet feels that he can speak of the "incontestable supremacy of the National Liberation Front."

Yet Martinet nevertheless reports some of the facts about the Front which he finds disturbing. He notes, for example, that the Front claims the *exclusive* right to negotiate with the French on the question of independence; also that a majority of Frontists are cool to the plan put forward by Bourguiba of Tunisia which places a significant emphasis on holding free elections as soon as possible. The MNA, on the other hand, has been more forthright in its willingness to call for immediate free elections, and to guarantee the political rights of minorities within Algeria.

But one recent fact is embarrassing to Martinet's estimation of the weakness of the MNA. In his discussion (published in early June), he wrote that the influence of the Messalists had declined percipitously in France itself, a traditional center of backing for the MNA. Unfortunately for Martinet's point of view, the first Congress of the Algerian trade unionists took place during the very month that his article was published. The USTA (Union Syndicale des Travailleurs Algeriens) is not only pro-Messali; it is apparently a viable organization with mass support among the Algerian workers in France.

Another view, which agrees with Martinet's estimation of the actual relationship of forces in Algeria but works on different premises, is that of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU). Accord-

ing to Werner Plum, writing in the German trade union publication, *Gewerkshactliche Monatshefte,* the Messalist tendency is "anarchist" and has little or no importance in Algeria. This article makes it plain that the official support of the ICFTU is to the Front in Algeria. It is all the more interesting when one considers that the French Communist Party, and the Communists in Algeria, are also partisans of the Front as opposed to the MNA. (Jay Lovestone, that ubiquitous figure who stands on the far anti-Communist right of the American trade-union movement, is also pro-Front, a fact which stands in interesting relation to his super intransigence on the Communist issue.)

On the other side, the strongest support for the MNA in France has come from the left socialists. The Trotskyists of *La Verite* have been outspoken in their defense of the Messalist tendency. And in the June issue of *La Commune* (organ of the newly formed Liason and Action Committee for Worker's Democracy), there are two articles which argue the case for the MNA. One of these, by Yves Dechezelles, includes a biting and incisive attack upon Giles Martinet and his reporting on *France Observateur.*

According to Dechezelles, Martinet and *France Observateur* have been involved in a sort of conspiracy of silence on the subject of the MNA. They feel that the Front is the "wave of the future" in Algeria, and as a result, they are prepared to ignore the MNA altogether. In particular, the whole question of Melouza (the Algerian town where a massacre took place; according to the MNA, it was an action of the Frontists against the Messalists) has been passed over without any real concern being shown. At the same time, Dechezelles recognizes that the refusal of the ICFTU to admit the MNA trade union, and its siding with the Front, was a blow to the Messalists. But he holds that it was not a final or decisive one.

More importantly, Dechezelles goes into the question of democracy and the FLN at greater length than Martinet. For him, "The anti-colonialism of the Messalists is based upon democratic principles. It is opposed to racism and fascism. For the MNA, the Europeans of Algeria are Algerians just as much as anyone else. The MNA is opposed to blind terrorism which attempts to create a general sentiment of insecurity among the Europeans. . ." On the other hand, he finds that the FLN has attracted all kinds of elements, from the bourgeoisie to the Communists, and that it is unwilling to come out and make an authoritative, principled statement on the question of democracy.

It is always difficult to determine the complex inter-action of tendencies at a distance. And the European press, as can be seen from the above, is literally a babel of voices on the question of the relative merits and strength of the MNA and the FLN. And yet, the information which is available has the general effect of confirming the independent socialist support of the MNA. It is not simply that Messali, and his followers, have put forward a social, and socialist, program, though that is significant. But the undeniable and controling fact which is immediately present is the difference between the two programs on the question of free elections. A sympathizer of the Front, like Martinet, is forced to admit that the Frontists regard themselves as having some kind of exclusive right to negotiate, and that they are, at least, cool to the proposal for immediate free elections.

At the same time, it should be obvious that the Front has rallied considerable support and from the strangest and most antagonistic quarters: from Nasser; from the Communists; from the Algerian bourgeoisie; from the ICFTU. Such a catch-all front can only unite on the basis of supressing serious differences. The forthright stand of the Messalists is far superior to such a situation.

The tragic part of this whole development is, of course, the fact that the internal struggle within the Algerian movement has aided the cause of French imperialism in Algeria. And yet, a policy of simply forgetting the profound antagonisms based on very real differences—a policy which Martinet tends toward—is ruled out of the question The Algerian revolution is not simply a question of freeing the land from France; it also raises the issue of how this will be done, of what form the newly independent nation will take. And given this problem, the position of the MNA, despite the arguments of Martinet and the ICFTU, remains clearly superior to that of the Frontists

Michael Harrington

BOOKS IN REVIEW

Roosevelt as a Saint

THE AGE OF ROOSEVELT: THE CRISIS OF THE OLD ORDER, 1919-1933. *By Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr.,* Haughton Mifflin Company. $6.00, 557 pp.

Arthur Meier Schlesinger, Jr. is the very model of a modern Stevensonian liberal-intellectual. He is intelligent, urbane, sophisticated—a man of affairs. He combines an academic post at Harvard with an active career as liberal publicist and speech-writer for his alter-ego, Adlai Stevenson. He writes well and intelligently.

Schlesinger, Jr. has one major passion in life it would seem—Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Thus, in his Pulitzer-Prize winning history, *The Age of Jackson,* the product of the speculative-frontier, Andrew Jackson, is seen as the spiritual ancestor of the product of Groton and Harvard, Franklin Roosevelt. Thus, Schlesinger's bible for liberals, *The Vital Center,* is filled with Roosevelt idolatry.

Professor Schlesinger now has given up playing about the fringe of the Roosevelt-myth and has penetrated to its very heart. He has openly declared himself—he has begun to produce a four volume history of the period in American history from World War One to the election of Dwight David Eisenhower—entitled *The Age of Roosevelt.* The first volume of this *mganum opus, The Crisis of the Old Order,* is now upon us. It is an interesting example of that genre of literature in which biographies of saints have an important place.

It would seem that Schlesinger has studied the devices of melodrama and of the old spell-binding orators with considerable care. He sets the stage for the appearance of The Hero with appropriate thematic material and musical background. Knowing full well that Real Heroes are always Pure Men in Shining Armour, marred by no flaw, and that Real Villians are always Evil Men with Scowling Faces, relieved by no venture Schlesinger gives us his Hero, FDR, and his Vil-

lian, Herbert Hoover, in this simplistic manner.

Schlesinger's literary devices are the standard stuff of a TV Soap-opera script writer. The first chapter is a description of the inauguration of Franklin Roosevelt. The second paragraph begins, "Saturday, March 4 dawned gray and bleak. Heavy winter clouds hung over the city. A chill northwest wind brought brief gusts of rain. The darkness of the day intensified the mood of helplessness. 'A sense of depression had settled over the capital,' reported the New York *Times,* 'so that it could be felt.'" Schlesinger immediately turns to a description of the ride of the outgoing and incoming presidents to the steps of the Capitol. The "motionless and unheeding" Hoover rode in uncomfortable silence with a Roosevelt who smiled and waved his top hat at the men and women along Washington's Constitution Avenue. Then, briefly, Schlesinger takes us around the United States, gripped in Depression, on the verge of upheaval with "fear in the country club" and "angry men marching in the silent street." And then back to the actual inauguration—the taking of the oath, the Inauguration Address. And after this, the inaugural parade. And it is on this that Schlesinger ends the chapter: "The high clear notes of the cavalry bugles announced the inaugural parade. Franklin Roosevelt, in the presidential car, waved greetings to the crowd along the way—men and women now curiously awakened from apathy and daze. The horsemen wheeled into line, and the parade began. In Washington the weather remained cold and gray. Across the land the fog began to lift." And all this with Bugles!

WITH THIS PROLOGUE, Schlesinger can begin his analysis. Unfortunately, his analysis has nothing new or interesting. He offers a very standard New Deal interpretation of events, based on no new research, no new materials. Utilizing easily available data, Schlesinger tells us about the forerunners to FDR in the liberal movement, stringing together a few scattered comments about the Populists, Theodore Roosevelt, Robert La Follette, William J. Bryan, Woodrow Wilson, and the founding of the *New Republic* magazine as an organ of the new liberalism, concerned with increased government regulation of the economy and social-welfare measures. He carefully skirts or avoids discussion of American capitalism's entry into the international imperialist struggles, he ritualistically whips the monopolists. He is concerned only with sketching in the harbingers of the coming of Roosevelt.

Schlesinger's treatment of the nineteen-twenties is of the same nature. The Bad Republicans were in office during the Age of Normalcy, values were crude and bad, the intellectuals were disaffected, and the liberals unable to make headway. All of this was bad, of course! And then the Crash came. Herbert Hoover was unable to do anything about it, although Schlesinger believes that a "small amount of spending" by the government in the first days of the depression might have saved the day. But, unfortunately, no one thought that the depression would last. However, there were many plans for change and reform in the air and Schlesinger talks about some of them, including a scattering of comments about the revival-on-the-left and the like.

Schlesinger then offers what is perhaps the only interesting section of his book—not interesting because of its originality or insight, but because he includes it at all. He discusses the growing radical mood of 1932—the Unemployed Councils, the various spontaneous cooperative associations that sprung up to meet the depression, the march of the Bonus Marchers on Washington, D. C., the agricultural revolt in which farmer's dumped milk on the roads in order to raise prices, and, with guns in hand, prevented local law officials from foreclosing on unpaid mortgages on farms and homes.

It is in this context that Schelsinger discusses the steps in the political struggle to win the Democratic nomination for Franklin Roosevelt. And in this discussion, the reason for the section of the radical mood of 1932 becomes clear: only Roosevelt could have saved the country from Ruin and Revolution! Roosevelt is, just like Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., the liberal-conservative or the conservative-liberal.

The book ends with a section sketching in the early life of Franklin Roosevelt. All this is in the way of introduction to the three volumes that will follow in this ambitious project. The last paragraph of the book is worth quoting for it contains what must be the major thesis of the volumes to come. Schlesinger writes:

> Many had deserted freedom, many more had lost their nerve. But Roosevelt, armored in some inner faith, remained calm and inscrutable, confident that American improvisation could meet the future on its own terms. And so on March 4, as he took the silent ride in the presidential limousine down the packed streets to the Capitol, he was grim but unafraid. Deep within, he seemed to know that the nation had resources beyond its banks and exchanges; that the collapse of the older order meant catharsis rather than catastrophe; that the common disaster could make the people see themselves for a season as a community, as a family; that catastrophe could provide the indispensible setting for democratic experiment and for presidential leadership. If this were so, then crisis could change from calamity to challenge. The only thing Americans had to fear was fear itself. And so he serenely waited the morrow. The event was in the hand of God.

This is the thesis. It will be interesting to see how Schlesinger develops it. The major point that James MacGregor Burns in his volume *Roosevelt: the Lion or the Fox* makes is that Roosevelt did not provide leadership at all, that this was his major weakness. The picture of Roosevelt that has emerged from the serious studies of such as Burns, Frank Friedel, and the many who have written monographs on select aspects of the New Deal, is that Roosevelt was a great politician, able to wield together a coalition in Congress and in local Democratic Party machines precisely because he did not lead, but found a consensus of Party opinion, and then adopted the least-common denominator position as his own. Thus, for example, Roosevelt refused to take any initiative to end the Jim Crow policies of the Civilian Conservation Corps because of fear of upsetting Southern congressmen. Roosevelt was the master of winning today's election—but this does not make him the great democratic statesman of the liberal myth.

In the last analysis, the work of Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. on Roosevelt is important neither for its contribution to our knowledge, for it makes none, nor for its new analysis, for it offers none. It is important, however as part of the sociology of American liberalism and of American intellectual life today. Schlesinger, like Roosevelt, does not "lead" liberal opinion. He merely finds a consequence of its view, and makes this least-common denominator view his own. He thus provides American liberals, looking back on "the days of glory of the New Deal," with an "authoritative liberal

version of the Life of Franklin Roosevelt." Indeed, the book is similar in import to an official Life of a Saint, which puts forward the accepted and orthodox version of the cannonized hero's career.

Schlesinger gives the academic, professional seal of approval to the commonly held liberal notion of Franklin Roosevelt.

All of this would neither be surprising nor worthy of comment if Schlesinger's book had not found widespread acceptance among historians and intellectuals. Almost all who have reviewed the book. with a notable exception here and there, fell over themselves in their hasty praise. It became a Book-of-the-Month-Club offering. In the world of Eisenhower and Dulles, Knowland and Charlie Wilson, there must be some solid rock upon which the liberal intellectual can build his Church! In a world of uneasiness and confusion, in which Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. in an article for the *Reporter* asked, without really offering an answer, "What next for American liberalism?" the need for a Liberal Hero becomes compulsive, for those who cannot stand the present, are uneasy about the future, and are dimly aware of the fact that they really have no alternative to the path of Eisenhower and Dulles, Knowland and Wilson! And if there is nothing in the present and nothing in the future, then there has to have been something in the past! Thus Arthur Schlesinger's book and the wide liberal acclaim it has received!

GEORGE RAWICK

An Important Book

THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL 1919-1943, DOCUMENTS. VOLUME I—1919-1922. *Selected and edited by Jane Degras.* Oxford University Press, 1956. 463 pp.

This volume, the first in a promised series, is a valuable collection of documents issued by the Communist International during its "heroic period"—as Jane Degras describes it—from its founding call in January 1919 through the Fourth Congress in December 1922. Included are programmatic statements of the Communist International, analyses of international events, instructions and advice to national Communist parties. The letters, resolutions, theses, etc., are preceded with background and explanatory material written by Jane Degras. Her own anti-Leninist bias, revealed in many of these notes, leaves much to be desired in the way of her own contribution to the book. But her notes, which do have some value, are only of incidental importance. There are more than four hundred large pages of some of the most significant documents in Communist history. What is more, the translation, made from the German, is excellent.

Although the volume is a massive collection of documents it suffers, nevertheless, from incompleteness. Many of the most important documents are extracts. The most important theses of the CI have been edited in varying degrees; in many of them truly major deletions have been made. It would have been more useful to have fewer selections without any editing than to ask the reader to assume that the many deletions made are either of no importance or are well provided for in Jane Degras' introductory remarks to each major selection.

J. F.