

# political affairs

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# political affairs

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## Was the American Revolution a Majority Movement?

By Herbert Aptheker

THIS FOURTH OF JULY, the 180th anniversary of the independence of our country, finds an anomalous condition existing in the writing of American history. That literature, reflecting reactionary domination, insists that the Revolutionary movement was a minority one, while the Secession movement, of 1860-61, had the support of the overwhelming majority of Southern white people. Thus, a progressive, democratic movement is held to represent the will of a minority, while a reactionary, anti-democratic movement is said to represent the will of a majority!

Both views are false, and with the latter the present writer has dealt at some length in other writings. In this article we wish to focus attention on the question of whether or not the majority of the American

people favored the revolutionary movement. Let us start with a brief demonstration of the fact that the overwhelming mass of historical writing, for the past fifty years, holds to the view of the Revolution as being favored by a minority.

Typical of the literature is the remark in Dora M. Clark's useful study, *British Opinion and the American Revolution*, published by Yale University Press, in 1930: "The statement that a minority fought and won the Revolution has become a commonplace." And Miss Clark goes on to register her agreement. Lynn Montross, in his generally excellent study of the Continental Congress, called *The Reluctant Rebels*, published by Harper in 1950, concurs with the view that the American Revolution was a minority move-

ment, and even goes on to generalize: ". . . it is the rule of history that revolutions in their early stages are imposed upon the bulk of the people by an organized and determined minority."

Usually, when dealing with the American Revolution in particular, writers declare that one-third the population was Whig (or Patriot), one-third was Tory, and one-third was indifferent, or neutral. This has been repeated so many times—it goes back at least to Sydney George Fisher's *True History of the American Revolution*, published in 1902—that now it is offered as a self-evident truth, "a commonplace," as Miss Clark put it, which needs no documentation. It occurs in practically every college-level textbook in American history published in the past thirty years, and in almost all of the more specialized writing. To cite an example from the latter category, so very careful and learned a scholar as the late Everts Boutell Greene, in his study of *The Revolutionary Generation* (1943) simply asserts: "Roughly speaking, possibly a third of the population was Loyalist, a third definitely Whig, and a third not active on either side."

More recently, particularly as the touchiness on the general subject of revolution has grown, one can observe an effort to further reduce the percentage of the American population which actually did support the Revolutionary effort. For example, Professor Crane Brinton of Harvard, in his *Anatomy of Revolution* (1949)

announces that not more than ten percent of the population falls into such a category.

Furthermore, it is generally insisted that of the minority who were Patriots, the gullible masses among them were hoodwinked into anti-British acts and feelings by the well-to-do. Thus, W. E. Woodward: "merchants and lawyers" manipulated the masses and "the men of money organized a popular resistance" (*A New American History*, 1936); Leo Huberman: "the merchants . . . stirred up the poorer classes into believing that England's new laws were the cause of their troubles" (*We The People*, 1947 edit.).

Such views are grounded in reports by British officials and leading Tories who naturally saw the Revolution in terms of pawn-like masses being manipulated by their betters, but their vision was suitable to their class and their century; it is far from an accurate view of what actually happened.

Among present-day academic writers dissent on this subject is extremely rare, but an outstanding dissident is Professor John Richard Alden. Alden, in *The American Revolution, 1775-1783*,\* declares that the Patriot element outnumbered the Tory from 1775 on, and "that a

\* This is a volume in the *New American Nation Series*, edited by H. S. Commager and R. B. Morris, published by Harper, 1954. Prof. Robert E. Brown's *Middle-Class Democracy and the Revolution* (1955) tends to present the Revolution as having majority support, but he repeats the "one-third, one-third" formula.

substantial majority supported the patriot cause after the Declaration of Independence."

Professor Alden adds that those who repeat the one-third, one-third, one-third proposition, do so on the basis of an original mis-reading of the *Works of John Adams*, citing, in this connection, a letter written by him in 1815. Alden's reference is to a letter which Adams wrote to one James Lloyd in January, 1815 (Vol. X, pp. 110-11) and he quite correctly declares that in that letter John Adams is not discussing the attitude of the American people towards their own Revolution, but rather their attitude towards the French Revolution! *In that regard*, Adams believed, in 1815, that an equal three-part breakdown of the American population (supporters, opponents, neutrals) would accurately reflect their feelings.

It is necessary to point out, however, and Professor Alden does not do this, that there is another letter which John Adams wrote, also in 1815, in which he did make reference to the attitude of the American people towards their own Revolution, and this does offer a degree of substantiation for the one-third school of interpreters. On December 22, 1815, Adams wrote a long letter to Dr. Jedediah Morse in which he stated that after 1765 and until 1775 Great Britain unleashed an intensive propaganda drive in order to win over segments of the colonial population and that, to some extent, it succeeded. Specifically, Adams

wrote: "In the course of these ten years, they formed and organized and drilled and disciplined a party in favor of Great Britain, and they seduced and deluded nearly one-third of the people of the colonies."

Here, in a letter written in 1815, one finds that John Adams thinks that there was something under, but close to, one-third of the colonial population which, after 1765 and at least to 1775, favored England. He says nothing at all about indifference and neutrality; rather the *inference* from his letter would appear to be that he felt that (approximately) seventy percent of the American population, up to 1775, favored the Revolutionary cause.

My own view would go along with that kind of a reading of this Adams letter, and I agree with Professor Alden that a clear majority of the colonial population favored the revolutionary effort. It is further evident, that a reading of the letters of John Adams (and of the other Revolutionary leaders) written contemporaneously with the event shows that they themselves were certain that they had the support of the vast majority of the population.

#### SOME THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS

This, however, possibly may be rejected as "self-serving." We would add, at this point, the following considerations. First, we deny the proposition—assertedly, "the rule of his-

tory"—expressed by some modern writers, like Dennis W. Brogan, Crane Brinton, Lynn Montross, and others, that revolutions are minority efforts. On the contrary, as we read history and seek to interpret its "rules," we think there is nothing more democratic than a revolutionary movement, and we believe that the success of such a movement can be explained ultimately only in terms of its representing the desires of the overwhelming majority of the inhabitants of the society being revolutionized. We say this on the basis of the immense power normally held by the vested interests against which the revolutionary movement is directed as well as on the basis of the ordinary inertia afflicting people in terms of acting outside the usual routine—and certainly revolutionary conduct is extraordinary behavior, involving considerable risks and burdens.

Further, specifically in connection with the American Revolution, and still confining ourselves to some general principles, the actual success of that Revolution after several years of sustained effort despite great hardships, enormous handicaps and a very powerful and persistent foe, is the best evidence that the majority of the population desired to carry on the effort to a successful conclusion. Had those Revolutionists not had the support of the majority of the American people it is inconceivable that Great Britain would in fact have been forced to recognize their independence.

Let us, however, turn from these rather theoretical propositions and consider some of the contemporary evidence as to the sentiments of the American people in the decade preceding Lexington and Concord.

#### CONTEMPORARY EVIDENCE

Among the measuring rods of public opinion in 18th century colonial America were elections. It is true that the suffrage was restricted as compared with the present—although it was not as restricted, especially in the northern colonies, as some historians have asserted—but it is also true that a considerable segment of the adult population, perhaps as much as 70 to 75 percent could vote in certain areas.

In legally conducted elections held in the late '60's and early '70's in such areas as Philadelphia, New York City, Boston, and much of Connecticut, Maryland, Virginia and Georgia, the results invariably showed overwhelming support for the Patriot party. Thus, there were 410 voters in a Boston election in 1771 and though these voters had a choice between Whigs and Tories, there were 410 votes cast for Hancock, 403 for Sam Adams, and 399 for James Otis, *i.e.*, very near unanimity for the whole Whig slate. Again, in 1772, when the Royal Governor, Thomas Hutchinson, extended himself to beat the Patriots in a Boston election, out of the 723 votes cast, 699 went to each of the two Patriot candidates, Thomas Cushing and John Hancock. In Connecticut elections

in 1775 and especially early in 1776, the results were about the same—nearly a unanimous electorate behind the rebel candidates.

The last election in Maryland, under the Proprietor, was held in 1773. Here, also, the triumph of the radical or Patriot party was decisive, and in certain areas, notably Annapolis and Baltimore, the Court candidates did not dare even to appear in public. In the 1768 elections in Georgia, of twenty-five members of the lower House, eighteen were what the Governor called "violent Sons of Liberty." Thereafter, all the evidence from that area shows, the anti-British feeling continued to grow, so that by June, 1775, Governor Wright told London that there was nearly unanimity for the Patriots, and that he could not hold onto the province.

In the New England Town Meetings, where practically no restrictions on the voting rights of males existed, throughout the pre-Revolutionary period the results of elections, on people and on policies, always ran nearly unanimously in favor of the Patriots, so that the British government could see no end to this embarrassment, except to forbid the holding of the Meetings.

In mass meetings and demonstrations, both in cities and in rural areas, assemblages totalled thousands and not infrequently every adult of some community actively participated in a protest aimed at British policy or rule. Examples abound—the struggles led by the Sons of Lib-

erty against the Stamp Act, those in favor of freedom of the press and supporting such champions of that struggle as the jailed Alexander McDougall, those opposed to the Quartering Act, those protesting the Boston Massacre, supporting the opposition to the Tea Act, denouncing the Intolerable Acts, and the truly remarkable intercolonial solidarity shown for the people of Boston when their port was closed down by one of those Intolerable acts.\*

#### LEADERS AND MASSES

In these efforts remarkable leaders, whose names are household words in our country, came forth. But their leadership represented, sprang from and drew strength from the will and the courage of the vast majority of the American population. These leaders functioned through indigenously created organizations—Sons of Liberty, Committees of Correspondence, the Associations, etc., whose creation reflected mass will and whose continued and effective functioning depended upon that mass will.

"The temper and wishes of the people supplied everything at that time," wrote John Adams in one of his autobiographical memoranda, having reference to the years leading up to the Revolution. Contempo-

\* When in September, 1774, it was rumored, falsely, that Gen. Gage's troops had killed six people in Boston, nearly every able-bodied man in Massachusetts took a gun and set out for the city. Edward Channing, a historian not given to overstatement, declared that some 80,000 men actually started out for Boston, each carrying a weapon.

raneously, Adams, in the papers signed "Novanglus" and published in the *Boston Gazette* from December, 1774 to April, 1775, said that the people were "infinitely in favor" of the Patriots and that "there are 19 on one side to one on the other."

There are not only decisive evidences of mass support of the Revolutionary leadership; there also exists good evidence that that leadership frequently trailed behind the masses and had to be pushed forward by them. Thus, for example, it is a fact that the colonial leaders were opposed to the Stamp Act, but it is also a fact that they were surprised at the sweep and vigor of the mass opposition that that Act aroused. This was true of Franklin in England; it was true of Richard Henry Lee of Virginia, who, once the Act was passed actually applied for a position as a collector, an application he hastily withdrew when the extent and vehemence of the mass opposition became clear to him.

In April, 1776, Joseph Hawley, a revolutionary leader in Massachusetts, wrote to Samuel Adams, then in Philadelphia as a member of the Continental Congress: "The people are now ahead of you [that is, of Congress] and the only way to prevent discord and disunion is to strike while the iron is hot. The people's blood is too hot to admit of delays."

That same spring, John Adams, also a member of Congress, reported the mounting mass will: "Every post and every day rolls in upon us in-

dependence like a torrent." George Mason, the Virginia revolutionary leader, wrote truly, in a letter to John Mercer, dated October 2, 1778, when he condemned the efforts of the British government to put forward the lie

that this great Revolution has been the work of a faction, of a junto of ambitious men against the sense of the people of America. On the contrary, nothing has been done without the approbation of the people, who have indeed outrun their leaders, so that no capital measure has been adopted until they called loudly for it. . . .

#### THE CAROLINA "REGULATORS"

There is one apparent contradiction to this thesis of the mass support of the Revolutionary effort that is so often reiterated as to need separate, if brief, treatment. This concerns the members of the Regulator Movement in North Carolina from 1768 to 1771. This movement, a pro-debtor, pro-democratic, Western one, was suppressed by the Crown with the assistance of many of the planters and creditor merchants of the East. It is almost universally asserted that the Regulators, incensed at Eastern suppression, turned against the Revolution and became Tories and active supporters of the Crown.

This assertion is repeated despite the fact that its falseness has been conclusively demonstrated in the most thorough and careful study yet

made of the Regulators, that by Elmer D. Johnson—possibly because that study, for some reason, has never been published.\* This work showed that exactly the opposite of the widely-held view was actually correct. Mr. Johnson demonstrated that "many of the men who opposed the Regulators became Tories in the Revolution." And he showed further that "the majority of the Regulators fought on the side of the Whigs during the Revolution." Specifically, Mr. Johnson discovered and listed the names of every known Regulator—to a total of 883. Of these the revolutionary status—whether Tory or Patriot—of 323 can be positively ascertained, and of these, 289 are known to have fought in the Revolutionary army and 34 to have fought as Tories. In the face of this study, made in 1942, one still generally finds the Regulators classified as Tories, with the classifier usually adding that this shows the "unpopular" character of the American Revolution!

The American Revolution, in its origins, had the fervent support of the overwhelming majority of the American people. Further, the Revolution, in its actual conduct, depended upon and did have the support of the vast majority, and we turn now to offer some evidence of that fact.

The last order of General Washington to the Revolutionary troops, dated November, 1783, contained this sentence: "The unparalleled perseverance of the armies of the United States through almost every possible suffering and discouragement for the space of eight long years was little short of a standing miracle."

#### THE WAGING OF WAR

This public reference to nearly insuperable difficulties was not boasting—something quite foreign to Washington's character—and was not the conventional exaggerations of "veteran" talk. At first glance it appeared sheer madness for the thirteen colonies to challenge Great Britain to a test of arms.

In Great Britain, then, lived nine million people; in the colonies less than three millions, of whom twenty percent were slaves. Great Britain had the world's mightiest navy; the colonists had none. Great Britain had a tried and tested and numerous army; the colonies had ill-trained militiamen. Great Britain was a mature, stable, well-knit governmental unit; the colonies were thirteen hastily-formed, separate, turmoil-filled sovereignties. Great Britain was the center of the most powerful empire in the world, and colonies to the north and south of the rebels—Canada, the Floridas, the West Indies—were loyal to the Crown and could serve as bases for attack. Great Britain had a firm currency and unlimited credit; the colonies had

\* Elmer D. Johnson, "The War of the Regulation," unpublished master's thesis, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, 1942.

neither. Great Britain had the largest merchant fleet and the most powerful industry in the world. British troops were universally held to be invincible, their bayonet charge irresistible. Great Britain had never been beaten in war, and had recently established her world-wide hegemony by defeating Spain, Holland and France. And, in 1775, she was at peace with all countries, so that, apparently, she could give the rebellious colonies her undivided attention.

These hard facts lay behind the confidence with which England's rulers undertook to suppress the rebels. When to them was added the further fact that these rebels were rabble and colonial rabble at that and the belief that they represented but a minority of the Americans, imperial confidence turned to arrogance—a dangerous attitude to take into battle.

Thus, the Earl of Sandwich—perhaps the most corrupt First Lord of the Admiralty in the history of the British Fleet—argued in the House of Lords, in March, 1775, for a policy of forcible repression against the colonists, for, "Believe me, my Lords, the very sound of cannon would carry them off as fast as their feet could carry them." Colonel Rall, of the Hessians, felt it would be child's play to subdue "the country clowns"—one of whom killed him at the Battle of Trenton; Major Pitcairn was sure that "if he drew his sword but half out of the scabbard, the whole banditti of Massachusetts Bay

would flee before him"—one of the bandits, a Negro named Peter Salem, put a bullet between his eyes at Bunker Hill.

With each passing year of resistance from the clownish bandits, British rulers assured everyone that next year was the year of victory. As Chiang Kai-shek announced for the hundredth time the impending collapse of the Communist bandits (just before taking off for Taiwan), so Lord Germain, Secretary for the Colonies, announced in 1781 (just before Cornwallis surrendered): "So vast is our superiority everywhere, that no resistance on their part is to be apprehended, that can materially obstruct the progress of the King's army in the speedy suppression of the rebellion."

British officers, believing that in America only a handful of misguided fanatics were attacking His Majesty, kept expecting outpourings of support from multitudes of Loyal Subjects. In England itself, major campaigns were worked out in terms of such support, but efforts to implement them in America failed in the face of the fact that there was no such support.

It is to be noted that British officers, once here and once discovering the truth—if not later American historians—acknowledged the nearly universal hostility of the colonial population as fatal to efforts at subjugation. General Gage in Massachusetts reported late in 1774 that "a ferment throughout the continent united the whole in one common

cause." General Burgoyne, in the midst of his New York campaign of 1777, that ended so disastrously for him, wrote to London: "The great bulk of the country is undoubtedly with Congress in principle and zeal." Another general officer wrote in 1778: "Every soul in the Jerseys is a rebel." Lord Cornwallis, in his Carolina campaign of 1780, found that instead of expected reinforcements from the allegedly numerous Tories, as he conquered areas he had to detach many of his own troops to hold these down, before advancing elsewhere, and that, at times, executions of rebels, as a means of terror, were necessary. But, said a British officer with him, "by these measures he greatly inflamed the animosity of the provincials." Another officer, in Charleston after its capture in 1780, observed that the men "being prisoners" maintained a sullen silence, "but the women make full amends by teaching their children the principles of rebellion, and seem to take care that the rising generation should be as troublesome as themselves."

The fact is that the British could conquer seaports—having full control of the ocean—and could more or less subdue surrounding areas up to about twenty miles; but beyond that, the vast hinterland was *verboten* area to them. This was because the population as a whole hated them and did not support them and because as the British got into the countryside they were fallen upon by guerrilla fighters (these were the

great days of Marion, Sumter, Pickens, etc.) and attacked by hastily formed units of militia and minutemen. Indeed the whole regular American army and navy effort during the Revolution was largely conducted on classic guerrilla warfare lines—strike fast, disengage, retreat, regroup, strike again, etc. It is for this reason that the first study of guerrilla warfare as such—by a German officer, Capt. Johann Ewald—was written just after the American Revolution and was based on observations made during that war. It is, of course, elementary that guerrilla warfare requires popular support; without that support the American Revolution would not have begun and would not have succeeded.

Space forbids a consideration of the question of what Toryism there was in the colonies, and the related question of how this problem was handled by the Revolutionary Fathers. Here we wish only to assert that, with some exceptions (as parts of Long Island), Toryism never represented a really dangerous question for the revolutionary effort, which is further evidence of the majority support for that effort.

## CONCLUSION

With the war won and the fighting at an end, General Washington wrote to his extremely capable comrade-in-arms, General Nathanael Greene:

If historiographers should be hardy enough to fill the pages of history with the advantages that have been gained with unequal numbers, on the part of America, in the course of this contest, and attempt to relate the distressing circumstances under which they have been obtained, it is more than probable that posterity will bestow on their labors the epithet and marks of fiction; for it will not be believed, that such a force as Great Britain has employed for eight years in this country could be baffled in their plan of subjugating it, by numbers infinitely less, composed of men oftentimes starving, always in rags, without pay, and experiencing every species of distress,

which human nature is capable of undergoing.

Historians who, in the face of the difficulties Washington mentions, and others left here unmentioned, declare that the Revolutionists also did not represent the majority of the American people, and that still they won, are indeed writing "fiction." There are many reasons that enter into the defeat of the British in the Revolutionary War, but certainly basic to everything was the fact that it did have, from origin to conclusion, the ardent support of the vast majority of the American people.

## Who Rules America?

### (A DISCUSSION OF "THE POWER ELITE")

By Louis Fleischer

FOR MANY YEARS, since the cold war and McCarthyism set in on American campuses, the apologists and myth-makers had a virtual monopoly of academic research, and of the bushels of publicity distilled from their works in the press and other organs of mass communication.

The ideological counteroffensive has been growing in recent years, but has been restricted mainly to circles of the avowed Left. Despite the repressions of the period, which limited circulation of Left-wing publications, these works had an influence broader than appeared on the surface.\*

More important, the movement of the population against the stifling atmosphere of repression, for the restoration of democratic rights, began to make real headway. World and domestic movements started to change the balance of forces at

home, creating conditions under which the ideology of reaction could be exposed before a wide audience.

Now, from Columbia University itself, C. Wright Mills, professor of sociology, has launched a frontal attack on reactionary ideology in his new book, *The Power Elite*.\*

Prof. Mills attacks the central positions, with an approach of vast scope. He uses the rigor of scientific method, the data of painstaking research in many fields, but he projects his conclusions with passion and literary skill. The result is an exposé of American capitalist society and its ruling class that certainly stands by itself for the post-war period. And by virtue of its broad, many-sided attack, it creates a fully-dimensioned view not wholly encompassed in even the best of the pre-war works.

In short, *The Power Elite* is a bombshell. Its influence will spread; it will strengthen the anti-monopoly movement in the United States for a long time to come.

\* There was also a certain type of ideological resistance in academic circles—setting forth the nineteenth century ideas of the trust busters and small business defenders. Helpful in exposing particular cases of monopoly apologetics, these academicians failed to grapple with the fundamental problems of the present. And their position was vulnerable to reactionary attack because of their failure to admit these realities.

\* Published by Oxford University Press, New York, 423 pages, \$6.

Marxist writers for many years have referred frequently to the ruling circles, rather than the ruling class. This is scientific, because in the period of monopoly capitalism it is not the bourgeoisie as a whole that rules, but rather the upper crust, the peak groupings, the financial oligarchy.

#### THE POWER ELITE

Mills studies this power elite, as he calls it. He determines its composition and how it exercises economic and political control. The institutions of the power elite are: the economic—the 200 or 300 giant interrelated corporations which hold the keys to economic decisions—the political, “the centralized executive establishment which has taken up into itself many powers previously scattered, and now enters into each and every cranny of the social structure”—and the military—now the largest feature of government, with a huge bureaucratic domain, and involved in politics and “public relations.”

The men of the power elite are the corporate rich of America, “whose wealth and power is today comparable with those of any stratum, anywhere or anytime in world history,” the warlords, who “have gained and have been given increased power to make and to influence decisions of the gravest consequences,” and the political directorate, which consists less and less of professional politicians, but rather today of “political outsiders . . .

members and agents of the corporate rich and of the high military in an uneasy alliance with selected professional party politicians.”

Mills examines in detail the relationships between these elements, the social, economic, national and religious backgrounds of the ruling circles. He develops the specific features of the admirals and generals, the corporate managers, but at the same time shows their underlying unity with and dependence on the very rich at the peak of society.

These are the individuals who have “access to the command of major institutions,” through which their power is exercised and becomes continuous. Thus, in Mills’ view, history is determined neither by the blind responses of anonymous institutions, nor by a conspiracy of a handful of men. But within the complex of forces in action, Mills contends, those individuals at the top have a power of decision which can have an important effect on history. With some of Prof. Mills’ emphasis on this point, we disagree, but we find valid his general conclusion that: “Political men now have every reason to hold the American power elite accountable for a decisive range of the historical events that make up this history of the present.”

They are accountable to the people, to history. But their system sets no standards of action other than acquisition of wealth: “Money is the one unambiguous criterion of success, and such success is still the

sovereign American value.” Monopoly capitalism has discarded all earlier codes. Political graft, “rackets,” vice, and crime, are all part of a general corruption and decay, the “higher immorality” which is a “systematic feature of the American elite.”

The men of the higher circles are unrepresentative; ability and morality have nothing to do with their position. They are “formed by the means of power, the sources of wealth, the mechanics of celebrity.” They are unchecked by open debate and representative political parties: “Commanders of power unequalled in human history, they have succeeded within the American system of organized irresponsibility.”

While not put in just these words, Mills’ fear is that this irresponsible and amoral power elite will lead us into an enormously destructive third world war, that they cannot hide their accountability therefor behind a facade of confused forces, superficially scattered control, and an “amorphous power situation.”

Starting with a careful, scholarly presentation of the problem and approach, Mills warms to his task. He shows the moral and intellectual bankruptcy of the ruling circles, and of the corps of celebrities and experts who glamorize them and think for them.

He exposes the systematic use of tax rackets by the very rich. He shows how their wealth leads to an accumulation of advantages in all fields, access to a further multipli-

cation of wealth and to enormous prestige and power.

He is merciless towards that “middle-class thinking” which rationalizes away the true picture of America, which comforts the masses and smothers revolt with psychological claptrap, and denies the luxurious living and overweening power derived from the oppression of the people. He is impatient with the fatalism which would absolve the elite of blame for the disasters they have wrought and threaten for the future.

While the approach is scientific—the rich are recognized as parts of a system, products as well as makers of the system—it adheres to the basic political truth that the power elite are the enemies of the people within this system, that they deserve only the hate and contempt of the masses.

#### POLEMICS

One of the great merits of this book is that it takes up and demolishes *all* of the major apologetic theories used by the ruling circles to confuse and disarm the public in America today. Here are some the author takes up:

1. The idea that high taxes and reform legislation have virtually put an end to great personal wealth, “except perhaps in Texas.” He shows that the very rich are at least as wealthy today as their counterparts a generation ago, and exposes sharply Kuznets’ theory of the “income revolution.”

2. The myth that great wealth can be obtained through "hard work" up the corporate ladder. He shows the increasing rigidity of class lines, and the predominance of inheritance in determining the very rich.

3. The concept of the "idle rich." In a most significant analysis, Mills shows that the proportion of mere coupon clippers and playboys is small. But the majority are active indeed, "promoting and managing, directing and speculating," in the affairs of the corporations they control and more and more taking an active part in the upper reaches of the Government in Washington.

4. The Hollywood picture of the democratic, humane, rich man handicapped by his money. To this Mills contrasts the reality of the corporate rich able to buy anything they want, without any concern about price, never having to take orders from anybody, by virtue of their wealth accumulating more and more advantages and privileges, living more luxuriously—if, for political reasons, less ostentatiously—than any ruling class in history.

5. Galbraith's theory of "countervailing power" and Berle's "corporate conscience": The big business rulers: "do govern at many of the vital points of everyday life in America, and no powers effectively and consistently countervail against them, nor have they as corporate-made men developed any effectively restraining conscience."

6. The idea of a balance of power through governmental "checks and

balances," and "democratic" selection of the legislature. Mills shows that Congress has been consigned to what he calls "the middle levels" of power, with the really vital decisions made by the executive; that "public debate of alternative decisions" has virtually disappeared; that Congress and the two parties are really manned by the lesser lights and hangers on of the "power elite," rather than representing other classes in society.

He brilliantly exposes, in this connection, Riesman's "romantic pluralism," his psychological interpretation of power, and his argument that the ruling class has lost its power to a congerie of middle classes and miscellaneous "veto groups."

7. Burnham's Theory of the Managerial Revolution.

8. The post-war apologetics which transform the robber barons into "industrial statesmen."

#### SOME WEAKNESSES

The fascist tendencies highlighted by McCarthyism are dismissed too lightly. It is treated as the work of "a small group of political primitives, on the middle levels of power" appealing to the "rankling status resentment" of the *nouveau riche*. That this is wholly inadequate is implied by Mills' later acknowledgment that the ruling circles "have benefited politically and economically and militarily" by the antics of the petty Right," and have used the McCarthyites as their "political

shocktroops." And the broad resistance to McCarthyism which actually developed and set it back is largely discounted.

Passing references equate political centralization in the Soviet Union with "totalitarianism" in Hitler Germany and the rule of the Power Elite in the United States. But there is no recognition of the different, socialist, economic organization in the U.S.S.R. which has already led to a growth of democracy for the masses of the population in limited areas, and creates the conditions for a genuine, all-around flowering of democratic life such as the leaders of the Soviet Union are now trying to encourage.

Mills does not analyze sufficiently the relationships between the very rich and the great corporations they own. The references are sometimes confused, and not always consistent. He writes: "Not 'Wall Street financiers' or bankers, but large owners and executives in their self-financing corporations hold the keys of economic power." This limits the scope of the tycoons at the heart of the power structure. Actually, the key men have stockholdings in many corporations, hold not one, but a half dozen directorships. Banks play a central role in their holdings, and are vital to their corporations which are "self-financing" only in the legendry of A. A. Berle. This truth is implicit in other observations of Mills, as: "Not the trade associations but the higher cliques of lawyers and investment bankers are the ac-

tive political heads of the corporate rich and the members of the power elite."

While underestimating their economic links, Mills exaggerates the political unity of the corporate rich. He recognizes the existence of cliques and squabbles among the warlords, and thinks these will become "more tense," because formerly the military stood together in order to survive, now "when they are dominant members of the power elite . . . it is no question of survival but of expansion."

The same reasoning applies, even more forcefully, to the financial lords. Differences of substance rise from the conflicting attempts to expand, differences which become more acute and concern more vital policy matters as the attempts to expand run into greater difficulties at home and abroad.

These are minor weaknesses, because they do not invalidate the overall picture of the power structure, nor detract seriously from the impact of its portrayal.

#### MILLS AND THE MARXISTS

Mills largely ignores the Marxists. He refers to almost all of the important exposes of monopoly in America—with the singular exception of Anna Rochester's *Rulers of America*. Without detracting a jot from the other works cited, there is no question but that this avowedly Marxist work is the pioneering

scientific analysis of monopoly capitalism as it functions in this country. Similarly, there is but one incidental reference note to an International Publishers pamphlet, and but one to a *Monthly Review* article—with no textual reference to the avowedly Marxist trend of thought of Sweezy and his associates.

There are no “credits” for the important economic arguments developed by Mills which have previously been presented in power-war works of the Labor Research Association and others; nor for the polemics of Aptheker and other Marxist historians which are now paralleled in Mill’s critique of the present-day apologists of the high and mighty. Nor are there credits for some of Sweezy’s theories of power structure (with which, incidentally, this reviewer disagrees), seen again in Mills’ work.

There are a few incidental references to the ideas of Marx. There are no references to the works of Lenin, the leading developer of Marxist theory for the epoch of monopoly capitalism. Certainly Lenin’s works should help a student of American monopoly capitalism. Thus, Lenin’s concept of the financial oligarchy and his explanation of its role provide an integrating principle which would make more consistent some of Mills’ explanations of the relationships between the Power Elite and their institutions.

*The Power Elite* has passing references to “vulgar Marxism” and to the “simple Marxian view,” both

applied as characterizations of particular oversimplifications. It is a fact, which we assume the author recognizes, that Marxists are not always either “vulgar” nor “simple,” nor do real Marxists oversimplify. For example, they strive to properly relate the actions and institutions of politicians and war lords to those of capitalists, recognizing the degree of independence in the role of each, but seeing the fundamental aspect of the forces of production and production relations in *broadly* determining the course of historical development.

Mill’s book is a genuine scientific contribution to this approach, and will be of great value to Marxists as to all citizens concerned with the welfare of the country.

#### DISAGREEMENTS

Mills does give a historical sense of the emergence of the rule of the Power Elite as it is today—associated with the extreme concentration of industry, the accompanying concentration of political power, and the tremendous development of productive and destructive technique. In short, while not stated explicitly, the reader can see the Power Elite as a product of monopoly capitalism.

But his sense of where we are going is less satisfactory. The picture here is of an all-powerful, unopposed clique running the country—it is implied—to a disastrous end. This pessimistic outlook is based on Mills’ view of the role of the masses.

The author distinguishes between the public and the masses. A public consists of politically aware people discussing issues, forming groups and parties, electing Congressmen to represent their views. This, says Mills, is the 18th century idealization of democracy, counterpart of the theory of the free competitive economy. It was never more than partially realized among the educated minority.

And this public has deteriorated, says Mills. It has been, and is being, transformed into a mass, who do not give opinions, but merely hear and see opinions through media of mass communications. The opinions are given by the spokesmen of the Power Elite who control the media. The masses become passive politically. Their contacts are solely with mass organizations (political parties, unions), which have grown very large, and which are actually run by small cliques of leaders, who derive their policies not from the memberships, but from the requirements of their positions in the “middle levels” of power.

The unions, in particular, had a brief period of insurgency during the 1930’s. But like the small business revolts before them, they have failed as autonomous movements, have become reconciled to the rule of big capital, have established petty vested interests within the expanded state, operating only in the “middle levels” of power, futile on major questions. The labor leaders are “government-made men,” motivated mainly by considerations of prestige,

“touchy” because of the insecurity of their position:

For a brief time, it seemed that labor would become a power-bloc independent of corporation and state but operating upon and against them. After becoming dependent upon the governmental system, however, the labor unions suffered rapid decline in power and now have little part in major national decisions.

There are elements of truth in this analysis. But it is mainly wrong, in the reviewer’s opinion, because it proceeds from a false premise—that mass organization is inconsistent with democratic process.

The working class achieved mass trade-union organizations not mainly through government aid—as Mills indicates—but mainly through mass struggles, against the vested corporate interests, against many of the organs of state power, shaping the New Deal and creating a basis for the limited government aid to labor of the New Deal period. Certainly there is corruption within labor union leadership. But this is derived from the influence of big capital, buttressed by the theoretical weakness of the American labor movement, both made possible by objective conditions which permit certain concessions on the part of big business. It cannot be understood in terms of the categories of the psychologist.

Unions, with all their limitations of objective and corruption at the top, provide the main channel for

democratic activity which workers in this country have enjoyed, and they do use it in a positive way. This is demonstrated quite dramatically in strikes where the formal bounds of imposed methods and even objectives are sometimes broken, where the people as active agents of history assert themselves, if only in a limited compass.

Numerically and organizationally, the unions today are several times stronger than they were 20 years ago. The history of class struggle—which Mills recognizes as a guiding principle—shows that it must rise to new heights as contradictions multiply. The potentiality of the labor movement, shown only dimly up to now, will be revealed as more powerful than ever before in the next forward wave of struggle which events will bring forth.

Even as the power of the elite to destroy becomes perfected, and its own actions more irresponsible in relation to the people's welfare or even survival, the resistance of the masses grows. This is not restricted to trade unions, or to formal organization altogether. No realistic observer of current events can overlook the positive role of the masses of the American people in helping to beat back the danger of war and the danger of McCarthyite reaction during recent years. Workers and middle classes have both had a part in this—the middle classes which Mills recognizes as the main readers of his book, but dismisses with scorn for their Babbitt-like

characteristics, without regard for their positive reactions which stem from democratic traditions, connections with labor, and the overwhelming nature of the war danger.

As the area of expansion of the Elite turns increasingly abroad, it must reckon more and more with the people abroad. In other countries, much more than our own, profoundly democratic movements of resistance to war and colonialism have had an unprecedented effect on the course of world history during the past decade.

The general course of policy of the ruling circles of the United States has been seriously blunted, and a number of specific objectives have been defeated outright. If one is to speak of frustration today—in the strategic, historic sense, rather than that of the psychologist—then one must recognize that it is the Power Elite of the United States that is being frustrated.

Its power is not nearly so absolute as appears on the surface, and it will be challenged more in the future, both on a world scale and domestically.

#### CONCLUSION

While disagreeing with Mills in this important matter, I do not regard his book as defeatist in its impact. The main thing is his exposure of the ruling circles—their opposition and exploitation, their corruption and decay, the hypocrisy of their hired apologists, their “organ-

ized irresponsibility,” the “structural immorality” of their system. All this is presented sharply, forcefully, with compelling fact and argument.

Men of good will—and most men are of good will—cannot read this without a growing contempt for the unworthy rulers of our society, without a growing feeling of the need to stand against them, to end their destruction of effective democratic government and their monopoly of economic power. In short, this

book, objectively, will stimulate the search for ways of accomplishing a basic change, and participation in action to that end.

And, by showing that the Power Elite are a product of historical development, an intrinsic part of the present system of monopoly capitalism, Mills' book will help many to realize that the change must be fundamental in character—to the new and rising system of socialism.

## The "Managed Economy" of the U.S. (Pt. I)

By William Z. Foster

ONE OF THE most significant economic and political trends in the period of imperialism, especially since World War I, has been the growth of the so-called managed economy in the major capitalist states. This is an expression of state monopoly capitalism. It manifests itself in attempts by the monopolists to control the economic processes generally through governmental manipulation of certain elementary economic factors. It may vary in form from the skeleton governmental controls in democratic bourgeois countries to thoroughly cartellized industries under fascist dictatorship. It represents a distinct departure from the *laissez faire* policies of the state during the earlier stages of competitive capitalism.

The state, as the "executive committee" of the bourgeoisie, has always displayed activity in support of the latter's interests. It has fed "infant industries" with tariffs, subsidized turnpikes, canals, railroads, shipping, airlines, etc. It has built a money and banking system for the profit of the capitalists, showed

great alacrity in combatting plans for government ownership of industry, and in sabotaging all legislation hostile to the interests of the capitalists. All this has involved a growing intervention of the state in production, a trend which has become especially marked since the rise of imperialism, with its state monopoly capitalism. It was only with the advent of World War I, however, that the capitalist state began to try to "manage" the economy as a whole. The bourgeois "managed economy," which is such a pronounced factor today, is a direct relation of the "organized capitalism" once dreamed of by Kautsky and other Social-Democratic opportunists.

Under the pressures of their own greed and the developing general crisis of world capitalism, the monopolist capitalists are finding it indispensable to try to give some measure of direction to their chaotic system. Consequently, the "managed economy" has come to be adopted, to a greater or lesser extent, in all the capitalist countries. Prior to World War II, Germany, Italy and

Japan became highly developed examples of "managed economy," fascist dictatorship being particularly favorable for this phase of "organized capitalism" and monopoly control. In fascist lands, with the political opposition of the workers, small farmers, and middle-class virtually crushed, the monopolists are able to exercise state controls over the economy to a much greater extent than in the bourgeois democracies, where these classes play a political role. The United Nations often expresses the "managed economy" on a world scale through reports of its various committees and the like.

Currently, the United States furnishes the most characteristic example of the "managed economy" type of organization. In the American economy the monopolists, rich beyond comparison, continue to grow and to consolidate their political controls. The combined Morgan-Rockefeller interests now dominate more than \$125 billion in assets. The "managed economy" is a major means by which such gigantic interests are fastening their grip upon the state and are using it to serve their own purposes. The profit plans of Wall Street, with its ambitious schemes of "managed economy" and "organized capitalism," are as wide as the world.

A number of elementary factors have contributed to the development of the "managed economy" in the several capitalist countries and internationally. Among the more impor-

tant of these may be mentioned, the growth in size and strength of the great monopolies and their increasing trend to penetrate and dominate the state, and the vitally urgent problems confronted by capitalism in this period, caused basically by its general crisis—vast imperialist wars, devastating economic crises, and exhausting cold war—which make imperative some sort of general economic management. Not to be ignored in this general respect also are the world-wide influence of the planned economies of the USSR and other Socialist states, and the heavy pressure from the workers and other toiling masses who are constantly striving to win concessions of a democratic character from the capitalists and their government.

### MANAGING AND PLANNING

The "managed economy" which we have seen developing in the major capitalist lands, is not to be confused with the planned economy of the Socialist states, although this is often done. The countries with "managed economies" remain capitalist, as before. Their governments continue to be, as Marx and Engels called capitalist governments generally, the "executive committee of the bourgeoisie." Their central purposes are to exploit the workers to the limit, to realize maximum profits for the monopolist rulers, and to protect the capitalist system from revolutionary attacks by the workers

and their allies. As for actually "managing" the respective economies, which are torn with endless contradictions and conflicts, the current types of "organized capitalism" necessarily set for themselves such concrete and relatively limited objectives, such as, to increase or decrease production through government subsidies, production quotas, etc.; to regulate the flow of foreign trade through loans, boycotts, and other measures; to strengthen the profits and general position of monopoly capital; to develop new means to confuse and curb the fighting spirit of the working class, and, especially, either to liquidate or greatly to ease the recurring cyclical economic crises. Short of fascism, however, the monopolists refuse to submit voluntarily their industries to more far-reaching state controls.

On the other hand, the planned economies of the countries of Socialism and the People's Democracy represent a very different type of social system. Instead of the industries being privately owned and operated for private profit, the whole economy, the property of the nation, is carried on for the benefit of the people as a whole. This makes it possible to plan production and the vital social services on a scale and with a thoroughness totally impossible under capitalism. Socialist planned economy embraces every branch of the economic, political and cultural life—industry, agriculture, education, social insurance, and many other activities.

The "managed economy" of capitalism, while it definitely facilitates the purposes and the profits of monopoly capitalism, does not overcome the inherent chaos of the capitalist system. Instead, it tends definitely to intensify this disunity by sharpening the contradictions between the military and civilian sections of production, between the monopoly and non-monopoly sectors of industry, between agriculture and industry; between the imperialist powers, between the great powers and the lesser developed countries, and between the Socialist and capitalist worlds. "Managed economy" also, based as it is upon the interests of monopoly capital, essentially sharpens up the class struggle on all fronts. Socialist planned economy, on the other hand, is an all-embracing unifying force at home and abroad. It makes for full employment and social unity nationally and for peaceful co-existence internationally.

Following World War I Lenin sharply exposed the futility of the capitalist "managed economy" of the period, as well as the theories of "organized capitalism" and of "super-imperialism" which lay behind it; but generally, the subject has not been systematically treated since Lenin's time by Marxist-Leninist theoreticians. It is not enough that state monopoly capitalism as such be analyzed; it must especially be examined as it functions specifically through the "managed economy." If this is not done, our knowledge

of the workings of monopoly capital is bound to remain sketchy and misleading, and our economic forecasts of limited accuracy.

#### THE "MANAGED ECONOMY" BEGINS: WORLD WAR I

When World War I began on July 28, 1914, the policy of United States monopoly capital was to remain outside the war, to watch its imperialist rivals destroy each other, to get rich selling them munitions, and to prepare to take command internationally upon the end of the war. But this plan fell through when in the course of the war it appeared as though militant Germany would defeat the western allies, with whom the United States had vital financial connections. Hence, on April 6, 1917, the United States Government, under the liberal President Wilson, overriding the strong popular opposition to this imperialist war, entered the struggle on the side of Great Britain, France, and Russia.

Even before American entry, however, the monopolists understood that in this war, in distinction from all other American wars which had preceded it, an effort would have to be made to establish some traces of order in the chaotic economy. Therefore, President Wilson, who had been responsible previously for anti-trust legislation and for a Federal Trade Commission to enforce it, proceeded to set up the Council of National Defense late in 1916, to organize, among

other tasks, the economic aspects of the war effort. This body was supplemented in July 1917 by the formation of the War Industries Board. These agencies undertook to allocate materials, to establish price controls, and to regulate wages—but unsuccessfully, as they worked upon an advisory basis. In the Spring of 1918, however, this whole state-economic apparatus was somewhat strengthened in the matter of putting its decisions into effect.

The Government also set up a number of commissions in various single industries, to "manage" them. Among them were the Food Administration, the Fuel Administration, the United States Shipping Board, the Emergency Fleet Corporation, and the Federal Railroad Administration. The most powerful of them were the railroad and allied administrations, as they operated the entire national railroad, shipping, and communications network, which had been taken over by the Government. Besides, there were the War Trade Board, Selective Service, and the War Finance Corporation. The direct control of all this industrial machinery was almost exclusively in the hands of representatives of the big trusts and monopolies through their "dollar-a-year" men. Small businessmen and the farmers had but little say in the matter. As for organized labor, its representatives, who supported the war, were nearly all shunted aside into secondary and minor advisory committees.

A central feature in the whole

war-control machinery was the National War Labor Board, made up of representatives of the public, the employers, and the workers. Its business was to "manage" the working class and to fit it into the war plans of monopoly and the Government. Generally, the workers, who had but little regard for this imperialist war, were in a militant mood and they struck freely. To curb them, the N.W.L.B. and its subordinate committees undertook to slash their wage and hour demands, and especially to prevent their extending the trade unions into the trustified open-shop industries. The wartime labor boards worked on the basis of semi-compulsory mediation and arbitration. Generally, the conservative Gompers trade union leaders were not hostile to this, with their no-strike, no-organize policies, and their playing down of working class militancy.

This, in short, during World War I, was the real beginning of the "managed economy" in the United States. Similar systems prevailed also in Great Britain and other imperialist countries. The general results were, to concentrate production upon war materials, to generate an orgy of profiteering, to create a crop of new millionaires, to further the interests of the monopolies, and to hinder the advance of the workers. The latter, although their real wages sank considerably, did succeed in establishing the eight-hour day in several industries, and in adding about 1,500,000 members to the trade union movement.

#### THE NEW DEAL AND THE 1929 ECONOMIC CRISIS

Immediately upon the end of World War I, the monopoly-dominated government set about dismantling the economic-control machinery that it had built up during the war. The railroads, shipping, etc., were returned to private control, the various war committees were liquidated, military appropriations were slashed, loans to foreign governments were cut off, and most important, the workers' protection of their wage rates was undermined by an unprecedented open-shop drive against the trade unions. "Back to Normalcy" was the key bourgeois slogan. American imperialism, vastly enriched by the war and dreaming of world conquest, demanded a free hand internationally, and it refused to become a member of the League of Nations. Inevitably these policies hastened the sharp economic crisis of 1920-21, in which industrial production fell off by 20 percent and agriculture to bogged.

By the end of 1921, however, the crisis of adjustment had already worn itself out and the country moved ahead to one of the most hectic booms in its history. The mainspring for this was the reparation of the war's damages, plus the growth of the new electrical industries and the automobile industry (with its huge road-building program) in the United States. The ensuing frantic boom was hailed as the Golden Age of American capitalism. There was

said to be a "new capitalism," immune to economic crises. The Social Democrats hailed the new American capitalist way to "Socialism" through mass production and speed-up, while the Communists warned of economic disaster ahead.

The great cyclical economic crisis of 1929, which was deepened by the general crisis of world capitalism initiated by World War I and the Russian Revolution, thrust back American capitalism to its knees and shattered the prosperity illusions of the recent boom period. Industrial production fell off by almost one-half, international trade similarly shrank, stock values sank to unprecedented lows, and up to 17,000,000 jobless workers walked American cities. Facing this economic holocaust, many of the spokesmen for capitalism, sunk in confusion and dismay, saw the revolution around the corner. To do something to at least palliate the situation was imperative.

After much hesitation and fumbling, the monopoly capitalist government of Herbert Hoover began to experiment in the general direction of a limited "managed economy," or "organized capitalism." As the recent world war had produced such tendencies, so also did the severe problems of the great economic crisis. First, under heavy mass pressure, the Federal Farm Board was established in 1929, which purchased 60 million bushels of wheat in a vain effort to check the downslide of farm prices. About the same time,

to bolster industry and trade, President Hoover extracted promises from leading industrialists that they would maintain wage scales and begin large capital investment programs—promises which all soon collapsed into nothing. Then the Reconstruction Finance Corporation was formed, with the Chicago Banker Charles Dawes at its head. The R.F.C., with \$500 million at its disposal, made big loans to hard-pressed railroads, banks, and other corporations. The idea behind the R.F.C. was Hoover's notorious trickle-down theory; that is, if the major capitalist concerns were made solvent, the benefits would eventually seep down to the masses. Meanwhile, the huge armies of impoverished workers and farmers starved along in the crisis, without Federal relief.

Hoover's picayune state economic measures could not check the great crisis, so the masses swept Roosevelt into the Presidency in November 1932. During the next eight years, through the New Deal, the United States experienced a program of state intervention in industry, of a "managed economy," or attempts at "organized capitalism," such as it had never before known in peacetime. This consisted of a whole maze of laws, rushed through Congress in haste, designed to rescue collapsing corporations, to "prime the pump" of industry, to strengthen bank credit conditions, to bolster agricultural and industrial prices, to shore up decaying banks by deposit insurance, to protect farm and home-

owners from foreclosure, to give relief and eventually the beginnings of social insurance to the workers. These steps were embodied in this legislation as the National Industrial Recovery Act, Agricultural Adjustment Act, Home Owners Loan Act, Fair Labor Standards Act, Social Security Act, Public Works Administration, Works Progress Administration, and many more. In all this, Roosevelt's central purpose was to save capitalism from its enveloping crisis.

Most of the early New Deal legislation, especially that relating directly to the subsidization and buttressing of industry, had, more or less, the support of monopoly capital. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce even produced the project for the National Industrial Recovery Act, which was administered by General Hugh Johnson. This was the nearest thing to a "managed economy" of the near-cartellized type that this country has ever had. The N.I.R.A. provided for the formulation of codes in each industry, among government, employers, and workers, covering prices, wages, working practices, etc. The framers of this law were undoubtedly influenced, on the one hand, by the booming planned economy in the USSR, based on thoroughly socialized industry, and on the other, especially, by the Hitlerite "managed economy," wherein state-controlled industrial cartels had been made compulsory in 1933. The monopolists, however, eventually backed away from N.I.R.A., and in mid-1935 it and the

A.A.A. were knocked out by the U.S. Supreme Court as too extreme and as unconstitutional.

The workers supported generally the Roosevelt New Deal legislation, but, especially under the ideological leadership of the Communist Party, they paid sharp attention to the strengthening of their own economic position, through unemployment relief and social insurance, jobs in public works, and the improvement of wage scales by militant organizing campaigns and strikes. Their greatest victory during the New Deal period was the trade-unionization of the basic, open-shop industries into the newly-formed C.I.O. Their principal legislative achievement was, first, Section 7 (a) of the N.I.R.A., and eventually the Wagner Labor Act of 1935, protecting the right of workers to organize. The Government sought to control the workers through the National Labor Board and the National Labor Relations Board. Not only did the New Deal vastly extend the subsidization of industry, beyond what Hoover had done, but it added, under working class and farmer pressure, a new dimension to it, that is, at least a partial increase of the purchasing power of the working masses.

Significantly, during the 1930's, the growing practice of the capitalist "managed economy" was theorized as part of his system of economics by John Maynard Keynes, the British economist, who, in 1936 published his well-known book on the subject, *The General Theory of*

*Employment, Interest and Money.* Keynes, challenging Say and other classical bourgeois economists, denied that capitalism automatically generates sufficient buyers to absorb all its production. On the contrary, he argued that there is a flaw in the modern monopoly capitalist system which, causing a vast accumulation of capital and its under-investment, leads inexorably to economic crises, and mass unemployment, and if uncorrected, it could lead to revolution. Keynes, among the measures he designed to remedy this serious capitalist weakness, mainly concentrated his attention upon the subsidizing of production in various ways by the Government. An enemy of Socialism, Keynes' basic aim was to save capitalism. He was in direct contact with Roosevelt, and he undoubtedly had a certain influence in shaping the New Deal legislation. Roosevelt's watchword of his inaugural speech in March 1933—"We have nothing to fear but fear itself"—was a typical Keynesian psychological-economic slogan.

The many New Deal relief measures helped but little the recovery from the great crisis of 1929-33. However, they cost the American people some 35 billion dollars. By 1935 industry and agriculture had only partially recovered; and instead of the characteristic boom developing, the country lingered along in "a depression of a special kind," as Stalin called it. In 1939, there were still some 9,000,000 American workers unemployed. It was not until the

Second World War began to loom up that United States industry, being fed with vast munitions orders, eventually emerged from its long and deep crisis and entered into a new period of "prosperity." The Roosevelt experiment with the "managed economy" was but a very limited success, if at all.

#### THE "MANAGED ECONOMY" IN WORLD WAR II

World War II was basically an expression of the general crisis of capitalism. The initial attitude of American monopoly capital towards the war, beginning in Europe in September 1939, was pretty much the same as it had taken towards World War I, namely: to keep out of the actual hostilities and to grow rich and powerful supplying munitions to its "friends" in the war. But the success and aggressiveness of the Axis powers forced the United States into the struggle in December 1941. As the war entry approached, the Roosevelt Government, in seeking for means to "manage" the economy during the conflict, naturally harked back to the experience of World War I. Thus began another experiment in "organized capitalism." Once again, in May 1940, a Council of National Defense was set up, and also an Office of Emergency Management, which, in January 1941, gave birth to the Office of Production Management. These organizations set themselves programs of coordinating, and stimu-

lating production; but as they had only a nebulous advisory power, they were not very effective.

Once the United States got into the war, however, this situation changed quickly. World War II was far more of a total war than the first great war had been. There were three times as many American soldiers at the front, and whereas in the first war it took only 3,500 horsepower to keep a division going, in the second war it required 400,000 horsepower, so great had the mechanization grown. The monopolies were also much more powerful and more integrated with the state—monopoly capital had become state monopoly capital. The general result was a much more elaborate system of “managing the economy” than had existed in World War I. The War Production Board was established, with the Office of Price Administration and Civilian Supply, the War Man-Power Commission, and many other regulatory economic boards. Eventually, the whole elaborate machinery was combined with the Office of War Mobilization. This complex economic apparatus carried out policies of compulsory production controls, allocations and priorities of materials, and price and wage ceilings upon an unprecedented scale. Rationing of food, clothing, gasoline, etc., was also applied as never before. There were strong political-economic committees in the respective industries, but this time the government did not actually take over the control and manage-

ment of the railroads, and other transportation systems, as had been done in the first world war.

World War II being a just, people’s war, the workers had a far more cooperative attitude towards it than they had had regarding the imperialist World War I. They voluntarily adopted a no-strike policy (which was not done in the first war) and they participated wholeheartedly in the various production committees: national, industry-wide and in the shops. Their leaders were conceded a somewhat higher level of advisory and executive posts than in World War I; but the liberal Roosevelt Government, nevertheless, was careful not to treat the unions politically upon a coalition basis, nor to let their officials get into decisive political and economic positions. Altogether the workers’ role in the directive aspects of the war was a very minor one.

The “managed economy” of World War II, with its elaborate system of speed-up and overtime for the workers, was far more successful in turning out military supplies than had been its predecessor in World War I. In fact, between 1916 and 1919 there was hardly any increase whatever in industrial production; from 1939 to 1943, however, the total of production more than doubled. It was also very effective in grinding out maximum wealth for the monopolists—yearly profits soared, before taxes, from \$5.4 billion in 1936-39 to \$19.4 billion in 1940-45, and the profit margin increased from 6.3 to

11.4 percent. Meanwhile the workers, largely locked in a wage-freeze under the National War Labor Board, increased their incomes only moderately through long hours of overtime.

The wartime “managed economy,” far from basically overcoming the chaos of capitalist production, intensified it by over-expanding the war industries at the expense of the civilian sectors of the economy. It facilitated an enormous growth of state monopoly capitalism, and it inflated the national debt from \$40 billion in 1939 to \$260 billion in 1945.

#### THE “MANAGED ECONOMY” IN THE COLD WAR

Upon the ending of World War II in 1945, strong back-to-normalcy trends, somewhat akin to those after World War I, developed among sections of the bourgeoisie. The monopolists were afraid of possible post-war democratic mass upheavals, with a more progressive government, movements towards the nationalization of industry, for profits control, and the like. “Free enterprise” was their central slogan and government intervention in industry their *bete noire*. Nevertheless, almost immediately, the strong trend toward increased government “management of the economy,” or “organized capitalism,” set in again. This was the inevitable result of Wall Street’s post-war drive for world mastery on the basis of a third atomic, world war.

For the past four decades or more there has been in the United States a long-term trend toward the “managed economy.” This has also been punctuated and speeded up by periodic intensive developments—during the two world wars, the great economic crisis, and the cold war—all of these being particularly sharp manifestations of the deepening general crisis of the world capitalist system. In each of these periods the “managed economy” faced specific economic tasks, requiring different means. In the two world wars the big job was to speed the production of vast amounts of munitions; during the great economic crisis it was to put the limping capitalist system back on its feet, and in the cold war it was, while building up a tremendous military machine, to keep the economic system from going into an economic depression or a runaway inflation.

In facing up to the specific economic tasks of the cold war, state monopoly capitalism had to work under different conditions than during World War II, just ended. Price controls, general allocations of materials, wage freezes, no-strike pledges, and other wartime control methods had to be scrapped. The big medicine for keeping the industries booming was more and greater governmental appropriations for arms production. This course was made the easier for the warmongers as organized labor generally accepted the arms program on a make-work basis. The armaments panacea was

also supplemented, from time to time, by the government with such means as the tightening or easing of bank interest rates and consumer credits, a closer hold upon stock speculation in Wall Street, tax reductions for big business, etc.

The broad significance of all this governmental control was a gigantic infusion of financial subsidies, state and private, into the general economic bloodstream, specifically for the benefit of the big corporations. Among the major items of this were, since 1945 (discounting duplications) \$60 billion in American foreign loans, grants, and credits; some \$300 billion in American military expenditures; an increase of consumer debt (mostly from installment buying), several times over—to the unprecedented figure of \$30 billion; about \$20 billion more added onto the national debt; at least \$50 billion above normal spent on the hectic expansion and remodelling of industrial plants; a total increase in private debt from \$140 billion to \$352 billion in 10 years; big increases in inventories in many industries, etc. The private and public debt has reached the peak total of \$258 billion, an increase of \$50 billion in 1955. The Korean war, which was a golden deluge for the profit-mongers, also gave a terrific shot-in-the-arm to production in general.

Notwithstanding all these huge blood infusions into the national economic system, the "managed economy" limped badly. The country, during the cold war years, experi-

enced two minor economic slumps—in 1947-48 and 1953-54, with production falling off in the first period by 10 per cent and with the army of wholly unemployed mounting to some 5,000,000. At the present time, although general production is at record high levels, there are many soft spots in the economy, despite all the Keynesian subsidy policies of the Government. Agriculture continues to sink into a slump, there is chronic mass unemployment in the textile and coal-mining industries, and, with a stockpile of 900,000 cars, far-reaching layoffs of workers are also taking place in the automobile industry. Especially since the Geneva Conference of July, 1955, at which gathering the peoples of the world turned thumbs down on Wall Street's drive for world war, the American industrialists are in a state of confusion and are fearful of the future market prospects.

The attempt of Wall Street state monopoly capital to "manage the national economy" took on a new spread and intensity during the cold war years. For one thing, the Government set up a number of new authorities, agencies, and commissions, to regulate the economy on an unprecedented scale in peace time, the names of which bodies we shall list further along. For another thing, in a Keynesian spirit, the Government built up, along with the arms program, an extensive backlog of investment projects, at least on paper, to serve their need, to bolster

up the sagging national economy. These include, besides the Eisenhower \$100 billion road-building program, broad proposals for flood control, slum clearance, soil conservation, school building, and the like. Needless to say, all such propositions, like arms production, if applied, would be organized on a maximum profits basis. American big capital, while relishing the prospect of a sizeable army of unemployed, is definitely fearful of the recurrence of an economic crisis on the scale of the 1929-33 catastrophe. A further characteristic of the development of state monopoly capital in the cold war years, with its "managed economy" implications, is the widespread militarization of the government, the industries, the colleges, and other key institutions that has recently taken place. General Eisenhower, as President of the United States, is the major symbol of this broad tendency. Many of the top brass are seeking administrative political careers as they approach the time of retirement, and there is also a veritable flood of generals, admirals, and other outstanding militarists into prominent positions in the upper executive echelons of big corporations. It is estimated that 2,000 of them took this route in 1955. Special attention is also being paid by these gentry to occupying the highest posts in the universities. Even as they are tying the industries organically to the state machine, especially in its military aspects, so the top militarists are also making

sure that the educated youth are made part of the broad and ever-expanding state-industrial-educational-military apparatus of American imperialism.

After World War II "managed economy" tendencies developed on a world scale, with the formation of the United Nations, which began to concern itself with such international economic questions as tariffs, trade, finance, deflation and inflation, full employment, and the development industrially of backward countries. American imperialism is up to its neck in all this. Whereas, following World War I, the American Government refused even to become an official part of the League of Nations, following World War II, it was the leader in organizing the United Nations and bodies associated with it. In the economic sphere it was thus a prime-mover in the establishment of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development and also of the International Monetary Fund. The basic reason for Wall Street's keen interest in these various international economic-political institutions is to use them to advance its drive for maximum profits and world domination. Such interest is also quite in line with its "managed economy" tendencies in general.

Another of the characteristic manifestations of this period has been the development of a strong fascist trend, in the shape of McCarthyism. This threat was cultivated by big business and expressed in many re-

actionary laws and practices of the Eisenhower and Truman Governments. There was much pro-fascist legislation, including the Taft-Hartley anti-trade union law, the fierce persecution of the Communist Party, and the many infringements upon popular democratic rights. Although somewhat curbed in 1954 as a result of national and international mass pressure, fascism still remains a real danger in the United States.

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*The concluding section of this article will appear in our August issue.—Ed.*

## On Party Relations and the Khrushchev Report

Since the Geneva Conference demonstrated that Washington might well find itself with its colossal arms-building "all dressed up and no place to go," the tremendous advances of mankind that have been masked by the fog of the Cold War are beginning to come into clearer view.

The XXth Congress of the CPSU in particular cast a powerful light on the new situation in the world today—the emergence of Socialism as a world-wide system, the zone of peace embracing the majority of mankind, the disintegration of the colonial empire, the new possibilities of the varying roads to Socialism. At the same time, it opened the book on the grievous crimes, theoretical errors and distortions of socialist life that contaminated the latter period of Stalin's regime.

These new conditions, possibilities and revelations have created the need for a profound re-examination of the application of Marxist theory not only by the American Communists, but by Marxists all over the world. They necessitate a sharp break with dogmatism and open up a new freedom of criticism within Communist Parties and between Communist Parties. At the same time, they make possible a new historic advance towards unity between Communist and Socialist parties abroad and among all socialist-minded people in our own country.

In the coming period, *Political Affairs* hopes to publish articles reflecting this new thinking by American Communists, as well as the new theoretical concepts of Marxists abroad. Thus, in this issue we are presenting a number of political statements of international importance evoked largely by the special report of Khrushchev, and centering around the question of relationships between Marxist parties. These are: the statement of the National Committee of the American Communist Party; the joint statement on the principles governing future relationships between the Soviet and Yugoslav Communists; and the most extended versions now available of the comments by the General Secretary of the Communist Party of Italy, Palmiro Togliatti, and by Pietro Nenni, Secretary of the Socialist Party of Italy.

*Political Affairs* will welcome contributions by its readers on the momentous questions now posed for solution by Marxists and supporters of Socialism in our country.

*The Editors.*

## Statement of the National Committee, C.P.U.S.A.

*The National Committee of the Communist Party, at its regular meeting, held on June 24, 1956, issued the following statement—ed:*

THE PUBLICATION of the State Department's text of Khrushchev's speech to a closed session of the 20th Congress of the CPSU has given a fresh impetus to the already widespread discussions in our country about the changes taking place in the Soviet Union.

The State Department would like Americans to believe that nothing has changed in the Soviet Union. It hopes to cancel out the positive impact of the 20th Congress, which registered, among other things, a new relationship of world forces, opening up for the first time in history, the real prospect for a lasting peace. It hopes in this way to keep alive the disintegrating remnants of the cold war.

However, the people of our country who desire peaceful coexistence cannot but welcome the actions taken by the Soviet government since Stalin's death as well as the determination expressed in Khrushchev's speech to end the brutalities and injustices which marred a period of Soviet life.

The State Department wants the American people to believe that the tragedies, crimes and injustices which took place during the Stalin era are evils which are inherent in socialism.

But the crimes against innocent people perpetrated under Stalin's leadership are, in fact, alien to socialism. They were an intolerable hindrance to the advance of socialism. Socialism is dedicated to the liberation of mankind from social injustice and to releasing the full capacities for the flowering of humanity. It requires an ever-expanding democracy, the growth of human freedom and personal liberties, the development of conditions which will ultimately eliminate altogether the use of force in the relations between people.

We have been and will continue to be the proud supporters of socialism everywhere. We have fought and will continue to fight against the efforts of big business to calumniate and vilify the Soviet Union and other socialist countries.

We Communists know that socialism must eradicate the inhumanity of capitalist society. That is why we, above all, are deeply shocked by the revelations contained in Khrushchev's speech.

In our opinion this speech should have been made public by the CPSU itself. We do not share the view that the questions dealt with, no matter how painful and abhorrent, are exclusively the internal affair of the CPSU. The role which the Soviet Union has played in world affairs for the last 40 years, and the defense of its socialist achievements by workers in the United States and other countries have made these matters public issues everywhere.

A basic analysis of how such perversions of socialist democracy, justice and internationalism were permitted to develop and continue unchecked for twenty years must still be made by the leadership of the CPSU. It needs also to be made by Marxists everywhere. Khrushchev's contribution to the exposure of mistakes and to the process of correction now going on, makes only a beginning in this direction.

We cannot accept an analysis of such profound mistakes which attributes them solely to the capricious aberrations of a single individual, no matter how much arbitrary power he was wrongly permitted to usurp. It is just as wrong to ascribe all the mistakes and violations of socialist principle to a single individual as it was to ascribe to him all the

achievements and grandeur of socialist progress in the USSR.

In our opinion the mistakes made were primarily a result of wrong policies and concepts arising in part out of the fact that the Soviet Union was the pioneering land of socialism and was surrounded for decades by a hostile capitalist world. Some of these policies and concepts have already been repudiated. But the historic objective factors associated with these errors need to be more fully assessed. Also required is a further and deeper examination of such questions as the structure and operation of socialist democracy in the Soviet Union and other socialist countries as well as of the new problems and perspectives arising as the workers of other lands move toward Socialism. This will illuminate the source of past errors and help avoid future ones.

We are deeply disturbed by facts revealed in information coming from Poland that organs and media of Jewish culture were summarily dissolved and a number of their leaders executed. This is contrary to the Soviet Union's historic contributions on the Jewish question. Khrushchev's failure to deal with these outrages, and the continuing silence of Soviet leaders, require an explanation.

The Communist Party of the U.S. has some serious conclusions to draw from all this. For we are responsible to the working class and people of our own country. And to them we admit frankly that we un-

critically justified many foreign and domestic policies of the Soviet Union which are now shown to be wrong.

We have begun to reexamine our previously oversimplified and wrong concept of the relations which should exist between the Marxists of various countries, including the socialist countries. These relations must be based on the principles of serving the best national interests of each people and the common interests of all progressive humanity; of the equality of parties; of the right and duty of the Marxists of all countries to engage in friendly criticism of the theory or practice of the Marxists of any country, whenever they feel this is necessary. Far from weakening, this will strengthen international working class solidarity. This new approach was reflected in

the *Daily Worker* as early as last March as well as in the position adopted by the National Committee at the end of April.

Our stand is rooted in the primary concern of our Party for the present and future welfare of the American people. As an independent Marxist party of American workers dedicated to socialism, we seek to add our influence to ensuring friendship of peoples and world peace. We shall continue to work for greater economic security, democracy, and civil rights in our own country, and for unity with all socialist-minded groups to attain socialism by constitutional, peaceful means, expressing the free choice of the majority of the American people.

## An Interview with Palmiro Togliatti

*Despite all efforts—including even a delay of press time—to obtain the full text of the interview given by Palmiro Togliatti, General Secretary of the Communist Party of Italy, to the magazine, Nuovi Argomenti, and reprinted in Unita, we were unable to obtain it for this issue. The fullest summary yet available was published in the London Daily Worker of June 18, 1956; it is this which we reprint below:*

Democracy and Socialism are inseparable, Palmiro Togliatti, leader of the Italian Communist Party declared last weekend, and he called upon the Soviet Communist leaders to explain “why Soviet society could and did stray so far from the democratic path.” In an interview published by *Unita*, paper of the Italian Communist Party, last weekend, the spokesman for the largest Communist Party in the capitalist world, stressed, however, there should be no lessening in reciprocal confidence and solidarity among Communist Parties.

The interview of 11,000 words dealt with the questions raised by the recently published speech of Nikita Khrushchev, Secretary of the Soviet Communist Party, on Stalin, which was delivered at the XXth Congress of the Party in Moscow last February.

Togliatti said that since the present Soviet leaders knew Stalin better than anyone outside Russia, “we ought therefore to believe them

when they describe him as they do.”

“We can only think to ourselves that, seeing how things stood, and apart from the impossibility of making a change in time, the Soviet leaders could at least have been more prudent in that public and solemn exaltation of the qualities of this man to which they had accustomed us.

“It is true that today they criticize themselves, and it is their great merit, but in this criticism there is no doubt that some of their prestige has fallen.

“But, apart from all this, as long as they limit themselves in substance to denouncing the personal defects of Stalin, the problem remains within the framework of the ‘cult of personality.’ At one time, all that was good was due to the superhuman, positive qualities of one man; now, all that is bad is attributed to the exceptionally and even staggering defects of the same man.

“Both in one case and in the other, we are outside the criterion of judg-

ment which is proper to Marxism. The real problems escape notice, such as the method by which and the reason why Soviet society could and did stray so far from the democratic path and from the legality which it had traced out for itself, arriving as far as degeneration.

"An examination must be made by following the various phases of the development of this society, and first it must be made by our Soviet comrades. They know more than we, who might err because of partial or erroneous knowledge of the facts."

After discussing the "suffocation" of Soviet democracy under Stalin, Togliatti said what had happened had led to the need and desire for even greater independence of judgment, and the Soviet model could no longer be obligatory for other Communist countries. Togliatti went on:

"We must recognize openly and without hesitation that, while the XXth Congress has made an enormous contribution to the exposure and solution of many serious and new problems of the Democratic and Socialist movement, we cannot consider satisfactory the position adopted by the Congress, which is now being amply developed by the Soviet press, in regard to the errors of Stalin and the causes and conditions which made them possible."

He said Stalin's growth into a tyrant was probably gradual and it was difficult at any time in the past twenty years for the other Soviet leaders to get rid of him. He added:

"I exclude the explanation that it was impossible to make a change because of a machine of terror which controlled the situation through military and police means. It seems to me far more accurate to acknowledge that, despite the errors that he committed, Stalin had the support of a very great part of the country and, particularly, of his ruling cadres and of the masses."

Togliatti added: "Of the facts that are now disclosed we had and could have had no notion."

Calling for an examination of how Soviet society "strayed from the democratic path," Togliatti said that one of the questions to be answered was how such tremendous successes had been achieved by the Soviet system while such great errors were present in its mechanism. "It is the Soviet leaders who must give us the answers, understanding that this is today one of the problems which assails sincere militants of the international working-class movement."

What was most important now was an accurate reply to the question of how the errors crept into the development of a socialist society, and whether "errors of a general order against which the whole world of Socialism should be put on guard did not arise."

He said the major fact to emerge from the XXth Congress was that the Stalin regime suffocated democracy in Russia, and that the efforts of all Communist parties must be directed to ensuring proper democracy within their own frameworks.

He did not believe all that had happened should lead to a lessening in the reciprocal confidence and solidarity among the various Communist parties. "But there is no doubt that it leads not only to the need but to the desire for ever greater independence of judgment, and that cannot but do good to our movement. The international political structure in terms of relations of parties is changed today. What the Communist Party of the Soviet Union has done remains as the first great model for the building of a socialist society, to which the way was opened by a profound, decisive, revolutionary break.

"Today the front of socialist construction in the countries where the

Communists form the ruling party is so vast, comprising a third of humanity, that for them the Soviet model cannot, and must not, any longer be obligatory.

"In the rest of the world there are countries where it is hoped to achieve Socialism without the Communists necessarily being the ruling party. In other countries again the march toward Socialism is an objective which draws various movements together, movements which have not yet reached any mutual agreement or even understanding."

Togliatti concluded: "One cannot talk of a single guide, but rather of a method of progress achieved by following different paths."

# The Opinion of Pietro Nenni\*

*Secretary, Socialist Party of Italy*

THE NECESSITY FOR the [Khrushchev] report and for the extraordinary and secret session of the Congress was the consequence of the amazement by which the delegates to the Congress had been seized when they heard, in the ten preceding days, raining down from the congress platform a whole series of criticisms of the cult of personality and of the Stalin myth; criticisms that culminated in the drastic affirmation of Anastas I. Mikoyan according to which for twenty years in Russia there had not in fact existed a collective direction of the party and of the state but instead there had been diffused the cult of the personality of Stalin.

It is neither the last nor the least of these surprises of the Twentieth Congress that the secret report of Khrushchev has been published by the State Department, which on June 4 put out a version that Moscow has not denied. It is therefore through the medium of the press section of U.S.I.S. (United States Information Service) that the Communist parties themselves, represented at the Moscow congress, have come to know one of the most serious and dramatic documents in the Communist literature of the world.

Let us see in what the "shameful facts" revealed by the Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union consist.

## "THE SHAMEFUL FACTS"

The first part of the report is devoted to the re-evocation of an old polemic, of the antagonism, so to speak, between Lenin and Stalin. An antagonism well known in all its details outside the USSR, but which the official historians of the Soviet Union had passed over for thirty years, as if the testament of Lenin had not even existed.

The report enters its most dramatic phase when it gives details of the purges, trials and executions from 1936 to 1938.

From that tragic period of the Soviet Revolution we already knew the four trials that ended with a series of death sentences: the trial of the "sixteen" (Zinoviev, Kamenev, Smirnov, etc.) in August, 1936.

The trial of the "seventeen" (Gregory, Piatakov, Karl Radek, Sokolnikov, etc.) in January, 1937.

The trial of Marshal Tukachevsky and of a group of generals and Red Army commandants in June, 1937. The trial of the "twenty-one" (Alexei Rykov, Nikolai Bukharin, Krestinsky, Henryk G. Yagoda, etc.) in March, 1938.

With regard to these trials, with the exception of Tukachevsky's, which was kept secret for reasons of military security, there exists an abundant literature, including a shorthand summary of the hearings.

It was evident from that time on that Soviet public life had undergone in the previous ten years a double process of degeneration. On the one hand, of the party and state machine toward forms of bureaucratization and terrorism, and on the other hand, of the internal opposition toward forms of conspiracy and palace revolution.

What was known at that time was only a part of the truth. Not even Trotsky in his vehement accusations of Stalin, not even Victor Serge in his "Pamphlets," not even Boris Souvarin in his slashingly critical biography of Stalin, were in complete possession of the whole truth, as it is now being revealed by the disciples and successors of Stalin.

Let us ask ourselves one moment what the Seventeenth Congress of the U.S.S.R. Communist Party was. It was the congress of the "victors." It was held in Moscow at the end of January, 1934. It opened with "tempestuous" applause for the central committee and for Stalin.

If one considers that the power of Stalin was not at that time what it became later with the war, it is evident that the massacres disclosed by Khrushchev involve responsibilities that were not Stalin's alone but of the whole directive apparatus. Terror, in conditions of

time and place not justified by necessity, was the price paid to the suppression of all democratic life inside the party and the state.

## WHERE WERE THE LEADERS?

At this point Khrushchev answers the questions that must have been in the air: "Where were the members of the political bureau of the Central Committee? Why did not they react in time to the cult of the personality? Why do they only react now?" The answer is "the members of the political bureau saw these problems in a different way at different times."

And this answer may be valid in a strictly personal sense. It is not valid for the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party. It is not valid for the Politburo. There is no doubt that the facts cited by Khrushchev, and on which world opinion now awaits proper documentation, must have placed the members of the political office in a very difficult situation. But they had been placed in posts of responsibility precisely for this purpose, precisely to face difficult situations.

From the revelations of Khrushchev we learn that the guest of the Kremlin appears to have been practically a maniac who, like the figure of the dictator in which Charlie Chaplin portrayed Hitler, "drew plans on a map of the world."

Khrushchev cannot contain his laughter at and contempt for Stal-

\* The text is the fullest abstract available at press time of an article published in Rome on June 23, 1956.

in's military genius. Of the historical and military films of Stalin he says that "they make us sick." The snag is that on those films, on those books, on those poems there was organized the most vast propaganda hoax in the memory of the world.

One of the main results of the Khrushchev report is the fact that the polemic on the cult of personality no longer makes sense, and the fact that it was Stalin who imposed the glorification of his own person becomes entirely secondary, as does the fact that he himself wrote the most laudatory phrases in his biography, on which the Communists of the whole world have fed, and the fact that he was never sated by hyper-laudatory adjectives, antheims, and gifts.

The Rapporteur has pointed out the difference between the premise—the criticism of the cult of the myth—and the conclusion—the demolition of the action of a man who for thirty years personified the Communist revolution. And the question has been asked, at the end of his report: "But how was all this possible? Stalin was at the head of the party and of the country for thirty years and in the course of his life many battles have been won. Can we deny it?" Khrushchev does not deny it.

#### PROGRESS OF USSR

He knows, better than we do, the progress that the Soviet Union has made in the past thirty years, winning the battle of industrializa-

tion, winning the battle of education, winning the war, becoming the second country in the world in production, and equaling the United States in the field of scientific experiment and especially of nuclear physics.

"The socialist revolution," he declares, "has been realized by the working class and by the poor peasants with the partial help of the middle-class of peasants. It has been a conquest of the people guided by the Bolsheviks." After this, evidently, we can return to the original question: Who then guided the Bolsheviks, in view of the fact that their congresses, their Central Committee, their Politburo, the Soviets, little by little, had allowed themselves to be stripped over twenty years of their prerogatives of control, and of their right of initiative?

The Khrushchev report lacks any kind of Marxist analysis of Soviet society, any historical reconstruction of the moment in which, under the influence of determinate objective or subjective relations all power was transferred into the hands of Stalin. There is a list of facts, of "shameful facts" as Khrushchev calls them.

An attempt is not even made to answer the question: "How and why could these things come to pass?" It was known that the dictatorship of the proletariat had been changed into a dictatorship of the Communist Party.

We learn that the dictatorship of the Communist Party had become the personal dictatorship of Stalin.

We are not told either how or why this could happen. We do not even know how the Soviet ruling group has arrived at its conclusions, whether it is in agreement, or divided, and if so on what, and why.

A similar uncertainty manifests itself in the Khrushchev report as soon as the Rapporteur deals with the question of remedies. He points out three:

1. Condemn and uproot in the Bolshevik manner the cult of personality as an element extraneous to Marxism-Leninism. Combat inexorably all attempts to re-introduce this practice under any form whatsoever. Restore and effectively apply the fundamental theses of the Marxist-Leninism doctrine, of the people as the creator of history and of all the material and spiritual benefits of humanity, the doctrine of the decisive function of the Marxist party in the revolutionary struggle for the transformation of society and of the victory of communism.

2. Continue systematically and effectively the work carried out by the Central Committee in the last few years.

3. Restore in full the Leninist principles of Socialist Soviet democracy with the object of combatting the arbitrary conduct of individuals who abuse their power.

Fine declarations which, when Stalin was alive, were made a hundred times by Stalin and other Soviet leaders. The collective direction of the Politburo or of the Central Committee would certainly be preferable

to the direction of one man, but if in the collective direction of the Politburo or of the Central Committee there is progress compared to personal direction, benevolent or tyrannical as it may be, there is nevertheless no guarantee of democratic life.

#### NEED FOR DEMOCRATIZATION

Now the whole problem of Soviet society—the whole problem of the popular democracies that have followed in the footsteps of Soviet society—is reduced to the necessity for internal democratization, for the circulation of ideas, in a word for political liberty, a necessity which has lain below the surface of Soviet society for many years.

It is substantially a question of eliminating in the state, in the laws, and above all in custom, all the surviving incrustations of the communism of war, of creating means and instruments for the formation of the free political initiative of the citizen, without there hanging over his head the accusation of being an enemy of the people, a deviationist, a saboteur every time he tries to give weight, in dealings with public authority, to his own personal and independent evaluation of the path to be followed. In this sense the Soviet crisis covers not only the so-called errors of Stalin, but the Soviet system, as it has been taking shape under the influence of factors which are in process of rapid trans-

formation, until they appear completely reversed with respect to the preceding situation.

After a century has passed the concept of dictatorship of the proletariat must be thought out again and reconsidered in relation to a society where the influence and weight of the proletariat and of the workers in general have become determinant in public life and where the state reflects, in countries democratically and socially more advanced, the continuous evolution of class positions.

With regard to Russian experience in particular it is a fact that the February revolution would have disappeared without trace, and the October revolution would not have gone beyond the phase of civil war and the interference of the imperialist foreigner, if the proletariat had not shown indomitable will and the ability to take control of the apparatus of power of the Czarist state, to smash it and to provide a substitute.

But it would be absurd to close one's eyes to the fact that the dictatorship of the proletariat had resolved itself into a dictatorship of the Bolshevik party, and this in turn into a personal dictatorship of Stalin, and thus put itself beyond the bounds of the prophecies and concepts of the masters of socialism.

#### A TURNING POINT

In this Soviet turning point two things have for us Socialists a prac-

tical and immediate interest—repercussions on the foreign policy of the USSR and on the relations between the Soviet workers' movement and the workers' movements in other countries, and secondly, repercussions on the Communist parties and in particular on the Italian Communist party.

In this sense the cataclysm of de-Stalinization must be put into relationship with the dissolving of the Cominform, which seems not to have been inspired by the purely tactical reasons which led in 1943 to the dissolution of the Comintern, but to have resulted from the tendency in Moscow to assume toward the other Communist parties in the world a position of detachment that would have been inconceivable during the time in which the Third International was in fact one world party, whose national sections not only accented but sought and justified theoretically the guidance of the Soviet state.

It is probable that toward an analogous tendency, in the relations between the Soviet Union and the popular democracies, the way has been opened by the agreement signed in these last few days at Moscow between Khrushchev and Tito, an agreement that sanctions the principles of the multiplicity of the socialist experiments and puts the relations between the two parties and the two states under the sign of liberty of action on the basis of the conditions of their respective degrees of development.

Within the framework of such a vast shuffling of the cards, the claim put forward by Comrade Togliatti in his replies to the survey promoted by the review *Nuovi Argomenti* to "an ever greater degree of autonomy of judgment" by Communists of the Soviet experience is a new fact, indicative of the necessity for Communists to seek means of a different development, a development that may be of great importance if not dictated by contingent, tactical considerations.

#### FOR GREATER UNITY AND FREEDOM

It is clear that a communism detached from Moscow, just like a communism without the Communist international, would no longer be the communism of the last thirty-six years, which determined the schism of the traditional Socialist movement.

It is difficult to say where a crisis so profound as that started by the Twentieth Congress of Moscow may lead, as now we only see the first manifestation.

Meanwhile, as things stand, there is an invitation to the various workers' movements, to the Socialists, the Social Democrats, the Communists, to get things straight with themselves, with the new times, with the results of the Moscow process of de-Stalini-

zation. For our part that means recognizing that a certain historical rationalization that we applied to what we found wrong and to be condemned in the Communist dictatorships limited our critical judgment on events, judgment that a workers' party should never renounce.

It is true that the struggle in which our party has been engaged in the last twenty or thirty years can provide an explanation of this.

The reform and changes that the Socialist wants to introduce in the state and in public administration tend in the direction not of state centralism but of administrative decentralization and of the development of modern forms of direct democracy and economic democracy, already existing in embryonic forms in the factory and the village, forms that are factors of freedom for the individual, for social groups, for the national collectivity.

As never before in the past, we are aware of the possibility of assuring the realization and the consolidation of socialism by means of the consent of the majority of the people.

As never before, the development of the productive forces and the capacity of the working class to take national values on to its own shoulders, can assume a growing development without violent clashes, without coercion from above or below and in the fullness of democratic consent.

# The Soviet-Yugoslav Party Agreement

*On June 20, 1956, from Moscow, was announced the following agreement governing future relations between the Communist Parties of Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union:*

## I

The Belgrade declaration of June 2, 1955, placed the relations between the two socialist countries on sound foundations, and the principles made public in it are finding ever broader application in their mutual cooperation.

## II

Cooperation and the general development of relations between the two countries since the Belgrade declaration, as well as the contact between the political and other social organizations of their peoples, have created favorable political conditions also for cooperation between the League of Communists of Yugoslavia and the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

Starting with the foregoing conclusions and taking into consideration the concrete conditions under which present-day socialist movements are developing, and in the spirit of the internationalistic principles of Marx-

ism-Leninism, the delegations of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia and the Communist Party of the Soviet Union have agreed that it is useful and indispensable that the existing contacts between the two parties should continue and develop with the view of cooperation in the interest of the further consolidation and progress of our Socialist countries, with the view of cooperation in the international workers' movement and in numerous matters of the present-day development of socialism, and also with the view of the development of peaceful coexistence and cooperation between peoples of the whole world, irrespective of differences in their social and political system, in the interest of the consolidation of peace, freedom and independence of nations.

In this, the representatives of the parties are governed by the consideration that the development of ties and cooperation between the League of Communists of Yugoslavia and the Communist Party of

the Soviet Union, as the leading parties in countries in which the working class is in power and which have the general aim of building a complete socialist society in their countries, of insuring the progress of humanity and a firm peace, will undoubtedly contribute to the development of further cooperation between the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and to the consolidation of lasting friendship between the peoples of Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union.

## III

Abiding by the view that the roads and conditions of socialist development are different in different countries, that the wealth of the forms of socialist development contributes to their strengthening, and starting with the fact that any tendency of imposing one's own views in determining the roads and forms of socialist development are alien to both sides, the two sides have agreed that the foregoing cooperation should be based on complete freedom of will and equality, on friendly criticism and on the comradely character of the exchange of views on disputes between our parties.

## IV

Placed on the mentioned foundations, cooperation between the League of Communists of Yugo-

slavia and the Communist Party of the Soviet Union will evolve primarily along the way of a comprehensive mutual study of the forms and methods of socialist development in the two countries, the free and comradely exchange of experiences and views on questions of general interest for the development of socialist practice and the promotion of socialist thought, and also on questions relating to peace, rapprochement and linking up between nations and the progress of mankind in general.

## V

The modern material and spiritual transformation of the world, which finds expression in an enormous growth of the socialist forces, in the strengthening of national liberation movements, in increasing the role of the working class, in solving concrete questions of present-day international development, confronts the international workers movement with a number of huge tasks. This fact also indicates the indispensability of a scientific analysis of the manifestations and fundamental material and social factors and tendencies of development in the present-day world.

For these reasons the delegations have agreed, guided by the principles of Marxism-Leninism, to a prompt mutual cooperation and exchange of views in the field of socialist scientific thought both in their mutual re-

lations and in the international workers movement, in general.

## VI

As regards concrete forms of cooperation between the League of Communists of Yugoslavia and the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, the delegations agreed that it should be realized by way of personal contacts, written and oral declarations and exchanges of views, through the exchange of delegations, materials, literature, as well as, when necessary, by organizing mutual meetings of party workers with a view to examining current questions of general interest and, generally, by way of constructive, comradely discussion.

## VII

Representatives of the workers movement of the two countries consider such mutual cooperation as a component part of all contacts with other Communist and workers parties as well as with Socialist and other progressive movements in the world.

## VIII

The League of Communists of Yugoslavia and the Communist Party of the Soviet Union consider that it is in the interests of the struggle for lasting peace and security of the people, as well as of social progress, to insure the wide cooperation of

all progressive and peaceful forces, which is increasingly being manifested in the most varied forms and on a world-wide scale.

This cooperation is one of the most pressing needs of modern social development. These ties should be equal, frank, democratic and accessible to world public opinion. They should aid mutual acquaintance and consultation on different problems of general interest and contribute to mutual understanding on the basis of a patient explanation of attitudes and views of the different sides.

This means the freedom of action of each individual participant in that cooperation, according to the conditions of his development and in keeping with the general progressive aims to which they aspire.

The representatives of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia and the Communist Party of the Soviet Union are convinced that cooperation between the workers' movements of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union on the basis of the above-mentioned principles and forms will serve the interests of their peoples and the interests of socialist construction in their countries.

They are convinced that with this they will give their contribution to a general rapprochement between socialist and other progressive movements in the world, and this will equally serve the interests of peace in the world, and the interests of general progress of mankind.

Communist Party Discussion Section

# Towards a United Party of Socialism

By Nemmy Sparks

OVER THE YEARS, the current of socialist thinking in the United States has been an exceedingly broad one. Many utopian socialist groups originated here in the early days of the 19th century and made a lasting contribution to this current. Marxism began its development in America almost simultaneously with its first steps in Europe. But for over a hundred years various socialistic tendencies developed side by side with the organized socialist movement, which itself had its historic series of mergers, splits and regroupings. In this general broad current many tendencies have at various times been only half-formed, politically confused and mingled with other streams of thought; but they have all contributed in one form or another to the present patterns of thinking among the considerable number in our country who look forward to some form of socialist reorganization of society.

In the present period there is again an upward trend of socialist thinking, and various currents and diversified groupings are playing an increasing role in this trend. Comrade Dennis in his report to the National Committee touches on the nature of these various groupings and faces the Party with a most challenging question: How does the Party define its relationship to these trends and what perspective do we envisage in regard to them and the common goal of socialism?

Our Party has always considered itself the inheritor of the traditions of the 100-year-old organized socialist movement in our country and the political descendant of Weydemeyer, Sylvis, Haywood and Debs. But in so doing, we assumed almost automatically that all that was worthwhile in the other socialist currents would soon flow into our stream of influence.

This assumption was all the more

natural because of the very real differences in regard to the struggle against capitalist policies in the U.S. as well as other questions. But was this assumption correct? If we apply the test of experience, we see that during the periods when our Party was reaping its most conspicuous successes, as when it stood at the head of the struggles of the unemployed, when it was playing a key role in the building of the CIO unions, when it was attempting to develop American traditions in the modern period, and exerting tangible influence on the political scene in the heyday of the New Deal, many individuals did come over from other socialist movements and schools of thought. But even then the Party by no means embraced in its following the varied currents of socialist thinking. In the later period when we operated under more adverse conditions, this assumption clashed even more with reality, for the diversity of the socialist currents increased.

Thus, in the course of the "new look" that we have been taking in our Party for several months now, this question has also come up for examination and it is being recognized that our experience challenges this central assumption that our Party should regard itself as the only constructive bearer of socialist thinking.

It would seem legitimate to ask: Why didn't we question this assumption earlier? What were the factors operating in our thinking which closed our eyes to the test of

experience on this question? Some of these factors were peculiar to our own historic development. Others were not limited to us alone but were common to the thinking of all Communist parties—the fact that the force of theoretical generalization had been given to the idea that the Communist Party is the only constructive bearer of socialist thinking.

This is borne out by a recent article in the Soviet journal, *Questions of History*. In planning the correction of the theoretical errors made under Stalin's leadership in its own field, this Soviet journal makes a general survey of the distortions introduced into Soviet history of the Russian revolutionary movement. All history-writing is, of course, retrospect — "hindsight." When historians work under a generally correct political theory—one corresponding to the realities of their times—they will also be free to write history as a correct reflection of the past. But when they work under a biased and incorrect theory, they will inevitably be pushed into imposing that bias on their picture of the past.

Thus the Stalin theory that as socialism developed in the Soviet Union the class struggle grew sharper, and its corollary that political dissent grew into treason, inevitably affected the historic picture presented of the earlier years of the Russian revolutionary movement. The journal points out: "Instead of characterizing Menshevism as an

anti-Marxist trend *inside* the labor movement, some historians picture the Mensheviks as abettors of czarist autocracy. They do not take into account that, though the most consistent, the Bolsheviks, *were not the only* force in the camp of revolutionary democracy." The journal declares that this erroneous picture had a definite influence in strengthening elements of sectarianism in the thinking of other Communist parties.

How would it strengthen sectarianism? In my opinion, largely by leading other Communist parties to believe, on the strength of the experience of the C.P.S.U., that the Communist Party of any country was the *only* political grouping that had any value in the movement for socialism. Such a concept would certainly affect the degree of success that could be attained by a Communist Party in the vital effort to develop a united front. For opponents of the united front in other political organizations had plain sailing in denouncing this approach as arrogant, and in presenting the aim of the Communists in the united front as that of destroying or absorbing the other groupings. On the other hand, one could hardly doubt that the Italian Communist Party's attitude of respect and acceptance towards the Socialists, though by no means excluding ideological struggle, has been an essential component of their successful united front in the present period.

A related theory that was ex-

tended into international practice far beyond the time and scope of any possible application it may have had, was the well known theory of "directing the main blow" against not only Social Democracy but against that group which stood in its declared position closest to the Communists. One of the formulations of this theory was given by Stalin as late as 1929:

In order that the fight against Social Democracy may be carried on successfully, attention must be sharply drawn to the question of fighting the so-called Left wing of Social Democracy, that Left wing, which by playing with Left phrases and thus adroitly fooling the workers, is retarding the desertion of the workers from Social Democracy. (*Leninism*, Vol. II, p. 115.)

At that time the whole working class movement was still living in the shadow of the terrible Social-Democratic betrayals of 1914-1920. And although Lenin put forward the slogan of united front as early as 1921, the experiences of the period of war and revolutions still governed all minds. The formulation of Stalin quoted above, and similar formulations, led to a tendency in practice at various times to center the struggle against the non-Communist Left. It tended to frustrate the natural efforts at building coalitions and alliances that were particularly encouraged by the Seventh World Congress and its historic call for a people's front against fascism. The Chinese Communist Party has de-

scribed in the recent editorial in the *Chinese People's Daily*\* how it decided to reject this theory and to develop its alliances.

These incorrect theories thus tended to divert us from recognizing the broad and varied currents of socialist thinking in America, and led us to a rigid and so-to-speak "monopolistic" attitude towards them. To change such an attitude does not mean to reject the unique character of the Communist contribution. But it means to recognize that one of the main contributions that can be made today by all socialist-minded forces in the U.S. is to bring about unity among themselves.

We should not mistake the low level of socialist organization in the country for a scarcity of socialist thinking. There are various general trends. Some stem from the days of the old Socialist Party, and remember through family traditions, the days of the Dems presidential campaigns and record socialist votes, and the close ties of the S.P. with the trade unions.

Other trends—in the long run perhaps the most fruitful potentially—are to be found within many trade unions where the tradition of socialist thinking had a direct relationship to the historic struggles through which those unions were built.

Among the youth, perhaps for the first time in nearly half a century, a new generation is growing up which,

owing to the wholesale repressions and intimidation, has not encountered any great amount of mass agitation for socialism. But the heavy-handed official anti-socialist and anti-Communist propaganda in the universities has fostered a tremendous curiosity about socialism that is being noted by numerous observers.

If we shed from our eyes the scales of a "monopolistic" attitude, we will see such trends and evidences of socialist thinking in all parts of the country and in almost every locality. What should be our attitude towards these trends and towards the various groupings in which some of them find expression? The Dennis report says,

We can have only the most positive approach to all honest socialist and Marxist-oriented groupings and individuals, whatever our differences may be on certain tactical and programmatic questions. We share the aspirations of many of these forces for a mass party of Socialism in our country. We, too, want to create the conditions for such a necessary and historic development.

In my opinion this approach and perspective are altogether desirable. Unity was always recognized as a central objective of those who wished to build a socialist movement. The historic conditions deriving from the First World War, the Russian Revolution, and the split in the socialist movement, have now given way to the new conditions which the XXth Congress described as the era of the

world socialist system. These conditions make possible a vast new trend towards unity among socialist-minded people which has already begun to be felt not only abroad but in our own country. The new features of independence and mutual criticism in the relationships among Communist Parties also tend to remove barriers between Communists and other supporters of socialism.

Would it not bring this perspective nearer, if in various localities, Communists would begin talking to other socialist-minded elements and groupings and begin to explore the areas of common agreement and difference, develop interchanges and public discussion, such as the splendid forum in New York where an exchange took place between Norman Thomas, A. J. Muste, Dr. Du Bois and Comrade Dennis?

The perspective of a united mass party of socialism would require more than just the desire to unite. It would require on the part of all active participants, not the least, ourselves—but not only ourselves—the necessary steps to bring about an atmosphere of discussion. It would be necessary—for this as well as for general reasons—to develop a review of our ideology and practices, to recognize our mistakes, to overcome our rigidity. In such an atmosphere, supporters of socialism would expect that other organized groupings would do no less. For the problem

of the absence of a mass following for socialism in this country today is the common problem of all socialist groupings.

Of outstanding importance in our own preparation for participation in such a development is the development of a normal atmosphere of discussion in our own Party. Unless we ourselves learn again how to maintain such an atmosphere, to truly determine policy through the give-and-take of discussion on all levels, to allow discussion to maintain the constant check on policy by experience, to lead by persuading and convincing, we would be unable to participate successfully in such a development.

The development of a new united mass party of socialism will also not come about as a result only of abstract discussion. It will also need the bond of common effort and common struggle for the needs of the American people against the continually increasing pressure of the monopolies.

Such common action would likewise help to shape its program and course, in contact with the realities of the mass struggle as they develop. A coalition of the main progressive forces of the American people to curb the monopolies, would be vastly increased in effectiveness, the stronger and more united its socialist sector.

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## Some Problems in Illinois

By Sam Kushner

WHILE IT IS RIGHT to speak of our influencing the nation, and affecting the thinking of the American people, I think it is number one that this be done through our influence in the working class. This, in my opinion, is the primary direction in which we must analyze the events of the past and attempt to chart our modest course for the future.

It is in this sense that I feel the Dennis report falls far short. In attempting to deal with a multitude of questions, and with a protracted period of history, the report fails to properly emphasize the role of the working class and our relation to it. The Dennis report, like too many other reports in the past, deals with the problems in the working class organizations in a cursory manner, much too briefly, and with a certain lack of critical and self-critical analysis.

### TRADE-UNION QUESTIONS

Merely to emphasize this point, one needs only to look at some of the perspectives set forth in the report and see the terrible absence of major questions that are under discussion in the trade-union movement. While

we are concerned with the national elections this fall, are we not also concerned with the need to participate with the labor movement in support of the Steelworkers with the strong possibility of a strike in that industry? Is it not correct that a major perspective for a large section of the labor movement today, and the Communists as well, is the achievement of a shorter work week? Are not the answers to the problems created by speedup and automation of the deepest concern to us? In the field of labor unity there is a multiplicity of problems facing the labor movement and is not part of our perspectives to help resolve these questions in a most positive manner? The strong sentiment that now exists in increasingly large sections of the labor movement for adequate Negro representation at all levels of the labor movement is another of the many perspectives in which we must play a role. And just to note one other, is it not within our perspectives to join with the labor movement in the drive to remove the iniquitous scab laws that masquerade under the title of right-to-work laws, from the statutes of many states?

While it is true that the Dennis report poses some general perspectives, those that affect the working class organizations in a most direct manner find very little reflection in the report. This is a sharp commentary on the leadership of our Party that has yet to put into life its aspirations of becoming the vanguard of the working class.

The Dennis report makes some very sound observations when it points out that the major yardstick for most united front activity in the past has been the foreign policy issue. As has been said by many, we became "the foreign policy party." This distortion of an approach to foreign policy, together with a rigidity in our tactical implementation, created major and insurmountable obstacles in maintaining united front relations, especially in the labor movement.

A certain basic style of immodesty that prevails in our work in general exhibited itself time and again in our work in the labor movement. We incorrectly assumed that our Party had all the answers. In the name of being the vanguard, we hot-housed many opinions that did not find adequate reflection from life. *More often than not, we took the germ of a good idea and beat it to death.*

### TAFT-HARTLEY

There are many examples, but a case in point was our attitude to Taft-Hartley compliance. What

started out to be a nation-wide powerful movement against compliance, soon took on the form of a rear-guard action by some of the most militant and progressive forces. Of course, there are unions, such as the United Mine Workers, that have refused to comply to this day. More power to them. But it is obvious that unions such as this were not faced by red-baiting, raids, and all-out attacks that some of the more progressive-led unions faced. Our Party urged persistent, protracted and uniform resistance to compliance long after this was realistic. Once again, wishful thinking replaced realistic analysis. It does not mitigate the circumstances that some of the leaders of the progressive-led unions shouted "sellout" at those unions which complied with T-H. Some complied because of their ideological approach (class collaboration); others, because they were forced to when faced with the facts of life. During the last decade, the shriek of sellout has been our charge in instances when unions did not agree with the tactics or policies of the Left. This is a poor substitute, if any, for patient understanding of the problems, weaknesses and need for correction on the part of some of these unions under conservative leadership.

### ON LABOR UNITY

Comrade Dennis, in my opinion, is quite right when he says that the issue is not whether the progressive-

led unions could have avoided expulsion from the C.I.O. I do not wish to enter into the debate on this point now. What is most aggravating, however, is that the Party forces in the labor movement did not put up a fight from the word go to reunite the labor movement. This weakness in our understanding on the question of uniting the labor movement has a history that goes back for ten years.

When some of the eleven unions that were expelled from the C.I.O. contemptuously announced that they were not expelled, but rather had walked out of the C.I.O., known Left-wingers associated themselves with this position. To the best of my knowledge, our Party never stated in a vigorous manner our disagreement with this kind of a position. What was the reasoning for this kind of excuse—of “walking out” rather than being expelled? It was an effort to “prove” to the membership of these unions that because of adherence to certain principled stands they no longer could live in the C.I.O. In order to lay the groundwork for beating off raids, they had to, and did, and so did we, paint the C.I.O. and its leadership in the rottenest terms.

This does not gainsay the many points of legitimate criticism that was due the C.I.O. leadership. But an outlook of going it alone necessitated a vituperative and unrealistic attitude to the C.I.O. leaders. Of course, the atmosphere was developed in many of these eleven unions that

anyone who spoke up for unity would be branded as an ally of potential raiders. It must be said that our policy was not in keeping with the needs of the workers, but rather that our ears were attuned to the opinions of some of the leaders of certain unions.

#### ON TACTICS AND POLICY

We should differentiate between some of the blundering *tactics* that sharpened the rift between the Party forces and some of the leaders in these unions, and the errors in *policy* which were of a sectarian nature. While it is true that the Left forces, following a sectarian line, unnecessarily broke with some trade-union leaders, is it not equally true that in many respects we became prisoners of a policy laid down by other “Left” trade-union leaders. It was sectarianism on both scores. In one case we very carefully listened to the trade-union leaders who had a wrong policy on unity and in the other case placed impossible demands in the united front with other trade-union leaders who disagreed with us.

In any estimate of our past trade-union work, a few words should be said about the sharp effects and consequences of the third-party movement. It was in this campaign that there were some of the sharpest consequences of wrong policies. Here not only did many of the progressive forces find themselves at odds with other trade-union leaders, but there was sharp separation between some

of the Left leaders and the rank and file of their unions as a result. It is true that many trade-union leaders, including myself at that time, were for the third party and saw great possibilities in it. But when in the last days of the campaign some of the trade-union leaders and shop workers raised questions with the Party about the new feelings among the workers, this was rejected as “capitulation” and opportunism. We bulldozed it through. We considered very little the new moods of the workers. We were speaking to the workers, but we certainly were not listening to them.

Dennis’ brief reference to the fact that we did not correctly orientate our work in unions other than those that were expelled from the CIO only tells a small part of the story. While agreeing with this statement, let us remember that during a large part of the past ten years we put a premium on results, resolutions, etc., which were forthcoming only in certain types of unions. We did not have the time to work in other unions. I might at this point parenthetically add that as long as our work in the labor field continues to be treated in the main as a department of the Party we will not be able to bring about a change in this state of affairs.

#### THE LAST FOUR YEARS

In the field of our recent work in the labor movement, my opinion is that our gravest error was on the

question of labor unity, during the past four years. Why did this come about? Why was it that while we began to break with our sectarian approach in the electoral and other fields, in the fight for labor unity we were dead wrong. Yes, we made some good beginnings in the first Swift articles on work in the Right-led unions, but we backtracked, both in a second series by Swift and in the Stevens report to the National Party Conference.

The election of Eisenhower brought a change in the thinking of the rank and file of labor in 1952. For the first time in two decades, an “unfriendly” Administration was in the White House, in the eyes of the workers. The speedup in the plants was growing and several unions were faced with prolonged strikes. Some of the strikes were broken. In the midwest, the 1952 Harvester strike was defeated. The workers were demanding answers. The only possible answer was greater unity. But our Party, beset with a line that predicted a crisis before the ’56 elections, and with ingrained sectarian practices, paid no heed.

As is noted in the Dennis report, there were all kinds of moods among some of our trade-union allies and in the Party ranks about unity being State Department inspired, etc. New signs of unity were beginning to show themselves, such as in the Square D strike (Detroit) and a successful united strike of the non-ferrous metal unions in the west. It should be noted that the rejection

of a correct line on unity was far from unanimous. The organized National Committee at that time rejected numerous proposals to consider a change of line. At one time a majority of the Illinois Board took exception to what was considered a wrong position on unity in the Stevens report.

One more word should be said, I think, about some of the lessons that we have yet to learn from the errors in this very important aspect of our work.

In several districts, including Illinois, it began to be clear that the desire for unity was crossing all lines. New coalitions were being formed in many local unions. This was particularly true at department levels. Indications of this were shown in steel, auto, and some of the craft unions. The intense red-baiting of the previous years began to recede. The united front around the grievances began to show itself. We were far from sensitive to these new moods which began to express themselves in a definite form after the '52 election.

The Dennis report falls far short of being a self-critical document on the questions of our errors concerning labor unity.

#### QUESTIONS OF ORGANIZATION AND PERSPECTIVES

In the discussion of our Party work in the trade-union movement as well as organizational forms in

the labor movement, we should keep in mind an approach to the errors we have made in the past. The main question that should concern us is the correction of these *political errors* of sectarianism. Let us keep in mind that when we fully participated in the historic campaign to organize the unorganized in the '30's, our correct line helped us overcome many of our organizational weaknesses.

The major problem that confronts us now is how we can become a more integral part of the working class and help to lead it forward. The forms will be diverse and many-sided. The trade-union organizations have their own forms.

The Dennis report says (p. 39):

To enable the Party to move forward most rapidly and to strengthen its mass contacts and multiply its political influence, it is equally necessary to create a new understanding of how the Party exercises its vanguard role in the present conditions where the Party, in the main, is largely semi-legal or illegal, and where big mass labor and popular organizations exist and broad mass movements are unfolding. In these circumstances, primary emphasis must be placed on drastically improving the content and modifying the forms and methods of work of our members in existing mass organizations and movements; on how to give more effective political leadership to the masses in and around the decisive organizations of labor, the Negro people, farmers, youth, and women.

Secondly, it is essential that we put

an end to certain sectarian and harmful practices that alienate the Left from many workers and other potential allies—namely the general indefensible and frequent disregard of trade-union democracy and discipline. Likewise the Left forces in the unions should avoid giving support to various old concepts of "opposition" and so-called "rank-and-file movements" that narrow and do not even embrace the majority of the Left and progressive forces, and tend to separate them from the majority of the workers and bypass the established union machinery and procedures which exist in the industrial unions in basic industry.

These statements by Comrade Dennis are important because of what they say and do not say. While I am sure that as we enter this discussion we will re-examine many questions, including our forms of organization, it seems to me that when Dennis used the word, "modify" some comrades already begin to interpret this as meaning "eliminate." To me there is a difference. Of course, some organizational changes will be needed. But the promiscuous discussion that I have heard already on the need for elimination of shop clubs, shop papers, and that we must not "interfere" in the affairs of the labor movement, seem to me to lead in the direction of weakening our already too weak role in the labor movement. I think there is a great need to examine the past activities of our organizations. May I, however, be so bold as to suggest that the shop club that was a residue of a sectarian

line will be a far different thing with a political line that is geared to coalition, not sectarianism. It is not the form of our work, I am inclined to believe, that is in error, but rather the content.

When Dennis argues against violations of trade-union democracy and urges that we end participation in "opposition movements" that are narrow and are only the Party forces under a different label, and that we end sectarian practices, I say, Amen. *But* there are legitimate caucuses in many unions that seek to speak for more advanced workers. I think those are good if they are representative of a broad cross section of the workers and are not in violation of the practices of these unions. In correcting our previous sectarian blunders let us not now swing the much abused pendulum in the other direction. Rank and file movements have not always been sectarian and need not be so.

One of the most serious omissions in Comrade Dennis' remarks is the failure to mention the need for a correct tactical approach and the tactical implementation of our policy in trade-union work.

What has happened to the old maxim that once policy is agreed upon then organization is decisive? Can we be an effective force in the labor movement without a correct tactical approach? I know that there are comrades who are repelled by the incessant and petty discussions in many of our shop clubs. I share this impatience. But is the answer to

“disengage” ourselves from the tactics? In meeting one excess, let us not commit another.

Yes, we should help to remold our Party along lines where the greatest portion of our time and energy is devoted to the major policy questions facing the workers. But let us be realists. Comrades who have worked in a certain style for years (as they were taught) are becoming confused by some approaches. Instead of clarity in some cases confusion prevails. It is par-

ticularly on the question of tactics, which is such an important part of Communist work, and in my book, always will be so, that we must make haste slowly to orientate our method of work so as to place the greatest emphasis on policy questions.

The future of our Party is intimately tied up with the working class. There can be no separation. The turn that is *most needed* at the coming convention of our Party, lies in that direction in order to break out of our isolation.

## On Marx and “Force”

By Harry Martel

WILLIAM Z. FOSTER's article “The Road to Socialism” in the April issue is a carefully reasoned and dialectic exposition of the historically conditioned ideas of the masters of communist theory on the crucial questions of the roads to socialism.

However, the context in which he places Marx's oft-quoted statement: “*Force is the midwife of every old society pregnant with a new one,*” is not strictly the proper one. The reader might get the impression that this quotation helps substantiate Foster's conclusion that at a certain period neither Marx nor Engels saw any “prospects for either a peaceful or legal revolution” (p. 6). But this impression would be erroneous. And while it is perfectly true that at the time the *Manifesto* was written such prospects were out of the question for the reasons given by Foster, it is not entirely accurate to imply that such prospects were out of the question at the time the “midwife” statement was written. Since I have not yet seen the concluding section of Foster's article, it is entirely possible that this latter reservation on my

part falls to the ground. But, in my opinion, it is incorrect to use the quotation from Marx in such a way as to imply that Marx in *Capital* also employed the term ‘force’ as equivalent to ‘violence’ outside the bounds of legality.

If one refers to the chapter in which the quotation appears, a chapter entitled *Genesis of the Industrial Capitalist*, it will be seen that Marx is speaking of something altogether different from what Foster's use of the quotation implies. It concerns the means and methods whereby the transition from feudalism to capitalism was effected in various countries. Discussing what he calls the “different moments” of primitive accumulation and their distribution in this and that country, Marx says: “In England, at the end of the 17th century, they arrive at a systematical combination, embracing the colonies, the national debt, the modern mode of taxation, and the protectionist system. These methods depend in part on brute force, e.g., the colonial system.” Marx then goes on to a marvelous generalization in which

the quotation used by Foster appears. "But," says Marx, "they all employ the power of the State, *the concentrated and organized force of society* (my emphasis, H.M.), to hasten, hothouse fashion, the process of transformation of the feudal mode of production into the capitalist one, and to shorten the transition. Force is the midwife of every old society pregnant with a new one. It is itself an economic power."

And there is an indignant account of the violence and barbarities of the colonial system, that brute force fostered by the bourgeoisie and sanctioned by the State.

From all this it can be seen that Marx is very, very far indeed from equating force with illegality, and equally far from considering violence as necessarily illegal.

This shows how important it is to examine the real meaning or rather meanings of such terms as "force," "violence," "State," "revolution," if one is to make a profound study of the Marxist theory of revolution. For these terms have been used in different senses at different periods and in different contexts by the masters of theory. This is not to say that they do not have precise meanings. They do, indeed. But when the Smith Act, for instance, lumps force and violence together, and when prosecutors call on their stool-pigeon "experts" to collect every reference to force and violence and revolution in Marxist literature, it becomes necessary to make clear that we at least are able to show that all this

prosecution hodge-podge of words is meaningless and purposely so. For instance, take the use of the term, force, in *Capital*, as meaning the concentrated and organized power of society, that is, the State. The Smith Act talks of the duty and necessity to overthrow the government by force and violence. Applying Marx's meaning of the term to this, we would get the following huge bit of nonsense: the overthrow of the government by the State. One can only wonder how even Judge Medina would have to cudgel his brains over this "Aesopian" language.

But be that as it may, had Foster attempted an exposition of the meaning of the "midwife" proposition, he would have strengthened his own basically correct argumentation, and would have avoided the implication that force necessarily means violence or/and illegality.

Further, he would not have made it appear that for Marx and Engels the prospects were the same at the period *Capital* was written as they were at the time of the writing of the *Manifesto*. For, it will be recalled that Engels said in his preface to the first English edition of *Capital* (1886) that Marx's lifelong study of the economic history of England had led him "to the conclusion that, at least in Europe, England is the only country where the inevitable social revolution might be effected entirely by peaceful and legal means."

Foster refers to this, of course, on

the very next page. But by his use of the quotation on the previous page in connection with the *Manifesto*, and by his statement immediately following the quotation: "Marx and Engels then saw no prospects for either a peaceful or legal revolution"

the impression could be given that this held true as well for the period in which the quotation in question was written. And that is the very impression which Foster himself shows should be avoided.

## NOTICE TO OUR READERS

Effective with our August issue, the retail price of *Political Affairs* will be 35 cents per copy. The annual subscription price will be \$4.00 a year, with 75 cents additional for Canadian and foreign subs. All present subscribers are fully protected, and their subscriptions will be continued until they expire without increase in price.

This long-overdue increase in price has become imperative because of steadily mounting costs during the past several years.

## CHICAGO READERS DISCUSS "P.A."

Recently in Chicago a group of readers got together with one of the editors to give us their opinions of P.A. Perhaps the most general agreement was that the articles still carry too authoritarian a tone. "People who write for P.A. often seem to think they don't have to *convince* anybody. The material may be valuable, but if it's produced that way, it doesn't stimulate interest, thinking and discussion. Let's have more articles that *discuss* the question with the reader, instead of just telling him. Articles are too weighty and too conclusive. An article in P.A. should not seek to end discussion among readers, but rather initiate it."

Or another reader: "Articles in P.A. often don't give enough facts. Sometimes facts are used only incidentally to buttress arguments and to prove preconceived conclusions. The Berman article on political economy was a welcome change on this score."

"P.A. is still too hard to read. A lot of it is because too many writers seem to be striving to be precise and 'balanced.' That's all right for an occasional special piece. But in general, it makes an article uninteresting and takes up space with things the reader already knows."

What about content? "There should be more reflection of American life—of the ideological issues confronting the nation. Take Eisenhower's Conference on how to sell the 'American system.' Couldn't we have some articles dealing with aspects of these questions? Or the crisis in education, or similar questions that have become almost insoluble here?"

"We have not been giving enough attention to the question of *how* the American people have been moving forward during this period in which we Marxists have been relatively isolated. We should have articles discussing the system of ideas, slogans and forms of struggle being used by the labor leaders, Negro people and people's forces generally."

"Most of the articles ought to reflect the struggles of the labor movement. We need more discussion of the thinking of labor, liberal, Social-Democratic and bourgeois ideologists. There should be more reflection of the current ideological developments in the labor field. About sixty universities now have labor departments in the closest relations with unions. They have become semi-official ideological centers for the labor movement. We would like some articles evaluating their methods and trends."

"There are not enough book reviews. We don't mean little reviews of left pamphlets, etc.; we mean adequate treatment of major books that play a role in the battle of ideas. Fleischer's review of Berle's *Twentieth Century Capitalist Revolution* was a good one. So was Aptheker's review of Walter Lippmann's book. We ought to have one such review every month."

How are these improvements to be made? One way is to broaden the circle of contributors. The readers present were all people who could be contributing articles and book reviews themselves, as some had done previously, and as they promised to do again.

We would like to hear the opinions of our readers on the comments of the Chicago group, as well as their own suggestions for P.A.

N. S.

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