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DAMNED ... AND BANNED ... BUT GROWING! WHY?

Marxism has been damned incessantly and banned repeatedly—but *it has not been refuted*. Eighty years ago the butcher of the Paris Commune announced: "Now we are finished with Communism!" He was wrong. Twenty-five years ago, Hitler, taking power, shouted: "We have destroyed Communism; we shall rule for a thousand years!" In his first assertion, Hitler, too, was wrong; in his second assertion, he missed by 988 years.

While all this has been going on, disillusionment with and renegacy from Marxism have also proceeded. The disillusionment and the renegacy were always proclaimed as decisive evidences of the obsolescence or fallacy of Marxism. Yet, somehow, Marxism persists; and today has more numerous adherents than any other philosophy in the world.

In the United States there is one monthly magazine which is a partisan of that philosophy, which seeks, with the light it affords, to illuminate the domestic and the world-wide scenes. That magazine is *Political Affairs*; there, and only there in the United States, will one find the viewpoint of Marxism-Leninism conveyed every month. There, and only there, each month, will the reader be able to find what the Communists think—not what George Sokolsky or Walter Lippmann or Max Lerner say the Communists think, but what they think in fact and as expressed by themselves.

We believe these thoughts are more profound, more revealing, and more truthful than any others. Be that as it may, they are significant and must be weighed by any person who wants to understand the world in which he lives. To get those thoughts first-hand, quickly and regularly, you must read *Political Affairs*.

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Editor: HERBERT APTHEKER

Post-Election Perspectives*

By Eugene Dennis

IN EVALUATING post-election perspectives and tasks, it is necessary to underscore the main features of the November elections.

What are some of the main conclusions to be drawn from the 1958 elections? Briefly, the following should be signalized:

1) The '58 Congressional elections were the most significant since 1936. The people won some important victories and created new opportunities for democratic advance. They are moving in the direction of forging a new popular majority and a democratic-front type of coalition.

2) On November 4th a majority of the electorate registered a protest vote against and sharp disapproval of the Administration's recession and farm programs and of its brinkmanship policy in the Mid-East and the Far East. In so doing, it administered a resounding political defeat to Eisenhower and Nixon and to the chief party of monopoly, the GOP, especially to its most reactionary congressional spokesmen headed by Knowland, Bricker and Jenner.

3) Democratic candidates—a majority of whom in the north and

west were supported by organized labor, the Negro people and sections of the farmers—won a substantial majority of both houses of Congress, and many state legislatures. This majority includes a sizable bloc of liberal, pro-labor, and certain pro-peace congressmen—the largest number elected since 1936.

4) The issues of and struggle around unemployment, the high cost of living, Benson's farm program and anti-labor legislation were, in an overall sense, the dominant issues in these elections. The questions of civil rights also played a big part in influencing electoral alignments and the election returns. And despite the bipartisan conspiracy to remove foreign policy from the arena of election controversy, criticism and opposition to Dulles' interventionist policy in Lebanon and Quemoy emerged as a real factor in many electoral contests.

* This Report, presented to the National Committee, CPUSA, Dec. 6, 1958, is supplemental to a Report on the results of the elections submitted to the N.E.C. on Nov. 18, which contains certain facts, figures and analyses of the elections themselves. The attention of readers is called to the article, "The 1958 Elections," by Arnold Johnson, which appeared in the December issue of this magazine.—Ed.

Consequently, and notwithstanding the limitations of the two-party system, masses of people made their will and influence felt and the Democratic majority in the Congress now has an unmistakable mandate to press forward for progressive labor, farm and social-welfare legislation, to enforce civil rights and to call a halt to Dulles' brinkmanship adventures.

5) One of the outstanding features of these elections is the growth of labor's political activity, independence and influence. In a number of states and in a host of congressional districts, especially where so-called "right-to-work" legislation was on the ballot and where the impact of the economic crisis has been most severe, wide sectors of the labor movement came forward as a *distinct political force* and played a key role in defeating "right-to-work" and determining the results of the elections. This is particularly true in Ohio, California, Michigan, Indiana, Washington and Colorado. And here, as well as in Minnesota, Iowa, North Dakota and Wisconsin, labor also strengthened its alliance with the people and with important farm, liberal and small-business groups and circles.

6) Of great significance, too, is the political and electoral role of the Negro people, north and south. By and large, the Negro people's movement elevated the issues of equality, civil rights and Negro representation to a new high in national politics. At the same time, they gave

primacy to their economic and class interests, and maintained their alliance with labor, especially in the struggle against "right-to-work" legislation. In so doing, the Negro electorate played an important part in the re-election of all pro-labor Congressmen and exercised a decisive role in re-electing all incumbent Negro congressmen and legislators, and in helping elect several additional legislators—such as in Connecticut, Washington and Maryland. They displayed considerable political independence and manifested a desire and intent to move forward with greater unity and organization, and in a non-partisan way.

7) The farm revolt was a serious factor in these elections, especially in the midwest. The farm vote was more solidly anti-GOP than at any time since the early days of FDR. The shift in the farm vote was accompanied by a noticeable growth of farmer-labor political cooperation which registered effectively in the heavy farm vote against "right-to-work" legislation and in the election of some sixteen pro-labor congressmen.

8) In the course of the election campaign the Communist Party confronted and challenged its detractors. Despite many weaknesses, our Party proved it was very much alive and a serious political factor. It played an indispensable role in the struggle against "right-to-work" legislation and helped influence the election outcome in a number of contests. It helped to raise and clarify

the most vital issues of economic and union security, civil rights and liberties, and peace. It advanced its socialist aims as well as its immediate program of action. And in the noteworthy campaign of Ben Davis it coupled the fight for the Party's program and Party building with the unfoldment of an influential united front struggle on mass issues.

9) In these elections the minority parties, including all those who profess adherence to socialism, received less than 100,000 votes. The candidates of the Socialist Party, Socialist Workers Party, Socialist Labor and the Independent Socialist Party, all came into head-on collision with the labor and people's movements, divided the Left, and received less than 1 per cent of the total vote. The only minority party campaign which combined an independent position with pursuing a broad people's coalition policy was the Davis campaign which re-inforced the popular movement in support of Congressman Powell while augmenting the vanguard contributions of our Party in the struggle for peace, democracy and socialism.

10) With few notable exceptions—such as with the re-election of Goldwater in Arizona—the elections show that the GOP candidates for major office who survived the Democrat-liberal-labor-Negro coalition trend, did so in part on the basis of coming forward as "liberals" and "independent" Republicans. This was the case with respect to governors-elect Hatfield in Oregon and Rockefeller

in New York, and of Senator Scott in Pennsylvania.

In respect to the election of Standard Oil's direct representative as governor of the Empire State—this was greatly facilitated by Harriman's uninspiring state record and his avowed position as a cold war warrior. It was also considerably aided by the official position of the New York AFL-CIO leadership which did not play an independent role in the elections or fight on issues. In fact, the labor bureaucracy in New York took the position that Rockefeller was a "good man" whose only misfortune was that he was in the "wrong party."

11) Insofar as the elections in the South are concerned, there were a series of ominous developments. These are symbolized by the re-election of Gov. Faubus by an overwhelming vote, and by the defeat of Brooks Hays by one of the most notorious segregationists in Little Rock. It is also reflected in the adverse school referendum results in Louisiana, which carried 3-1.

This, of course, is not the whole picture. There is the inspiring election of Mrs. White to the School Board in Houston, of Dr. Clements in Atlanta, as well as the sizeable opposition to Sen. Byrd in the Norfolk and Charlottesville areas, the election of Sen. Yarborough, the large vote for Claude Pepper, and the growing support for "local options" on the issue of school segregation.

At the same time it must be stated:

While quite a few of the 105 Southern Democratic congressmen cannot be lumped together with Eastland, the fact is that their avowed opposition to the Supreme Court decision on desegregation is abetting a resurgence of Eastlandism, of fascist racism, throughout the South. This is a national menace and must be so signalized.

12) Lastly, the November 4th elections demonstrate that while the GOP has received a sharp rebuff and a big political setback, and while there was no mass breakaway from the old two-party system, nonetheless the Democratic Party, as a whole, has not emerged strengthened. Outside of most of the South, the electoral victories registered by a growing number of liberal and pro-labor Democratic candidates were and are, in the first place, victories for the labor-Negro-farmer coalitions which supported these candidates, and not for the Democratic Party per se.

And in respect to state-wide campaigns, just as in regards to national elections, these elections point up the fact that to an increasing extent the Democratic Party, like the GOP, is becoming a minority party and the old machines are being weakened. Various state and county organizations of the Democrats are becoming more and more dependent on the "independent voters," and especially on the independent political strength and positions taken by organized labor and its allies. Moreover, the sharpening struggle and cleavage between the Dixiecrats and the north-

ern liberals and between the latter and the old city machines is creating new divisions and regroupings within the Democratic Party. Clearly one must distinguish between the sweeping electoral gains registered through the medium of the Democratic Party ballot and the strength of the Party as such.

II

In the light of the election results, which are the most important since the height of the New Deal days, what is the outlook for realizing the popular mandate of November 4th and for strengthening the positions of Labor, the Negro people and the farmers?

Admittedly, there are many obstacles and difficulties standing in the way of achieving positive legislative advances in the 86th Congress and in the various legislatures.

The President and his Administration are hell-bent on cutting the budget for social-welfare measures, on opposing all "spendthrift" policies—save for an expanded atomic missile-rockets arms program.

The big corporations, for whom the Cadillac Cabinet and the bi-partisan advocates of national defense speak, are continuing their frontal assaults on labor and collective bargaining. For instance, they are pressing for new curbs on labor's political activity and are plumping for "right-to-work" legislation in Illinois and Maryland and for drastically amending the little Wagner Labor Relations Act in New York.

The Dixiecrats are coming up with a dangerous "compromise" amendment to Rule 22, a legislative booby trap designed to circumvent any basic revision of the evils of filibustering. At the same time, they combine their open defiance of the Supreme Court and the U.S. Constitution with preparations to resume business-as-usual with their reactionary Republican brethren and seek to reconstitute on a new basis the old, yet weakened, Dixiecrat-GOP congressional alliance.

The Democratic majority leaders, Johnson and Rayburn, have announced a 12-point program of "moderate" labor, farm, social security legislative reforms and of increased flood control, road building and power development. However, this program, which has been endorsed by certain liberal as well as the "moderate" Democrats, is silent on civil rights, omits repeal or amendment of Taft-Hartley, rejects tax cuts and pledges continued bi-partisan support for the Administration's disastrous and bankrupt foreign policy.

While George Meany and the Executive Council of the AFL-CIO have advanced a 10-point legislative program to cope with some of the problems of recession and unemployment and favor revision of Taft-Hartley, a civil rights bill and a new farm program—they are jeopardizing the advancement of these measures and labor's interests by also calling for a "labor reform" law and expanded military spending.

Does this mean that the outlook for the 86th Congress is no different

from that of the 85th, and that little or no progress can be expected on the social and legislative front during 1959 and 1960?

Judging from the election returns and the trends within the country, such pessimism is unwarranted. It is true, of course, that the changes in the composition of the 86th Congress have taken place within the structure of the two party system dominated by big business; also that within the House of Representatives there is still a powerful bloc of some 200 reactionary and conservative Democrats and Republicans.

But it is also a fact that the 86th Congress includes the largest number of liberal and pro-labor Congressmen since the height of the New Deal days. And most of these Congressmen are dependent upon and influenced by a political combination embracing substantial sections of organized labor, the Negro people and working farmers.

More important, the popular majority that effected the big electoral changes on November 4th expects positive action from the new Congress. Wide sections of organized labor and the Negro people, in the first place, are in the mood to struggle on the picket-line and to wrest concessions from the Congress and the legislatures. They feel more confident and have a greater awareness of their political and economic strength, and the need to use it. This idea is expressed in varying degrees in the post-election editorials of the *AFL-CIO News*, *Railway*

Labor, the UAW's *Solidarity*, the *Butcher Workman*, and the *UMWA Journal*.

Symptomatic of the temper of broad masses and other democratic forces are the struggles and movements that have developed in the initial post-election period. On the issue of union and job security there are the militant strikes of 70,000 auto and tractor workers, of the pilots, engineers and mechanics on several national airlines, the demonstrative work stoppages of the East and West coast longshoremen around the question of automation, and the militant spirit that pervades the steel workers as they prepare for the enormously important nationwide contract negotiations in 1959.

On the issue of civil rights there is the mass lobby to amend Rule 22 called for January 5th in Washington by the 50 national organizations that sponsored the Pilgrimage. There is the stepped-up activity to collect one million youth signatures for integration in preparation for the second Youth March to Washington on May 17th. Also there is the new Atlanta Manifesto supporting desegregation and equality signed by 305 ministers and rabbis, and there is the significant pronouncement by Congressman Powell in respect to mobilizing for adequate Negro and Puerto Rican representation in major posts in the next New York mayoralty and state elections.

On the issue of civil liberties there

is the united front movement to abolish the Un-American Committee recently launched by the ACLU in Los Angeles, and the growing response to the proposals of the American Committee for Protection of Foreign Born to revise the McCarran-Walter Act.

On the crucial issue of peace there are the renewed appeals of the American Federation of Scientists, the Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy, and the Quakers for banning H-bomb tests now and forever, and the highly important pronouncement of the National Council of Churches (representative of 38 million Protestants) for U.S. diplomatic recognition of China and for seating People's China in the U.N.

As the AFL-CIO Executive Council declared in presenting its 10-point legislative program: "The voters called for an end to recession and mass unemployment. They called for broad progress on the social welfare front." As the *UMWA Journal* said: "The American people, and particularly the working people, want *action* out of their government on the basic issues: prosperity and peace." As the NAACP emphasizes, the Negro people want affirmative action on civil rights now, and they want "to be free by 1963." And as the organized peace forces stress, America wants co-existence, not non-existence; it wants peaceful negotiations with the socialist countries, not atomic brinkmanship.

These and related post-election

sentiments and developments are indicative of what large segments of the trade union and people's movements want and expect from the new Congress, and for what millions of Americans are ready to struggle.

What is required to further these popular objectives is the unity of action and the maximum unfoldment of the independent political organization and activity of labor, the Negro people and all other democratic forces at all levels. What is required is sustained and expanding intervention by labor and its allies in public affairs—locally, statewide and nationally—along the lines of the positive experiences of labor's recent crusade against "right to work" legislation.

Labor and the Negro people are not lacking in proposals or resolutions favoring the repeal or amendment of Taft-Hartley, amendment of Senate Rule 22, the enforcement of desegregation and equal rights; the adoption of an extensive federal program for public housing, health and education, and for a drastic improvement of the social security program, especially to extend the duration, coverage, and benefits of unemployment insurance and old age pension.

But what is urgently needed is greater solidarity and mutual aid in all economic struggles and in organizing the unorganized, the extension of united and parallel action by the unions and people's organizations, and the launching of a political-legislative mass movement at

the grass roots, that enlists broad and systematic mass activity of the organized workers and progressives, as well as of the independent voters, in the plants, precincts and congressional districts; in unions, lodges, chapters and churches; in the city councils, county commissions, and in the legislatures.

And whether the issue is one of mobilizing support for the positive features of the legislative program of the AFL-CIO, the NAACP and the Farmers Union, or for such proposals as we and others have advanced, for an FEP provision in all government contracts, for enacting Section III of the Civil Rights Bill and for federal action to expedite integration and to open and maintain public schools in the South; for revising the Full Employment Act of 1946 so as to make mandatory an adequate public works program; for adopting a comprehensive program to provide aid for students and social security benefits for all unemployed youth; and for amending the Wages and Hour Law to provide for a 30-hour week without reduction in pay in federal jobs and in all employment covered by government contracts—serious headway makes it essential to approach and develop each campaign, mass lobby and movement—having due regard for its special class or national features and appeal—as a vital part of the people's anti-monopoly struggle, as a common fight of all democratic forces against the big corporate interests.

In this connection, it is necessary to create a deeper understanding in the labor movement that to defend its own class interests and to make real progress in the fight to amend Taft-Hartley, to raise minimum wages, to secure adequate unemployment compensation, etc., requires a determined struggle on its part for full citizenship rights for the Negro people, for ending the archaic seniority system in the Congress, for breaking the Dixiecrat-GOP alliance and ousting the Dixiecrats from the Democratic Party. For the Dixiecrats, the avowed defenders of monopoly-reaction's jim-crow system, together with their political allies in the North, are one of the principal congressional road-blocks standing in the way of legislative progress and democratic and social advance everywhere in the nation.

This is not to minimize the most formidable problem which again threatens to severely limit the legislative struggles and advances of labor and the democratic forces, which deters broad progress on the social welfare front, and which is the single biggest obstacle holding labor back from making a qualitatively new leap forward in the sphere of independent political action. That problem is the position of most of labor's top officialdom which supports the bi-partisan "national defense" program and cold war foreign policy, which usually receives formal endorsement at most trade union conventions.

But here, too, not everything is the same as before. Millions of union families are beginning to sense the organic tie-up between the colossal arms budget and the high cost of living and would like to see steps towards universal disarmament. Millions are also alarmed by the menace of radioactive fallout and favor the prohibition of atomic tests and a ban on the H-bomb. And wide numbers of trade unionists, like other Americans, are convinced that the U.S. should keep hands off Quemoy, Formosa and the Mid-East.

It is not accidental that the growing peace sentiment in the ranks of labor occurs at a moment when the differences and contradictions within the ranks of monopoly capital and its two parties are multiplying, especially in the sphere of foreign policy. As is well known, the Acheson, Lehman and Finletter forces in the Democratic Party are calling for a reappraisal and modification of the Administration's policy towards China. Stevenson, as well as Eccles and Cyrus Eaton, are urging a more sober appreciation of the strength of the socialist world, and suggest a new and more constructive approach to negotiations with the USSR. Senators Gore, Humphrey and others recommend that the U.S. end the Dulles-inspired deadlock in Geneva and come up with a compromise proposal to prohibit H-bomb tests for at least a three-year period.

On these questions, as well as in the field of economic aid to the underdeveloped countries and in the

controversy over public *vs.* private ownership and control of the production of atomic reactors for peacetime purposes—the divergent views and conflict of interests within Big Business circles are increasing. And these will have their impact on the new Congress. Given timely and effective popular intervention around the real issues at stake, the results of the 86th Congress can differ appreciably from that of the 85th.

To promote this development it is necessary for us Communists and other advocates of peace to wage a bolder and more consistent struggle within the labor movement for an affirmative peace program—such as for outlawing nuclear weapons and ensuring a constructive and fruitful policy of peaceful negotiations between the East and West, particularly between the U.S.A. and the USSR. And here the question of reaching agreement on establishing Berlin as a "free city" and of bringing about negotiations between the German Democratic Republic and the Federal Government of Bonn for the reunification of Germany as a neutral and demilitarized nation and confederated state has become a most pressing problem. This is so because the rearming of West Germany with atomic weapons is creating new tensions and a serious war danger in the heart of Europe.

However, more than this is required. A fresh approach also needs to be made to searching out those aspects of a peace policy that masses of trade unionists understand as

directly and intimately affecting their livelihood and economic welfare. The question of expanding trade relations with the socialist countries, especially for establishing normal relations and trade with China is such an issue. The question of reducing the military budget and taxes on the low income groups is another. In this connection, the old popular slogan for "taking the profits out of war" might strike a popular response, especially if it were coupled with concrete proposals for enacting the steepest and most stringent income, capital gains and excess profits tax on all armament profits and industries, and with a mass agitational campaign to take General Motors out of the Defense Department and Standard Oil out of the State Department.

In any event, it is necessary systematically to explain that the endorsement of the bi-partisan cold war program by Meany, Reuther, *et al.*, not only jeopardizes the lives and liberties of America's working people. It weakens and undermines the people's struggle against the vested corporate interests, especially against the most reactionary and aggressive monopolies. It hamstring's labor's struggle against inflation, for lower taxes, public works and social security. It opens the door to government intervention in the internal affairs of the unions. It distorts the economy and creates uncertain and unstable employment even in the war industries. And it makes labor dependent on the parties of big business and drastically circum-

scribes labor's independent political role and activity.

Such explanatory mass educational activity has always been needed. Today, however, it assumes unusual importance and can strike deep roots. This is so because labor and its allies are entering a new and more favorable round of political and economic struggles, and approach the threshold of becoming a more distinct and influential political force. And this takes place in the context of a precarious economic situation where unemployment in the basic industries remains at over 7 per cent of the labor force, and where the number of displaced and permanently unemployed workers is increasing.

III

On the basis of the electoral verdict of November 4th and the main trends in the nation, the question arises: what are the prospects for 1960? And, in this connection, what should be the political orientation of the advanced and progressive forces in the labor and people's movements? This is a highly important question, the answer to which will affect the approach to many current and pending issues and movements.

As we have seen, an analysis of the most pertinent facts shows that tens of millions, if not a majority of trade unionists, Negro people and farmers are now moving towards positions of greater unity of action and political independence. But in so doing, they still function on the electoral front primarily through

the two-party mechanism, and chiefly via the medium of the Democratic Party, which remains, nationally, one of the major parties of capitalism.

There is no prospect at this time of any sizeable popular breakaway from the two old party system, except in isolated local situations. Nor is there any realistic possibility of labor and its allies "capturing" the Democratic national convention.

But, as we have noted, this is only a part of the picture. Deep under, within and around the two party structure the trends towards political independence in the ranks of labor, the Negro people and the farmers are growing. New political regroupments are taking place on the basis of struggle around a number of vital issues of security, equality and peace. And the conditions are maturing where substantial sectors of the labor-Negro-farmers' movements, especially its most politically active sections, can markedly influence the selection of candidates, program and the conduct of the 1960 presidential campaign, particularly in respect to the Democratic Party.

It is possible, as I stressed in my report to the NEC on November 18th, that a Democratic presidential ticket can emerge in 1960, resting on and responsive to a broad mass movement and committed to a forthright civil rights program—directly challenging and opposing the Dixiecrats, with elements of a domestic program embodying many of the positive economic and social demands of labor and the farmers, and with a

partial alternative to the Dulles-Eisenhower-Truman foreign policy on such questions as banning the H-bombs, establishing normal diplomatic and trade relations with China and on promoting partial universal disarmament.

This possibility exists because of the irrepressible conflict over civil rights which is deepening the cleavage in the Democratic Party; because of certain contradictions and differences within the ranks of big capital (i.e., over foreign economic aid, recognition of China, the H-bomb, public power and national resources); because of compelling objective factors and the organized strength and economic power of the trade unions and the militancy of the rank and file; and because of the increased trends towards united and independent labor-Negro-farm political action—trends towards a diverse, yet broad anti-monopoly movement and coalition—and because of the growing peace sentiment in the country.

The main strategic and tactical line we Communists should pursue to help realize this possibility remains, in most respects, essentially as projected by the 16th Convention in Section II of the Main Political Resolution, The Path Ahead, and as developed by the National Committee in preparation for the just-concluded 1958 election campaign.

To crystallize a new political majority capable of effecting these objectives in 1960 necessitates a further unfoldment of broad popular move-

ments and coalitions on the most vital issues of economic and union security, civil rights and liberties, and peace. It requires a vigorous, united front defense of the unions and all working class and people's organizations, and a broad and militant struggle for their shop and union demands on wages, speedup, FEP and the shorter work week, as well as a successful coordination of economic, legislative and other political struggles, such as around the burning issue of the 30-hour week without wage reductions which now looms as a major issue in the trade-union movement.

It calls for the most rapid expansion of labor's independent political organization and action in the factories and communities, making full use of the Michigan PAC experiences and of labor's crusade against "right to work" laws. It requires that labor champion a people's legislative program and closer cooperative relations with the organizations of the Negro people, the farmers, etc., and crystallize sentiment and organized support for adequate trade union, Negro and farmer representation in the next Congress and legislatures.

It calls for new political initiatives among the Negro people, including the promotion of non-partisan committees for independent political action and representation, starting now in the coming municipal elections. It requires a fresh approach to the organization of the independent voters, including the unaffiliated socialist-minded voters, which will

undoubtedly vary in form according to local conditions. It calls for the systematic promotion of the idea and perspective of a new mass party of the people—of a Labor-Negro-Farmer Peoples Party—and concrete steps to stimulate this basic line of development.

It will necessitate, likewise, sustained efforts by labor and the progressive forces to help influence the course of struggle and realignment inside the Democratic Party, especially to oust the Dixiecrats, and to help stimulate—as in New York—the coming into existence of progressive Democratic Federations or Democratic Councils. It also calls for greater efforts to develop further the organized peace movement and to augment its relationships with wide sectors of the trade union and Negro people's movements. Not least, it calls for a stronger Communist Party, for wider united front relations between Communists and non-Communists, and for a resolute struggle against the pernicious and costly influence and practices of "anti-Communism."

There are, of course, those on the Left who do not share our views, especially our electoral tactics.

Some say that the perspective we have outlined for 1960 is based on wishful thinking. But the facts are that the course we have projected is based on the realities of American political life and struggle. It takes into account both the existing relationship of class forces and the present level of labor's political action, as well as the new trends

within the labor and people's movements towards greater political independence and towards the emergence—with all its impurities—of a labor-Negro-farmers coalition. It takes into account that these new trends must be stimulated *and* that the realization of the new opportunities must be fought for. It also takes into account the fact that the struggle for civil rights and liberties and for peace are *general, national and democratic tasks* that presently can involve not only labor and its natural allies *but also* many other democratic forces.

Some claim that our approach to the 1960 elections will, in effect, only serve to strengthen the Democratic Party and keep wide sections of the trade unions and Negro people's movement tailing after the Donkey.

But actually the opposite is the case. The policy we have projected, if effectively fought for, can help the democratic forces to isolate and defeat the Dixiecrats. It will weaken the old city machines and bosses. It can sharpen the struggle against and help defeat the cold war warriors and the other representatives of monopoly inside and outside the Democratic Party. It can strengthen, in a variety of ways, the independent political positions of labor and its allies while they, in their majority, still operate on the electoral front through the two party structure. Thus it can open the way to crystallizing a new popular majority *and* a new political alignment led by labor.

There are those, too, who agree that a new people's party, perhaps a

Labor or Farmer-Labor Party, is desirable and may eventually emerge on the political scene. But they mistakenly contend that this will be such a long-drawn out process that in the meantime all those who profess adherence to socialism should band together and launch an independent socialist ticket and party for the 1960 presidential elections. And the Trotskyites, seeking to create an anti-Communist "socialist regroupment" under their hegemony, and desirous of obstructing the trends and movements towards a broad united front people's party led by labor, are trying to latch onto and promote such an infantile-leftist course.

It is true, of course, that large segments of the American people are exhibiting a growing interest in socialism and a deeper appreciation of the lands where it has been victorious. There is a great need to extend the advocacy of a socialist reorganization of American society, as well as to popularize the epic achievements of the socialist countries—especially the historic significance of the new seven-year plan in the USSR and the great leap forward in China—and we Communists must greatly expand our activity in this respect. There is also a need to foster the united action of all genuine adherents of socialism on the urgent issues of the day—an endeavor to which we subscribe and which we believe can now be best realized locally around specific mass issues.

But the organization of "inde-

pendent socialist parties" is quite a different matter, as the formation of the United Liberal and Socialist party in Washington State and the Independent Socialist Party in New York have demonstrated. For the latter are socialist in name only and make no pretense of being based on the working class and Marxist principles. They include in their ranks a small number of liberals, progressives and socialist-minded radicals, plus the Trotskyites and certain other anti-Soviet splinter groupings. And their advocacy of "socialism" reflects these diverse and antagonistic views and tendencies, most of which are non-Marxist and some avowedly anti-Marxist.

Some of the progressives and unaffiliated socialists in their midst earnestly desire to build a mass third party, an anti-capitalist party. But they reject the very premises on which such a party could be built.

To these sincere individuals with whom we wish to cooperate closely in the struggle for peace, democracy and social progress, we must, however, state bluntly that *neither* the interests of independent political action *nor* the cause of socialism in the USA can be advanced if the class conscious workers and progressive are going to isolate themselves from the mainstream of labor and the Negro people, and remain aloof from their strivings, activity and moves toward independent political action—no matter how uneven, limited, or confused these may be.

This is especially true today when

many factors are at work and the opportunities increase for developing labor's independent political role and positions to a qualitatively new level. Certainly, an "independent socialist ticket or party" in these circumstances, and specifically in the 1960 elections, would be ultra sectarian and divisive, would be truly "independent" of the working class—the essential backbone of any mass people's party, and the only class that will establish and build socialism.

To all real progressives and adherents of socialism we Communists emphasize the perceptive counsel of Lenin:

The task of the party [i.e., the party of socialism—E.D.] is not to invent some fashionable method of helping the workers, but to join the workers' movement, to bring light to that movement, and assist the workers in the struggle which they have already started themselves.

* * *

Finally, the 1958 elections affirm, anew, that the nation needs a stronger Communist Party.

The modest yet effective contributions that our Party has made in the recent elections and struggles are only a small measure of that of which we are capable. Yet these are indicative of better things to come, of the more influential role we Communists will play and the greater contributions we will make.

To discharge our vanguard responsibilities in the present situation and the coming period it is imperative that we imbue our Party from top

to bottom with the Marxist concept and practice of developing a bolder and more effective democratic and united front policy and program of action. And, in this connection, it is essential that we understand that the strategic objective of the struggle for democracy at this juncture in our country is to curb monopoly power—an objective that can lead toward the establishment of a people's anti-monopoly government, led by labor, and open the way for the working class and its allies to move forward to socialism.

The deepening constitutional crisis in the South, the profound crisis in U.S. foreign policy, the acute crisis in education and the insecurity of the young generation, and the aggravated crisis of unemployment and automation—all point up the fact that our people and country urgently need a people's democratic coalition, under sound working-class leadership, to curb the monopolies, to muster the broadest political alliance and mass movements to defeat the atom-manics, the racists and open-shoppers.

We Communists must be second to none in facilitating and promoting all such trends and developments—no matter how crude and rudimentary these may be in their initial stages. This is why we attach such great importance to the positive significance of the election returns, search out what is new and promising in the labor and people's movements, and emphasize that which our Party can contribute, independently and in concert with other progressive

forces, in helping initiate and organize at all levels the united action and diverse political combinations of all labor and democratic forces. This, too, is why we stress the need of strengthening and building our Party and its press, especially at *the club level*. For we recognize that the emerging people's democratic front can flourish and grow only if it is *clearly oriented* and has a solid foundation at the *grass roots*.

At this juncture in the political affairs of our nation when, as the events of November 4th show, the rough outlines of a people's democratic front are beginning to appear on the horizon, there are some in our ranks who are fearful and disdainful of this promising phenomenon. They are hypercritical and tend to stand aloof, indifferent to the great potentialities of that which is new and maturing, and of our responsibilities to help encourage, cultivate and shape this trend and movement and bring it under class conscious, working-class influence. And while they loudly declaim about the need of building our Party and its mass influence, their negativism towards, and self-isolation from, the broad mass movements produce quite opposite results.

At the same time, the emergence of the new possibilities which have arisen for effecting social progress, for forging a great popular democratic movement and alliance, inclusive of both labor and non-working class forces, give rise to contrary ten-

dencies. For there are also those in our ranks who confuse the appearance of possibilities with their realization, who consider that perspectives, no matter how well grounded, may be attained automatically, without leadership and struggle. These comrades are prone to lose their political identity in the mainstream, tend to gloss over the class nature of monopoly's two party system, minimize our Party's independent role and activity, confuse tactics with strategy and ultimate goals, as well as belittle the crucial need of building our Party and the Marxist press. Such views and tendencies are not merely harmful to the Party. They will impede and injure the development and effectiveness of the gathering people's anti-monopoly coalition and of labor's political leadership today and on the morrow.

To facilitate and help realize the working class and democratic anti-monopoly perspectives and objectives we have outlined for the period ahead, let us firmly resolve to enhance our vanguard role and multiply our political and organizing initiatives in the mainstream of the labor and people's movements, and among the independent progressives. Now, as we prepare for our 40th anniversary, let us resolutely strengthen our ranks, our mass ties and our united front relationships, and ever more widely popularize our socialist aims and Marxist-Leninist principles, as well as our immediate program of united labor and people's action.

The Economic Outlook Today

By Hyman Lumer

FOR WELL OVER A YEAR, the American economy has been in a slump. The decline, whose symptoms first became apparent at the beginning of 1957, reached a low point in April of last year. Since then, however, a considerable partial recovery has taken place. It is important, at this juncture, to review these recent trends and to assess their significance, as well as to probe further into the meaning of the decline itself.

TRENDS IN PRODUCTION AND INCOME

From a high of 147 in December, 1956, the Federal Reserve Board index of industrial production fell to 126 in April, 1958. This drop—more than 14%—was the largest in the entire postwar period. The biggest decline was in the durable goods industries.

Since April, however, industrial output has been rising. By November, the index had climbed to 141, thus recouping more than half of the loss. In large part, the rise is due to a substantial improvement in steel production. At a low of 47.8% of capacity in April, it had grown to

73.8% in October. But there has also been a marked improvement in durable goods output generally, and to a lesser extent in that of non-durables.

Nevertheless, as of November, durable goods production was still down nearly 11% from the previous peak. In the auto industry, estimated output for 1958 is about 25% less than in 1957. And steel production remains well below its previous high point.

The gross national product, which had dropped from a peak of nearly \$446 billion in the third quarter of 1957 to \$426 billion in the first quarter of 1958, has again risen, reaching \$439 billion in the third quarter. In dollars, this is a recovery of almost 75%, although if we allow for rising prices it is no more than one-third.

During this period, corporate profits fell considerably. On the other hand, personal income declined relatively little, thanks to a rise in farm income and the maintenance of dividend payments at an undiminished level by the big corporations. In recent months it has risen to a new peak.

Particularly striking has been the

upturn in construction which, following a decline during the past year, has returned to 1957 levels. For the past several months, both the dollar volume of construction and the number of housing starts have exceeded the corresponding figures of the year before. In this recovery, a major factor has been increased government spending on roads, dams, public buildings and similar projects, as well as increased federal mortgage supports. This has led to a marked increase in both public and housing construction. The volume of commercial and industrial construction, however, has shown much less improvement, and is still well below that of a year ago.

Though significant, the pickup in construction has distinct limitations. For the first eleven months of 1958, the total volume of construction was no higher than in the corresponding period in 1957, and 1957 was a comparatively poor year. Further, the indications are that commercial and industrial construction will not recover fully for some time to come. And in the housing field, in view of rising prices and the recent tightening of credit by the Federal Reserve Board, the increased volume can well lead to an accumulation of unsaleable houses.

UNEMPLOYMENT

So far, the economic pickup has found comparatively little reflection in lessened unemployment. From February through July of 1958, the number of unemployed, as measured

by the official figures, was at or above the five-million mark. Allowing for seasonal factors, it ranged from 6.7% to 7.6% of the civilian labor force. Starting in August a decline set in, and in November the total was some 3.8 million. A large part of this decline, however, was due to seasonal factors, chiefly the return of large numbers of students to school. Allowing for these, the November figure still represents nearly 6% of the labor force out of work.

The reason for this persistence of a high rate of joblessness is not hard to find. Thanks to greatly heightened productivity, the pickup in industrial output is being accomplished with fewer workers than were required before. Thus, while factory production rose 9% between April and September, the number of production workers rose only 2%. In the steel industry, wrote the *Wall Street Journal* (October 13, 1958), employment "falls far short of the total of as recently as a year ago, when production was only slightly above current figures." And in auto, Chrysler Corporation announced in late August that it would go into production of 1959 models with 28,000 workers less than the year before, even though it expected to turn out more cars.

To some extent, the lag in reduction of unemployment is also due to the fact that as production first rises, hours of work are increased for those employed before others are rehired. And to be sure, there has been a pronounced increase in the

average work week in manufacturing since last April. But this represents in large measure a restoration of overtime in particular sectors of industry, and still leaves many on short work weeks, as well as the many still unemployed.

The impact of the depression on workers and their families has been much greater than is indicated by the official statistics. As of last August, according to an Elmo Roper poll (reported in *COPE Political Memo*, August 4, 1958), twice the number then fully unemployed were on short work weeks. One-third of all families had been hit by loss of jobs or income, and in the lower income groups nearly half of all families. Since then, the cumulative proportion of families so affected has undoubtedly increased.

Among the Negro workers the rate of unemployment continues to be more than double that among white workers. Indeed, a modest improvement in employment tends to leave Negro workers relatively worse off, since they are most often the last to be recalled.

All in all, it must be said that the economic lot of the workers has been relatively little improved as a result of the partial recovery in production.

FARM "PROSPERITY"

For several years prior to 1957, the condition of the farmers had been steadily going downhill. But during the past year, in contrast to

the downward trend in industry, it has shown some improvement.

Farm prices rose, and in April, 1958 were almost 10 per cent higher than a year earlier. At the same time, farm costs rose only 3 per cent. Consequently, the parity index rose from 82 to 87, and there was a substantial growth in net farm income which, in the first half of 1958, was 22% higher than in the same period in 1957. These developments no doubt appreciably lessened the total impact of the economic crisis.

The improvement, however, was due largely to special factors of a temporary nature. As a result of unfavorable weather conditions, supplies of livestock and of fruits and vegetables were reduced and their prices rose sharply. In other sectors, uncovered by government price supports, bumper crops brought an increase in income. On the other hand, dairy farmers, who benefitted neither from special conditions nor price supports, suffered on the whole from falling prices throughout this period.

But now the temporary advantage enjoyed by some sections of the farmers is receding. From July to November, farm prices fell by about 6%, and the parity index dropped to 81. True, those benefitting from government price props continue to ride the crest of the wave of an all-time record crop. But even with this, there is no assurance that for farmers as a whole the improvement of the past year will continue. On the contrary, there are further indications of a new downturn; in fact, the De-

partment of Agriculture recently forecast a drop of 5-10% in farm income in 1959.

Moreover, small farmers have benefitted relatively little from the improved situation. The cost-price squeeze has continued to force them out. And the drop in industrial employment has had its effects on them, since fully one-third of the income of farm people—and among small farmers a much higher proportion—today comes from non-farm jobs.

RISING PRICES

Since March, 1956, the BLS Consumer Price Index has risen month by month with few exceptions. By July, 1958, it had increased nearly 8%. In the ensuing months, it became stabilized at a slightly lower level; however, predictions are widespread that this stability will be short-lived and that consumer prices will soon resume their upward climb. In the basic industries, prices have continued to rise despite decreased production and sales.

This persistent tide of rising prices even during the decline presents an important problem which merits further attention.* But it is not a phenomenon peculiar to the present situation. The fact is that since the turn of the century the over-all trend in prices has been upward, in good times and in bad. Only twice have prices as a whole fallen—in 1920-21 and 1929-32. On the other hand, dur-

* In this connection, see: Hyman Lumer, "The Problem of Inflation," *Political Affairs*, January, 1958.

ing the first seven months of the 1937-38 crisis, while production plunged 28%, prices rose steadily. In the postwar period, the upward pressure on prices has been accentuated by the increased power of the monopolies, as well as by the greatly enlarged burden of peacetime military spending.

Higher prices serve, of course, to bolster corporate profits. But they serve also to aggravate a depression, since they drain off an increasing share of workers' incomes for the most immediate necessities and leave less for the purchase of consumer durables such as appliances or cars. Thus, during the past year, though the total volume of consumer buying did not drop greatly, its pattern has noticeably changed. The purchase of consumer durable goods has substantially declined, whereas spending for non-durables and services has proportionately increased. By thus limiting consumer demand, rising prices tend to hinder the process of recovery.

WHAT LIES AHEAD?

From the data presented above, it is clear that since last April a substantial pickup in the economy has taken place. The question is: what does it mean and where will it lead? On this, opinions vary widely.

At one extreme is the bubbling optimism expressed by spokesmen for the Eisenhower Administration and by such publications as *Fortune* and *U.S. News and World Report*. These have been proclaiming for some time

that "the recession is ended" and have been predicting a speedy recovery followed by a new wave of prosperity.

"The future," said Eisenhower last May, "is bursting with vitality and promise." And he subsequently proceeded to act on this view by vetoing a measure to provide some \$280 million in aid to distressed areas. In August, the Republicans in the House of Representatives succeeded in killing a bill to loan \$2 billion to local governments for public works projects. And by mid-August the Federal Reserve Board was clamping down on money and credit as if the economy was already in a boom and the chief danger was a big wave of inflation.

But such rosy predictions find few takers among businessmen and economists generally. Even the more optimistic among these, though they share the belief that a full recovery is under way, anticipate that it will be a prolonged process, with depressed conditions and high levels of unemployment lasting at least well into 1959.

Thus, among 31 leading economists and more than 100 corporation heads questioned by the *Wall Street Journal* last August, the consensus was that recovery to mid-1957 levels would not be reached for at least another year. Some thought it would not be achieved until 1961. More recently, of 109 presidents of major corporations polled by Dun and Bradstreet in November, almost all predicted an improved economic pic-

ture in 1959, but none predicted a boom. The survey states: "None predicts a tremendous upsurge in 1959. More likely, they are inclined to think business will stabilize at or slightly above current levels and the national economy will continue a slow but steady rise."

Forecasts of steel production in 1959 range from 70-80% of capacity, and in the auto industry an output of 5.5-6 million cars is predicted. Both estimates fall considerably short of the previous peaks. The outlook in other major industries is not much different; only in construction are there more optimistic predictions. Such levels of activity, though they represent a distinct improvement over 1958, scarcely presage the emergence of a new boom. Least of all do they provide a basis for anything approaching full employment.

For it is generally conceded that even a return to 1957 production peaks will make little dent in present unemployment levels. Thus, in its August, 1958 issue, the *IUD Bulletin* of the AFL-CIO pointed out: "Joblessness will remain high even when past peaks of economic activity are again achieved. Such levels can no longer sustain full employment because of the growth of the labor force and because of the impact of improved technology." In the steel and auto industries, it is widely predicted, a considerable proportion of those laid off will never return.

In short, the development of automation and other technological improvements, and the widespread re-

sort to increased rationalization and speedup during the past year in order to cut costs, combined with the continued growth of the labor force during this period, leave no doubt that even with the kind of "recovery" which is being predicted, high rates of unemployment will be with us for a long time. The growing displacement of workers from industry with technological advance, concealed for a time by the expansion of production during the boom years, has now come home to roost.

A NEW CYCLE

In business and economic circles, the present slump is generally regarded as merely another "recession," a repetition of the declines of 1948-49 and 1953-54—somewhat worse and more protracted, to be sure, but nonetheless basically the same.

There is every reason to believe, however, that this downturn is in reality quite different from the preceding ones. As the Soviet economist Eugene Varga puts it: "The present crisis in the United States . . . is a cyclical crisis of overproduction, not a short-term transient crisis similar to those of 1949 and 1954." (*New Times*, No. 24, 1958.)

The years immediately following World War II were marked by a number of special conditions of a more or less temporary character, chief among them deferred consumer demand from the war years, the need for large-scale capital replacement to make up for its lag in the

depression of the thirties and during the war, stimulation of investment by important innovations, particularly in electronics, and the markets provided by the Western European postwar reconstruction and the subsequent boom. Underlying all these is the very powerful stimulus provided by greatly enlarged military outlays.

These conditions gave rise to an exceptional growth of capital investment and expansion of productive facilities, capped by the investment boom of 1955-57. It was these special factors which supported an overall upward trend in the economy for more than a decade and rendered abortive the two declines which occurred.

Now, however, these conditions have for the most part disappeared, and as for military expenditures in particular, the outlook for really massive increases is at present rather dim. Moreover, the possibilities of proping up markets through inflated consumer credit have been largely exhausted. Although there is undoubtedly room for expansion, a fresh wave of credit inflation like that in 1955-56 appears unlikely.

In these circumstances, the investment boom of 1955-57 soon led to an accumulation of excess productive capacity without precedent in the postwar period. Today, despite the pickup in industrial production, unused capacity in the basic industries is still estimated at 25% or more of total capacity.

The result has been a steep decline

in investment. From a peak annual rate of \$37.75 billion in the third quarter of 1957, expenditures for new plant and equipment were down to an estimated \$29.93 billion in the fourth quarter of 1958, a drop of close to 20%. Predictions for the future vary considerably, ranging from a modest increase in late 1958 and 1959 to continued decline extending through 1961. Not even the most optimistic surveys, however, forecast anything approaching a return to the 1957 peak in the foreseeable future.

Liquidation of business inventories, which in the first quarter of 1958 was taking place at a rate of \$9.5 billion a year, has greatly slowed down; in November, the rate was only \$2.4 billion a year. This has been the single most important factor in the recent upswing in the gross national product.

However, total inventories, which had grown from \$71 billion in the latter part of 1954 to a record height of \$91 billion in the third quarter of 1957, still came to about \$85 billion in November, 1958, despite the unusual rate of depletion. Hence there remains considerable leeway for further reduction, should a lowered level of sales compel it. But even if improved business conditions should bring inventory reduction to an end, and even if they should lead to some resumption of inventory accumulation, this would not, in the face of existing excess capacity, give rise to a significant expansion of capital investment.

It is this dead weight of excess productive capacity which holds the key to the economic picture. It is primarily this which limits recovery and inhibits the unfolding of a new boom, since it is expansion of capital investment which provides the necessary foundation for such a boom.

In the absence of immediate prospects of a substantial upturn in investment, the crisis, after hitting a low point last April, has given rise to what promises to be a more or less extended period of depression or stagnation—the characteristic sequel of a cyclical crisis of overproduction. This is quite different from the course of development in the two previous postwar declines; in these, the reaching of bottom was soon followed by a process of recovery leading directly into a new economic upsurge. Today such an upsurge appears rather remote.

It would be wrong, however, to attempt to blueprint the future course of cyclical development. There are too many imponderable factors involved, both political and economic, to allow prediction of the precise turn of events over an extended period of time, and within the general framework here outlined, there exists a wide range of possibilities.

GOVERNMENT SPENDING

In the partial recovery which has taken place, a factor of some importance has been increased government spending. As we have noted above, a large part of the pickup in con-

struction has been due to higher outlays for public construction and for mortgage purchases. There has also been a very substantial increase in farm-price support payments, thanks to an all-time record crop, as well as other increases, among them a pay boost for federal employees. The most striking increase, however, has been that in military expenditures. From a low of \$3.2 billion in the third quarter of 1957, military procurement rose in net value to \$8.5 billion by the second quarter of 1958. And these outlays have continued to rise.

Although the rise in government expenditures has served to stimulate certain sectors of the economy and has thus exercised an effect which should not be minimized, it does not, for the most part, represent planned expenditures designed to offset the decline. On the contrary, most of the increases were purely fortuitous, and would have occurred regardless of the state of the economy. The larger sums spent on road building had virtually all been allocated a few years before, as part of an extensive long-term program. That outlays for farm price supports rose by about \$1.5 billion was due to the accident of a bumper crop. And similarly for many other items.

The fact is that government spending has been rising for the past few years. From fiscal 1955 to 1957, conventional budget expenditures grew by \$4.8 billion, and in 1958 by another \$2.6 billion. For fiscal 1959, a similar increase had been projected;

however, added expenses occasioned by the depression and fortuitous circumstances such as those noted have swelled the projection by another \$5.2 billion. What is noteworthy in all this is that the decline occurred in spite of these rising outlays, and that the highly touted ability of the government to "regulate" the economy through fiscal and monetary measures was capable neither of preventing it nor of taking planned action to offset it.

At the same time, increased spending brings with it the prospect of astronomical budget deficits and the threat of inflation, particularly since it is accompanied by a big drop in revenues because of the depression. Thus, the unanticipated \$5.2 billion increase in outlays, coupled with a \$7 billion drop in tax receipts, have led to \$12.2 billion deficit in the conventional budget for fiscal 1959 (and a deficit of \$13.7 billion in the cash budget)—the largest in any peacetime year. The national debt has risen to a near-record level of more than \$280 billion. With this enormous burden of debt, the borrowing of large additional sums becomes increasingly difficult without risking marked inflation.

Nevertheless, the outlook is for further increases in spending. The expected budget estimate for fiscal 1960 is about \$80 billion, as compared with \$74 billion for 1959. And if, as in 1959, the actual spending substantially exceeds the estimate, another large deficit is in the offing.

The chief item in these swelling

budgets is military outlays, whose growth continues unrestricted, with mounting pressure for still greater increases. Moreover, should the international climate materially worsen, and above all, should the Dulles brinkmanship policies succeed in getting us into a shooting war, military budgets will undergo massive increases, regardless of the financial consequences. In fact, it is this which is the biggest imponderable factor in the situation.

THE DEVELOPING WORLD ECONOMIC CRISIS

Not least among the factors affecting the trend of the American economy is the course of economic development in the rest of the capitalist world. Historically, the economic cycle has tended to follow a roughly parallel course in different capitalist countries, a consequence of the development of a world market and an increasingly interconnected world economy. Major crises, therefore, have generally tended to be world crises, embracing all or most of the capitalist countries.

World War II disrupted this synchronism, since its impact on those countries directly in the arena of war was quite different from that on such countries as the United States. In this country, under the stimulus of the war, industrial production rose 47% between 1937 and 1946, whereas in Western Europe, thanks to the devastation and the greater demands

of armed conflict, it fell 30% during the same period.

Here the wartime expansion created conditions for the early post-war development of over-production, which made itself felt in 1948 and again in 1953. But in Western Europe the war left a state of severe under-production, leading to a post-war period of scarcity and reconstruction in which the 1937 level of industrial production was not regained until 1949. In these countries, the renewal and expansion of fixed capital did not begin in earnest until the fifties, giving rise in 1953 to an investment boom in which, by 1957, capital investment had increased 44%.

Consequently, when industrial production in the United States fell in 1948-49 and 1953-54, it was rising in Western Europe. This disparity, with the extensive outlets which it created for American exports and foreign aid, undoubtedly did much to limit the extent and duration of the slumps in this country.

But this situation has changed. The current depression in the United States coincides with the end of the boom and the beginnings of decline in the rest of the capitalist world. The boom reached its zenith in late 1957, during the second half of which a slackening in rates of economic growth and symptoms of a leveling off made their appearance. In 1958 the trend continued, with the emergence of growing signs of decline, particularly in industries like steel, coal and textile.

In Britain, industrial production in October, 1958 was down 5% from the corresponding 1957 figure. Steel production was down more than 12%, exports 4%. Record coal surpluses had accumulated. And unemployment, though still low, was rising.

West Germany presents a similar picture and so, to one degree or another, do other Western European countries and Japan.

These developments, which represent the beginnings of a crisis of over-production in the rest of the capitalist world, are obviously affected by the depression in the United States. For these countries are heavily dependent on foreign trade, a good part of it with this country or with raw materials-producing countries which in turn are adversely affected by the down turn here. At the same time, the decline in other capitalist countries reduces the markets for American goods abroad. As a result, United States commercial exports in the first nine months of 1958 were 18% less than in the corresponding period of 1957. Thus, according to the U.N. Commission for Europe, the downturn in this country was sufficient to set off a general contraction of world trade.

THE RAW MATERIALS- PRODUCING COUNTRIES

Its most immediate effect was a sharp decline in the world prices of raw materials, accompanying a drop in the volume of sales. In the course

of the year 1957, the index of raw material prices fell 8%. For a number of key commodities, the drop was much steeper. Thus, copper fell 32.8%, wool 20.3%, rubber 23.3%. And throughout 1958, prices have on the whole remained at these depressed levels.

This has had a severe impact on those countries whose economies depend principally on exportation of one or a few primary commodities—the countries of Latin America, Africa, Asia and the Middle East, which are dominated and exploited by the imperialist powers. As a result of shrinking export markets and falling prices, these countries have been severely pinched for foreign exchange, especially dollars, and have therefore been compelled, to one degree or another, to curtail imports. Consequently, while declining exports have led to rising unemployment on the one hand, the cutting of imports, which in these countries include a major share of the necessities of life, has led to shortages of goods and severe inflation on the other.

All of the foregoing—the growing symptoms of decline in the advanced capitalist countries and the crisis in the underdeveloped countries—are indications of a developing world economic crisis, whose pace of development and depth in the rest of the capitalist world will have no small effect on the course of the economic cycle in this country.

In such circumstances, every country strives as best it can to insulate

itself by restricting imports. Thus, West Germany has placed an embargo on coal imports, almost all from the United States. And in this country, President Eisenhower recently placed restrictions on imports of lead and zinc. But such actions serve, in the end, only to reduce world trade all the more and thus to worsen the situation still further.

The developing world crisis leads also to a sharpening of imperialist antagonisms as each imperialist power strives to protect its own monopolist interests at the expense of others, and to grab for itself a greater share of shrinking export markets for both goods and capital. American imperialism, in particular, seeks to use its dominant position and the dependence of other countries on its foreign "aid" to strengthen itself at the expense of its rivals. Encouragement is lent to aggressive, warmongering policies and to adventurist gambles, such as the sending of American troops into Lebanon or the more recent Quemoy incidents, which create an increased threat of war. There is also a stepping up of attacks against organized labor and against democratic rights generally, and a re-emergence of the threat of fascism, as exemplified by the rise of De Gaulism in France.

These were, of course, pronounced features of the depression of the thirties. But the world situation today differs from that of the thirties in a number of highly important respects, not least among them is the existence of a socialist one-third of the

world, which exercises a powerful and growing effect on the entire world economy.

To the rest of the world, the socialist countries, particularly the Soviet Union and China, offer large, stable markets unaffected by capitalist crisis, and thus provide the capitalist countries with the possibility of materially easing the impact of crisis. Indeed, the Western European countries and Japan, having fought with some success to relax the American-imposed trade restrictions, are carrying on a growing East-West trade; only the United States, among the leading capitalist nations, persists in shutting itself off from these markets. And to the underdeveloped, exploited countries, the socialist world also offers genuine aid in industrialization and a possibility of escape from the crushing domination of imperialism.

THE FIGHT AGAINST UNEMPLOYMENT

A previous article by this writer (*Political Affairs*, March, 1958) presented a fairly detailed program of action to meet the problems created by the economic decline. Despite the partial recovery since then, this program remains essentially valid. Here it is necessary only to emphasize some of its key aspects.

1. With large-scale unemployment looming as a chronic problem, major attention must be given not only to improving the purchasing power and conditions of those employed,

but also to protecting the welfare of the unemployed worker. Particularly important in this respect is the fight for drastic improvements in unemployment compensation, including the principle of payment of compensation for the full period during which a worker is unemployed. Legislation for the improvement of existing laws was sidetracked in the last session of Congress by the adoption of a temporary extension of benefits, but will undoubtedly be a major issue in the present session. Also important is legislation to protect unemployed workers from repossession and foreclosures.

Of vital importance in this connection is the need for the labor movement to champion the interests of the unemployed. A fight must be waged against present tendencies on the part of most union leaderships to write off the unemployed and displaced workers in their industries as being no longer any concern of theirs. Unity of employed and unemployed is essential, and the responsibility for building it falls first and foremost on the unions.

2. The fight for the shorter work week assumes ever greater importance as a central issue for the entire working class. Both as a contract demand and a legislative issue, this question must be brought increasingly to the fore.

3. Increased unemployment brings with it increased job discrimination

against Negroes and other minority groups. The fight against all forms of such discrimination therefore takes on growing urgency, and there is a heightened need for trade-union initiative in fostering Negro-white unity.

4. Of paramount importance is the fight against increased arms expenditures as a way out. The current growth in military outlays, and the insistent demands for still greater increases which are being raised by some sections of Big Business and by certain labor leaders and Democrats, threaten the American working people, in the end, with higher taxes, further inflation, and an increased danger of war. In place of this, a large-scale expansion of social welfare expenditures is required.

And a far better alternative with respect to providing jobs is opening the doors to trade with the socialist world. The immediate volume of such trade would more than compensate for the drop in exports during the past year, and its ultimate volume could be far higher. Such trade would, moreover, serve to promote friendship and peace, and would greatly lessen the threat of war.

In these and other aspects of the fight for jobs, the important victories won by the people in the November elections open the way for more effective struggle and for significant advances.

Work in the Two-Party System

By William Z. Foster

IT IS A PECULIARITY of the American labor movement that the trade unions have no mass Labor Party, or other mass party. For many years past—for well over half a century, in fact—they have concentrated their political work heavily upon voting for the policies and candidates of the two old bourgeois parties, Democratic and Republican, with the emphasis on the former. The general result is that the workers as a whole, following variations of the Gompers "reward your friends and punish your enemies" policy, have remained deplorably weak politically. They have had very little representation in the various governmental bodies, their political policies are inadequate and sketchy, and their understanding of the class struggle is heavily tinctured with bourgeois illusions. On the other hand, the various radical parties (and there are several of them) are frustrated in their growth and are essentially sects. This process has gone on until the present day, when the so-called two-party system is deeply entrenched in the labor movement, and the workers have built up much political machinery in all the key industrial states within

the framework of the Democratic Party.

Throughout the bulk of these years, the Left parties generally followed the policy of attempting to build independent mass parties (they originally got this idea from the German Socialist Party over two decades before), instead of working with the masses. For many years, up until the latter 1930's, this was also the definite policy of the Communist Party, which had inherited it from its forerunners. The result was a serious split in the ranks of the working class, with almost the entire Left on the sectarian end of the split, and defending it with all sorts of so-called revolutionary arguments; while on the other hand, most of the organized workers, who were chiefly conservative, insofar as they were politically active, supported one or the other of the two old parties. This has gone on until the present day, until now the two-party system is more marked than ever.

The Communist Party, with its Marxist-Leninist spirit and policy, was the first of the several Left parties (except for the scraggly policy of the Socialist Party) to begin

to make a break with this long-prevalent policy of having no truck whatever with the two-party political system, regardless of the isolationist consequences of their attitude. In the latter 1930's, when the CIO began to develop, the Communists, who were in working alliance with the progressive or middle group in the CIO unions, began to participate in PAC and in the manifold working-class formations inside the Democratic Party, supporting certain candidates, advancing policies, etc. This continued on a large scale in the CIO unions, with the Communists as participants in the political work, until the split of 1949 (with the partial exception of the American Labor Party period.) The weakness of the Communists in this work, however, was that they did not theorize it, and undertook it only half-heartedly. Undoubtedly, this active participation in the workers' formations within the two-party system was one of the major factors in the building of the mass strength of the Communist Party during the 1930's and 1940's.

In 1948, the Communists made a partial and disastrous departure from their policy of working within the framework of the two old parties, by the establishment of the independent Progressive Party. The formation of this party was one of the most serious errors made by the Party during the entire period. This isolationist policy pulled large numbers of members out of the Demo-

cratic Party, and most of them never returned; it also broke up the Left-Center alliance in countless unions. The weakening of the work of the Communists in this vital branch of mass political activity was hastened by a series of events of the period: by the Browder revisionism of 1943-1944; the Progressive Party split of 1948; the split of the CIO in 1949; the government oppression; the Party mistakes, both Left and Right, of the 1940's and 1950's; and the revisionist Party crisis after 1955. The development of revisionism had definitely as one of its major results the weakening of the Party work in the old political parties—characteristically, the revisionists had their eyes focused on the Right-sectarian bastardization of the slogan of the united party of Socialism, and the prevention of the Party from getting into real mass work.

THE TWO PARTY SYSTEM

The great bulk of the workers support the two old party tickets, with two-thirds or more supporting the Democratic Party, and hardly one-third, if that, supporting the Republican Party. In the recent November election, of the approximately 45 million votes polled by the two old parties, probably in the neighborhood of 20 million or more were cast by workers, with another 10 million or more cast by farmers, Negroes, and other Labor Party elements—with the usual huge majority going to the

Democrats. On the other hand, of the five independent, Left-wing parties (Communist, Socialist, Socialist-Labor Trotskyite, and Independent-Socialist), hardly one hundred thousand votes were cast, combined, all over the United States, which obviously is not the total Socialist strength in this country. This shows at a glance that the enormous majority of the workers, insofar as they vote at all, are voting the two old tickets. It also indicates that the main electoral mass work of the progressives, as things now stand, lies within the scope of these two mass parties, which control the election vote of the great toiling masses. And of course, these two parties are the controlling parties of the government.

In the work of the progressives, functioning in the unions and mass organizations, within the two old parties, consideration should be given to the following:

The Left forces should propagate their progressive program and line in the old parties, with the stress upon the one which currently contains the mass of the workers, and undertake to mobilize the workers and their allies in these parties for the eventual formation of the Labor Party at an appropriate political time.

The CP works upon the theory that it is impossible for the workers to win complete control of either the Democratic Party, or the Republican Party, they being too closely controlled by the monopolists, and

that eventually the workers and their allies will have to form an independent Labor Party. It is possible for labor, however, to win control of many key sections of the organization, to win some significant political concessions, and to raise important class issues, as was done in the recent election within the Democratic Party on the question of anti-right-to-work laws. Undoubtedly, strong organization can be built up in such states where the working masses are politically active, as, for instance, Massachusetts, Michigan, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey Maryland, Delaware, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, West Virginia, California, Washington, and other states.

The progressives should actively combat all illusions among the workers and others in the old parties (without making them splitting issues) that the Democratic Party, or may it be the Republican Party, can be won as a bloc by the workers. We must focus the attention of the masses on the eventual perspective of the Labor Party, as their next big step to a mass and class political organization, without rushing into premature, split movements.

It is important for progressives to work definitely at building strong worker organization and program inside the Democratic (and where possible, the Republican) Party. This they should do in such a way as not to play into the hands of the reactionaries, who are quick to use the

demagogy that the workers are out to "capture" the organization, and to carry through various political "plots."

The workers in these parties should work firmly and persistently, and not rush hastily and without proper consideration, into splitting movements.

Reformists and opportunists of all shades have long since dabbled with political activity within the Democratic and Republican Parties. For the most part, however, they have immediately shed therewith their previous radical pretensions.

The Left-wing has worked with labor and others functioning politically through the Democratic Party (and also in the Republican Party) as early as 25 years ago and it has continued it ever since, especially since the workers began to be active in the building of the CIO. The difficulty of the Left at the time was that it did not clearly theorize its course in the old parties. The general result was that its work was spasmodic and sketchy, and it made many needless and harmful opportunist and Left-sectarian mistakes. When it realizes clearly where its political action can take them, such errors and lost motion can readily be avoided.

In this general work, the Left must especially seek to cooperate with the middle or progressive group of workers and their leaders. Many conservatives are now displaying a measure of political activity, and they should be worked with; but the center for-

ces are vastly more active and effective, both in their program and their organizational work.

THE LABOR-NEGRO-FARMER PARTY

The Communist Party should orient (as it has done for the past 40 years, not always too clearly) upon the proposition that the American working class will eventually free itself from the bourgeois control of the two-party system, and build a mass party of its own. This, as American labor history indicates, probably will eventually take the shape of a combination of workers, Negroes, farmers, and petty-bourgeois elements. These will comprise a large majority of the American people as a whole, and such a party would have the potential of securing a majority in the elections on an anti-monopoly program. The formation of the Labor-Negro-Farmer Party (whatever its eventual popular name may be) in the United States, would mark a huge step forward for the American working class and its allies. It would enormously increase their representation in the innumerable governmental institutions, as well as facilitate in general their political fight, and clarify their understanding in the class struggle.

The Labor Party in the United States will probably not have, certainly at first, a Socialist program—owing to the non-Socialist ideology of the American working class. The

Communists, however, should actively propagate Socialism in all their Labor Party work. Under no circumstances should this point be neglected. But Socialism should not be presented as a splitting issue. We should not assume, also, that the development of the Labor Party in the United States will be directly parallel with that of Great Britain. The work of the Left in the two old parties, for the Labor Party, should be characterized by firmness, persistence, and resolute advocacy of the Labor Party. It should not be made the object of thoughtless and light-minded splitting movements.

The building of the Labor Party will undoubtedly represent a serious struggle and cover various phases. Past experience shows that many working class organizations will be built up in the process within the ranks of the old parties. Examples of this are the AFL and CIO, COPE and PAC. A number of other organizations will develop. This was the case with the old Progressive Party, the Commonwealth Federation, the EPIC movement of California, state and local Farmer-Labor Parties, etc., in the past. At the present time there are the workers' independent organizations in Michigan, and many other forms in other states. All these should be supported, bearing in mind the need to avoid useless, harmful, and premature splits.

A special form of intermediate organization developed between the building of primitive formations

within the old parties, and the formation of a definite Labor Party; this was the American Labor Party in the State of New York. Such organizations, while actively striven for, should not be organized until there is the proper groundwork. The life experience of this organization, which has been but little studied by working-class leaders, should be carefully gone into.

In the Labor Party work, inside of the old parties and independently, a major effort should be concern with dovetailing the work in both spheres. This was one of the strong points of the earliest years of the New York ALP. The workers in the ALP could work in complete harmony with their brothers and sisters who had not yet taken similar steps by breaking with the old organization and setting up an independent organization.

In the Labor Party work, in all stages, it must not be forgotten that the trade-union movement is the backbone of the Labor Party. Consequently, all organizations looking to the strengthening of the movement must have a solid core of organized labor strength. Especially is this the case when the movement reaches the point of actually forming the Labor Party. It is impossible to establish an effective Labor Party movement without a solid trade-union foundation. This the workers have experienced time and again in their several generations of effort to create the Labor Party. When the

situation is deemed ready for the formation of the Labor Party, as nearly as possible the whole labor movement must be involved. A characteristic attempt to form the Labor Party without a solid trade-union backing was the Progressive Party of 1948.

In the labor movement, it is important that the principle of independent action be established so that labor and its allies shall not be controlled by hostile class elements. There should be active campaigns begun to establish working relations between all the anti-monopoly elements, which could eventually come to make up a Labor Party. The membership of the Labor Party should be based upon the affiliation of organizations as well as the formation of groups on the principle of individual membership. The Communist Party would seek affiliation with the Labor Party, but it would not let this become a splitting issue.

THE COMMUNIST PARTY

The Communist Party must be actively built in every phase of the Labor Party movement—to create the organization of the workers in the major parties, to build the Labor Party, and to fulfil the thousand and one tasks that the Party confronts in the class struggle. We must remember that the independent role of the working class is the ultimate status we are driving at, and that hence the importance of the Com-

munist Party must not be underestimated.

The Communist Party, with its Socialist objective, should operate on the principle of the Vanguard Party, and play an independent role. Its members should permeate every phase of the Labor Party work. It should strive to win all the other Left forces to its Labor Party policy. The entire Left and radical movement should have one—a substantially unified—policy.

In general, the CP should oppose the putting up at this time of general Left-wing election tickets, covering all offices. Such a tactic puts the Left forces in direct opposition with the body of the workers who are still supporting the Democratic Party. So far as possible, the various branches of the movement—old parties, Labor Parties, and independent tickets—should dovetail with one another. Independent tickets should be put up, both of a general and specific character; but so far as practical, these should be directed against reactionary elements on the old party tickets. Above all, the Labor Party movement must aim at a unified strategy throughout all its phases.

The CP should take an energetic stand against useless splitting tactics on all levels of the movement. It cooperates freely with other Left forces, but it does not support them in splitting tactics which conflict with the interests of the workers. The CP at all times should retain full freedom to propagate its Labor Party policy,

as well as its general line. It combats illusions of the workers as to the permanency and other alleged benefits of the two-party system.

In keeping the Labor Party issue to the fore at all times, the CP should make no agreements with other parties soft-peddling this issue. It shall not, however, introduce the Labor Party issue into given situations regardless of the effects it may have upon the general movement.

The system of election primaries, as well as all other such machinery, need to be fully utilized, to see to it that workers and Negroes are nominated in greater numbers on the old party tickets.

The CP should carry on a permanent and active educational campaign for the Labor Party.

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During the course of the history of the labor movement, there have been numerous issues upon which the Left-wing forces found themselves taking a very different line from

that followed by the masses. Often this could be corrected, to the general profit of the labor movement and also of its most advanced sections. It has fallen to the task of the Communist Party, to have corrected some of these sectarian errors. Now it is necessary that this whole matter of electoral policy be very deeply probed and analyzed, and clearly stated.

It is high time that this was done. The Party needs to probe the entire political situation, especially all its two-party system aspects. The Party should examine its own experience, as well as that of others, in this matter, and draw all necessary conclusions. It is fitting that the Communist Party, as it has done on many other occasions, should take the vanguard position in bridging the gap between the electoral work of labor, functioning in the Democratic Party, and that of the independent Left. If this is done promptly and well, it will mean the material strengthening of the Party and the general labor movement in many respects.

Readers who wish to participate in the Party Program Discussion are reminded that their communications—not over 2,500 words, please—should be addressed to: James S. Allen, Secretary, 23 W. 26th Street, New York 11, N. Y.

The Negro Freedom Fight: Current Developments*

By James E. Jackson

WE ARE MET TODAY to discuss and, I hope, to reach basic agreement upon a correct Marxist approach to a theoretical representation of the Negro question in the United States and a sound over-all conception of how the struggle for its solution can be most effectively prosecuted. Our discussion here should result in the adoption of a dominant viewpoint on these matters which can then serve as a guide to, and basis for, an organized discussion in the Party directed toward the adoption of a *basic political resolution on the Negro question in the United States*, either at a subsequent meeting of this Na-

tional Committee, or on the occasion of the next National Convention.

As vitally necessary as it is to come to grips with and resolve in the interests of clarity and sound orientation, the fundamental theoretical problems of strategic concept, characterization, and definition of the status and developmental outlook of the Negro people's freedom cause, the urgent, pressing tasks of the living movement are not unrelated or irrelevant considerations in the correct achievement of this work. In connection with this latter point let me call to your attention certain developments of very special importance in the unfolding *current struggle* for the rights of the Negro people which require special action and a major exertion on our part to insure their success:

1. The 86th Congress will open on January 7 in a struggle to repeal Rule 22 and break the filibuster veto power of the Southern Senators over effective civil rights and other progressive legislation mandated by the people's vote in the November elec-

* Opening remarks on the discussion of the Negro question in the United States, at the National Committee Meeting, CPUSA, December 8, 1958. At this meeting a Draft Resolution on the Negro Question, and a Report by James Jackson, "New Features of the Negro Question in the U.S.", were approved as a basis for discussion directed toward the final formulation of the Resolution on the Negro Question by the National Committee, to be presented to the next National Convention of the Party. The vote approving this was: For: 34; Opposed: None; Abstaining: 6. A poll was taken among 21 comrades invited by the N. C. as being especially involved in Negro liberation work. Their vote was: For: 19; Opposed: None; Abstaining: 2. The Draft Resolution is published in this issue of *Political Affairs*; the text of the Report is to be published in the January number of *Party Affairs*.—Editor.

tions. Already the Johnson-Rayburn forces are working to split and weaken the forces pledged to support a clear anti-filibuster rule. With a crusading intensity, every day must be utilized to sustain the pressure upon the Douglas-Javits anti-filibuster bloc to brook no compromise with the appeasers of the Southern segregationists. Letters, telegrams, petitions, ads, participation in the January 5 Washington lobby of the 27 co-operating national organizations and trade unions, should be encouraged from every mass organization and trade union, etc.

Following the outcome of this battle will come the struggle for an enforcement amendment to the Civil Rights law. The most imaginative campaign must be sustained as long as required for victory in support of genuine civil rights measures in the new Congress. The clear intent of the politicians will be to push the matter over, to do nothing until the Party Conventions of 1960 and convert it into a competition in Party Platform writing and Presidential campaign promises.

2. The Southern segregationists and the state governments of the South have laid siege to the Supreme Court's ruling against school segregation. They have interposed over 200 state laws against the Constitutional right of the Negro people to equal unsegregated education in the Southern states. President Eisenhower, in flagrant contempt of his constitutional obligation, refuses to

take any action to uphold the law, as ordered by the Supreme Court, to enforce the equal citizenship right of the Negro people to education in unsegregated schools. Thousands of Negro and white children are locked out of their schools by the insurrectionary actions of Almond and Faubus, while other Southern governors contumaciously make no move in the direction of honoring the orders of the highest court of the land or of respecting the Constitutional rights of Negro citizens in general.

In response to the challenge and affront of this situation, the Youth March for Integrated Schools came into being. The great demonstration that was held in Washington is scheduled to be repeated and multiplied several times over on May 16. At this time the Youth are pledged to bring to Washington the signatures of a million young Americans who support their pledge to forever combat discrimination and segregation. This is a very big undertaking and the import and consequences of such a successful action must not be underestimated. Certainly no effort on our part should be spared in helping the young people to realize this noble goal.

3. To secure the liberties and safeguard the lives of Southern Negroes belabored by revenge-seeking local governmental and police authorities, Klansmen and White Citizens Council desperadoes, the Federal governmental law enforcement agencies must be compelled to intervene and

bring an end, once and for all, to the usurped rights of the States to wantonly violate the Constitutional rights of Negro citizens. But to bring about such a turn in events will require that the Negro trade unionists commence to exert their own initiative in the struggle of the Negro people. Two million-strong Negro trade unionists have a potential power of action to bring to bear at the point of production in the cause of Negro freedom that has not yet been felt or fully perceived.

We welcome the news of a new beginning on the part of Negro trade unionists to give organizational expression to the special fraternity that obtains among them, with the objective of playing a more leading role in the unfolding struggles of the Negro people. We would offer any support of which we are capable to aid its growth and to realize its aims.

4. In all of the United States, there are less than 100 Negro elected public officials. This spells out most graphically the fact that the Negro people in the United States are the most disfranchised people in the world with the exception of South Africa. How significant, therefore, is the anticipated convocation of a Congress of Negro statesmen for Washington in the early spring! Such a conference will be a major podium from which the heartfelt aspirations and urgent demands of the Negro people for genuine representation in government, for real enforcement of the right to vote and to

be voted for in the South, for the reapportionment of garrymandered Congressional Districts, Wards, etc. will be voiced to the nation. Also, it will give a dramatic push to the fight for enacting civil rights and FEP legislation.

5. The prospectus is that a Washington Congress of Negro statesmen may become a new permanent institution of much promise. But if an assembly of Negro elected officials is to be basically meaningful beyond its declamatory value, it needs to have as its backdrop an organized, nationally federated non-partisan movement of Negro voters for concerted independent political action. We look hopefully upon a current development in this direction which has taken root in one of the Midwestern cities. The political sagacity displayed by the Negro electorate in New York in connection with the Powell campaign and elsewhere across the country indicates that the mood of the Negro voter is ripe for concerted independent political action on a national scale while still expressing itself within the electoral framework of the two-party system. Certainly this development will be followed attentively, and progressives will find ways of rendering effective aid to its development.

6. The municipal and state elections of 1959 will offer opportunity for the Negro people to advance the fight for Negro representation as well as to further the local and state legislative measures necessary to secure

freedom and equal rights. Our Party plans to participate in one or more Southern cities in the 1959 municipal and state elections. Certainly, elsewhere in the country, our comrades will not be amiss in doing all they can to aid the cause of Negro representation both in a supporting role and, like Ben Davis in Harlem, in putting forward where possible and proper our own candidates for public office.

7. An event of signal importance to furthering the advance organizationally of the Negro people's movement is to be noted in the preparations being made for the June 1959 Golden Jubilee of the NAACP. These preparations are of a special character. They have to do with a most significant struggle within the Negro mass organizations around questions of policy, scope of program, tactics of mass struggle, of democratizing the structure of the organization, youth program, etc. Personalities in contest for election as delegates to the Convention and to local and national office will identify with definite positions on these matters. The membership of this vital organization of the Negro people's movement want basic reforms in the policy and structure of this organization. For our part, we identify with their aspirations and wish them success in rendering that organizations a more effective instrument in the fight for Negro freedom.

8. Various pressures are brought

to bear upon the Negro people's movement and especially upon its leaders to divert it from its course, to undermine its strength, to weaken its unity and effectiveness. Sometimes, some of the established Negro leaders who are the victims of these pressures seek release by becoming the purveyors of anti-Communism. But the Big Lie propaganda of the "Communist danger" is itself one of the most damaging pressures upon and weakening influences within the Negro people's movement. It threatens to ensnare the people in lies and mold hostile attitudes toward the world forces of anti-colonialism and socialism which are objective allies of the American Negroes' freedom cause at home.

In the second half of the twentieth century, in the age of the world-wide triumph of Marxist science in the liberation of oppressed peoples, there can be no successful end to any people's freedom movement whose leaders march under the Chamberlain umbrella of anti-Communism.

One of the important contributions our Party, and especially Negro Communists, have to make to the task of ideological clarity as to "who are the friends and who is the enemy of the Negro people" is precisely the exposure of all red-baiting preachments and practices. In conducting this ideological work against anti-Communist propaganda, we will make clear our support for every forward step of the movement. We will strive to enhance the unity and

advance the cause of the movement at all times no matter how provocative and divisive the red-baiting indulgences of a part of its leadership.

9. The desperate antediluvian denizens of Dixiedom have unleashed an unprecedented propaganda barrage in behalf of white supremacy and in defense of segregation. The centerpiece in their broadsides of racist pornography is to depict the offensive of the Negro people and democratic forces for equality as a "communist-inspired plot" against the domestic peace, as a "Moscow-ordered gambit in the cold war." In their indecent diatribes the school-room becomes the boudoir, and the enforcement of integration becomes "invasion." The Georgia Educational Commission is spending two million dollars in a slick Madison Avenue campaign to sell the case for segregation to the nation. A bill has been introduced into the Florida legislature for financing a similar project.

We are called upon to move the trade unions and people and religious organizations, colleges, and scientific societies, to rise to the challenge of the racist ideological assault that has been developed anew against the minds and reason of the American people. Our Party has a special independent role to play in this connection. In a previous period, the works of Dr. Aptheker and other Communists scored great victories against racist ideology in American scholarship. Now, once again—this

time at the level of the masses—we must counter the propaganda waves of the racists with the popularity presented revelations of truth, fact, self-interest, and social necessity for the "inter-racial" unity and equality of the Negro people. The struggle against racism and white supremacy prejudices and practices must be carried to the white masses via the organizations in which they are to be found. The Negro people do not want the progressive white person spending his or her time commiserating with them over their oppressed status; they want to see the white progressives fighting with and for them in behalf of their just rights in the white communities, among the white masses.

Now, as never before, there must be a keener sensitivity and vigilance against all manifestations of white chauvinism, of insensitivity to insult and injustice against the Negro people, of abstentionism in the struggle for Negro rights, of paternalism and discourtesy toward Negroes in the ranks of our Party.

10. On the African continent, a new sovereign state has been born, Guinea. Several other nations there have taken first steps toward independence. A great conference of the liberation fighters from the African world is now taking place in Accra, Ghana, in attendance at which are the outstanding American Negro internationalists and Marxists, Dr. Alphaeus Hunton, Dr. W. E. B. Du Bois, Paul Robeson, Mrs. Eslanda

Goode Robeson, Mrs. Shirley Graham Du Bois. Other Negroes from America are there, such as Congressman Charles Diggs of Detroit, and news reporters. The bonds of fraternal solidarity between the American Negroes and the dynamic liberation movements of Africa are growing and command great popular enthusiasm among ever larger sections of Negro public opinion. This represents a vital and developing stream of anti-imperialist consciousness among the Negro people. Furthermore, already in 1958 almost a hundred Negroes visited the Soviet Union. The inspiration they received there and the discovery of the true world situation as a consequence of their first-hand "look-see" at socialism in being, is reflected in a growing body of Negro periodical literature that is sympathetic to socialism and highly appreciative of the achievements and significance of the Soviet Union, China, etc. to the cause of anti-colonialism and Negro national liberation on a world scale.

We welcome this significant beginning of inter-cultural communication. We are for the broadest development of tourism on the part of the Negro people, particularly the trade unionists, youth and women, to Africa and to the Soviet Union and the socialist countries.

1. As a result of the outcome of the November elections, the trade unions have developed a new self-confidence. They should also have acquired a new and profound res-

pect for their electoral partnership with the Negro people, who held their ranks solid with labor in spite of every provocation from the Democratic Party chieftains and their southern cabal; but this they must yet learn to value properly. In any event, the opportunity has been created for recommencing a rank and file campaign to move the leadership into action on the question of the organization of the unorganized millions of factory and field workers in the South.

12. Finally, comrades, nothing we speak of here will succeed in attaining the dimensions and scope of real effectiveness in the months ahead if we do not simultaneously occupy ourselves with the upbuilding of the independent strength and influence of our Communist Party among the Negro people—the workers, the youth, the intellectuals. The crisis of policy and leadership of the Negro people's movement today is traceable in no small part to the absence of a conscious Marxist trend in effective numbers in the ranks and leadership of this movement. Our Party retains great latent credits among the Negro people. We can and will build the Party among the Negro people. At a subsequent meeting we want to review all of our experiences and sharpen our approaches and emphasis on this question of building the Party among the Negro people.

13. A key opportunity to secure a new appreciation for our Party

among broad strata of the Negro people is offered us in the struggle for *amnesty for Henry Winston and his colleague Gil Green*, as well as in the demand for the dismissal of the Lightfoot case. Above all, we Negro Communists must take into our own hands the cause of freeing Henry Winston from jail in 1959. We must set up a special committee toward this objective, assemble such forces and secure such funds and resources as are necessary, and carry through this task to the end. Let us do this thing ourselves. Let us point the finger at no one but ourselves. Let us blame no one but ourselves. Winnie belongs to the working class and to the Party as a whole, true enough, but in a special way he is *ours*. Let us do our Brother to Brother duty to him now. Never mind protocol and togetherness—let us take on this job and do it!

* * *

Comrades, as we address ourselves to the subject of this session—the

theoretical premises for the representation and solution of the Negro question in the United States—let us be mindful of the function and role of theory. Theory is not for the purpose of chieiding or denying reality, or of arresting the development of phenomena. "Phenomena are richer than any law," said Lenin. Theory explains and illuminates the forces at work in a given phenomenon, and reveals its relationship to all surrounding phenomena. It distinguishes the new and vital from the old and dying. It provides a guide to action. Correct theory is the midwife of the possible and reveals the most favorable course for its development.

The question is not how to compress the phenomena of the Negro people's movement in the United States into the conditions of a given Marxist category but how to effectively use the science of Marxism-Leninism to serve the cause of Negro equality and freedom.

May we have a rich and rewarding discussion, comrades!

In the February issue, we will publish the full text (10,000 words) of the Resolution on the Commune Movement, recently adopted by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China—ed.

Theoretical Aspects of the Negro Question (Draft Resolution)

By National Committee, CPUSA

PROPOSITION I

The U.S. is a historically derived, national formation; an amalgam of more or less well-differentiated nationalities. The Negro people are the most severely oppressed and all-sidedly exploited of all the peoples who make up the U.S. nation.

The Negro people of the United States are not constituted as a separately developed nation. Rather, their characteristics are that of a racially distinctive people or nationality who are a historically determined component of the American nation of the U.S.

Though deprived of their just and equal rights and freedom to fully participate in all aspects of the affairs of the nation, the Negro people nonetheless have contributed to and have an inseparable stake in (no less than the other nationality components) the American nation's common territory, economic life, language, culture, and psychological makeup.

The Negro question in the U.S. is a "national question"; it is one of the many varieties of the national question embraced by Marxist science.

The oppressors of the American Negro people are the imperialist ruling circles of the U.S., the monopoly-capitalists who own the biggest industrial-financial institutions of our country, and through these control and direct its economic and political life. The "extra-take" in super-profits, extracted by this class through the Negro-white inequality in wages alone, is estimated at four billion dollars annually, a figure greater than U.S. imperialism's profits from its Latin-American investments.

"The struggles of the Negro people and the resultant significant advances inspire Negro Americans with a new quality of self-confidence. A profound spirit of national consciousness and pride in their racial identification permeates the Negro people of the U.S. today. It fires their determination to build ever closer their unity in order to wage the struggle even more militantly to break down all barriers to their exercise of any and all political, economic, and social rights enjoyed by any other citizens.

"Negroes unite *not* in order to separate themselves from the political, economic, or social life of our country. They unite to more effectively employ the strength of their own numbers and weight of their alliance with other parts of the population to level the barriers to their fullest integration into all aspects

of the economic, political, and social life of the American people as a whole. They are forging an integral national unity to facilitate their struggle for full integration as free and equal American citizens." (Convention Resolution, p. 44.)

PROPOSITION II

In applying the classic Leninist definition of the factors making up a nation, two such elements must be re-examined in the light of fundamental changes that continue to develop. First, the element of a "stable community."

Capitalist development in the United States, particularly since 1930, assails the stability of communities. The U.S. population, taken as a whole, is the most mobile (i.e., the least "stable") population in the world. This is especially true of the American Negro people, whose position in 1930 was essentially that of an oppressed, land-bound peasantry, and has today become essentially an oppressed urban working people. This has resulted in a major alteration in the geographical distribution of the Negro people.

As has been historically true, the laws of capitalist development in the U.S. continue to register profound transformations on the various class strata of the Negro people. As a consequence, the relative weight of the peasant class-component of the Negro people has been decisively reduced and the relative weight of the working-class strata decisively increased. The scientific conclusion to be drawn from this objective fact is: the Negro national question in the United States is no longer "essentially a peasant question," the peasantry is no longer the basic class component of the Negro people, but today its basic class component is the working class.

This transformation in the absolute and relative weight of the basic class forces of the Negro people's movement is no more reversible than are the objective laws of development of the system which created these transformations.

Secondly: *the element of "common psychological make-up":*

Taking into full account all that is distinctive in this feature of the nation-like development of the Negro people, nevertheless, this is not determinative for either the solution or representation of the Negro question in the United States. The main currents of Negro thought and leadership in the struggle for advancement and freedom, historically, and universally at the present time, have projected their programs from the premise that Negroes individually and as a people are no less Americans than any other claimants. Only in describing the dimensions of their oppression have the Negro people represented themselves as a people apart from the American nation.

PROPOSITION III

These variants in the essential prerequisite features of nationhood (as described in Proposition II) compel the conclusion: the oppressed Negro people are not a nation and, therefore, the strategic concept expressed in the slogan: "the right to self-determination," which applies only to *nations*, is not a valid, workable, scientific slogan for the emancipation of the Negro people in the United States.

The Negro question in the United States remains a "national question" by definition as stated in Proposition I.

The Negro question in the United States remains a *special* question, commanding the attention of the working class and all forward-looking sections of the American population, because "the Negro people are the most severely oppressed and all-sidedly exploited of all the peoples who make up the American nation," and because the basic material conditions for their emancipation, and for the social emancipation of the American working class has been prepared by the continuing massive urbanization of the oppressed Negro people. It is also a special question because there can be no further basic advance for the working people of our country as a whole without the elimination from U.S. political life of the traditional Dixiecrat enemies of Negro freedom.

PROPOSITION IV

The re-appraisal of the "self-determination" concept and slogan, requires its replacement by a strategic concept and slogan which expresses a more accurate, workable solution to the Negro national question in the United States. Such a strategic objective and slogan must answer (as the "self-determination" slogan attempted to do) the very real problem of governmental power for the oppressed Negro majority population, coupled with radical agrarian reform, in what remains of the traditional areas of most-backward agrarian relations, intense poverty, and brutal landlord rule, in what is referred to as the "Black Belt" in the South.

The Communist Party program for the revitalization of Southern agriculture and radical alterations of production relations in the "black belt" remains sound.

The programmatic outlook of the Communist Party on the Negro question has heretofore been expressed in summary form as:

"The Communist Party stands for the full economic, political, social and cultural equality for the Negro people, including the right to self-determination in the Black Belt."

It is recommended that in the future the Communist Party popularizes its position in the following summary form:

"The Communist Party of the United States stands for the full equality of the Negro people; their inalienable right to a fully integrated participation in the political, economic, social, and cultural life of America, including the right to the guarantee of genuinely representative government in the South, with proportional representation, in the areas of Negro majority population."

PROPOSITION V

"The Negro people's movement is today a standard bearer in the struggle to open up the now restricted areas of democracy. It is the decisive strategic ally of the working class in the current struggles for liberty and livelihood and in all stages that lead to the subsequent achievement of the necessary fundamental transformation of American society from the present capitalist exploitative system to that of socialism.

"Now to cement the Labor-Negro alliance, through powerful mass struggles for Negro rights, is to lay the cornerstone for that broad anti-monopoly coalition of labor and the people's forces on which the progressive future of our country depends.

"This is the main uncompleted democratic task of our country, and its fulfillment will enormously advance the goals of the working class and our entire nation." (Excerpt from 16th National Convention Resolution, pp. 44-45.)

The fact that the scene of the Negro people's struggle unfolds within the bosom of American imperialism, and in direct and intimate association with the working class and popular struggles and is directed against the common class oppressor, feeds into the general stream of the historic working class cause of our time a powerful current which raises the torrential power of the whole cause of social advance for the people of our country. *"The question of Negro freedom, then, is the crucial domestic issue of the day, and is a factor of growing international consequence."*

PROPOSITION VI

The struggle against racism (white chauvinism) is in the first instance the struggle against its institutionalized forms, as represented in the all-sided system of segregation in the South, and its Northern extension in housing, jobs, etc.

In the course of unfolding broad popular struggles in support of the Negro freedom movement, against the segregation system, the harsh realities of this racist system in the South must become a knowledgeable part of the ideology of the American people as a whole, and in particular of the working class of our country.

The democracy-loving forces of the U.S. people can only come to fully appreciate the significance of the Negro freedom movement *to them* by gaining an increasingly deeper understanding of what segregation is: of its scope and depth of practice.

Politically, the segregationist leaders are the native Hitlers in the political life of our country; segregation imposes on the Negro family an economic standard of living that is 48 percent below that of the average white family, and upon the Negro children of America the penalty of dying 8 years sooner than a white child born the same day; segregation is the daily experience of insults and humiliation, the disrespect to the dignity of manhood and womanhood; segregation is the torture of the police-prison system; segregation, as the institutionalized form of racism, poisons the cultural wellsprings of our national life; it is the lies, distortions, and gross omissions which permeate the written history of our country; segregation threatens the physical destruction of the public school system in one whole region of our country; *segregation retards the unity of the toiling population of our country required for the promotion of the general welfare of the American people.*

Mass educational and explanatory work, developed in the course of struggle for concrete objectives in the desegregation battle, is made even more urgent, today, in the face of the flood of racist propaganda the Citizens Council groups are spreading nationally.

More and more, the nation-wide offensive against white chauvinism must find its reflection in the halls of the U.S. Congress and in the concrete actions of the Executive Department of the federal government. The honor and the democratic social progress of the American nation are at stake.

PROPOSITION VII

The Communist Party, the Party of Negro-white unity, must continue to build upon its accumulated credits among the people of our country, by boldly implementing the programmatic line which flows from our Party's estimate of Negro freedom struggles as "*the crucial domestic issue of the day, and a factor of growing international consequence.*" (16th Convention Resolution.)

Leadership in the struggle against white chauvinism continues to be a major responsibility for our Party, and especially our white comrades in their day-to-day contact with the white masses.

Negro Marxists have an indispensable role to play in the over-all strengthening of the Negro people's movement. American imperialism and its agents are quite sensitive to this fact.

The further development of the all-class unity of the Negro movement requiring the leadership of its working-class component; the deepening of its anti-imperialist ideological content, which at present is very weak; the strengthening of the Negro national movement's international ties, through the medium of personal contact and otherwise; the unfolding of a consistently correct tactical line in the day to day battles against the skilled enemies of Negro freedom; the conscious building up and training of its youth cadre for today and tomorrow's leadership of the movement; all of these are necessities which Negro Marxists can contribute immeasurably towards providing for the liberation movement.

This calls for their scientific contribution at all levels of the organized movement.

Such a weight of responsibility cannot be fulfilled from any position except one of being *within the mainstream* of organized Negro life. Despite whatever obstacles and difficulties are placed in their way, by the enemies of Negro freedom, it is the *duty of Marxists* to find the path of entry and influence into the mainstream organized movements which constitute the all-class Negro liberation movement.

Development of an ideologically definable, accepted, Marxist-scientific trend in the Negro people's movement is a continuing obligation of our Negro comrades. This continues to require careful planning, flexibility in tactics and consistency of effort.

Negro Marxists must be second to none in their demonstrable knowledge of the history of the Negro freedom movement, and in their ability to apply the Marxist scientific method of analysis, in generalizing these rich experiences into a practical scientific theory and practice of Negro freedom struggle.

Applying the democratic organizational principle of collective work, the Communist Party U.S.A. is dedicated to the discharge of its role as the vanguard Party of the American working class, in the concrete task of mobilizing our class and nation to meet the new challenges presented by the Dixiecrat-fascist menace to democracy and the new opportunities for mounting a nation-wide offensive, for the final and complete destruction of the Jim-Crow system in our country.

IDEAS IN OUR TIME

BY HERBERT APTHEKER

PASTERNAK, CULTURE AND FREEDOM

The rejection of Pasternak's novel, "Dr. Zhivago," by Soviet publishers, its appearance outside the USSR—in seventeen languages, so far (including Russian)—the awarding of the Nobel Prize in Literature to its author, the subsequent vehement denunciation of the Laureate by Soviet authors and organizations, and Pasternak's own resulting refusal of the Prize, have aroused world-wide interest, provoked passionate argument, and pin-pointed crucial questions for our epoch.

Zhivago, as a novel—that is to say, from the viewpoint of literary criticism, itself—has been analyzed exhaustively and, for me, definitively, by Charles Humboldt in the November issue of *Mainstream*; its political and social content, its ideological outlook, was examined with equal thoroughness and, I thought, with equivalent persuasiveness, by the five Soviet editors responsible for its original rejection, in 1956, and that was published, in full, in last month's *Political Affairs*. Hence, these aspects of the *Zhivago* case will be noticed very briefly, indeed, in the following pages; but there are many other questions, also of the greatest consequence, with which neither of the preceding essays pretended to deal. Let us consider some of them.

HYPOCRISY

When the trustees of Columbia University appointed General Eisenhower President of their institution, that smiling gentleman with his endearing modesty remarked that since he hadn't read a book in nine years, he was not quite certain of his qualifications for the proffered position. More recently, at the height of the *Zhivago* furore, this literary connoisseur, when asked his view of the matter, paused in addressing the golf ball and said he was "shocked that even the Soviets would do this kind of thing"; he added that he would be happy to welcome the author and "see and talk" with him at the White House itself. Perhaps someone later told him that months before, the State Department had refused a visa to Pasternak—maybe on these grounds Mr. Dulles finally will be dismissed!

At any rate, President Eisenhower, so prone to shock, might well want in the first place, to "see and talk" with Miss Autherine Lucy—for example—and inquire as to her progress in obtaining an education, since the University of

Alabama expelled her. Miss Lucy, after all, is one of the "sovereign people," whose servant, as we all know, the President is.

The poet, Archibald MacLeish, discussing the Pasternak question on a CBS television program monitored by Edward R. Murrow, urged: "This problem has to be approached without hypocrisy." He demonstrated his own frankness by remarking that even in the Free World there was "an invisible censorship which works, I am sure, in all countries, a restriction on publication which operates through the opinions of the publisher and through what can be sold and so forth."

The newspaper reporting these remarks (*N. Y. Times*, Dec. 8) in which Mr. MacLeish so strained at being fair-minded that he even thought he could somehow sense an "invisible censorship," noted that that particular comment "was edited out" of what went into U.S. homes; the program could not run over thirty minutes and some "invisible" influence had decided that an expendable item was the one we have quoted!

REALITY AT HOME

It may be useful, and it is relevant to the subject at hand, merely to indicate something of the impact of this "invisible" censorship here in our own country, surely among the most free members of the Free World. We may begin with the act of book publishing and confine ourselves simply to the cash nexus. The cost of publishing has risen so steeply in the past fifteen years, consumer resistance to increased book prices has been so marked, and the decline in reading of books simultaneously has been so great, that publishers now estimate that a hard-cover book must have a first printing of 10,000 copies and a paper-back book a first printing of 150,000 to assure the break-even point. Increased quantity in the Free World connotes at once decreased quality, of course; hence, in the face of the situation outlined above, leading publishers like Harold Guinzberg and Alfred A. Knopf today admit that bad literature is driving out the good. Alan Dutscher, another leading figure in the "trade," says it is "a generally acknowledged fact that . . . it has become virtually impossible to publish a quality trade book." It is to be noted that this de facto censorship refers not to social and political content as such, but rather to any serious effort at real literary distinction and craftsmanship and any attempt to deal intelligently with matters of some real moment.* The censorship of any truly controversial material, not to speak of any really revolutionary concepts, is so complete in the commercial publishing world, that it is no longer even discussed.

With the disintegration of serious book publishing, it is not surprising to find the function of incisive book reviewing disappearing. No less a figure than Granville Hicks, who years ago publicly announced his liberation from the yoke of *New Masses* and was thereafter quickly welcomed into the truly free pages of the *New Leader*, the *Saturday Review* and the *New York Times*, confesses in the latter (July 6, 1958) that book reviewers "are commonly looked down

* See the article by Frank G. Leonard in the *Anti-och Review*, Summer, 1958. Mr. Leonard offers striking examples of the alteration, cutting, changing, and censoring to which even books by Cozzens and Steinbeck are subjected when they are prepared for consumption by the really mass market.

on by the literati as hacks and by the larger public as poorly paid hacks." Mr. Hicks agrees that "so dismal is the situation," that he almost despairs of any kind of change; he finds in fact "that there are comparatively few periodicals for which a competent literary journalist can write, and most of these pay so little that writing for them is a form of philanthropy."

The drying up of outlets for serious book-writing and serious book-reviewing to which people like Alan Dutscher and Granville Hicks refer is, of course, a fundamental form of censorship infinitely more effective than Comstockism; it is deeper-going, too, in its reflection of a basic social decay. A similar situation exists for that literary form peculiarly American, namely, the short story. The fact is that today, in our entire vast country, there are perhaps four or five magazines, and almost all of them appearing but once a month, which will even consider stories pretending to represent serious creative effort; in these, moreover, the *verboten* political content is universally understood and almost no author will permit himself to waste his time by putting finger to typewriter to deal with such matters. If, moreover, he is so naive as to do so, the literary agent who returns his manuscript without ever submitting it to an editor, will tell him the facts of life.

Two major outlets that exist for the story—long or short—are the movies and television. Here censorship—both that which weeds out serious artistic effort and that which rejects "controversial" matter—is omnipresent and well-nigh omnipotent. Here, again, the major form of censorship is self-imposed; most writers *begin* by deliberately excluding matter that they know will be "troublesome." But that does not finish the process.

In television, stories are no longer submitted to editors; even the pretense of having fellow-craftsmen do the original judging is gone. Today in television, the writer or his agent submits his work to the advertising agencies servicing the networks; those agencies do the original weeding out, cutting, changing, and rejecting. Indeed, in television, the opposition to ideas *per se*—any kind of ideas—has reached the point where even entertainment, in the old-fashioned sense, is disappearing. This is why, as John Crosby writes: "Entertainment is gradually being stifled altogether. Television is gradually—not gradually, rapidly—becoming a huge bingo game." (*N. Y. Herald-Tribune*, July 2, 1958.)

Edward R. Murrow, himself, writing on "TV and Fear of Controversy," pleads for assistance in combatting "the malignant forces of evil" represented by Communism; he makes clear that he wants such assistance to be forthcoming "inside the existing framework." What is that framework? He answers: "Twenty or thirty big corporations dominate radio and television"; further, "television in the main is being used to distract, delude, amuse and insulate us." He begs modestly only that "it reflect, occasionally, the hard, unyielding realities of the world in which we live." And he confesses that the reason it does not, but rather deludes and distracts, is because its control is in the hands, as he writes, of "big business" (*New Republic*, Nov. 10, 1958).

George Rosen, writing in the trade journal, *Variety* (July 30, 1958), says that TV has become "depressing and cheap," marked by "cliche-ridden format," and that:

Up and down Madison Avenue and within all the precincts of the medium there is a gnawing fear that permeates every avenue and controls all thinking—a fear that has produced such timidity that it is not even rational. It is a fear of each and every thing that even remotely resembles controversy.

Dale Wasserman, a TV and movie writer, in the same issue of this journal, says of himself and his colleagues: "Conscience and guilt gnaw at our innards as we watch that once promising baby, television, move straight from infancy to senility." What has done it was the sponsors' demand for "pap, banality, and gunfire," and to this demand, he writes, we yielded. Controversy in our writing, he goes on, "consists of beating a dead horse."

Here is the Free World writer, the successful one, as described by one of them, in their own trade journal:

Your real writer needs the strong drink of argument and thought. Without it he is a dull creature, somnolent beside his steam-heated swimming pool, dreaming up new denials of the fact that he has failed his profession and himself.

But this is not yet the end of the story. Capitalism, turning culture into commodity, thinks of it in terms of marketing; in terms of "price"; in terms of "goods" and the "good" it can perform in helping to keep the system operating. The owners have contempt for their employees; this, too, is being manifested in forms whose blatancy is without precedent. Thus, the writers' products are altered now so thoroughly and so often without the consultation or even the knowledge of the authors, that the demand is rising amongst them for the deletion of their names from the credits. Jack Gould, writing in the *N. Y. Herald-Tribune* (June 15, 1958), commented on "the growing frequency with which TV writers are asking for the removal of their names from the screen or other disassociation from a play on which they have worked." This is because when they see the final product they hardly recognize it. Gould quotes one writer's reaction as he watched the premier of "his" play:

I quivered, I shrank, I was ineffably embarrassed. Everything I had objected to was in it—and more. This was not my script at all—not at all! Structure, technique, scene sequence, characterizations, relationships of characters, dialogue—not at all!

This is freedom all right—the play was freely edited!

The other major outlet remaining to the creative writer is the cinema. How fares freedom there? In *Variety* (Nov. 26, 1958), Hugh M. Flick, formerly the official movie censor for New York State, was quoted as saying there existed "a type of censorship rarely mentioned—that by banks financing the production of motion pictures." The well-known Hollywood actor, Richard Widmark, writes:

The elements which today, more than ever, dominate our work [are] the bankers, the Wall Street brokers, business investors. These groups not only sit on the boards of the various film companies, but they control heavy blocks of stock. . . . In the final analysis, it is *they* who are calling the turn on *what* Hollywood should make, *by* whom, and *with* whom (*Saturday Review*, Dec. 20, 1958, italics in original).

The result in terms of "freedom" and the sanctity of the artists' creativity is in movies what it is in television. For example, Orson Welles, certainly one of the top names in cinema, stung by the criticism of "Touch of Evil," a movie in which he is listed as author-director, wrote the magazine carrying the criticism:

As author-director I was not consulted on the matter of the release of my film without a press showing. One can assume that the distributor was so terrified of what the critics would write about it that a rash attempt was made to evade them altogether. This is understandable in the light of the wholesale re-editing of the film by the executive producer, a process of rehashing in which I was forbidden to participate. Confusion was further confounded by several added scenes which I did not write and was not invited to direct.

Mr. Welles went on to disclose that in his entire long career, "Only once my own editing of a film has been the version put into release" and that "only twice have I been given any voice at all in the 'level' of my subject matter." But, he concluded: "I have to take what comes along or accept the alternative, which is not working at all." (*New Statesman*, London, June 3, 1958).

In the face of this situation, movie criticism has gone the way of book criticism. Says *Variety* (Oct. 15, 1958): "It is generally assumed in New York movie circles that a movie studio can soften an adverse review—in advance—by bringing pressure on a newspaper. *This assumption is more correct than anyone will admit.*" (Italics in original). It is further documented to the hilt in the just-published *Seen Any Good Movies Lately?* (Doubleday, \$3.75) written by William K. Zinsser, recently-resigned movie-critic of the *Herald-Tribune*.

We will close this very brief summarization of something of the realities of cultural and intellectual freedom in the United States today, with comments on a main source for all cultural and intellectual activity—namely, the system of higher education. Louis M. Hacker, the thoroughly conservative former Dean of the School of General Studies of Columbia University, reports that "the status of learning in our contemporary world is alarming." After detailing some of the evidences of this, Hacker concludes: "There is a virtual blacklist in the American university world that is as mean and cruel as any inquisition" (*The Nation*, April 12, 1958). A younger man, writing in the same magazine (July 5, 1958), explains that he bases his comments on experiences as a student at Temple and Princeton Universities, and as a teacher at the University of Southern California. These are his conclusions:

The commercialism and conformity in idea and action of the men who fill our faculties and the administrative posts in our colleges and universities would nauseate the naive . . . the almost complete suppression of honesty and frankness as the basis for relations among men. . . . Our academic world is sick with the same corruption that has seized the rest of American society. . . .

* * *

In the preceding pages we have offered the barest summary of the commercialization and degradation of culture in the United States by the masters of the dollar, which is breaking the hearts and corrupting the talents of thousands of aspiring artists and writers. This is relevant to any consideration of cultural matters in the socialist lands, for those lands do not function in a vacuum, nor in anyone's ideal construction. Rather, they function, in aesthetics, as in politics, economics, and diplomacy, within a very real world; their activities are conducted by human beings subject to failings and mistaken judgments; and they derive out of specific national backgrounds, many of which antedate the socialist revolution and all of which effect conduct and policy. They operate, too, in an uncharted course, undertaking the qualitatively new on a colossal scale and beset by doubters, scoffers and foes.

These considerations are fundamental in all aspects of life; but they are especially consequential in the aesthetic for there the relationship to the socio-economic base is most remote, past traditions are most tenacious, and the peculiarly personal is most prominent. They are offered not in contradiction of or in ignorance of the truth that "two wrongs do not make a right"; we will attempt to assess the "right" or "wrong" of the *Zhivago* case further along.

Rather, they are offered because the corruption in U.S. cultural life is relevant specifically to the Pasternak affair since it is necessary to understand the vile quality of those who dominate the process of its judgment in our country. That is, when one sees the U.S. commercial press and the "successful" authors in this country issuing manifestos in the name of cultural freedom or integrity he is witnessing an example of disingenuousness that is unique in its enormity. And when one sees these practitioners of imperialist "culture" offer their judgments on the *assumption* that their standards are—of course—the standards for cultural advance, he is witnessing a piece of nationalist arrogance that cannot be surpassed.

This does not mean that all those concerned by or opposed to some or most of what they understand to have been involved in the *Zhivago* matter are of a piece with the cash-register aesthetes and their paymasters; on the contrary, many of the most staunch opponents of such paymasters have felt alarmed or even appalled at this affair. But they must, it seems to me, to begin with—and for the future—get their bearings again firmly in terms of the realities of the Cold War, of the malignancy of U.S. imperialism, and of the basically liberating quality of Socialism in general and of the history and present position of the Soviet Union in particular.

Without these fundamentals, one cannot begin to analyze rationally the world we live in, nor any of its specific events, including the *Zhivago* case.

* * *

Boris Pasternak, a distinguished Soviet poet and translator, of pre-Revolutionary, upper-middle class origins, produced in 1956 what he felt to be a completed draft of his first novel, *Dr. Zhivago*. Two years before, he had submitted certain poems—later to form a kind of postscript to the novel—for publication in *Znamia* (Banner), a Moscow literary journal; a considerable portion of these were published in Number 4 of that journal in 1954. Certain U.S. publications (for example, the *New Republic*, Dec. 8, 1958) have stated that prose excerpts from the novel were published in the USSR in 1956; that is false.

In 1956, Pasternak submitted the manuscript of his novel to the editorial board of *Novy Mir*, a leading literary journal. That board, speaking through five outstanding novelists, playwrights and journalists, rejected it in toto and in detail;* their rejection left no room for mere editorial deletions or revisions, for it went to the very fibre and totality of the work.

The next certain piece of information is that, in 1957, a Rome publisher—who had recently left the Italian Communist Party—announced the forthcoming publication of an Italian edition of *Zhivago*, and that the work was published that year, in its original form, despite efforts by Pasternak (according to his own statement) to have it delayed for revision.

Very soon thereafter, the Cold War and anti-Soviet functions of the novel became apparent to everyone—except, it seems, its author. At any rate, well-publicized plans were undertaken to bring out editions in other languages; this was done despite protests by the author that his "friends" were issuing unauthorized versions, without his consent. By the spring of 1958 versions of the novel in several languages, including Russian, were beginning to appear; in July, the U.S. magazine, *The Reporter*, published the first of three long extracts, accompanied by a discreet editorial foreword in which Max Ascoli would not go further than to say, quite incorrectly, that Pasternak had written what "might be called an a-Communist, and not an anti-Communist book."

By the latter part of 1957, too, the volume, in manuscript form, was being circulated in scores of copies among the membership of the Union of Soviet Writers; early in 1958, as R. H. Crossman has reported from personal knowledge (*New Statesman*, Nov. 29, 1958), "everyone in Moscow was talking about it"—by which, surely, Mr. Crossman must have meant everyone actively engaged in literary affairs.

Yet, though by 1958, the anti-Soviet usage of the novel was absolutely notorious throughout the world and was a matter, naturally, of intense concern and discussion in the USSR, not a word came from Pasternak disavowing this. By the summer of 1958, distinct rumors began to appear in the Free World, that

* It is this document that appeared in full in the December issue of this magazine. The *N. Y. Times* published about one-fifth of it in its issue of Dec. 7. In a rather hysterical editorial on the matter in the same issue, extraordinary for its misrepresentations even on that editorial page, the writer three times referred to three editors as rejecting *Zhivago*, and insisted that they were "three nonentities." The repeated error in number may reflect the editorialist's extreme state of disturbance; his reference to "nonentities" is typical *Times* ignorance plus arrogance. B. Lavrenyov has been an outstanding novelist and dramatist since 1924; K. Fedin is a renowned author and among the dozen most gifted writers in the world; K. Simonov, a younger man, is also very well-known, even in the U.S., where one of his plays, adapted by Clifford Odets, ran for some months, and where one of his novels, over a dozen years ago, was a Book-of-the-Month Club choice. The other two, B. N. Agapov and A. U. Krivitsky, much younger men, have already won distinction as short-story writers and critics, and in the case of Agapov, also as a translator.

the Nobel Prize was to be given to Pasternak; this was so advanced that *Life* magazine began to plan a Pasternak issue, in line with the well-known pro-Soviet sympathies of the Luce organization. Meanwhile, it must be added that while Pasternak was giving out interviews right and left—and exclusively to the Right—the Soviet Writers' Union itself maintained for the public, a strange silence; in particular, no move was made to publish the remarkable critique of *Zhivago* written in 1956 by the *Novy Mir* editors.

Then came the Nobel Prize in Literature for Pasternak; his immediate acceptance; and then the denunciations of his work, and his person, often in fierce terms that, particularly in view of the earlier silence and the bare fact of refusal to publish, produced moments of concern even for keen friends of the Soviet Union. Nevertheless, it is to be emphasized that no criticism of a public nature was made of Pasternak, and no denunciations were forthcoming on the basis of his having written a novel; the criticisms and the vehement attacks came as the result of his having permitted his work to be used as an instrumentality for the intensifying of the Cold War and as ammunition for anti-Soviet careerists, and having said not a word to counter this.

Here four questions of varying levels of importance urgently present themselves for consideration: 1) Is the history of the Nobel Prize in Literature one that provokes confidence in its purity of motive and its excellence of judgment—as the press of the Free World insists? 2) Is the nature of the book one of devotion to social progress and human emancipation, not to speak of Socialism as such? 3) Is a novel, in any case, representing as it does at least an effort at artistic creation, properly subject to such concerted, momentous and serious consideration and such nation-wide repercussion? 4) Is there not, finally, and quite apart from the quality of the book itself, some immutable and absolute principle of freedom of expression involved here—again, especially for the artist—and has this not been violated?

THE NOBEL PRIZE IN LITERATURE

The original terms of the award for literature bequeathed by the dynamite-millionaire Alfred Nobel, provided that it was to go "to one who has produced in the field of literature the most distinguished work of an idealistic tendency." It was also specified that the award was to be made in terms of work produced "during the year preceding." Both these limitations have been, in practice, more or less ignored; the award has been assumed to go to the most distinguished literary figure of the time, and to be bestowed quite apart from any "idealistic" tendencies, speaking philosophically or otherwise. Certainly, this is the general opinion in the Free World. It is an opinion that is not based upon the facts.

The Nobel Prize in Literature is made by the Swedish Academy of Literature; it has been an institution since 1901. In the very beginning serious charges were raised as to its bias: for example, the liberal magazine, now defunct, the *New York Independent*, in its issue of May 9, 1907, said that the members of the Award Committee, "have from the beginning shown a flagrant disregard of the intentions of the founder." Such charges have dotted the history of the Prize

ever since; thus, a characteristic example, was the comment by Edgar Johnson in the *New Republic*, November 29, 1939, anent the fact that the Finn, Franz Emil Sillanpaa, received the Award that year of the Soviet-Finnish War: "There can be small doubt that there are political overtones in the awarding of the 1939 Nobel Prize." Of course, any Finn would not have served; as Edgar Johnson noted, this Laureate was fascinated by death, and in his novels shows that while "he feels the grievances of the farm laborers and tenant farmers, he is not unfriendly to the farm owners."

The Nobel Prize in Literature has been given to Mommsen, Kipling, Pirandello, Deladda, Churchill, but not to Tolstoy, Chekhov, Dreiser, Nexo, Neruda, O'Casey; it went to Bergson, Gide, Mauriac, Camus, but not to Barbusse, Eluard, Aragon, Sartre. Two Russians have received it since the 1917 Revolution, one Ivan Bunin, when an emigre in Paris, and the other, *Zhivago's* author—Bunin, yes, but Gorki, no; Pasternak, yes, but Sholokhov, no.

It is impossible for anyone who examines these facts, and knows something of the content and merit of the writers who have and who have not received the Nobel Prize, not to see at once that the award is characterized by a consistent preference for politically reactionary authors over against those taking a more progressive stand. At the same time, I think it is impossible not to see that this political bias has operated, on the whole, to the disadvantage of truly great creative talent.

Specifically, on *Zhivago*, the political bias of the award is especially manifest. Indeed, Dr. Oesterling, the secretary of the Swedish Academy, on the same day that the Prize was announced, hailed not only what he felt to be Pasternak's genius, but also his spirited sense of independence in having written, though a resident of the USSR, such a book. Moreover, immediately with the announcement, a member of the Information Bureau attached to the U.S. Embassy in Stockholm—with the tact that seems to be characteristic of Mr. Dulles' employees, busily circulated press releases on the Award together with portraits of the author. At the same time, the Vatican pavilion at the Brussels World's Fair was passing out copies of a Russian language edition of *Zhivago* to whomever wanted them; by October 24 "Radio Liberation," well-known as a purely cultural activity, was broadcasting *Zhivago* on its USSR wave-length for the edification of its citizens.

ON THE BOOK ITSELF

As has been indicated earlier, there is no intention in this essay to go into an extended discussion of the style and content of *Zhivago*. In common with many other readers, I found the volume excessively circumstantial, poorly constructed, verbose, and thought the characters drawn most skimpily. The content of the work is intensely anti-Revolutionary in general, and violently anti-Bolshevik revolution in particular. It caricatures Marxism; and presents in the framework of extraordinary mysticism and religiosity, an essentially elitist, paternalistic, and fanatically individualistic outlook.

Anti-Sovietees, who have been delighted with the *Zhivago* book, have mani-

fested a certain embarrassment at the fact that the fascist-bound and fascist-favoring intelligentsia of Spain have risen in "defense" of Pasternak; they have been shamefaced, too, at the fact that the Franco regime announces for early publication an edition in Spanish to be issued in Barcelona. Richard Scott Mowrer, reporting on some of this from Madrid (in *The New Leader*, Nov. 24, 1958), wonders if *Zhivago* will undergo much alteration by the Franco censorship, but he admits: "The chances of *Doctor Zhivago* emerging unscathed from the ordeal look pretty good. . . ." He explains this purely in terms of Franco's opposition to the Soviet Union. But, in terms of substance, what is there in *Zhivago* that Franco would object to: is the almost pathological equation of *Zhivago's* own personal comfort with freedom likely to bother Franco; is *Zhivago's* insistence that efforts by men working collectively to make life better for the vast majority of mankind are foredoomed to failure, likely to trouble the Fascist; is *Zhivago's* equating of Marxism with resort to violence likely to distress Franco; is *Zhivago's* contempt for the October Revolution from 1918 to the moment a decade later when he dies, likely to worry Franco; or *Zhivago's* admiration for the Whites; or *Zhivago's* somewhat genteel, but persistently reiterated anti-Semitism;* or his paens to freedom so long as it is abstract and does not have to be fought for by real human beings in a real world seeking real benefits and substantial transformations? (In this connection, it is worth recalling that Mussolini permitted Croce to publish in Naples his *History as the Story of Liberty*—so long as Croce's "liberty" was idealist, abstract, and couched in terms sufficiently hostile to Marxism).

THE REPERCUSSIONS

Americans in particular tend to find strange if not sinister, the enormous significance devoted to questions of culture in the Soviet Union, with front pages of newspapers taken up with criticisms of symphonies, and with Premiers publicly discussing the pros and cons of the latest novel. Generally speaking, capitalism, treating culture as a commodity and having contempt for matters of the mind, tends to dismiss the whole area of aesthetics as something for youngsters or "long-hairs," as unimportant, except only insofar as it may serve to stupefy or corrupt the population. This is particularly true in the United States, a land which, for a variety of historical reasons, has tended to be notably anti-cultural and anti-theoretical.

The Soviet Union, however, is a socialist country, basing itself upon the outlook of Marxism-Leninism. To that outlook, nothing more severely condemns exploitative societies than the fact that all of them have operated in terms of confining culture and learning to the barest fraction of its population—to the so-called "leisured." For them only was Beethoven and Shakespeare, Copernicus and Newton; for the rest—the masses, the hordes, the unwashed, the hands, the poor—toil was the prime requisite and docility the great virtue.

* For an extended discussion of this feature of the novel, see "Dr. Zhivago: A Jewish Dissent" by Jacob Glatstein, in *Congress Weekly*, Dec. 8, 1958. Significantly, the Free World commercial press that went wild over *Zhivago* nowhere even mentioned, let alone condemned, its blatant anti-Semitism. Mr. Glatstein, on the other hand, nowhere connects the generally reactionary outlook of *Zhivago* with its anti-Semitism.

Socialism smashes that; it exists in order to make full the lives of the vast majority of the population, in every aspect, material and aesthetic. It insists that man, through conscious effort, organization and planning can accomplish this; the generalization for this, the outlook behind it, that conception which molds it, is dialectical materialism, or, in political terminology, Marxism-Leninism. This outlook is held to be true; and a society based on such an outlook will stress consciousness rather than spontaneity; will value collective planning rather than individualistic planlessness; will see as of the greatest importance the nature and the role of ideas.

Therefore, both in terms of a possession of the masses and in terms of the ideological commitments of the society, in Socialism matters of culture will be of the greatest consequence. It will, therefore, arouse the most intense and genuine concern; a work of art, a piece of drama, a symphony, a novel will provoke as deep an interest and will be as avidly and widely considered as in our own country will be—a World Series, for instance.

This represents a fundamental shift in attitudes, especially for those who belong to or have belonged to the rich; it will not be accomplished without great effort, many errors, and stubborn resistance. How stubborn is that resistance, and how persistent are the contrary errors, are among the prime lessons to be drawn, I think, from the fact that a Soviet citizen, living in the USSR for forty storm-tossed years, will nevertheless create such as work as *Dr. Zhivago*.

ON ABSOLUTE FREEDOM

A central question raised by the *Zhivago* affair remains: namely, the allegedly immutable freedom to publish. This position is stated plainly and with great conviction, for example, by Mrs. Muriel McAvoyn, in a recent letter to the *National Guardian* (Dec. 8, 1958):

There have always been historical reasons why czars, kings, dictators and bureaucrats have curtailed intellectual freedom. But for us, the right of free speech should be one of those absolutes for which we fight everywhere. . . . This we owe to the ghosts of M. Voltaire and Mr. Jefferson.

The fact that disreputable figures like czars and kings and dictators and bureaucrats have always offered their reasons for curtailing intellectual freedom, does not, in itself, mean that there should exist, or can exist, or ever has existed pure intellectual freedom.*

And Mrs. McAvoyn may be familiar with the ghosts of Voltaire and Jefferson but she would certainly be surprised at their views and positions when they were in the flesh. Voltaire held that the masses were stupid and brutish and always would be and therefore needed three things: the whip, the goad, and the yoke. Voltaire held that belief in God was probably misdirected, for the upper classes, but he held it necessary for the "lower orders" the better to restrain their wild and

* On this whole question, the reader is referred to my *Freedom in History*, a pamphlet published in 1958 by New Century Publishers, N. Y. C.

barbaric natures. Is this Mrs. McAvoy's ghost whom she would resurrect?

Jefferson deprived tens of thousands of Tories of every civil and political and economic right there is—let alone freedom of speech or press—and never even deigned to defend his actions. Mr. Jefferson assumed that the faculty in his University of Virginia would be confined to democrats, and that Monarchists, aristocrats and Federalists would be barred; Mr. Jefferson urged a carefully selected process of libel suits to be started against the more notorious of the Federalists' editors so that the corruption of the press by his political opponents might be overcome and, of course, Mr. Jefferson was a slaveowner. Is this the ghost Mrs. McAvoy wants to resurrect?

Would Mrs. McAvoy curb anti-Semitic and white chauvinist literature which today floods the mails and the stands of our country? She might well hesitate, as I would, to encourage such enactments given the present system and the present government, knowing as we do that this system and its government tend to vitiate the best of enactments and make them serve their own purposes. But, let me ask: if we have a socialist system in this country and a government pledged to its maintenance, might we then not have laws illegalizing and severely punishing such literature; would not the enactment of such legislation and the reality of its enforcement reflect a real advance in freedom?

Would Mrs. McAvoy repeal the Potsdam Treaty because it provides for the extirpation from all aspects of German life of fascism and any of its vestiges? That Treaty obligates the Powers to provide the German people the right to choose any kind of government they wish except fascist; to publish any kinds of books and papers they wish except fascist; to join any organizations they wish, except fascist. Is this wrong? Is it not rather wrong that the capitalist signatories to this Treaty have systematically violated it? By permitting the resurgence of fascism, including the fascist's freedom to publish his views, have the Allies furthered the cause of human freedom?

These kinds of questions are related to others of equal weight. Harry Braverman, for example, in *The American Socialist* (December, 1958), finds that: "The history of art and artists shows a rebellious, heterodox strain which strongly suggests that writers, painters, musicians, and poets cannot exhaust their potentialities and functions simply in praise of the status quo." I think that is true; and it is true because of the realities of class societies in the past, and of class struggle as a basic feature of human history under such conditions; hence the best of the creative workers, revolted by exploitation and parasitism, stood forth on the side of the exploited. The same is true of workers in political efforts; the best of them were rebels against the exploitative status quo.

But is there no change with the achievement of socialism? Are political workers under such systems who seek to destroy the status quo still revolutionists or are they counter-revolutionists? Is there such a thing as counter-revolution? Do the advocates of counter-revolution have the right to promulgate their desires and further their ends? Were the rights of Jefferson Davis and Robert E. Lee in defense of slavery to be equated with the rights of the slaves to be free or the rights of the Union forces to preserve the Republic and so end slavery?

Do not such questions have at least equal potency when addressed to socialist

systems? And in such systems is not the essential function of the artist as altered as is the essential function of the political worker?

Here it is not a question of insisting on nothing but praise for the status quo; and most certainly the bulk of Soviet cultural output has not done this. But it is a question of resisting systematic condemnation of the socialist society and of the principles and theories under which it operates and which give it its vision and breath of life. And it is under the latter that *Zhivago* falls.

Of course, this necessity raises difficulties and problems; anything important does. And these difficulties are not the only ones raised in the building of socialism—as we have lived to see. But the existence of the difficulties and problems, the appearance of failures, rigidities, or worse, must not lead to condemnation of the revolution that is in the making and that does represent the greatest blow for human freedom in all history.

Certainly, the elimination of such failures and rigidities is not assisted by the shameless exploitation, for Cold War purposes, of the works of disaffected individuals in the Soviet Union. Such exploitation serves neither the cause of culture, freedom, nor sheer human decency.

I choose to close my discussion of some aspects of the *Zhivago* case with a quotation from the works of one of the "nonentities" that the *New York Times* denounced. Fedin's monumental novel, *No Ordinary Summer*, opens with this paragraph, that might well have been addressed directly to the author of *Dr. Zhivago*:

Great historical events are accompanied not only by general excitement, finding expression in an elation or dejection of the human spirit, but also by suffering and deprivations far from the ordinary and beyond the power of man to prevent. For one who recognizes that the events taking place are part of the general movement of history, as well as for one who is consciously guiding the course of history, this suffering does not cease to exist any more than physical suffering ceases to exist when the disease causing it is known. But such a person reacts differently to the suffering than one who does not appreciate the historical significance of events, knowing only that life today is harder or easier, better or worse than it was yesterday or will be tomorrow. For the former, the logic of history lends meaning to his suffering; for the latter, the suffering seems to have been imposed only to be suffered, as life itself seems to have been granted only to be lived.

A Letter to Howard Fast

By V. J. Jerome

Renegades from Communism invariably ascribe their betrayal to superior morality; they have been disillusioned; *they* have been betrayed; they can no longer tolerate association with the cynicism and brutality and lack of sensitivity they suddenly discover to be characteristic of the Party. Hence have they left—and forthwith one finds some of them demonstrating their finer sensibilities by appearances on TV, where their craven fawning to the bourgeoisie is nauseating; soon, too, their noble humanism gains fat checks from Hollywood, or from "leading" publishers, who are so anxious to allow them to present a purified Socialism.

Howard Fast, for example, covers his nakedness by protestations that his writings were mauled by unfeeling Party autocrats; his *Naked God* is filled with wild concoctions telling of his noble struggles against these brutal affronts. Again, interviewed on a coast-to-coast TV program some time ago, Fast said that as a writer in the Party, "You submit to an arrogant, stupid, Victorian dictatorship of thoughts, ideas, and so forth."

We thought readers might be interested in a specific example of a real happening, rather than the inventions of an embittered turncoat, and so we are printing below an example of the Party's "brutality" toward Fast's creative efforts. It concerns Howard Fast's book, *The Passion of Sacco and Vanzetti*. Having completed a draft, Fast, in 1953, asked V. J. Jerome, then Chairman of the Party's Cultural Commission, to read it and offer him the benefit of his criticisms. Jerome was then in the midst of being tried under the Smith Act (he shortly thereafter was jailed for two years), but he agreed to do as Fast had asked. On June 17, 1953, Comrade Jerome wrote Howard Fast the following letter—given below in full and exactly as then written.—*Editor*.

* * *

Dear Howard:

I hope that by now you are well under way with the revisions of *The Passion of Sacco and Vanzetti*, since our discussion of a fortnight ago at my home. I am glad we had the opportunity for a full-length discussion of

the novel. It was to me especially gratifying that you concurred with the major points of criticism I raised. I am here setting down, as I promised you, when you first asked me to read the manuscript, my analysis, which I summarized in our talk the other evening.

I. Let me recapitulate some of the salient positive aspects:

1) In selecting this theme you are continuing along the noble path of presenting with dramatic force to the American people traditions of struggle against oppression, especially on these shores.

2) The theme of this present work will bring out starkly the class justice and its frame-up system, which has today a special relevance in the light of the Rosenberg case, following so soon after the execution of the framed Martinsville Seven and Willie McGee.

3) The style of this book is refreshing in its simplicity and directness, from which issue the elements of beauty and strength that are in it.

II. Now, as to the main points of criticism:

1) The book lacks the historical background against which the legal murder of Sacco and Vanzetti was perpetrated. While it is not as devoid of historical setting as, for example, Miller's play, *The Crucible*, it does not present the concrete conditions of the post-World War I years which explain the particularly vindictive outburst of our ruling class against the labor movement. While it is true that frame-ups and railroading have been a constant phenomenon of U.S. bourgeois rule, its virulent manifestations are always related to particular moments or periods of the class struggle. This is the key that Marxists can furnish for an adequate understanding of the frame-ups against the Molly Maguires, the Haymarket Martyrs, Joe Hill, Tom Mooney, and Sacco and Vanzetti, as after them the frame-ups of the Scottsboro Boys, the Rosenbergs, the Smith Act targets.

Needless to say, the relevant historical period in your novel cannot be superimposed, but must become an organic part of your theme, plot, and character interplay—something that you as the writer must determine how to integrate artistically.

2) The place that you give to the Professor of Criminal Law, namely, Felix Frankfurter, as well as your characterization of him, perturbed me. You will remember my answer, when you asked me how I viewed your progress as novelist. You have made major strides forward in selecting working-class themes, themes of epic importance drawn from the past and the present. In this respect, as in so many others, you have set a splendid example to progressive American writers. But I believe that in building your historical novels around working-class themes you have tended to select middle- or upper-class characters as protagonists, or at least as the most full-drawn and pervasive characters. This can be said of Gracchus in *Spartacus*, and now of Frankfurter in *The Passion of Sacco and Vanzetti*, and, although in a different sense, of Altgeld in *The American*. It is strange that the character in *Clarkton* who stands out most in my recollections is the doctor. You may remember when I criticized *Spartacus* on this score, you answered that by thus "balancing" the working-class theme with the upper-class central character you sought to achieve "objectivity" and avoid a subjectivist approach to the working class. You have repeated the pattern in this book. I must therefore re-state, if only briefly, the point I made then. Such an approach is a denial of class partisanship in history and literature. It negates the revolu-

tionary capacity of the oppressed class and leads to an idealistic and utopian dependence on "emancipation" by individuals of "goodwill" from above. Furthermore, it distorts and falsifies history. For such individuals are not scientifically evaluated to establish their historical limits, but are unduly heroised with an idealized treatment that borders on mysticism.

Does not dealing this way with Sacco-Vanzetti in the decaying stage of American capitalism and in the world context of capitalism's General Crisis, manifest—indeed, contribute to—a certain lack of confidence in our working class and feed the sundry notions, which you yourself have strongly challenged, of dependence for leadership from "good-willed" people outside?

Now, of course, this does not imply that we should adopt a negative attitude toward, or in any way belittle, the contributions that the younger Frankfurter made to the cause of Sacco and Vanzetti; but it is one thing to show him in the role of ally and quite another to show him as the leading social force fighting for the lives of those two working-class victims of monopoly capital.

Further, as to your characterization of Frankfurter. He is presented in a sheerly idealized manner. You make him hover before my eyes as a noble human being, a courageous, self-sacrificing champion of the injured and the oppressed—a man in whom we must all mirror ourselves. The only critical reference is toward the end of the book in which, in a sentence or so, he indicates the concern of the middle-class type lest the workers come into power. But even this is an understandable concern that in no way impugns his moral values. In fact, he would be

false to himself if he didn't entertain such doubts. Yet, have we not a right to ask: Is this ennobled presentation of Felix Frankfurter cast in the mold of truth? Is this the same being who today, as Justice of the Supreme Court, has condemned to death the Sacco and Vanzetti of 1953—Ethel and Julius Rosenberg?

You argued the other evening that you were presenting the Frankfurter of the '20's. I told you, simply to illustrate the point, of an argument offered to me by a writer in 1938 regarding an essay he was intending to publish in which he eulogized Max Eastman. To my question: what of the latter-day Eastman—is he to be expunged from the author's and the reader's consciousness? He answered: the author should not impose his present opinion upon a past situation, since such "interference" would violate the canons of art. To which I replied that the argument could be taken as a pretext for building a myth of the "noble" Eastman, and that the canons of art are not served but vitiated by such a philosophy. For, to view one period in total isolation from the extension of time is to lapse into metaphysics, into literary falsification. The artist in his forties cannot say that he is not responsible for what he writes about his experiences in his twenties. Moreover, the artist who has accumulated the political wisdom that comes from the revelations of time, far from withholding this understanding, is duty-bound to integrate it with his retrospective view of events and men.

I asked you, Howard, is it possible that the reactionary Supreme Court Justice of today is totally unrelated to his make-up of former days? And if

those unlovely qualities were not outwardly apparent in his behaviour then, is it not the task of the Marxist historical novelist to bring them out, even in their germinal form? And when you fail to do this, do you not fail yourself as novelist, do you not violate the canons of art?

Finally, as regards Frankfurter, I could not help concluding, Howard, that in painting him in such roseate hues you were one-sidedly influenced by the fact that he was a Jew—although it was necessary and correct to show, as you do so splendidly, the anti-Semitic bias against him by President Lowell of Harvard. I was reinforced in my surmise when you resisted bringing in the despicable role of Justice Brandeis, who shared responsibility for the death of Sacco and Vanzetti, as Frankfurter now condones the frame-up of the Rosenbergs. I was not satisfied, and could not be, with your answer that Brandeis "had to disqualify himself." Brandeis' pretext for cowardice has long ago been blasted. I can only assume that to bring in Brandeis in his true villainous role might perhaps "mar" the saintly picture you draw of Frankfurter.

3) The Prison Warden, too, you present as quite a decent human being. To my question as to his authenticity, you answered that he was not based on the actual warden in the case, but that you had found the warden in your jail a decent sort. Now, of course, here and there, a prison official may be less vicious personally than others, or may even be "decent"; but I question your right in a historical novel to present the warden, actually without knowledge of his character, in this flattering light. Certainly, we should be guided by the

principle enunciated by Engels and most recently elaborated by Malenkov, that the artist should strive for realistic portrayal through depicting the typical, that is, the representative. Surely, you don't want your readers to believe that the wardens of our jails have a representative type in your novel. Will the fires of resentment against the martyrdom of Sacco and Vanzetti be kept alive with inspiring meaning for the struggles of today and tomorrow by characterizing as decent the very warden who delivered Sacco and Vanzetti to their death chair? In this instance, too, there is violation of the unity of politics and art.

4) I come now to the central issue—the role of our working class in the struggle to save Sacco and Vanzetti from death, as reflected in your book. The working-class component, *vis à vis* the petty bourgeois, is very spottily rendered. Thus, while you give us the full-length portrait of the Professor of Criminal Law, as well as individual chapters devoted to the University President, the Warden, and the Judge, there is no such focus on a proletarian leader or spokesman defending Sacco and Vanzetti. The working class is not dramatically realized in your book as an important part—the important part—of the defense movement. This lack is made the more glaring by the total absence of reference to the Communist Party as participant in the Sacco-Vanzetti defense! When I mentioned this to you, you answered that the Party had not participated until seven months before the execution. Even if that were so, since your story deals with the last days of Sacco and Vanzetti, why should not the "seven months" of Communist Party activity

have been mentioned? But as a historical novelist, writing of a major event in your own lifetime and your own country, you need to know all the facts. The Communist Party led the big demonstrations in the latter years of the 1920-1929 Sacco and Vanzetti campaign. The Communist Party and organizations it influenced, especially the International Labor Defense (ILD), raised much money for the defense. The Union Square demonstration of the night of the execution was called by the Emergency Committee, which was set up by the ILD, and whose secretary was Rose Baron. Communists were active from the beginning of the struggle, notably in Boston. No authentic history, novelized or otherwise, of that campaign can omit such militant leading participants as Fred Biedenkapp, Mother Bloor, and Art Shields. In the front lines with them, in the Workers Defense Union, was Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, who immensely broadened the activities of the Sacco-Vanzetti Defense Committee. She extended the Committee's connections with Boston liberals, helped to get the American Civil Liberties Union into the campaign, and above all, carried the case to the trade unions. Her role in the defense was tremendous. Yet she too is not mentioned in your book. Likewise the international agitation, especially in the latter years of the case, was led by the Communist Parties abroad, about whom there is complete silence in the book.

5) Now, as to your treatment of Sacco and Vanzetti: Let me repeat here, that Sacco does not come into his own in your novel. His poor command of English appears to become a justification for not depicting him, for

having Vanzetti speak for both. Sacco becomes, therefore, a mere shadow, as dim as he is mute. Vanzetti did not die for both, Sacco died too. And Sacco, who wrote that immortal letter to his son, Sacco, the class-conscious, militant worker, upon whom the vindictive ruling class descended with all its fury, is hardly in the book entitled *The Passion of Sacco and Vanzetti*.

You did better by Vanzetti. The scene in the prison cell is creditable and inspiring. Vanzetti's personality comes through most sympathetically. He is a person one wants to fight for, to hold among the living. His humanism and essential wisdom shine out from every word he utters. Yet, at times his thoughts and words are made to verge on the mystical. This, at least, is how the reading affects me. It is as though in attempting to make him worthy of defense by liberals, you soften the steel in the man.

In one chapter you put a request into his mouth for a revolver. I pointed out to you that you thus negate the thesis of your book and bolster the executioners' claim that he was a "gunman." The argument that he must be shown through this as a man who wanted to "go down fighting," can only be characterized as adventurism, which can harm the struggle against frame-ups today, as well as the truth about Vanzetti.

I have gone to this length, Howard, in order to clarify fully, in writing, what I feel about your book. Though you acknowledged agreement with my main points, you spoke of making the corrections in a way that caused me to think you considered the criticisms minor. Thus, you did not even see the need for one chapter devoted to

the role of the Communist Party, but felt you could weave it in somehow. Actually, I am convinced that your book requires an overhauling, not mere patching, to implement the ideas here set forth, with which (except for the points on Judge Brandeis and the "revolver") you expressed concurrence. I look forward to reading the revised text, which you indicated you would have me read.

Dear Howard, I sometimes think that you understate in your own mind the role that you play as an advanced cultural force in our country and throughout the world. Thus, you do not sufficiently recognize your social responsibility as author, as a Marxist writer. Often in the past, as also the other evening, you have held up the high, unqualified praise of your writings by reviewers in other countries as evidence that our critical analyses of your works represented an injustice toward you. By this you implied that our Marxist standards of literary criticism are of "no account," that for true Marxist evaluation of your novels you

had to look beyond these shores. However, Marxist-Leninist principles of literary and art criticism are universal, allowing, of course, for errors in their application. Further, there is an understandable difference in approach and emphasis between reviews of your writings in this country and elsewhere. For the progressive world, you represent a symbol of the other America, and your works are viewed in this general light for their libertarian, humanist themes, and their basic message. It is here, the country where you live and create, at the "point of production," that your writings should receive their full critical analysis. Such criticism, insofar as the most responsible people are concerned, I assure you, approaches your works and you their author with deep admiration and with comradely pride in your achievements.

Accept these words, I beg you, as written in the spirit of friendly counsel and of admiration for your self-dedication as artist and citizen to the cause of freedom.

JERRY.

JUST PUBLISHED!

MARK TWAIN
SOCIAL CRITIC

By Philip S. Foner

ALTHOUGH few American literary figures have been more discussed in biographies and critical essays than Mark Twain, this is the first time that a comprehensive study of his social concepts and criticism has been published. Because Dr. Foner has had access to a vast collection of unpublished manuscripts, he has been able in this valuable study, as never before, to trace Mark Twain's progress and development as a social critic of the highest calibre, to bring to the reader a deeper understanding of his great compassion for mankind, and to reveal him as a profound thinker rather than merely a simple, happy humorist and writer of children's books.

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