The American **Socialist**

MARCH 1957 35 CENTS

An Analysis:

The Communist Convention

Toward a Socialist Revival

by Joseph Starobin

J. A. Wayland and the "Appeal to Reason"

by Fred D. Warren

Union Issues: In Auto, Steel and AFL-CIO

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

How Educate for Socialism?

I have seen only your January issue, and was especially pleased with your excellent reply to Dr. Du Bois, and Bert Cochran's speech, "Foundations of a New American Radicalism." It is of course difficult to judge by just one issue; I therefore enclose my subscription order.

There are a few pressing questions I would like to see answered. I agree with much of your criticism of the splinter socialist sects and the Communist Party. You also speak of the need for a new type of socialist organization. Is there such an organization or are you planning to form one?

I also wonder how you propose to educate the American people about socialism. Your publication appears to be written mainly for those of us who are already convinced of the need for socialism, and I have no doubt there are many of us. You can do a tremendous service in clarifying socialist thought and uniting us. But there is also a crying need for a magazine, pamphlets, etc., to convince the people of our country of the need for socialism. People are expressing many doubts about the present wage structure, unfair taxation, and the general lack of concern of politicians for the public welfare. We have the answers, but what are we doing to give those answers to the people?

I hope your efforts and/or the transformation of the Communist Party will help to disassociate socialism from the undemocratic practices of the Soviet Union and that socialism will once again become respectable.

L. D. H. *Elmsford, N.Y.*

Not Black and White

Your reply to W. E. B. Du Bois was good. I want to compliment you on it. You are still long on theory and short on facts, but it is so much better than the mill-run of articles on the subject that it is real refreshing. At least you don't insist on picturing everything in black and white. . . .

You simply cannot lead people to where they don't want to go. At least you cannot do it for long. Not any longer than it takes them to find out you are doublecrossing them. If the socialists could only find out that little fact they could get somewhere. Debs knew it, and that is why De Leon hated and fought him and refused to join the Socialist Party. That is why De Leon never lost a debate or won an election.

Perhaps it would help if we could think of socialism as a road, a direction, instead of as a system or a place. I doubt if the human race will ever arrive at a spot where it can stop and say: "This is it, we have arrived." In my book there will always be new horizons to beckon us on and to challenge us to greater endeavor.

E. M. G. *Arkansas*

Your readers will be interested in this little item in the Greensboro *Daily News*, N. C., written by Prof. Oscar Coffin of the University of North Carolina. Writing about Harry Golden, editor and publisher of the *Carolina Israelite*, a Southern newspaper for Jewish readers, he says:

"*Again I'm Beholden to Harry Golden.* Don't know how you feel about it, but I like my Israelites to have a bit of guile in them.

"Harry Golden's suggestion that our current integration problem can be handled by doing away with seats in public schools is the best bit of preaching I've met since the Supreme Court undertook to desegregate us.

"We've already integrated vertically, says Harry. No trouble comes from rubbing elbows at bank or post office windows or in shopping centers. It is the sitting down together that bothers, so why not remain standing in the schoolroom?

"I don't reckon the General Assembly in its special session will pay Harry any mind; but his proposal makes more sense than telling the Supreme Court we simply will not take it sitting down.

"Anyhow, I am glad we've got living, moving and having his being among us the editor of the *Carolina Israelite*: A man so civilized as to be able to smile at or even chuckle at the joke the bigot is playing on himself."

A Friend *Charlotte, N.C.*

Baltimore Study Group

We are a small group of college-age people who have formed a study group in Baltimore to study socialism. Our main interest is to educate ourselves, and our program depends on the month-to-month wishes of the group members. We are non-sectarian, informal, and, we hope, democratic. We read and discuss books of the group's choosing, and sponsor public lectures when possible. We invite the interest of anyone. Those wishing more information should write me at 3507 White Chapel Road, Baltimore 15, Md., or call Forest 7-0760.

A. Robert Kaufman *Baltimore*

I am sure we must present an American approach to socialism. The people of the USA will not even consider any other, and any one who thinks they will is living in a fool's paradise. . . .

I am asking you to make my paper (*The American Liberator*) known to your readers. Subscriptions are $1; the address is The Gallant Herald Press, 9 Sherman Ave., New York 40, N.Y.

Reverend Clarence E. Duffy *New York*

Emphasis Toward Action

Since coming in contact with your excellent publication, my interest in contemporary thought has moved considerably toward an expanded viewpoint. I have become so much engrossed in assimilating and trying to win my friends to the great articles that have appeared in the *American Socialist*, that an emphasis toward action had to come about.

I'm a college student in Milwaukee here and I'm interested in starting a student socialist group.

R. W. C. *Milwaukee*

I like the attitude and approach of the *American Socialist* very much, and its selection of material designed to pave the way to a better social order.

If only more people would think and use the subject matter presented in the *American Socialist* as a basis for their thinking, I would have more faith in the ultimate survival of democracy.

A. B. R. *Ohio*

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CONTENTS

UNIONS ON THE DEFENSIVE 3

THE COMMUNIST CONVENTION by Bert Cochran 5

TOWARD A SOCIALIST REVIVAL by Joseph Starobin 8

J. A. WAYLAND AND THE "APPEAL TO REASON" by Fred D. Warren 12

THE "DUES REVOLT" IN STEEL by Harry Braverman 16

DIFFICULT DAYS FOR AUTO LABOR by A Special Correspondent 18

BOOK REVIEW 21

The American Socialist

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Unions on the Defensive

THE labor unions are fat, rich, and complacent, but things don't appear to be in first-class shape fourteen months after the AFL-CIO merger. The Miami Beach meeting of the Executive Council could boast that the united labor federation has remained glued together as a top proposition, but it could report little else in the way of progress. It is not the employers who are fighting off organization campaigns in the open-shop industries. It is the labor movement that is on the defensive against charges of crookedness and racketeering. The American trade unions, traditionally corroded by the infiltration of grafters, panderers, and hoodlums, haven't licked the problem yet.

From the newspapers and airwaves the American public gets a cops-and-robbers picture that is all wrong, and subtly prepares people for anti-labor attacks that may later come. According to this stereotype, here is the government, impartial and fair, interested solely in protecting innocent working men from the depredations of criminals. On one side are the straight-shooting, right-thinking employers, often forced against their will to deal with and pay off crooked labor leaders. On the other side are the labor leaders, many of them honest and clean, but many, alas, the scum of society, hooked up with the underworld. The government moves in to protect the working man and society, cheered by the employers and the honest labor leaders. Those that don't cheer are probably dishonest, or subversive, or both.

It needs no mercurial imagination to discern that this opening gambit of a supposed anti-racketeering investigation carries grievous dangers for labor. For one, the august government is represented not by blind-folded Justice but in the more prosaic figures of dedicated reactionaries like Senators McClellan, Mundt and McCarthy, and we would not go very far astray in assuming that their aim is not to cleanse labor of its thieves, but to utilize the exposure of thieves to smear and undermine labor unions, as such.

The head labor pooh-bahs of the Executive Council understood that they were on the spot, and decided to go along with the Senators and their investigation. They isolated the Teamsters' representative in the vote and united around Meany to hotly protest their virtue. They went further to clean their own skirts by adopting a code designed to eliminate convicts and crooks, they forbade officials from maintaining compromising business connections, and laid down tough rules to guard against graft in welfare funds. To underline their respectability, they threw the Fifth Amendment to the wolves and added a couple of damns against communists and fascists, although no one had accused either of the latter of any guilt in pilfering monies from welfare funds. They had the Laundry, Distillery and Allied Industrial unions (with a reputed combined membership of 170,000) on the carpet and gave the three ninety days to clean house or face suspension.

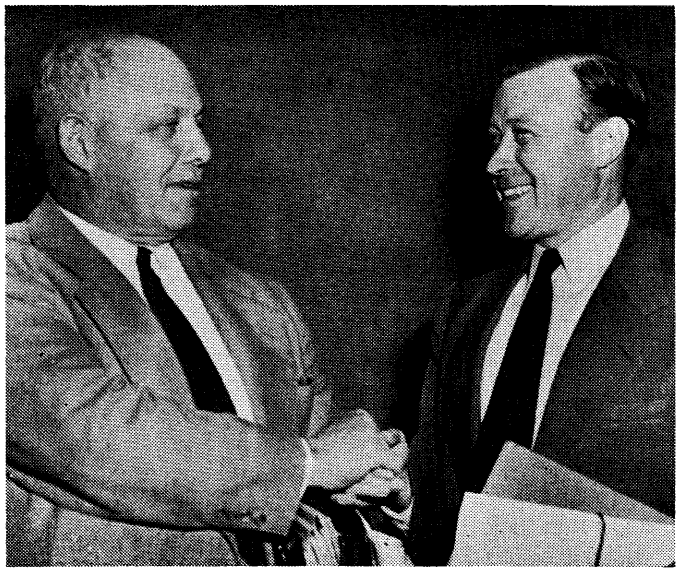
CARL Stellato, President of Ford Local 600, was the only known union figure who denounced the Congressional investigation. He certainly was on firm ground in suspicioning the motives of these "enemies of labor." His further statement—"I am quite certain that labor can clean its own house"—is of a more dubious character. The question naturally arises that if labor can clean its own house, why hasn't it done so through these past several years?

This brings us to the ground fundamentals of so-called labor racketeering. Why is it so persistent and so difficult to eradicate? The answer is, because the mores, values, and folkways of lush American capitalism breed racketeering as a swamp breeds mosquitoes. A moment's thought is sufficient to demonstrate that racketeers could not maintain themselves for a day in the leadership of unions if they were not backed up by powerful forces of this society.

For instance, the Teamsters Union, as many other old AFL unions especially in the service industries, habitually organizes workers by signing "sweetheart agreements" with the employers. This means they sell the bosses cheap labor protection in return for which the bosses sign a union contract and herd their employees into the unions, often checking off dues out of the workers' pay checks. In other words, the employers of a whole group of trades enter into a gentlemen's agreement with pliable labor leaders to maintain a conservative business brand of unionism and prop up union leaders that suit that kind of ticket. Naturally, only bluenoses would think of complaining if these labor leaders, in turn, proceed to better themselves by rifling union funds, paying themselves enormous salaries and expenses, and setting up business ventures in the field of their unionism.

Our revered Senators are making pious noises now for their own reasons, but just a couple of months ago, the testimonial banquet for James Hoffa was attended by a list of dignitaries from the business and political worlds that would have done honor to a U.S. Supreme Court judge, and several years ago, a similar blowout was tendered to "King" Ryan of the Longshore Union. They knew all about this technique in ancient Rome: You first corrupt the labor representatives, then you keep them pliant with threats of exposure.

The crude type of racketeering flourishes chiefly in the older AFL setups, primarily in the service, trucking, and building trades. "Sweetheart agreements" and the individual business-agent type of bargaining are unusual in the manufacturing industries and all but unknown in the CIO unions. But that doesn't mean that these unions are unaffected by the cynicism and greed of American business society. There is a line of distinction between the huge salary and expense account of a David MacDonald from the Steel Union and the legalized plunder of a



PROBLEMS OF UNITY: George Meany and Walter Reuther shook hands on a durable unification a year ago, but many problems, some of them in the form of Dave Beck (above) and associates, remain to plague the merger.

Dave Beck from the Teamsters, but that line is subtle in the extreme. There is a harder line between the business ventures of Lewis's Mine Union and the private business fliers of a Hoffa and Beck, but once the partnership of labor and capital within a beneficent capitalism is accepted as gospel, feathering one's own nest becomes accepted practice, to be pursued in strict accordance with union by-laws, if possible, or by stretching the rules where one must.

The Executive Council's cleanup campaign will therefore be no less and no more effective than the periodic reform drives to clean up vice and corruption in our major cities. Even small advances are not to be disdained, however. In this spirit, the anti-racketeering code will receive the wholehearted backing of active unionists everywhere who will seek to implement it in their own situations. But the basic guarantee against corruption is not contained in the Executive Council's code. It is an active and vigilant membership which democratically controls the affairs of the union. Democracy is a better and more potent weapon than all the Executive Council's breast-beating and pronunciamentos.

ON the plane of union politics, the Council decision represents an impressive victory for the Reuther forces. No one should conclude from this that the Teamsters are as isolated as the vote on racketeering would suggest. The Council members all felt they had to declare themselves publicly to be on the side of the angels. But the Teamsters remain a powerhouse, what with their many bilateral alliances with other unions and their strategic position in the nation's economy. They will get plenty of support from numerous allies.

The faction fight is a recrudescence of the craft-vs-industrial conflict transmuted onto higher ground of modern vs old-style unionism. Under it are subsumed the building trades' and other craft-jurisdiction battles against the industrial unions, old buccaneering business-agent unionism vs modern centralized corporate unionism represented by the CIO, toward which a number of the big AFL unions are also evolving. The struggle between the two sides may and probably will go on for years in one form and another, but it must be presumed that the eventual victory, or at least, preponderance, lies with the Reuther forces, because they represent the trend of the times in American unionism.

Outside of the racketeering issue, the Executive Council accomplished little of note. The report on its projected white-collar organization was crowded into its closing hours, and given the present lackadaisical mood of the union movement, the chances of the new drive do not appear very bright. The organizing record since the merger in December 1955 stands at about the zero mark. The united labor movement has played no role in the historic battle in the South for integration, while some of the southern locals have given aid and comfort to the racists and the White Councils. The Southern textile drive is stillborn. The dues paying membership was 14½ million a year ago and the figure is exactly the same today. The standing offer of the CIO unions to put up $4 million for new organization if other large unions match the contribution still has no takers. Jurisdictional squabbles continue as before (although the Federation office claims that next year's figures ought to show an improvement.) And more NLB elections are being lost to "no union" than before the unity.

IT is not just conflicting jurisdictional claims that are holding up organization work. The whole spirit of bureaucratic smugness and inertia militates against it. The middle-aged staff of well-heeled "pork-choppers" doesn't have the stomach for the hard battling that any major organization campaign would entail, and there isn't enough pressure from below to cut through the hard crust on top.

While full employment lasts and the big unions are able to wrest wage concessions and fringe benefits, the labor movement will continue its course of bustling inactivity and calculated inanition. It will muddle through. When the consequences of war economy and automation stare it in the face, new strong winds will start to blow.

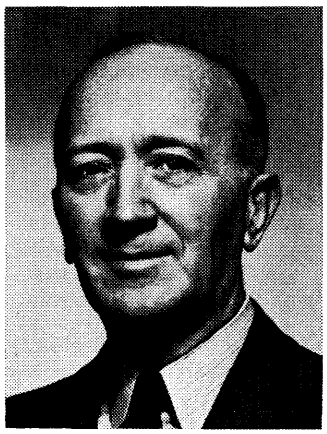
What happened at the recent Communist Party convention? How was the Gates-Foster fight resolved? Did the rebels fumble the ball?

The Communist Convention

by Bert Cochran

THERE are two different ways one can look at the recent Communist convention. If you compare the party with what it was a year ago, before the discussion started, you have to say that it made a lot of progress in democratizing itself, in breaking the cult of dogma, and in grappling with some of the problems facing American radicals today. Certainly, it has moved further along this line than any other Communist Party in the Western world. If, however, you view the convention from the standpoint of what is necessary if Communists are to play a role in American politics again, then you have to say that the American Communist Party is going nowhere fast. The big moment came with the convention that climaxed almost a year of frenzied debate—and the rebels fumbled the ball.

Shakespeare wrote: "There is a tide in the affairs of men, which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune. Omitted, all the voyages of their life is bound in shallows and in miseries. We must take the current when it serves, or lose our ventures." It is doubtful that anything the Gates group could have done at this late date would have led straight to fortune. But they might have got themselves set for some fruitful labor. Instead, they succumbed to their fears of split and gave up their fight in favor of a bloc with Dennis and his supporters. The bargain may prove about as sound as that of the Kansas farmer who surrendered his wallet for a half interest in the Brooklyn Bridge. What the rebels needed of their leaders at this convention, far above caucus politics and combinations, was a passion for truth, and the faith and courage to raise aloft a new clean banner to which others could rally. The rebels didn't get that kind of leadership. The disintegration of the party, whose membership by now numbers considerably less than half of its official 20,000, will, from all reports, continue apace.



OPPOSING LEADERS: William Z. Foster (left) and John Gates led opposing factions at the Communist Party convention, in the first case of a serious and prolonged difference since the twenties.

The present crisis started a year ago with the publication of speeches by Soviet leaders denouncing Stalin as a dictator and his rule as arbitrary and violent. The effect was devastating. It was as if the College of Cardinals called in a devout Christian monk to inform him that the late Pope, whose ground he literally worshipped, was actually a creature of Satan. The Communist Party, already in an advanced state of demoralization and disintegration, began to tremble and shake all over like one seized with the ague. Letters poured in to the *Daily Worker,* bitter, hysterical, denouncing, berating, anguishedly asking for explanations, pitifully seeking reassurances. The leaders were themselves bewildered and stunned. Finally, after two months of this chaotic babel, they tried to direct it into channels with their National Committee session at the end of April. But the report of national secretary Eugene Dennis, rather than dousing only fed the flames of discontent and rebellion.

DENNIS' report was a composite of the main criticisms of official line that had been privately floating around party ranks for a couple of years. These added up to the concept that the party's troubles were due to a false left-sectarian policy. As proof was adduced the party's exaggeration of the war danger on any and every occasion, the hallucination that fascism was rearing its ugly head every Monday morning, and that a new 1929 depression lurked around every corner. These misreadings of the American scene were held responsible for a host of bad mistakes: The pushing of the fight inside the CIO over foreign policy which eventually led to expulsion of all Communist-led unions; the formation of the Wallace Progressive Party in 1948, which action further separated the party from the unions; a bad attitude toward the NAACP which estranged it from the Negro people. Add up these instances and many others, and you had the explanation for the party's isolation and decline.

The diagnosis of the disease suggested the cure. The party had to promote united front activities and associate itself with the existing labor and Negro movements. This new approach was wrapped up in the strategy of plumping for a people's anti-monopoly coalition, which in plain English meant that the Communist Party members should dive into the Democratic Party and work within its labor-

ite-liberal wing. The strategy was neatly tied up with what after the Twentieth Congress had overnight become part of the new Communist dogma: The peaceful, parliamentary road to socialism, and the non-inevitability of war. Finally, in deference to the seething that was going on inside the ranks, Dennis included a few words about developing inner-party democracy and spoke vaguely about the possibility of organizing sometime in the future a new broader party of socialism.

AS mentioned, Dennis' post-Khrushchev New Look didn't take. Regardless of the presence or absence of merit in some of the propositions, the report had two glaring defects that condemned it to futility. First, it ignored the root cause of the trouble, that the Communist Party had been swinging like a pendulum from one extreme to another in response to the demands of the Russians; that the very approach now condemned as left sectarian had got started with the Duclos letter of 1946. Not surprisingly, the membership, slugged over the head by the Russian revelations, felt that Dennis' proposals weren't hitting on the main key. As for the Democratic Party strategy, it suffered from a different deficiency. Not that the membership wasn't disoriented enough to try anything —it was; but the new dispensation had already been in effect for at least two to four years without producing any startling, or even recordable results. So, while most continued to go along with the idea, nobody could get terribly excited about it as the answer to the party's crisis.

Things continued to churn as before, and then a month later came the publication of the secret Khrushchev speech—and temporarily everything went up in smoke. The *Daily Worker* people saw the blinding light that until the issue of independence from the Russians was settled, the CP didn't have a chance, and there was precious little sense in trying to solve other matters. Somewhere along this time what is known as the Gates group began to harden. The rebels started to pound away in the paper and at meetings for a more independent and critical approach, and it seemed as if the issue would at last be joined. But the leap ahead seemed beyond the powers of the mortals at hand, and in September the National Committee again unanimously submitted to the party a Draft Resolution which in essentials repeated Dennis' report of five months ago.

This time, the plastered-over unity was blown up by William Z. Foster, who was apparently more principled about his Stalinism than others were about their independence. He had been trying to ride out the storm with purely verbal concessions, but he now became deeply disturbed at the emergence of the Gates tendency and at the general direction of events with their implied repudiation of his own leadership. He changed his vote to "No" on the resolution, launched a fierce counter-offensive against what he called the "New Browderism" in authentic Stalinist style, and called on all paladins of the clan to rally 'round. Gates was compelled to present his platform in the November *Political Affairs* in reply, and the spurious unity concocted around the Draft Resolution had evaporated once again. On November 4 Soviet troops re-entered Budapest spreading death and destruction and

A Resignation Statement Read at the Convention

The following statement was read by a delegate at the close of the recent Communist Party convention, and was sent to the American Socialist *for publication.*

* * *

THIS Convention has only advanced far enough toward independence to make the party useful to the Voice of America as a stick with which to beat Communist parties abroad. It has not advanced far enough to be acceptable to the American working class or to the American people at large. This was put in simplest words the other evening by an industrial worker here in rejecting nomination to the National Committee offered by the Gates group. He said that he wanted to spend his time fighting the capitalist system, not fighting Communists.

This Convention, having patched up unity between two irreconcilable viewpoints, has failed in what appears to be its very success. The full-independence element will be a distinct minority in the full National Committee of 60. This is because the most convinced adherents of the Gates viewpoint will not re-appear at the reconvened State Convention to vote for New York's 11 members of the National Committee, and the same thing will happen elsewhere. Of my section's delegation to the State Convention, there were five all-out supporters of the Gates position. One, an effective seven-day-a-week community worker and party force, refused even to attend the State Convention when the compromise policy of the Gates leaders became clear, and has left the party. Two more left after the State Convention.

Thus, after the constitution of the full new National Committee, the Foster-Dennis forces will be in full command. These two men lost all possibility of respect for this party among the people from which I spring, the Jewish people, when they didn't open their mouths against the contemptuous and chauvinist action of *Pravda* in deleting from Dennis' article on the Stalin cult his words on the extermination of Jewish cultural figures.

These are leaders whose refusal to condemn Soviet intervention in Hungary on November 4 is interpreted by the American people to mean that they would favor the Soviet Army over the American working class should history ever bring those two forces into a contest for the future of our country. The American people will never regard as independent a party marked in the slightest degree by the presence of such leaders, or by half-way statements on such policies. Yet that is the future assured by this Convention.

I BELIEVE the Gates views contain a potential as great for America as do those of Gomulka for Polish and world socialism. I believe that an organization founded on those views could, even today under conditions of prosperity, win a hearing for socialism, a hearing that can never be won by an organization whose name and form are irrevocably associated in the minds of the American people with dictatorship over the working class and socialism at the point of a bayonet. This is why a number of delegates, including myself, and including some well-known figures, are leaving the party at the close of this Convention.

I appeal publicly to those who first formulated the views to which I adhere, to form a new organization.

BRIEFING: Reporters covering Communist convention at Chateau Gardens in lower Manhattan had to get their news from Simon Gerson (shown here talking to newsmen) and other assigned spokesmen for the organization, which fears reprisals against members and delegates. Releases, resolutions, and briefings were substituted for free entry into the convention for this reason. A number of observers representing pacifist and civil liberties organizations were invited, and attended the sessions.

the American Communist Party was seized with a new convulsion. Dennis, who had been doing some fancy politicking and straddling, lined up solidly with Foster, now that the chips were down on the Hungarian issue, and soon he and the Gates people were merrily tossing brickbats at each other.

IT was in these weeks that Gates and his associates explained most clearly what they stood for. The December 8 statement of the N.Y. State Committee Majority codified the Gates platform and apparently the decks were being cleared to appeal for delegate support at the forthcoming convention. They wanted, they said, clear-cut independence from the Russians without any ifs, ands or buts. They proposed to dump the theology and *mystique* of Marxism-Leninism that had been bred over the years, and use the Marxist method in sensible fashion. They craved democracy and an end to the stifling bureaucratic atmosphere, and so, in order not to have the question drowned in double-talk, they wanted the formulas of democratic centralism and monolithic unity abandoned forthwith. They finally proposed in effect that the CP recognize the facts of life, drop the pretension of being a party and the vanguard of the working class, and frankly admit that it is a political association which has the aim of helping to create a broader more inclusive socialist movement in this country.

This was a fine platform as far as it went. Where the Gates people didn't do so good was in dropping every now and then some phrase, or cryptic remark, or aside, which had an uncertain connotation, without bothering to elaborate what they meant, and most likely, without even being sure of where they stood on the question. To further muddle matters, Foster and Dennis both swore along with the Gates group for the "people's anti-monopoly coalition," and both damned with equal fervor left sectarianism. The average party citizen consequently couldn't make out too clearly where Gates and his friends were trying to lead him, or whether they knew for sure themselves.

But whatever the lacks of the platform, it was the performance that was most inadequate and unsatisfactory. If the unity around the eclectic Draft Resolution confused matters last September, re-establishment of this same unity around pretty much the same Draft Resolution was downright incomprehensible after Hungary and the polemical exchanges with Foster and Dennis. The Gates group again surrendered its platform at the convention—in favor of what? The alliance with Dennis blocked Foster's and the Russians' attack. But why was that especially important? A group organized on behalf of a program that doesn't fight for its program is like a knife without a blade. Where are they going now, and what do they do next?

SOME have observed that the Gates people have to govern their conduct by the tempo and developments inside the Communist Party, that they dare not run too far ahead of the membership. Such arguments might have sounded more persuasive before their performance at the convention. It is doubtful that the Gates group will be in as strong a position again to wage a fight. Their convention retreat must have demoralized their following, and puts a question mark over their future as a group.

The new National Committee of twenty is split three different ways and probably no side will command a majority after the forty additional members are selected by their districts. In the circumstances, the continuance of the convention bloc with Dennis is dependent on maintenance of an ambiguous position. The Gates people have the assurance that as soon as they want to renew the fight for their platform, Dennis will re-unite with Foster.

It may very well be that all this is a transient arrangement and the wordy, ambivalent resolutions will explode in the faces of their authors with the next critical event. Meanwhile, precious time will have gone by and the party will have continued to hemorrhage. It is difficult to be positive about these things, but it looks like the strategic moment to salvage something important out of the Communist Party has passed.

Radicalism today: The foundations of the old leftism examined with an eye towards the possibilities and premises of a revival of socialism in the United States.

Toward a Socialist Revival

by Joseph Starobin

NO subject is being more widely discussed these days than the rebuilding of an American socialist movement. In Detroit, Chicago, New York, Los Angeles and San Francisco, spokesmen of widely divergent socialist views have shared the platform at meetings attended by an impressive cross-section of radical opinion. All sorts of people are talking to each other who would hardly, in past years, have found themselves in the same room. It is being discovered that a bond of mutual regard exists between those who parted ways on the great issues which divided the Left since the New Deal days. Perhaps a score of universities have seen students and faculty members welcome socialist theorists as more than curios. A whole new library of books will soon be available, each author working to achieve a fresh understanding of contemporary capitalism. The monologues are turning into debates and cross-discussions in half a dozen periodicals, in addition to the several which call themselves socialist.

Probably most important of all, literally thousands of American radicals are going through personal programs of re-study, trying to separate the wheat from the chaff of their lives and times. Often this takes organized forms. My own experience is that hundreds of well-defined groups of socialist-minded citizens are functioning throughout the country. They may be working people in a given plant or industry, dealing with the guts of the class struggle. Or they may be residents of the same neighborhood, simply discussing current events, including the arts, the sciences, problems of ethics and culture. Most of these people share a community of thought and experience; in many cases, such groups give general guidance to the participation of their members in organizational life far beyond the Left, without being clubs or branches of any party.

Joseph Starobin, journalist, wrote "Eyewitness in Indo-China" and "Paris to Peking," and is at present occupied with another book about American capitalism and socialism.

I do not mean to paint the picture in rosier terms than it deserves. But there is a real ferment at work. Most of it may be the twilight of something we have all known, the dying embers flickering up in the strong winds of a stormy year. It may, however, form the basis for a socialist revival, or at least a transitional stage in that direction. Much depends on clarifying the stance, the ideas, and the forms of such an effort.

THE most serious divergences exist, of course, with respect to those countries and movements abroad which have been considered to be building socialist societies. Many of these are the inheritance of the past, differences which arose out of conditions that no longer prevail or are not likely to come again.

For example, I doubt very much whether an American socialist movement can be built in the spirit of the "ten days that shook the world" of John Reed's time. An international organization was formed in that era, stemming from the shock of the collapse of the Socialist International. Its premise was the more-or-less imminent "world revolution." It was taken for granted that because the Russian Bolsheviks seemed to have solved the problem of getting a socialist society going in their own particular country, they had the wisest council for all other lands, no matter how different in history and structure. All that lies in an irretrievable past. There may be a considerable body of Americans who live in a "Comintern" which is only the figment of their imagination and their nostalgia. Most of these are in any case remote from present-day American realities.

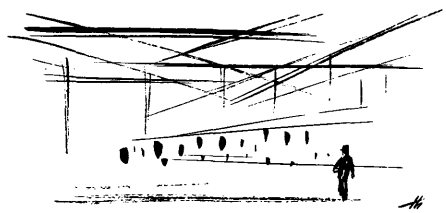
There is a variant of this un-reality, which predominated in the heyday of the American Communist movement, and still lingers on. It was assumed that the Soviet Union constituted the main force in a common battle in which the American Left was a sort of guerrilla group. The guerrillas were not consulted in the over-all strategy of battle; neither were they, to use the oversimplified phrase, "under Moscow's orders." Their inner premise was that any given guerrilla group might be expendable, even if considerable progress were being made in its own sector. The changing fortunes of the whole struggle were subject to guesswork, and the views of the Soviet Union—which was assumed to be in tip-top shape and most wisely governed—were divined by guesswork, not consultation. Such a state of mind explains the behavior of American Communists in the crucial period of 1944-45, when the gunfire from a friendly guerrilla force was accepted without question or much investigation. This explains the wanderings in the jungle ever since that time.

The discovery of immense failures and tragedies within the Soviet Union during the whole era when its strategy went unquestioned therefore came as an immense shock. Anna Louise Strong, in her recent booklet, finds the self-criticism of the Twentieth Congress largely unbelieveable, and many other prominent figures in American socialist ranks prefer not to believe that which compels them to come to different terms with their past. Others remain confused over the relations between main forces and guerrillas. Howard Fast, crying out in anguish, sounds as though he is resigning from the Russian Communist

Party of which he was not a member in the first place. His eyes are still fixed on some place else, even when he must turn away.

IN a way, this mood is the mirror-image, the blood relation of that position among some American socialists who insist the Russian Revolution must somehow be undone. They see it, to use the phrase of Sidney Lens,* as a "counterfeit revolution." Just what these friends would do about the titanic changeover in China is a little less clear. But they are intensely dissatisfied with Isaac Deutscher, who believes that irreversible processes are at work in the Soviet Union, even if fitful and uneven, which stem from the very fact of its industrialization and the emergence of a culturally advancing working population. For Deutscher, the larger drama of change within the Soviet Union is more important than the ham performance or stubborn resistance of any of the individual actors. "The appalling Mr. Deutscher," says Irving Howe in a recent issue of *Dissent*. He would problably say the same of the brilliant study by Jean-Paul Sartre in the January, 1957 *Les Temps Modernes,* where Sartre explores the reasons why "Stalin's ghost" still walks, without despairing of socialism as a reality in Soviet life.

In trying to define an attitude which may contribute to clarity if not unity on the American Left, an historical and relativistic approach seems to me the essence of the socialist method. The chief consequence of the very great changes of the past twenty years is that, if peace can be maintained, all peoples now have the prospect of advancing in a socialist direction, at their own pace, on their own terms, and favored by the new circumstances which their own activity generates. Many peoples have contributed to this change. The colonial peoples are making it impossible for American capitalism to restore the old empires or to inherit them. The American people have helped by their defense of democratic rights, and by the technological and political advances which force the invasion of socializing tendencies even within the hard



shell of capitalist relations. The Soviet Union (and China on its own) has certainly contributed decisively. In so doing, it now becomes possible for the Soviet people to unwind the coiled springs of their inner development. The new situation in itself makes the Soviet and Chinese experiences more unique, but less relevant to the specific paths which the peoples of the West can now take.

Our foremost problem is to maintain and extend an international environment of pacific competition between rival systems and their political and intellectual intercourse with each other, by which both can be modified most rapidly and least painfully. Socialists share with non-socialists the necessity of maintaing such an environment, but there is an aspect of it which only they, as socialists, can develop. It is to see the truth about the socialist countries in a historical, not an absolute fashion, and to tell that truth and behave within its framework.

THE era of the leadership of any one socialist country or party is over. Any attempt to maintain such a leadership runs counter to the real interest of socialist advance in countries which can no longer be treated as the areas of expendable guerrilla activity but important terrains of socialist development. Democratic change within the Soviet Union cannot be brought about, as it must be for its own sake as well as everyone's, by preaching from afar that the Russian Revolution be un-done, nor by a mechanical subservience, or even a system of formal consultations in which the essence of an outmoded relationship continues to operate.

Special ties of genuine alliance may be helpful among states of similar structures and policies, but when extended to movements in the capitalist world, especially in the United States, these ties are more harmful than useful. They make for a double illusion. No American Left can flourish in that framework and hence it would contribute little to the general trend of world development. The peoples of other countries would be kept in a deception, and subject to a rude awakening.

The predominant problem of the past has been dependence. That is why American socialists need to declare their independence. This necessity does not have to be justified because American workers have deep anti-Soviet prejudices which a long period of pacific competition, if the socialist world advances, may dissipate, nor is it the result of the ideological pressure of American capitalism. Most of us have resisted that pressure as well as the socialists of other lands. Our necessity is governed by the principle which is inherent in the new set of world relationships.

A friend of mine writes from California deriding this concept of "detachment." How can you be detached from a third of humanity, he asks? My answer is that, with Lincoln, we believe "the strongest bond of human sympathy, outside of the family relation should be one uniting all working people of all nations, and tongues and kindreds." But sympathy does not mean a passionate attachment. It is for the very reason that revolutionary forces abroad—not perfect in themselves, never models for us, and subject to changes which they themselves can and must bring about—helped to shape a new state of affairs, that we have a better chance of grappling with our problems, giving battle with American capitalism.

THESE problems were not solvable by the illusions and stupidities of a "world general staff," whose blueprints could never be followed. They were not solvable in the posture of "guerrillas." They are not solvable by "undoing" the Russian Revolution. Neither are they solvable by that escapism which denies the immense cost to everyone of the Stalinist path, nor which, in its latter-day form, tends to deny the Stalin phenomenon at all.

* A World in Revolution, by Sidney Lens, Praeger.

The most serious shock of the past year did not lie so much in the Soviet self-criticism. It arose from the Soviet hesitation to pursue its implications frankly and boldly, and this was mainly responsible for the Hungarian catastrophe. It comes from the attempt to backwater, to hold the differing elements of a world movement together on unreal foundations whereas it can only make its way if the most important parts of the movement—especially those which have yet to realize their great potential—stand on their own feet and learn to walk again. A sympathetic, critical detachment of American socialists toward other countries and parties is part of the maturity we must acquire if we lay claim to leadership in a nation which is no marginal or secondary factor of humanity, but a primary and vital member of it.

Harvey Goldberg and William Appleman Williams, in their newly published book,* point out that American radicals are now coming face to face with "their most promising opportunity of the twentieth century," for "no American radicalism could arise and become effective unless and until the United States found itself forced to choose between, on the one hand, a war that threatened it with devastation, and on the other, a reorganization of American society." The most hopeful feature of all the talk, the parleys, the re-study, of the past year lies in the deep conviction that we all need to know much more of American reality in order to help shape a reorganization of American society. This is the durable, the irresistible tendency. It was poignantly expressed in a letter to the *Daily Worker* last July, which spoke of a "longing for returning to our own backyard." Most widely recognized is the fact that there is no Aladdin's lamp, which if properly rubbed, with simultaneous incantations to Marxism-Leninism, produces a genie with all the answers. Marxism is itself developed and altered to the degree that it is creatively employed. The real issue, in re-appraising American reality, will inevitably involve a re-appraisal of what socialism is.

The relation of democracy to socialism has to be reassessed. It may be that in the new context of world relations, the powers of the state in a developed capitalist society with a deep and firmly defended democratic tradition can in fact be used for socialist transitions quite differently than in under-developed countries with a predominantly feudal past. There are problems of a moral and ethical character: problems of the limits and abuses of power, and the checks and balances to power, in the democratic operation of a highly-industrialized society. These were not appreciated in Russia forty years ago. The Chinese are far more sensitive to such matters, and in this respect, Americans may find surprising answers. A great part of the answer will lie in asking the right questions.

AT a discussion the other night, another friend of mine lamented the "decline of socialist consciousness" since the thirties. Perhaps what he fails to see is the rise of a much deeper democratic consciousness, to which the very activity of socialists and communists contributed. This is not a "corruption" of some kind, but the very basis for the extension of democratic consciousness to a socialist level. We can hardly go along with the editors of *Fortune* that this money-crazy, wasteful, nervous society which staggers along by the cannibalism of its human and natural resources is the "permanent revolution." But no socialist will make headway by debunking what has been achieved. The rise of great labor organizations without which modern industry cannot function; the remarkable fight of the Negro people for full equality, with weapons of their own choosing; the wider diffusion of a democratic and humanist culture which asserts itself despite the limitations and idiocies of the mass communications media —this is all the result of the strivings of millions of Americans to "make democracy work."

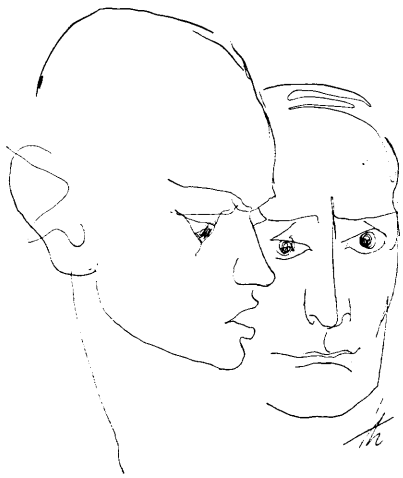
There is a current in American radicalism, expressed by the town atheist, the village iconoclast, the intellectual who thumbs his nose at everything, and while indicting the society, also withdraws from it. Escape is an ancient theme in American life. An industrial society which its people do not control, and which has no greater ideal than money-making, atomizes its members and feeds the urge to escape. This is often noble, but almost always sterile. And it is understandable after a decade in which so many socialist-minded Americans have been uprooted from the productive process, been driven from unions and colleges. But the problem remains of keeping one's eye on the main terrain on which socialists will advance, the terrain of what millions have already accomplished. To be dissolved without a trace in the bubbling currents of American life was always a danger; to be precipitated out of it is equally bad.

THE question inevitably arises: Who are the people that can give substance to a socialist revival, even if only in a transitional manner? The answer lies in a careful study of what actually exists. In this respect, just a word

on the American Communist Party whose recent convention drew the spotlight. At this writing, I have not yet studied its resolutions on key issues, such as economic perspectives, trade union policy, or proposals—if there were any—for American development in the era of peaceful competition. Within their own limits, and the formulas they use, my view is that the Communists did

* American Radicals: Some Problems and Personalities, Monthly Review Press.

make a break with their own past. The demands of the stand-pat wing, insisting on a repudiation of the criticisms on Hungary, banning further debate on changes of name and form, and viewing Marxism-Leninism in fetishistic terms, were not accepted by the convention's majority. Most of the serious newspaper editorialists and political observers recognize the change.



Pravda did so in its own peculiar fashion. The Soviet Communist newspaper (as reported in the *N.Y. Times* for Feb. 17, 1957) hailed the results of the convention, claiming it to have been a defeat for the "waverers" and "deviationists," meaning, we must assume, those who fought for a change and who won it. Such a performance has only one explanation: *Pravda* does not wish its own audience and the public opinion it shapes in many countries to know the extent to which the convention rebuked the reckless and thoughtless intervention of the Soviet leaders, aided by the French Communist Party. This is a piece of unparalleled cynicism. *Pravda* prefers to lie to its own people rather than let them face a serious and unpalatable truth, and thus begin to understand American reality by understanding why the American Communists have to break with the past.

Yet the convention in itself hardly solves the problems of the American Communists. Nor does it clarify what role they may play in a socialist revival. A large group of leaders who had such a heavy responsibility in running their movement to the ground could not re-impose their former policy and bitterly opposed even tentative steps toward a new one. Yet they presented their candidacies for carrying the new one out. They have no intention of giving others a fair chance to steer a much-weakened organization, and then submit the issue to a democratic decision at a later date. Thus, there is a real danger that the "old guard" will win enough of the remaining forty seats in the Communist national committee (in addition to the small number they have in the twenty already elected) and will dominate enough of the state organizations, after the conventions in March, so as to continue the leadership-deadlock of the past ten years. In short, the men who place power above principle—with whom the non-Communist Left has had so much experience—can reverse the course if the supporters of a forward advance fall away at a critical moment. It is therefore a big question whether the Communists will be able to take part in the peaceful competition and the normal evolution of a socialist revival, a question they have to answer.

The answer in full, however, still depends on whether the much larger body of socialist-minded Americans will face up to the challange that has been before them for a long time, and which arises out of the ferment on the Left. I may be wrong, but my own experience convinces me that the largest potential lies among the ex-members of what used to be the most influential organizations on the Left. These are the people I find in the scores of groups, working people and middle-class groups, in many towns and cities. These are the kinds of people who are meeting each other for argument and mutual exploration. The main body of active unionists, both leaders and rank-and-file, who think in socialist terms come from this category. These are the ex-members of the New Deal groupings, the ex-members of the Progressive Party, of the Socialist Party, ex-supporters of the Trotskyist groups, and ex-members of the Communist Party.

GRANTED that a considerable proportion of those who abandoned their former organizational ties did so out of fear, because of changes in their status, because of all the organic transformations which the Left has shared with the country as a whole. But the facts will also show that a very large body of people exists whose convictions have not changed and who are prepared to function in a fashion suitable to their real needs. Most of these people stepped out of their previous organizational ties not because they were wrong about them, but because they were right. I do not say that everyone who remains in a particular organization is hopeless, far from it. But there is an intermediate group, and by far the majority, those who were the "premature" critics of policies in the ranks of the Left which did, it is now generally admitted, lead to its decline. There is much to be learned from them. They have given our common problems a great deal of thought. Those who have come to such views later (myself, for example) have the obligation to listen to them.

No one is going to repeat the past, and there is no prospect or need today for a monolithic, tightly knit political formation which assumes the responsibility of leading everything, and in which the most useful people cannot really function. What is needed is best expressed in the term "Fabian Society," which can inaugurate educational projects, conduct a serious discussion, and stimulate a modest contribution by its members to the struggles which are developing and will develop, and with which no one can compete. Such a Fabian Society may not last forever; it might only save the best of American socialism and restore its prestige so that it can play an important part in whatever new formations must someday arise out of the labor movement, whether as a "third party" or a first party. No one can rush the crystallization of such a group out of the existing ferment. But the time is approaching, unless I am much mistaken, when a realistic and responsible initiative in this direction will bring gratifying results.

About a man who, more than any other, made a great success of socialist journalism in the years before World War I, told by his managing editor and close friend.

J. A. Wayland and the "Appeal to Reason"

by Fred D. Warren

"COME over and see me, Fred. You will be interested in the office of the *Appeal.*"

This brief note on a small letter-head signed "Wayland" was received by me one day in 1899. I was the editor of a small weekly newspaper in Rich Hill, Missouri, and this letter was like a ray of sunshine in my rather drab business experience. I had read the *Appeal to Reason* for several years, and it had made a deep impression on my mind. I felt flattered that the great editor had noticed me and my humble efforts. I planned to make the trip as soon as I could raise the money.

I arrived in Girard at 2 A.M. and hunted up a hotel. On the square I found accomodations, went to bed and slept soundly until seven o'clock. After eating breakfast I went to the office of the hotel and waited for Wayland. I was excited, you may be sure. To me Wayland represented the top round of success in the newspaper business.

When Wayland opened the door of the hotel, I knew him instantly. He was different from the men I had known in Rich Hill—that is, the average small town business man. His face, wreathed in smiles, was like no face I had ever seen before. He was tall—over six feet—and slender. As I noted the characteristics of his face and figure I was reminded of the mental picture I had acquired of the Great Emancipator. Here, before me, stood the man who was to be the Emancipator of the twentieth century. That was the impression I had—and I have never quite gotten it out of my mind.

Wayland proved a most agreeable companion and entertainer during my short stay in Girard on that occasion. (I joined the *Appeal* staff a year later, in 1900.) Figuratively speaking, he took me up on top of a high mountain, and showed me the world.

"Here it is, Fred," he said. "Through the columns of the *Appeal* we can convert the people of the United States to democratic socialism and in place of panics and depressions and unemployment and strikes and hardships, we can build the cooperative commonwealth. Men will not have to struggle to support their families, mothers will need no longer to drudge in kitchens and over tubs. All boys and girls will have the best education our resources can provide—and war will be banished forever as a means of settling disputes."

It sounded good to me. I had known nothing but panics and depressions and hard times. First the great panic of 1873 (the year after I was born) had swept father's modest fortune into the great whirlpool and left the family stranded. After I had worked as a boy in the local printing offices of Rich Hill, I managed to acquire a small printing office, and later established a weekly newspaper. Just as it looked as though everything was going fine, the Cleveland panic of 1893 swept over the nation. My small business was one of the casualities.

DURING the day, Wayland touched on his past life. He, too, had grown up in the local printing office in his home town in Indiana. He had embarked in business for himself while yet in his teens. His efforts were successful, judged by the standards prevailing. Later he moved to Pueblo, Colorado, and in a short time had the most prosperous printing office in that city.

Wayland was known as a money maker among his associates. He embarked in the real estate business. He could sense a good location line like a hunting dog can locate the game bird. While I was struggling with my newspaper in Rich Hill, he was getting ready to unload his holdings in Pueblo. Before Clevland's panic hit the West he had cashed up on his real estate holdings and sold his printing shop. He told his friends what he thought was coming. They laughed at him—and went on their merry way piling up dollars and stocks of merchandise.

As he slipped out from under, he had the laugh on his friends. Pueblo's business was built around the steel industry, and with the closing of the mills, gloom settled over the community, and then his associates remembered what the smiling Wayland had told them would happen.

Wayland did not get much happiness out of their discomfiture. He reasoned that with all our natural resources, our genius, our labor, the United States should be an earthly paradise. He returned to his native state of Indiana and established the *Coming Nation* at Greenburg: a weekly paper devoted to making the world a better place in which to live. He built a flourishing business out of this publishing experiment and he decided to establish a socialist colony.

He acquired a large tract of land in Tennessee, and called his new town "Ruskin," after the famous Englishman, John Ruskin. Wayland was a great admirer of Ruskin and drew much of his inspiration from his writings.

The colony was a failure, and Wayland, disheartened, but not beaten, turned over his paper to the colonists and located in Kansas City. Here the *Appeal to Reason* was born. In 1895, the *Appeal* moved to Girard, Kansas.

His experience with the Ruskin colony convinced him that such enterprises could not live surrounded by the competitive world. Only when the nation itself established

FRED D. WARREN AND EUGENE V. DEBS

the cooperative commonwealth could the plan succeed. The *Appeal* advocated a political revolution—and by this was meant that the voters should usher in the new order through the ballot box. Wayland had, until the day of his death, unlimited faith in the good sense of the American people if they could be aroused to realize how easy it would be to build a better world.

WAYLAND was one of the few men active in the socialist movement in the days before the first World War who would not make a public speech—though importuned many times to make speeches for the newly organized party. He never attended a convention of the Socialist Party, and it came to be a rigid rule that no member of the *Appeal* staff could be a candidate for any political office or hold an official position with the party. His idea was that an editor had no business mixing up in party affairs—his face should always be towards the goal, the cooperative commonwealth. He could not do a good job, argued Wayland, if he allowed himself to be influenced by the petty quarrels and factions that grew up as the party became more influential.

One day there appeared a delegation of friends of the paper from McCune, Kansas, and insisted that he address a meeting which they were arranging the following Saturday night in the high school building. McCune is located about twenty miles southwest of Girard. In those days (1908) there were nothing but dirt roads and as this was in the fall of the year, there was likely to be plenty of mud. Wayland agreed to be there if it was possible to make the trip.

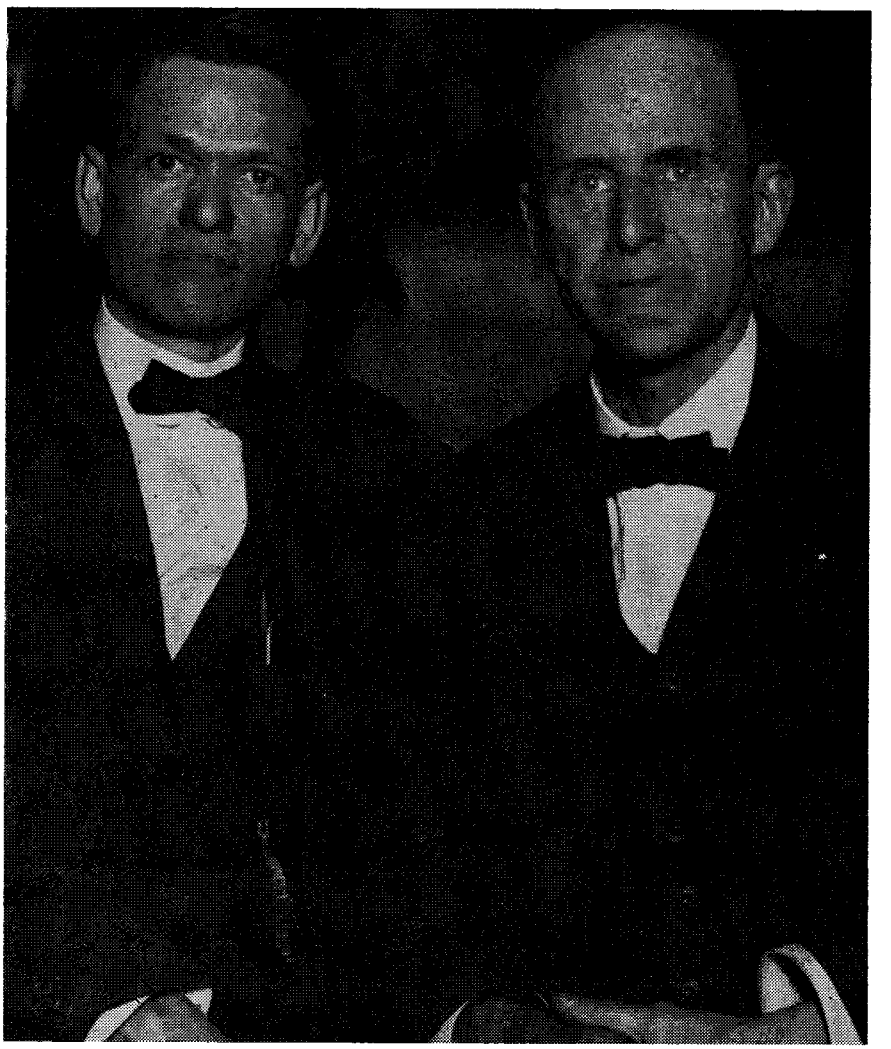
The McCune friends were equal to the occasion and they persuaded a farmer who lived in that section of the county and who had just acquired one of the newfangled

"Of the various attempts to re-establish the *Appeal to Reason*, I have seen no publication that I wanted to spread broadcast except the *American Socialist.*" — *Fred D. Warren*

THE above comment from a note accompanying this article, should be all the more gratifying to the readers, contributors, and editors of the *American Socialist* when it is recalled that the *Appeal to Reason* was by far the most successful socialist paper ever published in this country. With Debs on its editorial board, at its high point its average circulation was 500,000 each week, and special editions of the paper attained the phenomenal total of as high as 4,000,000. While the *American Socialist* is a periodical of entirely different type appearing under vastly different circumstances, it is praise indeed to be linked in this way with the old *Appeal* by Fred Warren, who edited that paper during its years of heyday (1900-1912) and was in many ways its moving spirit.

Fred Warren, now 85, still resides in Girard, Kansas, home of the *Appeal* and site of the building which was for years the Mecca of traveling socialists. He was hired in 1901 by J. A. Wayland, founder of the *Appeal*, to make it a fighting paper. Warren, in turn, hired George A. Shoaf, a reporter and socialist, as his "war correspondent," sending him into the thick of every class battle of importance during the period. (Mr. Shoaf, regular readers will note, writes often for the *American Socialist* under the column-heading "Notebook of an Old-Timer.")

Typical of the sensational handling the *Appeal* gave to contemporary happenings was Warren's public offer of a cash reward to anyone who would kidnap the ex-Governor of Kentucky from his hiding place in Indiana and return him to his state where he was wanted for complicity in a murder. The offer caused Warren's arrest, but the *Appeal* never let up from its sensationalism and militancy.



FRED D. WARREN AND EUGENE V. DEBS

contraptions called an automobile, to undertake the trip to Girard and get the speaker.

The school house was jammed and there was considerable interest manifested in the speaker and his message. Wayland insisted that he be allowed to conduct the meeting in his own way: He moved the teacher's platform to the center of the room, and placed a chair on it, and sat down. The chairman of the meeting, after a few preliminary remarks, introduced Wayland and announced that he would not make a speech, but would answer any questions asked by the audience. It was a novelty in public meetings and the crowd waited eagerly for the opening round, as it was known that two or three persons were in the audience who had planned in advance to "stump" the speaker with questions.

Wayland looked over the audience with a smile, his eyes twinkling as he sensed the interest in his unusual method of appearing on the platform.

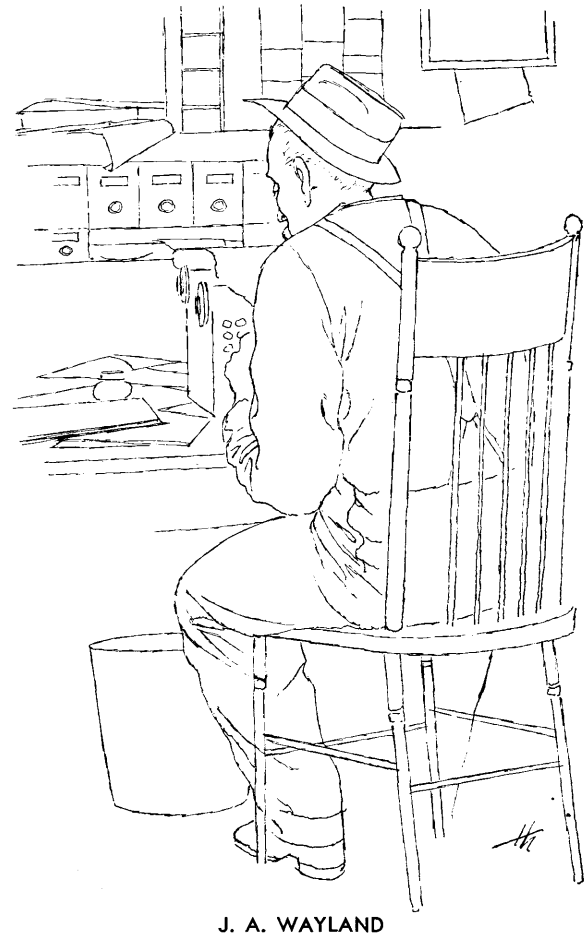
"Mr. Wayland," said a man in the back of the room, "as I understand your socialist philosophy, you would do away with competition—put us all on a dead level, and destroy the incentive which has made for progress in the past?"

"NO one really wants competition, for himself," replied Wayland. "Those who do want competition, want it for the other fellow. Those who want competition for themselves either do not know what it means, or are trying to deceive you. Do the laborers want competitors to compete with them for their jobs? Do your local merchants rejoice when a new store is opened up in McCune to take a part of the trade which is hardly enough to go 'round? Do millers invite competition to erect new mills in competition with them? The idea of competition being the life of trade is true only with the further fact that competition is the death of the tradesman. As Ruskin says, 'Competition is the law of death; cooperation is the law of life.' With those who suffer from competition but foolishly persist in voting for its continuance, it is merely a matter of ignorance."

"Do you really believe socialism will be established in the United States?" inquired a timid voice near the platform on which Wayland was sitting. Wayland looked down at the man and smiled, as he said:

"Socialism is on the way of being established in the United States right now. You go to the post office and buy a 2-cent postage stamp. You put it on a letter and send it to a friend living in Pittsburg, Kansas—a distance of perhaps twelve miles. I put it on a letter addressed to a firm in San Francisco. I get one hundred times the service you get, and yet neither of us is injured by this transaction. There was a time when there was no postal system in this country. All communications by letter were carried by private individuals. But as the country grew our people demanded a more efficient widespread means of letter delivery—and the postal department was established, in spite of the opposition by the private contractors, whose business was destroyed by the new system.

"Over in our little town of Girard, when I landed in that community, the electric light plant was owned by a private individual. It was not very efficient, and the



J. A. WAYLAND

machinery was old and obsolete. I persuaded a number of the citizens to join me in getting a vote on the question of taking over the plant. The voters, by a safe majority, voted to buy the plant. The city paid $20,000 for it. Since then it has been enlarged several times and is serving the people of Girard much more efficiently than the old privately owned plant.

"Some time previous to taking over the electric light plant, the city drilled a community well, and supplied water to its citizens through water mains. It was a decided improvement over the individual well or cistern which most of our citizens were using in the early days. I will leave it to you if turning on a faucet on a cold morning and getting water for the household needs, isn't far better than going out to the pump—which frequently had to be primed—and with the cold wind whistling around the corner of the house, pumping a bucket of water for the needs of the family."

AS Wayland pointed out other instances of similar social use, the crowd began to recognize that here was a new idea, and there were frequent bursts of applause. It was noted by those of us who had come with Wayland that much of the applause was coming from those who had come to scoff and badger the speaker.

As Wayland stepped down from the platform he was surrounded by eager men and women seeking more information, and it was hours afterwards before the

crowd melted away and the people went to their homes. Successful as the meeting was, however, we could never persuade the "One Hoss" to repeat the performance.

"I might like this talking to the public too well and forget how to write. I think I'll stick to the printing press —I can reach thousands while I'm talking to scores." And this ended Wayland's speech-making.

Wayland stuck to the printing press as a means of getting his ideas on political and industrial affairs before the public. So successful were his efforts that the circulation of the *Appeal* grew steadily. From a circulation of 30,000 in 1897, the paper reached the 100,000 mark by 1900; then jumped to 200,000, and in 1912, when Wayland died, the *Appeal's* subscription list was well over 500,000. Special editions were frequently issued when occasion demanded.

No advertising was carried in any of these special editions. They consisted of four pages of seven columns to the page, some set in 10-point type, clearly printed and presenting an attractive appearance to the eye. Free from advertising, there could be no charge that the paper circulated merely as an advertising medium. The lack of advertising caused many persons to wonder what was back of the enterprise—arousing a cursiosity to look into the matter. The papers were sold at a nominal price: 40 cents per 100 copies, later raised to 50 cents per 100.

One of these editions reached the unmatched total of 4,100,000; the twenty special editions that were issued between the turn of the century and the beginning of World War I averaged more than 2,000,000 each.

THE part played by the *Appeal to Reason* in starting our postal saving system is not generally known. It was early in the year 1897; the place was the money order window of the Girard, Kansas postoffice. A tall, pleasant-faced man was explaining to a puzzled and perplexed postmaster that he wished to buy a money order for $100 payable to himself. The postmaster, when it dawned on him what the customer wanted, patiently explained that the money-order system was established for the purpose of transmitting funds from one person to another in some distant city. The customer was J. A. Wayland and he finally persuaded the postmaster to issue the money order for $100, payable to himself, which he promptly deposited in a long black wallet he carried in his hip-pocket.

Wayland, along with millions of other American citizens, had been badly shaken by what the historians refer to as the Cleveland panic of '93, and he was looking for a safe place to put his money. He found it and he told his friends through the columns of his *Appeal to Reason* of his simple plan to have Uncle Sam guarantee his deposits. Thousands of persons followed Wayland's suggestion, and by 1910 millions of dollars were on deposit in local postoffices, over the protest of many postmasters, who like the Girard postmaster were sure it was "agin the law."

When the proposal to establish postal savings banks was debated in Congress, considerable opposition developed. It was argued that the innovation was a step toward socialism and would inevitably lead to the weakening of the established banking system. The arguments waxed long and loud, but on a final vote, the proposition carried by a safe majority, and was approved by the president on June 25, 1910.

After the enactment of the Postal Savings Bank Law, Wayland called the staff together for a consultation. He was highly pleased.

"You see how easy it is," he said as he smiled at the little group of men and women composing the editorial staff at the time. "Consider the situation at the time the first money order was purchased payable to the purchaser. Banks were failing daily—popping like corn on a hot griddle. People were in despair, savings were being tied up, some never to be repaid by the closed banks. These losses ran into billions of dollars, covering the period from just after the Civil War to the present.

"Before the passage of the Postal Savings Bank Law, one could go to his local postmaster and have a money order issued in his own name. This became a practice covering most every state and community in the nation, as a result of the few little pieces we printed in the *Appeal.* So persistent was this practice that Congress was forced to take notice of it—and now in every city, village, and hamlet, we have a safe place for our money! Yet this means was at hand for years, but no attention was paid to it until the *Appeal* told the public about it. Congress had fretted and talked about doing something to improve the banking system to prevent losses, but did nothing of a practical nature. So the people showed Congress the way—and the job was finished!

"Now there are ways well within the framework of the United States Constitution that can be utilized by the people to prevent national disasters—to prevent panics, to prevent hardships—and some day these methods will be used when some desperate crisis is reached and the politicians stand aghast at the wreckage."

AS I recall it the meeting covered hours. There was much argument back and forth, but this is the gist of what Wayland said on that occasion and the columns of the *Appeal* reflected these ideas, not only after this talk, but from its very first issue.

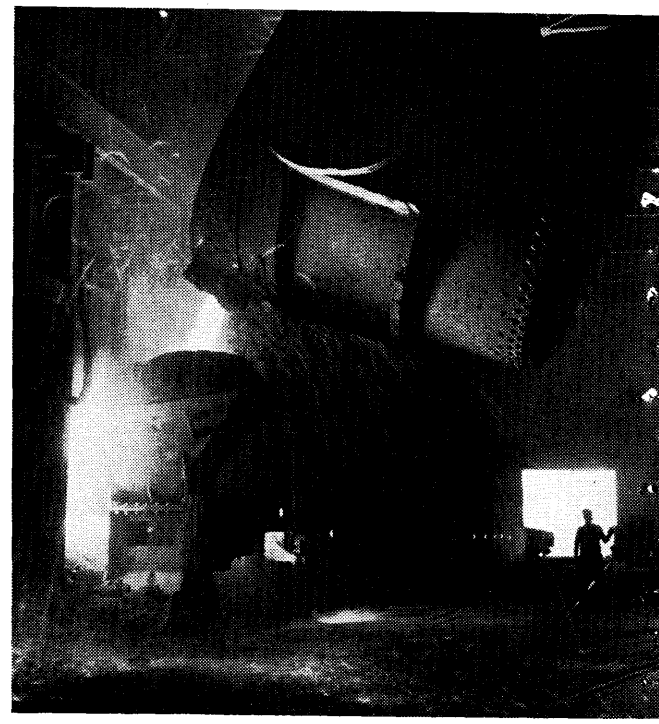
Wayland was in deadly earnest, and the rest of us caught the spirit and each went back to his desk with the firm determination to carry on.

At this time, there were nine federal court indictments hanging over the heads of members of the editorial staff. These indictments were based on flimsy charges growing out of statements which had been printed in the *Appeal* columns. They were a serious threat—each indictment carrying a sentence of five years in the federal penitentiary and a heavy fine. It is now a matter of record that each and every case was finally decided in favor of the *Appeal,* and new precedents set up by federal judges as to what a newspaper can say and do in its efforts to protect the people from the predatory politicians and racketeers.

Out of our various conferences, the *Appeal* finally evolved a slogan which it carried at its masthead during the latter years of its existence: "Cooperation in the production of things; competition in the development of ideas."

The "Dues Revolt" in Steel

by Harry Braverman



TO the unititiated, a referendum looks a good deal more like democracy than a convention as a means for choosing national union officers, but the experienced have always known better. Men with know-how in the fine art of staying in office year after year and decade after decade, with or without rank-and-file support, have always seemed to do a bit better by the referendum route. To oppose them, a union opposition must spring into being on a fully national scale, capable of reaching into the remote corners of the land to get the members' ears. That takes a lot more resources than any union opposition can usually command, while the entrenched bureaucracy, holding the levers of union machinery, has such an apparatus automatically. At a convention, terms are sometimes slightly more equal.

Not only that, but, should all else fail, the referendum counting is done by local and district officials who sometimes get their numbers mixed up, but rarely their loyalties. For reasons such as these, union referendums have generally been far more on the order of *ja-nein* plebiscites than real contests. For tried and tested dependability, the wise old dogs among the office-holders have always said: "Give me a referendum every time." But last month, that faith was severely shaken. Either the method or the people operating it must have some pretty bad defects when a complete unknown like Donald C. Rarick can walk out of a mill in the Pittsburgh area and poll nearly one third of the vote (at this writing) against incumbent steel union president David J. McDonald.

When one of the steel union's powerful district directors defied McDonald a couple of years back, and ran against his handpicked candidate for vice-president, he polled a little more than a third of the vote. But Joseph Molony was backed by district directors in almost a third of the union's districts; he represented a big split in the officialdom and disposed of large resources. Rarick's performance seems to prove that anybody can do it; that there is enough latent hostility to McDonald to make a good showing for any oppositionist, with or without money and influential backing.

The United Steelworkers of America took over its structure, as well as most of its initial organizing personnel, from the United Mine Workers Union. It's a mode of rule that operates best when associated with a commanding figure in the union; a proved scrapper and machine-loyalty builder. John L. Lewis never made it work in the miners' union until he had decimated all opposition in a bloody fracas three decades ago that pretty near put the union on the rocks. Philip Murray too, after he got out from under Lewis' shadow, was a strong man in the steel union.

SOME time back, Dorothy Schiff, publisher of the *N.Y. Post,* proved how far a dedicated journalist will go in reporting the news by writing up her gushings to David J. McDonald at some affair where she met him. McDonald is, she told him in effect, a handsome brute of a man and a perfect "father-image" for the men in the mills. Mrs. Schiff illustrates our point by getting it precisely backwards; McDonald is a pathetic substitute for a rough-and-tumble union leader, lacking competence, assurance and fighting spirit, and touched only with a hammy and insatiable vanity. Under him, the steel union has been an inherited strong-man's setup without the strong man.

Rarick's candidacy originated in a dispute at the Los Angeles convention last September over an increase in dues and officers' salaries. The proposal was to raise monthly dues from $3 to $5, and at the same time to increase the salaries of top union officers and staff representatives. McDonald was tendered a $10,000 a year raise, putting him in the top ($50,000) bracket for labor leaders, and when opposition developed he put on a performance that must have killed for all time the chance of a movie contract he has so long coveted. In the first place, he didn't want the raise, and in the second place, it would only cost the members a cent apiece. In the voting on the dues increase, McDonald refused a roll call demanded by some delegates, and declared the proposal passed on the strength of his eyesight alone.

The following month Rarick, who had been among those gaveled down by McDonald in Los Angeles, initiated a dues protest committee in his local union at the Irwin works of United States Steel. Within a short time, a number of such committees had been organized in the Pittsburgh area and elsewhere around the demand for a special convention to reverse the dues increase. McDonald thereupon trumped up a ruling that a special convention would have no authority to deal with the question of dues. He added to this the ferocious addendum

that the dues protest movement was an "illegal dual union" led by "Trotskyites," and threatened its adherents with expulsion.

These threats failed to quash the dissidents, who went on to nominate Rarick for union presidency, and McDonald, acting in character, quickly dropped them. Don Rarick charges that McDonald next summoned him to a secret meeting at a motel outside of Pittsburgh, where he was offered money and a job if he would quit the race. McDonald has called this a "plain, unmitigated lie." In the campaigning that followed, Rarick could raise only a few thousand dollars from some locals that supported him, while McDonald put on a drive that must have cost big money, involving as it did six regional union conferences where McDonald made sky's-the-limit promises for future union gains.

The opposition campaigned mainly on the dues-increase issue, adding only a few more demands for election of staff representatives and for more democracy in making union decisions. In a debate with Joseph Germano, director of the union's Chicago district, Rarick proposed that the union constitution be re-written to guarantee greater rights for the rank and file. Beyond such propositions, it has remained unclear just what the dues protest movement stands for in the way of an all-around union program. It is probably unclear to the opposition leaders themselves, as this appeared to be one of those *ad hoc* oppositions germinated by heat over a single beef. Rarick has been charged with saying that he's against the union shop, a charge he denies and parries by saying that if the union did its job right, members would come flocking in without a union shop. On the other hand, one of his backers quit him before the election with the comment that Rarick wants a "soft" union.

DONALD C. RARICK

McDONALD, for his part, contributed to the heavy vote against himself and in favor of an unknown by his alienation from the men in the mills over the past several years. His program of "mutual trusteeship" with the steel barons hasn't done him any good, not because the steel workers are convinced Marxian class-strugglers, but because it served to emphasize the aura McDonald already had of a man seeking self-aggrandizement. It is quite remarkable that McDonald remains so unpopular when one considers the contracts he has signed since 1953—by no means the worst. Yet his personality and approach clearly have little appeal to the steel workers. And he has antagonized some of the most powerful figures in the steel union apparatus, further weakening his position.

Beyond that, there is an instability in the union machinery which stems from the peculiar history of the union. The dictatorial setups in most unions are the outcome of a process of internal struggle, in which rival machines as well as rank and file oppositions were beaten and a set of loyalties and connections consolidated. The steel union existed as an organizing committee for its first six years of life, and had no machinery of democracy at all during that time. Its machine was artificially constructed from the top, in the main. Belated rank and file stirrings are now catching up with the union, at a time when they have run a long course in other unions and subsided for the present.

All of this is substantiated by the fact that, despite the fair showing in union gains he has made, McDonald has already twice faced oppositions to his administration. Once the opposition came from within the union hierarchy, and the next time it was a rank-and-file organization. These challenges, it should be noted, have come at a time when the trend in most other unions is towards an increasing solidification of the machines.

There is no warrant for seeing the Rarick candidacy as the herald of a general labor awakening, but it is symptomatic of a restiveness in a number of unions. In the International Association of Machinists, a dues increase was recently voted down by referendum, and because of this the union is discontinuing publication of *The Machinist,* and in two other unions, the American Federation of Teachers and the International Typographical Union, referendums on dues hikes had the same result. Currents of anti-bureaucratism mix and mingle with currents of scissorbillism in all these cases. Workers don't place any very high valuation on their union leaderships, and don't see any reason to increase their powers or finances.

WITH the unions devoid of an inspiring rallying call or crusading zeal of the kind that characterized the CIO for its first half-dozen or so years, a lot of petty dissension creeps in through all doors and windows. Union leaders complain that the younger workers "don't realize what things were like before the union"; that union ties are weakened and the union is "taken for granted." While there may be much justice in the complaints, no union leadership will be able to silence grumblings and dissatisfactions, or to rebuild a union spirit, simply by harking back to the past. It can probably be done only by a new infusion of militancy in battles for a new round of labor goals.

There is little question that the Rarick candidacy appealed to all sorts of elements in the steel union, including many to whom union dues are annoying and who would like to see the "power" of unions cut down, as well as to many others who would like more democracy in order to get a bit of control into their own hands. There was an ambiguity about Rarick's campaign that is probably implicit in the thinking of a lot of union rank and filers these days: in part, they are irked by the union, and in part they want a better and more militant union. Which way the balance tips, which way the mood swings, is going to be an important decision for American labor in the years to come.

In the meantime, despite the lack of clarity on the part of the opposition, we don't begrudge McDonald a bit of his troubles—it couldn't happen to a nicer guy. He is in the forefront of those who are making a resurgence of union spirit on an advanced level more difficult.

Monopoly closes in on the auto industry, bringing plant runaways, shutdowns, and mass unemployment. Multiplying problems face coming auto union convention.

Difficult Days for Auto Labor

by A Special Correspondent

Detroit

THE next UAW convention, due in Atlantic City on April 7, will be up against some critical problems: continued monopolization of the industry and consequent elimination of independent competitors, recurring mass unemployment, plant shut-downs and transfers of location, automation, intensive pressure for increased production (speed-up), and a special problem affecting the skilled-trades section of the union.

At its last convention two years ago, the union was becoming acutely aware of the new difficulties. That they confront the organization now in ever sharper form is testimony that the union has not solved them.

After a brief post-war flurry based upon the pent-up demand for automobiles the industry went back to "normalcy," but with a tremendously expanded productive capacity. First Kaiser-Fraser, then Hudson, and more recently Packard, were forced from the scene. In spite of the merger of Hudson and Nash into the American Motors Corporation, their share of the market last year was less than 2 percent. Studebaker-Packard, which recently got a shot in the arm through a merger with Curtiss-Wright, is also way down. As a result, many supplier plants have had to close their doors.

Basically, the crisis flows from the intense competition. The huge capital expenditures required for annual styling and engineering improvement signal the death knell of the remaining independents.

The wreckage of the mad race has been strewn all around. Workers with 30 years and more of service in the industry have been thrown onto the social scrapheap, their years of seniority wiped out in one corporation edict. Many of these workers have been compelled to take the most menial jobs in an effort to make ends meet. In some instances, displaced workers have been permitted to follow their jobs, as for example Hudson workers to the Nash plant in Wisconsin, with the mocking "right" to begin as new men.

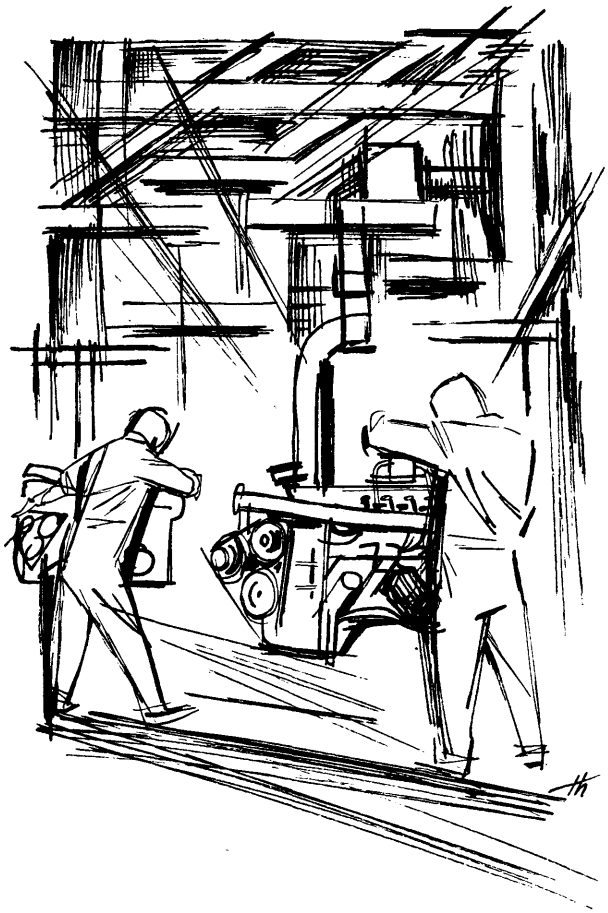
WIDE scale recurring unemployment is again a regular feature of the auto industry cycle. More than 200,000 workers were unemployed in Michigan throughout most of 1956. Even with peak production on the 1957 models, more than 100,000 auto workers remained unemployed, according to UAW reports. At the peak of 1957 Chrysler production on the new model, more than 20,000 workers were not called back.

The plague has invaded the shops themselves, with intensive drives for speed-up. Chrysler preceeded its new model with a letter to all employees calling attention to "new work standards . . . comparable to those of the same jobs at Ford and GM." While the union has formally gone on record to resist speed-up, increased work loads have been the rule throughout Chrysler. Chrysler's desire to emulate GM is quite understandable. The inferior working conditions permitted to exist in GM plants add up to subsidizing General Motors' drive for monopoly. They act as a drag on working conditions throughout the industry. No one can answer with certainity how much longer Hudson, Packard, etc., could have survived if contracts and working conditions had been brought up to uniform levels throughout the industry. But one thing would be certain—the plight of the displaced workers could then not be traced to the dereliction of their own union.

Another sinister development is the practice of farming jobs out by competitive bidding by different plants or divisions of the same corporation. A case in point is the recent experience of the Chrysler ABD (Automotive Body Division) workers who saw the "cushion" job lost to National Automotive Fiber Corporation—with the departure of over 1,000 ABD jobs. Thus in a very direct way the competition of the industry is transferred to the backs of the workers.

Difficult days lie ahead for auto workers in the Detroit area. Chrysler Corporation has built a new stamping plant at Twinsburg, Ohio. The Chrysler Delaware plant, formerly engaged in the production of tanks, is being readied for production of the Plymouth line. Its estimated capacity will be roughly equal to 50 percent of the current Detroit area facilities. Chrysler also has under way plans to build a new plant for Dodge production near Novi, Michigan, some 35 miles from Detroit. The present Dodge Plant in Hamtramck which has employed as many as 35,000 workers will be converted to a warehouse by 1960.

IN part, these large-scale transfers of operations result from the need to build fully automated production units. In many cases, the old buildings are unsuitable for the most advanced productive techniques. The movement to new areas is explained in some cases by the desirability of building closer to the potential customer. It also appears to this writer that a calculated operation to undermine the most militant sections of the auto union is in process. The



corporations seem to have decided that a larger number of small plants (less than 5,000 workers) makes for a more manageable labor force. Likewise, duplicate manufacturing units undermine the power of the union to cut off the flow of production at a single vital point in the system.

The auto union attempted to meet the difficulties of the independent auto producers in the first days of the crisis by a program of contract revisions and wage adjustments to "improve their competitive position." Not only did this tactic fail to achieve its stated purpose, but once the give-away program began, everyone wanted to get in the act.

The only action initiated by the union to meet the problem of displaced workers, other than the unsuccessful attempt to get the Michigan legislature to extend and increase unemployment compensation, has been a request to the other auto employers to give preferential consideration to these workers. The three-year contract freeze prevents any effort to force management agreement to even this demand. Anyhow, most auto plants have their own unemployed lists, so that even if this were won it would not materially alter the situation.

Each new plant shut-down sees a new round of visits of union officials to Washington with plaintive pleas for arms work to be channelled into the stricken area. The efforts to keep the wheels going even on this questionable basis have not been successful to any degree. The much touted Guaranteed Annual Wage, which came to life as a supplementary unemployment compensation feature, has not measured up to the claims of its sponsors. Because of the low level of the funds out of which payments are made, unemployed workers received only small benefits, and these for a very short duration. One effect of the plan seems to have been a tendency to stabilize the employment of some high seniority workers at the expense of low seniority people. Add it all up, and it amounts to a crisis for the auto union.

WITH the convention just weeks away, the union leadership has announced its demand for a dues increase of 50 cents per month and a proposal to revise policy with relation to the skilled trades. The only reference to the burning problems of the man in the shop is in Reuther's speech at the recent Skilled Trades Conference where he talked of a fight "to win the highest wage demands in the history of our union" in 1958. In effect, this is an admission that the three-year contract has the union in a straight-jacket—nothing can be done until the contract runs out in mid-1958, a year and a half away.

The new "Skilled Trades Program" adopted at a national UAW Skilled Trades Conference in Chicago in December contains two dangerous departures from previous union policy. First, there is the proposal that maximum rates be eliminated in skilled trades classifications. This spells in practice a return to the fair-haired-boy apple-polishing days which preceeded union organization, and can be the source of considerable disunity within the skilled groups themselves. More serious is the proposal that skilled-trades workers, in addition to the right to vote for or against the overall agreement, will also have the right to vote and to strike seperately on matters affecting skilled trades alone. This proposal has been made previously but has never received serious support.

The present turnabout derives from the violent upheaval of the skilled tradesmen following the contract settlements of 1955. Widespread dissatisfaction with the eight cents per hour increase erupted in a number of strikes and the mushroom growth of a new union, the Society of Skilled Tradesmen. Had the new organization been able to secure NLRB representation elections, it would have won in many plants under UAW jurisdiction. Fortunately for the UAW, the existing contracts provided a temporary barrier to the dual-union movement.

The Reuther leadership was obviously afraid of a revival of activity by the skilled-trades union and widespread defections at the end of the current contracts. Reuther jumped out in front, took over the program of the dual-union outfit, blessed it with a UAW label, and presented it as a votive offering to the skilled-trades section. This may appease the skilled workers for the moment. But it dangerously undermines the industrial union foundations of the UAW, and the union may pay the price in internal division in later negotiations.

THE skilled-trades workers are not without legitimate grievances. At the heart of skilled-trades discontent is wage inequity. Skilled-trades workers in the captive auto shops (tool rooms of the large auto plants) earn 40 to 50 cents per hour less than similar tradesmen in job-

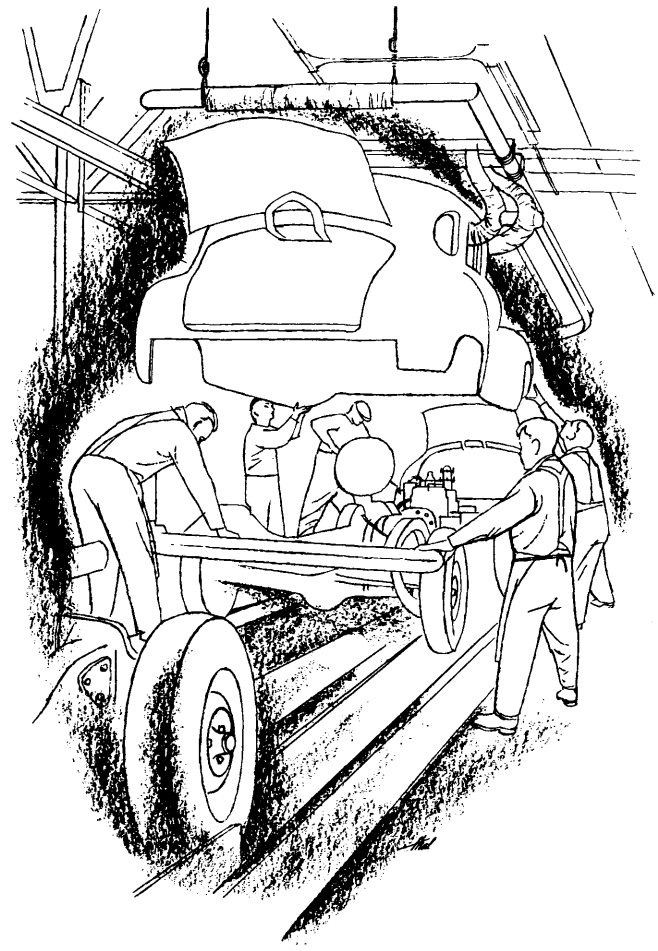
bing shops (independent tool and die shops). Likewise, many UAW skilled tradesmen earn far less than their counterparts in AFL craft unions. This must be solved if the UAW is to retain the allegiance of this section of the union. (*American Socialist,* May 1956, treats the problem in detail.) The union program should attempt to tie the membership of the union together in a fight against the employer. The Reuther proposal does just the opposite. It splits the skilled from the production worker in a manner which can create bitter division.

There is just no such thing as a strike of skilled trades workers by themselves. In a short while, the plants would close. Under present rulings, production workers affected by such a strike will have no claim to unemployment compensation. Since they would not be on strike, it is also questionable whether they would even be eligible for strike aid. Most important of all, production workers *will not have a single stake in the outcome of such a strike.* Latent anger at the harsh restrictions governing the entry of production workers into the skilled trades, added to the existing spread between wages of production workers, who earn roughly $4,000 per year if they work full time, and the pay of skilled workers which with overtime exceeds $8,000, can supply the fuel for an intra-union explosion.

What is suggested is a program which will support the legitimate wage demands of the skilled-trades workers, together with a drastic revision of provisions to enable production workers to enter skilled trades. The present lethargy of the union unfortunately militates against consideration for such a program, and the leadership is taking the path of least resistance.

The bureaucratic spirit is again illustrated in the leadership's handling of the proposed dues increase, the same issue which started such a commotion in the steel union. The object of the increase is to meet increased administrative costs, including pay hikes for staff members. To sell a dues increase is not an easy task under the best of circumstances. To sell a dues increase without a program of union action, as is the current case in the UAW, is to breed embitterment. Many locals immediately placed themselves on record in opposition. Carl Stellato and Ford Local 600 have announced their opposition to any dues increase that does not contain provisions for building a strike fund that will make possible automatic strike benefits.

WHILE there is an absence of organized opposition to the Reuther administration, there are a number of signs that all is not harmony within the union. The Budd Wheel Council, including Locals 813, 92, 306, and 1122, have adopted a resolution and are soliciting support for a fight to improve the existing contracts in the "Big Three," with special concentration on General Motors, in order to protect the superior working conditions in plants of independent jobbers and small contractors. New attention has also been focused on the demand for a 30-hour week with 40 hours pay, with the announcement of Local 600 that the 36 clerical workers and maintenance men employed by the local will start on such a schedule effective immediately. This is a challenge to Reuther, who

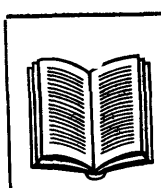


has been soft-pedalling the issue recently. In his speech to the Skilled Trades Conference, he ignored the shorter work-week and concentrated on talking about "the highest wage demands" in the union's history for 1958. Significantly, no resolution on the shorter work-week was included in the dozen adopted at the conference.

The 30-hour week remains the key. It is the only answer to re-employment of the many thousands who have been permanently displaced. Its need will be further seen as the full impact of automation hits the industry.

Another matter likely to come before the convention is that of short-term contracts. In response to widespread dissatisfaction with five-year contracts at the last convention, Reuther proposed a two-year limit. Though the convention approved this policy, the auto workers found themselves with a three-year contract when negotiations were concluded.

The same pressures are building up again. These dissatisfactions are showing themselves especially in some of the large local unions. In Local 212 and other Chrysler divisions, the administrations are experiencing their most serious opposition since they took control 10 years ago. UAW conventions have been noted for their "one act of rebellion" even during Reuther's heyday of popularity. The coming auto convention is likely to see more than one. On the local-union level as well as the International Union level, however, no new leadership with a counter-program has appeared.



BOOK REVIEW

History and Ideology

THE GENESIS OF PLATO'S THOUGHT, by Alban Dewes Winspear. S. A. Russell, New York, 1956, *Second Augmented Edition,* $5.

THE 2,300-year-old battle concerning the ideas and actions of the Greek philosopher, Plato, has clearly become more intense in recent years. It is a remarkable testament to the fertility and vitality of his outlook that this should be so. The problems of freedom and its relation to authority, ideas and their relation to social dynamics, the good and its connection to beauty on the esthetic side and to justice on the political side, have all been restated many times. However, this very fact shows that solutions to these issues remain to be achieved.

Alban Winspear's book, originally published in 1940, represents the most ambitious undertaking by an American Marxist to solve the riddle of Plato through the historical method. Little published from this vantage point since has notably improved upon this effort. For this reason, and for the more substantial reason that it has become a focal point in recent evaluations of Plato by American and British scholars, the publisher is to be complimented on making this title available again.

The virtues of the book for the lay reader are many. Winspear provides a clear analysis of the economic and intellectual growth of ancient Greece—its manifold historical roots and diverse patterns of social evolution. The dualism in pre-Socratic thought, which took the general form of a struggle between the school of Pythagoras (whose idealism was rooted in the abstract nature of mathematical symbolism), and the school of Democritus (whose materialism stemmed from the concrete nature of primitive physics), is nicely developed.

But the tendency to strict identification of idealism with the "conservatives" and materialism with the "progressives" leads to serious ambiguities. For example, Heraclitus, who as Winspear himself admits had only scorn for the people, is classified with "progressive philosophy" because of his dialectical approach. To be perfectly consistent, either he should be classified with "conservative philosophy," or Socrates, since he too was a founder of dialectics in its most intimate sense, should not be so roundly condemned as a defender of political reaction. Winspear's tendency to mechanical correlation of political and intellectual spectrums may have been a potent antidote to those who deny that any such connection is an aid in understanding Plato, but it suffers from the opposite vice of discouraging a study of the ideas of Plato and his precursors for their actual worth and validity.

HIS new material on the "Academy and the Later Dialogues" demonstrates that Winspear has stood firm in his methodological commitments. We are greeted with a gifted analysis of the meaning of the Platonic "Academy"; the author shows it to have had primarily a political role and only secondarily an educational function. Winspear also clarifies the shift in Plato's thought that took place with the defeat of reaction in Sparta and Syracuse. The problem is no longer, as it was in the *Republic,* to prove the illusion of social change, but to demonstrate how change is to be guided in terms of patrician needs. The burden of the *Phaedrus, Theaetetus, Paremenides,* and in its directly political form *The Laws,* is in Winspear's words an attempt to arrive at a "controlled change" through the force of *mind.* "And mind for Plato is easily identifiable as the interest of one's own class."

Despite the vigor with which the author pursues his position down to the establishment of Aristotle's Lycaeum, the new material strikes this reviewer as anti-climactic. Winspear did not respond to the challenges of his critics "because the loving care of many critics has not convinced me that any change was necessary." Neither has he augmented his findings with those whose critiques of Plato were oriented towards a different social or scientific estimate. It is thus not amiss to take up briefly those issues which Plato studies have recently been concerned with, and the ways in which they diverge from Winspear's book.

Winspear's method tends to confuse valuative and factual elements. For example, he assumes the view that since Plato represented conservative political forces, his theoretical structure is false and idealistic. There is ample evidence to indicate that the principles of political theory are often independent of metaphysical beliefs. Whether Plato's views are true or false requires an empirical appraisal quite apart from the social genesis of such ideas. What would Winspear make of Hegel, the defender of Prussianism and absolute idealism? Can it be seriously denied that the idealist Hegel is a far more astute and realistic political observer than the materialist Feuerbach? To fail to respond to the political realism of Plato is to render the interpreter impotent in explaining his impact on all who have worked to make of politics a science.

THE problems Plato posed can hardly be done away with by indicating his conservative affiliations. Is it not possible, for instance, to conceive of the present conflict between bureaucracy and mass in Russia, or the conflict of C. Wright Mill's "power elite" with the bulk of the American people, as illustrating Plato's thesis that the orderly function of government requires a clear separation of powers between the leaders, their allies in the military, and the mass of common men on the other side. Does not the "vanguard party" and the "creative businessman" function in much the same way as Plato's aristocracy of mind and economic status? Does not the offical Russian and the unofficial American control of the cultural milieu find its justification in the Platonic theory that an unbridled development of culture tends to undermine authority and ultimately the State itself? These are pertinent questions that cannot be avoided by calling Plato a defender of class privilege. Karl Popper no less than Winspear is concerned with the genesis of Plato's ideas, yet he perceived that an understanding of Plato proper requires a framework into which Plato can be placed without doing violent injustice either to genesis or philosophy. That he saw the answer in Plato as founder of the theory of the closed society, as opposed to the open society of democratic thought, may not turn out on inspection to be rigorous enough, yet Popper goes a long way beyond Winspear precisely because he senses the problem of Plato as two-fold—historical and ideological—and does not confuse the two.

There is a double aspect to the history of ideas. One is the sociological determination of ideas. The other is the analysis of those ideas for their content—the power they continue to exercise despite changing socio-economic circumstances. Admittedly such analysis is very difficult. But to infer the truth-content from the social matrix alone, a fault Winspear shares with those of different political opinions such as R. H. S. Crossman, tends to make light of a serious coming to grips with the power of Platonism as such. It leads ultimately to an anthropocentric and moralizing attitude towards intellectual history. It projects present relations into the past artificially. This is not to condone the far more frequent practice of an exclusive concern with ideas divorced from a social mooring which cradles all thought. But this "formalism" of institutional philosophy cannot be overcome by disregarding the practical vitality of ideas as such.

WINSPEAR'S conviction that his work needs no modification is more a tribute to his tenacity than to his sagacity. The basic question is not whether Plato was progressive or conservative in his political practice, but how it has come about that Plato is the living force both his defenders and detractors admit him to be. It is standard operating procedure to say, as Winspear does, that Plato gave the world the foundations of idealism; the real admission is that Plato gave the world a line of political theorists that moves from More, Hobbes, Rousseau to Hegel—and influenced Marx and Lenin to a greater degree than perhaps either was cognizant of. Winspear forgets that although Plato resolved his political problems idealistically, he presented them with a power derived from a real and acute knowledge of the polarities of political practice. And it is precisely at this point that Winspear reverts to a mechanical cor-

relation of history and ideology.

Several minor points are worth mentioning. The index has not been altered to include new materials. The biblography also has been left as it was in the earlier edition. This despite the appearances of important works such as Farrington's "Science and Politics in the Ancient World," "Head and Hand in Ancient Greece," and "Greek Science"; Popper's "The Open Society and Its Enemies"; John Wild's "Plato's Modern Enemies and the Theory of Natural Law"; George Thomson's "The First Philosophers"; Levenson's "In Defense of Plato"; the late works of F. M. Cornford, "The Unwritten Philosophy," "Principium Sapientiae," and "Plato's Theory of Knowledge." The fact that some of the above works (and a number not mentioned) shed new light on Winspear's approach, and that some are frankly critical of what he says in "The Genesis of Plato's Thought," should have compelled him to enter the fray in a more vigorous and candid way. That he did not do so, that he relies on the type of analysis that reflects the New Deal period of American history, is an indication that the idealist Plato may well have been more responsive and sensitive to changes in the political arena than his modern materialist critic.

IRVING L. HOROWITZ

"Just Call Me Sui Generis"

HUEY LONG'S LOUISIANA: STATE POLITICS, 1920-1952, *by Allan P. Sindler. The Johns Hopkins Press, Baltimore,* 1956, $5.50.

THIS book is not primarily about the Huey Long boss-machine in Louisiana, nor about Long's rocket-like climb to national prominence just before his assassination in 1935, but rather about the intricacies of Louisiana politics over a three-decade period. But, as Huey Long dominated state politics for most of that period up to his death, and as his influence lingered on for many years, much of the interest in the complicated maneuverings in Baton Rouge tends to focus around his career.

Huey P. Long, Jr., a Shreveport lawyer with an extraordinary mind and a genius for demagogy, began his political career in 1918 by winning a seat on the State Railway Commission, where he got into a fracas with Standard Oil that gained him state-wide attention. In 1922, as chairman of the commission, he increased his popularity by forcing a reduction in telephone rates, and a large refund to all users. In 1924, he failed in his first attempt to win the governorship, but his showing in the hill parishes made it clear that a few inroads in other parts of the state would make him an easy victor. In 1928, with strong back-country support, Long swept the election to take over the governorship. From there he went on to a seat in the U.S. Senate, where he launched his "Share Our Wealth" program, and for a while seemed to be on his way to a great national following. He was assassinated on September 8, 1935, by a personal enemy.

MR. Sindler, in an opening paragraph, sets his theme as follows: "In explanation of his rise to power, Huey Long often observed, 'Just call me *sui generis* and let it go at that.' That self-characterization, while accurate, fell short of a full explanation. Longite politics was an outgrowth of class tensions which Longism undoubtedly intensified but did not create. In the perspective of history, Longism represented the third major attempt of rural lower-class whites to challenge the dominant alliance of conservative planters and urban upper classes."

The two previous movements of which the author speaks were the anti-secession movement in Louisiana, and the Populist movement of the 1890's. In both cases, the dominant businessmen-planter alliance was challenged by a predominantly poor-farmer movement, concentrated in the rural regions from which Huey Long was to later draw his support with his raucous cries against "the interests."

As far as it goes, this analysis by the author is accurate, but his skimpy attention to the social setting of an America that had changed so deeply between 1860 or even 1890 and 1930 leaves him with a greatly oversimplified story on his hands. By the time of the Great Depression in which Huey Long rose to national prominence, any purely farm-revolt movement had become an impossibility. Populist demagogy combined with personal dictatorship in the Huey Long style, heavily tinged with anti-labor overtones, anti-Semitism, and anti-urban know-nothingism in general, added up to something considerably different from the agarian rebelliousness of a Tom Watson.

By the time Huey Long had risen to national prominence with his share-the-wealth demogogy and radio broadcasts (where he attacked the New Deal both from the right and from the left), the movement under his emotionalistic führership was no longer simply a play for the Southern poor whites. Its connections with well-heeled businessmen, while always remaining mysterious, seem to have been authentic as charged, and important segments of the nation's reactionary forces were rallying around him as the best antidote to the leftward swing of popular thinking in the thirties.

One hardly had to wait for Gerald L. K. Smith, one of Long's chief lieutenants, to draw Longism out into a fascist program after Huey died, to recognize the implications of the movement. All the more surprising that the author of this study, at this late date, should refrain from drawing those implications, and instead take share-the-wealthism naively at more or less face value. Mr. Sindler is not at all sympathetic to Huey Long and not particularly taken in by him; his trouble seems to be a kind of pedestrian academic approach which prefers to proliferate material rather than digest and analyze it beyond its most obvious surface implications.

IN power in Louisiana, Huey Long had the kind of successes to which supporters of Mussolini pointed in Italy: He built new roads, instituted a free textbook system and expanded the state university. But his labor record was a sorry one, and he not only failed to live up to his promises to strengthen workmen's compensation, he even weakened various labor and pension laws. Most of his state improvements, despite his soak-the-rich cries and his well-publicized clashes with Standard Oil, were financed by very heavy gasoline and cigarette taxes. In brief, he built an oppressive personal dictatorship by legal and extra-legal means, and when in power watered down his radical phrases to a preservation of the status quo with a few razzle-dazzle trimmings. If his regime could have been extended on a nationwide scale during the depression, it would have been a pretty close approach to the kind of fascism which was then on the rise in Europe. And Huey Long was particularly dangerous because, in terms of personal capabilities, he was the most able of the incipient Mussolinis born during the depression.

A. S.

Marx on the State

THE CRITIQUE OF CAPITALIST DEMOCRACY, by Stanley W. Moore. Paine-Whitman Publishers, New York, 1957, $4.50.

BY paraphrase, selection of key quotations, and organization of the material in a logical format, the author seeks to establish authoritatively the position of Marx, Engels and Lenin on the state, and on the relations between capitalism and democracy. The ideas of these three writers are scattered in dozens of their polemical works, and even Lenin's "State and Revolution," which is devoted to this subject, as the author sees it, "develops and applies an elaborate theoretical system which is *not* presented in the work itself." Mr. Moore seeks to fill this gap of exposition.

It is good to see scholars getting interested again in Marxist theory, and Mr. Moore has clearly devoted a lot of time and painstaking research to getting to the bottom of the Marxist concept. The pattern of Marxist thought on this matter is sketched out ably, clearly and cogently, and provides the newcomer with a comprehensive picture which he could not otherwise obtain without reading a shelf-full of books. It will prove valuable to students as an introduction to the Marxist theory of the state and world viewpoint.

Marxist scholars are few and far between in this country today. Our natural predisposition would therefore be to concentrate on the book's virtues—which it certainly possesses—and ignore its shortcomings. But it appears to us that Marxist writers have a right to expect from

socialist reviewers not only encouragement, but candid criticisms which they may find helpful in their future writings.

IN this department, two main defects in the book struck us. One is an occasional clumsiness in exposition which tends to muddle a subject matter which necessarily is already quite difficult. For example, on page 30, Mr. Moore explains: "Dictatorship is a method of rule: it is not a form of state, to be contrasted for example, with democracy." This is incorrect as it stands, and is contradicted by Mr. Moore's own explanation that follows. The confusion arises from the fact that Marxists use the term in two different contexts. They hold that all states denote the rule of a dominant class, regardless whether that rule is exercised by an absolute monarchy or a democratic republic. In this sense, all capitalist states represent capitalist dictatorship, just as the states in antiquity represented slave owners' dictatorships. But Marxists realize full well that these class dictatorships operate through a variety of governmental forms: monarchy, oligarchy, democracy, etc. In this latter sense, dictatorship is most certainly a form of state and can very definitely be contrasted with democracy.

A similar criticism can be made of the discussion concerning the possibility of peaceful transition to socialism. Mr. Moore writes, "To admit the possibility of peaceful transition is not reformism, but Marxism. It is reformism to proclaim this possibility in abstraction from the concrete conditions, economic and political, which define it. It is reformism to apply statements true of particular historical situations to decisively different situations, under cover of liberal platitudes concerning universal suffrage." Now, this is a very inadequate description of the reformist view, whether of Lenin's day, or of our own, it doesn't do justice to Lenin's position, and doesn't begin to explain to the reader what the differences were all about.

In part, Mr. Moore's difficulty arises from his attempt to clarify the problem at hand by resting exclusively on quotations from Marx and Lenin. And this leads to our final point. Mr. Moore should have set his sights a little higher. Marxism, after all, is above everything else a method. Marxism achieves stature not only by explaining how it was applied in the past, but even more, by going on to apply it to the present. The discussion of the state would have gained greatly if it were carried through to modern times, and the various pertinent analyses of the Nazi state, the Soviet state, the Western capitalist welfare state, were subjected to a similar critique. As for the problem of peaceful transition, it cannot in truth be discussed meaningfully at all without a concrete analysis of present-day conditions. Only on this ground can one even debate whether Marx's or Lenin's opinions still hold or have become obsolete.

B.C.

Some Dubious Aphorisms

TWENTIETH CENTURY SOCIALISM, by Socialist Union. Penguin Books, Baltimore, 1956. 65c.

SOCIALIST Union is an organization of British intellectuals and civil servants which is trying to cope with the new problems that Welfare Capitalism presents and come up with the new answers that the times demand. The aims are praiseworthy, but the product that it slaps together is tawdry in the extreme. Written by Allan Flanders, Senior Lecturer in Industrial Relations at Oxford University, and Rita Hinden, editor of *Socialist Commentary,* the tract literally breathes a spirit of middle-class philistinism and narrow-minded insularity. One is inclined to lay aside a book of this sort without any further comment were it not that this society and groups of a similar nature provide the right-wing leadership of the British Labor Party with much of its theoretical and programmatic equipment.

It is ironical that British socialists of this variety rest so much of their case on the propositions of conservative American writers like Riesman, Berle, Burnham, Galbraith. These writers' dubious aphorisms—that a new welfare state, which is no longer capitalism, is now in operation; that everybody now enjoys material comfort; that managers have taken over and now run industry; that Keynesian economics has supplied the tools of avoiding depressions and assuring full employment, etc., etc.,—are treated not as worthy discussion material but are casually introduced into the text in the manner of unchallengeable laws of nature which no one need bother demonstrating. One rubs one's eyes in sheer amazement. This is a book written in Britain for British readers! But isn't this country being shorn of its empire, aren't its finances in a perilous state, and isn't it moving toward a crisis? So the authoritative British business journals speak of things. But our two authors, who consider themselves stanch socialists, are oblivious of it all, think that the material problems of the British people have been permanently solved, and socialism can now worry about other higher problems, and find the solution to these without any reference to the rest of the world.

We have all read in the history books about Britain's "splendid isolation," but at a time when the country's industry is starving for oil because of the blockade of the Suez Canal, and when the remaining bastions of its once mighty empire are shaking, does it really make sense to discuss British socialism on the plane of a provincial social worker or town planner? This insularity coupled with an absence of any concept of social struggle, compounded by arguments relayed in pedestrian civil service jargon, gives the book its air of unreality and assails the reader's senses with an odor of mustiness and unpleasing reformer uplift smugness.

HERE seems to be the bone structure of the new dogmatics: The elimination of all private capital and the transference of economic power to the state will produce not a society of the free and equal, as Marx imagined, but totalitarian tyranny. Hence, the old idea that socialism demands state ownership of industry is outdated. What we have to aim for instead "is a balance of power between contending forces." The right kind of legislation to alter the distribution of economic power will do the job. The government can achieve this by taxation, proper allocation of the budget, and a limited government sector within a "mixed" economy. Society itself gets into the act and exercises control through Consumers Councils, Works Committees and the trade unions. "The goal of material equality is no longer sufficient to inspire a generation which has all the jobs it wants, and more money in its pockets to spend on pleasure than its parents had to live on for weeks. There is no longer a cause capable of evoking the dedicated idealism of an earlier era." (It is amazing how the argument duplicates David Riesman discussing liberalism in America!) The new dispensation? "What socialists value are all those opportunities which enable people to live in freedom and fellowship, which enrich the content of life and put the quality into equality."

This is the gist of what the official propagandists of the British labor movement have to offer in the second half of the twentieth century. Is it any wonder that official British laborism no longer fires the populace? The rhetoric, of which the preceeding is a passing fair sample, is not strictly first class. What is worse, one cannot escape the conclusion that what the Socialist Union means by socialism is the present British status quo garnished with some additional social security measures. We can admire the official British socialists for being preoccupied with human values and jealous to safeguard the heritage of freedom. But when, ostensibly in pursuit of these high purposes, they erect a new edifice of socialism in which all its guts have been kicked out, and where the good society looks suspiciously pretty much like what exists today, then we must say, as Cyrano de Bergerac said to his friend, Le Bret, "No, thank you!"

M.B.

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