

LABOR ACTION

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FIVE CENTS

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MAY DAY 1952

Greetings to All Fighters for Freedom!

MAY DAY 1952 One Way Only

"The emancipation of the working classes must be conquered by the working classes themselves."
Address of the First International, 1864.

This sentence, written by Karl Marx in 1864, is the fundamental and irreducible concept which distinguishes the socialist approach to politics from all others.

It constitutes the general guiding principle on which socialists base their political strategies. It is the cardinal idea which socialists seek to disseminate among the working class until it becomes an almost instinctive habit of thought. In fact, it is one of those ideas which acquires the impact of an article of faith.

And because socialists remain true to it, they stand as the unshakable champions and adherents of democracy when others tend to abandon it in despair. The moment they cease to believe it, socialists lose their reason for existence as an independent movement.

The main forces of official American liberalism have long ago abandoned, if they ever accepted, this democratic and revolutionizing concept of the role of the working class in the historical process.

They maintain that the working class is just one "interest group" among many of equal social and historical importance, and that its political role must and should be restricted to that of one "pressure group" among the many that vie for political recognition and influence in capitalist society.

They resist and deplore the proposal that the working classes of this country, the vast majority of the population who are bound together by the central fact of their common economic exploitation by capital, should form their own independent political party and seek democratically to assert the paramount political and social rights which follow from their numerical strength and social weight in the country.

They urge the working people of the United States to retain their former political alliances with those sections of the capitalist class which dominate the Democratic party, despite the fact that this alliance has been achieved and can be maintained only at the expense of subordinating the interests of the workers to those of a financially and politically powerful minority.

LIBERALS AND THE "STRONG MAN"

The policies of the liberals, both inside and outside the labor movement, have been carried into practice for the past twenty years—the twenty years of the New Deal and the Fair Deal. And yet today, all sections of official "liberalism" in America are suffering from demoralization and a mood verging on despair.

They face the elections of 1952 not only without a political party which they can truly call their own, but even without a presidential candidate in whom they have any confidence. And to them, this is a matter of acute political and even psychological anguish.

They hark back to the good old days of the '30s when they had a feeling of power in society, when they felt that they were riding the wave of the future, that they were reconstructing society of saner and better foundations; when they felt that they were the bearers of a profound, though orderly, revolution.

They do not, and in fact, cannot, recognize that the old feeling of power and purpose was a function of the surge of the American working class which brought the CIO into existence, and which tamed the unrestricted and arrogant power of the mighty and seemingly impregnable industrial giants in auto, steel, rubber, oil and the other basic industries.

They believe, fondly and with a longing for the past, that

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Next Week's LABOR ACTION —

will be a specially planned number, such as we have issued on May Day for the past two years, devoted entirely to a presentation of the Independent Socialist view on SOCIALISM AND THE FAIR DEAL.

Our regular articles and features will be back as usual the following week.

You'll want to order extra copies of the Fair Deal number. It will amount to a pamphlet on the subject.

Michigan Hits a New Low In Police-State-Type Law

By BERNARD CRAMER

The new Trucks Act adopted this past week by Michigan imposes a police-state law on the people with few rivals for viciousness and ferocity in any part of the country. It may be matched by the Texas law after which it was modeled, and it may be approached by Maryland's Ober Law, but no industrial state with a strong organized labor movement has yet seen its like.

Through a registration procedure deliberately designed to make registration out of the question, the Communist Party is not only effectually outlawed, but any member of the Communist Party may be jailed. In defiance of all other provisions on the subject, any minority party can be kept off or thrown off the ballot by a simple say-so of the attorney general. "Communists" or "subversives" are to be excluded or fired from any government job without the necessity of adducing proof.

After being rushed through the legislature with hysterical speed, following the recent visit to Detroit of the congressional Un-American Committee, this police-state act was signed with similar speed by the Democratic governor of Michigan,

Mennen Williams, whose election was supported by the United Auto Workers (CIO). Williams has been touted as a liberal by the UAW leadership, which was instrumental in boosting his political fortunes.

When the bill was passed, the legislature voted down an attempt to make it apply also to "known members of the Ku Klux Klan and the Black Legion." The reactionary legislators did not even bother to

pretend that they were "equally opposed" to "communism and fascism," in the usual doubletalk.

Liberal and socialist opponents of the measure, who regard the Stalinists (main butt of the law) as enemies of labor and democracy, will have no difficulty in pointing out how the law uses the "Communist menace" only as a whipping-boy in order to put through fundamentally anti-democratic changes in the government setup.

FORM FOR STOOLIES

The main provision of the Trucks Act requires that all members of the Communist Party and Communist organizations register with the state police, empowering the latter to demand any information they wish. Quicker than you could say "totalitarianism," the state police made public a registration form carefully drawn up with triple safeguards to ensure against any possibility of registration.

Their form not only requires registration of the individual but

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EXCLUSIVE: A Firsthand Report

The Nationalist 'Revolution' in Bolivia

By a SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

LA PAZ, Bolivia, April 13—Since its defeat in 1946, the Nationalist Revolutionary Movement (MNR) has not ceased fighting in this country to win back to power. Its coup d'état this week was originally prepared for Saturday, April 12, but it was advanced in time because of the crisis in the military government. This crisis was behind the meeting of the cabinet on the afternoon of April 9.

The military government's minister of police, General Seleme, was a member of the nationalist conspiracy and assured the support of the police and part of the government machinery. Therefore, on the morning of April 10, a proclamation on the government Radio Illimani announced

"the triumph of the national revolution" under the leadership of General Antonio Seleme. On the same day began the resistance of all the regiments and military schools of La Paz against the MNR-Seleme coup. But the coup was carried through, to the surprise of everybody and amid the general indifference of the people.

Three regiments, the Bolivar, Sucre and Perez regiments, undertook a heavy-artillery bombardment of the workers' quarter Villa Victoria, as in the time of the rightist regime of Urriola-goitia. This section of the city is considered to be the center of the MNR's political power.

The workers were indifferent to the "revolution," but when the

bombardment began they followed the advice of the Nationalist leaders and mobilized themselves under arms. Groups of armed workers went against regular heavy artillery with hand rifles, to defend their homes and families, their wives and children, against the criminal massacre launched by the military.

After two days and nights of an infernal bombardment of the city, the provisional organizations of the embattled workers not only repelled the attack of five regiments and two military schools but won complete victory in the struggle, by encircling the regiments, dispersing them and taking thousands of soldiers and officers as prisoners.

Of course, the workers' resist-

ance was greatly favored by the hilly topography of the city and the barricades in the streets, and carried through by audacious group attacks by armed workers against the nests of artillery. In addition, the police forces (carabineers) were very well armed and they backed the workers. But without the workers' heroic fight against the "military heel," and their fervency in taking revenge for the bombardment of their homes, the struggle would have been lost.

The situation leading up to the Bolivian coup d'état, ignored generally by the big press, could have been followed by readers of LABOR ACTION in the dispatches from Latin America of our correspondent Juan Rey. Since the military junta took over (see issue of June 11, 1951), the growing political crisis and the policies of the political groups have been described in articles in the issues of December 31, 1951, and of this January 21, March 17 and April 7. As we have mentioned before, the interpretation of events in these articles is that of our correspondents, but we are glad to present their informed articles.—Ed.

A Study in a Type of Ambiguity

Fritz Sternberg and Stalinism

By HAL DRAPER

A study of Fritz Sternberg's views on Stalinism and Stalinist Russia is of wider interest than merely an evaluation of Sternberg and his work. The latter we discussed in our review of his *Capitalism and Socialism on Trial*, issue before last (April 14). In that review we mentioned that Sternberg illustrates "in the case of an anti-Stalinist, a type of ambiguity with regard to Stalinism which is of interest today."

It may surprise some that we speak of ambiguity at all with respect to Sternberg's views on Stalinism. There would seem to be good reason for such surprise. How does this fit into his other views which we have mentioned? Here is a man who is obviously not only tender about the political reputations of the German Social-Democratic leaders of the post-World War I period, the Eberts and Scheidemanns, but who is also virulently anti-Leninist; who thinks the Russian Revolution was a mistake from the beginning; who is obviously antagonistic to the Stalinist regime, its totalitarianism and expansionism; etc. Where is there room for ambiguity on the question?

Sternberg's anti-Leninism is blatant enough, to be sure, but it is not that which need detain us. Even people who are looking for anti-Leninist "ammunition" will find only vacuous generalities in his book. There is not a single important question about the Russian Revolution or the post-revolution problems on which he even makes an intelligent comment, however hostile.

To the basic problem of the revolution he devotes a subordinate clause: "Precisely because Russia was an industrially backward country, and because therefore a socialist revolution was out of the question . . ." (his emphasis). Trotsky's or Lenin's views on this question never even get mentioned. (Incidentally, in recurrent chapters on the development of Russia through several periods after the war, Trotsky himself never gets mentioned in connection with the revolution, the struggle against Stalinism or the economic and political problems of Russian development.)

Sternberg asserts that the Bolshevik regime was a "party dictatorship" from the beginning, but the assertion exhausts his interest in the subject, it seems. He can even write that "at the very start of the November Revolution all the liberties won by the March Revolution were abolished, and even all the minor liberties which had been wrested previously from tsarism in years of hard struggle." (My emphasis.) This vulgar stuff, which would be too crude and fantastic even for Boris Shub, requires neither respect nor discussion; but what I am stressing is that at every point leading up to his passages on Stalinism, there is no attempt at any kind of political analysis, even the most elementary.

Stalin's theory of "socialism in one country" scarcely exists for Sternberg, though no doubt he has heard of it. The Stalinist "Third Period" line is mentioned in connection with the rise of Hitlerism but not a word ventured in explanation.

Later on he finds himself writing about the Stalinist Popular Front line; he is not in the least concerned with the question of why it came about and what relationship it has to understanding Stalinism itself. At this point, in fact, he seems to be favorably disposed, though I wouldn't swear to it: the French Popular Front government under Blum is mentioned almost incidentally but rather favorably. The Spanish civil war comes in for a page without a word said to indicate that the Stalinists played a role in it, let alone what that role was.

But if Sternberg was or is a supporter of Popular-Frontism, he approached it not from the Stalinist side but from the reformist side; and here again we wish merely to stress that there is not a single question connected with the development of Stalinism that gets a modicum of political discussion from him. This is of a piece with the rest of his book, as we have explained, and it characterizes his incompetence as a political writer.

But the man DOES have views on Stalinism, as we shall see. All we can ascertain at this point is that these views have no visible foundation whatsoever in any political analysis of the development of either Stalinism or Russia; and we will have to find out for ourselves what they DO spring from.

The "Double Character"

Before the Second World War, Sternberg's view of Stalinist Russia was a kind of cruder version of Trotsky's "workers' state" theory, unaccompanied by Trotsky's qualifications and reservations. In his usual stark, unanalytical fashion he embodied it in his 1938 book *Germany and a Lightning War*, as follows:

"Thus the economic system of Soviet Russia remains progressive (because socialist planned economy is progressive compared with the capitalist economic system) even though her political regime is experiencing its Thermidor. . . . [Emphasis in original.]

"If we bear in mind this double character of the present regime in Soviet Russia (progressive as compared with the capitalist states but reactionary as compared with the tasks of the international working-class movement) then it will not be difficult to understand why, despite the clear increase of reactionary tendencies in the Stalinist regime, the fascist states, and in particular National Socialist Germany, continue to regard Soviet Russia as their worst enemy."

This type of interpretation had its similars throughout the working-class movement, from the Trotskyist movement to Norman Thomas, at that time; but the point is that Sternberg has to this day not departed from this

line of thought, though he has whittled it down and become more incoherent on the subject. He would not now repeat the above direct formulation, but his thought has not broken with it.

Even the Hitler-Stalin pact did not shake him. In his book *From Nazi Sources: Why Hitler Can't Win* (1939) we find a version of the apologia for the pact given by the more conscience-stricken of the Stalinist fellow travelers (pages 125-126). But characteristically the apologia is cast in terms of economic considerations (every word of which is now known to be 100 per cent false).

New, in *Capitalism and Socialism*, the section on the Hitler-Stalin Pact is entirely a denunciatory one. In this book, also, we learn from him that Stalinist Russia is not "socialist." Some of his opinions and illusions about Stalinist Russia have been exposed (with no more analysis than his previous convictions were presented). But nothing has taken their place. And the remnants of his previous view stick out here and there even in his latest book, like the working parts of a mill which has been partially dismantled but is still operating in a limping fashion.

Cataloguing "Aspects"

This can be seen most easily at three points. (1) His approach to the character of the Stalinist Russian state is still dominated by a cataloguing of "reactionary elements" and "progressive elements," though the items and their relative weights have changed. Stalinist Russia, he keeps saying, is neither socialist nor capitalist, but following is the nearest he comes to saying another word about this interesting question:

"The result [of the revolution] was that both progressive and reactionary trends went to make up the new state. It is useless to give it a name which is not applicable. It is misleading to stress one aspect of Soviet development at the expense of another. It is not only useless and misleading, but it is dangerous. . . . [My emphasis.]

"What we must do is analyze objectively both the reactionary and progressive factors in Russian development from the days of the November Revolution up to the present time, and then we shall be able to see the real Russia, instead of a phantom built up of hopes, fears and emotions, and to give her her rightful place in the general constellation of world forces." (Page 209.)

Sternberg prelates his description of Russia as "neither socialist nor capitalist" back to the revolution, and adds on page 210: "a state which despite its reactionary tendencies also contained extremely powerful progressive elements."

He never gets a step beyond this eclectic view of Russia as a congeries of "reactionary and progressive factors." The "progressive factor" which he now emphasizes is the "progressiveness of Russian Stalinism" as compared with "Asiatic feudalism. . . ."

This eclectic approach, in which reactionary and progressive elements jostle each other in his mind as he thinks of the Russian phenomenon in different aspects, while he sees no way "to stress one aspect at the expense of another," is what makes possible the coexistence in his thinking of anti-Stalinism and illusions about Stalinism.

The Illusion of Democratization

(2) We mentioned in our review that Sternberg argues, in respect to current politics, for a policy based on a Socialist United States of Europe, which would make possible a political struggle against Stalinism. In both his *How to Stop the Russians Without War* (1948) and in his latest book, he presents this vigorously, even rather agitatedly. For us, these sections are the best things about Sternberg's politics. But right in the middle of this section he opens another door on his views about Stalinism.

In his own italics for emphasis, he takes us aback with: "Then, and then only, will the emergence of democratic currents within the Russian dictatorship be a real possibility."

Does he mean merely that "then and then only" the Stalinist regime could be overthrown by "democratic currents" within the country? or is he really envisioning an eventual democratization of the regime itself?—that typical illusion which is so often common to both the Stalinist fellow traveler and the non-Stalinist who has not entirely sloughed off his illusions about the Soviet myth, not to speak of certain types of anti-Stalinists both in and out of the U. S. State Department.

The ensuing passage clears up nothing; it contains sentences which point both ways; the two thoughts may indeed be indistinguishable for Sternberg. It begins, however, with thoughts which can imply only a democratization within Stalinism, not its overthrow. At the very least this seems to be as likely for Sternberg as the other.

Is it "Imperialist"?

(3) Stalinist Russia is expansionist, Sternberg now recognizes, and he describes its expansionism. But he seems to be uneasy about the characterization.

Is it "imperialist"? He is especially uneasy about this, in a manner reminiscent of the official-Trotskyists' approach. "If imperialism is taken to mean that a state uses its economic and military power to influence the economic and political future of other countries, then present-day Soviet Russia is an imperialist country. . . ." he admits (my emphasis). "However"—he then points out that "present-day Russian expansionism" and "the capitalist imperialist expansion of the past" are different; and from that point on, the only term he uses is Russian "expansionism."

Perhaps we are too suspicious because the official-

Trotskyists also use the substitution of "expansionism" for "imperialism" as a result of their pro-Stalinist orientation; but then we run into something else. We find Sternberg devoting a whole subsection to emphasizing the thesis that this expansionism is not a necessity for the Stalinist regime. In the course of one page he repeats this assertion with five changes of language, without adding an additional idea.

Now one can assert that expansionism or imperialism is not an "inevitable compulsion" for the Stalinist regime, that it is not inherent in its system, only on the basis of an analysis of the nature of that system. (The same goes for the assertion that it is inherent.) But Sternberg repeats and repeats this claim without even a vestige of such an analysis. Why?

If it is so indeed, if Stalinist imperialism is only a policy of "bad" leaders and not organically rooted in the Stalinist system, if therefore it could conceivably be sloughed off as a characteristic of this regime, if furthermore this regime can be democratized by "democratic currents" within it, then a number of conclusions may follow about Stalinism. Sternberg's "iffy" uneasiness about the term Stalinist imperialism becomes a little clearer: IF Russia is acting imperialistically, yet it is a superficial, eradicable, reformable imperialism, a policy of a leadership and not a characteristic of the SYSTEM. It becomes, in fact, one of the elements and factors which is "more progressive" about Stalinism "as compared with" capitalism. It means that in this direction at least, there is more hope to be placed in the further development of Stalinism than of capitalism; etc.

I certainly do not mean to imply that Sternberg has either thought these conclusions, and others, out to the end or is necessarily even aware of them. If he had done this, he would either have written a better book or none at all. But they indicate how his thinking about Stalinism is conditioned by unarticulated beliefs and assumptions about which he does not write but which signal their presence in such passages as these.

The Basic Source

What is it that holds Sternberg bound to unarticulated or half-articulated illusions about the "progressiveness" of Stalinism?

The ways in which Sternberg manifests his continuing illusions are very often quite peculiar to himself; but with respect to their underlying basis, there are few cases more typical or which illustrate the case more clearly.

This is so because of a characteristic of Sternberg which we already mentioned in our review.

Sternberg is at bottom an economic determinist in the sense in which that is different from Marxist historical materialism. He tends to see political questions quite literally as reflections of purely economic factors—and not merely in the famous "long run" either. He tends to make a one-to-one correspondence between politics and economics at every point in the curve. He tends to think as if political views are to be mechanically derived from economic analysis. He illustrates precisely that methodology which ignorant or malicious critics of Marxism have so often attributed to Marxism itself. Sternberg no doubt sincerely believes that his methodology is "Marxist"—just as, no doubt, the above-mentioned uninformed critics sincerely believe that what they are refuting is "Marxism."

With such a methodology, Sternberg is a marked-out victim for that which is the illusion of illusions about Stalinist Russia: that the decisive thing is the "economic basis" of Russia, the existence of nationalized property, which is of course "progressive," while most of the "reactionary elements" are "merely" in the field of politics. The economic basis is progressive; yet we observe that the politics is reactionary. This is bewildering, to be sure, but can we forget the decisive role of the "economic basis"?

The thoughts of better men than Sternberg (Trotsky, for example) have run ragged around this vicious circle, as long as they could not break away from the fatal gravitational pull of the central illusion: the "progressiveness" of the "economic basis." Sternberg could not even start to find a way out without changing his whole approach to understanding political and social phenomena. That which was a trap for Trotsky is Sternberg's whole mode of thought!

Anyone who is at all acquainted with the way in which intelligent Stalinist fellow travelers think (as distinct from whatever they may write) need not be told that this is also the central consideration which holds them enchained to pro-Stalinism. Capitalism in Russia has been destroyed; therefore anything is possible, all our hopes and desires, in spite of zigzags and unpleasant detours in the road to the future, for the economic basis is there. . . .

If Sternberg, nevertheless, is not a Stalinist fellow traveler, it is because he does in fact give greater weight to his democratic sentiments and convictions; it is because he personally cannot reconcile himself to the unpleasant zigzags which the Stalinist fellow traveler learns to swallow if he wants to stay on the train. And the irony of it is that Sternberg thereby disavows his whole mode of thought! A central inconsistency is introduced. His thinking on economics and his thinking on politics are uncoupled and set adrift separately. All the tendencies of his methodology clash violently with political convictions which he cannot bring himself to abandon.

But democratic sentiments and convictions, important as they are, are no substitute for political understanding, which alone gives a solid basis to the democratic convictions of genuine socialism.

We Fight for Socialism and Democracy

MAY DAY GREETINGS

For the Third Camp of World Labor and the Colonial Peoples!

New York Branches, ISL

"THE FUTURE BELONGS TO THE YOUTH"

FORWARD TO A SOCIALIST WORLD!

National Bureau, Socialist Youth League

CARRY ON THE FIGHT FOR DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS!

Philadelphia ISL

Socialist Greetings to a Great Paper

Newark ISL

May Day Greetings

Keep Up the Fight for a

SOCIALIST AMERICA

Chicago ISL

IN MEMORY OF MARTIN ABERN

Will labor's rights be restored after the war? Political conceptions and methods in time always fall into line with economic trends. Developments point and lead toward a greater administrative and military bureaucracy in the post-war present, an economic necessity for imperialist survival and functioning. . . .

If labor is unable to maintain its rights now (major rights to strike and organize, when workers are employed), it will find the obstacles and struggles many times more difficult later. . . .

For every immediate and ultimate reason, therefore, it is better for the workers now to learn the lesson of the ever-present conflicts with the ruling class; to fight today to maintain and extend union rights and organization—even if the fight is not always a winning one—in order to be able on the morrow to better withstand all onslaughts and to forge the better world of socialism.

—From: *The Administration's Anti-Labor Policy*, LABOR ACTION, November 16, 1942.

Organize Youth for Socialist Democracy

New York SYL

SOCIALIST MAY DAY GREETINGS

To The Anti-Fascist Fighters Of Franco Spain

AND TO OUR COMRADES OF THE POUM

Berkeley SYL

Labor!

Abolish hunger, war, slavery, and all the evils of capitalism! You have the power to do it.

Boston ISL

Greetings

from one of the Chicago

"JOCKS"

MAY DAY Greetings

Cleveland ISL

A Salute from the Industrial Heart of America

Pittsburgh ISL

Build the Independent Socialist League!

Oakland ISL

Fraternal Greetings to

LABOR ACTION

On Its Twelfth Birthday

Chicago Socialist Youth League

The 'Revolution' in Bolivia — —

(Continued from page 1)

On Friday, April 11, the "revolution" had triumphed, and the Nationalists dominated the situation unchallenged.

Thus, after six years of persecution and struggle, they have reconquered political power, thanks to the fact that the workers were pushed to their support in heroic battle. The tenacity and vitality of the Nationalist Party can certainly be admired but the real explanation lies in the tenacity and revolutionary heroism of the Bolivian workers.

The main reason for the Nationalist triumph in Bolivia lies in the reactionary, stupid and corrupt policy of the Right, which ended in the criminal bombardment of the capital itself. The rickety bourgeois "democracy" degenerated into the crypto-dictatorship of Urriolagoitia, who massacred the mine workers and industrial workers, and it wound up with the stupid and reactionary military dictatorship which was incapable of solving any of the country's problems.

The second reason for the Nationalists' victory lies in the imperialist policy—also stupid and reactionary—of the U. S. and its embassy in Bolivia. The latter intervened in Bolivian politics against the workers, the leftists and the Nationalists. The tin question mobilized the majority of the Bolivian people against the U. S. and so made the climate favorable for the Nationalists.

The third reason lies in the backward and anachronistic economic and social structure of the country, which demands rapid and radical solutions: the colonial-type one-product economy of the country; the enslaved conditions of the two million Indians; the need for agrarian reform; the low standard of living of the workers—all making for a permanent and stubborn opposition of the working class against the ruling class and its policy. These factors were ably exploited by the Nationalist Party.

PROMISES

In his first official declaration, the No. 2 man of the MNR, Hernan Silez Zuazo (the top

leader is Paz Estenssoro, who has been in exile in Buenos Aires), promised the workers that "our government will not only be one of reform but it will be a government of political, social and economic transformation." He promised a change in the colonial economic structure and a transformation of the one-product economy (tin and other minerals) toward a diversification of the national economy, that is, toward a development of industry and agriculture. He also promised agrarian reform and the integration of the Indians in national life. The secretary of the miners' union, Juan Lechin, promised nationalization of the mines.

This is indeed the key to the situation, the reason for the heroic fight of the workers and also the tragedy of the Nationalists in power. The workers were and are fighting only for power and for a transformation, that is, for "social revolution," and the MNR is fighting only for power and for a patchwork reform of Bolivian capitalism. The MNR government will be only a patchwork government because the MNR is only a petty-bourgeois party and not a revolutionary workers' party.

The Bolivian workers want a revolution but are quite confused about its content, for the MNR talks about the "national revolution" and the Stalinists (PIR) and Trotskyists (POR) talk about the "democratic revolution." But this is precisely the basic error of the Stalinists and backward, Fourth Internationalists; in our time what is possible is only a revolution carried through and led by the workers—that is, only the social revolution, which will solve the national and democratic problems of backwardness in passing. The social revolution of our time is the socialist revolution and its leader is the proletariat, not the petty bourgeoisie or the Stalinist bureaucrats.

The Bolivian POR (Trotskyists) supported the MNR; the militants of the POR fought under the leadership of the Nationalists, in Lechin's groups on the streets, as this writer was able to see personally. They fought in the

hope that the MNR would start the democratic revolution in Bolivia and that "then we (the POR) will come." But in Bolivia there is no revolutionary bourgeoisie or petty bourgeoisie; there is only the nationalist petty bourgeoisie, which is oriented toward Peronism, and the Stalinist "intelligentsia," which would introduce state capitalism.

The sole revolutionary force is the proletariat, which can lead the Indians and enslaved peasants to the social revolution, to socialism. Therefore the workers must pass through the nationalist experience, through the illusion of the "national revolution," before finding their way to the authentic revolutionary socialist workers' movement. The "nationalist experiment" will prove the revolutionary incapacity of the Nationalists, who will not be capable of "social and economic transformation," because they are not a revolutionary party and because Bolivia is a poor, backward semi-colonial country which is incapable of losing the social revolution with its own forces, under the conditions of imperialist domination.

Therefore the MNR's victory and seizure of power is the beginning of its defeat. For they will not and cannot achieve the promised "program of transformation" but will resort to patchwork; then, much as in the case of Peronism, the workers will separate from the Nationalists, for they desire a fundamental social change and not Peronist-type "reforms." And this split between the workers and the Nationalists in power will be the end of the Nationalists.

In spite of barricade fighting and bombardments, what has taken place in the country was not a revolution, not even a "popular" or "national" revolution; it was only a Nationalist coup d'état, begun by the ambitious, grotesque and cowardly general, finished by the workers and exploited by the Nationalist Party, hungry for power. What took place was only a changing of the palace guard, a change in the men in control of the state apparatus and not a change in class power.

Michigan Police-State Law — —

(Continued from page 1)

It can be said that the stupid and criminal bombardment and the cowardice of the military camarilla was what mobilized the working class in vengeance, and so helped to gain the day for the Nationalists.

From Wednesday afternoon to Thursday night the Nationalists' situation was so bad that General Selemo, who had delivered the police power to the MNR, took refuge in the Chilean embassy and sought a reconciliation with the military leaders. His role was certainly a very grotesque one, for the Nationalists had proclaimed him to be "the leader of the national revolution." But though the leaders lost hope of victory, the workers did not, and thus they were able to defeat the army and military schools with only small arms and machine guns.

also obliges that individual to become a wholesale stoolpigeon. He is asked to put the finger on the person who recruited him, name the CP members in groups he belongs or belonged to, "name any Communist schools or classes that you may have attended and list the names of the instructors and your fellow students," etc. Failure to register, as well as any omission in filling in the form, carries the penalty up to 10 years in jail and a \$10,000 fine.

The Detroit press makes it amply clear that officials consider the form a necessary farce; no registration is expected. The reason is also clear for going through the motions of invoking a registration procedure.

This procedure is modeled after a similar Texas law which brought not a single registration

in two years of operation. Yet, said the head of the Michigan state police, Leonard, Texas officials have been "satisfied with it."

Since no one will register, CP members can then be automatically jailed for refusing to register, NOT (repeat not) for being a Communist. It is for this reason that the form was drawn up so as to make registration impossible even for publicly acknowledged leaders of the CP.

The first victims of the law, however, have not been the Stalinists. Immediately upon its signature by Governor Williams, the Socialist Workers Party was barred from the state ballot. This, after the SWP had already filed 12,000 petition signatures to get on the ballot.

This action was taken, admittedly, by decree of the state attorney general, who "said that the United States attorney general had designated the Socialist Workers Party as a 'dissident Communist group.'" (Detroit News, Apr. 18.) Thus the infamous "subversive list" drawn up at the behest of President Truman becomes the basis for the Michigan atrocity. The text of the Trucks Law is not available to us, as we write, and it is unclear whether the law itself refers directly or indirectly to the Truman "subversive list."

FIXING A "DEFECT"

All provisions for the legality of minority parties and their candidates thus become subject to veto by one man, with no provision for any democratic check.

In fact, the Trucks Law was adopted, at least in part, in order to avoid the necessity of presenting positive evidence in "subver-

sive" cases. This is the "defect" of the Michigan statute already on the books. As the Detroit Times explained (Apr. 18): "Michigan for several years had had a statute permitting up to a life sentence for subversive activity. No one has been prosecuted because it must be proven by testimony that the accused had advocated overthrow of the U. S. government by force or violence."

In a slip of the tongue, state Police Commissioner Leonard is quoted: "In future trials or arrests, if a proven Communist is picked up he can be tried under the new Michigan law instead of requiring the state to prove that he is a subversive." (Detroit Free Press, Apr. 18. Emphasis added.)

Detroit also has a charter amendment, passed in 1949, which proved "unsatisfactory" because it required more proof than does the new state law. Thus in successive stages the police-state mentality "improves" its legal bludgeons.

Special provisions of the Trucks Act are aimed at all government employees in state or local offices. All public rolls are to be cleared of "subversives," decisions on "subversiveness" to be purely administrative by department heads. Employees are denied the right to refuse to answer questions. The state civil service director announces the beginning of a virtual reign of terror:

"Arthur G. Rasch, state civil service director, said his staff is checking records of employees 'about whom there has been some suspicion.' There are about 12 we suspect," he said. "Others have resigned for various reasons. The entire 22,000 workers are under close

One Way Only — —

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this was in the main the work of one man, Franklin Delano Roosevelt.

And from those days to the present they have been yearning for and seeking another champion, another leader. That, and only that, can explain the tendency of so many of them to support, un- easily and with a feeling of frustration, another man of magnet- ism and power, even if he is named Eisenhower.

From the same basic lack of faith in the capacity of the working classes, of the great majority of the people both in our own country and abroad for democratic decision and action stems the liberal's support of American foreign policy. To be sure, the boldest among them criticize and deplore decisions to support this dictator or that reactionary ruling class or colonial regime. Abstractly, most of them profess the idea that America should champion and encourage the national and democratic revolutions in Asia, or the Middle East, or Spain.

But concretely, the fact that the American government stands as the bulwark of capitalist reaction all over the world does not deter them from supporting its foreign policy in the main. When the democratic aspirations of the masses clash with the military plans and programs of the government, they join the chorus which insists that the latter must be given priority.

For the vast majority of them, even plans with a democratic potential like the general idea of a Point Four type of program are seen as means to assure "social stability" in the backward countries of the world. Their lack of confidence in the capacity of the masses for democracy results in a paralyzing fear of Stalinism.

Like the generals in the Pentagon, they have real confidence in only one political force: the potential superiority of American arms.

It is the lack of confidence in democracy which leads to the sterility of "anti-Communism" as a substitute for a social program.

THE STRUGGLE NEVER CEASES

Democracy does not win the allegiance of millions as an abstract idea. It is a means for achieving more tangible and concrete social and economic ends.

Yet when democratic forms are manipulated for the purpose of keeping in power an economic oligarchy which keeps them in a position of poverty and insecurity, they will turn, for a while, to political parties which promise them a new and better status in society, even if at the expense of democracy.

It is this promise, and the willingness to act upon it to the extent of crushing the old ruling classes, which gives Stalinism its political appeal in Western Europe and Asia. It cannot be defeated by propaganda about "democracy" which turns out to be nothing but support of the existing and hated economic system.

It cannot be countered with an "anti-Communism" which amounts to the same thing. It can be defeated only by a mobilization of the working people in a movement which seeks to put a thoroughgoing democracy into consistent practice as a means of transforming the economic system into one which corresponds to their needs and aspirations.

But the cry rises in this year of 1952: Are the working classes of the world really capable of emancipating themselves? We have been waiting for them to do it ever since 1864. And although there have been powerful movements, revolutions, struggles for national liberation, labor victories in elections . . . nowhere have the working classes succeeded in emancipating themselves and building the new society, more democratic, more free, which is the historic goal of human struggle. Has not the socialist faith in the masses turned out to be an illusion?

The road has been a long one since the founding of the First International in 1864, and it is true that the defeats have been more lasting than the victories. The new oppressive society of totalitarian Stalinism now vies for world rule with the old and sagging system of capitalism. The socialist movement in America is weaker than it has been in recent history, and in most countries of the world it is contending for its very existence with the mass movements of Stalinism.

All this is bitterly true. The working classes have not exhibited a miraculous capacity—which socialists never thought they had—to avoid false leaders and false programs. They have not at all times been able to pick out the main enemy and unite to defeat him.

They have not always shown a greater capacity than the liberal professors and professional labor leaders to resist the lure of following and depending on the strong man. In short, they have not everywhere and in their mass learned the primary lesson which socialists seek to teach: that their emancipation can only be won by themselves.

But they have never ceased to struggle. With greater determination and unity at times, and with less at others; with greater illusions here, and with fewer ones there; with a clearer understanding of their historical role now, and with a more confused one then—the struggle has gone on. And as long as that continues to be true, there can be disappointment and discouragement, but there never need be despair.

Whatever the successes or the failures, one fact remains: There is no individual, there is no group or military machine on earth which can achieve democracy let alone economic emancipation FOR the working classes, the masses of human beings in the world. They can only do it for themselves.

To aid them to understand this truth as clearly and as realistically as possible, and to act on it is the central task of the socialist movement in general, and of the Independent Socialist League in particular.

observation." (News, Apr. 18.)

Detroit's educators, if such they can be called, hastened to come forward, salute, and toe the line. Heads of the school system promised to carry the banner of the witchhunt and purge among the teachers. The presidents of Wayne University and Michigan State College issued statements of humble compliance, as quoted in the city's press.

The Detroit News quoted one "known Communist" as saying: "If they jail us we'll get publicity all over the world from this. The Russians will have a fine time writing about the way we're treated."

As we write it is yet to be seen whether liberal and labor proponents of civil liberties will speak up vigorously against the act and Gov. Williams' approval.