

# LABOR ACTION

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FIVE CENTS

## SPOTLIGHT

### UN on Hungary

The UN commission's report on the savage Russian suppression of the Hungarian people, and its account of the great heroism and socialist aims of the freedom fighters, will be a basic document for the history of our times; so it appears from the press reports and summaries on it.

It is noteworthy that it was drawn up—unanimously—by representatives especially of small nations, and therefore will speak all the more directly to most peoples everywhere. It is sure to be a strong blow against illusions and misconceptions about the "progressiveness" or benevolence of the Russian tyrants which are often held in many countries.

To recall the need for this kind of blow—in view of the fact that most readers may not feel that their own opinions about Russian intervention in Hungary require bolstering by the UN—we may remember the disgraceful attitude taken for the whole first period by a Nehru, as a reflection of the situation in the minds of India and Asia.

### But in Algeria—

But while the UN found it possible to document the truth on Hungary, where the criminal involved is totalitarian Russia, it has still not found it possible to take up the rights of another people who are being as cruelly slaughtered and suppressed. These are the Algerians, whose hangmen are the leaders of our very democratic ally France.

That crime goes on. It is even going to be stepped up, it appears.

The new premier Bourges-Maunoury was the defense minister in the preceding Guy Mollet cabinet, and was one of those most intransigently in favor of a brutal policy of blood and terror in Algeria. He now heads the French government (however temporarily) with the blessing and support of Mollet and the votes of Mollet's socialist party. More than that, and perhaps more important from the point of view of continuity, the French resident general—the man directly in charge of prosecuting the infamous assassination of Algerian national freedom—is still Robert LaCoste, the "socialist" who is showing French reaction how reliable a social-democratic imperialist can be.

In fact, just the other day LaCoste got the accolade from one of the leaders of the French colonialist community in Algeria, which is fighting with back to the wall and shows its desperation. He threatened Bourges-Maunoury with the riot act if the new premier dared to replace the widely hated LaCoste.

The fall of the Mollet government, therefore, took Mollet personally off the hot seat, but it has not lessened the terrible complicity of the French socialist party. This perhaps is what is of the most immediate moment to socialists, including socialists like ourselves who feel only

horror and indignation of molletism.

We can scarcely even call upon the UN first to speak out about the criminals in Algeria, when there is many a socialist party and social-democracy—including the SP-SDF of this country—which has not spoken out yet in condemnation of the Molletist policy, publicly.

Some time ago, the Uruguayan Socialist Party called on the parties of the Second International to do so. It is high time, and an elementary socialist duty.

### Something New?

There seems to be something new stirring on the Arab refugee problem, for the first time in some time; and one dares to wonder whether it looks hopeful.

The reason for the dubiety is, of course, the inspired and tendentious nature of the reports emanating from both sides, Israeli and Arab, and the past experience in which such reports have been simply weapons in the mutual propaganda war. But—

It is said that larger numbers of the refugees themselves are thinking in terms of accepting resettlement. It is said that more of the Arab leaders are becoming reconciled to a "coexistence" deal with Israel. It is said that the Israelis are willing to make new concessions.

Whether any of that turns out to have substance or not, the very fact that such sparring takes place at least creates the atmosphere where people on both sides have to turn their minds to the problem of finding a way to live together in the Middle East; and that is all to the good.

In this context it is interesting to read, this past week, in a N. Y. Times dispatch from Tel Aviv, of pressure being put on the Ben-Gurion regime by leaders of the American Jewish Committee, one of the major organizations of the Jewish community here ("non-Zionist" but fellow-traveling with respect to most Zionist aims).

The focal point of the difference between their ideology and that of the Israelis and Zionists lies in the field of the relationship between American Jewry and Israel: the people of the AJC, as "good Americans," bridle at any suggestion by Zionism that all Jews everywhere are really members of a "Jewish nation" in "exile," all of whom should owe allegiance to the "Jewish State" rather than to the state they live in.

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# Is Mao's Regime Challenging Moscow As a Power Center?

By GORDON HASKELL

Last February Mao Tse-tung, Communist Party boss of China, delivered a speech to a party gathering in which he discussed social contradictions within "Communist" society. The consequences of this speech continue to reverberate throughout the unsettled and crisis-ridden Communist world.

In fact, the speech itself, as well as the widespread reactions to it, can cast light on the nature of the crisis which racks Stalinism, and the means by which the ruling groups in each country are trying to meet it.

For this purpose it is not necessary to go into all the subtleties and nuances of Mao's speech. The striking features of the speech were its bald assertions that contradictions between the leadership and the masses continue to exist in China; that it is dangerous and undesirable to try to "solve" these contradictions by repressing criticism of and opposition to the policies and practices of the ruling party; that differing points of view must be permitted to exist and to be expressed; that persuasion and education should replace repression.

It is nothing new for a Stalinist to proclaim the virtues of persuasion as against repression, or to call for widespread criticism as a means of correcting "bureaucratic abuses." The speeches and writings of Stalin himself were studded with such assertions over the years. Since his death, it has been a constant theme, played over with varying degrees of emphasis throughout the Communist world.

What is new for a Stalinist leader is the admission that inherent in the Communist system, at least at this stage of its development in China, are contradictions between the bureaucracy and the masses.

The other aspect of the speech, which gives it truly international significance, is the challenge, implicit in its timing and context, to the supreme position of the Russian leadership as ideological and political overlords of the Communist world.

### DEFLECTING PRESSURE

With regard to the first point: The

"struggle against bureaucratism" has been a fairly constant feature of the bureaucratic system ever since its inception. What is involved is a continuing effort to overcome the economically damaging consequences of the social antagonism between the bureaucracy and the masses by a strictly directed and controlled process of "criticism and self-criticism."

In addition (and this becomes the dominant motive in situations of acute crisis), the top leadership seeks to deflect fundamental criticism of the system and of itself by pointing the finger at this or that individual or group who is charged with "bureaucratic excesses" and the like. (The most striking and dramatic examples were the attempt to load onto the shoulders of the dead Stalin and executed Beria the blame for all the grievances of the Russian population accumulated over three decades.)

### CHALLENGE TO MOSCOW

Mao, however, has gone one significant step further than any other leader by recognizing that the conflict between the bureaucracy and the masses is a feature of the system itself rather than an abuse of it. Though the existence of this contradiction was stated in the most general and vague way possible, and integrated into a program for dealing with it which is designated to maintain the unquestioned supremacy of the Communist Party as ruler in the country, it is clear that to give official recognition to this central conflict within Communist society is an extremely dangerous and daring step.

In all the "anti-bureaucratism" campaigns in Russia and the satellites (and in Tito's Yugoslavia as well) what was stressed was the fundamentally "indissoluble unity" between the party, its Central Committee, the government and the people. This fundamental identity of interest, so the story went, was or had been endangered by the abuses and excesses of individual bureaucrats. Let the people speak out against the culprits! If they do so, they can rely on the top leadership to back them up, and correct the "abuses and shortcomings" of the lower echelons of bureaucrats. So they said.

Why did Mao decide to take it? Although an attempt to answer this question necessarily involves a certain amount of speculation, enough of what is going on in the Communist world is

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## The Final Blow at 'Creeping Socialism'

"The only reason we have fabulously wasteful highway and street congestion which seems to be beyond correction is because we have socialized streets and highways. If we had privately owned streets and highways, operated as private enterprises, this accented problem of congestion would never have arisen and would be self-solving."

—Dr. Emerson P. Schmidt, Research Director of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, in a speech before the American Institute of Architects.

## Report on a Visit to Poland:

The 'Gomulka Way'  
And the Workers

By MAX MUELLER

Berlin

1956 goes down in Polish history as a memorable year. In June the Poznan workers struck a blow against the Stalinist dictatorship, only to be brutally crushed by the armed forces of the state. In October the people carried through a peaceful "revolution." This "revolution," often characterized in Poland as the "October days," was led by the students, journalists and working class which organized mass demonstrations in all leading Polish cities demanding national independence and freedom.

The Polish United Workers Party (Communist), rolling with the punch of "revolution," rehabilitated Gomulka, who became head of the party. Gomulka became the symbol of the anti-Stalinist revolution and achieved a great deal of popularity in Poland during the "October days."

Gomulka was caught between the seething ferment of the masses and the pressure of the Soviet state whose army was (and is) on Polish soil. An agreement was reached with the Soviet Union which considerably improved the political and economic status of Poland. However, Poland retained her membership in the Warsaw Pact and she remains within the Soviet orbit. Internally, Gomulka reached agreements with the peasants, the petty-bourgeois elements and the Catholic Church.

With regard to the peasants, forced collectivization was ended and now at least 80 per cent of the land is operated under private farms. A great deal of farm produce is sold directly by the peasants to the city people in local markets.

With regard to the petty-bourgeois elements, a considerable number of privately owned small shops and businesses are now flourishing; however, no industry has been denationalized.

Gomulka made a "concordat" with the Catholic Church which gave the church much more freedom of operation. Religious education is now given in the schools by the church. Other churches also have this same right but the Catholic Church is the dominant one. Social pressure to attend the Catholic classes is great and a number of beatings have been administered to non-Catholic children who refused to attend.

Gomulka has been able to satisfy, at least to some extent, the claims of the peasantry, the petty-bourgeoisie and the Catholic Church. Naturally these groups, with improved statuses, have to varying degrees supported the "Gomulka way." There is evidence that they want more, however.

The Communist Party, however, does not claim to be a party of the peasantry, the petty-bourgeoisie, or the Catholic Church, but rather a party of the working class. Its actions regarding the working class can best be described by a brief analysis of the Workers Council movement.

## WORKERS COUNCILS TRENDS

Following the "October days," a Workers Council movement developed in Poland. In November the Polish parliament, composed of National Unity Front members led by the Communist Party, passed a law concerning workers councils. It stated, in part:

"Workers Councils, elected by all employees of a firm, shall administer the enterprise, which nevertheless remains the property of the state. The director is appointed by the state authorities after agreement with the council; and he has to direct the enterprise in accordance with the plan, the resolutions of the council and orders from a superior state authority. In case of conflict between the director and the council, the final decision lies with the minister."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Economic Survey of Europe in 1956; (Geneva, United Nations, 1957), pp. 42-43.

Max Mueller is a West German socialist recently returned from a trip to Poland where he spoke with many Polish people including industrial workers, peasants, a medical doctor, management officials, technicians and journalists. Their identities, for obvious reasons, are not given.—Ed.

Subsequent statements of Prime Minister Cyrankiewicz and other government officials indicated that the Workers Councils should be mainly interested in eliminating waste and raising productivity. The parliament under the National Unity Front regarded itself as the supreme political element in Poland.

The Workers Councils did not hew to the party line. They held a national conference at Chrzanow in February at which Workers Council delegates from all over Poland met.

The conference call stated that the delegates would discuss the relationships between the Workers Councils and plant managements, central administration, the Communist Party plant fractions and the plant trade-union councils.<sup>2</sup>

The delegates to the conference were divided into three different groups: revolutionary socialists, moderates or reformists, and Stalinists. The first two groups included both non-party people as well as party members.

## "ALL POWER . . ."

The revolutionaries, under the leadership of L. Gozdzik, head of both the Workers Council and the factory Communist Party fraction at the Zeran Auto Factory, put forth the slogan of "All power to the Workers Councils." Gozdzik stated in an opening speech that there was no time for discussing the details of the relationship between the Workers Councils and the central administrations but rather "It is a fight between us and them."

The left-wing program, strongest among the delegates from the large industrial enterprises of Warsaw, Poznan and other big cities, proposed complete workers control of the economy from bottom to top with power to reside in the workers through their elected representatives in the plants and in the central administrations.

The moderates were anti-Stalinist but not so critical of the regime nor so sharp in their demands for workers' control.

The Stalinists (referred to as "conservatives" in the Polish press in contrast to the bourgeoisie, which is referred to as classical conservative), seeking to divert the revolutionary anti-Stalinist direction of the Workers Council delegates, issued an anonymous leaflet which was venomously anti-Semitic. This demagogue proved unsuccessful.

The final resolutions of the Workers Council conference, although not as specific and radical as the left-wing proposals, called for workers' control of the economy from the plant level to the central administration.<sup>3</sup>

Although some of the press reported the final resolutions of the conference, Gozdzik's slogan of "All power to the Workers Councils" was either ignored or distorted. One newspaper reported it as "All economic power in the plant to the Workers Council." Such a distortion in-

<sup>2</sup>Gazeta Krakowska, organ of the Krakow District Communist Party, (Krakow, February 11, 1957), p. 1.

<sup>3</sup>For the complete text of the resolutions of the conference, see Gazeta Krakowska, February 13, 1957, p. 1.

icated that the Communist Party realized the danger of Gozdzik's slogan.

Today in Poland workers' councils may be divided into two different types—real and fake. There are about 20 real Workers Councils, in which power is lodged in the workers, who elect the Workers Council, which controls the director of the factory and has the right to hire and fire him.

The relationship between the council and the central administration, although clear in the aforementioned law, has been hazy in practice. There have been numerous cases of clashes. These real Workers Councils are concentrated mainly in the basic factories such as Zeran, the WFM Motorcycle plant in Warsaw and the locomotive and farm-machinery factories in Poznan. All but the 20 real Workers Councils are phony in that their power is only advisory.

Conditions in the real Workers Councils are not all rosy. Following are excerpts from an interview I held with a Poznan worker who is employed in one of the factories which has a real Workers Council.

Q.—"Were the elections to your Workers Council free?"

A.—"Yes."

Q.—"Does your Workers Council control the director of the factory?"

A.—"In theory, yes. They may hire and fire the director. But our director is the same man we had before October. The Workers Council, the factory director and the minister in the central administration all work hand in glove."

Q.—"Can you not control your representatives to the Workers Council?"

A.—"They are elected for two years so what can we do? Gomulka has told us that Poland is poor and that there is no money for wage increases this year. You know that Russia forced Poland to sell coal to her for many years at half the price offered in the West. Also the coal was transported to Russia free of charge."

Q.—"With your elected Workers Councils, is it not easier to get wage adjustments?"

A.—"No. We are paid on the same incentive system. The standards are determined by the same time-study engineers who operate in the same fashion with the same stop watches. The time-study engineers are also paid on the incentive system; the tighter they make our standards the more money they make."

## "SO POLAND MAY LIVE"

The "Gomulka way" is not the Workers Council way. Even the most radical newspapers, such as *Po Prostu* and *Nowa Kultura*, once strong supporters of the Workers Councils, are now cool on the subject. The reason given me by a leading intellectual and Gomulka supporter, is that the real Workers Councils must die so Poland may live.

(A revolutionary socialist took exception to this widely held view. He contended that Poland should establish Workers Council socialism and export revolution to the Soviet Union.)

Almost all the Polish people are apparently convinced that Poland would be committing suicide and be obliterated as a nation by the Soviet army if either socialism or capitalism was introduced.

He attributed the failure of Poland to introduce socialism to two basic reasons.

First, Poland is isolated geographically with the Soviet Union on the east, Czechoslovakia on the south, East Germany on the west and the Baltic Sea on the north. Second, socialism in an isolated Poland is impossible and since the international working-class movement is now dead, no assistance could come to Poland. The Communist Parties throughout the world oppose socialism and social democracy has such leaders as Mollet who is not a socialist.

The left-Gomulkaites, although unofficially very friendly to the Hungarian Revolution and very anti-Stalinist, follow an official line which may be characterized as reformist, that is, reformist-Stalinist. They do not work to overthrow the old regime but rather to reform it. The limits of the reform for them are prescribed by the Soviet Union and its implicit threat of intervention. Notwithstanding this, however, Poland since October, is certainly the freest of the satellite states.

There are reportedly no political prisoners. There is apparently considerable freedom of speech, including criticism of the regime from both the left and the right. I found no one afraid to talk to a Westerner and many were quite willing to criticize the regime even in public.

Freedom has not been extended to permit the organization of any political opposition to the National Unity Front. Censorship of mail to and from the West continues. Only Communist newspapers were sold at the newsstands.

Ironically, papers friendly to Gomulka such as *France-Observateur* are not available while western Communist papers hostile to Gomulka are plentiful. Books such as John Reed's *Ten Days that Shook The World* are now being published. Rosa Luxemburg's works are allegedly available in the libraries although they are not published.

## ECONOMIC NOTES

In the economic sphere, Poland seems in rather desperate shape. She has negotiated loans with both the Soviet Union and the United States. However, these loans are not sufficient to make much of a dent in the Polish economy.

Under the Stalinist regime in the past 12 years a considerable amount of industrialization has taken place; they officially estimate that the number of industrial workers has doubled. Despite this industrialization, the economy is disorganized. Old housing has been permitted to deteriorate completely and new housing is very inferior. Coal, one of the basic industries, is often transported by horse and wagon, which is a common means of transportation in contemporary Poland. A tremendous army is under mobilization and yet there is apparently still a great deal of both underemployment and unemployment.

The logical outcome of such a large army, unemployment and a disorganized economy is low wages and high prices. From my discussions with a number of workers, I concluded that the average industrial worker earns about 5 zlotys per hour or about 1000 zlotys per month.

The consumer goods, as in other Eastern European countries, are of very poor quality generally. Necessities such as meat are often not even available. Western clothes sell at high prices in Warsaw both on the black market and in the shops officially. The standard of living of the Polish working class is, in fact, far lower than that of the East German working class, which is considerably lower today than during the days of Hitler Germany.

## JUST FOR ONCE

("To a Viennese Waltz Tune")

Now to the left,  
now to the right,  
one step forward,  
and two steps back,  
democracy  
for years  
was out of joint  
and that's the point—  
between Moscow  
and our Warsaw  
this sweet waltz  
poisoned blood.  
Now to the left,  
now to the right,  
a bit of gripe, a bit of  
song, a little prance,  
but now the time is ripe,  
once again, once again,  
once again,  
that from this struggle  
of classes,  
hear ye, hear ye, hear ye,  
something may benefit the  
masses  
just for once, just for once,  
just for once!

from "New Year Ditty, 1957,"  
by Włodzimierz Bzeczolowski,  
*Głos Wyrzesa* (Gdansk), Dec. 31, 1956

Nenni's Party Is the Battleground of Tendencies

# Italian Socialism in Crisis: The Problem of Regroupment

By A. GIACOMETTI

Eight months after Nenni and Saragat's meeting at Pralognan, Italian socialism has not yet succeeded in overcoming its crisis, which continues to dominate the political scene in Italy.

The fall of the Segni government last month, and the disintegration of the "Center Coalition" (the alliance of Christian-Democracy with the Republicans, the Liberals and the Social-Democrats) is the most recent consequence of the socialist crisis.

The immediate cause of Segni's fall was the withdrawal of Saragat and three other social-democratic ministers from the coalition. Several factors contributed to make this withdrawal inevitable.

At the end of February, the Republican Party had already quit the "Center coalition" in protest against the reactionary agrarian legislation of the government. Secondly, the right wing of Christian-Democracy managed to impose Togni, of the Employers' Federation, as the minister in charge of the state-owned sectors of the economy, thereby conquering a powerful means of corruption for the next elections and ensuring that no nationalized enterprise would endanger the position of private industry.

Even under the circumstances Saragat and his friends might have remained in government, had a new situation not developed within the Social-Democratic Party (PSDI): the strengthening of the left wing under the leadership of Mario Zagari, with the support of party secretary Matteo Matteotti.

This new situation had arisen as a result of the 32nd Congress of Nenni's Italian Socialist Party (PSI), held in Venice last February. For a better understanding of the present situation it is necessary to briefly return to the events of that Congress.

## NENNI'S FOUR POINTS

Coming at the most critical moment of the Stalinist crisis, the PSI's Venice congress confirmed the "declaration of independence" of the PSI from Stalinism. Nenni's opening speech to the congress, which was frequently interrupted by stormy applause, was a sharp denunciation of Stalinist policy.

He observed that the Italian working class had failed to benefit from technological progress and from the economic recovery of the country due to the sterile policy which the Stalinist leadership had imposed on the Italian labor movement. He cried out: "We don't want the Italian working class to know a Budapest!"

At the close of the congress, the PSI adopted four general principles which summarize the main aspects of Nenni's new policy:

(1) The party is prepared to merge with the PSDI.

(2) It declares its complete independence from the CP.

(3) It henceforth bases its action on the principles of freedom and democracy and accepts to participate in the organization of Western defence. Nenni even went so far as to declare that the PSI could accept NATO if it was transformed from a military pact into an instrument of economic assistance; at the same time, he advocated the constitution of a belt of neutral states in Europe.

(4) The party believes in the necessity of European union.

## AGAINST CAPITULATION

The adoption of these principles as a basis for party policy represented a decisive break with the CP and a long step toward a merger with the PSDI, but, at the same time, created new ambiguities.

Throughout the congress, the delegates had come out enthusiastically for a policy of independence from all power blocs, and for an independent, united and militant socialist movement. Nenni's platform, on the other hand, left many questions unanswered; it complied too willingly with the requirements of social-democracy; it did not offer sufficient

guarantees that the break from Stalinism would lead to an independent socialist course rather than to a capitulation to Saragat.

The final stages of the congress made clear that the majority of the party strongly disapproved of any such capitulation. The most significant episode in this connection was the election of the Central Committee of the PSI, in which most observers saw a defeat for Nenni.

Out of 81 members, only 29 were elected on Nenni's ticket; 15 were elected on Basso's ticket, which represented a firmer and more independent socialist point of view; 9 were elected on Pertini's slate, which represented hostility to the merger with the PSDI and to the break with Stalinism; 31 were elected under the leadership of a young, previously little-known functionary called Dario Valori.

Most bourgeois observers assumed these last to be hidden Stalinists, and their election to mean a "revenge" of the Stalinist apparatus in the PSI. In reality, things did not happen that simply.

## WHAT THE RANKS WANT

The Stalinists were routed at the Congress; not a single speaker dared to take the defense of any aspect of Stalinist policy, or to advocate the continuation of the PSI-CP alliance. Valori's tendency did not stand for a well-defined, homogeneous group but expressed several things at the same time; the resentment of some Stalinists was no doubt part of it, along with an instinctive reaction of the apparatus (a rather weak and small apparatus, it should be added) against a possible threat to its security. But, more important, it also expressed the opposition of the rank and file against the too-generous concessions Nenni seemed to be willing to make to the PSDI.

Within the whole context of the Congress, the political significance of the CC elections was to block any "social-democratization" of the PSI WITHOUT re-establishing the former close ties with the PCI.

This was the line that corresponded most closely to the desires of the overwhelming mass of the party's followers, represented by the delegates to the congress. A further confirmation can be seen in the elections by the CC of the Directing Committee, in which 10 followers of Nenni were elected against 6 of Valori's and 3 of Basso's.

Consequently, it seemed after Venice that the unification of all socialist forces would be a matter of weeks. The congress had been a great encouragement to all left-wing and independent socialist groups.

## USI MERGES

The Independent Socialist Union (USI) considered that, in view of the Congress results, there was no longer any justification for its existence as a separate organization. On March 24, its CC decided by a vote of 38 against 1 for the PSI.

The terms of the merger were that on all levels (local, regional, national) a certain number of elected representatives of the USI would be co-opted into the directing bodies of the PSI. Six members of the USI Central Committee (Giovana, Libertini, Magnani, Pischel, Scarongella and Woditzka) were co-opted into the Central Committee of the PSI. The USI also asked to be represented by two members on the PSI executive (DC), but this request was turned down.

As far as the PSDI was concerned, most socialists expected that it would

take the next step toward unity and withdraw from the government. This was the demand of the PSDI Left, which had grown rapidly in response to the new policy of the PSI, and now amounts to about 40 per cent of the party, deriving its main strength from the industrial federations of the North.

Saragat's policy, however, was much different.

Before Venice, when there were hopes that the PSI could be stamped into unity on Saragat's terms—i.e., full acceptance of the political line of the PSDI—there was no more ardent advocate of unity. After Venice, there was no one more skillful in contriving delays and evasive maneuvers.

First he seized on the elections to the CC of the PSI, which according to him, meant that the PSI was willing to continue collaboration with the Stalinists, to show that unification was impossible. He insisted on the continued participation of the PSDI in government as long as he could without threatening his own position in the party. He postponed the congress of the PSDI to avoid bringing the issue to a head.

## RIGHT-WING DEMANDS

In April, he confronted the PSI with an unacceptable ultimatum, demanding that it (1) pledge to "adhere to the principles of democracy"; (2) pledge to "support Atlantic solidarity and the campaign for European unity"; and (3) sever all links with the Communists.

The two first points are merely a reiteration of Saragat's old demand that the PSI play the game of parliamentarianism and of alliance with the Right on the basis of a pro-U.S. foreign policy.

The third point meant that the PSI was to cut off all relations with the CP—not at the summit, where it had already broken, but at the grass-roots: in the trade-unions, in the co-ops, in the small towns and villages. This the PSI cannot do and should not do for several reasons which are well-known but which it doesn't hurt to restate.

The basic fact in the present situation is the existence of several million Communist workers and peasants; without this militant and well-organized core of the working class, no move towards socialism is possible in Italy.

These masses of people are not Stalinists. They are people who are compelled by extreme poverty to find immediate and radical solutions to the problems of Italian society, and who follow the CP because it has provided them with the most effective organization they have ever had. All other external problems are immaterial to them: they are not going to accept every directive of the CP leadership because they are told that Russia is a socialist paradise; but neither will they leave the CP and its organizations because the Hungarian revolution has been crushed. Like most ordinary people, they have pressing practical problems, and they will join the party that offers the best practical solutions.

For socialists, nothing would be more suicidal than to start a civil war with these people, but this is precisely what Saragat's policy amounts to: "break with the CP at the grass-roots" does not mean to break with Togliatti and his machine but to break with the Communist worker and peasant.

The independent socialists of the PSI, on the other hand, consider that any fundamental criticism of the CP leadership, and of Stalinism as a political movement, cannot be demonstrated sufficiently on paper, but only in action: by working together with the Communist ranks and by doing a better job in their eyes than the CP itself, as far as organization, political strategy and education is concerned. It is clear, on the other hand, that this line necessarily also involved a constant struggle against the Stalinist top leadership.

Unfortunately, after Venice, the PSI did not follow such a consistent, independent course which would have enabled

it to defeat Saragat's and the Stalinists' maneuvers. The reasons for this must be sought in the political traditions of the PSI leadership, which are those of Italian maximalism: social-democratic instincts overlaid with revolutionary historicism.

For most of the PSI's leaders, the alliance with Stalinism had been deeply satisfactory, combining a revolutionary form with a reformist content; even after Venice they remained nostalgically attached to it. For others, who had broken with Stalinism, the reformist alternative was the only one that remained real in their minds.

The political line of the PSI—and for this Nenni bears some personal responsibility—became a futile chase after Saragat.

It is significant that during the same period, the USI, which had offered to merge on the terms of the PSI when the PSI needed its contribution most, was viewed with some mistrust and embarrassment. A vague hostility toward the independent socialists was the only issue on which the leading reformists and the defeated Stalinists were able to agree within the post-Venice PSI.

The leadership of the party was making it easy both for Saragat and for the Stalinists. The former was utilizing every concession of the PSI to lead it along further toward social-democracy; the latter triumphantly showed their followers that no militant policy was possible outside of the CP's control.

The local elections of last March and April were clear indications that this policy is rejected by the ranks of the PSI and, in part, by the followers of the PSDI, who had hoped, after Venice, to see a left-ward turn of the PSDI, not a right turn of the PSI. At Cremona, Rimini, Lecco, Como, the CP gained at the expense of both socialist parties; the PSI lost more heavily where it had put up joint tickets with the PSDI.

## CHASING SARAGAT

In effect, by its lack of firmness toward Saragat, the PSI had enabled the Stalinist apparatus to regain control over the CP. After a brief period of "panic and disarray" in January and February, when Togliatti and his machine were clearly off-balance, when intellectuals, old party-men and trade-unionists were leaving the party by the dozens, the membership rallied back behind its old leadership for lack of a clear alternative.

Another disastrous consequence of the PSI's vacillations was the development that occurred on the industrial scene.

While Saragat was trying to push the PSI into a merger on terms acceptable to the bourgeoisie, the employers' organizations had launched an all-out campaign to smash the trade-union movement, and especially the CGIL, under the guise of attacking its Stalinist leadership.

This campaign has several aspects: partly the time-honored methods of brutality combined with the corruption of the functionaries; partly an attempt to divide the workers by piece-rates, pay differentials, a complex system of bonuses, etc. (For example, many enterprises have a "good behavior bonus" which is given to every worker at the end of the year if there has been no strike.)

Partly it also involved a massive propaganda campaign attempting to use the Stalinist repression in Hungary to whip up reactionary hysteria.

This campaign was effective especially in the metal industry. The elections to the works councils at FIAT last March showed a further increase of the Catholic CISL and of the reformist UIL (both affiliated to the ICFTU) at the expense of the CGIL, which sank to 21.1 per cent of the vote. Elections in other major plants of the metal and mechanical industry showed similar trends.

The seriousness of this situation becomes clear when it is realized that the CISL and the UIL are not only worse unions than the CGIL, but that they actually don't exist in most factories. The votes in the works councils elections by no means reflect the real strength of the different organizations which, in fact, have no real organization on the shop level.

The offensive of the employers consequently threatens the very heart of the Italian labor movement. The instinctive defense reaction of the workers and peasants on the political level (vote for the

(Continued on page 7)

# LABOR SCOPE

## Discussion: Union Elections and Workers Democracy

By DAVID BAKER

The United Steelworkers' particular procedure for the election of their president seems in large measure responsible for the surprising show of strength of the opposition candidates last February. After an election campaign of several months duration, a virtually unknown gained over 40 per cent of the vote for the presidency without a well-organized machine. Such an extremely rapid rise and successful manifestation of opposition is rare within the American labor movement.

The opposition candidate, Donald Rarick, was described by the press as a rank-and-file worker, while the incumbent president, David J. McDonald, had been president since 1952 and before that a lieutenant of the previous president. The magnitude of the campaign against Rarick may be gathered from this excerpt from the N. Y. Times of Feb. 10, 1957:

"The full machinery of the union is being used to convince the members that their welfare will best be served by the re-election of the present leaders. The union recently sponsored a series of regional conferences in all parts of the country at which the administration's accomplishments were extolled. . . . The conferences cost the union an estimated \$1,000,000."

During the campaign the opposition candidate had the advantage of being able to address himself directly to the membership as a whole for their votes in the general national election for the presidency. His campaign was aided by circumstances usually attendant upon a direct national election in a large and important organization: a focusing of public attention on the election for a number of months, with the attention sustained by nation-wide publicity through press and radio. And when the election date arrived, the workers had the remarkably simple alternatives of voting directly for either of the contesting candidates.

To my knowledge no other large national union chooses any of its national officers through an election in which rank-and-file vote directly for candidates of their choice. The usual procedure is for the members in the various local unions to elect delegates to a national convention, and for these delegates to choose the national officers from among candidates nominated at the convention.

A consideration of the differences between the Steelworkers' procedure and this usual one sheds light upon how the Steelworkers' opposition gained its success, and perhaps how workers' democracy might be strengthened in other organizations.

It would not do to view the Steelworkers' electoral system as having affected merely the manner in which the union membership registered its wishes on the day of election. The system itself affected much that occurred from the very onset of the campaign, if not before. It interacted with all other aspects of the situation in the union to foster an opposition which grew out of the very process of waging the campaign.

### THE MACHINE'S ADVANTAGE

Under the circumstances of a direct national election for a national officer, a diffuse opposition unified somewhat and snowballed its support from the workers. It is entirely possible that this opposition, unified by the electoral process, may endure sufficiently to influence future events within the union.

The more usual method of electing national officers, the indirect one as contrasted with the Steelworker's direct method, places an inordinate burden on a small and unimportant opposition. Although an initially weak opposition should be expected to have a hard time in a fight for national office, the indirect system places a special burden upon it. It requires a local-by-local fight, and all this entails in the way of establishing prior contacts in the locals, finding suitable can-

didates to run as delegates to a national convention, and cutting through numerous local loyalties and extraneous issues to make the selection of national officers a major issue in the election of delegates to a convention. It should be clear that a well-organized machine has a tremendous advantage under the indirect method.

Those in power in the national and local union offices already constitute such a machine by virtue of their necessarily special, favored relation to the membership, their closer contact with each other, and their bureaucratic interests in common. Consider the following for what it implies Rarick's chances would have been if the Steelworkers had chosen their president through a vote of delegates at a national convention:

"The confidence of the McDonald forces is enhanced by the fact that he was endorsed for the nomination by 1,905 locals, as against only ninety-one for Mr. Rarick. The union president also has the solid backing of all the organization's twenty-nine district directors."

Was the direct method of electing a president available to the Steelworkers because they were aware of and accepted some of the virtues of this method? I doubt that steel workers and UAW workers have perceptibly different attitudes on direct versus indirect elections of national officers, in spite of the fact that their unions differ in this respect.

Even union militants and socialists would probably have accepted either set-up without question. Electoral systems and basic organizational structures are readily adapted to, and then taken for granted by most people. This applies almost as well to those who write about them as to those who vote under them and abide by their results. Yet a blind or casual acceptance of organizational structure, including electoral procedures, almost always plays into the hands of conservative or bureaucratic forces.

### PROBLEM IN WORKERS STATE

The case of the Steelworkers' election presents us with more than merely arguments for the direct election of at least some union officials, and for a closer consideration of the effects of organizational structure in general. The election of a national union leadership is parallel in many ways to the election of the leading national body of a workers' state.

In each case workers widely separated in local organizations—factory councils or local unions—must somehow bridge their separateness to elect national representatives. It seems reasonable and logical that the advantages of a direct choice of representatives through a national election would apply to a workers' state at least as well as to a union such as the Steelworkers. Picture the Steelworkers' two thousand locals multiplied by thirty-fold, at least.

Without some provision for by-passing this complex structure, a minority in a workers' state would have to struggle under conditions that granted an advantage to an entrenched political machine. Such a provision for a minority taking a campaign directly to the people should be for regular use as a part of the national life, and not merely for use in an emergency. It should be a part of the basic processes of the state.

I do not wish to pass off the Steelworkers' national election procedure as an ideal one. Among other defects, it suffers from the common one of not granting a minority representation in the top councils that is proportional to its support in the union. But it offers in part the embodiment of a basic idea that left democratic socialists should accept wholeheartedly:

The workers should be able to directly select, through a national election, those representatives that will sit in the top councils of their unions and state. This simple, democratic idea can be offered by socialists now to the workers in the Teamsters' Union and the Iron Curtain countries.

# American Forum Has Its First Discussion

By SAM TAYLOR

New York, June 12

At this first public meeting of the American Forum for Socialist Education, held at the Community Church, A. J. Muste, chairman of the Forum, did not indicate whether the meeting was called to answer the congressional witch-hunters or to begin the process of political discussion.

If it was the latter, then there was little presented at the meeting which could in any way be considered part of the problems that have faced and divided the socialist and radical movement in the U.S.

In the opening speech Muste outlined the criticisms which have been directed against the Forum as coming from two sources.

First have been the attacks by Senator Eastland of the Senate Internal Security Committee and J. Edgar Hoover of the FBI. Muste repeated his justified refusal to appear before the witchhunters. He also spoke out against "totalitarianism of whatever color, in the U.S. or Russia, which would deny civil liberties."

Second were the other criticisms by "socialists, libertarians and progressives." Muste then outlined four types of criticism leveled against the Forum.

- Those who say that you cannot engage in discussions with Communists.

- Those who say that Communists are incapable of participating in free discussion or dissent.

- Those who say that it is all right to discuss with Communists but not to put Communists on a committee in a united front.

- Those who say it is all right for the American Forum to set up a National Committee with members of the Communist Party provided that there is also on the committee some individuals who are anti-Communist and severely critical of the Communist Party.

But at no point did Muste refer to the most important reason why many socialists have refused to serve on the National Committee and take political responsibility for the Forum: the refusal of the American Forum to take a clear-cut stand for democracy everywhere, in the Russian orbit as well as in the U.S.

The same reason was given by Norman Thomas in a letter read at the meeting: "We may well discuss social theories with Mr. Gates but not unite

with him or his followers in a socialist organization unless and until their conversion to democracy has been far better proved than it is today."

Toward the close of his remarks, Muste gave a warning about the future of the Forum: "What happens to the American Forum does not depend on Eastland's attack or criticism that comes from other quarters. In the last analysis the future of the American Forum depends on ourselves. We, therefore, are concerned with manipulation or slap-dash action."

The other speakers were Stringfellow Barr, Dorothy Day and Conrad Lynn.

Questions were then directed to other members of the Forum who sat on a panel.

Of special interest were the remarks of Albert Blumberg of the CP. While everyone else at the meeting tried hard to maintain that the only purpose of the Forum was to stimulate discussion, Blumberg laid out a different perspective.

"The American Forum does not exist to canvass differences of all groups; the purpose is to move outward, not inward . . . we will not be led into endless discussions . . . We look forward to breaking out into broad areas of socialist thinking and action."

Milton Zaslow of the Committee for Socialist Unity replied to the question: "Since the American Forum stands for civil liberties in the U.S. what does it say about civil liberties in the Stalinist world?"

Instead of discussing the question in the spirit of serious, untrammelled discussion, Zaslow referred to the question as an "indictment" and an attempt "to cast aspersions on the Forum as an apologist for dictatorship in the Soviet Union or elsewhere. . . ."

He then proceeded, by curious logic, to infer that in order to defend civil liberties, participation in and support of the American Forum is mandatory. "Those who in the name of civil liberties oppose this forum and do not want to participate, and who fear being stigmatized, are not really great civil-libertarians."

A. J. Muste in his concluding statement reported on the first American Forum pamphlet which is being prepared for publication. The subject will be the question: If you had socialism in the U.S., what would it be like?

## Norman Thomas on the American Forum

The following letter by Norman Thomas was addressed to A. J. Muste, chairman of the American Forum for Socialist Education. It was read by Muste to a meeting recently held by the Forum in New York. We print it here for the information of readers.

This is a statement of my reasons for strong opposition to official investigation of the American Forum by Senator Eastland's committee despite my own socialist objections to the Forum as it has been set up.

From the standpoint of a democratic socialist this is no time to include even a few Communists in managing what purports to be a socialist forum. I acknowledge differences of opinion among socialists which need discussion. But more clearly than ever in these times of confused opinion, I want to insist that Communism, Leninist as well as Stalinist, in theory and practice, is not socialism but state capitalism as practiced by a dictatorial, one-party police state which has gathered to itself all powers of all former owning classes.

I am always ready to discuss this belief with or against Communists; I welcome any signs of change for the better in the Communist Party or any of its factions. But to put Communists on the board of a purported socialist forum confuses socialist thinking and public

understanding of true socialism. It inevitably leads to suspicions of new united fronts of sorry memory. We may well discuss social theories with Mr. Gates, but not unite with him or his followers in a socialist organization unless and until their conversion to democracy has been far better proved than it is today.

But advocacy of this strong opinion of mine, and understanding of it, are clouded by Senator Eastland's inquisition which sets one more precedent dangerous to our civil liberties and gives a glory of martyrdom where it is not deserved. The American Forum has voluntarily publicized its own purposes and its own form of control. It has listed its governing committee containing only two or three Communists of one faction. It aims not at political action but at open political education under a form of management which I oppose but which is none of the business of the Senate of the

(Turn to last page)

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## Hitler's Leftovers Fill E. German Army Posts

For some years now, the East German Communists have been carrying on a campaign of agitation against the rearmament of West Germany. One of the main charges which they have leveled concerns the appearance of former Nazi officers in positions of trust in the Adenauer government and military.

This has posed a certain problem. The charges of the Communists are, often enough, true, and anti-war socialists share their opposition to militarism and the rearmament of Western Germany. But, as always, a crucial factor is left out of the Communist propaganda: what the Communists themselves are doing.

The current issue of *Klarer Kurs*, the monthly organ of the Young Socialists of Germany, contains an interesting report on this aspect of the situation by Klaus Jelonneck.

Jelonneck begins his article with a sarcastic question: "How is it that a People's Democratic machine gun is different from a capitalist machine gun?"

### THE AIM OF THE YSL

The Young Socialist League is a democratic socialist organization striving to aid in the basic transformation of this society into one where the means of production and distribution shall be collectively owned and democratically managed. The YSL attempts to make the young workers and students, who form its arena of activity, conscious of the need for organization directed against capitalism and Stalinism.

The YSL rejects the concept that state ownership without democratic controls represents socialism; or that socialism can be achieved without political democracy, or through undemocratic means, or in short in any way other than the conscious active participation of the people themselves in the building of the new social order. The YSL orients toward the working class, as the class which is capable of leading society to the establishment of socialism.

—From the Constitution of the YSL

### EVERY WEEK—

### Young Socialist CHALLENGE

appears as a section in all regular issues of *Labor Action*. Published, and independently edited, by the Young Socialist League.

it is the only socialist youth weekly in the country. Don't miss it!

An 'Ode to the People's Army,' by the German Communist poet Max Zimmering, shows us the distinction: the People's Democratic Soldier is a friendly fellow, his Panzers are nice wagons . . ."

### HOLDOVERS FROM HITLER

The sarcasm, as Jelonneck develops his article, appears to be merited. In August of 1951, Clement Grotewohl announced, "There is no Hitler-general in the East German Republic. We do not believe that such spiritual pigmies can serve in our armies."

However, it must be compared with an embarrassing fact: that the East German army includes Vincent Muller, Staff Chief of the People's Army and, under Hitler, the Commander of the 17th Army; Arno von Lenski, the leader of a motorized section of the People's Army, and the former commander of a Nazi panzer division; Walter Lattman, a panzer leader, and former commander of a Nazi panzer division; Dr. Otto Korfes, Operational Chief of the People's Army, and former commander of an infantry division for Hitler; and Bernhard Bechler, an official in the People's Defense Ministry and a major under Hitler.

It is well known that the Communists have used former fascists in their work; the head of the Catholic Communist movement in Poland, recently deposed by Gomulka, was a leading Polish fascist of the Thirties; but the East German case has a particular interest. It comes as no surprise to socialists that the East German rulers are enemies of the people—with all of their use of the word "People's"—but it is incredible that, in the middle of a campaign against West German militarism and its use of former Nazis, the East Germans themselves are relying on former general officers of the Nazi army.

### YSL NAC STATEMENT

On June 19 the YSL National Action Committee adopted the following statement in regard to certain actions of Comrade Tim Wohlforth for publication in *Challenge*:

"The YSL National Action Committee has had its attention called to the fact that at several recent public meetings Comrade Wohlforth read from a private political letter, illicitly obtained, written by a member of the SP-SDF, and that he did so without the permission or authorization of its author. The NAC regards this action as reprehensible, and in contradiction to socialist morality, and wishes it noted that Wohlforth's action is without the authorization of the NAC and in contradiction to the position of the YSL on such actions. The NAC therefore repudiates this action."

## Ask Aid for Spanish Students Fighting Franco Regime

May 31, 1957

DEAR FRIEND:

The Spanish Council of the European Movement has sent an urgent appeal to *Iberica* for help in raising funds to aid the university students of Spain who have been imprisoned, fined and otherwise penalized as a result of the student demonstrations occurring in Spain earlier this year.

In January students of the University of Barcelona went on strike in protest against the denial of academic and other freedoms. Students of other Spanish universities followed suit by staging similar demonstrations.

Students suspected of involvement in these demonstrations, or simply of dissenting from the official Falangist line, were treated with brutality. In Barcelona students were mercilessly beaten with bludgeons and rifle butts by armed police and members of Franco's guard, called in from Madrid to help subdue the unarmed students. At least one stu-

dent, Juan R. Masoliver, died as a result of a beating. Many have been imprisoned and are to be tried; several hundred have been fined or obliged to pay their tuitions over again.

The Spanish Council is endeavoring to raise a fund of \$10,000 to send to Spain to be used to help these students. We hope that friends of Spain here will contribute a considerable portion of this fund, and thereby show that these courageous students who have risked everything in the name of freedom have not been completely abandoned by Americans, who also believe in freedom.

NORMAN THOMAS  
Honorary Chairman of *IBERICA*

SALVADOR DE MADARIAGA  
Honorary Chairman of *IBERICA*  
Chairman of the Spanish Council of the  
European Movement

Please send contributions to *Iberica*, and make checks out to *Iberica Student Fund*.

## Students in the Revolt For Democracy in Cuba

News of student participation in the revolutionary movement in Cuba recently reached the United States.

According to a New York *Times* dispatch, the summer session at the University of Havana has been canceled because of the political situation. The summer session has been held for six weeks for the last sixteen years, but this year the University Council was afraid of the "rebellious attitude of a large group of students."

This is in line with the decision announced last November, when the university was shut down because of student work in the movement against the Cuban dictator, Fulgencio Batista.

Meanwhile, reports indicated that revolutionary activity persisted throughout Cuba. In Santiago de Cuba, posters appeared announcing, "Viva Fidel Castro!" and "We have come down from the Sierra Maestra to put these up—Come and Get Us."

Santiago de Cuba is the capital of the Oriente Province in Eastern Cuba, the center of the activity against the dictatorship of Batista. Fidel Castro is the

leader of the guerrilla band which has been carrying on action against the government forces for some months.

From scanty information which can be gained from reports in the American press, the Castro movement appears to be motivated by a desire to overthrow the dictatorship and to establish a bourgeois democracy in Cuba. Castro apparently has support from sections of all classes in Cuban society, from the workers as well as from the bourgeoisie. His social program has not been made clear, since his movement has been functioning underground, under conditions of severe censorship, and because of the national character of the revolutionary forces.

The current report from Havana on the closing down of the university is one more indication of the role which youth has been playing in the Castro movement. The students are a traditional source of revolutionary unrest in Latin American societies (indeed, they play a role out of proportion to their social weight in almost all backward areas), and they have been living up to their past in Cuba.

# Greetings to the 3rd National Convention Of the Young Socialist League!

The Communist writer's break with the Communist Party presents a test for the dissidents inside the Stalinist movement and for the critics outside of it. . . .

## HOWARD FAST *and* HIS STALINIST CRITICS

By H. W. BENSON

When Howard Fast left the Communist Party in February he shook up American Stalinism as much as any single individual could. His novels had circulated by the millions in Russia; the party had counted him as one of its literary treasures; he was a Stalin Peace Prize recipient; and he was not just a fellow traveler but a regular, official party member, and had been so for fifteen years.

Like thousands of others he had been deeply shocked by the Stalin revelations and awaited a genuine turn to democracy in Russia with expectancy; but he waited in vain. His turn was definite and public.

Many others, in the party and out, deplored Stalinism and suggested that perhaps it was time to curb the dictatorship. But Fast made a sharp break denouncing injustice, murder, totalitarianism for what they are, proclaiming his own personal dedication to the fight for democracy.

He insisted that he remained a socialist, true to his socialist convictions. Yet, like so many ex-Stalinists who have been awakened to the bare truths without warning, he is not only shocked but perplexed. The Russian regime is dictatorial, he calls out with no evasion; its policy has been anti-socialist; but in his view it remains "socialist," a tragically dictatorial, totalitarian "socialism" that must become democratic and humanitarian.

**The case of Howard Fast, if we can turn him from an individual into a symbol, puts all groups to a test. Those who profess to abandon Stalinism, and those who actually have, meet a forthright repudiation of it. Will they grapple with Fast's arguments with some attempt at honesty, or will they react as in the past with Stalinist-type abuse?**

And those who have always been anti-Stalinist meet the test of opportunity. Can they receive those whose views resemble his, recognize that they are breaking with their Stalinist past, and call upon them to join in reconstructing a powerful democratic socialist movement in the United States? There are hundreds, not as articulate as Fast in his repudiation of Stalinism, but as thoroughgoing.

On February 1, the N. Y. Times announced Fast's break with the CP. It was there that the party first read the news.

The CP national convention was yet to come; the *Daily Worker*, not yet under the full pressure of a resurgent Fosterite faction, was calm enough. It deplored his action but understood it and expressed the hope that all could remain friends.

### FIRST PHASE

In the *Worker* on March 10, A. B. Magil reported on his interview with Fast under the head, "He Affirms Socialist Beliefs but Severs Communist Ties," all in a friendly spirit. Where Fast was repelled by a record of unspeakable crimes, Magil noticed "shortcomings" which Fast made too much of.

"Clearly Howard Fast is deeply troubled, even bitter about some developments in the socialist countries," diagnosed Magil. "To this writer it seems that he tends to magnify serious

shortcomings in the Soviet Union and to see them in a one-sided way. To criticize those shortcomings, to urge changes is one thing. But doesn't Fast overlook the fact that the Soviet system made the greatest and most fundamental change in history . . . It is this change that world imperialism would like to reverse."

It was only a trace of a hint of the old tone. That was yet to come, blatantly from others.

Fast still felt compelled to credit the Communist Party in the United States with making "contributions"—at least, so Magil reported. But this was a concession that could hardly cancel out his open attack on the Russian regime.

**Magil reported: "But more bitter than anything else was his criticism of what he described as 'an almost total lack of functioning democracy in the Soviet Union.' Fast said, 'What we witness in Russia is not democratic or humanist socialism. It is totalitarian socialism. It is to say exactly this—and to say it as forcefully as I can—that I left the party. There was no other effective way I saw to protest this terrifying distortion of all that socialism means to so many.'"**

Fast told him too: "I can't close my eyes to the fact that a Russian writer who through his writings had attempted to expose the very real abuses of democracy in his own country would have had his work die stillborn. He himself, as the record shows, would have either been disgraced, jailed or even put to death."

The future? Fast remains a socialist, he said. "If at some future time a broad socialist movement comes into existence in the U.S., I'd like to be part of it. I plan to go on fighting with all my strength against perversions of democracy here, of which there are no small number."

### "LOATHING AND DISGUST"

The editors of the Communist literary magazine *Mainstream* soon essayed a reply more in the old-fashioned tone. As a concession to the spirit of the times, they invited Fast to explain his views in their March issue, which he did in a nine-page statement entitled "My Decision."

The Communist Party, wrote Fast, "is compromised to a point where it can no longer make any effective contribution to the continuing struggle for democracy and social justice."

How could he have remained in the party while the Russian repressions went on? He explains: "I believed, as did millions of men of good will, that the only truth about the Soviet Union was the picture presented by friends of the Soviet Union."

But when "this unspeakable document" appeared—namely, the Khrushchev report—"I was filled with loathing and disgust. I felt a sense of unmitigated mental nausea at the realization that I had supported and defended this murderous bloodbath, and I felt as so many did then a sense of being a victim of the most incredible swindle in modern times."

**And: "The dimensions of this horror were not only beyond anything we could have dreamed of—but also beyond, far beyond, the worst accusations of the worst enemies of the Soviet Union." And he will not be satisfied with a form-**

al, gingerly, mechanical, passionless admission of past "errors."

The contempt he feels for the new school of apologists is expressed in one simple incident. A French Communist intellectual wrote him a bitter letter pointing out that the French CP had asked for "a more complete theoretical explanation of the serious wrongs attributed to Comrade Stalin." The Frenchman was indignant that Fast remained unsatisfied, for "The Soviet Communist Party then issued a statement implying precisely this theoretical analysis, a statement which forms a document of major importance to every militant of the working class and which has enabled the working-class parties to make a sound appraisal of the ideas already involved."

To this incredible trash, Fast replies in just three words, completely and adequately: "Heaven help us!"

### "THE DUTY OF SOCIALISTS"

Fast is torn by the apparent paradox of a "socialism" that is totalitarian:

"In Russia we have socialism without democracy. We have socialism without trial by jury, habeas corpus, or the right against self-incrimination. . . . We have socialism without civil liberty. We have socialism without power of recall of government. . . . Perhaps the cruellest and strangest development of history is the appearance of socialism under the domination of totalitarianism. And unless this is seen and faced and dealt with by the Left, both Communists and Socialists, then the present agony of mankind will continue far longer than it has to."

To those who claim that Russia is now at least on the road to democracy he replies: "Where jail or death is the price of criticism directed at government, such claims are not only false but even obscene."

**Where, he asks, is the duty of socialists now? "I say that it lies with socialism . . . it does not lie with the pretentious dogmatism of Soviet leadership, indicted not only for their acquiescence in the crimes of Stalin, but for their continuing record of intolerance and dogmatic bossism since the exposure of those crimes."**

Clearly, then, we have met a man who is not a shamefaced critic, a near-apologist or a half-apologist, but one who is ready to speak out his hatred for Stalinism, for totalitarian dictatorship in all forms. And if he still looks upon Russia as some form of socialism, albeit reactionary and totalitarian, this does not alter that fundamental fact.

### BACK IN THE GROOVE

The editors of *Mainstream* begin the process of controlled and restrained vituperation.

"You admittedly knew nothing of all these crimes, they reply, but neither did we or the party; how can you hold us responsible for crimes and errors that were concealed from us? Thus they take refuge in a cloak of common ignorance.

But now they do know; Fast knows; he is sickened and horrified and he cries out in protest as any decent man should. They, the editors of *Mainstream*, know too; but they persist, with their newly found knowledge, in speaking as apologists for the Stalinist-without-Stalin regime of dictatorship. That is the essential difference between them and Fast.

**When Fast attacks dictatorship, they protest that he only brings confusion "when the need to achieve some sort of working cooperation, if not unity, is apparent to almost all." If they insist upon unity as a substitute for criticism, it is because theirs is a unity which endorses the very totalitarianism which Fast rejects.**

If Fast denounces the murder of Jews in Russia, they reply that the Israeli government confiscates opposition papers; if he protests against the lack of democratic rights, they take refuge in juridical irrelevancies and assumed ignorance. "We are not competent to discuss this." But they claim to be quite competent to discover that the main enemy in Hungary was the U. S. Intelligence Service.

If Fast insists upon democracy and exposes

## Reaction of CP Hacks to Fast's Criticism Runs in the Old Groove . . .

hypocrisy in Russia, they deplore his lack of patience.

Their compendium of apologetics, irrelevancies, and diversions concludes: "we consider his statement a disservice not simply to the Communist Party, not just to the cause of socialism, but to the American progressive movement as a whole."

The form is somewhat restrained but the content rings familiarly.

### CHORUS SINGS OUT

A month later *Mainstream* solicits comments on the exchange with Fast.

Herbert Aptheker finds a lot to attack; he denounces "reaction" in Hungary; he is merciless with British and French imperialism; colonialism meets his wrath, in British Guiana, Guatemala and Columbia. Franco Spain, West Germany and Japan are exposed as citadels of remilitarization. Naturally, he has little space left to deal with Fast's stinging repudiation of Russian dictatorship.

He is left only with this: in Russia "the real masses, the vast majority of toilers are themselves building a new life, are deciding by their own experience the most difficult problems of socialist organization." All this under the Stalin police dictatorship too? Did the masses choose that too by "themselves," or was it foisted upon them? Useless questions? Aptheker is Aptheker.

Another writer, one of *Mainstream's* contributing editors, concludes that Fast is guilty of "desertion under fire," which of course finishes him off neatly. Thus the author need only add, "I am not going to try to answer Mr. Fast's attacks on the Soviet Union."

Joseph Starobin, another commentator, is careful to note that Fast "neither grew as a writer nor gained as a man" while he was in the party. An interesting literary and psychological observation that might be fitted into something some time! "I have no sympathy for the way the Soviet leaders have behaved," he writes; "their society should never have been taken as the model for what we wish to build and it is not that today. But Howard's indictment is as extravagant and oversimplified as his passion used to be."

Bert Cochran, alone, shows understanding and real sympathy: "Howard Fast's break with Stalinism is the only way one should make this kind of a break . . . straight from the shoulder, clear-cut, and public. What has been so disturbing about many of the post-20th Congress reformations was their queasiness. . . . Fast's statement has the earmarks of something personal, something deeply felt and sincerely meant. That is why it deserves to be taken seriously."

### APOLOGETICS AGAIN

Time passes. A month later, A. B. Magil returns to the scene with two articles in the *Worker* (April 21 and 28).

The first article stalls along, expressing three columns of belated surprise that Fast should

find the CP "compromised." Of course, Magil adds, mistakes have been made, even serious ones, but we have acknowledged them. Why, he asks blandly, draw such "drastic conclusions?"

By the following week, Magil has supplied the raw materials for a reply to his own question. He addresses himself to Fast's criticism of the Russian regime and we begin to hear, more audibly than before, the voice of the apologist.

"It seems to me," he writes, "that Howard Fast has become confused about who is the enemy of mankind." There follows the inevitable thrust at imperialism—in France, in Britain, in the Near East, as though the crimes of capitalism somehow mitigate those of Russian dictatorship.

**Yes, the enemies of mankind have been myriad. Is Stalinism perhaps one of them? Magil hastens on without a reply.**

He is amazed that Fast discovers socialism without democracy in Russia but his objection has nothing in common with those like ourselves who find no socialism in Russia. No! Magil insists that Russia is socialist and therefore it must be democratic; no need to examine the facts, no need to face Fast's indictment; for "Isn't 'socialism without democracy' a contradiction in terms? When all the means of production are taken away from a small group of private big-capitalists and landowners and converted into public property, when the labor of the workers ceases to be a source of private gain for non-workers—isn't this itself an enormous democratic transformation?"

A curious reader might wonder: if democracy was inherent in Russian "socialism," why, where, what was Stalinism? No place for it in Magil's scheme.

There wasn't and there isn't a trace of democracy in Stalinist Russia. Neither was there socialism. The fact is that the means of production were owned not by the "public" but by the state, and the state in turn was controlled by an exploiting bureaucracy.

**When Fast exposes the lack of democracy, Magil replies that the Soviet legal system "was fashioned in bitter struggle against external and internal class enemies." That might have impressed some of his friends three years ago. But now we know that the Stalinist legal system was fashioned against workers, socialists, and Communists, and that under it more Communists were executed in Russia than in any other country in the world.**

Magil concludes: "Fast has tossed away the compass of scientific socialist principles and is steering by intuition." If that were so we would have to conclude; a thousand times better Fast's intuition than Magil's apologetics!

### FOSTER'S DIATRIBE

Our last chapter begins on June 9 when Fast released the text of his correspondence with Russian writer Polevoi to the *Times*. It added little to what Fast had already expressed in *Mainstream*.

But he was quickly castigated for going to the bourgeois press, by none so sharply as William Z. Foster. His critics, however, were curiously undisturbed when Khrushchev chose to use the bourgeois-owned television industry to present his defense of the policies of the Russian dictatorship. Obviously, the proscriptions apply only to the enemies of Stalinism, not its apologists!

If Fast chose to make his views known not merely to the world of 7000 *Daily Worker* readers but to the hundreds of thousands who read the *New York Times*, who can blame him? His break from Stalinism was not intended to be a private act before a select circle but a public declaration against tyranny.

**Foster's diatribe against Fast, available for inspection in the June 17 *Daily Worker*, is worth attention only as a token of the public revival of Stalinist methodology.**

Fast expresses open horror at the Stalin revelations in strong words—but that is only the beginning. Now he rejects the Russian regime because it remains totalitarian and dictatorial. Foster doesn't waste time with so decisive a point; he busies himself to explain that Stalin's crimes can be easily explained by objective conditions.

But objective conditions, however potent, can only explain. It takes Foster to try to explain away. And when Fast protests against the continuing suppression of democracy in Russia, Foster hurls epithets: "slander"; "monstrous distortion"; "playing directly into the hands of the class enemy."

### IN THEIR NAME

And so, we repeat, the case of Howard Fast has become a test for all.

He left the Communist Party because he would not wait indefinitely for a fundamental change and lost all hopes of a transition to democracy in Russia by the ruling regime. But there are those who still remain inside the Communist Party in the hope of moving it toward a democratic conception of socialism. The least they can do, the very least, is to protest against the defamation of the name of Howard Fast and the Stalinist-type distortion of his views.

**Fast writes and speaks in his own name; but in his views he expresses the feelings of thousands of others who have no way of putting forth their opinions. They are horrified at what existed in Russia and at the dictatorship that still exists. They have left the Communist Party or cease to sympathize with it. Despite everything, however, they imagine that Russia is still somehow "socialist." It is to them a terrible form of "socialism." They want not that but democratic socialism. These are the thousands of radicals who are breaking away from Stalinism or who have already broken from it.**

A militant socialist organization, worthy of the name, would know how to take these people as they are and channelize their energies, abilities and idealism in the common cause of democratic socialism.

## Italian Socialism in Crisis: Problems of Unity — —

(Continued from page 3)

**CP) only covered up the real confusion and demoralization, which became apparent in the collapse in the factories.**

The future of the labor movement in Italy, and the whole political future of the country, now depends on the manner in which the socialist crisis is going to be solved.

Before Venice, Saragat's solution was to draw the PSI into the "Center coalition" and turn it into a larger edition of the PSDI. Today, this solution has become impossible, and Saragat's aim has become to split the PSI, to absorb its right wing and to sterilize its left wing by pushing it into the arms of the CP.

On the trade-union level, this operation involves the breaking up of the CGIL, and the incorporation of its socialist elements in the "free" trade

unions, or into a new "all-socialist" union which would be a larger edition of the UIL.

It is hardly necessary to point out that this type of solution is not unwelcome to the CP leadership; moreover, it would bury all possibilities for a progressive solution to the country's problems for years to come, by removing the socialist movement as an independent factor from the political scene.

**Within the PSDI itself, Saragat's policy is strongly opposed by the left-wing minority, which already represents nearly half of the party. It is the progress of this minority which forced Saragat to withdraw from the Segni government.**

His temporary spell in opposition will enable him to undercut the left wing in his own party, and to make overtures to the right-wingers of the PSI, in the hope

of pulling them out of Nenni's party.

The solution of the PSI majority, on the other hand, was to merge with the PSDI and to break up the Christian-Democratic Party, eventually absorbing the latter's working-class and trade-union wing. In the face of Saragat's attitude, a merger with the whole of the PSDI has become increasingly unlikely. The only way a united socialist party can probably be established now is without Saragat.

The coming congress of the PSDI will solve the matter one way or another: either the left wing conquers the party and Saragat leaves, or the left-wing leaves and merges with the PSI.

A united socialist party (assembling the former PSI, USI, PSDI, Left and *Unità Popolare*) could then make an effective appeal to the Catholic workers,

with fair chances to split Christian-Democracy along class lines. It would also be in a position to propose a policy for all workers and peasants; that is to say, it could carry the debate on socialist policy right into the midst of the CP and could open a new phase in the crisis of Stalinism.

Such a policy, however, involves a fundamental change in approach. The party would have to be reorganized from the bottom up; it would have to be based on effective local sections, functioning as permanent councils of workers and peasants, capable of acting effectively both on small daily matters and on matters of general policy.

For a disorganized and confused party as the PSI is today, this is an immense task, but a start has to be made somewhere.

# Mao Challenging Moscow?—

(Continued from page 1)

public knowledge to make possible the explanation of a number of hypotheses on it.

One striking aspect of the Mao statement is its implied criticism of and hence challenge to the Russian leadership of the world Communist movement. It should be born in mind that at the time of the Hungarian Revolution, the Chinese Communists backed the Russian intervention to the hilt. Further, that after the 20th Congress of the CPSU, and Khrushchev's famous speech on Stalin, the Chinese party took a dim view of the "downgrading" of Stalin and all that this involved in an attempt to "liberalize" the totalitarian regime in Russia.

Now, just a few months later, Mao seems to have reversed the engines. The Hungarian Revolution is pointed to, though in guarded tones, not so much as an example of capitalist intervention into the internal affairs of Hungary, as a popular reaction to the attempt by the Hungarian and Russian leaderships to resolve the contradictions between the Hungarian people and their masters by force and repression. Throughout the whole speech, the "self-criticism" of repressive means used by the Chinese Stalinists in the consolidation of their own power can be taken as a stinging rebuke to the three decades through which the Russian bureaucracy has ruled by terror in varying degrees.

## STIRRING THE WATERS

Furthermore, the whole question of the degree of criticism, independence and opposition which should be tolerated by a Communist regime is still a subject of the most lively debate among leaderships of the various Communist-controlled countries. This debate is not an intellectual exercise, but a form of the muted but intense struggle which continues within each Communist country, as well as among their leaderships, and especially between them and the Big Brother in Moscow.

Mao, whose government lined up solid-

ly with the Russian hangmen of the Hungarian Revolution as long as that revolution was threatening to overthrow the Stalinist system itself, now stands back and casts a stick of dynamite into the turbulent waters of the struggle for position and power in the Stalinist world.

One reason suggested is a struggle within the Chinese leadership, in which one could speculate that Mao and Chou En-lai represent rival factions. The only evidence which might point to such a conclusion is that Chou was the most prominent spokesman of the line of supporting Russia in its suppression of the Hungarian Revolution, and pressed this line particularly strongly in Poland when it was highly unpopular there.

Though such a possibility is not excluded, its existence remains purely speculative. Whether there are actual factions in the Chinese leadership or not, however, everything we know about the Stalinist system points to the virtual certainty that there are differing policies put forward on how best to deal with the discontent and disaffection among the masses which is constantly bred by the system.

## CONTROLLED CONCESSION

Chou's approach has one big advantage over the usual Communist "anti-bureaucratism" drive. In Russia and in other Stalinist countries, the lower levels of the bureaucracy, who are under the greatest day-to-day pressure from the masses, are also forced to bear the brunt and be the scapegoats of the higher bureaucracy's constant drive for more production at the expense of more sacrifices by the masses. (When this is a built-in feature of a social system, it goes under the term exploitation.) Since criticism of the system itself, as well as of the party leadership, is excluded, the sergeants and captains of the bureaucracy know that it is they who will have to bear the blame when mass resistance slows down production, or forces the tops to sacrifice a few underlings to try to deflect mass discontent.

Chou's formulation takes a little bit

of the pressure, in theory at least, off the backs of the lower bureaucracy. At least, it may be calculated to do this. As long as the discussion of the "contradictions" can be carefully channeled and controlled by the party, it permits every bureaucrat to explain to the masses that their hard lot is not due to inefficiency, or abuses, or indifference by the bureaucrats to their lot, but due to inevitable and stubborn "contradictions" to which they must reconcile themselves.

Of course, its great danger is that the masses may refuse to accept these contradictions as inevitable, and to recognize that they are part of a social relationship which is man-made and hence can be changed by men. As a matter of fact, this is precisely what a few courageous individuals have asserted in the discussion opened by Mao's speech. Quick to recognize the danger, the Communist Party, with all the means of communication and propaganda, has been mobilized to attack and seek to discredit those who have dared raise too high the sights of their critical weapons.

## SATELLITES REACT

In the rest of the Communist world, the reactions have been varied. In his famous TV interview, Khrushchev denied that there are any contradictions between the leadership and the masses in Russia. It is significant that this section of the interview was deleted from the version printed in Russia. It would appear that even the necessity of denying that such contradictions exist was considered too dangerous for Russians to think about.

The Czech Communist Party, which is seeking to follow a "hard" line against all doubters and dissenters in Czechoslovakia, has repudiated Mao's doctrine. At a recent meeting of their Central Committee, leading members asserted that although free discussion and exchange of opinions may be all right for China, it will not be tolerated in Czechoslovakia.

The explanation for this difference between the two countries appears to have been along the lines that while the Chinese bourgeoisie is a loyal part of the Chinese system, Czechoslovakia stands on the borders of the capitalist world, and hence cannot afford the expression of alien ideas. Since all opposition and demand for democracy is equated with "bourgeois ideology," this is the general cover under which the suppression of all dissent is justified.

In Poland, Mao's speech was hailed by the Gomulka tendency and democratic elements to the left of it as a much needed sign of support for their continuing struggle. Though it may be purely coincidental, it is not without interest that just as Gomulka returned from Moscow where one of the things he attempted to do was to get payment for some of the free services Russia had extorted from Poland after the war, in China General Lung Yun, vice chairman of the National Defense Committee, made a speech demanding reimbursement by Russia for industrial equipment looted from Manchuria right after World War II, and for some share of the expenses incurred in the Korean war. Although Lung was immediately denounced by the official press as a "right deviationist," it will be interesting to see whether he is purged from the high post he now occupies.

At the moment, Mao's speech and the opening of limited discussion which followed it may be regarded most likely as an attempt to deal with the internal pressures against the regime, while at the same time nailing down another stake in the Chinese leadership's claim to independence and real equality with the Russians in the Communist world.

Whether it will succeed in both respects or not depends on many factors. Chief among them is the degree to which the political ferment evident in the rest of the Communist world is present in China also.

After all, Chou has spoken of the rope in the house of the hanged.

## The ISL Program in Brief

The Independent Socialist League stands for socialist democracy and against the two systems of exploitation which now divide the world: capitalism and Stalinism.

Capitalism cannot be reformed or liberalized, by any Fair Deal or other deal, so as to give the people freedom, abundance, security or peace. It must be abolished and replaced by a new social system, in which the people own and control the basic sectors of the economy, democratically controlling their own economic and political destinies.

Stalinism, in Russia and wherever it holds power, is a brutal totalitarianism—a new form of exploitation. Its agents in every country, the Communist Parties, are unrelenting enemies of socialism and have nothing in common with socialism—which cannot exist without effective democratic control by the people.

These two camps of capitalism and Stalinism are today at each other's throats in a worldwide imperialist rivalry for domination. This struggle can only lead to the most frightful war in history so long as the people leave the capitalist and Stalinist rulers in power. Independent Socialism stands for building and strengthening the Third Camp of the people against both war blocs.

The ISL, as a Marxist movement, looks to the working class and its ever-present struggle as the basic progressive force in society. The ISL is organized to spread the ideas of socialism in the labor movement and among all other sections of the people.

At the same time, Independent Socialists participate actively in every struggle to better the people's lot now, such as the fight for higher living standards, against Jim Crow and anti-Semitism, in defense of civil liberties and the trade-union movement. We seek to join together with all other militants in the labor movement as a left force working for the formation of an independent labor party and other progressive policies.

The fight for democracy and the fight for socialism are inseparable. There can be no lasting and genuine democracy without socialism, and there can be no socialism without democracy. To enroll under this banner, join the Independent Socialist League!

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# SPOTLIGHT

(Continued from page 1)

So, impelled by these motives, these American Jewish spokesmen, in a delegation led by President Irving Engel, are pressing Israel to take a certain step which can also be a step toward Jewish-Arab amity. And therefore one must especially wish them well in the attempt.

The issue is Israel's Nationality Act, which is the only law on Israel's books which formally, openly and juridically discriminates against non-Jews in the very language of the measure itself (rather than merely in practice, intent, and administration).

According to this law, any Jew, from anywhere, can become a full Israeli citizen immediately and automatically as soon as he steps on Israeli soil, and even retain dual citizenship in his former country to boot; whereas anyone else, including an Arab who has lived on the soil all his life, and whose ancestors have lived in the land since long

before Zionism was invented, is burdened with a list of conditions to be met before citizenship can be granted. Moreover, such citizenship can be indefinitely withheld administratively on all sorts of grounds; and dual citizenship is forbidden.

Now the AJC, and no doubt most American Jews, and possibly even a great many American Zionists, look upon this racist-type law as a sad mistake; above all, because they do not want any equivocation about "dual loyalty" to taint the respectability of their status here, through no fault of their own. But more important is the need to change and give up the anti-Arab impact of this discrimination.

A change here would only be a possible first step; but the road out of the impasse in the Middle East is going to begin with "first steps," by both sides.

Here's to this one, as far as Israel's side is concerned.

NORMAN THOMAS

# Thomas on American Forum—

(Continued from page 4)

United States unless that body or its committee aspires at long range to ape communism itself in control of the thought and speech of free men. Its investigation can learn nothing new that the Forum hasn't told except as its investigators may strive to create terrors to fan the dying flames of McCarthyism. Legislation—which is the legitimate concern of a Senate tragically behind in legitimate legislation—banning this Forum by fiat would not stand up before any court. The inquiry necessary will tend only to besmirch individuals and confuse thinking about the meaning and value of freedoms guaranteed by our Bill of Rights.

If the Senate of the United States really believes in congressional investi-

gation as a cure for subversive tendencies, not only in thought but in action, let it investigate the open defiance of the Supreme Court decisions on integration; the shame of repeated acquittals by all-white juries of men who by violence persecute their Negro neighbors; and the role of White Citizens Councils. In such an investigation Senator Eastland would be among the chief of the investigated rather than chairman (by grace of the Democratic Party) of an inquisitorial inquiry into the opinions of other men—men who are today defying no courts and challenging none of our basic rights. Senator Eastland and his Party should hear from liberty-loving Americans. The answer to error in the American Forum is a truth alien to Eastland.