

A MARXIST  
QUARTERLY

SPRING  
1956

*Fourth  
International*

# THE END Of the Stalin Cult

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Which Way for Supporters  
Of the Progressive Party?  
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*A Psychoanalyst Looks for a Sane Society*

*by Joseph Hansen*

*Dollar Empire in Latin America*

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*Belinski and Rational Reality*

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**35 cents**

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## Contents

|   |    |
|---|----|
| <b>The End of the Stalin Cult</b>                         | 39 |
| by M. Stein   |    |
| <b>Which Way for Supporters of the Progressive Party?</b> | 45 |
| by Harry Ring   |    |
| <b>Early Years of the American Communist Movement</b>     |    |
| <b>The Passaic Strike</b>                                 | 50 |
| <b>After 1925</b>   | 51 |
| by James P. Cannon  |    |
| <b>Dollar Empire in Latin America</b>                     | 56 |
| by Theodore Edwards                                       |    |
| <b>Belinski and Rational Reality</b>                      | 59 |
| by G. V. Plekhanov  |    |
| <b>Books:</b>   |    |
| <b>A Psychoanalyst Looks for a Sane Society</b>           | 65 |
| by Joseph Hansen  |    |
| <b>The Last Hurrah</b>                                    | 69 |
| by Jack Bustelo   |    |

## From Our Readers

James P. Cannon's political estimate of the role of Debs in the history of American socialism, which was featured in the Winter issue of **Fourth International**, met with a warm response from our readers. In the Twin Cities, where a one-month campaign for subscriptions was organized in April, Cannon's appreciation of Debs was used in calling

attention to the special value and uniqueness of the magazine. Winifred Nelson writes from Minneapolis that "we receive comments" on the Debs Centennial article "every day." And she expresses her own gratitude for the "fine store of information" that Cannon "puts down on paper in such a choice way." That sums up the general sentiment of the readers of **Fourth International**.

While quoting from our Twin Cities

correspondent, we might add that she thought "the Kutcher editorial was really very well done — it was a good account rounding out and bringing up to date the information on developments in the Case of the Legless Veteran."

Our Canadian readers continue to demonstrate their lively interest in **Fourth International**. In Toronto, our correspondent reports, "We have always been able to sell off back issues over a period of time but just lately we have been doing better than ever. Part of it is due to the interest in the Plekhanov articles." These, it appears, have stirred discussion among university students interested in philosophy and the solutions Marxism offers to its key problems. The order for back issues was accompanied, we note, with a gratifying increase in the regular bundle order.

G. N. of Winnipeg liked the review of Owen Lattimore's book, **Nationalism and Revolution in Mongolia**, in the Winter issue, considering it "very perceptive." He writes, "I cannot profess to know too much about Mongolia although

(Continued on page 71)

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5. The average number of copies of each issue of this publication sold or distributed, through the mails or otherwise, to paid subscribers during the 12 months preceding the date shown above was: (This information is required from daily, weekly, semi-weekly, and triweekly newspapers only.)

(Signed) JOSEPH HANSEN  
Editor

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 20th day of September, 1955.

(Seal) CARNIG AJAMIAN

Notary Public, State of New York  
No. 31-5033400 Qualified in New York County.

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# The End Of the Stalin Cult

by M. Stein

**B**UREAUCRATS, with their inflated sense of importance, like to think of their congresses and gatherings as historic occasions. The bureaucrats at the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union were no exception. The speakers rarely failed to mention the historic importance of their words and actions. This time though they were dead right. The Twentieth Congress will be remembered as the congress that laid the Stalin cult to rest.

This is an event of major world importance. The Stalin cult had dominated Soviet political life for almost 30 years. It had poisoned the atmosphere of the world revolutionary movement for as long a time. This cult, built on the bones of the best of the revolutionary generation that founded the Soviet Union and at the expense of the Soviet working class, finally became insupportable even for the bureaucracy which was its sole beneficiary.

The Twentieth Congress opened Feb. 14. Twelve days of oratory followed on innumerable subjects. So far as speaking time was concerned, the repudiation of Stalin was only a minor part of the congress. The other items did not distinguish the Twentieth Congress to any appreciable degree from previous meetings of the bureaucracy.

They talked a lot about coexistence with the imperialists. But that's nothing new. We've heard that since 1924 when the infamous theory of "socialism in one country" was introduced by Stalin. They talked about the virtues of the neutralist bourgeoisie of the colonial countries and elsewhere. That too has been heard before. And Khrushchev openly revised Lenin. I

The following article is based on a speech given in New York City March 24 by M. Stein.

understand that this has outraged the dissident Stalinists — there is such a group here, expelled from the CP sometime ago, but which has remained true to Stalin.

It's true that Khrushchev revised Lenin on several points; namely, on the inevitability of war so long as imperialism lasts; on the parliamentary road to socialism; and on the nature and role of the Social Democracy. But the only reason that Stalin did not openly revise Lenin is that he found it more expedient to falsify Lenin, to suppress his writing, and to shoot the true Leninists.

The dissident Stalinists who could swallow Stalin's crimes but who now gag at Khrushchev's revision of Lenin cannot of course attract much sympathy. However, regardless of the comparative merits of the attitudes of Stalin and Khrushchev toward Lenin, the fact remains that the essence of their foreign policy remains basically the same.

Promises were also made of economic concessions to the Soviet industrial and agricultural workers. But these, too, do not set a new trend in Soviet life. Such concessions have been made continually since the end of World War II. Khrushchev's promise to raise the real wages of the Soviet workers by 30% and the income of the peasants on the collectives by 40% during the sixth Five Year Plan ending in 1960 is essentially the same ratio of improvement claimed under the fifth Five Year Plan ending in 1955.

What is new, I repeat, is the repudiation of the Stalin cult. The first reference to it came from Khrushchev, who made the main report the first day. He introduced it somewhat haltingly, more or less as a philosophical question, under the topic of "The Role of the Individual in History." Here are the first words of his report on the subject:

"In the struggle to promote in every way the creative activity of the Communists and of all the toilers, the Central Committee has taken measures to explain widely the Marxist-Leninist concept of the role of the individual in history." (*Izvestia*, Feb. 15.)

When the bureaucracy, whose hallmark is contempt for theory, suddenly discovers theory, that of course is a signal to sit up and take notice. "Theory," to the bureaucracy, always serves immediate practical ends. It first decides on a course and then hunts up quotations from Lenin or Marx to justify it. Khrushchev's practical aims became clear with the very next sentence:

"The Central Committee has resolutely condemned as alien to the spirit of Marxism-Leninism the cult of the individual, which converts this or that leader into a hero or miracle worker and at the same time belittles the role of the party and of the popular masses and results in a lowering of their creative efforts. The spread of the cult of the individual minimized the role of the collective leadership in the party, and led at times to serious shortcomings in our work."

This is very mild, of course, and it doesn't name the target. But, as the beginning, its meaning was unmistakable. The bureaucracy had decided to smash the Frankenstein it had itself created. Since there is no other force on earth, outside the bureaucracy, interested in maintaining the cult, the cult is finished. Who else will try to cling to Stalin's name once the bureaucracy repudiates him? By the time even a partial record of Stalin's crimes becomes widespread, where can anyone be found shameless enough, to say, "I am a Stalinist and I'm proud of it"?

For ourselves, we know a lot about Stalin's crimes, about his falsifications of history, his counter-revolutionary deeds, his frame-up system, his wholesale murder of innocent people, his extermination of the whole generation of Bolsheviks who led the October Revolution. To us this is not new. But I dare say that as the facts of Stalin's 30-year rule become known, become *fully* known, even *we* will be shocked at the ghastly details. We may still have to wait a long time before all the facts are known. The Kremlin bureaucracy will continue to hide as much as it can get away with. And we can count only on the intervention of the Soviet masses to finally wipe the slate clean.

### "Why Did They Confess?"

But even as it is we are a long way from those tragic days in the middle Thirties, when we had to explain the Moscow Trials and the mass purges. At that time we tried to prove to anybody who would listen that they were frame-ups. How difficult it was to get people to understand that the criminals were *not* in the prisoner's dock but at the prosecuting table and in the Kremlin offices; that Kamenev and Zinoviev and Bukharin and all the countless other victims of the gigantic hoax were not really agents of the bourgeoisie. That they were not really trying to restore capitalism in the Soviet Union. That this would have been purposeless. That men who had spent their whole lives fighting capitalism could not suddenly become partisans of this outworn system after a victorious revolution. But sceptics would ask over and over again the same question: "Then why did they confess?"

Leon Trotsky did his utmost to expose the frame-ups — even offering to stake his life by appearing in court to answer Stalin's charges if the Kremlin would only try to extradite him. The Kremlin did not accept his offer because Stalin's charges could not stand up in court.

Trotsky offered to appear before an impartial commission of prominent liberals and labor figures. Such a commission was formed under the chairmanship of the world-famous philosopher and educator John Dewey. In



Three of the Bolshevik leaders who founded the Soviet Union. Trotsky (left) was assassinated by an agent of Stalin in 1940. Lenin (center) died in 1924 and was converted into a "harmless ikon" by Stalin who sought to rule in Lenin's name. Kamenev (right) was framed-up by Stalin in the infamous Moscow Trial of 1936 and shot as a "fascist mad dog."

1937 it held hearings in Coyoacan, Mexico, at which Trotsky appeared and presented his evidence. The Stalinists of course refused to participate in a fair court like this. The verdict of the commission after careful examination of the facts was that Trotsky and his son Leon Sedov were innocent and that the Moscow Trials were frame-ups. From that time on, informed opinion the world over was aware of the fact that these show trials were fabrications run according to scripts prepared by Moscow's secret political police.

Nevertheless, the same question cropped up again and again: "But why did they confess?" To most of the world it was the great mystery of the decade.

Of course for those who knew what Stalinism was really like it was no mystery. And today it is pretty well understood that under sufficient pressure there comes a breaking point where weakened men can become pliable tools of their enemies.

Now, however, almost 20 years later, we are once again confronted with the question, "Why did they confess?" The "they" in this case refers to Stalin's loyal friends and collaborators, the perpetrators of the earlier

frame-ups, now confessing to some of Stalin's crimes.

It is reported that at a closed session of the Congress on Feb. 24, ten days after its opening, Khrushchev made another speech, lasting three and a half hours, in which he listed some of the things of which Stalin was guilty. From the high level of abstract theory where he began in taking up the cult of the individual in his opening report, he descended into the secret cellars of the GPU and revealed the names of some of Stalin's victims, the circumstances under which they were framed-up and the terrible harm dealt the Soviet Union. We do not know the details of Khrushchev's revelations. But it is reported that among other things he dealt with the purge of Marshal Tukhachevsky, head of the Soviet General Staff, and his co-workers in 1937. Some 5,000 Soviet army officers lost their lives in that purge. This occurred shortly before the Soviet Union had to face the German imperialist invasion. This purge was tantamount to opening the front to the Nazis.

We remember well the Tukhachevsky purge. Trotsky had warned about its disastrous consequences. We saw his prediction borne out; first in the

Finnish war when the mighty Soviet Union was stopped in its tracks by this outpost of Allied imperialism, and then in the war against Hitler when in its early stages millions of Soviet soldiers fell or were taken prisoner due to Stalin's crime in beheading the armed forces.

But it wasn't only the Soviet army that was beheaded. So was the Communist International. Whole leaderships of various national Communist parties were executed. Stalin rounded up all the foreign communists who had fled fascist persecution in their own countries and sought asylum in the Soviet Union. He murdered them. Extermination of revolutionists by Stalin and Co. proved even more disastrous to the international working class than the purge of the Soviet armies.

But to get back to the question — why did Khrushchev and the other heirs of Stalin begin confessing? They didn't do it because of pressure from the secret political police. That's for sure. They control the secret police. They control the state apparatus. They control the whole apparatus that proved so successful in extorting confessions from others.

Did they confess out of a sense of remorse? Such things are possible in the case of individuals, but I don't believe it is possible in the case of a *machine*, and especially of a *state machine*. The machine generally manages to take care of people with a conscience.

So there's obviously a force *outside* the state apparatus exerting powerful pressure, powerful enough to have forced Khrushchev and Co. to make this confession. We note that in confessing Stalin's crimes they do not emerge exactly as heroes. The first question that occurs to everyone — and it has been raised at Stalinist meetings here in New York and elsewhere — is, where were Khrushchev and Kaganovich and Mikoyan and all the others when Stalin was committing these crimes, when this tyrant was lording it over the country? And what did they do about it? Stalin did not commit all these crimes single-handedly. He wasn't that omnipotent. He had accomplices. It is the wrong

way to start destroying the hero cult by creating a villain cult. One is as false as the other. Stalin headed a machine and these confessors of Stalin's guilt were part of the machine. All of them were Stalin's hand-picked men. Can they deny this? They, too, are guilty and that is why they cannot possibly come out of the situation unscathed.

We are safe in assuming that they know that by exposing the crimes and horrors of Stalin's reign, they thereby expose their own complicity. From their viewpoint it would be preferable to keep quiet — as they did for three years after Stalin's death — in the hope people would forget the whole period. Yet they finally broke their silence and began confessing. It is, therefore, safe to assume that the Kremlin is taking the present course under duress, under compulsion. That it is not really its own master and that it must yield to powerful pressure being exerted upon it from some quarter.

#### Is Dulles Responsible?

What is the source of this pressure? Let us see if we can discover it by process of elimination. Secretary of State Dulles, whose job is to help build an Eisenhower cult in this country, has tried to give the White House and the State Department the credit for the Soviet bureaucracy's change in course. His reward — universal ridicule — was well earned. He never did explain, and never will, just how and why U.S. pressure forced Khrushchev to attack the Stalin cult and expose some of Stalin's crimes. The fact is—and it's a cold historic fact—that the period of closest relations between Washington and Moscow was marked by the Teheran, Yalta and Potsdam conferences when Stalin was master of the Soviet Union and sat down in person with the representatives of Wall Street. He was good old genial Uncle Joe at that time.

I might add that the State Department made not a small contribution in promoting the Stalin cult and in covering up for his crimes. Two instances out of many will indicate its role.

First, there was the book, *Mission to Moscow*, by Joseph E. Davies,

American ambassador to Moscow during the infamous purge trials, which undertook to whitewash those trials. This was then made into a movie building up the Stalin cult and praising the foul dictator. It was produced under the inspiration of the State Department — a Hollywood movie that compares with some of the worst Stalin-cult movies filmed in the Soviet Union.

Secondly, there was Trotsky's book: *Stalin, A Political Biography*. This was published in 1941 after Stalin's assassination of Trotsky. Copies were sent out to reviewers. Then, at the instance of the State Department, came a frantic letter from the publishers to please return the review copies because the book had been withdrawn. Why? To please Stalin. This book was finally permitted to appear after the war when collaboration between the State Department and Stalin came to an end.

These very, very moral gentlemen in Washington played Stalin's game and covered up his crimes when it suited their purposes.

The Stalin cult is not what stands in the way of friendly relations between the Soviet Union and the United States. What stands in the way is the conflict of two antagonistic social systems. Washington will accept the Stalin cult or any other cult; it will accept any murderous regime when it suits its class interests.

#### Unity with Social Democrats?

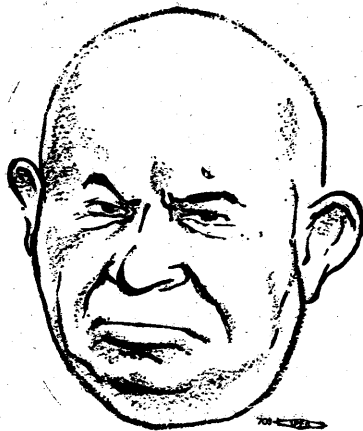
There has been wide support in the press for the idea that Stalin's successors repudiated their master to clear the way for a unity approach to the Social Democrats and the liberal intellectuals. This view is bolstered by the fact that the congress, in addition to repudiating the Stalin cult, also revised Lenin on the nature and role of the Social Democracy and on the road to socialism.

The implication here is that the Stalin cult, or the tyranny that Stalin imposed on the Soviet people, stood in the way of good relations with the reformists or liberals. There is no more truth in this than there is in the contention that the cult prevented friendly relations with the imperialists. As a matter of fact in their rela-

tions with the Stalinists, the reformists and liberals have followed the turns and twists of their own bourgeoisie.

It was precisely during the monstrous Moscow trials that the French Socialists and bourgeois radicals joined in a people's front alliance with the Stalinists. During the war and the immediate post-war period, while the Big Four alliance flourished, the Socialists and liberals worked hand in glove with the Stalinists, in and out of parliament, for a time holding ministerial posts together with them in France, Italy and elsewhere.

What the Social Democrats and the liberals chiefly opposed was the Russian Revolution itself and its leaders, Lenin and Trotsky. They warmed up to Stalin as he destroyed the Bolshevik



KHRUSHCHEV

Present top dog among the hatchet men chosen by Stalin to succeed him in office; says he was "afraid" of dictator.

generation in the Soviet Union and turned to class collaborationist policies internationally.

Another view as to why Khrushchev and Co. decided to end the Stalin cult is advanced by Max Lerner who writes "think" pieces for the N.Y. Post. In the March 24 issue he makes some juicy deductions. For example:

"It is more likely that the anti-Stalin campaign has been decided on the whole by the top Stalin elite, in the belief that the Russian people have too long been hypnotized by the Satanic figure of Stalin."

If Stalin had the Russian people hypnotized, then why was his rule so bloody? Why have so many millions of people been sent to prisons

and concentration camps? Hypnosis would have been a very cheap way of rule in comparison to the purges. Terror is generally used precisely when hypnosis does not work. The terror under Stalin testifies not to his hypnotizing the Soviet people, but on the contrary to the mass opposition to his rule. In fact the opposition is now shown to be so great that Stalin's closest collaborators, seeking to gain favor with the people, must try to appear as victims of Stalin themselves. They try to pretend now to having something big in common with the Soviet people — fear of Stalin.

And if the top Soviet elite, as Lerner says, believe that the Russian people were hypnotized by Stalin, why should Stalin's successors try to break the hypnosis? A people under the spell of a dead dictator could have been easily manipulated by ruling in his name as his loyal disciples. Khrushchev and Co., who were hand-picked personally by Stalin, could easily have done it. Instead, they are trying to cover themselves with Lenin's glory, not Stalin's. They are trying to wipe out, if they can, the whole era of Stalin by promising to go back to Lenin. Shouldn't this in itself convince anybody capable of thinking that Stalin's name is hated in the Soviet Union?

But Max Lerner continues to believe that the Russian people are hypnotized, so hypnotized that he feels sorry for them. Says Lerner further:

"But we may well ask what happens when a people has been conditioned to blind belief in a ruler, as the Russians have, and have come to lean on it as on a prop, then what happens when you remove the prop, taking away what they once had and giving them nothing to replace it?"

That's a terrible plight. We have a whole great nation of 200,000,000 people, hypnotized, leaning on a prop, and suddenly Khrushchev pulls away the prop. What happens? Total collapse naturally.

Lerner typifies the bourgeois liberal who is anti-Stalinist. But his reasoning follows the same model as Stalinist reasoning. The Stalinists denounced every critic of Stalin, of his brutal rule, of his crimes, as anti-Soviet. A mere whisper against the oppressive

bureaucracy was branded as counter-revolutionary. Why? Because to their way of thinking you could not separate Stalin from the Soviet Union. The same method of identifying the Soviet Union with Stalin and the Soviet working class with the bureaucracy, of identifying the ruler and the ruled, of seeing harmony and unity where there is contradiction and conflict guides the thinking of both the bourgeois liberal and the Stalinist. The difference is that where one sees only a minus sign the other sees only a plus.

We see in Lerner, the bourgeois liberal, what stupidities this method of thinking can yield. The consequences in the case of a Stalinist — and here I refer to the sincere worker who considers himself a communist — are even more disastrous. This way of thinking makes impossible any analysis of the living social forces in the Soviet Union. But if you cannot analyze the forces in the Soviet Union you become incapable of Marxist analysis of the world situation. You cannot understand the world without understanding the Soviet Union.

### Lenin Began the Struggle

The fact is that the first one to take up the struggle against the Soviet bureaucracy was none other than Lenin himself. Even in his lifetime he saw the sharpening conflict between the rising bureaucracy and the Soviet masses. But he died at a crucial turn in the struggle just as he was preparing to crack down on Stalin. Part of Lenin's legacy was continuation of this fight. Trotsky, as co-founder of the Soviet Union, remained true to the principle of opposing with all his strength the expanding power of the bureaucracy.

Stalinism represented that grasping bureaucracy which finally succeeded in pushing the Soviet workers out of the Soviets and out of the Communist Party and establishing the uncontrolled, absolutist rule of Stalin. Stalin was the personification of the bureaucracy, of its grasping nature, of its power madness, of its arbitrariness, of its hostility to democratic processes. His rule was far from being in harmony with the workers state established by the October Revolution. On the

contrary, it was its antithesis and negation. It was in constant conflict with it.

Only the Stalinists and the bourgeoisie and their representatives have pretended that Stalinism and the Soviet Union are one and the same thing. The Stalinists exploited the great conquests of the October Revolution, attributed them to Stalin and deified him. The bourgeoisie, its propagandists, its theorizers, have exploited the crimes of Stalin in order to smear Bolshevism and the revolution. The capitalist propagandists and the Stalinists alike have tried through the years to identify Stalinism and socialism.

The confession at the Twentieth Congress by the bureaucracy itself that Stalin's long rule was in fundamental conflict with the program and principles of Marxism-Leninism is confirmation in its way of the correctness of Trotsky's long, tireless struggle against all the charlatans who sought to prove that Stalinism was the continuation of Leninism.

To understand why Stalin's successors now seek to give the impression that they have finished with Stalinism, it is necessary to go back to Trotsky's writings. I recommend especially *Stalinism and Bolshevism*, *The Revolution Betrayed*, and *Their Morals and Ours*, as first on the list for study. Trotsky's explanation as to why the Stalin cult arose is the Marxist explanation. You will not get any such explanation from Khrushchev. He hasn't mentioned a single good reason why the cult arose, why it flourished so long. Nor will you find a Marxist explanation in the remarks of the other speakers on the subject at the congress. And you cannot get a Marxist explanation from William Z. Foster. All Foster says is, wait for Khrushchev and the others to give the answer. They are more competent to do it. Having lived and worked with Stalin the closest, they are best qualified to reevaluate the whole experience.

But it is not a detective job that is required in this case. What is required is a Marxist analysis as to how and why this monster with his medieval methods could come to rule a country born of a proletarian revo-

lution, a revolution that established the most advanced forms of production in the world.

### An Ideological Deviation?

On Khrushchev's premises, one can only conclude that the cult was a sort of ideological deviation from Marxism-Leninism. Can it be that the works of Marx and Lenin haven't been available to the bureaucracy? Or that they haven't studied them diligently enough? Was that why the cult arose?

The question of ideology is, of course, very important. But ideology itself is molded by social forces. Anybody who knows the ABC of Marxism knows that being determines consciousness.

If the cult of the individual is alien to Marxism, as Khrushchev correctly points out, then what ideology does it represent? Marxism is the ideology of the proletariat, of the working class in its struggle for socialism. As the only class hostile to all forms of inequality and oppression, the working class can construct socialism. But it can do so only through the most complete democratic participation of the toilers in industrial and political life. The Marxist party, expressing these interests, never seeks to substitute itself for the class, either in the struggle for power or after victory. The Bolshevik party and its leadership inspired and educated the working class to discharge its responsibility as the ruling class until such time as class society is outlived and the state withers away. For Stalinism to triumph, the Bolshevik Party had to be destroyed first.

The ideology of the leader cult is bourgeois. It is the ideology of a privileged minority seeking to immobilize the working class as a political force and to substitute its own interests for those of the working class. In other words, Stalin and Co. have been the bearers of bourgeois ideology precisely because they have been the bearers of bourgeois privileges in the Soviet Union.

The bureaucracy needed this anti-Marxist bourgeois cult of the individual in usurping political power from the working class and fostering inequality and its own privileged position. Any-

one who consciously or otherwise supported the Stalin cult has by that fact placed himself in the service of the bureaucracy and has worked against the interests of the Soviet workers, against the interests of the world working class. This is the truth that Khrushchev and Co. cannot re-



STALIN

Self-anointed "genius" deflated by his own hand-picked heirs.

veal. On the contrary, they must do their utmost to conceal it. That is why they speak only half-truths and reveal no more than they are absolutely forced to.

### Due to Soviet Workers

The power compelling Stalin's successors to throw overboard the cult of the late dictator, the cult that served them apparently so well up to now, is none other than the Soviet working class. This is the *other* force in the Soviet Union, the force the bureaucracy must face every day and every hour.

The Stalinists outside the USSR cannot even see the Soviet working class. They have only the eyes of the bureaucracy, Stalin's eyes yesterday, Khrushchev's eyes today. The Soviet working class with its interests, its aspirations for freedom, for an end to arbitrary bureaucratic rule, its aspirations for equality, for the reconstitution of the Soviets as the organs of democratic workers' power, for the right to free speech, free assembly, the freedom to organize politically in its own interests — this does not exist for them. To the Stalinists these masses are only the object



of clever maneuvers by a cynical bureaucracy. And that is why our own Stalinists right here as well as in other countries are so baffled by the Twentieth Congress. They cannot figure out the nature of this "maneuver." They don't know what its purpose is, whom it serves. Up to now they could explain every zig-zag of the Kremlin as another clever maneuver. They were never at a loss for explanations. Even the Stalin-Hitler pact in 1939 had its explanation. It was supposed to have gained the Soviet Union time to better prepare and arm itself for the coming showdown.

But now for the first time they cannot figure out the angle. The reason they cannot do it is because this is the first time the bureaucracy has been compelled to relieve the social

pressures within the country not by another purge but by a political concession. The purges — they always had an answer. That was simple. The standard argument was that they were purging the "enemies of the people."

But how do you explain political concessions without admitting at the same time the existence of abuses? I dare say there are enough Stalinists around who would rather see another purge in the Soviet Union today, no matter how bloody, than to see this development. It confounds them; they cannot understand it.

### A Regime of Crisis

From its inception, the Stalinist regime has been a regime of crisis. Mass purges as we have seen them in the Soviet Union throughout the

years are not a feature of a well-ordered society. These are crisis measures of a state dominated by a force that dares not rule by democratic means. A regime that has the support of the people need not resort to such monstrous methods of rule. Purges have as their object the terrorization of the people. But while purges terrorize they also spread discontent. New and greater purges are always required to discourage opposition. And this by and large has been the Stalinist course. The purges kept multiplying and extending.

Following World War II, whole nationalities were purged in the Soviet Union and exiled to Siberia. The population of the forced labor camps kept mounting. In 1948 Stalin tried to purge Yugoslavia, a country of 16,000,000 people. Following that there were mass purges in all the satellite countries of Eastern Europe. When Stalin died in March 1953 another gigantic frame-up was in the making. That was when the Jewish physicians were arrested in preparation for a mass trial. No one can say how many more were scheduled for victimization. The physicians were only puppets in a bigger show that was in preparation.

The *Monthly Review*, the Sweezy-Huberman magazine, has the unfortunate distinction of being the only publication in this country outside of the direct Stalinist organs to have hailed that new purge, just on the eve of its exposure.

### Workers Revolt

But all these purges did not prevent the workers in East Germany from rising up against the regime on June 17, 1953. The logic of the purge system would have demanded in this case the extermination of an entire people. These risings reverberated in Czechoslovakia and other Eastern European countries.

In July 1953 there was a general strike of a half-million slave laborers in Vorkuta. Similar strikes occurred also in other camps during the following year. These strikes had the support of the free laborers in and around the camps as well as of the guards. We do not know how the Soviet workers reacted to this wave of unrest,

(Continued on page 70)



Outstanding leader of the 1905 revolution in Russia, co-leader with Lenin of the October revolution that founded the first workers state, Leon Trotsky devoted the last years of his life to defending the Soviet Union from imperialist pressure and Stalinist degeneration. He was slandered, framed-up, hounded from country to country and finally murdered by Stalin. Now the end of the Stalin cult signals the beginning of the victory of Trotsky's program of revolutionary socialism.

# Which Way for Supporters Of the Progressive Party?

by Harry Ring

**M**ANY people in America today are dissatisfied with both the Republican and Democratic parties. The bulk of them are aroused over the way these old machines turn deep-seated grievances into mere subjects of campaign oratory that are forgotten the day after election. Undoubtedly the hope is still strong among them of getting some reform in the old parties, especially the Democratic Party, yet a large section would like to see a complete shake-up and fresh alignment on the political scene. Unfortunately, they don't know how to go about it.

In the labor movement a good number of workers are aware of the general road that must be taken. They feel that it is quite within the capacity of the American working class to build a labor party at least as powerful as the British model. Many of them are concerned about the continued cold war waged by the State Department against the Soviet bloc, about the atomic armaments race and the long-range drive toward a Third World War. They view the freedom aspirations of the colonial peoples with sympathy. They are profoundly disturbed over the bi-partisan foreign policy that has brought America into world-wide dispute. They would like to see a clean, new, labor administration in Washington that would extend the hand of solidarity to the rest of humanity. But they don't see what can be done specifically in 1956 to advance this aim.

Among them quite a few have gone on in their thinking until they have come to realize that in the final analysis socialism offers the only road to the society of abundance, peace and well-being that is obviously within our capacity to construct. Some of them are developed enough politically to grasp the world-shaking significance of the achievements of planned economy in the Soviet Union and to understand that the Chinese Revolution has opened up new vistas of hope for the victory of socialism on a world scale. But they are not so sure precisely how this can be turned to account in America, especially in 1956.

All these shadings, which represent in reality stages of political development, have this in common — understanding, to one degree or another, of the need to turn away from the Democratic and Republican parties and take the road of independent political action. They also have in common a difficult problem — what to do in the 1956 election?

The problem is especially acute for the groups that have worked together under the banner of the ill-fated Progressive Party. Organized in 1948 with Henry Wallace as presidential candidate, the party went into a tail-spin when this wealthy capitalist politician decided to ask

for forgiveness from Wall Street for his sin of campaigning against Truman. In 1952 the Progressive Party ran a half-hearted campaign for Vincent Hallinan and Charlotta Bass. This year it will not enter a ticket in the presidential race.

A hot, even bitter debate has raged as a consequence among the various groups about the future of the Progressive Party and above all what should be done in 1956. Since the issues in dispute concern the whole problem of independent political action, the arguments pro and con are of general interest and serve admirably to point up a number of key questions that are being asked by thinking workers throughout the country. To properly follow the debate, however, it is first necessary to understand the role and aims of the powerful Communist Party faction which has dominated the Progressive Party since Wallace's desertion.

## Policy of the Stalin Cult

During the mid-Thirties when the CIO took shape, the natural logic of this powerful upthrust of the working class clearly pointed to shattering the traditional pattern of American politics. With the formation of Labor's Non-Partisan League, labor seemed on the verge of appearing with giant force in the political arena. The Communist Party was in position to decisively affect this promising development. Had the Communist Party provided Marxist leadership for the vanguard of the turbulent CIO movement, American labor would have long ago taken the road to independent political action.

But the Kremlin wished to maintain the status quo, otherwise known as "peaceful coexistence with capitalism." This meant subordinating the class struggle to Stalin's opportunistic foreign policy. The Kremlin even saw the possibility of gaining the good will of the capitalists of the Western Powers by diverting potentially revolutionary socialist movements in their areas into blind alleys. A vehicle for achieving this perfidious aim was the so-called "people's front" which the Stalinists began organizing wherever they could.

In the United States this took shape as the policy of forming a coalition with the Democrats. The working-class trend toward independence was diverted into the American Labor Party which in turn channeled it toward the Democratic machine.

Someone still under the hypnosis of the Stalin cult may believe that the Stalinists played a major role in organizing the American Labor Party as a step toward independent political action. However, let him read an

official Stalinist admission. Writing in the May 1954 issue of *Political Affairs*, John Swift confessed that the ALP was organized so that it "enabled independent voters in New York to form a new party without thereby endangering the election of those major party candidates who in their eyes still deserved support. In practice this performed the function of delivering an even larger vote to the Democratic Party presidential, state and congressional tickets."

The Stalinist role in helping to organize the Progressive Party was not different in principle. It is true that their coalition with the Democratic machine was broken — but it was broken by the Democrats, not the Stalinists, as one of the consequences of Truman's opening up the cold war. Wallace's line happened to coincide with that of the Stalinists — continuation of the war-time alliance. And both Wallace and the Stalinists had their eyes on the wave of militancy that swept American labor following World War II. To be noted particularly is the fact that the program of the Progressive Party did not transcend liberal bourgeois limits. In fact, at its inception the party announced it would support "progressives" on the Democratic and Republican tickets. As power politics, the whole maneuver aimed at channelizing labor militancy and directing it back to the Democratic Party in return for better standing with the machine bosses.

The correctness of this analysis is confirmed by what happened in the formation of the Independent Progressive Party in California. It is well known in Progressive Party circles that the supporters of the IPP got a half million signatures on petitions to place Wallace on the ballot. It is less well known outside of California that this enormous effort was unnecessary. California state law provides two alternatives for placement on the ballot. It can be done either by the difficult petition route chosen by the IPP or it can be done by enrolling 12,000 people as registered members of the new party. It would have been a lead-pipe cinch to register the 12,000 at that time. A number of powerful CIO unions supported the movement. The wide general support was indicated by the very fact that a half million people signed up. But the Stalinists insisted on doing it the hard way. Why?

The answer is simple. The "people's front" policy requires the Communist Party to do everything in its power to maintain or strive for coalition with the Democrats. If the CP registered its forces with the IPP they would have had to withdraw from the Democratic Party. That would have meant weakening the coalition with the California Democratic machine.

Since the 1952 campaign the Progressive Party has been under heavy pressure from the Communist Party to abandon any perspective of independent political action and chart a course back to the Democratic Party. In July 1955 the Stalinists liquidated the Independent Progressive Party in California, establishing instead the "Independent Committee for Political Action in 1956." The "political action" meant here is a polishing job from the left for the badly tarnished Democratic machine of that state.

In New York the CP has done such an effective job

of scuttling the American Labor Party that in 1954, when the Stalinists pushed the millionaire Democrat, Averill Harriman, for governor, the ALP got less than the 50,000 votes needed to maintain a place on the ballot. The ranks of the ALP have now been instructed by the State Committee to enroll in the Democratic Party.

## Dope Peddlers for the Democrats

Such organizational steps have been accompanied by a propaganda campaign in favor of the Democratic Party. Naturally this propaganda is quite different from anything directly produced by the National Committee of the Democratic Party or its leading candidates. It is aimed principally at the ranks of the Progressive Party — the ranks of the Communist Party too — and it bears in mind that this audience is pretty thoroughly convinced about the need for independent political action. Thus we see the phenomenon — rather strange unless you know the origin of Stalinist policies — of the most subtly poisoned arguments in favor of the Democratic Party coming from the Communist Party.

The intended victims of Stalinist designs in the Progressive Party have tried to resist walking the plank into the Democratic Party, but having no clear and effective program, their resistance up to now has proved feeble. For instance, the editors of the *National Guardian*, newspaper of the Progressive Party, have refused so far to swallow the argument that the Democratic Party is a "lesser evil." On Jan. 10, 1955 the *National Guardian* called for a "national independent ticket on the ballot in the 1956 elections." They proposed a national conference during Labor Day week of 1955 to launch such a ticket.

The Stalinists responded with a sharp scolding in their magazine *Political Affairs*, and the *National Guardian* refrained from mentioning the proposal again. It continued to demonstrate the futility of supporting the Democrats, but for the time being had no suggestions as to what independents should actually do in the 1956 elections. Finally, on Nov. 7, 1955 — the anniversary of the Russian Revolution! — the *National Guardian* proposed abstention; that is, simply withdrawing to the sidelines.

The Stalinists took a more positive stand — positive for the capitalist candidates of the Democratic Party. Max Gordon, writing in the *Daily Worker* of Nov. 22, berated the *National Guardian*: "Win or lose, big vote or small, some of its writers occasionally imply, the main thing is to vote my conscience, to keep my own principles unsullied. This may be lofty sentiment, but it is scarcely the aim of politics."

He should have said "capitalist politics" for it is certainly the aim of Marxist politics to keep the principle of independent political action unsullied. As an attorney for the Democratic Party, Gordon argued that workers consider the Republican Party to be "the stronghold of reaction" and the Democratic Party to be "the vehicle for winning concessions for labor." To avoid "isolation" from these workers, he contended, it is necessary to get into the Democratic Party. He urged the *National Guardian* to review its position on this "tactical problem."

The argument is, of course, specious. Insofar as a tac-

tical problem is involved, the solution for a socialist wishing to avoid isolation from the workers is to stay with them on the job and in the union, not go looking for them in the Tammany Halls or at the \$100-a-plate dinners arranged by the National Committee of the Democratic Party. For one who really opposes the Big Business political machines, the only principled course is to explain in the union hall or around the lunch pail that the best vehicle for winning concessions for labor is independent political action, since it exerts the greatest possible pressure on the class enemy.

Of course, it's not the rank and file unionists who might vote Democratic that the Stalinists leaders are concerned about keeping in touch with when they insist on the need to get into the Democratic machine. They want to get next to the labor bureaucrats who are in the Democratic machine. These bureaucrats will be found rubbing elbows with the Democratic Party bosses, a political hobnobbing from which the Stalinist chieftains have been "isolated." That's what all the talk about ending the "isolation" boils down to. By delivering labor votes to the Democratic Party, the Fosters hope to become once again socially acceptable in these capitalist political circles.

How much more effective the Communist Party is than the Democratic Party itself in working up support among independents for the Democratic Party can be judged by Gordon's concession that the labor movement "at a particular stage, will learn from its own experience the need for an independent party." Having thus assuaged the feelings of those who want independent political action in 1956, Gordon insisted, of course, that in 1956 the only practical course is to get behind the Democrats. The great opportunity in the 1956 election of helping the labor movement to learn from its own experience through the explanations of an independent candidate does not come under the Stalinist concept of "practical" politics.

This Stalinist huckster of Democratic wares even tried to turn into its opposite whatever experience the ranks of the Progressive Party have gained about the need for independent political action. Reaction, he argued, tries to isolate "militants from the ranks of the workers" and "for a time it succeeded — in part because the entire Left erred along the lines of the Guardian position." The "error" he refers to was supporting Wallace instead of — Truman.

The Stalinist leaders have even attempted to provide basic "theoretical" justification for such arguments. This is not because they believe in it themselves, but because they are aware that a considerable section of those to whom they are trying to sell the Democratic Party demand a weightier explanation than is offered in the Gordon-type sales talk.

An instructive example is the article by Celeste Strack in the November 1954 *Political Affairs*. In answer to Tabitha Petran, who had contended in the *National Guardian* that a major crisis in America will breed mass radicalism thereby putting independent political action on the order of the day, Strack argued that a crisis will also spawn a

drive toward fascism and that means, in accordance with Stalinist politics, "the need for maximum unity to avert a repetition of the German, Italian and Japanese experiences is correspondingly great. The left would not contribute to such unity if it viewed the immediate issue as socialism."

There you have class-collaborationist politics in all its nakedness. Prosperity? — the workers aren't ready for socialism. Depression? — socialism would disrupt "unity" against fascism. This is not the lesson of the German, Italian and Japanese experiences. It is a guarantee to repeat them.

The magic word "unity" expresses the essence of Stalinist politics; that is, a certain kind of unity. Not the unity of the working class in struggle against the capitalist class which is progressive and absolutely indispensable. Not the unity of the Negro people, of other oppressed minorities and of the middle class with the workers on a correct program which is essential for success in this struggle. The kind of unity the Stalinists mean is "unity" with the capitalists. It is a variation of their cry for "peace" where there is no peace — in the class struggle.

One example will illustrate the bad meaning given these good words, "unity" and "peace," in Stalinist propaganda. William Z. Foster in the October 1955 *Political Affairs* looks for a rising "peace" movement that "will embrace not only workers and other democratic elements, but also important sections of the bourgeoisie, and even of monopoly capital itself."

Foster, of course, is trying to encourage CP ranks by making out that pacifist sentiments have become so widespread as to give pause to monopoly capital. This would seem to justify the Stalinist line of exerting pacifist pressure through the Democratic Party. But to put the workers in the embrace of a political machine of monopoly capital instead of in uncompromising struggle against it, is to help prepare another world war.

The real barrier to another world war is advancement of the class struggle. This has been proved in life once again — this time definitively one would imagine — by the revolutionary battles of the colonial peoples, especially the North Koreans and Chinese, which have forced Wall Street to postpone its timetable for war again and again.

As these citations indicate, the basic pattern of the CP's propaganda in behalf of the Democratic Party is fairly simple. First, the views of the ranks of the Progressive Party are kept in mind and admitted to be correct in principle. "Yes, the workers will come to learn the need for an independent party." BUT — and this is the next step in the pattern — right now, it's not *practical*. "Reasons" are advanced for its not being practical. The workers are still voting for the Democrats; they aren't ready for an independent party yet, etc., etc. Thus there is danger of the vanguard getting isolated from the masses by rushing too fast down the road of independent political action. Then comes the proposal for an action that *is* practical, according to the Stalinists; namely, retrace whatever steps have been taken on the road to independent political action and register Democratic.

That this is a violation of principle is not mentioned. Instead a glowing picture is painted of the practical advantages. You "avoid isolation," "avoid sectarianism," avoid "splitting" the democratic-minded forces, avoid becoming a martyr to "lofty sentiment" that is "scarcely the aim of politics." It sounds like the toothpaste ad that tells you how to avoid dental yellow; and like the toothpaste ad the Stalinist propagandist goes on to stress the positive advantages of his product. You serve the cause of unity against reaction. You serve the cause of peace against the warmongers. You help the peace-loving powers on a world scale. All this is principled isn't it? Therefore how can you object to registering in the same party as the Southern Bourbons?

## The Resistance to the Sales Campaign

The resistance to this pressure, as we indicated, is not united around an effective common program. As a result the demoralization is considerable, a phenomenon that finds its practical reflection in those who walk out of the Progressive Party in disgust. The *National Guardian's* proposal to abstain in the 1956 election has not served to counteract the demoralization. The noted Negro historian Dr. W. E. B. DuBois has attempted to give the same position a more attractive formulation. After a scathing indictment of the Republican and Democrats in the March 26, 1956 issue of the *National Guardian*, he declared: "I can stay home and let fools traipse to the polls. I call this sit-down strike the only recourse of honest men today so far as the Presidency is concerned."

While under certain circumstances the boycott of a phony electoral system is justified, this does not hold true for America today. The foolish thing is to stay home and let the dishonest men monopolize the ballot. The honest men should seek to get on the ballot in order to better present the case for independent political action; and, where they are barred from the ballot by anti-democratic laws, they should organize write-in campaigns.

The editors of the *Monthly Review*, a magazine of some influence in Progressive Party circles, have not yet taken an editorial position on the elections. In 1952 the editors rode horses in opposite directions, which was a convenient way of demonstrating independence, if not consistency, of thought. Editor Leo Huberman announced that he would vote for Hallinan and Bass; editor Paul Sweezy announced he would vote for Stevenson as the "lesser evil" candidate.

So far this year only Huberman has indicated the direction of his thinking. In the March 1956 issue of the magazine he wrote that he intended to vote socialist. He was faced, he said, with choosing between one of the four existing socialist parties which he listed as the Communist Party, Socialist Party, Socialist Labor Party, and Socialist Workers Party. For various reasons he considers all of them inadequate. In actuality, we note, Huberman's choice is narrowed down to the Socialist Workers and Socialist Labor parties, since they are the only ones of the four he lists that will present a ticket in the 1956 campaign.

A persistent voice in the Progressive Party for independent political action has been that of Clifford P. McAvoy, a leading non-Stalinist in the American Labor Party and its standard bearer in a number of New York elections. In the Oct. 10, 1955 *National Guardian*, McAvoy called for rejection of the policy of "enrolling in or dabbling in the internal politics of the machine parties . . . in 1956." "Let us have an end now," he urged, "to coalition with advocates of cold war, enemies of labor and the Bill of Rights, friends of Jim Crow." Since then, McAvoy has continued to insist on the need for opponents of the two-party system to work out practical means for actively participating in the 1956 election.

In pressing for this approach, McAvoy has come into direct conflict with the Communist Party. As against their argument that crossing class lines and supporting a capitalist party is a purely "tactical" question, McAvoy has insisted that it is a matter of principle, a principle that cannot be violated by anyone who understands that both the Republican and Democratic parties represent Big Business.

McAvoy is quite correct in this. The principle, moreover, is not something remote, applicable perhaps in the distant future. It is of burning importance right now. The civil rights issue, especially desegregation in the South, has jolted the equilibrium of the two-party system. The Democratic Party is confronted with the impossible job of placating the extremely important Negro voters in the North and West while at the same time avoiding a bolt by the Dixiecrats. The labor bureaucrats are likewise caught in a squeeze. Negro unionists everywhere are pressing for aid to the embattled Negroes of the South. Yet if the labor fakery concede to this pressure they embarrass their Democratic Party allies.

Even more important is the effect on the thinking of a large section of militant white workers of such struggles as the Montgomery, Ala., bus protest movement. By exposing both Republicans and Democrats in the sharpest way, the civil rights struggle heightens class consciousness and furthers dissatisfaction with the two-party system.

Doesn't this development offer exceptional opportunities to advance the cause of independent political action? Could anything be more criminal at a time like this than helping the official leaders of the Negro and labor movements in their dirty work of trying to keep the ranks tied to the Democratic machine?

The 1956 election must be utilized to aid the working people in heightening their political consciousness. But this can be done only by offering them a meaningful alternative to the perennial "lesser evil" choice.

In arguing for his stay-home-from-the-polls position, Dr. DuBois declared, "The result of the election I cannot change, but I can at least refuse to condone it." Dr. DuBois is of the opinion that "There is no chance for any third party candidate on any platform to get his beliefs before the people."

With all due respect to the eminent historian, this judgment is unduly pessimistic. Of course a third party candidate in 1956 will not reach as big an audience as

the major candidates. The capitalist-controlled press, radio and TV will see to that. But is that a legitimate excuse to brood at home? Who will listen to such a hopeless appeal? How can it possibly lead to action of any kind toward formation of a labor party?

## The Socialist Workers Party

The fact is that a militant campaign by even a small organization can break through the conspiracy of silence. This was demonstrated in 1948 and 1952 by the Socialist Workers Party which was not afraid to buck the opposition even in the worst days of the witch hunt and which won a hearing in a series of key centers and got at least a part of the time it was entitled to on nation-wide radio and TV hook-ups. To cite difficulties is simply to cite problems that must be solved, not evaded by staying home. How else can the movement fight its way forward?

The 1948 and 1952 campaigns of the Socialist Workers Party, modest though they were, have prepared the way for an even more effective campaign in 1956. This campaign, we submit, offers a means for everyone who believes in independent political action to participate in the 1956 election in accordance with his principles.

It is true that the Socialist Labor Party is also campaigning in 1956. But with all due recognition for the many true things this staid organization says about the evils of capitalism and the need for socialism, its platform on some of the most vital questions facing the working class today is not to be commended.

For example, it does not support the Soviet Union against imperialist aggression. The SLP asserts that the war danger today exists because "Capitalism and Stalinist imperialism are more than ever in desperate need of foreign markets . . ." (*Weekly People*, March 3, 1956.) The SLP thus does not distinguish between the planned economy of the Soviet Union which is certainly progressive and the capitalist economy of the Western Powers which is just as certainly reactionary.

Trade unionists in particular will find the SLP platform difficult to swallow. Writing about the projected AFL-CIO drive to organize the unorganized, the *Weekly People* of Dec. 31, 1955 condemned the proposal, inasmuch as organizing the unorganized "merely puts more dues payers under the thumb of the labor fakers and thus strengthens the union-bulwark of capitalism." A militant trade unionist favors such a drive, among other reasons as a means of combatting the labor fakers, for extending the union widens its base, and often signifies struggles that give fresh inspiration to the rank and file. Strengthening the union as a whole will in the long run weaken the capitalist class, including their agents in the labor movement. Because they understand this the labor fakers are generally reluctant to organize the unorganized, a fact which should give comfort to the SLP.

In sharp contrast to this, the Socialist Workers Party has defended unconditionally the great conquests of the Russian Revolution. From its foundation, the Socialist Workers Party has done its best to explain the great progressive meaning of these conquests for the future of

humanity. It should be noted especially that its defense of these conquests included defending them from the corrosion of Stalinism. The Stalin cult was opposed from its beginning by the founders of the Socialist Workers Party.

As for the domestic scene, the Socialist Workers Party has a consistent record of participation in the struggles of the working people, no matter for what partial demands. This record extends from the great Minneapolis strikes of the early thirties to the Montgomery bus protest movement this year.

## For Dobbs and Weiss

The candidates of the Socialist Workers Party are worthy of the support of everyone who believes in independent political action.

Farrell Dobbs, the SWP candidate for President, has an outstanding record in the labor movement. As a young truck driver in Minneapolis during the depression, he enlisted in the campaign to organize the coal drivers and yard workers into the Teamsters union. His unusual abilities made him a leader in the historic 1934 strike struggles that converted Minneapolis from an open shop town into a union stronghold.

As secretary-treasurer of the Minneapolis Teamsters union until 1939, Dobbs sparked the drive that won a uniform contract for a quarter of a million over-the-road drivers in the 11-state Northwest area.

In 1941 Dobbs was one of the 18 leaders of the Socialist Workers Party and of the Minneapolis truck drivers union who became the first victims of the Smith Act, being railroaded to prison for advocating socialism and opposing World War II. Now National Secretary of the SWP, he was its Presidential candidate in 1948 and 1952.

Myra Tanner Weiss, the SWP's Vice-Presidential nominee, likewise has an impressive record in the labor and socialist movement. A revolutionary socialist since 1935, she participated in the organization and strike struggles of the heavily exploited agricultural workers in Southern California. The Mexican Agricultural Workers Union made her an honorary member because of her courageous defense of Mexican immigrant workers.

In 1946 she gained prominence for her role in helping to force official action in the Fontana, Calif., case where a Negro family of four, O'Day H. Short, his wife and two children, were burned to death when racists set fire to their home. Her pamphlet on the sensational case, *Vigilante Terror in Fontana*, was widely circulated.

Myra Tanner Weiss was twice the SWP candidate for Mayor of Los Angeles, its nominee for Congress in California, and its candidate for Vice-President in 1952.

These two candidates stand on a platform of opposition to the preparations for World War III. They demand withdrawal of U.S. troops from foreign soil. They call for an end to Atom Bomb tests. They demand immediate recognition of the Chinese Peoples Republic.

In opposition to the witch hunt, they call on the labor movement to unite in defense of the civil liberties of everyone under attack, regardless of political belief. They

(Continued on page 71)

# Early Years Of the American Communist Movement

by James P. Cannon

## The Passaic Strike

June 9, 1955

Dear Sir:

I remember the December 1925 Plenum of the CP of the U.S. I was allied with the Ruthenberg faction at this particular Plenum and took a very active part in the debate on the trade union question. It probably marked the tentative beginning of resistance to AFL fetishism, although the details of the specific issues in dispute at the Plenum have not remained in my memory.

According to my recollection, the Passaic issue came up at the Plenum, but it did not originate there. It was rather thrust upon the party by the cyclonic activities of Weisbord, who had gone into the field and actually began to organize the unorganized textile workers. Looking back on it now, we deserve censure, not for giving conditional support to the organizing work of Weisbord, but for failing to go all-out in such support and to make the issue of AFL fetishism clear-cut.

The "United Front Committee" under which the organizing campaign in Passaic proceeded, instead of under the auspices of a new union, which the situation really called for, was a concession to the party's prevailing policy of AFL-ism. To be sure, the recruitment of *individual members* to the "United Front Committee" twisted the conception of the united front, as an *alliance of organizations*, out of shape. But the real problem at Passaic was to organize the unorganized, unskilled and low-paid workers neglected by the AFL.

The Fosterite opposition to the re-

A student who is doing research work on the history of early American communism asked James P. Cannon as well as other participants, a number of questions about the events and prominent figures of the pioneer movement. Cannon's answers, which began in the summer 1954 issue of *Fourth International*, are continued here.

cruitment of individual members to this "United Front Committee" showed up the bankruptcy of the ultra-AFL policy in a clear light for the first time. It could have had no other effect than to paralyze the organization of the textile workers in Passaic for fear of committing the sin of "dual unionism" — for which the Fosterites had a real phobia.

The Passaic strike started in the spring of 1926 while we were still in Moscow attending the Sixth Plenum of the Comintern. I don't know or remember any of the immediate circumstances attending it. It is my definite impression, however, that the strike was not precipitated by the party leadership. Rather it was dumped in its lap as a result of Weisbord's successes in organizing the textile workers there.

Gitlow's pretensions about masterminding the Passaic situation, as related in his compendium of distortions and fabrications entitled *I Confess*, should be taken with a grain of salt. All his stories which are not outright inventions are slanted to enlarge his own role in party affairs and to denigrate others — in this case, Weisbord.

The organization of the workers in Passaic and the effective leadership of the strike itself, were pre-eminently Weisbord's work. I had a chance to see that on the ground after we returned from Moscow. I, myself, had nothing to do with the Passaic strike, but I spent a little time there and had a good chance to see Weisbord in action. As a strike leader he was first class, no mistake about it.

It is true that he worked under the close supervision and direction of a party committee in New York appointed by the national party leadership in Chicago. But it's a long way from committee meetings in a closed room, off the scene, to the actual leadership of a strike on the ground. The full credit for that belongs to Weisbord.

There was an apparent contradiction between the decision of the Sixth Plenum of the CI to confirm Foster's faction — with its pro-AFL policy — in its hegemony over party trade union work and the concurrent conduct of the Passaic strike under the auspices of a "United Front Committee" outside the AFL. That was not due to factional manipulation. It happened that way because life intruded into the internal affairs of the party.

It happened because Weisbord — a brash young egocentric fresh out of college, and in general an unattractive specimen at close range, but a powerful mass orator and a human dynamo if there ever was one — stirred up a lot of workers and organized them into the "United Front Committee." The sense of strength that came from their organization emboldened them to call a strike without waiting for the sanction of the AFL union. The strike soon exploded into violent clashes with the police which were splashed all over the front pages of the metropolitan press. The Passaic strike was the Number One labor news story for a long time.

This action at Passaic did indeed violate both the letter and the spirit of Fosterite trade union policy, which the party had followed for years and which had been implicitly supported

once again in Moscow. But that didn't change the fact that the party had a big strike on its hands. And the party certainly made the most of its opportunity.

The Passaic strike really put the party on the labor map. In my opinion it deserves a chapter in party history all by itself. It revealed the Communists as the dynamic force in the radical labor movement and the organizing center of the unorganized workers disregarded by the AFL unions — displacing the IWW in this field.

The Passaic strike was well organized and expertly led, and under all ordinary circumstances should have resulted in a resounding victory. The only trouble was that the bosses were too strong, had too many financial resources and were too determined to prevent the consolidation of a radical union organization. The strikers, isolated in one locality, were simply worn out and starved out and there was nothing to be done about it.

A poor settlement was the best that could be squeezed out of the deadlock in any case. Such experiences were to be repeated many times in the case of isolated strikes before the unionization drive in the Thirties gained sufficient scope and power to break the employers' resistance.

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The Passaic strike was destined to have an influence on party trade union policy which in the long run was far more important than the strike itself. The genesis of the drastic change in trade union policy a few years later can probably be traced to it. There was a belated reaction to the party's attempt to outwit the textile bosses and the AFL fakers by yielding to their principal demand — the elimination of the strike leader Weisbord.

When it became clear that the strike was sagging, and that the bosses would not make a settlement with the "United Front Committee," negotiations were opened up with the AFL Textile Union. The AFL was invited to take over the organization and try to negotiate a settlement. These accommodating fakers agreed — on one small condition, which turned out to be the same as that of the bosses, namely,

that Weisbord, the communist strike leader, should walk the plank.

I do not know who first proposed the acceptance of this monstrous condition. What stands out in my memory most distinctly is the fact that both factions in the party leadership agreed with it, and that there was no conflict on the issue whatever. The fateful decision to sacrifice the strike leader was made unanimously by the party leadership and eventually carried out by the strike committee.

Such questions cannot be viewed abstractly. Perhaps those who, in their experience, have been faced with the agonizing problem of trying to save something from the wreckage of a defeated strike have a right to pass judgment on this decision. Others are hardly qualified. The main consideration in the Passaic situation was the fact that the strike had passed its peak. Real victory was already out of the question and the general feeling was that a poor settlement would be better than none. Other strikes have been settled under even more humiliating conditions. Workers have been compelled time and time again to "agree" to the victimization and blacklisting of the best militants in their ranks as a condition for getting back to work with a scrap of an agreement.

But what stands out in retrospect in the Passaic settlement — and what is painful even now to recall — was the alacrity with which the party leadership agreed to it, the general feeling that it was a clever "maneuver," and its falsely grounded motivations.

The decision to sacrifice the strike leader and to disband the "United Front Committee," implied recognition that the moth-eaten, reactionary, good-for-nothing AFL set-up in the

textile industry at that time was the "legitimate" union in that field; and that the "United Front Committee" was only a holding operation and recruiting agency for the AFL union.

All that was wrong from start to finish. The "United Front Committee" should have been regarded as the starting point for an independent union of textile workers. For that it would have been far better to "lose" the strike than to end it with a disgraceful settlement. Independent unionism was the only prescription for the textile industry, and had been ever since the great days of the IWW. "Boring from within" the AFL union in that field, as an exclusive policy, never had a realistic basis.

The Passaic settlement and the motivations for it carried the AFL fetishism of Foster, with which all the others in the party leadership had gone along more or less uneasily, to the point of absurdity. It brought a kick-back which was to result, a couple of years later, in a complete reversal of party policy on the trade union question.

When the Comintern got ready for its wild "left turn" toward "red trade unions" in 1928, Losovsky singled out the Passaic capitulation as the horrible example of the party's policy of "dancing quadrilles around the AFL." The party then embarked on an adventurous course, going to the other extreme of building independent communist unions all up and down the line.

The disastrous results of this experiment with the Trade Union Unity League, as the organizing center of a separate communist labor movement, was in part a punishment for the sin of the Passaic settlement.

Yours truly,  
James P. Cannon

## After 1925

July 14, 1955

Dear Sir:

The three-year period following the 1925 Convention of the Communist Party must present far more difficulties for the inquiring student than all the preceding years put together. The party entered into a uniquely dif-

ferent situation, without parallel in all the previous history of American radicalism, and the seeds of all the future troubles were sown then. It was a time when factionalism without principle in the internal party conflict prepared and conditioned many people for the eventual abandonment and betrayal of all principle in the



broader class struggle of the workers, which the party had been organized to express.

The printed record alone obscures more than it explains about the real causes of the party troubles in these bleak years. The important thing, as I see it, is not the specific disputes and squabbles over party policy, as they are recorded in print, but the general situation in which all the factions were caught — and which none of them fully understood — and their blind, or half-blind, attempts to find a way out.

Prior to that time the factional struggles, with all their excesses and occasional absurdities, had revolved around basic issues which remain fully comprehensible; and settlement of the disputes had been followed by the dissolution of the factions. From the 1925 Convention onward, the evolution of party life took a radically different turn. The old differences had become largely outlived or narrowed down to nuances, but the factions remained and became hardened into permanent formations.

After 1925 the factional gang-fights for power predominated over whatever the rival factions wanted — or thought they wanted — the power for. That, and not the differences over party policy, real or ostensible, was the dominating feature of this period. The details of the various skirmishes are important mainly as they relate to that.

The factional struggle became bankrupt for lack of real political justification for the existence of the factions. For that reason nothing could be solved by the victory of one faction, giving it the opportunity to execute its policy, since the policies of the others were basically the same. There were differences of implicit tendency, to be sure, but further experience was required to show where they might lead. The factions lived on exaggerations and distortions of each others' positions and the anticipation of future differences.

At any rate, the real differences on questions of national policy, in and of themselves, insofar as they were clearly manifested at the time, were not serious enough to justify hard and fast factions. The factions in that pe-

riod were simply fighting to keep in trim, holding on and waiting, without knowing it, for their futile struggle to fill itself with a serious political content.

The factions were driving blindly toward the two explosions of 1928-1929, when the latent tendencies of each faction were to find expression and formulation in real political issues of international scope, issues destined to bring about a three-way split beyond the possibility of any further reconciliation. But that outcome was not foreseen by any of the participants in the futile struggles of those days. These struggles, for all their intensity and fury, were merely anticipations of a future conflict over far more serious questions.

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I began to recognize the bankruptcy of factional struggle without a clearly defined principled basis as early as 1925, and began to look for a way out of it. That still did not go to the root of the problem — the basic causes out of which the unprincipled factionalism had flourished — but it was a step forward. It set me somewhat apart from the central leaders of both factions, and was a handicap in the immediate conflict. Blind factionalists have more zeal than those who reflect too much. But the reflections of 1925 eventually helped me to find my way to higher ground.

The experiences of the conflict in the Foster-Cannon caucus at the 1925 Convention had revealed the Fosterites' basic conception of the faction as that of a permanent gang, claiming prior loyalty of its members in a fight for supremacy and the extermination of the opposing faction. I couldn't go along with that, and the disagreement brought us to a parting of the ways.

The definitive split of the Foster-Cannon faction took place, not at the 1925 Convention, where the first big conflict over the "Comintern cable" arose, but some weeks later, after numerous attempts to patch up the rift. When Foster and Bittleman insisted on their conception of the faction, and tried to press me into line for the sake of factional loyalty, I, and others of the same mind, had no choice but to break with them.

It was a deep split; the cadres of the faction divided right down the middle along the same lines as the division in the caucus at the Convention. Prominent in support of my position were the following: William F. Dunne, and with him the whole local leadership of the Minnesota movement; Martin Abern in Chicago; the principal leaders of the youth organization — Shachtman, Williamson, Schneiderman and several others who later became prominent in the party: Hathaway, Tom O'Flaherty, Gomez; Fisher and his group in the South Slavic Federation; Bud Reynolds of Detroit; Gebert, the Pole, later to become District Organizer in Detroit before his departure for Poland; and several District Organizers of the party.

The conception of the central leaders of the Ruthenberg-Lovestone faction was basically the same as Foster's, as was soon demonstrated in a brief and futile experiment in cooperation with them. I didn't agree with the claim of either group to party domination and could see no solution of the party conflict along that line. This left no room for me in either faction as a full-time, all-out participant, which is the only way I can function anywhere.

The simple fact of the matter, as we came to see it in 1925, was that the party crisis could not be solved by the victory of one faction over the other. Each was weak where the other was strong. The two groups supplemented each other and were necessary to each other and to the party.

While I considered that the Foster group as a whole was more proletarian, nearer to the workers and for that reason the "better" group, I had begun to recognize all too clearly its trade union one-sidedness. In this respect I was nearer to the Ruthenberg-Lovestone group. But the latter, although more "political" than the Fosterite trade unionists, was too intellectualistic to suit me. I thought that the Ruthenberg-Lovestone group by itself could not lead the party and build it as a genuine workers' organization, and nothing ever happened in the ensuing years to change that opinion.

The cadres of both groups were too

strong numerically, and had too many talented people, to be eliminated from the party leadership. The two groups, united and working together, would have been many times stronger and more effective than either one alone. We thought the time had come to move toward the liquidation of the factions and the unification of the party under a collective leadership.

In relating this I do not mean to intimate that I had suddenly become a pacifist in internal party affairs. I was as much a factionalist as the others, when factional struggle was the order of the day, and I have never seen any reason to deny it or apologize for it. Those pious souls who were not factionalists didn't count in the days when the party life was dominated by internal struggle, and have nothing to report. It is true that factionalism can be carried to extremes and become a disease — as was the case in the CP after 1925. But professional abstainers, as is always the case, only made the game easier for the others who were not restrained by qualms and scruples.

I was not against factions when there was something serious to fight about. But I was already then dead set against the idea of *permanent* factions, after the issues which had brought them about had been decided or outlived. I never got so deeply involved in any factional struggle as to permit it to become an end in itself. In this I was perhaps different from most of the other factional leaders, and it eventually led me on a far different path.

This was a deliberate policy on my part; the result of much reflection on the whole problem of the party and the revolution. I was determined above all not to forget what I had started out to fight for, and this basic motivation sustained me in that dark, unhappy time. I felt that I had not committed myself in early youth to the struggle for the socialist reorganization of society in order to settle for membership in a permanent faction, to say nothing of a factional gang. I tried always to keep an over-all party point of view and to see the party always as a part of the working class.

And by and large I succeeded, although it was not easy in the atmos-

phere of that time. Many good militants succumbed to factionalism and lost their bearings altogether. It is only a short step from cynicism to renegacy. Betrayal of principle in little things easily leads to betrayal in bigger things. I have lived to see many who were first class revolutionists in the early days turn into traitors to the working class. Some even became professional informers against former comrades. Cynical factionalism was the starting point of this moral and political degeneration.

We could see that the factional struggle was degenerating into a gang fight, and we set out to resist it. Being serious about it, we did not disperse our forces and hope for luck. On the contrary, we promptly organized a "third group" to fight for unity and the liquidation of all factions. This may appear as a quixotic enterprise — and so it turned out to be — but it took a long struggle for us to prove it to ourselves.

The international factor, which had frustrated all our efforts, eventually came to our aid and showed us a new road. When I got access to the enlightening documents of Trotsky in 1928, I began to fit the American troubles into their international framework. But that came only after three years of fighting in the dark, on purely national grounds.

No one can fight in the dark without stumbling now and then. We did our share of that, and I am far from contending that every move we made was correct. No political course can be correct when its basic premise is wrong. Our premise was that our party troubles were a purely American affair and that they could somehow be straightened out with the help of the Comintern, particularly of the Russian leaders, as had been done in earlier difficulties.

That was wrong on both counts. The objective situation in the country was against us, and we all contributed our own faults of ignorance and inadequacy to the bedevilment of the party situation. But the chief source of our difficulties this time was the degeneration of the Russian Communist Party and the Comintern; and the chief mischief-makers in our party, as in every other party of the

Comintern, were these same people whom we trustingly looked to for help and guidance.

It took me a long time to get that straight in my head. In the meantime I fumbled and stumbled in the dark like all the others. My basic approach to the problem was different, however, and it eventually led me to an understanding of the puzzle and a drastic new orientation.

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In the objective circumstances of the time, with the booming prosperity of the late Twenties sapping the foundations of radicalism, with the trade union movement stagnating and declining, feverish activity in the factional struggle in the party became for many a substitute for participation in the class struggle of the workers against the bourgeoisie. This sickness particularly infected those who were most isolated from the daily life of the workers. They did not take kindly to our formula for party peace and party unity through the liquidation of the factions. They didn't understand it, and above all they didn't believe in it.

In the underworld of present-day society, with which I have had contact at various times in jail and prison, there is a widespread sentiment that there is no such thing as an honest man who is also intelligent. The human race is made of up honest suckers and smart crooks, and that's all there is to it; the smartest crooks are those who pretend to be honest, the confidence men. Professional factionalism, unrelated to the living issues of the class struggle of the workers, is also a sort of underworld, and the psychology of its practitioners approaches that of the other underworld.

In the eyes of such people, for whom the internal struggle of the Communist Party had become the breath of life, an end in itself, anyone who proposed peace and unity was either a well-meaning fool or hypocrite with an axe to grind. In our case the first possibility was rejected out of hand by the esteemed colleagues with whom we had been associated in numerous struggles, and that left only the second. A third possible reason or motivation for our position was excluded.

Our formula for party unity and party peace was not taken at face value by the leaders of the Foster-Bittleman and Ruthenberg-Lovestone groups. We were regarded as trouble-making anarchists, violating the rules of the game by forming a "third group" when the rules called for two and only two.

The Fosterites waged an especially vicious campaign against me as a "traitor," as if I had been born into this world as a member of a family and clan and was required by blood relationship to have no truck with the feuding opponents on the other side of the mountain. That was a complete misunderstanding on their part; they had my birth certificate all mixed up.

As for the Lovestoneites, they even introduced motions in the party branches specifically condemning the formation of a "third group." For them two groups belonged to the accepted order of things; a third group was unnatural. This dictum, however, was not binding on us for the simple reason that we did not accept it.

It was evident from the start that our program could not be achieved by persuasion. Some force and pressure would be required, and this could be effectively asserted only by an organized independent group. We set out to build such a group as a balance of power, and thus to prevent either of the major factions from monopolizing party control.

Despite the all-consuming factionalism of the top and secondary leaders, our stand for unity undoubtedly reflected a wide sentiment in the ranks of both factions. Many of the rank and file comrades were sick of the senseless internal struggle and eager for unity and all-around cooperation in constructive party work. This was strikingly demonstrated when Weinstone, secretary of the New York District, and a group around him, came out for the same position in 1926.

That broke up the Ruthenberg "majority," as our earlier revolt had broken up Foster's. Weinstone soon came to an agreement with us, and the new combination constituted a balance of power grouping in the leadership. It didn't stop the factional struggle — far from it — but it did

prevent the monopolistic domination of the party by one faction and the exclusion of the other, and created conditions in the party for the leading activists in all factions to function freely in party work.

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I had been closely associated with Weinstone in the old struggle for the legalization of the party — 1921-1923 — and knew him fairly well. We always got along well together and had remained friendly to each other, even though we were in opposing camps in the new factional line-up and struggle which began in 1923. He had gone along with the Ruthenberg-Pepper-Lovestone faction and was its outstanding representative in New York while the national center was located in Chicago.

In the course of the new developments I came to know Weinstone better and to form a more definitive judgment of him. He was one of that outstanding trio — Lovestone, Weinstone and Wolfe — who were known among us as the "City College boys." They were still in school when they were attracted to the left wing movement in the upsurge following the Russian Revolution, but they were thrust forward in the movement by their exceptional qualities and their educational advantages.

They came into prominent positions of leadership without having had any previous experience with the workers in the daily class struggle. All three of them bore the mark of this gap in their education, and Lovestone and Wolfe never showed any disposition to overcome it. They always impressed me as aliens, with a purely intellectualistic interest in the workers' movement. Weinstone had at least a feeling for the workers, although in the time that I knew him, he never seemed to be really at home with them.

All three were articulate, Wolfe being the best and most prolific writer and Weinstone the most gifted speaker among them. Lovestone, who had indifferent talents both as writer and speaker, was the strongest personality of the three, the one who made by far the deepest impression on the movement at all times, and most times to its detriment.

It was everybody's opinion that Lovestone was unscrupulous in his ceaseless machinations and intrigues; and in my opinion everybody was right on that point, although the word "unscrupulous" somehow or other seems to be too mild a word to describe his operations. Lovestone was downright crooked, like Foster — but in a different way. Foster was in and of the workers' movement and had a sense of responsibility to it; and he could be moderately honest when there was no need to cheat or lie. Foster's crookedness was purposeful and utilitarian, nonchalantly resorted to in a pinch to serve an end. Lovestone, the sinister stranger in our midst, seemed to practice skullduggery maliciously, for its own sake.

It was a queer twist of fate that brought such a perverse character into a movement dedicated to the service of the noblest ideal of human relationships. Never was a man more destructively alien to the cause in which he sought a career; he was like an anarchistic cancer cell running wild in the party organism. The party has meaning and justification only as the conscious expression of the austere process of history in which the working class strives for emancipation, with all the strict moral obligations such a mission imposes on its members. But Lovestone seemed to see the party as an object of manipulation in a personal game he was playing, with an unnatural instinct to foul things up.

In this game, which he played with an almost pathological frenzy, he was not restrained by any recognized norms of conduct in human relations, to say nothing of the effects his methods might have on the morale and solidarity of the workers' movement. For him the class struggle of the workers, with its awesome significance for the future of the human race, was at best an intellectual concept; the factional struggle for "control" of the party was the real thing, the real stuff of life. His chief enemy was always the factional opponent in the party rather than the capitalist class and the system of exploitation they represent.

Lovestone's factional method and

practice were systematic miseducation of the party; whispered gossip to set comrades against each other; misrepresentation and distortion of opponents' positions; unrestrained demagoguery and incitement of factional supporters until they didn't know whether they were coming or going. He had other tricks, but they were all on the same order.

The party leaders' opinions of each other in those days varied widely and were not always complimentary; but at bottom, despite the bitterness of the conflicts, I think they respected each other as comrades in a common cause, in spite of all. Lovestone, however, was *distrusted* and his devotion to the cause was widely doubted. In intimate circles Foster remarked more than once that if Lovestone were not a Jew, he would be the most likely candidate for leadership of a fascist movement. That was a fairly common opinion.

Wolfe, better educated and probably more intelligent than Lovestone, but weaker, was Lovestone's first assistant and supporter in all his devious maneuvers. He was different from Lovestone mainly by his less passionate concentration on the intrigues of the moment and less desperate concern about the outcome.

A prime example of Lovestone's factional method is his 1929 pamphlet, *Pages From Party History*. He makes an impressive "case" against his factional opponents by quoting, with a liberal admixture of falsification, only that which is compromising to them and leaving out entirely a still more impressive documentation which he could have cited against himself. Wolfe's factional writing was on the same order, crooked all the way through. His 1929 pamphlet against "Trotskyism" shows Wolfe for what he is worth. These two people in particular had little or nothing to learn from Stalin. In their practices in the factional struggles they were Stalinists before Stalin's own method was fully disclosed to the Americans.

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Weinstone was different in many ways. He was not as shrewd and cunning, and he lacked Lovestone's driving will. But he was more honest

than Lovestone and Wolfe, more party-minded, and in those days he was undoubtedly devoted to the cause of communism. Also, in my opinion, Weinstone was more broadly intelligent, more flexible and objective in his thinking, than any of the other leaders of the Ruthenberg-Lovestone group.

Weinstone never got completely swamped in the factional struggle. That was the starting point for his independent course in 1926-1927. He recognized the merits of the comrades in the other camp. More clearly than others in his group, he saw the blind alley into which the factional struggle had entered at that time, and was honestly seeking to find a way out in the higher interest of the party.

Weinstone was perhaps dazzled for a time by the phony brilliance of Pepper, but he was never a personal follower of either Ruthenberg or Lovestone. His criticisms of both, in numerous conversations with me, were penetrating and objective; at least so they seemed to me. He was revolted by the Ruthenbergian claim to party "hegemony" — they actually proposed the formula of "unity of the party under the hegemony of the Ruthenberg group"! That sounded something like the unity of colonies in an imperialist empire, and that is really the way it was meant. Weinstone feared, with good reason, that encouragement of such an unrealistic and untenable pretension would lead to a party stalemate which could only culminate in a split.

Already in 1926, before the death of Ruthenberg, Weinstone began to take a stand within the faction for unity, through the dissolution of the factions and the establishment of a "collective leadership" of the most capable and influential people, without factional barriers to their free collaboration. This naturally brought him into consultation and eventually into close collaboration with us, since we had evolved the same position out of our own experiences in the Foster faction.

The Lovestoneites, who proceeded from the *a priori* judgment that everything that happens is the result of a conspiracy, and that nothing is ever done through good will and the

exercise of independent intelligence, were dead sure that I had cooked up Weinstone's defection and talked him into his factional heresy. That's the way Gutlow tells it in his sorry memoirs; but that's not the way I remember it.

When Weinstone became secretary of the New York District, as a result of the overturn manipulated by the Comintern in 1925, the bigger half of the effective militants in the New York District, who only yesterday had been the duly elected majority, became an artificially created minority. Weinstone recognized their value as party workers and deliberately instituted a policy in the New York District, on his own account, of conciliation and cooperation.

Most of the New York Fosterites, after a period of suspicious reservation, responded to Weinstone's conciliatory policy, and a considerable measure of cooperation with them in party work was effected. This favorable result of local experience induced Weinstone to extend his thoughts to the party problem on a national scale. That soon brought him to virtually the same position that we had worked out in Chicago.

I doubt whether I personally had much to do with shaping his thoughts along this line — at least in the early stage. The fact that he came to substantially the same position that we had already worked out gave us a certain reassurance that we had sized things up correctly; and it naturally followed that we came into closer and closer relations with Weinstone.

We came to a definite agreement to work together already before the sudden and unexpected death of Ruthenberg in March 1927. We often speculated how things might have worked out if Ruthenberg had lived. Ruthenberg was a factionalist like the rest, but he was not so insane about it as Lovestone was. He was far more constructive and responsible, more concerned for the general welfare of the party and for his own position as a leader of a party rather than of a fragmented assembly of factions. Moreover, he was far more popular and influential, more respected in the party ranks, and strong enough to

(Continued on page 64)

# Dollar Empire In Latin America

by Theodore Edwards

**T**HE offers of economic aid to the colonial world by the Soviet Union make the blood of Wall Street financiers run cold. Viewed in terms of quantity, actual Soviet aid may turn out to be quite small, but what makes the U. S. investors see the handwriting on the wall is the nature of Soviet aid, its essentially non-exploitive, non-imperialist character.

Latin America today constitutes the biggest foreign field of investment for U. S. Big Business, \$6 billion, or more than 30% of total foreign investments, being concentrated there. No better illustration of the colonialism practiced by the U. S. and of the imperialist nature of U. S. "assistance" to "underdeveloped areas" can be found. The fact that 70% of U.S. foreign investments are in the Western hemisphere (if the \$5¼ billion invested in Canada are included) points up the extent to which U.S. imperialism has been pushed back into its own homegrounds by the advance of the world revolution since the end of World War II. It also explains the gnashing of teeth with which the U.S. imperialists greeted the offer of Soviet economic aid to what they consider their own private feeding trough of Latin America.

A year ago, the United Nations Bureau of Economic Affairs issued a report which showed that for the last 30 years U.S. investors have been taking more money out of Latin America in the form of profits than they sent back in new capital investments. The same report also showed how the rate of return reaped by U.S. capital in Latin America had increased steadily over the years.

During 1925-29, U.S. investors pocketed 6% profits, repatriating a

total of \$300 million from Latin America. Since only \$200 million new capital flowed back during the same period, Latin America was left on the short end by some \$100 million. By 1950, however, the rate of profit exported from Latin America reached 16.8% after taxes, and by 1951, 20.5% after taxes. In 1952, U.S. investors took \$336 million more out than they sent back in new capital.

Some Latin American countries are much worse off in this respect than the over-all figures would seem to indicate. As the *Diario de Noticias* of Rio de Janeiro pointed out, \$97 million of new U. S. capital had flowed into Brazil since 1937, while the profits repatriated in the meantime by U.S. investors in Brazil totalled \$807 million, or almost eight and a half times as much!

Three weeks after the publication of the UN report, the U.S. Department of Commerce found it expedient to publish a report of its own in order to counteract the wave of indignation aroused in Latin America. In addition to the usual high-flown phrases about "the important and valuable contributions" made by U.S. capital abroad, such as "providing employment" and imparting to native workers "training in managerial, technical and craft skills," "expanding markets," "developing raw material resources," "leading to auxiliary and related industries," the Commerce Department explained that \$166 million of U. S. profits are reinvested annually in Latin America, that U.S. capital pays \$1 billion in taxes, and that during 1946-53 repatriated profits amounted to \$482½ million a year, new capital investments to \$300 million — leaving Latin America on the short end by only \$182½ million.

By taking the average over seven years, the tendency of this imbalance to widen was hidden, but even if we take these figures at their face value, the interesting fact presents itself that total U.S. profits (before taxes) in Latin America amount to \$1 billion plus \$482½ million plus \$166 million, or \$1,648,500,000 a year on a \$6 billion total investment — a modest 27.47% average annual rate of profit. (The latest figures for domestic capital in the U.S. show an average rate of 16 to 17% profits before taxes.)

The 165 million people of the U.S. produced a gross national product of \$397 billion last year, while the 171 million Latin Americans produced a gross national product of only \$60 billion, \$6 billion less than the present budget of the U.S. government. This low productivity continues in spite of the half century or so which U.S. Big Business has had to show what "free enterprise" can do for "underdeveloped areas."

One-tenth of all the values and services produced by Latin America are produced under the control and for the profit of U.S. investors. Given the great specific weight of U.S. capital in Latin America — due to its strategic position in an economy where 60% of the population is still engaged in agriculture — the U.S. imperialists can impose at their leisure what they consider "a favorable environment" for U.S. investments. This makes Latin America a showcase of what the happy life under the heel of the North-American giant is like.

In the *N.Y. Times* of Jan. 4 appeared a two-page ad by Ford, U.S. Steel, GE, IBM, United Fruit Company, et al, entitled "Private Enterprise is the Key to World Economic Advancement." In a very succinct paragraph, entitled "Ingredients of Favorable Environment," the U.S. monopolists present their views on that subject: ". . . nations . . . will permit the employment of managers, technicians and other key employees without regard to nationality. They will assure to a foreign-owned enterprise the right to determine what proportion of its earnings is to be re-

invested or remitted, and will not prevent or penalize, by inequitable exchange restrictions; the remittance of any part of such earnings. They will pursue policies which will inspire confidence that the sanctity of contract will be upheld; that owners will be secure in the possession of their property . . ."

The pages of the *N.Y. Times* furnish ample proof that these "ingredients of favorable environment" are bounteously present in the case of Latin America. In January each year, the *N.Y. Times* devotes an entire section to a review of economic progress in the "Americas," i.e., Canada and Latin America. Last year, this section bristled with two- and three-page ads like the following: "A Message From General Somoza, President of Nicaragua: . . . Nicaragua welcomes foreign investors and provides them with many attractive guarantees. Included is the right to transfer profits to the investor's country of origin." "Haiti's doors are open wide to investors . . . Profits of industries with home offices in the U.S. may be exported to the U.S. Haiti belongs to the dollar area and movement of capital is free from all control . . . LABOR COSTS ARE AMONG LOWEST IN THE WORLD IN HAITI." "Industrial opportunity awaits the investor in San Salvador." "Bolivia is high in favor with business men." "Generalissimo Trujillo of the Dominican Republic welcomes investors." "Trinidad's fiscal policies favor the foreign investor." "Peru, land of profitable investment." Etc., etc.

In the same section, a full-page ad from the Finance Minister of Brazil solicited foreign investments, since "U.S. capital and profits may leave and enter freely." We learn that in Colombia, profits and capital are also freely transferable to the country of origin; that in Chile, earnings on approved investments are repatriable after five years in five annual instalments; that there are laws exempting new capital from any kind of taxes for periods lasting from two to five years in Barbados, British Guiana, Honduras, Jamaica, and Trinidad. This year, in the Jan. 5 issue, though a trifle more circumspect in tone, the ads of the Latin American republics

were again calculated to titillate the profit-lust of U.S. investors, to assure them that it is clear as the tropical sun at noonday that Latin America is the paradise of U.S. imperialism.

Yet another ingredient of this Garden of Eden for U.S. investors deserves mention. As Henry R. Luce, publisher of *Time* and *Life*, put it a year ago at the New Orleans Inter-American Investment Conference, "in order for the favorable climate for U.S. investments to be maintained, a delicate balance must be struck between freedom and order."

The Latin American satellites of U.S. imperialism, made or broken at will by the U.S. State Department, not only must offer their countries' resources as free gifts and their fellow citizens as an abundant and cheap labor supply, but they must know how to strike a "delicate balance between freedom and order." They must keep beating down their insurgent peoples, thwart their aspirations for economic emancipation and political freedom — so that the foreign exploiters "will be secure in the possession of their property" and the knowledge that their profits will keep rolling in.

Latin America not only is the happiest of hunting-grounds for the North American tribe of super-profiters, it also constitutes a \$3½ billion market for U.S. manufactured goods. This makes it a larger outlet than Europe or Asia for U.S. manufacturers. In order to obtain U.S. dollars with which to buy U.S. commodities, Latin America must provide foodstuffs and raw materials at bargain rates. The economic well-being — if it can be termed such — of the Latin American republics thus depends on the prices that a few assorted raw materials or foodstuffs bring on the world market — which usually signifies at whatever prices the U.S. monopolists care to pay.

Eisenhower sent a message of greeting to the New Orleans Investment Conference in March last year, in the course of which he elevated U.S. and Latin American from the relation of "Good Neighbors" to that of "Good Partners;" in other words, the "Good-Neighbor-Policy" under Roosevelt Partners"; in other words, the "Good-

Partner-Policy" under Republican auspices. This does not prevent the Eisenhower administration from turning thumbs down on the perennial Latin American demand for stable raw material prices. The "Good Partnership" is strictly a one-way street. The U.S. imperialists and their executive committee in Washington are dead-set against "price-fixing" — when it would work to their detriment, that is.

The "dollar gaps" created in the trade balances of the Latin American countries in this manner lead to the careful rationing of the import of U.S. manufactured items. The consumer goods imported by this inequitable exchange are then distributed among a paper-thin layer of Latin American bourgeoisie and landlords, while the primitive living conditions of the immense majority of the population, engaged in agriculture and mining in the main, are far too low to permit them to buy any kind of manufactured item, imported or not.

The Wall Street tycoons turn a deaf ear when representatives of the colonial bourgeoisie, such as Carlos Davila (at the New Orleans Conference) attempt to warn them that "private investments in Latin America should not exclude public credit, but make it all the more necessary, because public capital is needed to be invested in sanitation, highways, housing, hydroelectric plants, educational programs, transportation and irrigation systems. These are fields that yield no immediate financial return but are vitally important to make private investment attractive and safe."

The Latin American satellites of the U.S. are sitting on top of a volcano of native mass discontent. They are begging the U.S. imperialists to consider raising the standard of living of their peoples by at least partially industrializing Latin America, before they and their foreign masters with them are blown sky-high by Latin American mass unrest. But why should the U.S. financier, sitting in his plush office in Wall Street, or cruising on his yacht in the Caribbean, invest in public works in Latin America — in electric lights, modern plumbing, or housing, or roads, or even sidewalks, or schools, or water wells for

the colonial masses — from which he might, if he is lucky, pocket a 2 to 3% profit; when he can invest in petroleum in Venezuela, which brings a 31.1% profit, AFTER TAXES (!), or even in mortgages on the land, which yield 12 to 14% interest, after taxes?

It is true that in the long run the industrialization of Latin America and the consequent raising of the standard of living of the toilers there would in time create a larger market for U.S. goods. But since when are the capitalists motivated by such considerations as raising the standard of living of the working people when they are casting about looking for spheres of investment? Given the "ingredients of favorable environment," U.S. Big Business is guided in its investment by the highest rates of profits and not by any appeals to its humanitarian feelings by the colonial bourgeoisie. What is more, the immediate effect of any industrialization of Latin America would be to shrink the present outlets for U.S. goods by raising native competition — and U.S. manufacturers have yet to show the slightest inclination to take kindly to potential or actual competitors.

At Bogota, Colombia, in 1948, the U.S. gave its solemn pledge to provide economic aid in industrializing Latin America. That pledge has yet to be redeemed. In line with its general policy of attempting to cope with the tribulations besetting senile and decrepit capitalism in its death throes with the means and methods peculiar to its 19th century, "laissez-faire" period of youthful vigor, the Eisenhower administration views with even greater disfavor than Roosevelt or Truman any government-to-government loans at low interest rates, for public works or native industries in Latin America.

Rather, the Foreign Operations Administration instituted a guarantee program in March 1953 for the express purpose of encouraging the flow of private capital abroad, by "protecting the U.S. foreign investor against inability to repatriate his profits and his principal in dollars as well as guarding him against expropriation." The FOA insures the principal and up to 200% of the

principal in anticipated profits (!). On an investment of, say, \$1 million, the U.S. government will cheerfully refund \$3 million, if the unfortunate tycoon finds his profits unrepatriable or nationalized! (This is what U.S. Big Business really means by economic "aid" to "under-developed areas.")

In 1954, the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America issued a report which estimated that \$1 billion a year in public investments in basic capital would be needed to raise the standard of living in Latin America by 2%. Since the per capita income in Latin America amounts to only \$351 a year (this is 14.6% of the per capita income in the U.S.), a 2% increase would raise it by all of \$7 a year. To attain this startling effect, the UN Commission proposed an Inter-American bank, financed largely by the U.S. but under the control of the 20 Latin American republics themselves.

In November 1954, at the Inter-American Economic Conference in Rio de Janeiro, the Latin American delegates passionately defended this UN Commission project, but the U.S. vetoed any such endeavour, no matter how modest its aim might be. The Latin American delegates were referred to the Export-Import Bank and the World Bank, both of which are tightly controlled by the U.S., their funds being administered by the U.S. Treasury Department, and their directors designated by the U.S. President. These banks, of course, grant loans only to governments friendly to Washington. Nor is the money loaned to be spent on any industrialization or public works, since the loans are stipulated to be spent on U.S. goods and services which, moreover, have to be transported in U.S. ships.

Thus, the true nature of U.S. economic aid was once more revealed to be only the open or back-handed subsidizing of U.S. manufacturers and shippers — part and parcel of the economic blood transfusions by the billions of dollars which the U.S. government pumps into the sclerotic veins of superannuated "free enterprise."

At Rio, the Latin American republics were also referred to the New

Orleans Conference of March 1955, where the vaunted resources of "private enterprise" were going to be brought into play. The character of the latter conference can be summed up easily enough in the fact that 15 new U.S. companies opened up offices in Venezuela, because of the "advantages which Venezuela offers new capital . . ." (such as 31.1% rate of profit on petroleum, after taxes.) No \$1 billion in public investments, such as schools, roads, electricity, housing, plumbing, was raised at New Orleans either.

The Latin American puppet regimes tend to forget that it was only the imminence of the socialist revolution in Europe in the immediate post-war era which forced U.S. Big Business into rehabilitating their former competitors there. No aid in industrializing Latin America by the U.S. imperialists has materialized or is in store in the future. If the Latin American satellites of the North American colossus are concerned about keeping their hungry and discontented peoples quiet and orderly, the U.S. government is ready at a moment's notice to send them shiploads of guns, ammunition, planes and bombs. The rulers of this country spend \$40 billion a year (an amount equal in value to two-thirds of the total annual gross product of Latin America) on military expenditures. The U.S. government thus has more than enough to spare for propping up bloody dictatorships in Latin America.

The highly touted U.S. economic aid in industrialization has taken the quaint form of aiding reaction and counter-revolution everywhere, either through camouflaged or outright financial subsidies or through direct military aid or intervention.

Whatever the subjective motivation of the Soviet bureaucracy, its offer of economic aid to the colonial world points to the only real solution of the problems of the colonial peoples: The victory of socialist revolutions in the advanced countries and the consequent real aid which the workers of the advanced countries could send to their colonial brothers who at present are everywhere engaged in throwing off centuries of imperialist oppression.

not a complete shot.

# Belinski And Rational Reality

by G. V. Plekhanov

## Chapter VII

Why did Belinski pass so swiftly and resolutely from "absolute" idealist philosophy to utopian socialism? In order to clarify this transition it is necessary once again to return to our great critic's attitude toward Hegel.

Even after Belinski condemned his own article on Borodino as foolish and unworthy of an honest writer, he continued to consider the period of his return from Georgia, i.e., the period of *his complete infatuation with Hegelian philosophy*, as the beginning of his spiritual life. To him this period seems to have been "the best, at any rate, the most remarkable period" of his life. Another article on Borodino he considered foolish only because of its conclusions and not at all because of its basic propositions. He wrote:

"The idea I tried to develop in the article about Glinka's book, *Sketches of the Battle of Borodino*, is true in its essentials." He had only failed to take full advantage, as he should have, of these true essentials. "It was likewise necessary to develop the idea of negation as a historic right no less sanctified than the other historic right and failing which, mankind would be converted into a stagnant, stinking swamp."

The reader has perhaps not forgotten the passage which we have already cited from Hegel's lectures on the *History of Philosophy*. This passage shows that to the extent that Hegel remained true to his dialectic, he fully recognized the historic right of negation. Belinski thought that by having rejected Hegel's "absolute" conclusions, he had completely rejected Hegel's entire philosophy. Actually, he was only passing over from Hegel, the herald of "Absolute

This installment completes Plekhanov's discussion of the importance of Belinski, one of the outstanding Russian intellectuals who came under the influence of Hegel in the 1830's. Presented here in an English translation for the first time, the opening installment of the essay appeared in the Spring 1955 issue of *Fourth International*.

Truth," to Hegel, the dialectician. Despite his jibes at Hegel's philosopher cap, Belinski still remained a pure Hegelian. His first article on Peter the Great is saturated with the spirit of Hegelian philosophy. The same spirit pervades the second article, although here Belinski tried to take a different standpoint in his judgments concerning the influence of geographic environment on the spiritual qualities of various nations. But his rather unsuccessful reasoning does not in the least change the general character of his world outlook at the time; it remained thoroughly idealist. All of his co-thinkers likewise remained idealists at the time.

His biographer has apparently failed to grasp this accurately. Mr. Pypin declares that in Herzen's "Letters on the Study of Nature" — published in *Otchbestvennye Zapiski*, 1843 — "the tasks of philosophy and science were posed in the same way that the best minds pose them today." (*Belinski* by Pypin, Volume 1, page 228.) This is a major blunder. Mr. Pypin was evidently misled by the categorical statement of the author of the "Letters" to the effect that "Hegel had raised thinking to so high a level as to make it impossible, after Hegel, to take a single forward step without absolutely leaving idealism behind."

But this statement in no way hindered Herzen from remaining an idealist of purest water both in his views on nature (wherein he is wholly Hegelian) as well as in his views on the philosophy of history. He thought that "in materialism there is nowhere to go beyond Hobbes." He said that the materialists in history were those to whom "the entire world history seemed to be a matter of personal inventions and a strange confluence of accidents." (It is an interesting sidelight to compare this view with the charges levelled nowadays, from all sides, against the economic materialists.) Up to the middle of 1844, Herzen spoke throughout as an idealist in his *Diary*. Only in July 1844 did he refer commendingly to an article by Jordan in Wigand's quarterly. But this comment, too, did not at all signify any decisive turn in Herzen's views.

Mr. Pypin also remarks that Belinski's "last philosophic interest" was the positivism of Auguste Comte and Maximilien Littre "as the categorical rejection of metaphysics." Mr. Pypin has unfortunately failed to print in full the letter in which Belinski, according to Mr. Pypin, dwells at length on positivism. Judging solely by the passage cited from this letter by Mr. Pypin, our great critic's opinion of Comte was not overly favorable, as Mr. Pypin himself concedes. "Comte is a remarkable man," says Belinski, "but the chances are rather slim that he shall prove to be the founder of a new philosophy. For this genius is required, and in Comte there is not a sign of it." This leads us to conclude that Belinski would not have inclined toward positivism, if death had not carried him off so prematurely.

If speculations are in order, then we shall take the liberty to speculate that Belinski would have become ultimately a zealous partisan of dialectic materialism which, in the second half of the 19th century, came to replace outlived idealist philosophy. Historical development, which absorbed Belinski's philosophic thought, led precisely in this direction; and it was not for nothing that he read with so much satisfaction the *Deutsch-*



*Franzoesische Jahrbuecher* in which the future founders of dialectic materialism were then writing. If Belinski found nothing objectionable in their views in 1845, then why should he have risen up against them later on, after these views had been developed and given a firm foundation?

Let us note here, by the way, that the logical affinity of philosophic ideas speaks in favor of our speculation. And against it, one may say that Belinski, removed as he was so terribly far from the centers of West European intellectual life and loaded perpetually with pressing work, would have found it hard not to lag behind the best minds of Europe. The greatest of geniuses requires for his development, the favorable influence of the surrounding milieu upon him; in Russia this milieu was fearfully undeveloped in every respect. Therefore it is possible that Belinski might not have been able to the end of his days to reach a full, definitive and harmonious world outlook toward which he strived passionately and constantly. It is also possible that the social ferment which began in the second half of the 1850's would have made of him the leader of our enlighteners of those days. As we shall presently see, in the last years of his life, there were not a few elements in his views that could have made comparatively easy such a transition to the wholly justifiable views of the Russian enlighteners at the time.

But enough of speculation; let us return to the facts.

Belinski felt the need of developing the idea of negation. Following in the footsteps of the author of *Sketches of the Gogolian Period of Russian Literature*, Mr. Pypin thinks that Belinski was, greatly aided by Herzen in this particular development. He is of course correct in the sense that discussions and debates with so dynamic, clever and many-sidedly educated a man as Herzen were not and could not have been without some influence on Belinski's views. But we think that the meetings with Herzen while they gave a strong impulsion to Belinski's intellectual activity, offered him little in the way of assistance toward developing dialectic views on social events. Herzen and

the dialectic got along poorly. As is well known, to the end of his days he saw in Proudhon's *Contradictions economiques* a most successful application of the dialectic method to economic life. Herzen saw that, correctly understood, Hegel's philosophy could not be a philosophy of stagnation (Hegel to the contrary notwithstanding). But if there was any one in Russia who understood poorly the Hegelian affirmation of the rationality of whatever exists, then it was surely none other than the brilliant but superficial Herzen. In *My Past and Thoughts* he says:

"The philosophic phrase which has done the greatest harm and on the basis of which German conservatives have sought to reconcile philosophy with Germany's political life, namely, the phrase to the effect that 'whatever is real is rational,' was merely another way of stating the principle of sufficient reason and of the correspondence between logic and facts."

But such a commonplace as "the principle of sufficient reason" would have never satisfied Hegel. The 18th century philosophers likewise recognized this principle but they remained very far removed from the Hegelian view of history as a lawful process. The whole point is this: Where and how does a given theory of society seek the sufficient reason for social events? Why did the old order in France fall? Was it because Mirabeau was so eloquent? Or was it because the French custodians (of the old order) were so untalented? Or was it because the flight of the royal family failed?

The "principle" singled out by Herzen vouches only for this, that there was some reason behind the downfall of the old order, but it offers no indications whatever as to the method of investigating this reason. This is the woeful condition that Hegel's philosophy sought to remedy. Interpreting man's historical development as a lawful process this philosophy eliminated therewith the standpoint of *accident*. (To be sure, Hegel said that there is an element of accident in everything that is finite — *in allem Endlichen ist ein Element des Zufaeligen* — but by the whole meaning of his philosophy it is only

at the point where several necessary processes intersect that we meet with *accident*. That is why the concept of accident accepted, and quite correctly so, by Hegel does not at all obstruct a scientific examination and explanation of events. Moreover, to understand a given accident, one must be able to find a satisfactory explanation for *at least two necessary processes*.)

And *necessity*, too, was not at all understood by Hegel in the commonplace meaning of the word. If we say, for example, that the old order in France fell because of an accidental failure of the royal flight, then we immediately recognize that the moment this flight failed, the downfall of the old order became *necessary*. Understood in this crude and superficial manner, necessity is simply the other side of accident.

With Hegel necessity has a different meaning. When he says that a given social event was necessary, he means that this social event had been prepared by the internal development of the country where it had taken place. But even this is not all. By the meaning of his philosophy each event creates in the process of its development, from within itself, those forces which negate it later on. Applying this to social life it means that every given social order itself generates those negative elements which will destroy it and will replace it with a new order. Once you understand the process whereby these negative elements are generated, you likewise understand the process that will bring the old order to its death.

By saying that he needed "to develop the idea of negation" Belinski wanted thereby to say that he needed to negate the historical necessity of the indicated elements in every given social order. In overlooking this important side of the matter, he had committed a serious blunder at the time. But the principle of "sufficient reason" suggested by Herzen was not at all sufficient to correct Belinski's logical error. In this respect Belinski was left completely on his own resources.

To develop the idea of negation meant, among other things, to recognize the right of the "ideal" which

in the heat of his infatuation with Hegel he had sacrificed to reality. But the ideal, lawful from Belinski's new standpoint, could not be an "abstract ideal." Since the historical negation of reality comes as the result of its own development it therefore follows that *only that ideal can be recognized as lawful which itself rests on this development. Such an ideal will not be "torn out of geographic and historical conditions of development" and it cannot be said to have been "erected in mid-air."* It only expresses in image and thought the results of the process of development *already taking place in reality.* And it is *concrete* to the same extent as the unfolding development is itself concrete.

In the first phase of his development Belinski sacrificed reality for the sake of the ideal; in the second, he sacrificed the ideal for the sake of reality and finally in the third phase he sought to reconcile the ideal with reality by means of the *idea of development* which would give the ideal a firm foundation and transform it from the "abstract" into the concrete.

This was now Belinski's task. It was a great task. So long as men remain unable to solve such tasks, they are unable to influence consciously either their own development or that of society and therefore remain playthings of accident. But in order to pose oneself this task, it was necessary to break with the *abstract* ideal, to understand and feel thoroughly its utter impotence. To put it differently, Belinski had to live through the phase of reconciliation with reality. That is why this phase does him the greatest honor. And that is why he himself considered it later on as the start of his spiritual life.

But to set oneself a given task is one thing; to solve it, something else again. Whenever a dispute arose over some difficult question, among the young people who belonged to the Stankevich-Belinski circle, after tussling with it, they sometimes came to the conclusion that "only Hegel could solve it." This is just what Belinski might have said to himself now when it fell upon him to apply the dialectical method to the interpretation of

Russian historical development. But Hegel would not have justified his confidence, either. Dialectic idealism posed correctly the great task of social science in the 19th century, but it did not solve it, although, true enough, it did prepare this solution to a considerable degree.

To study an object means to explain the development of this object by all of the forces it itself generates. Thus spake Hegel. In his philosophy of history, he indicated very accurately in isolated instances the motor forces of historical development. But *generally* his idealism pushed him away from the correct path of investigation. If the logical development of the "idea" supplies the basis of all other development, including historical development, then history is to be explained in the final analysis by the logical properties of the "idea" and not by the dialectic development of social relations. And Hegel actually appealed to these logical properties each time he ran up against this or another great historical question. And this meant that he explained perfectly concrete events by means of abstractions. Precisely herein lies the error of idealism. It ascribes to abstraction a creative, motive force. That is why, as so often happens with idealists, arbitrary logical constructions take the place of the study of actual causal connections of events.

A correct, a genuinely scientific theory of historic development could make its appearance only after dialectic idealism had been replaced by dialectic materialism. Belinski did not live to see this new era. True, not a little variegated material had been collected in his day for the elaboration of a correct interpretation of history. The April 1897 issue of the magazine *Novoye Slovo* published certain views of V.P. Botkin on the role of economic interests in the historical development of mankind. There is nothing surprising in Botkin's having held such views. Before being attracted to Hegel's philosophy, Botkin was a follower of Saint-Simon, and Saint-Simon explained the entire modern history of Europe by the struggle of economic interests. (See in particular his *Catechisme politique des indus-*

*triels*, where this view is expounded with special clarity in connection with French history; see also his letter to the editor of *Journal General de France*, May 12, 1818 where Saint-Simon says that "The most important of laws is the law which organizes property. It is the law which serves as the foundation of the social order.")

There was not a little in this connection that Botkin could have borrowed from other utopian socialists, for instance, Victor Considerant and even Louis Blanc (especially Blanc's *Histoire de dix ans*). Finally there is a good deal he might have obtained from the French historians, Guizot, Mignet, de Tocqueville. It is difficult to assume that Botkin remained ignorant of Tocqueville's famous book *De la democratie en Amerique*, the first volume of which was already out by 1836.

The dependence of social development on economic relations, more accurately, on property relations, is accepted as an incontestable truth in this book. According to Tocqueville, once property relations are given they "may be regarded as the first cause for laws, customs and ideas which determine the activities of the people." Even that which these relations do not engender, at any rate changes correspondingly with them. In order to understand the laws and morals of a given people it is therefore necessary to study the property relations dominant among them. (See, in particular, Tocqueville's *Destinee sociale*.) The last two volumes of Tocqueville's first work are wholly devoted to the study of how the existing property relations in the United States influence the intellectual and esthetic habits and needs of the Americans. As a consequence of all this Botkin could have arrived without too much difficulty at the conviction that spiritual development is determined by the course of social development. This conviction of Botkin's was assuredly known to Belinski. It was expressed, for example, in Belinski's views on the historical significance of Pushkin's poetry. But it could not serve him as a reliable guiding line in the elaboration of a *concrete ideal*.

The point is this, that Saint-Simon

as well as Considerant and other utopian socialists, along with the historians who discerned in property relations the most important basis of the social structure, remained nevertheless *idealists* with regard to the evolution of these relations, i.e., with regard to the main cause of social movement. They understood the social significance of economics; what they failed to see was the root cause upon the action of which depends the economic order of every given society. In their eyes the cause was in part accident, fortunate or unfortunate, (for example, advantageous geographic position, conquest, and so forth) and in part human nature. That is why all of them appealed chiefly to human nature in support of social institutions or plans they cherished. But to appeal to human nature means to take your stand on the side of the *abstract ideal*, and not on the vantage point of the dialectic development of social relations. Precisely therein lies the essence of the *utopian outlook* on society.

Prior to the appearance of the historical theory of the author of *Capital*, all socially minded public figures who were not completely carefree about theory, from the extreme left to the extreme right, were utopians to one degree or another. It is therefore understandable why Belinski, too, on concluding his truce with reality, had to take the utopian standpoint, contrary to his own striving toward the *concrete ideal*. This striving could leave its stamp only on a few of his isolated views, considerations and judgments.

## Chapter VIII

"In Moscow," Kavelin notes in his memoirs, "Belinski put forward, during a conversation with Granovski . . . the Slavophile idea that Russia would perhaps be better able than Europe to solve the social question and put an end to the hostility between capital, property and labor." This is indeed a pure Slavophile point of view, later adopted by Russian populists and subjectivists. Belinski, the irreconcilable enemy of the Slavophiles, could have entertained such an idea only by dint of his attraction to utopian socialism.

We have already observed that in his sympathy for the oppressed, Belinski regarded them not as beings living and working under specific historical conditions but as a sum total of "personalities" unjustly deprived of rights which are the natural rights of human individuals.

From this abstract viewpoint the future development of social relations was bound to appear not so much dependent on an inner logic of their own as, on the contrary, on the personal traits of a people, oppressed in one way or another by these relations. The *dialectic* was bound to cede place to *utopia*.

Betimes Belinski also approached the future destiny of Russia from the standpoint of the traits of the Russian "personality." In the article, "A Glance at Russian Literature of 1846," he says: "Yes, through us there pulses national life; we are called upon to speak our word to the world, to utter our thought." What is this word? Belinski refuses to engage in speculations and guesses on this score, "for fear most of all of conclusions that are arbitrary and merely subjective in their import." (His attitude toward subjectivism, as we see, remained unchanged from the time he wrote the article on the anniversary of Borodino.)

But just the same it seems to him that the many-sidedness with which Russians understand other foreign nationalities, permits of certain judgments concerning Russia's future cultural mission.

"We do not affirm it as ineluctable that the Russian people are destined to express through their nationality the richest and most many-sided content; and that this is why a Russian has a remarkable capacity for assimilating and adapting everything foreign to himself," says Belinski. "But we are so bold as to think that a kindred idea expressed as a supposition, without boastfulness and fanaticism, would not be found lacking in justification."

He expressed himself quite sharply in the same vein in his March 8, 1847 letter to Botkin:

"Russian personality is still only an embryo; but what breadth and strength there is in the nature of this embryo! How stifling and repulsive to it are all limitations and narrowness! It fears them

and most of all it is intolerant of them; and in my opinion it does well to be meanwhile satisfied with nothing rather than become enslaved by some shabby one-sidedness. The contention that we Russians are all-embracing because there is actually nothing we can do — is a lie, the more I think of it all the more convinced am I that it is a lie. . . Don't think I am an enthusiast on this question. No, I came to solve it (for myself) along the hard road of doubts and negation."

A similar "solution" opened wide the doors for the Slavophile view on the social question in Russia. It is commonly known that this view was based on a completely false conception of the historical development of the Russian *obschina*. Incidentally, the sort of conception held by the most advanced thinkers at the time is graphically shown by the following comment Herzen made in his *Diary*: "The model of the highest development of the Slav *obschina* is the Montenegrin."

But the Montenegrin *obschina* is a consanguine community completely unlike the Russian village *obschina* which has been created by the Czarist government for the better securement of its fiscal interests, long after the consanguine tribal community disintegrated among us. In any case, our village *obschina* could never evolve along the lines of the Montenegrin. But at the time our Westerners regarded the *obschina* as abstractly as did the Slavophiles. And if among them a conviction occasionally arose that there was a brilliant future for the *obschina*, then this came about as a mere act of faith, the product of a pressing moral need for an escape, even if through fiction, from the onerous impressions of surrounding reality. Herzen says flatly in his *Diary*:

"Chaadaev once made the splendid remark that one of Christianity's greatest traits is to raise the hope in virtue and place it alongside of faith and love. I agree completely with him. This side of putting trust in sorrow, of firm faith in an apparently hopeless situation must be realized primarily by us."

Why did men like Herzen feel themselves in a hopeless situation? Because they were unable to work out for themselves any kind of *concrete ideal*, i.e., an ideal indicated by

the historical development of a reality they found so unpleasant; and failing to attain such an ideal they underwent the same moods of oppression through which Belinski had passed in the days of his youthful infatuation with the *abstract ideal*. They felt themselves completely impotent. "We fall outside the needs of the people," complained Herzen.

He would not have said this had he seen that the "idea of negation," he had allegedly made his own, was the result of the inner development of a people's life. He would not have then felt himself outside of the needs of the people. Just like Herzen, Belinski exclaims:

"We are the unhappy anchorites of a new Scythia; we are men without a country, nay, we are worse off than men without a country; we are men whose country is a phantom and is it surprising that we ourselves are phantoms? that our friendships, our love, our strivings, our activities are phantoms, too?"

Owing to such moods, a temporary inclination toward Slavophile fantasies is quite understandable even in a thinker so strong in logic as Belinski.

It was a temporary inclination, we just said. From all indications with Belinski, in contrast to Herzen, it was not only temporary but brief. Not in vain did Herzen say of Belinski that he "cannot live in expectations of the life of a future age." What the Germans call *jenseits* (the beyond) exerted little attraction on Belinski. He needed the firm soil of reality. In the article, "A Glance at Russian Literature of 1846," from which we have extracted some dubious hypotheses about the future of Russian civilization, he refutes the attacks of Slavophiles on the reforms of Peter the Great and notes:

"Such events in the life of a people are far too great to be accidental and the life of a people is not a flimsy little boat to which anyone may impart an arbitrary direction by a slight movement of an oar. Instead of pondering the impossible and making oneself a laughing stock by intervening with so much conceit in historical destiny, it is much preferable, recognizing the existence of irresistible and unalterable reality, to act upon the foundations of this reality, guiding oneself with reason and ordinary sense, and not with Manilovist fantasies."

In another passage, recognizing that a certain reform had exerted some unfavorable influence on the Russian national character, he adds the following important qualification:

"But it is impermissible to stop with the recognition of the validity of any fact whatsoever; it is necessary in addition to investigate its causes, in the hopes of finding in the evil itself the means for a way out of this evil."

The means of struggle against the unfavorable consequences of Peter the Great's reform must be sought within the reform itself, within the new elements it introduced into Russian life. This is a wholly dialectical view on the question; and to the extent that Belinski upholds it in the dispute with the Slavophiles, to that extent his thoughts are alien to all utopianism; to that extent his thoughts are *concrete*.

He feels this himself and deals in passing several blows to his old, ever-present enemy — the *abstract ideal*. "The unconditional or absolute method of thinking is the easiest one," he says. "But, in return, it is the most unreliable; today it is called abstract thinking." In his opinion the main source of Slavophile errors is "that they arbitrarily anticipate time; they take the results independently of the process of development; they demand to see the fruit before the blossoms, and finding the leaves tasteless, they pronounce the fruit to be rotten; and they propose to transplant a great and vast forest to a different location and to take care of it in a different way. In their opinion this is not easy but it can be done." These lines contain so profound and serious a view of social life that we warmly recommend it to the study of our present-day Slavophiles, i.e., populists, subjectivists, Mr. N—on and other "enemies of capitalism." Whoever assimilates this viewpoint will not venture, like Mr. N—on, to try to impose on "society" a remarkable task which society is not only incapable of carrying out but is not even in a condition to understand; nor will he think, like Mr. Mikhailovskii, that to follow in "Peter the Great's footsteps" is to nurse utopias; in brief, he will never reconcile himself with an "abstract ideal."

Three months before his death on February 15, 1848, Belinski, then cruelly ravaged by illness, dictated a letter to Annenkov in Paris. It contains many interesting ideas which have only recently begun to attract the attention of thinking Russians.

"Whenever I called you a conservative during our debates over the bourgeoisie," he said, "I was foolish and you were wise. The whole future of France is in the hands of the bourgeoisie; all progress depends exclusively upon it and the people here can only play a passive, auxiliary role from time to time. When I remarked in the presence of my 'believing friend' that Russia now needed another Peter the Great he attacked my idea as a heresy. He claimed that the people ought to do everything for itself. What a naïve, Arcadian notion! Furthermore, my 'believing friend' expounded to me why God was obliged to save Russia from the bourgeoisie while today it is clearly evident that the inner process of civil development in Russia will not begin before the Russian nobility becomes transformed into a bourgeoisie. . . . What a strange fellow I am! Each time a mystical absurdity falls into my head, those who are capable of rational thought rarely succeed in knocking it out by arguments; for this to happen I must congregate with mystics, pietists and screwballs who have gone mad on the same idea — and then I shy away. My 'believing friend' and the Slavophiles have done me a great service. Do not be surprised by the juxtaposition; the best of the Slavophiles take the same attitude toward the people as my 'believing friend' does; they have imbibed these concepts from the socialists. . . ."

This was one of the results of Belinski's trip abroad. In Paris social life and thought were very vigorous at the time and the socialists of various schools had acquired a considerable, although unstable, influence on the world outlook of the French intelligentsia. In Paris there then lived not a few Russians who were passionately interested in social questions, as is evident from Annenkov's memoirs. Strongly stimulated by the social milieu, our fellow Russians became apparently bent on speculating even more eagerly and vehemently than they did at home on the theme of Russia's future role in the solution of the social question. Clashing with extreme views of this sort, thanks to his powerful instinct for theoretical truth, Belinski instantly took note of their weak side: complete abstraction,

complete absence of any rational, conscious connection with the historical course of Russia's development. The old Hegelian must have felt again the long familiar and long vexing need to tie up the ideal with life, to gain from dialectic the explanation of today's reality. And so he made Russia's future destiny dependent on its economic development; Russia's internal process of civil development would not start until the Russian nobility had turned into a bourgeoisie. Therewith the historical conditions for such a transformation remained unclear to him. He failed to see that the economic consequences of Peter the Great's reforms are quite adequate for the development of capitalism in Russia.

Likewise unclear to him is the historical relation between the bourgeoisie and the people of Western Europe. The people appear to him to be condemned to a "passive, auxiliary role." This is, of course, an error. But all of the socialist utopias assigned to the people a perfectly passive role; with this difference that the people, in accordance with utopian views, were bound to play a "passive, auxiliary role" not in the process of the further development of the already existing social order, but in respect to social reform. Here the initiative and the leading role belonged of necessity to the well-meaning and honorable intelligentsia, that is, essentially the offspring of the self-same bourgeoisie.

Belinski was contemptuous of the socialists and was evidently ready to denounce them, too, as pietists and mystics. He was by and large correct; in their views there actually was a lot that was completely fantastic and unscientific. And their chief error, just as in the case of the Slavophiles, was — as Belinski noted — that they saw nothing but evil in evil and failed to note the other side of this evil, namely the drastic alteration effected by it in society's foundations. (Belinski, by the way, expressed a negative attitude toward the socialists even before his trip abroad. He approved of the French philosopher Littré, for example, because Littré did not adhere to the utopian socialists. See his letter to Botkin, January 29, 1847.)

Belinski unsuccessfully tried to correct the error of the utopian socialists by condemning the "people" to an eternal, passive role. But his correct understanding of the error is proved precisely by his extolling the significance of the bourgeoisie, i.e., of capitalism. In his eyes capitalism now represented the idea of development which had failed to find a sufficient place in the teachings of the socialists.

This attitude toward the utopians involuntarily recalls Belinski's contemptuous attitude toward the "little, great people," whom he had so savagely lashed in the days of his conciliationist moods. His ire was aroused against the "little, great people" who approached social life from a rationalist standpoint, without even suspecting the existence of the inner dialectic peculiar to this social life. Belinski's attitude toward the utopians was much milder, although he did call them mystics. He understood that their enthusiasms were not guided by caprice or vanity but by a striving toward the social good, whereas the "little, great people" seemed to him vainglorious phrasemongers, and nothing more. But his dissatisfaction with the utopians stemmed from the very same reasons that had previously led him to scorn the "little, great people," namely: *the abstract character of their ideal.*

I. S. Turgenev designated Belinski as a *central figure*. Our designation is the same, but in a different sense. In our view Belinski is the central

figure in the whole course of development of Russian social thought. He posed to himself, and therefore to others as well, the great problem, failing whose solution we can never know what the ways are civilized mankind must travel to attain happiness and the triumph of reason over the blind, elemental force of necessity; failing whose solution we would have forever remained in the sterile domain of "Manilovist" fantasies, the domain of the ideal "torn out of geographic and historical conditions of development and erected in mid-air." A more or less correct solution of this problem must serve as the criterion for evaluating the entire future development of our social concepts. Of his co-thinkers Belinski said: "Our generation are Israelites, a tribe wandering in the desert and not destined to see the promised land. And all of the leaders are Moseses and not Joshuas."

Belinski was precisely our Moses, who, even though he failed to rid himself of the Egyptian yoke of the *abstract* ideal, nevertheless tried with all his might to free himself and those near him from it. This is the great, inestimable merit of Belinski. And this is why the history of his intellectual development should have been long ago analyzed from the standpoint of the *concrete* views of our time. The more attentively we study this history, all the more deeply are we convinced that Belinski was the most remarkable philosophic organism that ever came forth in Russian literature.

## ... Early Years

(Continued from page 55)

veto Lovestone's factional excesses if he wanted to.

It is quite possible that an uneasy peace, gradually leading to the dissolution of factions, might have been worked out with him. His sudden death in March 1927 put a stop to all such possibilities. The Ruthenberg faction then became the Lovestone faction, and the internal party situation changed for the worse accordingly.

Yours truly,  
James P. Cannon

### CORRECTION

Due to a typographical error, Arnold Hauser's "The Social History of Art" was incorrectly titled "Socialist History of Art" in Trent Hutter's article in the Winter issue of **Fourth International**.

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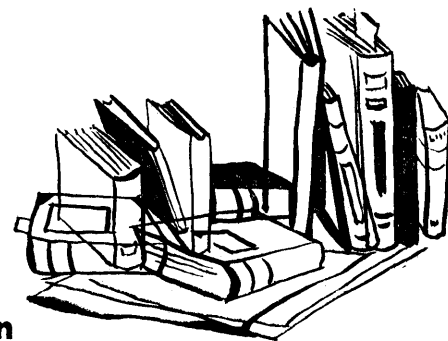
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# A Psychoanalyst Looks For a Sane Society

by Joseph Hansen



**The Sane Society**, by Erich Fromm. Rinehart & Co., Inc., New York. 1955. 370 pp. \$5.

**Eros and Civilization, A Philosophical Inquiry into Freud**, by Herbert Marcuse. The Beacon Press, Boston. 1955. 277 pp. \$3.95.

Outside of Marxism, psychoanalysis is the only science to have felt from its beginning an insistent need to assess society as a whole. This was unavoidable. Although dealing with individual patients, the psychoanalyst is forced to consider their relationships with other people. How else can any individual, sick or well, be understood? But relationships with others are manifestations of society. It would seem only natural, consequently, for this science to take an unfavorable attitude toward capitalism, since among the general phenomena of the times one of the most striking is the production of psychoses and neuroses on a mass scale.

However, the main stream of the psychoanalytic movement appears to accept capitalist society, equating it with civilization itself. According to this view human nature is inherently anti-social. The most fundamental drive of the human animal is held to be for pleasure: but gratification of pleasure, in the way our basic nature would have it, is incompatible with civilization. It is not civilization (capitalist society) that must be changed. The key problem, accordingly, is the adjustment that the individual must make. Interest centers therefore on the primeval core of the human psyche and its vicissitudes in process of domestication. Since civilization is a constant — the fixed pattern to which the individual must conform — it can be separated out and left aside.

While this seems to be the outlook of the majority, nevertheless, in encouraging contrast, a significant wing of the psychoanalytic movement insists today that the individual cannot be separated from society; that what he is, is largely the consequence of the action of society upon him. Moreover a given society is not necessarily synonymous with civilization. This wing tends to be critical of capitalism, particularly its development toward authoritarianism. Whether

Freud's basic teachings can be used to support these views is in controversy — those who think Freud has been superseded holding the center of the stage at present. One of the most outspoken representatives of the latter position is Erich Fromm.

In his latest book **The Sane Society**, Fromm stresses the insanity of capitalism. As objective evidence of the pathological condition of this society, Fromm points to the statistics for suicide, homicide and alcoholism. More interesting than such figures, which have been noted before, are Fromm's observations on the general unhappiness that pervades capitalist society.

## Universal Boredom

This he sees as an effect of the drive for conformity, the incapacity for independence in outlook, the substitution of accumulation of things for cultural achievement as life's goal. The consequence is spiritual emptiness, universal boredom. The inability to achieve the freedom that comes from genuine cultural achievement is converted into fear of freedom in general. Anxiety is no longer the exception; it is the hallmark of modern man. Such psychological conditions take social and political expression in pathological movements of which fascism is an extreme form. Thus in the psychological shaping of the individual, capitalism reveals its trend toward a new barbarism.

Many of Fromm's observations are shrewd and penetrating. His judgment that capitalism is insane is certainly to be commended. One might expect an objective author to note how all this confirms the Marxist analysis of capitalist society. However such is not the case. Fromm opposes Marxism. He advocates a blueprint for the "sane" society. This turns out to be a commodity-producing society arbitrarily divided into small work units — a far from novel proposal, since it can be traced to the petty-bourgeois socialists of pre-Marxist days.

And how is this utopia to be reached? Again, the means are far from novel. As the pre-Marxist socialists preached, salvation is to be achieved by converting wrong-thinking individuals to the right view through moral precepts and by

offering them elevating examples — showing them sample pieces of the ideal society, colonies of socialism set up on an experimental basis in the crevices between the giant monopolies, trusts and cartels.

The means, in short, is establishment of a new religion that impresses on people by its model canons and its model way of life how superior it is to put man himself in place of the idols of the church and market.

All the answer that is needed to such musty nostrums is contained in the **Communist Manifesto**, written more than a century ago. Yet Fromm is quite serious in advocating his utopian cure-all for the staggering evils of capitalism in its death agony. What we have here — to borrow from the language of psychoanalysis — is a case of regression to more primitive levels.

## How to Tell an Insane Society

Leaving aside the question of the psychoanalytic reasons for Fromm's fantasy and the sociological pressures which they reflect, the source of Fromm's utopian conclusions lies in his method.

His first main problem, as he himself notes, is to find a criterion by which to measure whether a given society is sane or insane. Rejecting the common concept of anthropologists that a society must be judged sane if it is self-perpetuating, he finds his criterion in human nature in general. A society that is compatible with the nature of man in the abstract is sane. If it goes against that abstract concept then we must classify it as pathological to one degree or another.

To substantiate this approach, it is evident that two basic norms must be determined: (1) what constitutes a normal human being, (2) what constitutes a normal society. Fromm's book is about these norms, the deviations from them that we see about us today and how we should achieve sanity. Everything, it is apparent, hinges on the norms. Grant them and one can admire the logic with which Fromm puts together the rest of his structure.

For example one can understand Fromm's strange ambivalence toward capitalism. Insofar as it goes against human nature it is negative. Insofar as

it corresponds with human nature it is positive. Despite the symptoms of insanity, Fromm finds much that is positive in capitalism, at least in "the economically most progressive country, the United States":

"... the main demands of the nineteenth-century reformers have been fulfilled... the economic exploitation of the masses has disappeared to a degree which would have sounded fantastic in Marx's time. (As fantastic as corporation dividends in 1955? — J. H.) The working class, instead of falling behind in the economic development of the whole society, has an increasing share in the national wealth, and it is a perfectly valid assumption that provided (!) no major catastrophe occurs, there will, in about one or two generations, be no more marked poverty in the United States." Fromm obviously sees no internal connection between the current prosperity and a coming depression, or fascism, or imperialist war.

He even believes that "the human and political situation of the worker has changed drastically. Largely through his unions, he has become a social 'partner' of management." Management's part, if we may inject a dissent, is to determine the degree of automation and speed up; the worker's part to join the unemployed or move faster on the belt line.

Fromm finds the positive everywhere, interwoven like bright wool in the negative wamp of social insanity: "As far as submission to irrational authority goes, the picture has changed drastically since the nineteenth century, as far as parent-child relations are concerned. Children are no longer afraid of their parents. They are companions, if anybody feels slightly uneasy, it is not the child but the parents who fear not being up-to-date. In industry as well as in the army, there is a spirit of 'team work' and equality which would have seemed unbelievable fifty years ago. In addition to all that, sexual repression has diminished to a remarkable degree; after the First World War, a sexual revolution took place in which old inhibitions and principles were thrown overboard. The idea of not satisfying a sexual wish was supposed to be old-fashioned or unhealthy. Even though there was a certain reaction against this attitude, on the whole the nineteenth-century system of tabus and repressions has almost disappeared." Happy children, happy GI's in a standing army that would have seemed unbelievable fifty years ago, and happy youth in sexually free America!

In his use of the "negative" and the "positive," Fromm resembles the petty-bourgeois utopian Proudhon, whom he quotes approvingly along with Leon Blum and Adlai Stevenson. Like Proudhon he wants to save the positive while discarding the negative. Not even Marx is exempt from his negative-positive

approach. Fromm rejects the findings of the mature Marx, by and large, but finds much food for thought in his youthful writings where the influence of Hegel and Feuerbach is most marked.

Strangely enough, Fromm does not mention Feuerbach; yet he appears to owe much to this philosopher. Fromm's central idea — to retain the alleged values of religion by putting man in place of God and by stressing love — was one of Feuerbach's main themes. Fromm's construction of an abstract normal man is likewise in the Feuerbachian tradition. Feuerbach, as the link between Hegelianism and dialectical materialism, played a role of decisive importance. To advance his platform today, however, is anything but progressive.

In the case of the Soviet Union, Fromm finds little that is positive. The remarkable achievements due to planned economy despite Stalin's role are brushed aside, since he views Stalinism as a consequence of the integration of economy and the introduction of planning on a nationwide scale. (Big economic units lead to bad consequences because they don't fit human nature.) He correctly sees Stalinism as having much in common with fascism, but, in accordance with Social Democratic dogma to which he adheres, he sees Leninism as the source of Stalinism. The ultimate origin of Stalinism is found, he thinks, in Marxism.

Trotsky's powerful refutation of this superficial view and his equally powerful defense of the progressive meaning of the Soviet Union's planned economy apparently do not exist for this disciple of the utopian cobweb spinners of pre-1848 vintage.

### Straightening Out Marx

Consideration of Fromm's criticism of Marx will enable us to better appreciate how decisively his method affects his conclusions. According to Fromm, Marx "did not recognize the irrational forces in man which make him afraid of freedom, and which produce his lust for power and his destructiveness. On the contrary, underlying his concept of man was the implicit assumption of man's natural goodness, which would assert itself as soon as the crippling economic shackles were released." This led to three "dangerous errors in Marx's thinking."

First of all, Marx neglected "the moral factor in man." (Fromm's emphasis.) Marx "did not see that a better society could not be brought into life by people who had not undergone a moral change within themselves." The second error "was Marx's grotesque misjudgment of the chances for the realization of Socialism." Third, "was Marx's concept that the socialization of the means of production was not only the necessary, but also the sufficient con-

dition for the transformation of the capitalist into a socialist co-operative society." (Fromm's emphasis.) Contributing to this error was Marx's "overevaluation of political and economic arrangements... He was curiously unrealistic in ignoring the fact that it makes very little difference to the personality of the worker whether the enterprise is owned by the 'people' — the State — a Government bureaucracy, or by the private bureaucracy hired by the stockholders."

Fromm evidently drew these deductions by setting up his own abstractions about man and society as the criterions by which to measure what he considered Marx's views to be. Naturally, measured by Fromm's criterions, Marx turns out to be all wrong about both human nature and the society that should be tailored to fit it. Suppose, however, we refuse to accept Fromm's criterions as scientific?

Despite his sensitivity on the subject of authoritarianism, Fromm's criterions, by a curious dialectic, are based on authority. His main authorities are the traditional figures of the leading world religions, particularly those in "the Judaeo-Christian tradition."

Fromm states specifically: "We do not need new ideals or new spiritual goals. The great teachers of the human race have postulated the norms for sane living." "And then again about five hundred years before Christ in the great religious systems of India, Greece, Palestine, Persia and China, the idea of the unity of mankind and of a unifying spiritual principle underlying all reality assumed new and more developed expressions. Lao-tse, Buddha, Isaiah, Heraclitus and Socrates, and later, on Palestinian soil, Jesus and the Apostles, on American soil, Quetzalcoatl, and later again, on Arabian soil, Mohammed, taught the ideas of the unity of man, of reason, love and justice as the goals man must strive for."

Fromm's concepts of human nature and the ideal society are drawn from such authorities plus the utopians who preceded Marx. While accepting without question Jesus and the Apostles and other saintly authorities a half millennium before them, he rejects some of the findings that Freud considered basic, particularly the importance of sex as a fundamental human drive. Freud, the founder of psychoanalysis, you see, only reflected in his limited way the Victorian cast of the late nineteenth-century before capitalist America became sexually free.

### Marx's Criterion

Marx began with the idealist approach developed by Hegel. As his thought matured, however, Marx came to the question what is the material origin of the idealist concepts? He could not escape the materialist answer, they have

a class origin and they reflect class interests. Forced to reject the mystical absolutes of idealism, Marx had to search for an objective basic criterion by which to measure society. He found this in the development of the productive forces; that is, technology and the organization of labor.

Utilizing this criterion, let us now retrace our ground to see what answers we get through its help to the questions raised by Fromm. First of all, how shall we tell a sane society from an insane one? If a society advances the development of the productive forces, it is sane. If it does not, it is insane. The simplicity and obviousness of this way of approaching the problem should not mislead us as to its efficacy. It enables us to measure objectively the sanity or insanity of stages of a given society. It even provides us with the means for answering the crucial question, a question that scarcely occurs to the idealist, what is the material origin of the forms of society? Forms of society become outmoded when they no longer advance the development of the productive forces. Forms of society that open up new possibilities move from potentiality toward actuality. This, we note, is an alternative way of asking about the rationality or irrationality of the forms.

Putting Fromm's blueprint for an ideal society to the test, we observe that breaking up today's colossal productive forces into tight little commodity-producing islands would take us back to the level of the 1840's if not a half millennium before Jesus and the Apostles. The blueprint, if carried out in life, would therefore give us not a sane but an insane society. Our criterion, however, reveals even more. Since it would take us backward instead of forward, the odds for its becoming actual equal zero. That is why, from the scientific viewpoint, we have no choice other than to classify the blueprint as utopian in addition to its being reactionary.

Let us take a more serious example — the capitalist society we live in. First of all we must observe the specification of the criterion that we take the society as it actually is; that is, as a world-wide system. Capitalism is much more than capitalism in the United States. Here our method safeguards us from Fromm's gross error of making a chiropractic diagnosis of the negative and positive status of the American spinal column of the organism while overlooking the gangrene in the colonial extremities.

In its first stages, capitalism was highly rational, for it developed the productive forces as no other society before it. This is an objective fact that must be recognized no matter what one might think about the real attitude of this society toward "the unity of man, of reason love and justice." Today, however, application of Marx's criterion

yields a different result. Capitalism has become such a brake on the productive forces that it is turning them into their opposite — forces threatening to destroy civilization and even mankind itself. Could a society be more insane? Our conclusion is thus much the same as the one reached by Fromm on psychological grounds but the consistently materialist judgment is far more severe and sweeping.

What kind of society will replace the irrational one we live in? Certainly not one envisaged in some dusty scheme patented in the days of the horse and buggy or handed down from the still more remote times of the ox cart. All the evidence shows that it will be a society based on planned economy. Planning in the Soviet Union has demonstrated in life what steep increases in the rate of development of the productive forces is possible under this system. What is noteworthy, however, is that capitalism itself is preparing all the requisites for planned economy. This is the long-range meaning of the giant enterprises we see appearing throughout the capitalist structure. Marx's criterion permits us to recognize the signs of the actual inherent evolution of capitalism toward a higher order.

We are now in position to see why Marx considered that the socialization of the means of production was the necessary and sufficient condition for the transformation of capitalist into a socialist co-operative society. This applies to capitalism as a world system. Does it take much perspicacity to see — once world socialism has demonstrated its superiority in developing the productive forces — that all possibility of a return to capitalism will be excluded?

Fromm's criticism of Marx as to the inadequacy of socialization of the means of production is not based on Marx's position but on acceptance of the Stalinist lie that socialism has been established in the Soviet Union. It was, of course, quite natural for Fromm to grant this completely unwarranted concession to Stalinism, because his own method permits him to visualize model samples of societies like swatches from big bolts of cloth. In fact Fromm goes the Stalinists one better. They claimed that it was possible to set up socialism in one country. Fromm believes it can be set up in one work shop. But socialism, as the outgrowth of capitalism, is a world-wide system. The difficulties in the Soviet Union do not prove that socialization of the means of production is inadequate to change human nature and that therefore moral persuasion must do the job. The difficulties in the Soviet Union follow from the fact that world capitalism has not yet been transcended. What is really inadequate is the extent of the socialization of the means of production.

Marx's basic criterion enables us to give a materialist explanation for what to Fromm is most important, "the moral factor in man." Definite forms of society have in turn advanced and then retarded the development of the productive forces. The forms consist of classes based on particular modes of organizing economic production and distribution. The classes in turn give specific content to such abstract concepts as "justice," "love," "reason," and "the unity of man." The content is progressive or reactionary depending on whether it advances or retards the development of the productive forces. The so-called moral "factor" is thus relative, not absolute.

In the rise of capitalism, justice and reason were with the struggle to overcome and replace the outmoded forms of feudalism. The class war was projected on to the moral, religious and philosophical plane. Fierce battles were waged on the printed page and speakers' rostrum; but that more than words was involved is clearly demonstrated by the fact that the issues were finally decided in civil war. The history of America can offer some evidence as to this. The morals of capitalism displaced the morals of feudalism or slavery. The bourgeois ideologues thought that the success of the new views was due to their consonance with human nature, but they were simply in consonance with the basic task of increasing productivity.

Today capitalist morals have become obscene. Witness the efforts to save the Francos, Rhee and Chiangs as part of the reactionary struggle to prevent the rise of a superior system. The workers on the other hand, although originating in capitalist society, are developing a new morality in opposition to the outmoded capitalist morality. Love for one's fellow man, the concept of the unity of man, gain a new content — international working-class solidarity.

To think that Marx neglected the moral reflection of the class struggle is simply not to understand Marx at all. For him the highest moral obligation was to join in the struggle for working-class emancipation. His whole life was living proof of how seriously he took "the moral factor."

As for the criticism that Marx made a "grotesque misjudgment of the chances for the realization of Socialism," we can only express appreciation for this authoritative judgment from a modern Don Quixote as he sets out to win an erring world back to the values of chivalry.

\* \* \*

The question of the relation between human nature and the development of the productive forces still remains to be discussed. Here it will prove fruitful to



bring in Herbert Marcuse's book *Eros and Civilization*.

Marcuse does not explicitly define his attitude toward Marx's outlook in this book. However, in his previous work, *Reason and Revolution*, where he traces the conversion of Hegel's idealist dialectic into Marx's dialectical materialism, there can be no doubt about his favorable appreciation of Marx in basic essentials. (See especially the sections "Marx: Alienated Labor," "The Abolition of Labor," "The Analysis of the Labor Process," and "The Marxian Dialectic.") There is nothing in *Eros and Civilization* that would indicate a change in his position; in fact, the book appears to be an attempt to apply and extend it in a critique of the fundamental concepts of psychoanalysis.

In his opinion psychological problems have turned into political problems: "private disorder reflects more directly than before the disorder of the whole, and the cure of personal disorder depends more directly than before on the cure of the general disorder." It is wrong, he thinks, to try to apply psychology in the analysis of social and political events. "The task is rather the opposite: to develop the political and sociological substance of the psychological notions."

### Freud's Contradiction

From the start it is thus clear that Marcuse's approach is the opposite of Fromm's who seeks to measure society by psychological notions. Marcuse begins with the fundamental contradiction in psychoanalytic theory: "The concept of man that emerges from Freudian theory is the most irrefutable indictment of Western civilization — and at the same time the most unshakable defense of this civilization."

The indictment is that this civilization requires man to sacrifice his happiness. "According to Freud, the history of man is the history of his repression. Culture constrains not only his societal but also his biological existence, not only parts of the human being but his instinctual structure itself."

The defense is that without the repression and the constraints civilization would be impossible.

This contradiction deeply disturbed Freud. He recognized man's claim to freedom and happiness and even asked if civilization were worth the sacrifice. Yet he felt forced to defend civilization. This was the source of the pessimism observable in his writings.

The problem then is to determine whether this contradiction can be resolved or whether it must forever remain an antinomy incapable of being transcended. Marcuse thinks it can be resolved and that Freud's own basic concepts help point the way out.

It was a mistake on Freud's part, he contends, to identify civilization with the

thousands of years of class society that produced it. Class divisions were a consequence of scarcity even though they made possible an increase in productivity. Granting that slavery in one form or other was historically necessary, nevertheless the ruling class has always had a vested interest in maintaining its exploitation. To the repression of the toiler required by slavery was added "surplus-repression" to maintain the exploitative rule.

However, are we required to assume that scarcity must endure forever? On the contrary, the development of technology and the productivity of labor have become such that it is now possible to relegate scarcity to the past. Humanity now has the possibility of developing civilization on the basis of an economy of abundance. What are the prospects for happiness in this new social order? What will be the fate of repression? What will happen to human nature?

Our search for answers to these questions must begin, Marcuse holds, with the basic insights provided by Freud which have been rejected by the revisionists of the Fromm-Horney-Sullivan school. These are the profound and decisive significance of sexuality and its intimate relation to a so-called "death instinct" (destruction or aggression impulses). (Freud's concept of sex, for those unfamiliar with his writings, is much broader than the meaning usually associated with the term — it means a basic drive that can have any number of derivative manifestations.) Freud held that these drives are lodged in the biology of the human animal.

### Form and Content

Marcuse grants that this is a universal truth. But what about the particular forms the instincts take? Is this a question of just biology, affected only by changes in geology? No, says Marcuse. Man lives in society; and the forms of society determine the forms in which his instincts become manifest. Since form and content, however, are interconnected, the form must inevitably affect the content in a most profound way. To use an analogy of our own, the form of bound feet will completely alter a person's capacity to walk; hobbling will prove more "natural" than running.

If we now look at Freud's concepts with this consideration in mind a surprising conclusion is forced upon us. Freud's concepts of psychological forms express a social content. The death instinct, for example, manifests the destructive drives of class society. The important thing to note is the profundity with which the social content becomes rooted in the human psyche by shaping the biological instincts. Freud was correct in estimating the depth of the anchoring but erred in not taking into account the strictly historical influence

of society in the vicissitudes of the instincts.

From this it follows that America has not undergone a sexual revolution as Fromm contends. Such a deep-going revolution has not taken place anywhere in capitalist society. Had it occurred a spectacular decline in neuroses and psychoses would have been evident in the new generations reared without repressive binding of the instinct. Marcuse does not take this point up, but very likely he would agree that what we do see are increasing signs of the strain on the monogamic form of the family and perhaps widespread anticipations of its break-up. But that's not the same as freedom from repression. Freedom won't come until the new social order appears with whatever will be its form of the family.

If this view of society's profound shaping of the instincts is correct, as Marcuse believes it is, then Freud's basic concepts constitute an "irrefutable indictment" of the existing social order. Uneasiness over this indictment is one of the compelling motives for the revisionist abandonment of Freud's conclusions.

Moreover, if this view is correct, optimistic conclusions follow about what will happen to human nature in a rational society of abundance.

### Marx's View of Labor

In developing this theme, Marcuse relies mainly on Marx's concept of alienated labor, basing himself, it is evident, on his presentation in *Reason and Revolution*. (This presentation is much closer to Marx's view than the one given by Fromm in *The Sane Society*.) Marx held that work is the normal activity of the human being. Man expresses himself in the labor product, sees and finds himself in it. By changing nature, man has changed his own nature; that is, he became and developed as human.

Class society, however, negates this norm; the producers are alienated from the labor product. The slaveholder, lord or capitalist does the planning and the directing and the product is his. This alienation reaches its culmination in capitalist society where, as proletarian, man is converted into an adjunct of the machine and utterly divorced from the labor product. Moreover, the labor product, an expression of definite economic relations, becomes a strange thing, with seemingly independent powers, ruling man like the fetish of savages or the gods of primitive religions and the Judaeo-Christian tradition. So far as the capitalist labor process is concerned, the proletarian is the negation of a human being. Consequently work becomes toil, animal-like drudgery, and pleasure is put outside the labor process to what

is not specifically human — the animal functions.

That is why Marx considered that human history will not truly begin until this negation has been transcended and the labor process converted into the opposite of what it is under capitalism. Through conscious planning man will master his own social relations and, through this, master the labor product so that it no longer stands against him as an alien power but instead becomes a means through which he may rationally shape himself. According to this, work should become a pleasure, a source of deepest satisfaction, the process through which civilization achieves full flower and man enters his own as a fully developed human.

Marcuse seeks points of support for this view in Freudian theory. Sublimation, he thinks, shows in theory that work can acquire the pleasurable quality of play. The aggressive impulses, too, can be successfully teamed up with work. And in any case a free society of abundance will provide far more room for unrepressed sexuality with its pleasures than we can easily visualize.

Whatever we may think about Marcuse's speculations concerning human nature in the vast future that will open up to mankind under socialism, it must be admitted that he has powerful logical support. He accounts for the universal side of human instincts as grounded in biology and for the particular forms they assume in relation to the development of society. Moreover, he sees the forms as a dialectical progression — the first shaping of the human being through work, then the negation in class society, and finally the overcoming of the negation in a social order of abundance. He thus ties the forming of human nature to the basic criterion of Marxism, the development of the productive forces. In addition he links his views with Freud's concepts, yet resolves the basic contradiction in Freud's theory.

It should also be pointed out that Freud's concept of the role of fantasy, which is also a kind of knowledge as Marcuse insists, fits in with this outlook. The memory of a happy time in the distant past, whether of the history of the species or of the individual, fuses with the vision of a future that must be happier than this foul and tragic time in the death agony of capitalism.

Let us say what Marcus fails to say. This side of the mind escapes the repression imposed on the individual. In the artist it finds one kind of language; in the mathematician or scientific theoretician another; but creative imagination is not confined to these specialized types. The workers too have this gift. And that is why when an economic order becomes irrational, although it destroys many people and warps most, it cannot blot out the capacity to conceive a better

organization of society on the basis of what has already developed.

In fact the repression itself impels the mind, in search of pleasure or at least escape from pain, to turn away from the present world. In this primitive manner the mind seeks to negate the inhuman quality of reality. To many this ends in day-dreaming, delusion, and perhaps worse. From this stems the construction of utopias and the opium-like dreams of a beatific life in the hereafter. To some, however, the imagination yields new concepts that point to changing reality for the better. These concepts give direction to the chaotic pressure of rebellion and therefore beg: to concentrate the elemental mass force against the weak points in the given organization of society. No matter how the ruling class exerts "surplus-repression," a time finally comes when the will of the masses can no longer be contained. The slave arises and takes his destiny in his own hands. Anyone seriously interested in the study of revolutions will find this to be a fact in the history of the most diverse kinds of economy.

But here we have come to another science — Marxism. In the consciousness of its vanguard, the proletariat has long passed the stage of mere revolutionary fantasy, the construction of utopias. The proletariat is not limited to elemental upthrusts that grind forward without a correct guiding theory. Of all the revolutionary classes in history it is the first to have a tested body of scientific knowledge and political experience in advance of its own revolution.

In Marxism is summed the heritage of all the rebellion of the lowly and oppressed since class society began. If the proletariat finds its economic position

to be an utter negation of what is human, its theory on the other hand by subjecting capitalism to scientific criticism has already established the bridge to the new order where truly human civilization begins. That should be sufficient guarantee that its road to success will prove far shorter and less costly than the one travelled by the bourgeoisie from feudal society.

\* \* \*

Marcuse's book is not, like Fromm's, written for popular consumption. It assumes on the reader's part some acquaintance with philosophy and considerable familiarity with psychoanalytic literature. Those interested in the questions raised by Fromm will, however, find Marcuse's final chapter, at least, well worth while. It is a quite readable criticism of neo-Freudian revisionism.

This school, Marcuse feels, has dumped overboard some of Freud's most fruitful insights. The criticisms of society levelled by Fromm and the others, while at times pointed, are really superficial, tending to be grounded in "idealistic ethics" of one variety or other. Thus the school is eclectic in theory. Their general framework of thought is acceptance of the status quo. Instead of "curing" the patient to become a rebel," their "therapy is a course in resignation."

Marcuse himself offers no specific political road leading toward the future society of abundance. He contents himself with indicating the unfavorable political tendencies of the various wings of the psychoanalytic movement. On the other hand, he offers no blueprint utopia, and that is decidedly in his favor after the bad taste left by Fromm's "sane" society.

## The Last Hurrah

by Jack Bustelo

The Last Hurrah, by Edwin O'Connor.  
Little, Brown and Co., Boston. 1966.  
427 pp. \$4.

To judge from the high-powered ballyhoo of the hucksters over this book, the publishers are determined to make it a best seller no matter what its merits might be. However, if this has created an unfavorable impression in your mind, overlook it and borrow a copy from the public library. That is, if you go for characters and humor of the Damon Runyon kind.

This is the sentimental story of an allegedly typical big-city machine boss whose evil reputation hides a heart of gold and a mind like a razor. An adept in the principles of machine politics, he knows that the means must conform to the end, including promising everything

to everybody and clinching it by stuffing the election boxes.

So he's as crooked as a Boston alley. You can't help liking the guy anyway, once you get to know him, as Adam and Maeve did once Adam succumbed to temptation and bit into the apple proffered him by Skeffington from the tree of political knowledge.

And, after all, if Skeffington puts the squeeze on the rich it's in the interest of the poor whom he loves and whom the rich exploit and oppress by refusing to replace the slums with decent housing despite the campaigns of the mayor.

Sure, he pads the city pay roll with clowns and deadbeats and ward heels and sees that the contractors who back him never lack civic holes into which to pour their concrete. But even Robin Hood

had to keep his merry crew in roast goose.

Mayor Frank Skeffington's crew is a merry one for sure and their antics campaigning for re-election of their chief are better than a trip through the fun house. They are supposed to represent the Irish immigrants who barged into New England politics as the royal road out of the slums. Their day, as typified by the rule of Skeffington, is passing.

That is due to the new pattern of federal handouts, social security, etc., established by Franklin Delano Roosevelt and this is the last chance to get an inside seat on the old-time, torch-light, tub-thumping campaign of the benevolent and paternalistic kind of pre-Roosevelt machine boss. The Big Business puppets, stuffed with sawdust and greenbacks and dangled on a reform platform, are out to take over from the lovable old rascal.

The characters are grotesque. Many of the situations are mechanically contrived. The author's view of politics, its class basis and dynamics is superficial, carrying the seal of the Samuel Lubell (*The Future of American Politics*) school of political housekeeping. Capitalist political gangsterism is prettied up. The Catholic hierarchy is whitewashed since we are told that they are trying to stay out of politics and are embarrassed by Skeffington — a pitch that should do

sales no harm so far as the good will of the frocked politicians might be involved. Despite such glaring faults, the novel is marked by entertaining, if cynical, satire.

Some of the best highlights for me were the TV scenes — old skinflint millionaire Amos Force in ecstasies over free detergent entertainment until the station shuts down, and McCluskey's principled reform campaign from his living room in opposition to Skeffington: Pope's portrait on the wall, hired Irish setter on the floor, ever-loving wife with cookies and milk for mayoralty candidate hubby, and baby in rubber pants turning bottoms up right in the TV camera eye just before the fade out. Nixon should appreciate that reminder of his 1952 performance.

A number of bits are deadly, such as "Little Sump," the satire on the Orphan Annie-type newspaper comic strip, the mayor ceremoniously handing the giant key of the modern city he heads to Fats Citronella, a visiting bop musician the reverent conversation of the mourners at the wake for Knocko Minihan. . .

All the political speeches, of which there is no dearth, are such biting take-offs they sound like unexpurgated originals.

O'Connor's book is not a great American novel, in my opinion, but it certainly makes pleasant reading.

ers felt isolated, when they hated the bureaucracy but shied from struggle against the bureaucracy for fear it would give aid and comfort to the imperialists. To maintain itself in power, the bureaucracy is trying to fall back on a new line of defense. Its main concern is to prevent a conscious workers vanguard from appearing on the scene. It is trying to prevent a fusion of this gigantic working class with a conscious vanguard represented by the program, by the ideas of Trotsky. The bureaucracy is trying therefore to save at least ten years of Stalin's 30-year rule. According to them Stalin's first 10 years were progressive. The struggle against Trotsky and the others as "enemies of the people" must not be reevaluated. It was only after Stalin elevated himself above the party following 1934 to rule as a dictator — that he became no good. In this manner the bureaucracy hopes to maintain a wall between the Soviet masses and the revolutionary ideas represented by Trotskyism.

Thus in continuing the struggle against Trotskyism it must by that very fact continue to falsify history. It must continue the frame-up system inasmuch as the struggle against Trotskyism was based from the beginning on frame-ups and falsifications.

The main ingredient of the frame-ups in the early stages in 1924 was Trotsky's alleged hostility to the Old Guard which Stalin was ostensibly defending. This then shifted to the charge that Trotsky underestimated the peasantry. It was followed by the charge that he was a super-industrializer because he was the first to advance the idea of a five-year plan. Meanwhile Stalin waged a ceaseless campaign making out that he was defending Leninism against "Trotskyism." Before long all argument stopped and Trotsky was falsely accused of conspiring to overthrow the government, of consorting and collaborating with White Guards. He was condemned as an agent of imperialism and a fascist. He was finally assassinated and Trotskyism was declared defeated once and for all.

Now 16 years after Trotsky's as-

## ... End of the Stalin Cult

(Continued from page 44)

but it is safe to assume that the strikes reverberated throughout the Soviet working class, which hates the bureaucracy no less than the slave laborers do.

The logic of the purge system would once again demand the wholesale extermination of the population of the forced labor camps and elsewhere. As the resistance to the bureaucracy rose and the pressures built up, the bureaucracy was compelled to make a turn. It was compelled to take the course of concessions to the masses. The repudiation of the Stalin cult is a continuation of these political concessions to the Soviet workers.

But just as the purges have a logic of their own, leading to ever greater and more numerous ones, so do political concessions have a logic of their own. The masses will no doubt accept the abandonment of the Stalin cult as a concession. They will accept it jubilantly, accept it and demand more.

The bureaucratic propaganda about

turning to collective leadership will be filled by the workers with their own content. The workers will demand that they be in the collectivity. They will not stop short of the fullest democratic rights. If Stalinism up to now has been a regime of crisis, it is today in its death agony. It is confronting today not an isolated opposition but the working class as a whole striving to enter the political arena, a working class that has grown tremendously in numbers and culture. The Soviet working class today is the second largest in the world — some 48,000,000 strong. It is profoundly socialist in its consciousness. The very fact that the bureaucracy tries to speak in Lenin's name testifies to that. It has gained tremendously in self-assurance as a consequence of the revolutionary developments following World War II and especially the Chinese Revolution.

The situation is different, totally different, from what it was before World War II when the Soviet work-

sassination a new campaign is underway against him. What is the nature of this campaign? The charge that Trotsky was hostile to the Old Guard is no longer mentioned. This would be too grim a joke. Stalin crushed the Old Guard in his "protective" embrace. It's no longer mentioned that Trotsky underestimated the peasantry. This charge too mustn't be whispered. It was Stalin who killed millions of peasants by the most brutal method of forced collectivization. The charge now is that Trotsky never really understood the working class. They have dug up an old polemic between Trotsky and Lenin on the trade union question and are attempting to inflate this episodic disagreement as "proof."

An article appeared in Pravda recently, written by Petrovsky, one of Stalin's purge victims who has been rehabilitated and put to work denouncing Trotsky. He writes his mem-

ories of the Tenth Congress of the Communist Party held in 1921. This poor soul is given the job of charging Trotsky with inability to understand the workers. There were no proofs he could adduce. All the decisions of the congress were adopted unanimously. He pays tribute to Lenin for his great genius in unifying everybody at the congress by argument alone. But he manages to falsify just enough to give the impression that there was at least a dispute between Trotsky and Lenin over understanding the workers.

Khrushchev and Co., all hand-picked bureaucrats who came from nowhere, whom nobody knew until Stalin died, now try to cook up as an issue that Trotsky, the Chairman of the Petrograd Soviet in the first revolution in 1905, the organizer of the insurrection in 1917 and the organizer of the Red Army, did not understand the workers!

The purpose of this charge is ob-

vious. It represents an attempt to convince the Soviet masses to look to the bureaucracy for real understanding.

The March 24 *Daily Worker* carried another charge against Trotsky. They say he was against industrialization. Imagine, the man they accused of being a super-industrializer in 1927 is today turned into an opponent of industrialization! But it is significant that they are starting an "ideological" campaign when their bloody campaign was supposed to have finished Trotskyism once and for all.

By this new campaign the bureaucracy betrays its real fear — the fusion of Trotsky's program and ideas with the mass of the Soviet people who are struggling to become the masters of their own house. We feel today surer than ever they will win. There is no power on earth that can stop them. Victory is on the side of the Soviet people.

## ... From Our Readers

I am vitally interested in knowing that social conditions have improved there considerably since 1921."

A Vancouver supporter of **Fourth International** challenged Jack Scott of **The Vancouver Sun** to indicate his opinion of Joyce Cowley's article, "Youth in a Delinquent Society," which appeared in our magazine last fall.

Scott began his column in the March 13 issue of the **Sun** as follows: "Some of the most provocative and, I'm bound to say, interesting views I've read on the problem of juvenile delinquency have

come from Joyce Cowley, a writer for the **Fourth International**."

Then he quoted the challenge from the person who sent him the copy of the magazine: "Naturally, since this is a Marxist paper, we cannot expect to see Miss Cowley's views in the capitalist press."

Scott, however, decided that her views "may be worth examining for that reason alone." And he added: "There's surely some validity to the argument, for example that younger people are often victims of the new climate of conformity and Miss Cowley rightly criticizes the minimum of political protest to be found these days at universities."

Scott utilized the rest of his column to present well-chosen excerpts from Joyce Cowley's study on juvenile delinquency. Since the column appeared on the front page of the local news section, Vancouver readers of the **Sun** had the unusual opportunity of getting at least a glimpse of the Marxist approach to this social problem that is disturbing so many families today.

Our thanks to Mr. Scott. And thank to the reader of **Fourth International** who believes that if you pound loud enough on the door of the capitalist press someone inside might open it at least a crack to see what all the noise is about.

## ... Progressive Party

(Continued from page 49)

likewise urge the labor movement to rally behind the struggle of the Negro people for full equality. Their main plank is furtherance of the class struggle of the workers through independent political action. They advocate formation of a Labor Party, regarding this as a step toward the establishment of socialism in America.

Those who believe that socialism is the wave of the future can find no better means of helping its advance in 1956 than by vigorously supporting the SWP campaign.

Those who are not yet convinced that the only alternative to the wars, depressions and barbarism of capitalism is socialism, but who believe in labor's organizing its own political party, can register their opinion at the ballot box in 1956 by voting for the SWP ticket. And all

those who want to strike a blow for peace, for civil liberties and civil rights are urged to support the Socialist Workers Party. It is the best means to translate your beliefs into action in this crucial election year.

We especially appeal to the rank and file of the Communist Party who have been saddled with the infamous chore of peddling propaganda for the Democratic Party. That unenviable assignment constitutes part of the practical application of the politics of the Stalin cult. The top bureaucracy in the Kremlin has now been forced by the Russian workers to disavow Stalin as a paranoiac monster guilty of mass frame-ups and mass executions. But they are still trying to continue Stalin's politics. And Stalin's handpicked lieutenants, such as William Z. Foster, are doing their best to continue Stalin's line of acting as recruiting sergeants for the Democratic machine. Break with the Stalin cult by breaking with its class-collaborationist politics! Begin pressing for the class-struggle policies of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky!

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