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At the Crossroads:**

*Toward Democratic  
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or

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by H. W. Benson

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by Michael Harrington

**The Elections: A Post-Mortem**

by Gordon Haskell

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# THE NEW INTERNATIONAL

A Marxist Review

Vol. XXII, No. 3

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# THE NEW INTERNATIONAL

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## The CP at the Crossroads:

### Toward Democratic Socialism or Back to Stalinism

The Communist Party is in a grave crisis.

There are different opinions on the causes; there are disagreements on the cure; but every leader and member knows that the discussion which involves the Party from top to bottom arises out of the crisis and seeks an answer to it.

Yet while Communists are plunged into unprecedented debate, outside their ranks every wing, group, tendency, publication stemming from the socialist movement talks of a new alignment, a regrouping, a new beginning; they look not toward the decline of socialism but toward its rise. New opportunities are opening everywhere.

The Communist Party can no longer go on as before. In truth, it stands at the crossroads. If it chooses one road, it will travel speedily toward decline and disintegration into an isolated Stalinist-type sect, not only rejected by the working class but detested by it. If it takes the other path, it can make a notable contribution toward the rebirth of genuine socialism in the United States; it can move together with Socialists everywhere and spur the movement on. Which way shall it be? Members of the Communist Party must make the decision but the outcome is so vital that all socialists must enter into the discussion. In such a spirit, we of the Independent Socialist League offer this pamphlet as a contribution to the discussion inside the Communist Party.

IF THERE IS A CRITICAL SITUATION which no one can ignore, how did it arise? It is not because members or leaders suddenly wavered in their loyalty to ideals which brought most of them into the Party. They were first drawn into the movement by the liberating inspiration of socialism; they were motivated by the goal of a society without exploitation, by human brotherhood, internationalism, democracy. As Party members, they sacrificed for causes that were unpopular; fought for what they thought was right; gave money; gave time; some gave their lives. And in recent years, when their movement came under attack from every quarter, they risked jobs, they faced jail, they felt the lash of anti-democratic persecution. And yet, they went on. They persisted courageously in maintaining and building their movement. If the Party now faces a crisis, it is not for lack of heroism, self-sacrifice and devotion by its adherents. Quite the opposite. The membership of the Communist Party displayed an unexampled fortitude in standing against the tide of opinion in their own country.

Yet the crisis is here. The outward signs are obvious to all who know

even the most elementary facts about its history; the movement which once numbered a hundred thousand in membership, which inspired a million or more close sympathizers, and which led other millions is now isolated from the mass of people who once looked to it for advice and leadership, direct and indirect.

Once, vast numbers of worker unionists affiliated with the American labor movement were led by members of the Communist Party and its sympathizers. The Party was a growing force: in transport, auto, rubber, oil, packinghouse, electrical and machine—a roster of basic industry, not to mention secondary industries where its influence was no less. Now, it is all gone. In one union after another, the Party and its sympathizers have been defeated, ousted from power, often expelled from membership; where their followers and friends held on, they were expelled en bloc from the CIO and cut down.

Where they still hold a remnant of influence, it is either being whittled away or without significance to the development and course of the labor movement. As one Party trade union commentator explained: "... a base which becomes completely surrounded and hemmed in by the enemy will not long remain a base. For the very concept of a base is that it be a strong-point from which and not merely in which to operate." (John Swift, *Political Affairs*, April 1952.)

That was almost five years ago. Since then, the Party's situation has deteriorated even further.

Once, Communists were among the chief leaders of the fight for Negro rights everywhere, inside the labor movement and out. Entirely apart from its fundamental line including the slogan: "self-determination for the Black Belt," in fact despite its basic line, the Party led national struggles against discrimination, police brutality, and frame-ups. Inside the Party, a constant campaign was waged against "white-chauvinism"; hundreds of thousands of workers who passed through the CP learned at least one thing: the need for solidarity between white and black and the pressing need for a fight for equal rights for all.

Yet, today, the CP is isolated from the Negro movement. In the United States, a vast struggle for Negro equality is under way. Negroes in the South are ready to risk life and security in a fight for democracy; they are not frightened; they are not submissive. Their movement spreads all over the South; in the North, Negroes rally to the assistance of their comrades with moral and material aid. It is the most massive surge forward of Negroes in the nation's history. But the Communist Party is not part of it; the fighting Negroes look to new organizations; they look to the unions; above all, they look to the NAACP. Not only do they by-pass the Communist Party; they look upon it with distaste: even though individual members of the Communist Party are often respected for their own personal devotion to the cause of civil rights.

Nevertheless, and this should be absolutely clear, the Party's isolation from the organized workers and the Negro movement is only a symptom of the crisis and not its basic cause. Sometimes, socialists must stand alone against public opinion in the interests of truth and democracy. No movement has the right to respect and devotion if it cannot remain steadfast in the face of adversity and tell the world, "You are wrong; we are right." If the undercur-

rent of public opinion were overwhelmingly conservative, even reactionary, and bitterly anti-socialist, then any socialist movement, worthy of the name, could only hold on, defend its own rights and its views, awaiting a turn in the tide. It would hold on, knowing that isolation is the harsh price it pays for unremitting service to truth, democracy, and justice. If that applied to the Communist Party today, there might be a decline in membership and in influence *but not a crisis*; for its followers were hardened enough to stand up under such pressures.

But is that the case? Every CP member and leader must face up to this question squarely without evasion, and without self-consoling delusions.

Has the CP been plunged into isolation because the American working people have been plunged into an unprecedented conservatism? Did the labor movement and the Negro movement fall victim to unreasoning jingoism, anti-socialism, and McCarthyism? If so, how and why? Such an explanation must be rejected out of hand. The Negro movement today has risen to new heights and cries out more vociferously than ever for democracy. The labor movement is more powerful than ever and the working class is aware of its extraordinary strength.

The workers and Negroes have won a strong position in American society. But do not "console" yourself that their victories have made them content with their lot and unmovably pro-capitalist. "The reality that even under capitalism the workers may be able to increase and defend their living standards need not, in the long run, lead them to accommodate themselves to capitalism and to turn a deaf ear to socialism." So writes Foster in *Political Affairs* (p. 41, Nov. 1956). Why, then, do they turn a "deaf ear" to the Communist Party today?

But let us clarify the question. We are not referring here to "people" as a vague, undifferentiated mass. Obviously, a majority of workers, even organized workers, has always been non-socialist or anti-socialist. Nevertheless, a whole section of the working class was socialistic in its thinking, and progressive in outlook. It is to this truly progressive section of American labor opinion that we refer. Once, the CP was respected by it; now it is rejected. Why? Was the rejection of the Communist Party by these workers a rejection of socialism, truth and democracy or was it something else?

Until February 1956 it was possible for every Communist to tell the world and, even more important, to tell himself as he looked in the mirror, that *he was defending the truth*. If isolation and denunciation is the price for defending socialism and democracy every sincere Communist Party member and leader told himself; then so be it! We have stood up under worse and we will again. But that inner conviction was wiped out at one blow by the 20th Congress and the Khrushchev revelations! Of a sudden, it dawned upon the thinking members that they had defended not truth for 25 years, but lies!

### THE 20th CONGRESS

EVERYTHING HAD TO BE REEXAMINED. The open crisis in the CP dates from the 20th Congress. The very fact that the party was shaken from top to bottom was in itself a sign of life. Only a corpse would remain unmoved. If the Party was no longer sure of the old way, a new way became possible.

It came as a shock to Party members and sympathizers to discover:

*That:* Under Stalin, a police tyranny crushed all critics; carried on "mass arrests and deportations of many thousands of people" and "executions without trial." Yet, the Party detected nothing but the most perfect democracy on earth.

*That:* Sincere Communists were tried and shot, or just shot. Their "trials" were frame-ups; their "confessions" were false; they were tortured and tormented. Virtually the whole leadership of the Bolshevik Revolution was exterminated. In 1937-8, 70 per cent of the members and candidates of the Central Committee of the CPSU were shot. Yet the Party saw nothing wrong. It defended "Soviet justice" and denounced all who questioned the trials as "fascists."

*That:* "Plots" were invented. Whole nations, enjoying a fictional autonomy as affiliates of the USSR, were wiped out and their peoples deported from their homes. "The Ukrainians avoided meeting this fate," said Khrushchev, "only because there were too many of them and there was no place to which to deport them. Otherwise, he [Stalin] would have deported them also." Yet, no one in the Party leadership protested against such outrages. Quite the contrary, they sought always to justify them, where they did not deny their existence.

*That:* The heads of governments in Eastern European nations were falsely denounced as "fascists" and "agents of imperialism." Many were executed like Rajk in Hungary, Kostov in Bulgaria, Slansky in Czechoslovakia. Tito, who remained outside the grasp of the Kremlin, was excoriated as a "fascist warmonger." Needless to say, the Party leaders followed suit, piling their own little heap of abuse on to the mountain of crimes.

*That:* Stalin was transformed "into a superman possessing supernatural characteristics akin to those of a god." The Party leaders saw nothing wrong. They sought to discover and extol virtues which others had overlooked.

The list is longer. And to the list of official crimes must be added the questions that came to mind but which were evaded by Khrushchev. What of democracy in general, free trade unions, the one-party state, free elections?

The 20th Congress was a terrible moral blow to the old Party leadership. It was compelled to admit that for a whole political epoch it had defended as democratic what was now admittedly a police dictatorship and it had done so as a blind and uncritical apologist for Stalin and his ruling regime.

The "revelations" were new only to those deliberately kept ignorant of the fact that the crimes of Stalin against socialism had been followed and analyzed in all details by socialists from the earliest days of his rise to power. What made them "revelations" was that this time the charges originated from within the ruling bloc itself and consequently were virtually unanswerable.

One party member looked the facts square in the face. "The American Communist Party does not approach the American people with clean hands, as far as the Soviet Union is concerned. The American Communist Party repeated as gospel truth which it sincerely believed, every lie told by the Soviet Union about its living standards, about Tito, about the Moscow Trials, about the electoral system, about the Doctor's case, the stamping out of Jewish culture." (L. W. M. in *Party Voice*, December, 1956.)

That was the root of the Party crisis.

You can understand better now why militants in the labor movement

hung back, refusing to spring to the defense of the Party. You can see now why the Party had to fight on, isolated and alone, a losing defensive battle not just before the bar of bourgeois courts but before the jury of working class opinion. There had been "red-baiting" many times before; in the Thirties, the infamous Dies Committee and its similars tried to rouse a lynch spirit against Communists, Socialists, liberals, and dissenters of all kinds. But they failed. They failed because millions, especially in the unions, rejected with contempt the call for a witch hunt. As a matter of fact, progressives and militants in the unions did more than defend the legitimate democratic rights of Communists from reactionary attack; they placed them in high union office; they even shielded them from justified criticisms from Socialists. But their mood changed.

Militant unionists fled from the Party's orbit not because they were misled by lies but because they were beginning to suspect the truth. It is the same truth which Communists have begun to face only since the 20th Congress.

Even now, some Party members try to discover what tactical errors led them to lose the sympathy of progressive workers. How, for example, did they lose out in so advanced a union as the United Automobile Workers with its outstanding record of militancy and democracy? Was it the "right opportunism" of "Browderism" which led Communists to support piece work, to denounce opponents of the no-strike pledge, and to tail-end Roosevelt during the war? Was it "left-sectarianism" which led them to denounce Reuther as the "bosses' boy"; or a dozen other errors? The answers raise more vexing problems than the questions. It was none of these errors and it was all of them! Any socialist group will make "errors." But what became clear to every intelligent militant in the UAW was that every turn in the Party line, "leftist" or "rightist," followed one consistent pattern: it represented an attempt to adjust the policy of the working class movement to the needs of the Russian rulers. No minor shift from "right" to "left" or back could shake off this conviction.

It was true before the Congress and even more so after. Party members began to realize that to the extent progressives rejected blind acceptance of the Kremlin's policies, *they were right*. The Party could not go on as before. The growing hostility of workers had sounded a warning. After the Congress, a new balance sheet was unavoidable.

THOUSANDS JOINED THE PARTY to fight for socialism, willing to burn the bridges to bourgeois respectability behind them. Were they now simply to fade away in disillusionment and become a political nullity? Were they to look for a comfortable niche as obedient and docile servants of the status quo; mere beasts of burden in the factories; intellectual work-oxen in the professions? Would they join the swarming throng of ex-radicals who had discovered that it was possible to make peace with capitalism and live comfortably as its courtiers? Would they call for the speedy "liquidation" of the Communist Party only in order to liquidate a socialist future for themselves? Those who remained in the Party but who want a radical change have given their answer. They speak of an independent socialist movement, democratic, based upon the interests of the working class, and freed from dependence upon Russian

policy. They have decided to press inside their Party for a new, resurgent independent socialist movement.

Thus, this crisis inside the Communist Party gives rise to a thoroughgoing and genuine debate. And as the discussion proceeds, it is becoming clear to socialists everywhere that whole sections of the Communist Party honestly have already taken the first steps toward the only authentic socialism, that is: democratic socialism. New hope stirs for American socialism.

But it is not simple; it is not easy. In the discussion, there are many in the leadership and in the ranks who sincerely want a new course. Others, some in honest confusion and some by deliberate calculation, block the way and resist any fundamental change. Some want clarity; others throw up a squidlike ink screen. Everything come us for discussion; it is difficult to separate primary issues from the secondary and to differentiate between questions that can and must be settled quickly and those which must await a more leisurely, continuing discussion. It is not possible, instantly, to take a quick position on a dozen "fundamental" questions before taking a stand on issues which are decisive to reconstructing an independent, workingclass socialist movement in the United States. In brief, it is not necessary to decide everything before doing anything.

### THE DRAFT RESOLUTION: TWO TENDENCIES

OUT OF THE FIRST STAGE of debate came the Draft Resolution which became the focus of discussion as the February convention approached.

It was obvious at the outset that it proposed sweeping tactical changes and viewed the Party's recent past with a critical eye. But was it the beginning of a genuine change or was it a camouflage and cover for a continuation of the fundamental line of old?

When the program appeared, that question seemed hanging in mid-air; the socialist and labor public was accustomed to abrupt 180-degree turns in line which left things basically unchanged; they were scornful, too, of fake "discussions" that became nothing more than breast-beating, scapegoat-hunting sessions.

It soon became clear that the National Committee majority which had adopted the Resolution was divided into at least two sharply divergent tendencies, each of which had voted for the same resolution but for vastly different aims. Since the program was an umbrella covering opposing policies, it could serve only as the starting point for debate; it became a convenient vehicle for raising the key questions, but it could not settle them.

If it quickly became evident that this was a real discussion, in every sense of the word, it was because one wing of the Party seriously tried to face up to the Party crisis. It saw the Resolution as a spring board for a new attitude and a new movement; it maintained that the Party would founder unless it became democratic—democratic in its inner regime and democratic in its conception of socialism; that it had to be genuinely based upon the interests of the working class and to reject the role of blind apologist.

It was this group that turned the discussion into a genuine one.

John Gates, editor of the *Daily Worker*, in "Time for a Change" (*Political Affairs*, November 1956) called for a real turn: "This tragic situation cannot

be cured by a few patches here and there as we have been doing for many years. It can only be solved by drastic and basic changes. . . ."

He rejected "uncritical acceptance of Soviet mistakes." He pointed out that "the expansion of democracy is not automatic under socialism but must be fought for." He insisted upon inner-Party democracy and "the right of dissent after policy has been adopted and while it is being carried out."

Gates is only one among many. They have only made a beginning but it is a serious beginning by people who know that trivialities and clever maneuvers are futile and that without a drastic reorientation they are doomed in the United States.

It was no accident that those who rose to the occasion centered around the *Daily Worker*. Here were the Party's public propagandists, the men who faced the non-party public.

They sensed the mood of progressives and union militants who had become suspicious of the Party and were deserting it after the 20th Congress. They were eager to drive the lessons home to the Party and induce it to make a real turn.

But there are others—others for whom the draft program was not the beginning of a new era but a subtle maneuveristic device. With unruffled equanimity, they were willing to admit a multitude of errors—in the past—so long as they were not required to make a real turn in the future. They imagined that by repudiating the "crimes of Stalin" in his "later years" they could be absolved from the duty of drawing up a real balance-sheet.

They hoped to go on fundamentally as before, with new apologetics and cliches for the old. The working class public, they hoped, would forgive or at least forget. They sought a "new look" but the old substance; old wine in new bottles.

No one better represents this redecorated, wall-papered conservative wing than Eugene Dennis.

For a fleeting moment after the 20th Congress, it seemed as though the Khrushchev regime might tolerate, even encourage, a critical attitude by foreign Communist Parties toward limited aspects of Russian policy. The bureaucrat, skilled in the arts and crafts of old-line Stalinism, cultivated a sixth sense that enabled him to anticipate what his higher-ups would appreciate. The successful Stalinist flunkey was one who required not direct orders but only subtle hints. Perhaps Eugene Dennis suspected that his new mentors might welcome a certain line of inquiry. At any rate, he wrote a rather mild note to *Pravda* suggesting that the rise of the "cult" of Stalin needed a deep Marxist explanation.

(Leave aside the pitiful mood of such a query: the most urgent demand put to those who shared power with Stalin is that they think up a cogent explanation for crimes they once concealed. It is as though a murderer's accomplice were called to task, not for killing, but for failing to lecture on the social causes of crime.)

Under the pressure of labor, liberal, socialist, and now Communist public opinion, Dennis mentioned the execution in the USSR of Jewish cultural leaders and the suppression of the Jewish language. *Pravda* reprinted his mis- sive in full, with one deletion; *it deliberately cut out all his references to the destruction of Jewish rights!*

Months pass. Dennis defers, submissively and politely, to this disgraceful censorship and refuses to raise his voice.

Here is a man, then, who is ready upon command to call out stridently against murder, frame-ups, terror, and tyranny . . . for the past and upon orders from above. But in his breast stirs not the meagerest hint of audacity, not enough to protest against a mean act of censorship and suppression of the truth. Who will now take him seriously if he begins to speak of "independence"?

A short history of the Dennis line is preserved in the *Daily Worker* for December 4, 1956. Joe Clark proves in pitiless detail that he never dared to utter a criticism until it came through Russian channels first: "Dennis evidently does not object to the *Daily Worker* criticizing anything said or done by Soviet Communists but only after the Soviet Communists have themselves made such criticism." With perfect accuracy Clark summarizes Dennis: "Dennis . . . assigns to the Soviet armed forces in Hungary the role which Marx considered fell to the working class."

Yet Dennis, Clark and Gates all support the Draft Resolution; the real line of division, then, is not between those who voted for and those against the Draft. It lies elsewhere.

While Dennis voted for the Draft, it soon became obvious that he had far more in common with William Z. Foster, Party chairman. For one passing, hesitating moment, Foster reluctantly voted for the Draft Program but after rapid calculation changed his mind and his vote. He is against—and properly so from his basically Stalinist point of view.

The Draft is heavily laden with old baggage. But there is little point to a microscopic word-by-word dissection of its political line. Apart from its exact contents it cleared the way for a searching criticism of the Party line; it legitimized not only a consideration of secondary tactics and slogans but a new look at some of the most sacred party dogmas.

It opened a path for those who wanted fundamental changes; in particular, for a change in the relation between the Party and the regime in the USSR.

That is exactly what those who hang on to the past cannot tolerate. They want not a real discussion but only the appearance of one.

They tolerate a genuine discussion with distaste and, doubtless, would suppress it if they could by bureaucratic machine methods. But since that is not possible in the present atmosphere, they try to smother it with other methods.

Not every supporter of the Resolution desires a fundamental break with Stalinism; but its opponents, open and not so open, rally round a still-Stalinist line, in politics and in method. The unquestioned leader and organizer of this tendency is Foster, an unreconstructed holdover from the Stalin era whose politics have not budged an inch despite routine disavowals of "Stalin's crimes" especially in "his later years."

The discussion takes place around the Draft, with amendments, supplements, addenda, and what not. But all this serves only as a convenient rallying ground for the battle between the two main tendencies and as a temporary shelter for those who vacillate between them. Convention action on the Draft cannot end the discussion; it only opens a new phase.

Those who have nothing better to do spend their time picking out "revisionist" flaws and "opportunist" deviations in it. In the end, they know no more about the depths of the divisions between the two main tendencies than they did at the beginning. To understand the real scope of the fight in the Party, it is essential to turn to the course of the discussion as a whole.

One group takes form and looks for leadership to men like Gates and Steve Nelson. It is a distinctive *tendency*; that is, it leans in a certain direction. It is not of one mind on every question; its views are not consistently or fully developed; it has a distance to travel; but its direction is already marked out: *toward democratic socialism*. On the other side, a truly Stalinist wing clusters around Foster.

Democratic socialism or Stalinism: these are the two main poles. The party must ultimately choose between them. That and nothing less is at stake.

FOSTER DENOUNCES HIS OPPONENTS as "revisionists" when they propose to revise his monstrosities in the field of Party policy. He accuses them, too, of representing a "right" wing.

Who is "right" and who is "left"? One can get lost wandering around the points of the political compass; but such direction signs give a rule-of-thumb guide to tendencies in the labor and socialist movement.

If we could find "pure" examples of right and left tendencies (as we never can in practice), they would be distinguished approximately as follows: A Marxist "left" wing is one which leans toward the independence of the working class and for its establishment as a class organized in its own interests. A "right" wing leans just in the opposite direction, toward the subordination of the independent working-class or socialist movement to other social groupings or their representatives.

In the multitude of questions up for debate, a flood of tactical and strategic divergencies relate to the "American question." Foster has ample scope for his talents. Yet, despite grotesque contortions and outright distortions, no one of the Foster-Dennis camp has been able to demonstrate, or even seriously suggest, that their line represents the policy of independence in American politics as against critics who propose to capitulate to the bourgeoisie. In any case, party history refutes any such claim; *no line of demarcation has appeared here*.

But what does separate the two sides—clearly, unmistakably and admittedly—is their respective attitude toward the USSR, and differing conceptions of the relationship of the Party to it. Foster and Dennis are united in a determination to subordinate the movement. Gates, Nelson, and the *Daily Worker* group, on the other hand, despite the vacillations of their politics, call for an attitude of critical independence from the USSR, and demand an end to serving as blind apologist for it.

Not that they follow out the full implications of their position. Ironically, both they and Foster insist in common that Russia is "socialist"; but the difference in tendency is there nonetheless.

The Gates wing moves toward independence; in that sense, compared to its rivals it is the "left" wing in this dispute.

However, the terms "right" and "left" can be misleading. It would be more accurate to say that the democratic socialist tendency is the *working-class*

wing, while the Foster group is the "Russian" wing. Their incompatibility arises not simply from differences of opinion but from class roots: the former is groping for real roots in the American working class, while the latter is bound firmly to the bureaucracy of the Russian state.

### STALINIST METHODS

AT FIRST GLANCE, THE DISCUSSION seems knotted up in a tangle of hopeless confusion. Everything and anything is up for consideration and posed for decision . . . a stream of bulletins, magazines, letters, articles, papers, columns . . . an unending series of subjects . . . a multiplicity of clashing opinions. In the *Daily Worker* alone, perhaps 1,000 letters from readers have commented on the issues!

And on what subjects! Minor matters and important ones; trivial questions and decisive ones: The Program; the Negro Struggle; the Trade Union Movement; Constitution; Organization; Marxism-Leninism; Democratic Centralism; Peaceful Coexistence; USSR and relations with national Communist Parties; Hungary; Election Policy; Left-Sectarianism and Right Opportunism; A New United Party of Socialism; Roads to Socialism; Capitalist Stabilization; American Economy and American History; Dogmatism and Creative Marxism. All this is only a partial list of subjects stretching from Past to Present into the Future, and covering all the spaces in between.

Beneath it all, two definable forces are exerting their pull. But it is not always evident what they are.

No one could possibly end the present discussion by rude decree. But a bureaucratic device, to serve the same end is to prevent it from leading to anything in particular and to drown it in a forrest of cliches. A master at this technique is Foster, trained and reared in the Stalin school. In 30 meandering pages entitled, "On the Political Situation" (*Political Affairs*, October, 1956) he proceeds at length to cut the discussion into a thousand hanging fragments to prevent it from becoming concentrated and clarified. He uses up the alphabet from "a" to "u" listing no less than 21 positively burning questions that must be probed before anything can be decided, ending his list with "etc." Not satisfied, he rakes up no less than 16 basic "errors" of the "right wing" that must be censured. He is only scratching the surface. With his private thesaurus of "deviations" and "orthodoxies" the man could go on indefinitely. He is ready to talk his opponents to death while they grow old politically and die.

Then, without turning a hair, his friends accuse them of wanting to turn the Party into a discussion society!

Do you raise questions? Nothing shore of liquidationism, revisionism, he replies. Consequently, let the discussion proceed not on what you want to discuss but on what I do.

Do you suggest new views? That is irresponsible, he replies. Before *your* views could be adopted, or even seriously considered we must discuss everything and anything from the formation of primitive protoplasm out of raw matter to the creation of the Warsaw Pact; we must follow every ramification, every detail fully, "scientifically." We must study, we must investigate, we must think. That, by the way, applies only to *your* views. But not cer-

tainly to mine which can and should be adopted instantly, long before the devious ends are tied together in a beribboned bundle.

Before taking a position (that means, of course, *your* position) on America, argues Foster, we must begin to study American History, and U. S. Economy in a deep way—which, by the way, he insists has never been done. Don't make a move without consulting Lincoln—and Lenin. He, himself, however, is not hindered by such diffidence and stands above such prescription. He is trigger-ready to "reaffirm" all "fundamentals" and their applicability to America without a second's hesitation or a moment, even, of contemplative study.

It seems absurd? It sounds incredible? Yet, the danger is that this assault upon human intelligence, or something like it, will win out in the end!

Understand that Foster's program is nothing more than a dusty collection of hollow formulas, stale slogans copied mechanically out of books, a running series of familiar cliches. If life gets in the way of his philosophy, let life be adjusted; a simple act of legerdemain, easily performed for a select credulous audience and reported in sympathetic publications, privately printed.

Yet its appeal is understandable. The membership listens for months to a discussion of new views and still newer views. Objections, rebuttals, surrebuttals. Criticisms and replies to criticisms. Months pass and nothing stands out with any starkness; nothing seems in order except new investigations into still newer fields.

Then comes Foster. "Marxism-Leninism, Proletarian Internationalism, Vanguard of the Workers, United Front of Struggle, Mass Work." At last! The collective sigh of relief is almost audible. Here at last is something that can be understood! Concert goers listen with untutored ear to modern music, respectful perhaps but ill at ease. It is hard to concentrate until, at last, comes a popular piece with old familiar tunes; they relax in relief and hum the harmony along with the orchestra.

Foster's method is simple. Keep up a constant bedlam and rely on natural conservatism to assert itself in the face of confusion. What if those who know that a change is needed become discouraged; what if hundreds are driven away in impatience. Let them go, so long as a Stalinist machine can reach back for Party control. Keep the pot of irrelevancy boiling and bubbling until your critics quit in disgust; then, perhaps, the time will have come to put an end to discussion.

By his methods alone, Foster reveals the unregenerate Stalinist at work.

### DOGMATISM AND MARXISM

THE BANNER OF CREATIVE MARXISM is raised against dogmatism. Those who want to reexamine policy in the light of living events are indubitably right in rejecting dogma. But as they pause in contemplation of everything-at-once, they inadvertently overlook the trap which Foster has set right at their feet. The task is to focus attention sharply on what must be decided now; and help everyone reach a position. But Foster diverts attention precisely toward his dogmas, which ring so familiarly, and casts a diffusive haze over every living question.

For that, he and his friends play at being the true apostles of "Marxism-Leninism." But the dogmas that fascinate him have little in common with

the theories that guided Marx or Lenin. He appeals to the "laws" of Marxism-Leninism as a body of juridically fixed statutes; his "laws" are like a criminal code and not the guiding principles of a socialist movement. What he decrees now, as in the past, in the name of "Marxism-Leninism" are nothing but the rules and regulations laid down in every sphere of theory and practice by those upon whom he is ever dependent. He cannot arrest anyone for violating the "laws" but he can subject them to a heavy sentence of verbal vituperation.

He wants to "reaffirm" everything. It was not the laws of "Marxism-Leninism" that led us astray, complain Foster and Dennis, it was our own failure to carry out its prescriptions; instead of sniping away at it, let us criticize our own shortcomings. What we must do, they insist, is to reaffirm the old dogmas; carry them out, at last; and go forward, the flag flying high.

If they never get around to accounting for their own basic errors, it is doubtless for lack of time. They are busy self-criticizing others. Meanwhile, by their own admission, they could never distinguish between genuine Marxism-Leninism and a counterfeit. For years, Foster confesses, the Party and its leaders violated and perverted these principles; the energies of a generation of writers and theorists were dedicated to presenting the false as true. By what right can Mr. Foster who, like the others, couldn't tell one from the other, offer himself as the official, accredited, certified representative of "Marxism-Leninism" ready to reaffirm in less than a moment all that he never understood?

When all dogma is cast in doubt, it is only natural that Party members are dismayed. For years, they imagined that the "dogmas" were clearly understood by all; the distilled essence of truth, categorical precepts for all eternity, *the* guide to action, *the* theory. Now they are puzzled and confused. Do you mean that we didn't know what we were talking about? What is "Democratic Centralism" *really*? (to use only one example). They enter into prodigious researches to uncover its "true" meaning so that it can be voted up or down, once and for all. One club finds the nugget of truth buried in a directive issued from above to the Chinese Army! The editors of *Party Voice*, New York discussion magazine, extracts a definition from the official rules of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

Consider what all this implies.

A hundred years after the Communist Manifesto, it is necessary to redefine Marxist fundamentals. Thirty years after the death of Lenin, you are compelled to refine your conception of Leninism. Every generation from the vantage point of its own experience has the right to examine all programs with a critical eye. It will require years of political and scientific confrontation to unwrap each and every principle that guided Marx and Lenin from the mud and silt of misunderstanding, distortion and plain falsification that settled upon them like archaeological deposits.

And meanwhile?

While all fundamentals come up for investigation, the pressing tasks of our day remain: To decide what type of socialist movement fits our needs in the United States today; to reply to insistent questions on events in Hungary, Poland; to choose or reject independence from the USSR as it is *today*, under a regime unknown to Marx or Lenin and foreseen by neither. Study commissions are not a substitute for politics.

It has taken a political lifetime first to suppress, then to pose, finally to formulate all questions inside the CP. From the bursting locked attic of the Party memory, an accumulated storehouse of politics is now strewn about. It will not be carefully sorted, rearranged and tucked back neatly in order in a passing few minutes; not at one convention or two. The full encyclopedia of subjects belongs, too, not on the Party's private discussion shelf, but in the socialist public arena.

THE ATTENTION OF THE PARTY must be focused on what is urgent and its passions aroused for a truly independent socialist movement. The greatest freedom of debate, the widest expression of views should be not simply tolerated but encouraged and insisted upon. It is not a question of limiting, certainly not of closing, the debate for that would be a calamity. But at some point the discussion must be brought to a head and concentrated.

The salient task for a leadership which wants to show the way to democratic socialism is to turn a spotlight on those issues which light up the way. Not everything can be treated on the same plane. Some matters can be left for time and the leisurely confrontation of opinion. But others must be grappled with quickly. Out of the welter of discussion the key issues have already taken shape and force their way to the forefront. They need to be formulated more clearly:

1. Democracy inside the Party.
2. The fight for democracy by socialists, everywhere; not only in countries dominated by capitalism but in those ruled by Communists as well, including the USSR.
3. Realignment of forces to build a broad independent socialist movement in the United States; one which would unambiguously reject capitalism and Stalinism.

### DEMOCRACY IN THE PARTY

THE WHOLE PARTY IS IN ARMS against bureaucracy. Everyone repents the past and pledges to protect inner-party democracy in the future; gone are the days when the most elementary rights of rank-and-file members were passed off with a shrug.

So universal are democratic professions that the matter seems raised above dispute. Yet it would be foolhardy if the Party members trusted to simple expression of good intentions.

The future of Party democracy depends not on the good will of leaders, not even exclusively upon the alertness of its membership, *but upon the political means chosen to solve the Party crisis*. Foster's road leads ultimately back to bureaucracy; not necessarily because he is a willful man but because he wants to overcome the Party crisis in a certain manner.

What has caused the crisis and what is the way out? The answers to these questions will in the end determine the fate of internal democracy.

Consider the approach of John Gates, Steve Nelson and their supporters: For them, the Party dilemma is rooted basically in a failure of Party policy in a fundamental sense to meet the needs of our times. *The Party and its policies must be changed radically* if it is to make its essential contribution to socialism in the United States.



Once this view is carried out consistently, democracy becomes more than a mere preference; it becomes an indispensable instrument.

In the first place, it would be impossible to make the essential turn now and tomorrow without the most thorough-going participation of the membership in action, in decisions and in debate.

But this is the minor key. For there are others who would agree: *So far, so good. But so far, and no farther!* For them, the question of democracy is posed as though it were a code of etiquette to guide the family in the private relations among its members.

But those in the Party who move toward democratic socialism view democracy as something more than mere traffic rules and see it in its deeper significance. It is not enough to grant each other the dispensations of democracy; they must convince trade unionists, Negroes, all peoples fighting for democracy, that they are actively turning away from dictatorial methods, away from dependence upon any authoritarian regime and toward democracy.

Party democracy becomes a life-and-death matter for them, not only for private purposes but because without it Communists are doomed before working-class opinion.

Some socialists, who regrettably have not followed the discussion with the attention it deserves, demur. "You claim there is a democratic socialist tendency in the CP, even among some of its leaders," they object. "But look at their past; see how they still refer to Russia as a socialist state and shy away from a full and frank criticism of its role in Hungary. Do you imagine that they can be sincere in this turn?"

But it is not a question of "sincerity" as some disembodied spirit. Look upon the past in a new light; insist upon a change in a given direction; and you are led willy-nilly toward a new view of Party democracy, flowing from a whole political outlook. Such a leaning or tendency arises in the Party; we can only hope that it continues consistently along the road which it has charted for itself.

To understand their outlook, contrast their views with Foster's.

For him life is quite simple. The only crisis that he notices is the annoying fact that others persist in talking of a crisis! What is fundamentally wrong, he thinks, is that there are too many comrades who insist that there is something fundamentally wrong.

The 20th Congress? The Khrushchev report? Events in Eastern Europe? Isolation from the mass movement? No problem for Foster: just don't think too much about them.

Why bother, in any case? The basic difficulties have been handily settled for us, now and forever, just as in the past. "Now, however, upon the initiative of the leaders of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, the Stalin undemocratic cult is being liquidated root and branch." (*Political Affairs*, September, 1956.) What more do you want; let us go on to "constructive" work and leave such things to our highest "leaders."

Everything could have easily been straightened out by Foster, given a little time to think up a good apology and to acquire a prefabricated Marxistical explanation. As he puts it (*Political Affairs*, October, 1956): "Although the situation created by the Stalin revelations presented certain problems no doubt the Party could have overcome them without great difficulty, absorbing

the immediate lessons from the Stalin exposure and studying the long-range implications of this important matter."

Just a bit of a problem, nothing different from what he juggled successfully many times before. But alas, it was not to be because there were Gates and the others.

To quote from Foster (*Political Affairs*, October, 1956): "This Right tendency is now menacing the Marxist-Leninist foundations of the Party." And "If it were desired to liquidate our Party no more effective means could be used to this end than the current discrediting of the Party and its leadership by ascribing to them endless 'errors,' many of which never happened." And "These wrong views included bitter attacks upon the Soviet Union, upon our Party, and upon its whole leadership."

There is no doubt in Foster's mind where the crisis originates; the cause can be pinpointed exactly: it is the rise of the Gates-*Daily Worker* tendency.

The solution? It follows inexorably, from Foster's bizarre conception of what is happening in the world and in the Party, that *the way out of the crisis, for him, is the defeat of the Gates tendency and the return to "normality."*

Remember that we are dealing with the keeper of the seal, the man who will countenance no deviation from "Democratic Centralism" and who longs for the "monolithic unity" of the Party—whatever it means to anyone else, we know what it means to him. For Foster this discussion can be nothing but an annoying, unavoidable overhead.

What follows from his line and from his whole conception of the nature and solution of the Party crisis is that the Gates group must be smashed and the buds of Party democracy cut off.

"This time," says Foster (*Discussion Bulletin* No. 2), "there will be no Duclos article to bail us out of our folly." A thought scented with nostalgia for the good old days when everything could be decided by a nod from above, or a letter.

Not only that, things have gone far enough; that is: too far. "Such an exaggeration of mistakes as we have had in our Party during recent months would not be tolerated in the Communist Party of the USSR, Peoples China, Italy, etc.," he warns. Why then tolerate them in your Party, Foster? Doubtless he asks the same question of himself and has an answer ready for the proper time.

Everyone pays lip service to inner-Party democracy. In keeping with the spirit of things, all kinds of constitutional changes, organizational devices and structural novelties are advanced to safeguard the rights of members. But the real test will come in the fate of the opposing tendencies.

Can democracy win out in the Party, can the Party advance if Foster and allies take it in a stultifying grip? The most ornate constitution devised by the human imagination could hardly maintain democracy if the Gates-*Daily Worker* tendency comes under his heavy hand. If they are penalized in any way for their views, or removed from posts of responsibility, or their right to speak bridled, what will be the fate of the Party then?

Nelson, Gates and the others take on nothing less than the task of defending democracy in the Party and its reputation outside. Before they can face the working-class public, they must face their own Party.

Can they tolerate an appeasement of Foster's Stalinist conceptions? There is the first hurdle.

### A PEACEFUL ROAD

A FIGHT OVER DEMOCRATIC socialism is at the heart of the problem in the Party discussion; it is the crux of at least three questions which pose the relationship between socialism and democracy, 1. peaceful transition to socialism in the United States, 2. the right of every nation to its own road to socialism, 3. Hungary.

Everyone assures everyone else that a "peaceful road to socialism" is possible in the United States; no one protests. By a process of natural selection the question should disappear.

Yet it does not. Debate continues; more accurately, two debates: the real debate and the fake one.

Knowing Foster's methods, we expect him to steer the discussion up a blind alley. We are not disappointed.

As far back as the first CP Smith Act trials, he posed the possibility of "achieving socialism" in the United States by peaceful means if democracy prevailed at home and world capitalism continued to decline. He, at least, should have little objection when others speak of the same possibility. But we are dealing with a Foster. Where there is no real difference, he is ready with a false substitute.

True, he admits, a peaceful development *is possible*. But you, you compromisers, he cries to the dissidents, insist that the peaceful road *is inevitable*? That's the difference: is it merely possible or is it inevitable? And there follows from him and his imitators an interminable flow of disquisitions, complete with digressions, on overestimating capitalism, revisionism, class-collaboration, etc.—all of which is presumably contained, tightly compressed, in this simple original difference.

It is all arrant nonsense; it is an argument concocted out of nothing but sheer malice. And if fog settles in a shadowland, if everyone gropes about blindly, so much the better! That is the ground on which he prefers to fight.

His task is made easier by those on the other side; for they do not make clear what they are driving at, or they are not able to say.

In the December, 1956, issue of *Party Voice*, Norman Schrank contributes an article entitled "Strengthen the Draft Resolution." By title alone we locate him in the political spectrum. He is for the Party's Draft Resolution as a beginning but he sees the need for a deeper analysis and more extensive changes in Party policies.

"Sometimes I feel," he writes, "the stand-pat dead-center comrades are still too much hypnotized by the international movement. They wait for distant winds to blow." And he concludes: "the charge that we move to extremes is being used today by those who hold the stand-pat position who want no change and by those who want to return to old policies. Under today's conditions, this criticism which was once sound becomes harmful. *It becomes a pernicious thesis against change!*"

All this is simple truth. What is even more significant is this: "I believe," he says, "there is a serious omission in the resolution's failure to describe the socialism we seek as democratic socialism."

Democratic socialism! If this phrase is conceived in all its depth and not as a catchword, it summarizes the whole crisis in the Communist movement and points the way out. The crisis derived from a failure to come forward truly as a democratic socialist movement, and the solution lies in moving toward it.

It seems to us that when the *Gates-Daily Worker* tendency speaks of the peaceful road to socialism it is already reaching toward an even deeper concept: the democratic nature of socialism, in general. Perhaps that is what really irritates Foster.

Notice how Schrank returns to the point in the same piece: "Given the democratic, peaceful and constitutional path to socialism in America, *what is wrong in characterizing the socialism we seek as democratic socialism? Is the socialism we seek undemocratic?*" (His emphasis.)

In his mind, then, the peaceful, constitutional road is virtually synonymous with the *democratic* road to socialism.

IT IS TRUE THAT A PEACEFUL road to socialism is possible and desirable in the United States. As humanitarians and champions of civilized methods in every respect, socialists will do everything to make this possibility a reality. There are countries ruled by dictatorships where a "peaceful road" is barred, *not only the peaceful road to socialism* but the peaceful road to almost anything else of importance to the people! But even where the *peaceful* road is blocked, socialists hold to the *democratic* road; that is the only road to socialism. For the *democratic* way to socialism is not necessarily dependent upon parliaments and constitutions where these do not exist.

In November 1917 when the Bolshevik Revolution took place in Russia there was literally no constitution in existence. Yet the revolution became a triumph of democracy; it was based upon the support of the masses of soldiers, workers, and farmers, and was not imposed upon them. In 1933 Hitler came to power in Germany under the forms of the old Weimar Constitution. Yet this "constitutional" method was the road of totalitarian dictatorship.

Socialism remains democratic under all conditions and under all constitutions. The road to socialism in the United States, with its democratic institutions, will be vastly different from that in Spain where a dictatorship suppresses every democratic right. But in both countries, as in all, socialism must come with the support of the majority of the people. Without such support, it will not come; or what will come will not be socialism!

Socialism always and everywhere insists upon the rights of democracy. And more: it seeks its objective not against the will of the people, not over them, but with their support. That is why any authentic socialism is democratic socialism.

### NATIONAL "ROADS TO SOCIALISM"

EVERY NATION FOLLOWS its own "road to socialism." This truism is repeated on all sides, especially since the Russian leaders consented to legitimize Tito. By now, it has been uttered so often that it becomes a commonplace, its content slurred over; it becomes a clot on thought. What does it mean?

"Roads to socialism" are not picked out and ground to taste like brands of coffee on a supermarket shelf. Did anyone imagine that socialism would

come to Britain exactly as to India; was it conceivable that to imperialist nations and colonies, big nations and small, farmers, workers, semi-serfs socialism would come cut to one master pattern? What is the latest discovery? That each nation strives for socialism under conditions peculiar to it, guided by its own traditions? Such an elementary, even primitive, conception could hardly become the basis for a clear division of opinion. Naturally, the Foster-Dennis wing reduces it, like everything else, to a downright absurdity; they pick up what they say from *Pravda* and repeat it mechanically. That's good enough for them.

But for the *Daily Worker* group, it was quite a different matter. "Many roads to socialism" as a programmatic idea became the first "legal" device for raising the banner of independence from the USSR, for themselves and for the Party. The Party membership hesitant and confused was encouraged to take the first necessary steps without revolutionizing its entire outlook. In effect, they were told, we want nothing different from what Tito demanded and what Khrushchev conceded to him.

Russia has its road to socialism; we have ours. It was a simple enough beginning. But complications came. For the *Gates-Daily Workerites* were not hunting for a tidy formula just for their own puzzled members. (For Foster that is the beginning and end of everything.) They wanted a bridge to people who sympathized with socialism but who rejected everything that smacked of totalitarianism. They were confronted with basic questions. "Russia's road to 'socialism' is dictatorship, one-party state, anti-democracy. Is that what you propose?" It was easy to find a reply. "No, we insist upon our own democratic road."

"How do we know you are sincere," came the rejoinder. "Why don't you criticize dictatorship in Russia." And that became the great dividing line in the Party. Members became increasingly critical; they openly questioned the "necessity" for a one-party state in Russia; they suggested that perhaps democracy might be proper, even in the USSR. It is this that Foster will never forgive.

Still, as matters stood up to yesterday, each nation's road to socialism was equally legitimate. But big events brought harsh questions.

In Poland a revolutionary surge among the people brought a new government to power, the Gomulka regime, against the will of the Russian rulers.

Russian troops were mobilized menacingly against the Gomulka regime which threatened to order Polish troops to open fire if the Russians marched. The two countries teetered on war; an open armed battle was averted only by a last minute compromise. What was at stake? Was the USSR trying to impose its "road to socialism" upon Poland which defended its own "road to socialism"?

Now, *Pravda* demands that "proletarian internationalism" supersede "nationalism." But its internationalism is nothing but the right of the USSR to dominate the peoples in its orbit without regard to their nationality and indifferent to their national needs and feelings. Genuine internationalism is not imposed by bayonets; it is possible only when every nation is free to associate or not with any other; it is totally alien to the forced dependence of small nations upon powerful ones. When Russian troops marched toward Poland they did so not to subordinate "bourgeois nationalism" to "inter-

national socialism"; or "national communism" to "proletarian internationalism." They say "proletarian internationalism" when they mean Russian foreign domination. Troops moved to impose the rule of the USSR over Poland.

NOTHING IS MORE EMPTY IN THE EYES of the *Daily Workerites* than mere "dogma"—and they are right. Yet, in all the struggles and conflicts between nations in the Communist bloc and in the struggles inside them, they detect nothing more than a conflict of doctrine, a difference of opinion, varying conceptions of the doctrine of "roads to socialism." Doctrinairism is no substitute for dogma. If life will not submit to Foster's dogmas, neither will it be limited by bookish doctrine. In Eastern Europe, they talk of doctrines; but they fight against exploitation and national oppression.

Two distinct questions are hidden in the formula, "own roads to socialism." 1. the right to national freedom, 2. democracy and the road to socialism.

Yugoslavia and Poland defended their independence from foreign domination and here, as everywhere, socialists stand on the platform of self-determination, support those who defend their own nationhood, and congratulate them upon their successes. What kind of socialist and what kind of socialism would deny small nations their right to free, national existence?

The sympathy of socialists for the national aspirations of Poland and Yugoslavia is no less, even though *inside each country the fight for democracy goes on!* All roads to socialism lead through democracy. In Poland, any democratic socialist worthy of the name will support those who demand full democracy, free elections, free parties, and who reject all apologia for dictatorship. Not to turn the means of production back to capitalist exploitation, no socialist wants that, but to give social and political power to the working people.

Under Tito, it is said, Yugoslavia has the right to its "road to socialism." But that is only the beginning of the question: for now, Milovan Djilas, former partisan fighter, former President of Yugoslavia, former member of the Communist Party, stands up and demands to be heard. He is truly a democratic socialist and a courageous one who will not be cajoled or coerced into silence.

We know from his article in the *New Leader* (November 19, 1956) where he stands on democracy under socialism. On Poland, he writes: "Given independence from Moscow, Gomulka took a historic step forward. But with half-hearted reforms he will soon reach a dilemma—which Moscow had foreseen. He will have to choose between internal democracy, which has become inseparable from complete independence from Moscow and the ties with Moscow required to maintain the Communists' monopoly of power."

He explains why the USSR decided it had to crush Hungarian resistance: "Had the Hungarian Revolution not only brought political democracy but also preserved social control of heavy industry and banking, it would have exercised enormous influence on all Communist countries, including the USSR. It would have demonstrated not only that totalitarianism is unnecessary as a means of protecting the worker from exploitation (i.e., in the 'building of socialism') but also that this is a mere excuse for the exploitation of the workers by bureaucracy and a new ruling class."

Tito's rule in Yugoslavia, he said, was based upon "narrow ideological and bureaucratic class interests."

Tito, with his "road to socialism" had only one reply, the classical reply

of the offended dictator: Djilas was arrested, tried, and sentenced to jail for three years. In the United States, we protest against the Smith Act convictions of Communists who are sent to jail for the sole "crime" of advocating their political opinions. Can we do less for Djilas who is jailed for nothing more by a government that calls itself socialist?

To its credit, the *Daily Worker* protested, if only mildly. "We deplore the fact that he was tried for his opinions," it editorialized on December 14, "We do not believe he should have been convicted. We do not think he should go to jail. . . . In the world-wide battle for the minds of men, we hold that believers in socialism, such as ourselves, cannot accept in the name of government necessity actions that are a denial of the things for which we fight."

What now of Yugoslavia's "road to socialism"? Djilas demands democracy. Tito throws him into jail. Who then truly represents the road to socialism inside Yugoslavia? The answer of every democratic socialist should come instantly: We are for Djilas and we are for his road.

Yes, every nation will take its own road to socialism. Does that mean then that the road to socialism in Russia is through a one-party dictatorship? That in China the road leads through the illegalization of all opposition parties. That in Yugoslavia it leads through an independent one-party dictatorship. But that in the United States, fortunately for us, it leads through real democracy?

That would be a serious distortion of the "road to socialism" and a perversion of the meaning of socialism itself. But leave that aside. Who will believe it? If "socialism" comes through dictatorship everywhere else, or at least everywhere it presumably has come, then who will give credence to your assurances that in the United States the democratic way will be held open. Only when a movement demonstrates that it supports the democratic road everywhere can American workers have faith in its attachment to the democratic road in the United States.

### REVOLUTION IN HUNGARY

IT WAS IN HUNGARY that the fight for national freedom, democracy, and socialism reached its climax. It was here that the *Gates-Daily Worker* tendency began to mobilize Party opinion for a fundamental change; but it settled for a compromise that disarmed it. Foster rose to clamor loudly against the bogey in his own imagination: a "fascist" revolution. The *Daily Worker* was finally trapped into the vain task of stimulating support for a question mark.

Russian troops entered Budapest on October 24 and fired on crowds demonstrating in support of the Gomulka government in Poland. In the first days of November, the Party National Committee disavowed responsibility for the action of the Russian tanks in a public statement, from which we call attention to these excerpts:

"The events in Poland and Hungary cannot be explained as the result of reactionary pro-fascists plots or the operations of Project X. Such an explanation flies in the face of well-established facts."

It condemned the policies of the Stalin regime as responsible for the peoples' discontent which led to their uprising: "These policies ran counter to the whole philosophy and outlook of Scientific Socialism."

Of the Communist movement in Hungary, it declared, "At the last mo-

ment instead of meeting the legitimate grievances of the Hungarian working class and people, they again resorted to repressions. Their calling in the Soviet troops stationed in Hungary to put down the popular demonstrations was a tragic error. This dramatized the bankruptcy of a policy which was not based securely upon the national needs and sentiments of their own country—of the working class and popular masses of Hungary."

Who should rule Hungary? "The Hungarian people have now had 11 years in which to test parties and leaders. They alone have the right to decide whether to change or retain them." They alone! Mark that well.

Where was the Hungarian rising going? The National Committee had no doubts those days: "We are confident that despite all the difficulties and temporary setbacks, the Hungarian people will find their way to Socialism, based on their own national traditions and requirements and secured by the will of their own working class and people."

And what of the promises made in abundance? "The events in Poland and Hungary show that despite the promises of the 20th Congress which aroused these great expectations, these principles [equality of nations] are yet to be fully applied in practice."

On Nov. 4, after throwing the Hungarians off balance by holding out the hope of ending the occupation, Russian tanks and soldiers shot their way back into Budapest and installed Kadar as puppet ruler over the masses who hated him. The universal Hungarian resistance began: general strikes; armed fighting; extension of Workers' Councils; demonstrations. A seething and irrepressible hatred of the occupation and its stand-in government.

The Party National Committee statement had already been adopted. On November 5, as the first news of the reentry of Russian tanks into Budapest was flashed to the world, the *Daily Worker* hardly wavered and held to its position. In an editorial, it declared: "The action of the Soviet troops in Hungary does not advance but retards the development of socialism because socialism cannot be imposed on a country by force; it does not help but damages the relations between socialist states. . . . We are for the withdrawal of all troops from all countries to their own borders. We are for the right of all people, the Hungarian people as well as those of Cyprus, of Egypt, of Israel, of Kenya, of Okinawa—the list could be greatly extended—to rule themselves in complete independence. We oppose the use of force against those people no matter who originated it." No matter who originated it! And the editorial continues: "The use of force by the Soviet troops in Hungary will bring no lasting solution to that country's problems. That is why we support the Hungarian masses who sought to solve their own problems as they were settled in Poland without violence, without foreign troop intervention and without allowing the supporters of the old fascist regime to remain in power."

While Soviet tanks were rumbling into Budapest the *Daily Worker* could write, "We support the Hungarian masses."

Criticism of Russian intervention was in a "comradely" spirit; the errors, it found, were the wrong way to build socialism! While declaring support for the Hungarian masses, both the National Committee and the *Daily Worker* still assumed that the Russian army was an instrument of socialist policy, even if tragically misdirected. They said only the least that could be said. *BUT THEY DID SAY IT*. They opposed Russian intervention

in Hungary! Looking back, we know now that a significant section of the Party had been making a determined effort to begin taking an independent policy. But it wasn't until they spoke out on Hungary that their course became clear to others. The editorials in the *Daily Worker* and the Committee statement were, in effect, a declaration of independence.

But, having made its declaration, the Party began to slip back under the pounding of Foster and Dennis.

Until events in Poland and Hungary, it was easy enough to talk of an independent policy; but revolutionary events tested everyone and compelled them to come forward with their real policies. Foster and Dennis were revealed as true Stalinists, in policy and in methods. They denigrated the Hungarian revolution and whitewashed Russian intervention. Their technique is succinctly and perspicaciously described by Max Gordon of the *Daily Worker* as the process of blind apologetics, defined as "this process which starts with the assumption that all Soviet action must be championed and then erects its own structure of 'fact' to accomplish that aim." (*Daily Worker*, December 17, 1956). We feel free to speak more bluntly than Gordon: they lie to cover up for the policy of the ruling Russian bureaucracy.

We saw the process of "blind apologetics" in action when the Stalinist wing went openly to work.

On November 21, Foster wrote on the Hungarian situation in the *Daily Worker*. He was blandly ready to admit "that the Communists in Hungary, both Soviet and Hungarian found it necessary to conduct an armed struggle against a mass movement which undoubtedly had the backing of the bulk of the Hungarian people." (The bulk? It was one united people against foreign armies.) Yet, this mass movement of the majority had become "fascist." "When the leadership of the mass movement was thus seized by reactionaries, which happened under the Nagy regime, the basic issue was changed from one of a just struggle of the people for more democracy and for national independence, to an attempt by the reactionary forces, stimulated and organized by American money, to transform the Hungarian Socialist regime into one of fascism."

How and when did a struggle for democracy by the majority become transformed instantaneously into a struggle for "fascism?" No need to scrutinize the question closely. All Foster has to know is that Russian actions must be justified and he will find a way. If an outright lie will help, so much the better, as "It was . . . upon the request of the Kadar Hungarian government that the Soviet Union, under the terms of the Warsaw Pact and the Potsdam agreement stepped in to restore order in Hungary. . . ." Upon the request of the Kadar government! But everyone knows that there was no Kadar government until Russian troops entered Budapest, drove out the Nagy regime and imposed Kadar over the Hungarians.

On November 15, James Allen made his contribution:

He justified the reentry of troops because, "in the face of a counter-revolutionary attempt, force has to be used to safeguard socialism" and "a counterrevolutionary government would have been installed if Soviet troops had remained passive." And here, when the first mass struggle for democracy had burst out in Eastern Europe he learned only that "Hungary has shown

how the general, abstract idea of democracy can be made to serve the purposes of counter-revolution."

On November 28, Benjamin Davis:

"The second use of Soviet troops, after fascist elements had gained or were gaining the upper hand, was in my opinion a grim and painful necessity . . ." and he wanted "a more positive attitude toward the Kadar government."

The *Daily Worker* and the National Committee had spoken out for the "masses," against Soviet intervention, confident that the Hungarian workers themselves would defend socialism. From the Stalinist wing came the old song: the uprising was now "fascist," Russian intervention was justified. It was doubtless under the impact of this Stalinist-type campaign of slander and abuse that the Party retreated. On November 19, the National Committee adopted a new statement in the form of an "Open Letter to CP Members." Presumably it was a "compromise"; it gave way before the Stalinists, attack. And in vain. Their abuse against the *Daily Worker* continued without let-up.

A mass struggle was in progress. On one side a united Hungarian people fighting for democracy; on the other nothing but Russian arms. The Open Letter tried to straddle the barricades: "We do not seek to justify the use of Soviet troops in Hungary's internal crisis on November 4. Neither do we join in the condemnation of these actions. Was there no alternative? Was it a grim necessity? There are no ready answers and we are in no position to give final judgment on the Soviet action. On this there are different viewpoints in the national committee and in the Party. With the unfolding of events further clarity on this point will be achieved." But "with the unfolding of events," Hungary was allowed to slide out of sight.

While the Open Letter was ready to write a question mark over Russian intervention—it was neither for nor against—it did give support to the slanderous accusations of Foster, Dennis and the other Stalinists:

"The role and influence of the reactionary elements within Hungary were bolstered by an influx of exiled fascists, interventionists and agents of Project X across the Austrian border. The Nagy government retreating before the reactionary pressures lost its capacity to govern and was unable to halt the lynchings, anti-Semitic outbreaks and reign of terror against Communists and progressives."

Meanwhile, the vast majority of worker Communists and progressives, in fact the whole Hungarian nation was up in arms against the interventionists and an irrepressible general strike gave evidence, against all the lies, that the working class was united for democracy and socialism.

Why the compromise in the Open Letter? It was the product of suicidal "diplomacy." Those in the Party who want independence were ready to appease the Party Stalinists—or did they thus compromise themselves on the ground that it was necessary to stall for time in the internal fight?

But what about the "fascists" in Hungary? For that, we must turn to the story of the "exiled fascists" who presumably crossed the Austrian border to fight for reaction.

But first, let us make a few things clear. Those who called the movement "fascist" are the same men who were ready to denounce Tito as a fascist upon

demand of Stalin. They lied then; they lie now. The whole story is a pure fabrication; a blatant falsehood, a cynical trick! And the staff of the *Daily Worker* knows it well.

*First fact:* On November 23, the *Daily Worker* wrote, "On November 8, the *Daily Worker* ran a story culled from the London *Daily Worker* by foreign editor Joe Clark, which reported that since last April when the Austrian-Hungarian border was opened to tourist traffic an estimated 60,000 counter-revolutionaries had entered Hungary. As far as we've been able to discover, no other English language daily paper published this news item. Yet several people have demanded to know why we've 'suppressed' it." There's a lesson here. You help manufacture a story but get no gratitude in return. We've learned, so far, that only the London *Daily* had discovered this story; how, no one knows. For it refused to print the accurate account sent to it by its own Budapest correspondent, Peter Fryer. Still, what about the 60,000?

*Second Fact:* On December 4, Clark told the full story himself in a reply to Dennis, an account which so utterly destroys the whole basis of the "fascist" slander that we will quote it at length:

"Dennis accuses my typewriter of writing off the danger of fascist attempts in Hungary. But the sole specific 'fact' about such fascist danger which Dennis cites came from my typewriter. Dennis names forces of Horthyites and '60,000 diverse other fascists agents and bands which infiltrated Hungary via the Austrian border.'

"Now the story of the 60,000 appeared in the *Daily Worker* via my typewriter and it was picked up from the London *Daily Worker*. The dispatch in question did not come from Hungary because at that time the Budapest correspondent of the London *Daily* couldn't get his on-the-spot reports into his paper. It was based on dispatches from Prague, which mentioned 60,000 as the total number of persons who crossed the Austrian-Hungarian border over a period of months. These included all tourists, delegations, and persons whose policies ranged from Communist to Fascist.

"To cite this as evidence that the 800,000 members of the Hungarian Communist Party and the millions of organized Hungarian workers and the Hungarian army of 250,000 could not prevent fascism is to deny facts and the class struggle."

Enough said. The only question that remains is this: why did Clark peddle the story? Obviously just to appease Dennis and the others. But it does no good. When they insist on apologetics, they want the real variety.

The Hungarian revolutionaries weren't fascists; that's clear now. But what were they? That is clear, too. The struggle in Hungary, to this day, is led by fighting democratic institutions of the working class, Workers' Councils as it was in Russia in 1917. And their goals are fundamentally the same: socialism and democracy. Here are excerpts from the monitored broadcasts from Hungary during the revolutionary days:

October 27: over Radio Gyor. The local Defense Committee of the Hungarian Workers (Communist) Party demanded, "They must insure that Soviet armed forces in Hungary cease fire and leave the country, being granted free departure. This is not a counterrevolution but the national movement of the Hungarian working people. The workers and peasants in Gyor-Sopron County do not want the restoration of the power of manufacturers and

landlords, the national revolution is not aimed at the restoration of the old regime."

October 30: Radio Miskolc: "We have proposed a socialist state form which will guarantee the full development of our people... We are fighting for peace, for socialist truth, for the guarantee of the free development of our peoples. Help us in our fight."

November 7: Radio Rackoczi: appeal to Soviet troops. "Your state was created at the cost of bloody fighting so that you could have freedom. Today is the 39th anniversary of that revolution. Why do you want to crush our liberty? You can see that it is not factory proprietors, not landowners, and not the bourgeoisie who have taken up arms against you but the Hungarian people, who are fighting desperately for the same rights you fought for in 1917."

November 12: Slogan from Manifesto of Armed Revolutionary Youth "For a neutral, independent, democratic and Socialist Hungary."

November 12: From the demands of the Workers Council of the 11th District of Budapest. "We wish to emphasize that the revolutionary working-class considers the factories and the land the property of the working people."

And there is the evidence of Peter Fryer, Budapest correspondent of the London *Daily Worker* who resigned when the paper refused to print his eyewitness accounts. This is from his letter of resignation;

"... power was in the hands of the armed people, and they were fully aware of the danger of counter-revolution and were themselves fully capable of smashing it.

"The great mass of the Hungarian people have no desire to return to capitalism, and want to retain all the positive social achievements of the past 12 years.

"Nor did the Soviet troops who entered Budapest on November 4 fight fascism; they fought workers, soldiers, and students; and they could find no Hungarians to fight alongside them.

"These are the conclusions I reached after hundreds of interviews. . . . No honest Communist can now ignore the truth about Hungary. The Hungarian people were the victims of tyranny and oppression masquerading as socialism."

We have irrefutable documentary evidence of a senseless capitulation to the Foster-Dennis wing when we put two issues of the *Daily Worker* side by side and watch how it turned tail in analyzing the Warsaw Pact and events in Hungary.

*Daily Worker*, November 5: NC Statement:

"The response of the Soviet authorities to the request for armed intervention also cannot be justified by the argument that they had the legal right to do so under the Warsaw Pact. This was not a matter of formal rights. It violated the essence of the Leninist concept of national self-determination because the call for the troops was not in accord with the wishes of the Hungarian people." Here, then, the Warsaw Pact did not justify intervention. Now read on. . . .

*Daily Worker*, December 2: Editorial on "America and Hungary"

"Of course, the issue isn't the same in those two countries [Egypt and Hungary]. Foreign troops—British, French and Israeli—are in Egypt as a result of one of the most brazen acts of aggression in the long sordid history

of imperialism. Foreign troops—those of the Soviet Union—are in Hungary by agreement between the two countries under the Warsaw Pact, counterpart of NATO, as well as under the Potsdam Agreement; Hungary was part of the fascist Axis.” We note only this: Now the intervention is justified by the Warsaw Pact.

What caused the switch in line? Again, we can think of only one answer: appeasement of the Stalinist wing in the Party.

Socialists talk of brotherhood, of democracy and of the working class and its ceaseless striving for human dignity and socialism. “You and your workers,” laugh the cynics, scoffers and bandwagon jumpers. “Look at them in their pitiable state. See how they fall for the crude trash of the bourgeois press in the United States. See how they swallowed the farcical tales of Stalinism in Russia. Watch how they come to heel when ordered about by real power. That’s the stupid, common herd for you. That’s your ‘democracy.’ Better to take care of yourself and to the devil with them!” Isn’t that the theme song of many who passed through the socialist movement on their way to greener pastures, coming from all political directions fanning out into all others?

Yesterday, the snobbish gentry, contemptuous of all mass movements for human freedom, might have pointed to Hungary as a typical example of the degradation that humans will suffer like so many beasts of burden. We owe to none other than William Z. Foster a picture of the regime under which they groaned. According to his account (*Daily Worker*, November, 21), the government “lowered living and working standards”; it was guilty of “bureaucratic blunders and tyranny” and “excesses and brutalities” and “great-Russian chauvinism.” Moreover, “the national independence of the Hungarian people was virtually liquidated” and “they were stripped of their civil liberties and subordinated to the vicious domination of the secret police”; they suffered “needlessly severe economic strains.” And “the several political parties . . . were either emasculated or liquidated.” Finally, “these harsh and unjust measures, alien to the principles of Socialism could not be justified.”

If one does more than simply put words down on paper but feels what they mean and understands the misery and oppression which they represent in life, he can only rejoice with all his heart that the Hungarian people revolted. They proved themselves men and not stolid cattle. So long as the spirit which inspired them lives on, socialism will be invincible.

Democracy and socialism won a triumphant vindication. And not for the first time! From 1914-1917 the cynics of their day pointed, too, with scorn at those who called for international socialist democracy. “Internationalism? How absurd! Watch while the workers of every nation plunge bayonets into one another at the command of their rulers. Where is your internationalism; where is your democracy?” In the great Russian Revolution of March 1917 and again in November they received a fitting reply. The way opened for a rebirth of socialism.

In 1956, the vindication of mankind’s struggle for freedom came in Hungary. The Hungarian Revolution is not a passing incident that must regrettably be fitted into a discussion of other things. It goes to the very heart of all discussions of democracy and independence.

And what a rising. For months, the united population of a small nation

refused to bow before the military power and deceptive ruses of one of the two biggest military powers.

It was more than a victory of the spirit of democracy, It was a true triumph of socialism. The heart of the resistance was the working class which created its own parliament and its own leaders in the Workers’ Councils. And they defended their rights under the very turrets of Russian tanks, by perhaps the most heroic and united general strike in the history of the world working class.

They did not have to improvise. The Hungarian workers followed the path outlined in 1917 by the Russian workers; the Hungarian Workers Councils were a replica in 1956 of the Workers Councils of Russia in 1917, the Soviets.

And yet, the foreign occupiers, the destroyers of their nationhood and freedom, the Russian armies were dispatched in the name of “socialism.” What a terrible blow to the name of socialism; and it is this travesty upon it that makes it imperative to speak out loudly and clearly on the events in Hungary so that no one can mistake the anti-democratic intervention of the Kremlin for socialism in any respect whatsoever. In defending the Hungarian Revolution, then, we do nothing less than defend the very name of socialism itself. We defend it while the Stalinist wing in the Party defames it.

Inside the Party, one tendency demands independence and a democratic policy; presumably if it wins it is ready to fight before the world for its program. But can it take itself seriously unless it is ready to fight without deference to the Party Stalinist apologists. No apology for the apologists! Hungary has become a test for socialism. Its people fight for free parties, free elections, free press, national independence, and socialism. Foreign troops dominate their country and suppress their rights. Are you with them in the fight for democracy? Can a democratic socialist mumble in reply?

### **SOCIALISM WITHOUT DEMOCRACY?**

WE HAVE EMPHASIZED THE NEED to hold uppermost that which must be resolved soon and not let it be buried in a mass of disputation. True, the stimulating course of controversy has uncovered a forest of neglected theory, principle and practice. But before the whole forest can be explored, as it must, the first roads and trails must be cleared. What should guide those who seek democratic socialism inside the Party at this stage has, in the main, governed the presentation of views here as part of the discussion. This is not an effort to present, at last, complete in all detail, a “finished program” on all the issues of world and domestic politics. It is a contribution toward a discussion of next steps for socialism in the United States as reflected inside the CP.

However, dogmatism in general and many dogmas in particular have been subjected to searching, even scathing, criticism. This is all to the good. It is fitting, then, to confront the discussion with one unmentioned dogma. If, like all the others, it cannot be “settled” now, it must be faced along with them, in time.

It is the dogma of dogmas; it is sacred and untouchable; it is sacrosanct and inviolable; it is so holy a holy that everyone talks of it only with rever-

ence; even the most ardent protestant against all other dogma shrinks from casting the doubting light of dispute upon it.

That dogma, of course, is the thesis that "Russia is socialist."

It is impossible to begin without instantly touching the fundamental question for every socialist tendency today: the relation between socialism and democracy. Those who assume that Russia is socialist today insist that it remained socialist all through the Stalin era. Yet, it is conceded by all, that for decades democracy in all forms was wiped out and the country fell prey to terroristic dictatorship. When and how? Before answering that question, another must be faced. If Russia under Stalin was ruled by a police dictatorship—then for that period if for no other was it socialist? If your reply is "yes," you are confronted, swiftly and inexorably, with what follows: can you have socialism without democracy?

Do not reply hastily for there is too much at stake! If socialism is truly possible without democracy, what happens to your professions of the "democratic way"? Your attachment to democracy becomes a matter of taste, a praiseworthy preference but a bit of luxury. Democracy becomes not the living heart of socialism, inseparable from it and essential to it, but a piece of fluff, the frills and furbelows with which it is decorated by well-meaning people. You and I, no doubt, are men of good taste. But others speaking in the name of socialism, explain that democracy may very well be discarded, and justify its extermination in the name of their "socialism." In your view, is what they strive for "socialism" as well as yours? If so, how can the people know, with confidence, where socialism *as a movement*, leads: toward democracy or away from it?

In referring to socialism, we include all possible popular political variants and synonyms for it, like: workers state, deformed or degenerated workers state, etc. Can the working class rule without democracy?

Russia is not a capitalist society ruled by a bourgeois state; the basic means of production are nationalized; the capitalist class was expropriated long ago, wiped out, disappeared from sight if not from the imagination of some; prospects for its return are as dim as the dinosaur. It is not capitalist. But is it a socialist society ruled by a workers government?

"Yes," comes the reply, "for despite everything, the means of production remain state property and that is socialism (or workers rule)." But is it? Many matters are up for reconsideration. Consider, then, the quintessential difference between the nature of working class power and the power of all exploiting classes.

The basis of bourgeois rule is private property, in particular the private ownership of the basic means of production and exchange. Through this, the power of capital, the capitalist class extracts surplus value, amasses great pools of wealth and by consequence is able to dominate the political life of the nation. Economic power guarantees its political power *under all forms of government*. As long as its possession of the economy is maintained, it can rule under democracy; not because of democracy but despite it. It makes up in the power of money for what it lacks in the power of numbers. Democracy under capitalism is limited and restricted because the bourgeois can "purchase," so to speak, the basis for political power. Under certain conditions, it might prefer democracy but democracy is never essential to it. As long as it

keeps a tight grip on its property, it can rule under dictatorship as well as under democracy. Sometimes even better! The form of government, then, is not decisive to its rule.

But how different is the working class!

The proletariat can become the standard bearer of socialism because it owns no property in production. If the bourgeoisie dominates the state by virtue of its domination of the economy, the proletariat can dominate the economy only by its domination of the state. The working class cannot "evolve" into the ruling class by slowly taking possession of the means of production; for first, it must make a radical change in the state power so that it can become an instrument of working class rule and socialism.

The workers cannot own the means of production directly as does the capitalist class which holds them as personal private property. It can "own" them only collectively. Between the workers and the means of production stands the State. If the working class gains control of the State, and if the State, in turn, moves toward possession of the means of production, then a workers social revolution has taken place and society takes the road to socialism.

To dominate the economy, to rule society, the working class must have control of the State. For when the State takes over the means of production (or is in the hands of those who seek to take them over) the key question becomes: who "owns" the State? The working class as an unpropertied class, can "own" the State, i.e., control it, only under democracy; its power lies in numbers and in organization and in class consciousness, not in ownership, and this power can be fully expressed and exerted only where it has the right to organize, and to choose its own government. That is, under democracy. The working class cannot be indifferent to the form of government for it can rule only under democracy. That is its peculiar class nature. Wipe out democracy and you have wiped out workers rule.

If the workers are denied the right to control the State—which-owns-the-property, then State power passes into the hands of other social groups or classes and becomes an instrument, not of socialist evolution, but of exploitation.

Thus, in the most precise and scientific sense we must say: no genuine democracy without socialism; and no genuine socialism without democracy.

That, tragically, is the story of Russia in capsule form. In 1917, the Russian working class won state power; it became the ruling class and took the road to socialism.

Under Stalin, democracy was ruthlessly wiped out; consequently, the working class lost state power. How? When? Why? Each question is burdened with a thousand lessons for socialism. But even without an answer to everything, the basic fact is there to see.

Everyone asks the one question that cries out for a reply: how is it possible that the power of one man could subject a whole nation to systematic police terror? *Pravda* answers that Stalinism was the product of deep material pressures acting upon the Soviet Union; but it assures its readers that the socialist system survived despite Stalin.

We suggest a totally different reply: Profound social forces acting in Russia brought Stalin to power and destroyed the rule of the working class at



the same time. Stalinism was not the rule of one man but the rule of the new bureaucratic class which ousted the workingclass from power by *destroying democracy*. If under Stalin, the loftily placed members of the Political Bureau felt helpless and without power, what was the status of the lowly worker, as an individual and as a class? In no sense could the workers under such conditions be considered a "ruling" class but only a subjected, exploited class.

In the Soviet Union there is still no democracy! Some people believe that *tomorrow* a change will come. Perhaps, they hope, as a free, peaceful gift from above. Are such hopes illusions? We think so; for we are convinced that in Russia as everywhere democracy must be wrested and won by the masses below in struggle. And it will be. But leave that aside. The fact is that there is no democracy *today* in Russia.

Whatever it may be without democracy, it is not *socialist*.

Can we have been wrong for so long in accepting such a "dogma"? If you consider yourself a *democratic socialist*, you must face the question; for, to repeat, it raises one of the most fundamental problems for Marxists in our time: the relation of socialism to democracy. In the socialist movement it will force itself to the fore and in the end will have to be faced squarely and unambiguously. That, regrettably, cannot be expected in the Party today as it is. But changes will come.

### SOCIALIST REGROUPMENT

AN UPHEAVAL IN THE PARTY comes because serious people know that it is impossible to continue in the old way. There is no unanimity, nor could it be expected, on what must replace it but a fresh start must be made. Communist Party members, necessarily preoccupied with an inner debate, may imagine that the search for a new way is prompted exclusively by their own dilemma. But it is not. Every alert socialist tendency avidly talks of a beginning, of a regroupment, of a resurgence and reorganization of socialism. The wide-ranging discussion in the Party, opening up every question, has not created the new potentialities but it has reinforced them.

Fresh winds blow everywhere. Not a country on earth but the people demand national freedom and democracy. Empire building belongs to the dead past; the future belongs to the struggle against oppression in every form. Every big power feels the whip lash of popular power: in North Africa, French imperialism can never reestablish its hold; in the Near East, the pressure of world opinion forced Britain and France to abandon their Suez adventure in ignominy and pressed the United States to look for a niche of neutrality; in Yugoslavia, in Hungary, in Poland—each in its own way—stands up for national freedom. At the bottom everywhere is the rising of people against oppressive rulers. If after the dangerous days of cold war, the imminent world war is thrust back and an era of peace looms, it is not because the two blocs of Big Powers have suddenly become reasonable, peace-loving, and wise. Peace is possible because neither of the two blocs was able to rally the peoples of the world unitedly behind it and each felt the hostility of peoples even among its allies. Resistance of masses everywhere made dangerous adventures unwise. Russia in Hungary; England and France in Suez felt the backfire of world opinion.

The United States is not an untouched island of conservatism in a rising

sea of world democracy. The witch-hunt era of McCarthyism is fading; people take courage and speak out. For the first time, the industrial working class is organized in its majority and united. It remains tied to bourgeois politics but its political consciousness is at the highest point in history. Side by side with the great movement of the working class, a movement of Negro people for equality arises: irrepressible, destined to be victorious and thereby to revolutionize the whole structure of politics in the United States. The rule of Southern reaction is doomed and with its doom, democracy the nation over, can only rise. The Supreme Court decision on school segregation was only a token of the unconquerable struggle for equal rights in every sphere. These are great days. Now is the time for socialism to rebuild.

But the socialist movement is fragmented into splinters and sects, each with its own program or ideology, each with its own origins and history. Not one has the strength or the authority to speak in the name of any significant section of the working class; and none, by itself, is on the verge of attaining such influence. Meanwhile, the Communist Party of necessity turns inward to reorient itself; in the midst of an undisputed rise of the workers and Negro movements, its influence declines.

A new generation of socialists cannot simply be ordered into ready made forms and cramped into custom-built complete and "finished" programs conveniently prepared for them. They will embrace Marxism in time, we confidently expect, but they will have to find their own way to Marxism. The rebirth of socialism calls out for new forms, new methods, a new appeal.

In "Time for a Change" (*Political Affairs*, November, 1956) John Gates writes: "The advance of the American workers to socialism is impossible without a conscious and organized vanguard. In all candor we must admit that we are not that today. Nor are we likely to be the exclusive channel through which such a leadership will come into existence, but I do think we are an important and essential part of this process and can make a decisive and distinctive contribution if we face up to our present crisis and make the necessary changes to surmount it." And he adds, "To achieve this, we need to create an atmosphere which welcomes all new ideas no matter how unorthodox they may be and debates them on their merits without resort to name-calling as a substitute for thinking."

Note that he does not insist that workers must rally round the CP as the vanguard; the Party can make its contribution but only if it "surmounts" its crisis and considers all new ideas; that is, it must *change its policies*.

As an immediate step, but not a final solution, he proposes that the Party be transformed into a Political Action Association to point up the new orientation. Naturally, his critics, captained by Foster, rush in to charge that he wants to resurrect the Browder line and to reestablish the Browder form of organization. It is to be expected; they will never face the issues; their charges are pure diversions.

Browder's policies were not a private idiosyncrasy; they represented a Party *tactical* turn which left the fundamental basis of its line rigidly intact. The best evidence of this fact is that Browder and Foster alike continued to act as the blind apologists for the Stalinist policy in Russia and everywhere else. The formation of the Communist Political Association was a mere organizational device. Gates proposes not a minor shift in organizational form

but sweeping changes in every respect including organization. If he did not, it would be a trivial proposal.

Gates' line is not the old Browder line in any important respect as Lillian Gates, legislative representative of the New York State Party, explained at a Jefferson School debate. The form of organization, she pointed out, was secondary. First comes the need for a new outlook. It is not sufficient, she said, for the Party to correct its errors; it must seek to unite with all socialist tendencies in the United States; it must prove that it is based on the interests of the American working class; it must prove that it stands for democracy and can solve the "problem of democracy in a socialist society." It must throw overboard the uncritical acceptance of Soviet policies. What all this could have in common with Browder's CPA remains a mystery.

Another Party leader who sees the way is Steve Nelson.

Nelson looks toward "A New Party of Socialism" (*Political Affairs*, November, 1956) uniting all currents, including the Socialist Party; although he realizes that the actual formation of such a party "is some distance away." To those who oppose raising this proposal he says, "This view refuses to concede that there were any serious mistakes in policy and that there ever could have been anything wrong with our organizational concepts. Those who take this view tend to play down the present discussion in the world Communist movement and treat it as a surface phenomenon. They apparently draw the conclusion that no fundamental problems are to be reconsidered anew. Everything in the past is taken for granted as if everything was answered for all time." Thus, the way out of the Party crisis leads through socialist regroupment.

There are those who treat everything "as a surface phenomenon." Take someone who imagines, after all that has transpired, that the Party remains the guardian of sacred truth; that after the 20th Congress; after the repudiation of Stalin and the shame of those who apologized for him; that after events in Poland; that after the bloody suppression of the Hungarian revolution by Soviet troops—after all this, take someone who is convinced that the Party need only fix things up a bit here, make a slight alteration there, a twist, a turn; take someone who anticipates that socialists, organized workers, embattled Negroes will then gaze upon his trifling work, pronounce it good, and that the Party will be on the road to "overcoming its isolation"—in other words, take William Z. Foster.

Foster, immune to life, demands the impossible: to go on as before. "Almost certainly," he writes (*Political Affairs*, October, 1956), "in the United States the fight for socialism will be made not by the Communist Party alone, but by a combination of economic and political groupings among which the Communist Party must be a decisive leader. The present immediate path as the workers proceed to the building of a mass socialist movement in this country, therefore, is the strengthening of the Communist Party upon the basis of Marxism-Leninism and the development of broad united-front mass struggles." There it is, unchanged. The Party must be *the decisive leader*. It could have been written two years ago or ten. It overlooks only this: it is impossible today! He is willing to pay lip service to a new movement but cautions, "The resolution also should de-emphasize the slogan for a new mass party of social-

ism from its present implications of immediacy to the status of a possible long-range objective."

Eugene Dennis is another. He hit upon the slogan of a "Mass Party of Socialism" in his report to the National Committee in April 1956. For him, it was a handy maneuver. Purpose? To avoid drawing up a balance sheet before the socialist public. But he is utterly dismayed to learn that Gates, Nelson and others take the idea seriously. Now he issues a stern warning against his own formula, "To reject the perspective for a new united party of Socialism would weaken the possibilities of unity of action of all socialist-minded forces in the coming period. . . . On the other hand, to attempt to realize this perspective immediately would be to abort it, to create a sectarian caricature of what it should be and to disperse our ranks and negate our vital role." (*Political Affairs*, October, 1956.)

Of course, we committed gross errors in the past; of course, we defended Stalin's crimes against socialism; we have admitted it and naturally you will now rally to us. To prove how fundamentally we have changed, we will now proceed to reaffirm everything; then we will permit you to unite with us—under our leadership of course. That is the Foster-Dennis line. Will anyone do more than laugh?

Declaim as it may against "liquidationism," the Foster-Dennis line leads swiftly toward liquidation of the Party into an isolated Stalinist sect. Foster voted against the Draft Resolution; Dennis, for. But they are united on what is basically a Stalinist policy in the most scientific sense of the term. They differ only on how best to preserve a Stalinist-type organization. Once it was possible to build a mass Stalinist movement in the United States. But no more.

Thousands of Communists have devoted their full mature lives to the fight for a world of socialism, as they saw it, risking personal well being, gaining experience in the class struggle. Are they now to be scattered to the winds and squandered; are they to waste away in a hopelessly Stalinist sect, justly scorned by the working class? That, and that only, is the grim and inexorable result of a victory for the Foster-Dennis line, a victory which would bring a spurious vindication for them as Party officials, but at what a cost! It would mean the destruction of the potentialities and possibilities already created inside the Party by the discussion.

If the Party makes the necessary changes in policy and outlook (and in this Gates, Nelson and the others, are a hundred per cent correct) Communists will be able to make their contribution to the new socialist movement that is destined to come.

## STALINISM DOOMED

THE FORMATION OF A GENUINE SOCIALIST PARTY of the working class, and not an illusory, self-deceiving substitute for one, is not the matter of a moment. The working class will not suddenly rally to the call of some self-appointed saviors and that is a good thing! It requires a long period of political experience in which the working class is able to test socialism and socialists; a new socialist movement can gain the confidence even of a significant socialistically conscious sector of the working class, only by its participation in the living class struggle and by permitting events to test its platform and policies.

Under the best of conditions, it would be foolish to expect socialism to

emerge quickly as a leading force among the workers. With all their insecurity, with pools of unemployment, with the dislocations of automation—the list of evils and shortcomings could be extended at will—American workers compare their lot with the workers in other nations and realize that on the whole they enjoy a standard of living and economic and political rights above the others. And they are not receptive to those who propose a fundamental social change, even in the name of socialism and democracy.

A majority of the workers distrusts socialism; even the socialist-minded minority remains aloof from existing groups. And not because they are unthinking dupes of capitalism. The American working class distrusts big business; it rejects all politicians who are obviously the outright representatives of the capitalists as a class. A working class which is organized into gigantic class unions; which is led into politics by these unions; which casts its ballot on the basis of class interest as it interprets it; such a working class has no confidence in the bourgeoisie as a ruling class. It accepts capitalism without reconciling itself to the domination of big business.

If the majority accepts capitalism, there is the minority. Always . . . always in the history of the labor movement in the United States, in good times and bad, in prosperity and depression there has been a strong minority, avowedly anti-capitalist in outlook. At one time, it was led by the old Socialist Party of Eugene V. Debs; sections were led by the old I.W.W.; and closer to our day, big sectors once looked to the Communist Party.

With justice, one points to the strong position of U.S. capitalism at home and abroad to explain the weakness of American socialism. But that is only one side of the question. Despite its relative weakness, measured against socialism in other capitalist nations, there was always a significant, if minority, anti-capitalist, pro-socialist tendency in the United States. What has happened to it?

Let us face it squarely. Yesterday, it looked to the Communist Party. Today, it does not. It has not disappeared; it has become disorganized, and disoriented. Because this socialist tendency has been cut loose and is drifting, a socialist realignment is absolutely indicated even inevitable.

At bottom, the decline of the Communist Party was not just the inevitable by-product of cold war and witchhunt, although these played a part. To explain its precipitous loss of influence on that basis would be sheer evasion. As we have said, Communists withstood such pressures before. The question is: why did the witchhunt succeed this time?

The truth is bitter, but it must be faced. Increasingly, unionists, Negroes, liberals became convinced that the Party acted as a blind apologist for Russia; that its turns, this way and that, could be explained by a mechanical determination to fall in line with policies over which it had no control and which were made and unmade in a twinkling by the Politburo.

Hold on! Do you mean to say, it will be protested, that the CP is weak because it apologized for Stalin's Russian tyranny? Who are you to talk; what about you and your movement? If we have lost strength, we are by far the strongest of those who profess to stand on the platform of socialism. Weak as we are, it is added, we are stronger now than you have ever been.

Such objections have been put many times in the course of the discussion, by all tendencies. For example, Steve Nelson argues:

"At the same time, it may be worthwhile to call to the attention of those who attach so much importance to the matter of being 'hopelessly compromised' that *other socialist groups did not grow even though they were not so 'hopelessly compromised' as we were.*" Nelson is arguing against those who want to "solve" the crisis by simply dissolving the Party; we would agree: what is necessary is not that the Party just vanish off the political scene but that its members work their way through to democratic socialism in the course of this serious discussion. What is "hopelessly compromised" is Stalinism and all those who defend it. By truly turning away from it, Communists can play their part in reviving socialism in the United States. But we are not talking of this but of the question implied by Nelson: you rejected Stalinism, why didn't you grow? The question is a weighty one and deserves a serious reply.

To understand the causes of the Party's weakness today it is necessary to understand its sources of strength yesterday. Despite what is said by anti-socialist ideologists, socialism has powerful traditions in the labor movement, traditions which offer a rich soil for socialist renaissance. For a time the stream of socialist sentiment flowed toward the Communist Party and made it a real mass movement.

The Party was born with the Russian Revolution but it was during the depression years of the early thirties that it assembled and trained the basic cadres that carried it into the CIO and toward mass influence. Even with a fantastic "leftist" policy on every conceivable question, in fact despite its policies, the Party could lead thousands during the depression in mass struggle and win their confidence. In the late Thirties, with the rise and expansion of the labor movement, the Party gathered enormous power and became a significant mass movement. This, despite a policy that became "right-opportunist." Thus, come "leftism," come "rightism" the Party moved forward *because it received an enormous impulse from the outside, despite itself!*

And that was the USSR. In truth, the Party's attachment (even its unthinking attachment) to Russia was a source of great strength *in those days*. In those days but not today—that is what has changed. Anyone who cannot understand this change instantly removes himself from effective politics today.

Remember that the Communist Party rose in the United States (as did the CIO) at a time when the world socialist movement and the international working class was suffering one defeat after another and was beset with imminent reaction! Mussolini had taken full control for Fascism in Italy in 1926. Hitler wiped out the organized working class movement in 1933. Dolfuss wiped out Austrian socialism and set up a clerico-fascist regime in 1934. Franco seized power in Spain after a three-year civil war 1936-39. Late in 1939 the Second World War erupted. In this series of setbacks and defeats only two consoling elements seemed to stand above the mountain of disappointment: the Soviet Union under the Stalin regime and the United States under Roosevelt. Stalinism and the New Deal. It was between these two stones that the socialist movement in the United States was pulverized. Those who remained anti-capitalist looked to Stalin's Russia as a source of strength and hope. Most of those who were disenchanted with Russia lost faith in socialism and became liberal New Dealers. The anti-Stalinist socialist movement was fragmented into small sects of varying sizes and fortune, but ultimately on the

decline. The Communist Party, which was pro-Stalinist, thrived, grew and prospered as the vehicle for anti-capitalist sentiment.

All that is done with! Gone, finished, ended, no more—and never to return!

Now people see not the continuing downfall of democracy but its rise; not the further defeat of socialism but its resurgence. They look at Russia now and see dictatorship while all the world fights for freedom; they see their proud and strong unions; they strike with confidence to improve their own conditions. In the USSR they see only state-controlled labor groups, without the right to strike, without the right to speak freely, without the right to fight. Is *this* your "socialism"? they ask. If so, we want no part of it. And they are right. A renewed socialism will be democratic, independent, anti-Stalinist and anti-capitalist.

This is a new period, with new problems, new opportunities. It is no longer possible to build a movement which depends upon Russia or any other power. And, as Foster will learn, it is impossible to build anything that is presented as a twin substitute for Stalinism. Those who speak of a new mass movement for socialism are on the right track. Those who oppose it are doomed: if they refuse to see, they are just as used up and finished as the period in which they once lived.

### ALL-INCLUSIVE DEMOCRATIC SOCIALISM

IT WOULD BE LUDICROUS TO SEARCH for worked out recipes and hallowed formulas prescribing a form for organized socialism good for all time. Nor could anyone predict in elaborate detail what forms a revived movement may finally take in the United States. To attempt either would be a pointless pedantry. Whether it be called a party, an association, a federation or a league is not now decisive. What is decisive is that it be suited for the tasks of our day; not for days gone by and not necessarily for the distant future; but for *now*.

The reconstitution of an effective socialist movement will not come overnight; yet, it is not an abstract dream but a concrete possibility. A fluid situation calls for a flexible approach. No one, at this time, can do more than indicate tentatively and only in general outline, the conditions and characteristics that would make it possible for a renewed movement to grasp the opportunities arising for socialism in this country.

We begin with what we have. It is not a question of political trading, each group giving a little and taking something from the others; nor of attempting an impossible reconciliation of diverse theories; nor of concocting a new program by extracting small pieces from everyone. No one could possibly be satisfied with such a melange and everyone would be disoriented. It is a question of finding a *minimum basis* for socialist political collaboration, a basis which permits a viable regroupment and not one which is destined to fly apart after a day. No group can be asked to discard its own views or to capitulate to any other. A minimum platform, and that is what we are discussing at this point, should serve two ends: 1. To permit every democratic socialist tendency to live within a unified movement and retain its own theories and principles; 2. Establish the necessary political basis for building a healthy socialist movement in the United States.

Reunification is an urgent task for all socialists and it is imperative to find the foundation for a viable, healthy and lasting regroupment. Could a common program be found in the realm of theory, Marxism or non-Marxism; or in a mutually acceptable interpretation of historical questions; or in an estimation and reestimation of old questions which have been debated time and again in the world socialist movement? We, ourselves, base our program upon a Marxian view of social questions and try to analyze the historical past as well as the tasks of the day from that standpoint. But it must be recognized that all such questions have divided the movement for decades and are not likely to be resolved promptly after any concentrated course of discussions. If we await final clarification of fundamental theory we may indeed wait forever. A renewed movement could not take form around theoretical and historical questions if it is to include all those who rightly should rally to it. It is a question of unifying all those who genuinely adhere to a political platform which is unambiguously for democratic socialism and against Stalinism and who are ready to participate in the common fight to apply such a platform to the issues and struggle of the day.

We do not propose to establish a discussion circle or a mere educational society. A socialist movement must engage in the struggles of its time; it must give support to the workers in their fight against exploitation; it must support the Negroes in their struggle for equality; it must give moral and political aid and encouragement to all those in the world who strive for freedom.

This is not to say that theoretical, even historical questions, are of little importance. Quite the contrary. They merit serious discussion and will be attentively pursued in any intellectually alert movement. But they cannot be put on the same plane with immediate political tasks if the movement is to emerge from its present fragmentation. In the past, such questions led to bitter factional conflicts and splits. It would perhaps be better not to try to unify if it were to be merely the prelude to new splits; the movement has endured enough splits and more would only further discredit it. To reconstruct a new movement on firm foundations and give it a chance to root itself among the people it may be necessary by common agreement to leave certain questions "open," or to postpone others. In any case, all discussion will have to be conducted in an atmosphere which protects the unity of the movement and its maximum effectiveness. If this means that a series of questions are left unclear, unanswered or ambiguous, it will not be fatal. There will be time to discuss everything in a fraternal spirit.

But what about Russia? Isn't it necessary to take a forthright position? It is here that the line of division between all groups which stand on a socialist platform becomes sharpest. For our part, we would distinguish between two quite different aspects of the question. One aspect deals with the theoretical and historical questions; these need not be settled as a condition for political collaboration but could be very well left open. Another, however, deals with pressing political tasks; these could be left ambiguous by a movement only at the cost of mortal injury to its chances of survival.

In a renewed movement in the United States, as in the socialist parties of other countries, different tendencies will define differently the nature of the social order in Russia and other Communist countries and will estimate differently the tasks of socialists within them. Some will refer to Russia as a

"state of the socialist type"; others, a "workers state"; others, "state capitalism"; others, a "bureaucratic collectivist" state; others, a "managerial society." Some will call for the "reform" of the regimes; others will look for a "gradual evolution to democracy"; some will favor a "political revolution"; still others, "a political and social revolution." Likewise, a whole rainbow of theories and tendencies will be evident on the nature of the Russian Revolution of 1917, on the evolution of the Russian state, and on the causes for the triumph of Stalinism.

A broad movement can encompass all these views and all these tendencies can live together as they do in the European socialist movement provided proper conditions are observed by all. And all these questions can be discussed on the proper plane of theory and history.

But if a movement is to have any impact upon the American people, its platform cannot be ambiguous or silent on one question: if it characterized the Russian regime as socialist it would be instantly discredited and would meet the suspicion and hostility of the American people. It would have to make clear that no despotic regime can be a socialist regime; it must emphasize over and over, that socialism and democracy are indivisible. Without democracy in Russia, there can be no socialism.

There is no socialist worthy of the name, and we know of none, who suggests that the achievement of democratic socialism in Russia requires the denationalization of industry and the conversion of the means of production into the private property of capitalists. That would be as absurd as it would be reactionary. What is required is democracy.

The movement must be for democracy everywhere.

### FOR DEMOCRACY EVERYWHERE

IT WILL NOT BE DIFFICULT TO AGREE ON AN attitude toward democracy under capitalism. Socialists must be for democracy and equality in the United States. For democracy and national freedom in Algiers. For democracy in Spain. For freedom for the colonies of capitalist imperialism.

In raising the standard of democracy, we refer not to the illusive playing of sociologists and political jugglers but to basic palpable rights: the right to form parties, trade unions, and other mass organizations free from state domination and free to oppose the government and free to replace it at will by democratic means; the right to publish an independent press and to hold public meetings, for critics and oppositions as well as supporters of the regime; the right to free elections.

"Yes, we know that you want democracy *here*; but are you for it *there*?" will come the insistent question that any socialist movement must answer without evasion. By *there*, we mean of course the nations now ruled by Communist governments. Every tendency without exception, whatever its distinctive theory must be ready to call for democracy now in every country and to give moral and political support to those who fight for democracy within them and to disassociate itself unequivocally from the opponents of democracy. For all countries! For capitalist imperialist countries; colonies; Russia; all the countries now ruled by Communists.

If you are not for democracy now where you insist socialism is in power today, who will believe you when you insist that democracy will prevail when

socialism wins power in other nations tomorrow? Who will trust a movement that calls for democracy only where it is a minority?

In sum, a socialist movement must be a genuinely democratic socialist movement, avowedly against capitalism and against Stalinism and not ashamed of that view but proud of it. With less, no movement can make even a serious beginning in America.

Even if it were possible or desirable to initiate some combination of forces that proclaimed to the world that Russia is "socialist" it would be under a cloud of suspicion and its future would quickly be in doubt. It might, perhaps, serve as a convenient, if temporary, resting place for some existing groups and sects *as they are* but it could hardly be of any significance in reestablishing a viable socialist *movement*. To our workingclass, the Russian system is the symbol of everything dictatorial; any movement which puts it forward, in any sense, as an example of what it strives for—that movement is doomed.

### FOR INTERNAL DEMOCRACY

IF OUR TASK IS TO FACILITATE a peaceful coexistence of a wide rainbow of tendencies, the organization form must be one of full unrestricted inner democracy.

If the political basis is a concrete declaration for socialism and democracy, a platform for regroupment rather than a worked out theory and a "finished program," then it requires a loose organizational structure rather than a tightly disciplined one. It requires, too, a wide autonomy for its sections and an emphasis upon decentralization rather than centralization. It would not simply permit but encourage the issuance of books, papers, magazines, pamphlets, scholarly works and popular educational material by its adherents as individuals and as cooperative groups without necessarily subjecting them to rigid censorship and organizational control. It would rely upon and stimulate the individual initiative of all. It would be a product of a new mood and at the same time it would create a new atmosphere, a concentration upon a new audience; the diffusion of socialist education.

Such a movement, intellectually alive, encouraging freedom of thought and expression could attract the most serious and talented professionals and intellectuals as did the Socialist Party of Debs.

It would mean the end of warfare among the sects and groups and the beginning of the battle for the minds of the people; the beginning of a movement which would support the organized workingclass in its struggles; encourage every tendency toward class independence and suffuse it with the ideals of socialism.

### FOR A MOVEMENT LIKE THE DEBS SOCIALIST PARTY

A LOOK OF AMAZED DISBELIEF will spread over the faces of many Party members. What about iron discipline, monolithism, centralism? All the dogmas they took for granted seem to rule out every one of our propositions without exception. Is it possible to build such a movement?

It is not only possible; it is necessary. It is not only necessary it is virtually inevitable. Let us ask a question in return. How else, after theoretical and

programmatically disarray, after the fragmentation of socialism, do you think that it is possible to reconstruct the socialist movement now?

It is not an idle dream. There was just such a movement in the United States. What we are describing is nothing less than the Socialist Party of Eugene Debs. We need such a movement brought up to date; one which takes into account the reality of today's politics on the national and international arena.

There is a shopworn fable that the old SP was a futile do-nothing outfit that could accomplish nothing. Dismiss it from your mind! Let us not genuflect before the memory of Debs but learn from what he and his comrades were able to accomplish. It was Debs and the all-inclusive Socialist Party which he helped to build that brought a whole generation of workers, intellectuals and professionals to socialist consciousness. It was this party which broke out of the sectarian isolation of the tightly-knit, closely disciplined, "monolithic" Socialist Labor Party and brought socialism to millions.

In some ways, our task today is similar. Once again we must unite socialism; end a sectarian form of existence, and win over a new generation to socialism, a generation which must reach socialism in its own way.

This is the opportunity that awaits us. Are you ready to grasp it? Others will. Will you make the necessary transformation in your policies, organization and outlook? As you answer these questions you are deciding the fate of your movement and the future of its membership. You are deciding nothing less than this:

*Toward democratic socialism or back to Stalinism?*

H. W. BENSON

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## **Quarterly Notes**

# **The Elections: A Post-Mortem**

The sharp counterposition of major issues is not one of the outstanding characteristics of the American "two party system." As a matter of fact, the two major parties are so organized as to make it virtually impossible for the electorate to choose between clear-cut alternatives in national elections.

In the 1956 presidential election campaign, however, we have a case in which the leaders of both parties seemed to exert themselves to compound the political characterlessness natural to the system. The general form of the "great debate" of this campaign revolved around the question of which candidate had the greater right to claim for himself the exact center of the political spectrum.

The result of the campaign gives a strong boost to the hypothesis that causal relations operate in politics as well as in other natural processes. One of the most issueless campaigns in modern history resulted in one of the most issueless, or rather, stalemated political situations imaginable. Eisenhower, the figurehead of "modern Republicanism" was overwhelmingly re-elected, along with Republican delegations in both houses of Congress who are about as "modern" as Coolidge. At the same time, a Democratic majority was elected in both houses, attesting to the continued status of the Democratic Party as the more popular, plebian, liberal of the two parties. Yet this party's Congressional delegation will be dominated by a group of the most reactionary political figures in America—the racists of the South.

The levers of power in Washington have been interlocked thus: the ad-

ministration will be run by the big-business cabinet, while Eisenhower assures everyone that beauty and light prevail, as he struggles to grasp as much of what is going on as his native capacities and his health will permit. Congress will be run by the Southern Democratic-Republican coalition, thus insuring the defeat of any serious social program that might conceivably be prepared and pushed by any group of liberal Democrats. Added to this will be the pulling and hauling on the narrowest partisan basis over the narrowest partisan issues inevitable when Congress is controlled by one party and the executive by the other.

HOW DID THE CAMPAIGN assume the form described above? Is it simply that the prosperity in America is so vast, and that this, together with the recession of the danger of World War III which became apparent with the slackening of the cold war created such an unshakeably self-satisfied, bovine mood in the American people that the disaster the Democrats experienced by leaving it alone could only have been exceeded by the disaster they would have brought on themselves had they tried to shake things up a little?

It would be pointless to deny that the continuing prosperity has generated a degree of complacency and conservatism in a broad section of the electorate. Without this it would be impossible to explain the continued solidity of the Republican Party. Yet, the fact remains that a majority of the people continue to support the Democratic Party as a general proposition precisely because they believe it repre-

sents a concern with the welfare of the "little man," and resistance to the tendency of big business to extend its power in the political realm. They support the Democrats because their program and their record on social legislation is superior to that of the Republicans.

Why, then, did they not support Stevenson also? Was he not an eloquent spokesman for the program of his party? Did not the official liberals and labor leaders look on him as an exceptionally high-minded, firm-principled and generally glittering knight championing their cause?

It is not hard to understand why the official liberals were lifted into an euphoric haze by Stevenson's oratory. It was an excellent expression of the current quality of their own political thought. Stern and forthright in demanding "bold initiative," "new ideas," and "creative thinking," from others (the Republicans), Stevenson's own program was utterly lacking in these qualities. His speeches may have seemed meaty to a handful of people whose good intentions and comfortable circumstances make it possible for them to live on general ideals alone. But to the mass of people, it was evidently pretty thin fare, at best. That is why one must ascribe the bulk of the votes he did get more to his being on the Democratic ticket than to his campaign.

Two issues which simply could not be talked out of the public mind in this election were the struggle for Negro equality, and the war which broke out in the Near East in the closing days of the campaign.

On the question of Negro equality, Stevenson and Eisenhower ended up in a verbal draw. Both said they were for brotherhood, equality of opportunity, the Constitution, the Supreme Court, the progress of all humanity,

and the like. But since on this question a bitter, historic, implacable struggle is actually going on in the United States, the leaders and ranks on both sides of the fight were interested in concrete consequences for their cause which the election of one or the other candidate would have.

To the Negroes, specially in the South, Stevenson's real position was revealed not by his words so much as by his active wooing of their bitterest enemies, the Democratic leaders of the South. His failure to fight for a forthright position on the desegregation decision of the Supreme Court at the Democratic Convention spoke louder to them by far than his subsequent platitudes and assurances. In despair, many of them decided to cast what in the deep South is a purely symbolic protest vote . . . and voted Republican. In the North, the shift of Negro votes was not so sizeable, as the struggle there is not nearly as intense and deep-going as in the South, and industrialized and unionized Negroes have interests and attitudes which more closely parallel those of the organized workers as a whole.

WHEN THE WAR BROKE OUT in the Middle East, Stevenson sought to seize on it as the one "big break" which his advisors and crystal-gazers had been telling him he needed to overcome the spell of Eisenhower's personality. He charged the administration with ineptness, bungling, having brought the country's policy into an absolute blind alley in that area, etc.

It would be hard for even a fanatical supporter of Dulles to counter these charges. America was at cross-purposes with its allies, at loose-ends for a policy, and uncomfortably voting the same way at the UN as its arch-enemy. What a chance for the opposition to make political hay . . .

on one condition: that it had a policy of its own to offer which would be more popular at home and more effective abroad.

Throughout his campaign Stevenson had been making vague speeches about how America needs to support rather than oppose the aspirations of the Asian, African and Latin American people for freedom, equality and self-determination. He had talked about aiding them to economic self-development rather than tying them up in military pacts, and the like.

But when the British and French launched a typical 19th Century imperialist attack on Egypt in collusion with the Israeli government's catastrophic "preventive war," all of these generalities evaporated, and were replaced with an almost equally vague suggestion about a possible policy revolving around the United Nations, with strong overtones of the idea that America cannot stand aside in this situation, but must assume, or resume, its leadership of the Free World, etc., etc.

All this sounded to a great number of Americans very much like an attitude and approach which could get this country involved in a war over whether the British and French or the Egyptians should control the Suez Canal. Call it short-sighted, if you will, but there must have been millions of people who could not see why American blood should be spilled in this struggle, especially on the side of the imperialists. Thus, when Eisenhower simply assured the country that this was one war America would sit out, it is easy to understand why they sighed with relief, and went to the polls to vote for Ike, even if they were otherwise unshaken Democrats.

IT IS NOW CLEAR that Stevenson was

about as weak a candidate as the Democrats could have nominated for this election. But that is among the least important problems with which the Democrats, including their liberal-labor wing, will have to deal in the coming period.

In city after city, the old-line Democratic machines completed the collapse whose beginning was clearly marked in 1952. Where the labor movement stepped into the vacuum in a powerfully-organized and united manner, the Democratic ticket as a whole was able to hang on to its urban majorities. In Detroit, for instance, even Stevenson increased the percentage of his vote over 1952.

That the modern labor movement is now deeper in "politics" than it ever was before is clear. This did not make it possible for labor to steer a clear decisive course at the Democratic convention, or even to come close to swinging that convention toward the views of its most progressive and powerful sections on such matters as Negro equality. After all, the laborites had come to the convention completely committed to Stevenson, who, in turn, had already shown his determination to hold fast to the Southern wing of the party. They had no alternative, either as to candidate or political organization, with which they could counter-balance the weight of the South.

Thus, their power to influence the Democratic Party, Stevenson himself, and the American people in general, was cut down to a low figure. Despite this, the labor movement expended considerable money and energy for the Democrats. But no matter how well every district and block is organized, the political problem for labor continues, and will continue to be in-

soluble as long as they remain tied to the Democratic Party.

A million dollars spent on leaflets and radio time will not wipe out the Republican claim, directed at Negroes, that a vote for the Democrats is a vote to put Eastland and Co. at the head of Congressional committees. You cannot really convince the American people that the Democrats are the "peace party" in this country as long as they have no real alternative to Republican foreign policy, and as long as Democratic spokesmen charge every Republican reduction of the military budget with endangering the nation's military security.

There is no basis for anyone to believe that a majority of the American people were, during this election, prepared to follow a revolutionary program. On the other hand, their mood is not reactionary, but conservative, in the sense that they want what they

have, plus some improvements. On the whole, they trust the Democrats more than the Republicans to safeguard their interests, and are not at all scared by the fact, impressed on them by every means of Republican propaganda, that the labor movement is increasingly becoming the backbone of the Democratic Party.

The self-defeating, futile character of labor's policy in this election was nothing new for the American labor movement. Some of their leaders are, as one might expect, taking the attitude that "next time we'll try harder," like the horse in Orwell's *Animal Farm*. But even though the experience is not new, its monotonous repetition tends to have a wearing effect on the nerves which may, in due course, communicate itself to the brain-cells of the labor movement. That day will mark the beginning of a new political era in this country.

GORDON HASKELL

## Quarterly Notes

# A Chronicle of Revolution

The Hungarian Revolution broke out on October 23, 1956. The chronology of these world-shaking events is clear enough. During the revolution, radio stations in Hungary were taken over by the revolutionaries and broadcast to the outside world. Correspondents of every political point of view filed eye-witness accounts. And from these reports, it is possible to develop a fairly clear picture of what was going on during these amazing days.

*October 21st.* The students of the Polytechnique University assembled and voted a political program. They announced that they would demon-

strate if their demands were not met. The student resolution, distributed in the streets of Budapest, called for: withdrawal of Russian troops; revision of economic treaties with Russia to grant real independence to Hungary; publication of trade and reparations agreements between Russia and Hungary; full information on Hungarian uranium resources and the concessions granted to the Russians; the election of a new leadership in the Communist Party; the installation of Imre Nagy as Premier; a public trial for Mihaly Farkas, organizer of the terror under Rakosi; secret, general elections with more than one party on

the ballot; a reorganization of the entire economic plan; revision of workers' norms; the right to strike; revision of the system of compulsory collective farm collections; equal rights for individual farmers and members of cooperatives; restoration of the Hungarian national flag; restoration of the Hungarian Army uniform; destruction of the statue of Stalin in Budapest; solidarity with the national movement in Poland.

At Gyor, the writer Gyula Hay demanded an end to Russian bases in Hungary. A crowd of two thousand applauded his declaration.

The Petofi Circle announced that they would issue a manifesto of solidarity with the Polish national movement on the following day.

The paper of the Young Communists, *Irodalmi Ujzag*, quoted Paul Laszlo, a Csepel worker, "Up 'til now, we have not said a word. . . . But do not be disturbed. For we shall speak up too."

*October 22nd.* Meetings in Budapest continued. The students of Lorand University adopted a statement expressing "fraternal sympathy for our Polish comrades who are now struggling for sovereignty and liberalization." The students and professors of the Military Academy, Miklos Zrinyi, announced that they adhered to the political program of the Polytechnic University.

*October 23rd.* Demonstrations began in the streets of Budapest. Workers, students and army men were in the march. At first, the Ministry of the Interior forbade the demonstrations, but this was changed almost immediately, and an authorization was granted.

The marchers carried huge portraits of Lenin. They sang the Marseillaise, and shouted slogans of "Out with the Russians," "Nagy to power,"

"Put Rakosi on trial." After about three hours, the crowd began to disperse, and it appeared that the manifestation had taken place without violence. The people gathered again before the Budapest radio station, shouting "Down with Gero." A delegation of three youths was selected to go in and speak with government authorities. They were immediately arrested by the Secret Police. The crowd attempted to force the door of the building, and the police fired, killing three people.

The revolution had begun.

The workers of Csepel went on the offensive. They went into army barracks and were given guns by the soldiers. With these, they attacked the arsenal and barracks at Hadick. Soldiers in Budapest began to join the workers and students. Two officers who offered to mediate the riot at the radio station were executed by the Secret Police.

On the night of the 23rd, Erno Gero broadcast a statement on the events of the day. He accused the demonstrators of seeking to establish a "bourgeois" regime, and announced, "Our decision is definitely to abide by Socialist democracy. We must defend it. We are against those who want to misuse Hungarian youth for manifestations against socialism."

That night he called for Russian tanks.

*October 24th.* The government was radically altered. Nagy was installed as Premier, but Gero retained his seat in the Politburo. Kadar was named Secretary of the Communist Party.

As soon as he was named Premier, Nagy announced his support of the plan to crush the revolution. "Our first task," he broadcast, "is to restore discipline and peace." He also made an offer of amnesty: "All those who give up the struggle by 2 P.M. in the



interest of stopping bloodshed and surrender their arms will not be tried." His political program called for the consumer-orientation which he had attempted to introduce in 1953. At the same time, Kadar accused the demonstrators of "trying to bring back capitalism."

By the 24th, fighting had broken out in the industrial centers outside of Budapest. The first workers' councils were established. At Miskolcz, in the industrial region of Borsod, The Workers Council of Borsod called for a new government "in the spirit of Bela Kun and Laszlo Rajk."

*October 25.* Erno Gero was dismissed from his position of leadership in the Communist Party.

In Budapest, the people continued to fight against the Russian tanks. Russian troops went over to the side of the revolution. According to Noel Barber of the English *Daily Mail*, some Russian tank crews had torn the hammer and sickle from their flags and joined the rebels under a red banner.

Nagy announced a new amnesty.

"We promise clemency to all young people, civilians and servicemen who will give up the struggle immediately. The full weight of the law will strike only those who go on attacking." At the same time, he admitted that all of the political points contained in the program for the 23rd (substantially those drawn up on the 21st) were "justified."

At Debreczen, Szeged, Pecs, Gyor, Sopron, Szolnok and Magyarovar, the general strike began. Kadar once again charged that the revolution aimed at capitalist restoration. Reports that the revolution controlled huge areas outside of Budapest began to come from Austria. Radio broadcasts from various revolutionary stations were heard.

*October 26th.* Workers Councils appeared in almost every industrial city in Hungary. At Magyarovar, the "Municipal Council" had 26 members, elected in the factories and at the National School of Agriculture. Members included Social Democrats, National Peasants, Small Holders and Communists. The President of the Council was Lugosy Gora, a worker and member of the Communist Party. The Council rejected emigree leadership and called for free elections under the supervision of the UN. At Gyor, the Revolutionary Committee was composed of 20 members, elected by secret ballot in the factories. The Committee declared, "We are categorically opposed to demagogic speeches about the possibility of a counter-revolutionary government emerging and thus giving a juridical basis for foreign intervention, transforming our country into a second Korea." The Council at Miskolc put forth a program calling for free elections, the right to strike, the retention of the Council movement in the political structure of the nation, and demanded a government of "Communists devoted to the principles of proletarian internationalism."

In Budapest, fighting continued, and the Nagy Government went on with its efforts to halt the demonstrations.

*October 27th.* The Council of Miskolc proposed the unification of all Councils on the basis of a common political program: the creation of a free, independent, sovereign, democratic and socialist Hungary; free elections and universal suffrage; the immediate removal of Russian troops; a new Constitution; suppression of the Secret Police; total amnesty for all revolutionaries, and trials for Gero and his accomplices; free elections to be held in two months.

Russian troops in Budapest began to move out of the city. A cease fire was proclaimed which was held in the capital, but did not effect the developments throughout the country.

*October 28th.* Nagy granted all of the demands of the revolutionaries. He proposed: a general amnesty; the withdrawal of Russian troops from Budapest; early negotiations with the Russians for removal of all of their troops from Hungary; higher pensions; consumer orientation in the economy as a whole; increased food production; a more liberal agricultural policy; workers councils on the Yugoslavian model; more housing. The Budapest radio broadcast: "You have won. We must realize that a huge democratic movement has developed which includes the whole Hungarian nation. Please, please stop. You have won. Your demands will be fulfilled. Just stop the killing."

Nagy also announced that members of political parties other than the Communist would be part of his new government. In the industrial towns, Workers Councils were jailing leaders of the Communist Party. Throughout the country, members of the Secret Police were being jailed or shot.

*October 29th.* Nagy recognized the Councils throughout the nation as organs of government. *Szabad Nep*, the official organ of the Communist Party, hailed the insurrection.

The Revolutionary Committee of Hungarian Intellectuals saluted the "complete victory" of the revolution, and thanked the Russian soldiers who "refused to fire upon our revolutionaries." They published their political program: immediate removal of Russian troops; immediate cancellation of all commercial treaties unfavorable to Hungary; publication of all Hungarian-Russian treaties; free, secret elections; all mines and factories to be

the property of the workers; revision of production norms and salaries; free unions; free agricultural organizations; direction of agricultural cooperatives by members, not by functionaries; compensation to farmers for past injustices; the proclamation of the 23rd of October as a National Holiday.

*October 30th.* Nagy formed a new government with the Communists in the minority. The Revolutionary Council of the Army sent its delegates to Budapest. Free elections were announced.

On the 30th, the Russians announced that they would withdraw their troops "as soon as this is recognized by the Hungarian Government to be necessary." They also made a general statement, admitting past errors, offering to reconsider the whole question of Russian troops in Eastern Europe, and calling for a "commonwealth" of "socialist" nations.

Nagy then called upon the Russians to remove their troops from Budapest. The collective farm system was abolished. The participation of Smallholders, Peasant Party, Social Democrats and Communists in the new government was announced.

*October 31st.* The Russians announced that orders had been given to their troops to leave Hungary. The nation celebrated the victory of the Revolution.

Cardinal Mindszenty was freed and restored to his Palace in Budapest. He was guarded by forces from the Hungarian Army.

*November 1st.* Nagy announced that Hungary would break with the Warsaw Pact. He proclaimed Hungary a neutral nation. Negotiations were begun with the Russians to get them to take their troops back home.

The Councils recognized the Nagy Government. They called upon the

workers to end the general strike. The Hungarian unions announced that they were quitting the World Federation of Trade Unions.

*November 2nd.* Russian troop movements are reported.

Nagy, Kadar, and Lukacs leave the Communist Party and form a new party. The youth of Hungary proclaim that the aims of the revolution are socialist.

In this period, Bela Kovacs, a leader of the peasants, announced that "No one wants to go backward, to return to the world of the nobility, the bankers and the capitalists."

*November 3rd.* Zoltan Tildy, head of the Smallholders Party, announced that Russian-Hungarian conversations on the removal of troops were continuing. He protested against the movement of Russian forces into Hungary. Tildy also told newspapermen that the government was united in its conviction that capitalism must not be restored in Hungary.

The composition of the new government was announced. It included Anna Kethly, Gyula Kelemen and Josef Fischer for the Social Democrats; Istvan Szabo for the Smallholders, and General Pal Maleter, a revolutionary commander, as a representative of the revolutionary forces.

Speculation that Cardinal Mindszenty would take a leading part in the new government continued in the bourgeois and Stalinist press outside of Hungary. There was no word from Budapest as to his political role, although even he had disavowed any intention of reintroducing the old regime.

*November 4th.* The Hungarian news agency, M.T.I., sent an urgent teletype message to Vienna: "Russian gangsters have betrayed us, they are opening fire on all of Budapest. The Russian troops suddenly attacked

Budapest and the whole country. They opened fire on everybody in Hungary. It is a general attack. Janos Kadar, Gyoergy Marosan and Sandor Ronai formed a new government. . . . They are on the Russian's side."

On the night of the 3rd, the Russians had tricked Maleter, the revolutionary commander, into a rendezvous and arrested him. Then the attack began.

Nagy begged for outside help. And the following declaration came from the revolutionaries: "We do not have enough arms. . . . We have no heavy artillery. Our people throw grenades at the tanks. The Hungarians do not fear death. . . . Some attack the tanks with bare hands. . . ."

BY THE MIDDLE of the week of November 5th, the brutal Russian attack against the revolution had begun systematically to crush all centers of resistance. On the anniversary of the October Revolution, Radio Rakoczy broadcast to the troops who were drowning Hungary in blood: "Soldiers. Your state has been created at the cost of bloody fighting in order that you shall have freedom. Today is the thirty-ninth anniversary of that revolution. Why do you want to crush our liberty? You can see that it is not the factory proprietors, not the landowners, not the bourgeoisie which has taken arms against you, but the Hungarian people fighting desperately for the same rights for which you fought in 1917."

And still the revolution went on, though now the struggle became more of an act of massive resistance on the part of the Hungarian people, less of an armed struggle. By November 10th, Kadar's puppet government was faced with a general strike. On the 11th, Kadar negotiated with Nagy in the Yugoslavian Embassy, but within

a matter of days the leader of the first revolutionary government was arrested. By the 14th of November, all pretense of the government basing itself on a popular mandate was abandoned: word came that Hungarian youth were being deported to Russia. But, incredibly, the workers continued to fight back. They formed themselves into a network of Councils, and Kadar was forced to negotiate with their leaders.

According to the correspondent of the Austrian *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, organ of the Social Democracy in Vienna, there were two tendencies in the workers movement during this period. One group argued that the resistance could best be organized by returning to work, and thus gathering the forces into one place. The other demanded an immediate general strike. During November, this division was apparent in much of the activity in the Budapest Workers' Councils, and yet the

solid front of workingclass opposition to the Russian troops and the Kadar Government was maintained. The *Arbeiter-Zeitung* reported that Kadar was even fearful of calling a meeting of the puppet Communist Party, for then, he was quoted as saying to a friend, "We will have to fight against the Russians."

During November and December, reports on the struggle in Hungary became fragmentary. A "government" of Russian tanks attempted to destroy every vestige of independence in the nation. And yet, even the bits of information that came out of Hungary added up to one huge fact: that the massive, unanimous revolutionary opposition of the Hungarian people to Kadar and to the Russians continued, above all, that the Hungarian working class was still fighting for freedom. The Hungarian Revolution was far from over.

MICHAEL HARRINGTON

## Hungary—the Wave of the Future

### Hungary Previews Collapse of Russian Empire

The workers of Csepel, the miners of Borsod; the proletarians, the students, the intellectuals; the oppressed of the entire Hungarian nation have written a chapter in the history of man's struggle for freedom no less inspiring than the courage and nobility of any revolutionary struggle in modern times.

It was in 1945 that the Russian army, with the blessings of the Potsdam Agreement, saddled the Hungarian people with an army of occupation. There followed a decade of unsurpassed national oppression—beatings, deportations, murders, political suppression. For the young it

was the beginning of a lifetime of growing disillusionment and sorrow; for the old it was to be ten long years of poverty and terror; for the Hungarian nation there began an era of national humiliation, of being reduced to the level of a vast national concentration camp. These were the well springs of the Hungarian Revolution which aspired to two related objectives: national independence, and political and social democracy. They were also the background of a political catharsis which moved a small nation of nine million from fear to heroism, to pit only its will and small arms against one of the most

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mighty military machines in the world. And in that struggle the Hungarian people who have been neither subdued in spirit nor disrupted in its unity have proven to all who wish to see, the vulnerability of the Russian imperialist oppressor. And the lesson of these newly exposed weaknesses cannot be lost on other oppressed nationalities in the Russian orbit or among the subjugated millions in Russia itself.

When one considers the facts of the Hungarian revolution and understands its idealism and revolutionary purity, how enormous and monstrous becomes the Stalinist sponsored canard that the revolution was inspired by "fascists," by "clerical reactionaries," by "Horthyite officers." Khrushchev and Bulganin would have us believe that they were forced to protect the Hungarian working class from a "fascist counterrevolution" by slaughtering tens of thousands of Hungarian workers and youth, including members of the Hungarian Communist Party. But with all the accusations of "fascism" hurled at the Hungarian people, the Kremlin dictators have not produced a single shred of evidence to support their charges. The slander is so preposterous that the Russian Politburo, masters in the bizarre art of frame-up trials and forced confessions, have not been able to raise the curtain on one such staged production in Hungary. The charge is so far out of line with the reality that a little more time must pass before a well-rehearsed macabre and humorless grand guignol could be concocted. Even then such trials might not be held. For, unlike the Moscow Trials, who would believe them or defend them?

### Did the Masses Fight For Capitalism?

TO DEPOSE STALINISM means more than the elimination of a terrorist Party from governmental authority; it means the destruction of a social system. Stalinism—or bureaucratic collectivism—is a class society in which the means of production have been nationalized and democracy extirpated; where the economy is planned and run by a despotic centralized state which seeks to perpetuate itself in the only manner it can—through violent repression and exploitation and with a monolithic self-discipline; and for the special benefit of a small minority of the population—plant managers, officers, state functionaries and, on top of the bureaucratic pyramid, the hierarchy of the ruling Communist Party. The social power of this class, then, resides in its "ownership," not of private property, but of the State which is the regulator of the entire economy and determinant of all social and political policies. Thus, a movement which succeeds in destroying the political power of bureaucratic collectivism destroys the entire system.

But what would replace the totalitarian order? What would be the new relationship of class forces? Would the industrial bourgeoisie be able to reassert itself? Would the exiled large landowners be permitted to resume their disrupted lives as parasites living off the rents and profits extracted from the peasantry? In our opinion, all this is impossible.

To those who insist, despite all evidence to the contrary, that the Hungarian revolution was led or initiated by forces bent on the restoration of the powers, privileges and economic wealth of the pre-Stalinist bourgeoisie, we suggest that they consider the following questions. Where in Hungary

resides the moral, physical and social basis for a possible bourgeois restoration? Or, to break the question down further, who would approve of and fight for a return of bourgeois politicians to political power? What would be the mechanics whereby nationalized industries are divided among bourgeois elements? Who is left of the old bourgeoisie to receive such bounties? How would the alleged private capitalists sponsoring the revolution divide or operate industries and factories never owned by capitalists but organized by the state?

An objective examination of these questions will show that the statements of old Hungarian bourgeois and peasant politicians "in favor of socialism" not only reflect the anti-capitalist sentiments of the Hungarian masses, but are an admission that there is no social basis for a capitalist revival in Hungary. The pattern of economic development in Eastern Europe between the two world wars, the events of the Second World War, the fate of capitalism and capitalists during a decade of Stalinist rule have all served to render virtually impossible the restoration to power of a *Hungarian bourgeoisie*.\*

In Hungary, as with most of Eastern Europe, capitalism never achieved the stability of capitalism in Western Europe or the United States. Because of the weakness of the Eastern European bourgeoisie, the entire area was easily penetrated by foreign capital. Before the war virtually all key positions in industry, transport and banking in Eastern Europe were foreign controlled. The main exception was Czechoslovakia. In order to protect their economies from totally

\*The imposition of an artificially created bourgeoisie in Hungary by Western imperialism in the event of a war is a theoretical possibility. But to introduce this remote possibility in a discussion of Hungary today might prove more disorienting than enlightening.

succumbing to preying foreign capital, important areas of the economy were nationalized. Nationalization was to supply the economic and political counterweight to foreign exploitation and was required to develop industries which neither foreign capital nor native capitalists found sufficiently lucrative. The specific social weight of native capitalists was thereby weakened in Eastern Europe, as they were squeezed by the two jaws of an economic vise: foreign capital and nationalization.

With the German occupation during the war new blows were struck. The Germans confiscated at once all capital controlled by Jews as well as the considerable properties of Allied capitalists. In Czechoslovakia, for example, almost 60 per cent of industry and nearly 100 per cent of banking and insurance were in German hands.

In Hungary—whose status was different from Czechoslovakia in that it was an ally of Germany—German capital and the German state made enormous inroads in its economy. German investments there were officially estimated in 1944 at 692 million dollars, and unofficially totalled at twice that figure. About a third of all Hungarian industry was in German hands and German capital in Hungary was valued at approximately one fourth of the total Hungarian national wealth, excluding land and buildings.

With the defeat of the German armies the power of capitalism in Hungary and all Eastern Europe was reduced to a minimum. In a number of countries such as Poland and Czechoslovakia, which had been occupied by the Germans, vast segments of their industry, left ownerless after the war, had to be statified to avoid a totally anarchic condition. Other industries which had been in operation

during the German occupation, but were owned by Nazi collaborators, were also taken over by the state. All parties and virtually the entire population in these countries, including the "patriotic bourgeoisie," favored this expropriation of property held by bourgeois Nazi-collaborators. Similarly, while the Communist parties were the outstanding proponents of nationalization, all important political parties stood for some degree of statification. What opposition was felt in bourgeois circles to the nationalization policy was considerably muted by their fear of the Stalinists and its popularity among the masses.

The decimation of the bourgeoisie in Hungary was no less complete than in Poland and Czechoslovakia though its demise followed a different path. Hungary was an ally of Germany in the war. It was not a German occupied nation. This became the legal pretext for the Russians to occupy Hungary as conquerors. As conquerors the Russians did not initially press nationalization on the Hungarian nation. For three years it preferred outright *Russian* seizure of industry, either through dismantling and looting, reparations, or in the form of Russian ownership of the country's assets. However, with the successful "salami tactics" of the Hungarian Communist Party and its accession to undisputed control of Hungarian affairs made possible by Russian bayonets, the Kremlin withdrew its direct control of Hungarian economic life in favor of nationalization. Industries controlled by the occupiers were now run by its puppet government. In preparation for this nationalization, and subsequent to it, the Russians and their Hungarian hirelings systematically liquidated what was left of Hungarian capitalism. And in Hungary, as elsewhere, "liquidation of capital-

ism" meant more than expropriation. It was as often as not a euphemism for liquidation of life itself. Of those who escaped death, some managed to emigrate, others successfully integrated themselves into the Stalinist apparatus and some managed to survive, maintaining an obscure and marginal existence.

How, then, can one speak of the possibility of "capitalist restoration" in Hungary? But let us suppose for the moment that the revolution was led by restorationists. Let us also imagine that this restorationist revolution had succeeded. How would the victorious capitalists proceed to restore what they consider their due? How would they apportion the industrial wealth and resources of the nation? Who would receive factory "a" which had been organized by French capital before the war, or factory "b" constructed by Germans during the war, or factory "c" built under Stalinist auspices after the war, or factory "d" which actually belonged to a Hungarian industrialist before the war and who has long since perished of old age or in the war or during the post war Kremlin-style "liquidation of capitalism"? How would our imaginary restorationists settle this rather annoying problem. Not one of them has a legitimate legal claim to either factory "a", "b", "c" or "d". How to resolve it? Draw lots? Consult the UN? It sounds and is facetious only because after fifteen years of war and Stalinism the mechanics of restoring power to native Hungarian capitalists presents an insuperable problem. But in order for this insoluble difficulty to become even a potential one, we would first have to witness the miracle of Hungarian capitalists rising from the dead to form the component parts of this much talked of restorationist bourgeoisie.

By capitalism, it may be argued, we have only been discussing industrial and financial magnates. But what are the possibilities of the return of the large landowning aristocracy to its former status?

While the majority of the population certainly approves the continued nationalization of large scale industry and commerce, it is just as clear that many revolutionists and, undoubtedly, a majority of the peasants favor private ownership of the land. The Kolkhoz system is hated throughout the Stalinist world by the peasants who rightly regard the Stalinist collectives as a system of brutal bureaucratic exploitation. Had the Hungarian revolution succeeded, then, it would in all likelihood have meant the breakup of enforced collectives and the distribution of the land to individual peasant proprietors. There is nothing in this to disquiet socialists. On the contrary, the cry of land to the peasants has a progressive significance under Stalinism, just as it does in those areas of the world where land tenure still takes feudal forms and where there exists a reactionary landlord class which robs and exploits the peasantry.

The destruction of the Kolkhoz system in Hungary, could not possibly mean the restoration of the land to remnants of the old land owning classes. How could it? The peasants are opposed to the present collectivization because they want the land for themselves, not because they want to return it to their former landowners and revert to conditions of semi-feudal servitude.

That the Hungarian peasants will not tolerate a return of the landed aristocracy is a fact and not conjecture is shown in every act and statement made by revolutionary councils in rural areas and voiced by authorita-

tive representatives of former Peasant and Small Landholders parties. Bela Kovacs, brought back to join the Nagy government, explained at a meeting of the reconstituted Smallholders Party at Pecs on October 31:

The Party has full rights to reassemble, but the question is whether on reconstitution the Party will proclaim the old ideas again. No one must dream of ging back to the world of counts, bankers and capitalists: that world is over once and for all.

On November 3, Ferenc Farkas, national secretary of the National Peasant Party, reorganized under the name Petofi Party, made a speech listing the views on which the Nagy coalition government was "unanimous." The list was headed by:

The government will retain from the Socialist achievements and results everything which can be, and must be, used in a free, democratic and Socialist country, in accordance with the wishes of the people.

These views coming from spokesmen of former agrarian based parties can hardly be confused with any alleged conspiracy to restore the old days of parasitic landlordism. Nor, by any stretch of the most undisciplined imagination can one presume that the support given by all peasants to Hungary's embattled workers, supplying them with free food deliveries and promising to continue such aid for the duration of their strike, was done in the hope that a victory of the Workers Councils would give them the privilege of being exploited by the Esterhazys once again. The opposition of these Workers Councils to a return of the large landed gentry was known to all in and out of Hungary; an opposition shared by peasant and worker alike. That this opposition to the old landlords reflects a steadfast mood of the peasants was evidenced in a statement issued on January 6th by

Ferenc Nagy, an exiled rightist leader of the Landholders Party and former Premier, which denounced a committee of old emigre Hungarians organized in the United States in 1948. Ferenc Nagy repudiated this committee, which he, himself, had helped to form, as a reactionary body "hoping to restore the Horthy regime or the Hapsburg monarchy in Hungary." While renouncing the old committee Ferenc Nagy sought to participate in the Revolutionary Hungarian Council now being organized in France by representatives of the political parties which supported the October-November revolution.

Ferenc Nagy understands that the Hungarian peasants, who formed the mass base of his party, want no part of the old order. His action—regardless of motive—is an index of the moods of the Hungarian people and gives the lie to Stalinists and to those habitual apologists for the Kremlin who would have us believe that a vast army of emigre landlords is converging on Hungary's frontiers, champing at the bit, as they await a successful revolution which will install them once again in their manors and castles.

### The Program of the Revolution

The Hungarian Revolution was animated by an irrepressible urge for national independence and political democracy. But to appreciate the full significance of the revolution it is necessary to underline the fact that its tenacity, organization and consciousness was provided, in the main, by the Hungarian working class, the backbone of the revolution.

As a background to the military struggle, the workers organized a general strike, which became perhaps the longest general strike in history. Workers Councils sprang up every-

where. The revolutionary forces triumphed in all the industrial centers of Hungary; Gyor, Miskolc, Dunapentele, Pecs. Said a UP dispatch during the early days of the revolution: "The rebels appeared strongest in the great industrial section of Borsod," which is the center of some of the most important steel plants and coal mines in the country. The major organized forces in the country in the October 23rd to November 4th period consisted of workers' organizations which assumed the positions of spokesmen for the revolution. Moreover, after the second Russian attack on November 4, as a result of which the Nagy government was deposed and replaced by the quisling Kadar regime, the working class organizations remained the main source of opposition.

Acknowledging the primacy of the working class in the Revolution moves one a long way toward an answer to the question: what was the ideology of the revolution? We are dealing here, it must be remembered, with European workers, among whom militant supporters of capitalism are rare creatures. What is more, we are discussing the one country in the world aside from Russia which had a Soviet government for at least a short period after World War I; a government Socialists and Communist formed jointly in 1919 that enjoyed the support of the working class, whether or not it had the support of a majority of the country as a whole. These socialist traditions were not dissipated and could not be wholly repressed in the reaction which followed the defeat of the 1919 revolution. During the hard long years of Horthyite rule, the Social Democratic Party, seriously handicapped by its semi-legal status, continued to exert considerable influence among workers, and even the smaller Communist Party maintained

a significant working class following. In 1945, the Social Democratic and Communist Parties were backed by the overwhelming majority of workers.

The manifestoes, demands and programs developed by the Workers Councils in the recent revolution are eloquent testimony to the strength of these socialist traditions. For the revolution was spontaneous in the sense that there was no well organized underground network working out details of revolutionary program and organization. But, while the forms of revolution sprang up almost overnight, they were readily filled with the ideological content of socialism, supplied by the workers and intellectuals whose traditions survived, not only the Horthyite terror, but ten years of Russian directed dictatorship.

On October 24, the Workers Council of the Borsod region called for a government in "the spirit of Bela Kun and Laszlo Rajk."\*

On October 28, the Workers Committee of Gyor declared: "We do not wish to return to the old capitalist system. He want an independent and socialist Hungary." Lugosy Gora, a mechanic and member of the Communist Party, who was elected president of the Council of Magyarovar, informed reporters that he was against the reactionary proposition of a government of emigres and explained that he was for an end to class distinctions. The Austrian socialist, Peter Strasser, who had participated in the deliberations

\*All the material in the following pages on the programs of the Workers Councils, speeches by political leaders and broadcasts over radio stations under revolutionary control has appeared in various newspapers and periodicals. Quotations from the programs of various Workers Councils and by their spokesmen are from the November 2 and 9 issues of *La Vérité*, French Trotskyist newspaper. Quotations from revolutionary radio broadcasts are from the booklet, "The Revolt in Hungary: A Documentary Chronology of the Facts," which is an extremely useful compendium of texts of radio broadcasts in Hungary from October 23 to November 4, published by the Free Europe Committee. Other quotations are from the British Bevanite paper *Tribune* for November 23rd.

of the Sopron Committee for National Liberation, stated that "they are absolutely opposed to the restoration of the old regime of Horthy" and wanted socialism. The Revolutionary Committee of Gyor declared that it opposed "the formation of a counter-revolutionary government which would furnish a juridical basis for foreign intervention and the transformation of our country into a second Korea."

On October 25, a manifesto read over Radio Miskolc, which was in revolutionary hands, explained. "We have had enough of this autocracy of certain leaders. We too want socialism, but according to our own special Hungarian conditions, reflecting the interests of the Hungarian working class and the Hungarian nation, and our most sacred national sentiments." Three days later, this same radio station announced:

In the course of our several days fight for freedom the joint demands of the entire country are slowly beginning to take shape. Therefore, we workers, students and armed forces under the leadership of the workers council and student parliament of Miskolc submit the following proposal:

1. We demand a new provisional government, one truly democratic, sovereign and independent, fighting for a free and Socialist Hungary, excluding all ministers who served in the Rakosi regime.

On October 30, the revolutionary Radio Szombathely broadcast the demands of the National Committee of County Vas: "We . . . declare that we want a free, independent, democratic and Socialist Hungary headed by the government of Imre Nagy." The broadcast declared these to be "the uniform demands of the population." On the same day Radio Miskolc beamed appeals to the people of other satellites:

Slovaks, Rumanians and Serbians,

blood is flowing from our wounds and you are silent! We are fighting for liberty and you call us fascists. Rakosi's colleagues, who were not Hungarians, but enemies of our country, said the same thing. . . . We see that you too are groaning under the yoke we wish to throw off; now foreign interests want to incite you against us. We have every confidence that you will not believe their lies. . . . We have proposed a Socialist State form which will guarantee the free development of our people and stop the clash between East and West. We are fighting for you, too, for peace, for Socialist truth, for the guarantee of the free development of our peoples. Help us in our fight."

During all the days it was in revolutionary hands, this radio station manifested a high degree of internationalist consciousness, addressing appeals to other peoples in Eastern Europe, Rumanians, Poles, Czechs and Slovaks. In one broadcast it declared: "We do not want bourgeois parties, but Social Democratic parties, parties which will never again oppose the demands of our people . . . We believe that you also are thinking along these lines and do not believe the calumnies of the Czechoslovak radio."

On November 12, the Workers Councils of the 11th District of Budapest, where military resistance continued to the very end, adopted a resolution whose first point stated: "We wish to emphasize that the revolutionary working class considers the factories and the land the property of the working people."

On November 2, Radio Kossuth reported the demands made by a delegation of 28 members of the Workers Council of Borsod-Abauj-Zemplen County to Imre Nagy and Zoltan Tildy, whom they visited in Budapest. Among them:

We will not return the land to the landlords, nor the factories to the capitalists, nor the mines to the mining

barons, nor the Army command to the Horthyist generals.

Subsequent developments showed that the Councils did not intend to dissolve of their own volition after the triumph of the revolution. They conceived themselves to be permanent bodies of working class rule in the factories, and desired to play a distinctive political and social role in Hungary's future. In so doing, they underlined their similarity to the initial objectives of the workers councils (Soviets) in the Russian Revolution of November 1917.

On November 7, Russian military forces called upon the revolutionary military forces in Dunapentele to lay down their arms. In reply, the Military Command and the National Committee of Dunapentele, declared:

Dunapentele is the foremost Socialist town in Hungary. The majority of its residents are workers and power is in their hands. . . . The workers will defend the town from Fascist excesses . . . but also from Soviet troops. . . . There are no counterrevolutionaries in the town. . . .

A section of the revolutionaries, mainly former Communist Party members, consciously thought of themselves as "Communists," as "Marxist-Leninists." They were in control of Radio Rajk whose broadcasts gave every indication of their socialist and "Bolshevik" ideology. On November 10:

Comrades, now you can see . . . that it is impossible for any kind of "proconsul," even if called a government, to serve the interests of the Hungarian nation under Russian imperialism. There is only one course—to shake off the Russian terror regime or die.

"We Hungarian Communists, the faithful followers of Rajk, will do our utmost to shake off the Russian yoke. . . ."

The Socialist heart of the Hungarian Revolution did not beat for the workers' organizations alone. Youth

and student revolutionary bodies and committees of intellectuals which mushroomed during the revolution showed that they, too, were for socialism. The nine-point program adopted by the Revolutionary Committee of Hungarian Intellectuals on October 29, listed as its fifth point: "All of the factories and the mines are the property of the workers." The appeal of the Revolutionary University Students Committee declared on October 31:

We want neither Stalinism nor capitalism. We want a truly democratic and truly Socialist Hungary, completely independent from any other country.

And on November 12, a proclamation of the Armed Revolutionary Youth declared: "For a neutral, independent, democratic and Socialist Hungary!"

### Stalinism—A Source of Revolution

Where did the Hungarian working class receive the political education indicated in every move it made? We have already mentioned the socialist traditions of the Hungarian workers and intellectuals. But that is, admittedly, only a partial explanation; it does not satisfactorily explain the form and sophistication of the Workers Councils, their phenomenal political acumen, their revolutionary parlance. An added factor, we believe, is Stalinism, itself, as a special type school of socialist learning.

All totalitarian movements seek a mass base, a popular force which will help carry them to power and from which they can draw a minimum of continued support once power is achieved. The fascist seeks this base in the discontented middle class and among the most backward sections of the population; but the Stalinist

movement by its very nature tries to build its base among the working class and other advanced sections of the population. Even where Stalinism has already come to power, and, even where it has come to power on Russian bayonets, as is the case in Hungary, it must continue to play for some support from its own working class, from its youth and intellectuals. Fascism, unlike Stalinism makes little pretense at being an internationalist movement, it does not feel compelled to present a refined ideology but is content to develop a limited social program combined with a program of action which appeals to the most base and ignoble prejudices of middle class and lumpen elements. Stalinism, on the other hand, appealing to workers and intellectuals, could never make any headway among them without dressing itself in the garb of socialist internationalism. It poses as the standard bearer of socialism, of Marxism, of Leninism. It presents an ideology. It lays claim to all that is glorious in past struggles for freedom. It adopts the American revolution, the Paris Commune and the Russian Revolution as part of its social genealogy. But in order to maintain its pose as an international movement of socialist thought and action it must "educate." And this it does in a certain narrow, restricted and selective sense. It actually provides an emasculated Marxist education. Some socialist books are censored (others are prohibited), Lenin's writings are selected with caution and misinterpreted with perverse abandon—but they are presented, along with unimpaired Marxist literature.

Stalinist "socialist educators" are aware of the great danger to its system inhering in even a warped version of socialist theory and history. But for all its consequent attempts to denude

the Socialist classics—which *are* read—the basic ideas of socialism break through the curtain of lies, even if only diffusely. In reading Marxist literature a serious student, a perceptive worker or a searching intellectual will not fail to recognize the similarities between their own conditions of life and the oppressive circumstances which moved socialists to participate in and sometimes to lead great liberating struggles of the past.

Stalinism claims as its heritage the Russian Revolution of November 1917, but as with almost all else, it tries to subvert the essential truth of the revolution. Facts, names, dates, policies, objectives are omitted or distorted. Despite this, it is difficult for Stalinist propagandists totally to obscure the spirit of the Russian Revolution. Many Hungarian workers and students who were undergoing indoctrination courses one evening and fighting Russian tanks the next morning learned their lessons of the Russian Revolution well. The following appeal to Russian soldiers broadcast over Budapest's Radio Kossuth on November 7, is a remarkable illustration of just how well the workers understood the Russian Revolution:

Soldiers!

Your state was created at the cost of bloody fighting so that you could have freedom. Today is the thirty-ninth anniversary of that revolution. Why do you want to crush our liberty? You can see that it is not factory proprietors, not landowners, and not the bourgeoisie who have taken up arms against you, but the Hungarian people, who are fighting desperately for the same rights you fought for in 1917.

Stalinist education can facilitate the conscious expression of such deadly parallels—deadly, that is, for Stalinism.

Stalinism not only aids in this fashion the ideological arming of the

democratic revolution; it also teaches methods and principles of political organization. It emphasizes the historic role of the working class in political and social struggles, it correctly points to the need of worker, peasant and student solidarity against the common foe. (Of course, the Stalinist instructor means only one thing by "common foe"—its own foes; but the lesson is not wasted.) It lays heavy stress on the necessity of organization for achieving political objectives.

Thousands of Hungarian workers and students listened to their tutors for years, and even read the texts. They learned their lessons perfectly. For the "strategy and tactics" and the organizational techniques of the Hungarian peoples' revolution were above reproach from a socialist viewpoint. The students, lectured at interminably about the importance of the working class, acted accordingly. One of the first efforts of Budapest University students to implement their demands formulated on October 24, was to send delegations to the factories to explain their program and propose coordinated activity. And the organization of Workers Councils, which followed so closely the form and character of the Russian Soviets of 1917 suggests that propaganda on the Russian Revolution and the united front of the working class was not in vain.

In these and other ways, Stalinist education, designed to seek a base among the working class, suggests the organizational weapons and ideological armaments of a democratic and socialist opposition.

The Hungarian people have taken advantage of another aspect of Stalinist totalitarianism. Stalinist regimes are under the compulsion to organize the masses. They create a multitude of organizations for purposes of indoctrination and to maintain their con-

trol over and check on the people. There are student groups, youth circles, unions for the workers, special associations for intellectuals, leagues for women, study circles for peasants, etc. And there are branches of Communist workers directly affiliated to the ruling Communist Party. The organizations obviously vary in composition, inclusiveness and degree of authority. But they have this in common: they are all sponsored or authorized by the Communist party—and they are the only organizations permitted to function.

This compulsion of Stalinism to organize the masses in order to paralyze them, has an internal defect. It provides the people with innumerable organizations in which they can assemble and which can become centers of opposition. That is what happened in Hungary where not only government sponsored, broad organizations of workers, students and intellectuals gave the revolution its initial organized character, but where they were joined in revolt by whole branches and districts of the Communist Party itself. The masses who were either obligated to join State organizations or who voluntarily entered them learned to use the only channels open to them as a means of expressing their own democratic aspirations.\*

The level on which Communist means of oppression are turned into instruments of revolution vary greatly. Some organizations are, undoubtedly, consciously penetrated by democratic elements seeking a base of political operation. Other, initially acquiescent segments of the population, learn to adapt state sponsored organizations to their own needs as

\*In the March 9, 1953 issue of Labor Action George Benda has an interesting account of this process in Czechoslovakia where workers used the state controlled "unions" to further their own interests.

their opposition to the regime grows. In the Communist Party, itself, workers who voluntarily joined it out of misguided idealism, learning through their own experience the anti-socialist character of their Party leaders, but still convinced of the need for a militant socialist party, attempt to turn the Party into an instrument of anti-Stalinist revolution. Classic examples of the latter can be found in the broadcasts of Radio Rajk. In its message of November 6:

Comrades, join the pseudo-Communist Party of Janos Kadar immediately, possibly in leading positions, and do your best to make a truly Communist Party of it. However long and hard this task may be, turn it into a Hungarian Communist Party... But despite all disgust and abhorrence, we true Hungarian Communists must stay in the Party of the infamous and treacherous Janos Kadar who, under the false banner of Communism, will continue to serve as Rakosi's successor, Russian imperialism, and who accepted this assignment from those hands, dripping with blood, which carried out history's vilest massacre in Hungary....

And on November 7:

Comrades, let us preserve the fighting spirit of Marxism-Leninism, let us continue to fight within the framework of our betrayed and outraged Party for the independence of the Socialist Hungarian nation.

### The Achievements Of the Revolution

ON NOVEMBER 4TH, when victory seemed so close, the Hungarian revolution was submerged in a sea of blood. And Hungary, today, remains a land of incalculable suffering, the misery of its oppressed population compounded by the anguish of death, by torn cities and broken lives, by cold, hunger and new persecutions, by bitterness and frustration. But the Hungarian people show no signs of

regret that they struck a mighty blow for freedom. They remain resourceful and defiant. They know that their revolution was not "premature." That knowledge, unfortunately, is not shared by all in the so-called civilized world. The word, "premature," or its equivalent, has become the favorite adjective applied to the Hungarian Revolution by those who have misgivings over any revolutionary struggle by the masses against Stalinism (this category extends from the State Department on one side to Deutscherites on the other), and by others who are blinded to the tremendous tangible accomplishments of the Hungarians' "premature" revolution.

The Hungarian people achieved nothing less than striking the death blow to Stalinism as a world system.

The first visible crack in Stalinism was in the Titoist defection 8 years ago; similar disintegrative tendencies operating within satellites were further revealed by the murder of Rajk and Kostov and the imprisonment of Gomulka. The myth of Stalinist invulnerability received a rude shock with the Berlin uprising of June, 1953. It was further weakened by the "revelations" of the Twentieth Congress, the Poznan Revolt and the recent Polish revolution.

But the Hungarian Revolution has wrought unprecedented havoc on the power of world Stalinism. In the West it is cutting wide swaths into Communist Parties. Not even the "revelations" of the Twentieth Congress spelled such direct and immediate disaster for them.

In Italy, the Hungarian Revolution has enlarged the gulf between the Nenni-led Socialist Party and the CP. The Confederation of Labor, Italy's most powerful union movement, dominated by the Communist Party, rebuked the Russians for their use of

troops in Hungary and decried "undemocratic methods of government."\* The effect in the shops was no less dramatic. Shop steward elections recently held in a number of plants have been marked by hitherto unknown defeats for the Communists. Eugenio Reale, Italian Senator and one of the best known figures in the CP sent in his resignation along with his condemnation of Russian aggression. (After receiving his resignation, the CP decided not to honor it and expelled him instead.) A large number of Communist mayors, deputies, senators endorsed Reale's sentiments. Party branches passed resolutions supporting the Hungarian people. Vasco Pratolini, one of the Italian Party's leading writers in breaking from the CP wrote an article which *Unita* refused to publish where he "condemn[s] the Soviet aggression wholeheartedly and without any reserve whatever." His attitude was seconded by hundreds of other Italian intellectuals in or close to the Party.

In France, reputed to have the most die-hard of western Communist parties, the toll has been heavy among intellectuals in the Party and on its fringe. The most publicized defection is that of Jean Paul Sartre, but, as in Italy, denunciations of the Russians and the French Communist Party have been made by literally hundreds of intellectuals. While significant proletarian sections of the Party have not as yet left,\* the CP has obviously suffered the alienation of many in its ranks. Strong evidence of this was the Party's dismal failure to rally more than a few thousand in a counter-demonstration following the burning of CP headquarters by Parisian demonstrators.

\*In the December 17, 1956 issue of the *New Leader*, Daniel Bell presents a long, partial listing of the mounting number of Communists defecting from the CPs following the Hungarian Revolution.

In England, the Communist Party has been badly shaken. One-fourth of the staff of the London *Daily Worker* left the paper. Important Communist trade union leaders, intellectuals and rank and filers have pulled out of the Party.

In the United States, the Hungarian Revolution has pulled a shroud over any movement in the United States which does not take a clear cut position of opposition to Russian totalitarianism. In the past, the Communist Party was able to rally support for almost any Kremlin sponsored iniquity. Whether it was GPU directed murders in Spain, the infamous Russian purges in the Thirties or the Stalin-Hitler Pact, the Communist Party could always depend on the support of thousands in its ranks. And on the outside, there were always the reliable "progressives" ranging from Beverly Hills society lights to genuine labor leaders. Today, the American CP can rally no one.

What is no less significant is that the Kremlin is finding it equally difficult to rally the American CP as it once could.

The impact of the Hungarian revolt on the fate of Kremlin rule in the satellites is already a matter of historical record. In Hungary, it is now clear, the Russians won a Pyrrhic victory as the Revolution's reverberations have transmitted powerful tremors throughout the Russian empire and more than an echo remains in Hungary. There is "unrest" among students in East Germany, demonstrations by

\*Bell offers an interesting explanation for the surface appearance of unity in the ranks and in the leading core of the French CP. In other European countries there is a ready made place for defecting Communists to go. In England there is the Labor Party and its Bevanite wing; in Italy there is the Socialist Party, led by Nenni (and the smaller Independent Socialist Union which Bell doesn't mention). In France dissatisfied Communists feel that they have no other home. The Socialist Party there is ineffective and is led by Premier Guy Mollet whose colonial policies have earned contempt for him among Communist workers and intellectuals, and has tainted his party in their eyes.

the Hungarian minority in Transylvania, student protest in Rumania; and in Poland, the Gomulka regime which tries to meet some demands of the masses at the same time that it attempts to conciliate the Kremlin and maintain its own bureaucratic rule, cannot indefinitely check the passions of the Polish people whose every public act shows that it seeks not merely a "limited" Russian occupation, or a "limited" authoritarian regime, but is bent on struggling for complete independence and freedom.

The impact of the Hungarian Revolution is also felt in the citadel of the Empire—Russia. The Revolution proved that Russian troops forced to act as storm troopers of imperialism are not dependable. Whole divisions of the original army of occupation had to be replaced by more "reliable" troops. But caution dictated that even replacements be deceived as to their military mission, many of them being led to believe that they were going to fight American "fascists" or defend the Suez Canal from British-French imperialism. Defections from the Russian Army were reported; not only among the original occupying soldiers and officers, but from the new, presumably more trustworthy troops.

The Kremlin cannot trust its own troops recruited from the young workers and peasants to crush revolution in Eastern Europe. And it is small wonder. For the anti-Kremlin resentment that has accumulated in ten years of totalitarian rule in Eastern Europe has its parallel in the accumulated hatred born of a quarter-century of oppression that the Russians feel toward their own regime. Even the question of national independence, a key factor in the Hungarian Revolution, finds its counterpart in Russia. The "Soviet Union" includes 140 different national and ethnic groups



comprising approximately 50 percent of its population, all of whom are subjected to various degrees of oppression. The initial popularity of the Nazi invaders among some of the oppressed minorities in Russia, the destruction by the Kremlin—through deportation and genocide—of several national minorities, the revelation by Khrushchev that Stalin (was it only Stalin?) was threatening the destruction of Russia's largest minority—the Ukrainians, the organization during and after the war of a mass national resistance movement which fought both German and Russian imperialism, each in its own way reveals that the national question operates as a disintegrative force, not only in Stalinist colonies, but in Russia itself.

Despite all stories in the Russian press of "Fascist counter-revolution" in Hungary, the Russian people cannot be quarantined from the truth. Through reports from returning soldiers, by their instincts and experience which leads them to disentangle and translate Russian newspapers, the events in Hungary can only increase the Russian people's hatred of the regime and inspire it with a new measure of strength and self-confidence. Manifestation of Hungarian inspired acts of defiance by Russian workers and students have already been reported.

These, then, are the success of the Hungarian Revolution which some analysts are now prepared to discount as "premature."

Two other concrete achievements must be noted. First, by discrediting Stalinism in the eyes of the entire world working class, it thereby helps to eliminate a serious obstacle in Europe and in the United States to the resurgence of a socialist movement. Second, by encouraging revolutionary discontent in the Stalinist controlled

world, it has reduced the danger of war. The Kremlin must begin to move more cautiously. It knows that it cannot risk a war when its own base is seething.

THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE Hungarian Revolution does not even end here. Events in Hungary and Poland have contributed to the clarification of political and theoretical problems, each one of which has its own political significance.

One myth which the Revolution has relegated to the status of a political curio is the conception of Stalinism as an internally indestructible force. A founder of this school, the discredited James Burnham, has devoted all his talents and much of his time to elaborating his views to his readers and to the State Department. The world is divided into two camps for Burnham—the American and the Russian. The latter cannot be overthrown by the peoples it holds in captivity. Since Stalinism is not only internally indestructible, but of necessity expansionist, the only means open for the West to defend itself is through a series of provocative, military adventures. That the specific acts he suggested in his writings would be climaxed inevitably by a global war is nothing that would faze a man like Burnham. He is not one to run away from a deduction. "If 'a' then 'b'" is the law of logic to which he once dedicated a book.

But Burnham's neat little package has been shaken by every major development inside the Russian empire for the past 10 years and altogether exploded with the first Molotov cocktail thrown at a Russian tank in a Budapest street. To the extent that the Hungarian Revolution has undercut the ideological moorings of such war-mongering elements as Burnham in the United States, it has made

another contribution to peace.

Burnham's logic was reinforced by the theories of totalitarianism advanced by Hannah Arendt which struck a responsive chord among many ex-radicals and one-time socialists who saw Stalinism as the invincible wave of the future. In Arendt's view, under totalitarianism, the divisions of non-totalitarian society into antagonistic social classes with their clashing interests, come to an end. History is thrown into reverse with all the motor forces of social change inherent in a democratic society grinding to a halt. Instead of class struggle, we have a structureless mass of people, atomized, declassed and irrationally manipulated by the totalitarian power into a hopeless depression or a dispirited conformism.

Again, in the Hungarian and Polish revolutions Arendt's pessimism has met the same end as Burnham's logical militarism.

If the Hungarian-Polish events have reduced Arendt's pessimism to a curious incongruity, what have they done for the prognostications of Isaac Deutscher?

In an article written shortly before the Hungarian and Polish Revolutions in *Partisan Review* (Fall 1946), Deutscher summarized his views. It is recommended reading for all who want to know where he stands.

Deutscher is an optimist—a bureaucratic optimist. Change can take place in Russia, Deutscher claims, unlike the pessimists. Indeed, it is taking place. And it is all for the good. But it is the change of a self-reforming bureaucracy which should not be disturbed in its progressive evolution. Where capitalism needs to be overthrown by the working class, the Kremlin rulers (class? caste? bureaucracy?—it is not clear in Deutscher) are themselves the agents of progressive

economic and political reform. Stalinism arose as a brutal dictatorship, out of the backwardness of the Russian economy. The dictatorship, however, fulfilled an economic and social function. It industrialized the nation. By increasing economic wealth it tends to destroy itself. "By fostering Russia's industrialization and modernization Stalinism has with its own hands uprooted itself and prepared its 'withering away'."

For Deutscher, the relaxation which followed Stalin's death and culminated in the Twentieth Congress was not the product of class struggle. It was not the attempt of a desperate and unstable regime to ward off the hostility of the masses who saw in the death of Stalin and the consequent dislocation of the bureaucracy, a crack in the monolithic wall through which they might pour with all the fury of a flood. Not at all. The Twentieth Congress marked a new era in the bureaucracy's supervision of its own dissolution as a ruling dictatorial power.

The bureaucracy, which under Stalin was creating the conditions for democracy, is now beginning to move toward that goal with an implied new consciousness. It now begins to introduce, gradually, slowly, even unwillingly (to make a concession to anti-Soviet elements), the methods and institutions of political democracy.

The autocratic system of government, bequeathed by Stalin is *shattered*. The backbone of the M.V.D., the political police is broken. (!) The *univers concentrationnaire* is dissolving. Stalinist monolithic uniformity is slowly, painfully, yet unmistakably beginning to give way to a certain diversity of outlook. If the 'liberal trend' is defined as a radical lessening of governmental coercion and a striving for government by consent then this trend has been obviously and even conspicuously at work in Soviet society. (Emphasis added)

Deutscher moves accordingly. As the bureaucracy gradually introduces democracy—which is the beginning of the realization of the socialist dream in Russia—Deutscher degenerates from an “objective Historian” to a calm apologist for the dictatorship. And like all apologists he falsifies and distorts events and tries to force contradictory evidence into his preconceived patterns. This is most glaring in the case of the Hungarian Revolution wherein Deutscher, in a recent *Reporter* article, finds, not only understandable grievances among the people (he is always prepared to sympathize with the masses) but “elements of counterrevolution” as well. Who or what these “elements” are Deutscher never tells us. He cannot. But he has to locate them there, otherwise it will not jibe with his theory. If the Russian action in Hungary is decisive proof that, fundamentally, Khrushchevism remains rigid in its determination to crush any move by the people for freedom, then it fails to correspond to Deutscher’s view of a new enlightenment moving the Russian regime in its objective striving for “government by consent.” All one has to do is to find a little “counterrevolution” or elements of it in Hungary and things are put to right. Without this fictional counterrevolutionary force operating in Hungary, how would Deutscher make the following analysis (written just before the Hungarian revolt) consistent with the Hungarian’s hatred of the regime:

The Soviet worker has begun to ‘finance’ in all earnestness the industrialization of the underdeveloped Communist countries; and he finances it out of the resources which might otherwise have been used to raise his own standard of living. . . . Here indeed two aspects of de-Stalinization—Russian domestic reform and reform in Russia’s relationship with the entire Soviet bloc—can be seen

in actual conflict with each other

Where can one find a more glamorized and more falsified version of Russia’s relation to her satellites? And, note carefully, it is not the Russian government which finances Eastern Europe’s but the “soviet workers.” And this magnanimous display of Soviet solidarity is done in a spirit of socialist self-sacrifice—for if the “Soviet workers” were not pouring billions into Eastern Europe to build socialism there, then the bureaucracy would be able to advance even further its own economy, which, in turn, would mean that the bureaucracy could open the faucet of democracy a little wider. (One might say that for Deutscher the whole problem of democracy in Russia is a matter of high finance.)

Apparently the Hungarian worker didn’t appreciate the fraternal, self-denial of “the Soviet worker.” He saw and experienced in the Russian occupation, not an aid to the government’s economy or his social well being, but the imposition of political terror and economic exploitation in the interests of a foreign power and its puppet native ruling class.

If only the Hungarians showed a little more patience. If only they weren’t so susceptible to “counter-revolutionary elements.” If only they waited until the rulers in the Kremlin, observing a statistical upswing of Russia’s economy might have felt the time propitious for a little more democracy. As it was the Hungarians proved incapable of showing the patience and understanding peculiar to Deutscher.

The Hungarian workers did not understand that:

With public ownership of the means of production firmly established with the consolidation and expansion of planned economy, and—last but not least—with

the traditions of a socialist revolution alive in the minds of its people, *the Soviet Union breaks with Stalinism, in order to resume its advance toward equality and socialist democracy.* (Emphasis Added)

Nor would they believe that

Circumstances have forced Malenkov and Khrushchev to act *up to a point* as the executors of Trotsky’s political testament. The wonder is not that they act these roles awkwardly, badly, and even monstrously badly, but that they act them at all!

Up to what “point” Malenkov and Khrushchev will execute Trotsky’s testament—as they did his body—is not discussed by Deutscher. It is a nice safety valve, however, for the uncertain future.

Deutscher has much in common with Hannah Arendt and other theorists of the invincible power of totalitarianism: A distrust of the masses. Arendt did not believe that the working class was capable of revolutionary action. Neither does Deutscher. Democracy, for him, is desirable, even necessary, but the working class is not capable of using it effectively. It must be doled out piecemeal by a benevolent dictatorship which replaces the working class as the harbinger of socialism in Russia and in Eastern Europe.

WHERE ARENDT voices hopelessness and Deutscher implies acquiescence to a benevolent self-reforming dictatorship the Hungarian working class acted on the basis of self-reliance. Its instinct, its traditions, its education taught it that no faith can be placed in the empty promises of the totalitarian enemy. It understood that the extent to which the Twentieth Congress relaxed the dictatorship at home and abroad was in the first place, a recognition of the strength and determination of the people’s hatred and

opposition to the regime. Secondly, the “liberalization” was an effort of the Politbureau to avoid the disastrous self-cannibalism of life under the supreme authority of Stalin. But the reform has limits. History offers no example of an exploitative class committing suicide not even to justify the conceptions of Deutscher. And for the Russian ruling class to sponsor deep and wide democratic reforms, to transfer political power from its hands to those of the masses—hesitantly, of course, as Deutscher would note—means it self-liquidation.

If the Kremlin is moving toward “government by consent” why does it do it slowly? Why not all at once? If Russia—whose productive capacity is greater than any other country in the world excepting the United States—needs to increase its industrial potential and labor productivity what prevents the Politbureau from initiating a thorough extension of democracy right now? Would Russia revert to capitalism if democracy were won—or given? Obviously not. Would democracy in Russia strengthen the economy or weaken it, make it more efficient or less efficient, eliminate bureaucracy in planning or add to it? Certainly the former on all three counts, unless one could establish that the people are too stupid to rule and to plan. Would a democratic Russia be more stable internally than Russia governed by a narrow section of the population? That is clearly the case. Would a democratic Russia, liberating the satellite countries of its present foreign rule, win or alienate the peoples of Eastern Europe? The answer is too apparent. If the Khrushchev regime were to follow the democratic course implied by these questions would they be set upon by the people and punished for the “crimes of Stalin”? That seems hardly possible. Why then

doesn't it pursue such a policy, here and now, not in some Deutscher or Khrushchev promised future. We have already answered the question but it merits repetition. Democracy is not dependent on Khrushchev's whims or Deutscher's economic determinism. Russia is dominated by a totalitarian class which will tolerate so much—and no more. It is a conscious class, a purposeful class, not a group whirling toward democracy on the high-blown and full winded abstractions of Deutscher.

CAPITALISM, TODAY, IS A reactionary social order. But it evolved slowly and painfully out of a stagnant feudal society. It has in the past a progressive historical function to perform for which no other social formation could substitute. The working class,

born under capitalism, necessary for it and in conflict with it has inherited the responsibility of leading in a continuing struggle to constructively release the full, creative genius of man. Hungary has shown that this reliance socialists place in the working class is not misplaced.

Capitalism has no future, but it had a past. The working class has had only brief moments of fulfilment but it remains with a future. Bureaucratic Collectivism on the other hand, was born as a pestilence, a reactionary monstrosity rising out of the defeats of the working class and the decay of capitalism. Its life has been violent but it will also be brief. Whoever doubts that, need only look at the Hungarian Revolution.

MAX MARTIN and JULIUS FALK

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