INTERNATIONAL SOCIALIST REVIEW

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THE SOUTH'S DILEMMA

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A "Free" Ballot?

The exclusion of three minority parties from the ballot in New York in 1958 once again pointed up the hypocrisy of Washington's boastful claim to the world that "free" America practices political democracy (except maybe in the South where progress, nevertheless, is being made).

The Socialist Labor party was ruled off the New York state ballot although it had collected 16,000 signatures on nominating petitions. The People's Rights party was denied a place for its candidate Benjamin J. Davis of the Communist party in Manhattan's 21st Senate District despite 6,000 signatures. Likewise brushed aside were the signatures in Manhattan's 19th Congressional District supporting David McReynolds of the Socialist Party — Social Democratic Federation. Only the United Independent-Socialist party with 27,000 signatures managed to get on — after a difficult court fight that cut in heavily on time for campaigning.

How minority parties are deliberately barred from even placing the names of their candidates on the ballot is well explained in an article by Ralph Nader and Theodore Jacobs in the October 9 Harvard Law Record from which we would like to quote somewhat extensively for the information of our readers.

"In its Model Election Law, the American Civil Liberties Union urged that minor parties be required to accumulate signatures equivalent to only one-tenth of one percent of the total vote cast in the preceding gubernatorial election, with a maximum limit of 16,000 signatures. Compare this standard with the requirements of 2 percent in Missouri (36,000 votes), 3 percent in Massachusetts (71,643 votes), 5 percent in California (259,000 votes) and 7 percent in Ohio (259,000 votes)...." "New York, Illinois, Massachusetts, and Ohio demand that the signatures obtained on nominating petitions represent a prescribed number of counties throughout the state. Apportionment requirements often result in giving disproportionate power to rural areas and discourages urban and, in some cases, rural centered groups from availing themselves of the election process...."

"Regulations pertaining to authentication of signatures, even in states with liberal signature and apportionment legislation, provide further hurdles for small parties to overcome. Six states require individual noratization of every signature on a nominating petition."

"In Missouri, each of the 36,000 names needed must be certified by a notary who personally knows the signer or by two witnesses who can swear to his identity. Early filing dates, often four to six months before the election, effectively bar eleventh hour protest or splinter parties and force the gathering of signatures before the acme of the public's political consciousness. In other states, the period within which signatures may be obtained is severely restricted. Pennsylvania, for example, requires that the total number of necessary signatures be obtained within a 20 day period."

"The potential group from which signers may be solicited is even limited in many states. Prevented from signing an independent nominating petition are those who voted in a contemporary party primary as well as voters affiliated with another party within a specified previous period...." "One of the characteristics of an inflexible standard is the facility with which it can be abused in its enforcement. Thus, even when a minority party complies with all the major regulations there remains a fair possibility that the petition will be totally negated by a technical defect or omission often due to ambiguities in the election law...."

"Added to these legal obstacles have been a variety of pressures in the form of discriminatory judicial and administrative enforcement, and harassing, intimidating tactics by vigilante groups. The latter pressure has been expressed in the past by publishing petitions in newspapers to embarrass or black-list signers and even by physical violence against small party workers."

(For the information of our foreign readers, we should like to point out that these arbitrary restrictions do not apply to the Democratic or Republican parties. These parties appear automatically on the ballot from year to year. The restrictive laws were enacted by the Republicans and Democrats specifically to maintain their monopoly of the ballot. In many instances when small parties have managed to get through the requirements the signatures managed to get on — after a difficult court fight that cut in heavily on time for campaigning."

"Exclusion blocks "perfectly legitimate aspirations. Access to the election slate not only permits the expression of public opinion but also has a high publicity value in marshaling greater support. It is the only practical way by which minor parties can say, 'Republicans and Democrats — take notice!'"

"A democratic society should not dismiss a freedom as unimportant merely because it has comparatively little direct significance to the majority. We would do well to remember that suppression once sanctioned has epidemic qualities and that all of us are minorities in one framework or another."

For a copy containing the complete article, the address is 23 Everett St., Cambridge 38, Mass. The newspaper sells for 10 cents.
After the Cleveland Conference

THE Cleveland conference of socialists, held November 28-30, marks, we believe, the end of one stage of the process of regroupment of revolutionary socialist forces in this country and the opening of another. The perspectives, in our opinion, are quite hopeful.

The conference itself met simply to assess the effort at united socialist electoral activity in 1958 and to discuss the possibility of a more intensive effort in 1960. No action was taken except to agree to meet again within a year. A committee was set up to coordinate correspondence and discussion.

America's various shadings of socialist opinion were represented in their complete range. Participants included leaders of the defunct Progressive party and American Labor party, the Socialist Workers party, and the Communist party, as well as unaffiliated independents and former members of the Communist party. The Socialist Party — Social Democratic Federation and Socialist Labor party sent observers. Christian socialists were present. A leader of the Oehlerite Revolutionary Workers League spoke for the ultra-left.

The Socialist Labor party, in a five-page, single-spaced letter explaining why it was only observing and not participating, called the conference “one nondescript brew.” However, most of those in the brew felt that the adjective “nondescript,” used by Frederick Engels at another time in another context, did not indicate the central significance of this gathering. What really occurred in Cleveland was a resumption of the old tradition of free discussion, fraternal exchange of opinion, and readiness to seek points of united action against the common class enemy that characterized the American socialist movement before the advent of Stalinism. Engels, if we must appeal to his shade, would have considered this revival of democracy an encouraging development, we think.

The strength of the sentiment for reviving this fine tradition was most tellingly indicated, in our opinion, by the presence at Cleveland of leading spokesmen of the Social Democracy and the Communist party. Neither of these tendencies played an exactly heroic role in the effort to put up united socialist tickets in the 1958 election; yet both found it necessary to attend the conference where this was the main topic under consideration.

When the United Independent-Socialist ticket was fighting for its place on the New York ballot, the Social Democratic leadership harassed the new electoral party with threats of court action, thus aiding the De Sapio machine in its attempt to maintain the Big Business monopoly on the voting machines. At Cleveland, the Social Democratic spokesmen sought to cover up this sorry lapse in the defense of democratic rights in New York by strongly championing democratic rights in Soviet bloc countries. The response of the conference was scarcely enthusiastic but the patience displayed indicated the importance attached to even the most formal gestures of the Social Democrats in the direction of comradely discussion.

The Communist party leadership, committed like the Social Democrats since 1936 to supporting candidates of the Democratic party, had similarly sought to block the United Independent-Socialist ticket. They were not so crude as to threaten court action. They sought first to prevent formation of a united socialist ticket; and then, failing in this, they sought to dissuade the ticket from running a candidate for the key office of governor, since this meant opposing Harriman. Finally they withheld support in getting signatures for the nominating petitions and when this failed they tried to cut down the vote for the socialist gubernatorial candidate. As precinct workers of undoubted energy in the Democratic party, they stayed on De Sapio’s ill-fated bandwagon to the last, calling for Rockefeller’s defeat “at all costs.”

At Cleveland the Communist party spokesmen, while proclaiming devotion to distant socialist goals, tried to justify the anti-socialist policy of “working within the Democratic party.” They did not succeed in convincing anyone not already convinced, so far as we can judge, but even their most unyielding opponents sought an amicable, if vigorous, refutation of their point of view.

The Socialist Workers party was well represented at
the conference, but unaffiliated socialists and former members of the Progressive and American Labor parties easily constituted the strongest contingent. Such figures as Vincent Hallinan, John T. McManus, Annette Rubinstein and the Rev. Joseph P. King set the tone, which was one of optimism and confidence. There was nothing forced or artificial about this. They came fresh from auspicious electoral actions, particularly in New York, in which — not least in importance — they had demonstrated that it is possible for socialists in America to find common ground for united action despite serious differences. Then the exchange of views from all over the country rapidly gave proof that the New York experience was not something freakish. As John T. McManus put it in the National Guardian (Dec. 8), "...the approaches to socialist unity — at least among independents and rank and file Socialists, Communist and Socialist Workers Party members — were certainly clearer and apparently more realizable after two days of matching views."

It is not our intention to go into the details of the meeting. These are available in the issue of the National Guardian mentioned above and in the December 8 Militant. We wish only to discuss features of the conference touching most closely on larger questions of policy and their relation to preparations for 1960. One prominent fact, however, deserves special comment: the size and quality of trade-union representation. This, if we are not mistaken, was a refreshing surprise to some of the conference participants who in recent years have become inured to seeing former fighters, grown fat between the ears and elsewhere, taking orders from the Democratic high command. The trade unionists at the Cleveland conference represented those lower levels in the labor movement who are somewhat less than enthusiastic about the way the political policies of the Reughters and Meanys have paid off in anti-labor barriers and weakened unions. Their inclinations are to go in the direction of a labor party that could effectively express the true weight and importance of the American working class in the political field. Many of them, as was clear at Cleveland, are prepared to go much further in the direction of socialism.

Their main contribution at the Cleveland conference was to indicate more precisely how socialist activity can be linked with such popular issues as defeating the referendums on the so-called Right-to-Work laws. Both the Ohio and California experiences offered much food for thought on the campaign for better laws for workers and trade unionists and trade unionists of this type ran a pilot campaign of socialist opposition to the Right-to-Work proposition with encouraging results. This stood in contrast to Communist party utilization of the issue to ring up votes for the cold-war candidates of the Democratic party.

The significant number of trade unionists who showed up at Cleveland testifies to the inspiring effect of united socialist campaigning in 1958. Union militants are attracted by candidates capable of standing up to

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The image contains a page from the International Socialist Review, featuring a list of contents and articles. The text is too detailed to summarize comprehensively here, but it appears to discuss various topics related to socialism, labor, and political activism, likely from a socialist perspective.
the political spokesmen of the corporations; and the demonstrated capacity of socialists of varying views to get together in a united effort has given many unionists new hope that the long monopoly the two parties of Big Business have exercised in American politics can finally be breached. The lesson is obvious. The socialists who conferred at Cleveland are on the right road to attracting wider support in militant sectors of the labor movement.

THREE main political positions were voiced at the Cleveland conference in connection with the main issue confronting socialists in electoral activity. John T. McManus summarized them succinctly in the National Guardian:

"The possibilities of independent electoral action were brought into much better focus as unionists, students, and gray political veterans took the floor to argue for middleground maneuverability between hardrock positions represented by the Communist Party, which advocates operating within the Democratic Party with the labor movement, and the Socialist Workers Party, which refuses to support candidates of 'capitalist' parties, and advocates challenging them with independent socialist candidates in every possible situation."

These positions were debated during the formation of the United Independent-Socialist ticket in New York. Neither the Communist party nor the Socialist Workers party altered their stands. The "middlegrounders" could see little difference in repugnant evils between the dynasties of Harriman and Rockefeller; and so a basis was provided to put a united socialist ticket on the ballot, offering voters a genuine choice. Communist party officials were much exercised over this "sectarianism," while members of the Socialist Workers party and readers of the National Guardian, pitching in enthusiastically to overcome the difficulties of putting the ticket on the ballot, felt that a big turn had been made.

The discussion on this question at Cleveland, we take it, was not intended to register a congealing of previous positions but rather to open up further discussion which can now proceed at a more leisurely pace in the absence of major electoral opportunities in 1959. It is important, we think, to go as far as possible in removing differences, or at least in getting a clearer understanding of the differences, in advance of an action.

An instructive case in point was the discussion last summer over including a plank in the United Independent-Socialist platform in support of efforts of workers in the Soviet bloc to achieve restoration of proletarian democracy. This was resisted by a majority of supporters of the ticket, who felt that it placed an unnecessary obstacle in the way of Communist party participation in the united campaign. The Socialist Workers party, which had been pressing for this plank, reluctantly agreed to concede and leave it out. The Communist party did not respond to the gesture and the candidates soon found themselves forced to take a stand anyway on the need for democratic rights in the Soviet bloc. The issue was posed very sharply in the murder of Imre Nagy and the shameful campaign against Boris Pasternak. But once the candidates had indicated on radio and TV how they felt on this question, they found it easy to defend the progressive Soviet achievements which the October Revolution and the planned economy made possible. The redbaiters, on the other hand, found it difficult to attack the ticket. The American people are interested in Soviet successes; at the same time they are deadly earnest in their distaste for dictatorial Stalinist practices. That is a fact of life.

It would seem fair to conclude that even though it was not possible to reach agreement on this question when the platform was drawn up, the free discussion made it easier later for the candidates to make the necessary adjustment when the issue came up in press and radio interviews. But it would clearly have been politically advantageous in answering early attempts to smear the ticket as "Stalinoid" to have been able to refer to a simple statement in the platform on the need for Soviet democracy.

In this spirit — looking forward to 1960 and its problems — we would like to continue the discussion that occurred at Cleveland on support, "maneuverability" or opposition in regard to candidates of the Republican and Democratic parties.

First, it would prove instructive to see how well the course toward united socialist tickets, in complete opposition toward both Democratic and Republican parties, measured up to the general voting pattern of the working people. The Worker made much of the fact that McManus, the candidate for governor on the ISP ticket, came short of the 50,000 votes required by New York's reactionary electoral statutes to qualify for permanent ballot status. (The final vote for McManus and Rubinstein was 31,658; Mulzac, 34,038; Gray 31,746; Lamont, 49,087). Lack of funds and time for registering supporters and time for public campaigning, the court attack of the De Sapio machine and the studied silence of the press are sufficient to account for the inability to reach the goal. Under the circumstances the ticket did remarkably well. It is clear that the actual vote can not be taken as the decisive gauge in measuring how well the political course paralleled voting trends.

In raising the question of policy in pointing to the low vote, the Worker fails to mention the effect of the 22-year Communist party and Social Democratic policy of calling for a "lesser evil" vote in favor of the Democratic party. If a consistent policy of independent political action had been followed during this same period by these organizations, with their once powerful trade-union influence, the socialist movement in 1958 might have been close to taking office, in many of America's industrial centers. The real explanation the Worker owes its readers is why it began supporting Democratic party candidates and why it continues to this day to support them despite the disastrous consequences.

The nationwide swing to the Democrats continued the shift away from the witch-hunt atmosphere of the
McCarthy period. The Democrats profited from it, cashing in on a distorted expression of popular mood. In 1952 the swing was toward Eisenhower and the Republicans because the Democratic wing of the capitalist political machine had become identified as the war party and the General offered an end to the Korean conflict. In 1958 the swing was toward the Democrats because ever since the thirties the Republican wing of the capitalist political machine has been identified as the depression party and the “recession” of 1958 again confirmed this impression. Behind the political twins, the popular mind sees the twin evils of war and depression.

It was apparent that big segments of voters have made an elementary association: under the two-party set-up a mere vote against war may mean a vote for depression and a mere vote against depression may mean a vote for war. Such a conclusion constitutes a rejection of both Democrats and Republicans.

This mood was spotted from coast to coast in such illuminating pre-election surveys as those made by the New York Times. Widespread bullet voting and crossing of party lines confirmed the accuracy of the surveys. The outstanding example, of course, was the countershift from the Democratic to the Republican column in the most populous state in the country and the deep inroads Rockefeller made in the working-class and minority-group voting bloc in New York City, the country’s political capital. Rockefeller’s gimmick was to appear neither Republican nor Democratic. He succeeded in proving thereby that in this key state a decisive layer will take a vacuum in preference to war or depression.

On a nationwide scale, the voters pounced on the walls of the two-party system like prisoners seeking escape.

The other important new fact was the mobilization of workers against the Right-to-Work propositions. No credit for this goes to Democratic candidates, who reaped part of the benefit. They played it cool in view of the money Big Business shifted from the Republican to the Democratic column of its political expense book. It was the rank and file unionists who singled out these ultra-reactionary propositions and set out to deal them a resounding defeat.

Viewed objectively, the conclusion is inescapable that the strong stand which the ISP and similar formations elsewhere took against both Democratic and Republican candidates in 1958 reflected a widespread if inadequately organized, sentiment in America today.

This, of course, is proof only of the timeliness of independent political action. That fact, however, should give anyone favoring socialism on any grounds long pause about holding open the possibility of a “maneuver” involving support of a capitalist party candidate. If we have read the election signs correctly, further economic decline or even continued stagnation, with its accompanying unemployment and general insecurity, can lead to rapid radicalization of the American working class. Nothing would be more out of season in such an atmosphere than advocacy of support to this or that “lesser evil” candidate of the parties of war, depression and witch-hunts. To promise it in advance would cast a pall over any independent enterprise in its very infancy. Militant workers, who take their politics seriously, would cast a cold and suspicious look at it, and they would be fully justified in this. Why take a ride with a driver who announces he may crack up manipulating the first curve?

More than a century of the most variegated experimentation has shown that it simply does not pay to support candidates committed to the ruling class, no matter how liberal their promises, or demagogic their oratory. In every case such support has at least undermined independent political action and more often led to political catastrophe. The recital would fill a good-sized book; we will return to this in the future, hoping that it is sufficient here to pose a single sentence: Why vote for a Democratic candidate on the American Labor party line when you can vote for him directly on the Democratic line?

The theoretical explanation of the political folly of supporting capitalist candidates is not too difficult. To back a Democrat, for instance, implies the possibility of “capturing” the Democratic machine. (You bolster the “good” side in preparation for ousting the “bad” side.) Advocating a “lesser evil” is a negative expression of the same thing. (Agreed that you can’t capture the machine; but Hangman Brown, you must admit, does tie a better-fitting noose than Hangman Jones.) The sage advice that a half loaf is better than none belongs here too. (That green hue is not mold but arsenic.) The Communist party variant is that socialists must stick with the majority. (A normal sheep follows the flock into the slaughter house.) Then there is the opening-wedge argument that an “exceptional” Democrat, say a trade unionist who bucked the local ward-heelers in the primaries and is now running against a reactionary Republican, “deserves” socialist support. (What is he—a candidate for window dressing or an innocent who needs wising up to the fact that you can neither hijack nor reform the Democratic party?)

Are capitalist parties constructed so that they can be captured by the people? The most cursory study of the way the Democratic and Republican machines are owned, controlled and operated will reveal how illogical it is to imagine that these political instruments of Big Business can be torn out of the capitalist grasp and used against their possessors. You are up against billions of dollars, a hand-picked professional political gang hoary in the treacherous art of minority rule. You are up against organized corruption, lies, demagogy, back-stabbing, bribery and ruthless determination to maintain the capitalist character of the bi-partisan twins. Is it so difficult to uncover the elementary law of politics that parties reflect the class structure of society? If this is so, then it is simpler and easier to go to the economic root of things — capture the giant corporations themselves and let their political extension wither on the vine. To do that, the workers need their own political party.

Such is the thinking behind the decision of Marxists to make it a principle; that is, a fundamental policy not to support capitalist candidates under any circum-

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stances, any time, any place and to put their energy and resources, instead, into building an effective political instrument of the working class. The kind of party needed is utterly different in program, structure, control and operation from the capitalist machines. It has to be built from the ground up. It can't be captured ready made.

**Peace** came up at the Cleveland conference along with other issues that figured in the 1958 election. However, little discussion occurred on the more specific international issues that are troubling the world today. One of the reasons for this was that the conference proposed only to discuss the 1958 election and possible preparations for 1960. This limitation was understandable and, in the circumstances, completely justifiable.

The fact remains, however, that American socialists have much to consider in attempting to reach a common viewpoint on international issues. Many socialists today can give you facts and figures by the yard on how Big Business is carving up our natural resources and seeking to extend its hooks further into the national domain. They are also up on what is happening in outer space, including the latest findings about radiation in the belt pierced by the new rockets. In between, where the bulk of humanity lives, their knowledge leaves much to be desired. Their tendency is to by-pass questions involving those areas, in the belief that we have enough to handle in our own back yard.

True enough, our national yard is sufficiently cluttered. But we can never afford to forget that the world's greatest imperialist power is located right here at home and that one of its biggest preoccupations is intervention in the internal affairs of other countries. American socialists are duty bound to follow events abroad with sufficient care to be able to determine which figures and forces line up on the side of Wall Street and which are in opposition.

It is not simply a question of good will and solidarity with oppressed people abroad fighting for their freedom, important as this is. An incorrect position on a struggle abroad, even abstention, can materially aid the monopolies, thereby making the domestic class struggle against them more difficult. On the other hand, helping to achieve a victory abroad weakens the monopolies and thereby aids the struggle for socialism in America.

All this is known, in general, to every American socialist. Where things get sticky is in those cases where the forces are contradictory. Here it is absolutely necessary to have certain knowledge and the aid of Marxist method and experience. Take the current example of Arab nationalism. Should socialists be for or against it? Or should they be for and against? Should they be for at one time and against at a different time? Or at one and the same time? What criteria should they use in taking a position?

The difficulty or obscurity of some of these questions does not lessen their importance. The Korean problem, too, was complicated and obscure — until thousands of American boys began returning in coffins.

The fact is that a whole series of time bombs were planted all over the world in the closing phase of World War II and these have been going off, one after the other, each of them threatening to set off World War III. The entire struggle for peace, so acute in the minds of American socialists, is intimately tied up with such troublesome places as Quemoy, Taiwan, Viet Nam, Cyprus, Lebanon, Algiers, Berlin . . .

Moreover, the repeated outbreaks in these and similar areas all point to the great enigma of World War II. Why wasn't it followed by a series of socialist over-turns in Western Europe that would have settled the fate of capitalism once and for all?

That question should haunt every socialist. World War I gave us the October Revolution in Russia, although there was only the small persecuted party of the Russian Bolsheviks to lead it. World War II was far more ghastly, far more destructive, far more conclusive in its revelation of the abyss into which capitalism is taking humanity. A great power, great enough to defeat German imperialism, claimed to have achieved socialism in the thirties and thereby to have set an example for the entire world. Tens of millions of workers throughout Europe turned toward the Soviet Union for leadership. Yet only in Yugoslavia and China, where Kremlin directives were defied, did overturns occur under national leadership. In the heart of Europe where the decay of capitalism was most advanced and most visible, this rotted structure managed to survive. How is this to be explained?

A riddle for historians? Yes. But what if the policies that secured the structure of European capitalism are still active? What are the connections between De Gaulle's return to power in 1958 and the Communist party policies since 1941? What does this signify for the struggle to achieve a world of enduring peace?

We do not suggest that interest in such questions should supersede interest in winning the struggle for integration in American schools, or in pressing for the thirty-hour week at forty-hours pay to combat unemployment, or in demonstrating for a sane nuclear policy, or in freeing Morton Sobell, or in reforming America's reactionary election laws to make it easier for minority parties to get on the ballot, or in building the circulation of the socialist press, or in getting socialists together.

But we do have the opinion that in America we suffer from a kind of socialist "isolationism" that takes a deprecating attitude toward some of the most burning questions on our planet simply because our visualization of geography lags behind today's jetplane timetables.

We hope that one of the consequences of the Cleveland conference will be to inspire a discussion that will bring this side of socialist politics into better balance.
The South’s Dilemma

Shall education be sacrificed to the racist fetish of segregation? Doubts begin to affect 'massive resistance'

by Lois Saunders

The United States Supreme Court on September 29, 1958 told the South to end its obstruction and to get on with the task of integrating its schools.

It thus set the legal framework within which the continuing battle of the Negroes for equality in educational opportunities must unfold. For the first time the question was posed to the South as a choice between the alternatives of admitting a limited number of Negroes to all-white schools or closing down the schools entirely: integration or no education.

The Court made it clear that henceforth the South must accord the same rights to Negro children as it does to white children. "The constitutional rights of children not to be discriminated against in school admission on grounds of race or color," stated the unanimous decision, "... can neither be nullified openly and directly by state legislators or state executive or judicial officers, nor nullified indirectly by them through evasive schemes for segregation whether attempted ingeniously or ingenuously."

In an unusual move, the Court gave advance warning that it would hold unconstitutional any legislation or plan that seeks to subvert its orders. The decision continued:

"State support of segregated schools through any arrangement, management, funds or property cannot be squared with the [Fourteenth] Amendment's command that no state shall deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws."

This emphatic "No!" was the Supreme Court's answer to an appeal from Little Rock officials for postponement of the token integration enforced there last year after federal troops put down riots officially inspired by Arkansas Gov. Orval E. Faubus. The request for a two and one-half year delay was a stratagem calculated to nullify the Court's previous rulings and bring integration to a halt.

Had the Court backed down and granted the delay, it would have meant putting off school desegregation to an indefinite future throughout the South. Little Rock was the symbol and the testing ground, and this was universally recognized. In fact, federal judges in Virginia and elsewhere held up judgments in other school cases pending the Little Rock decision. The granting of the delay there would have been an invitation to racists everywhere to foment riots in the Faubus fashion, and then use the resulting violence and tension as an excuse for preventing court-ordered integration.

Even more was at stake, however, than the fate of integration; the authority of the federal government had been brought into question. By the time school opened in September, the South had gone too far in its defiance to permit the Court to yield to the Little Rock appeal. The South again, as in the period before the Civil War, was asserting the supremacy of the states and accusing the federal government of exceeding its powers by intervening in the matter of race relations. By choosing States Rights as its battle cry, the South threatened the foundations upon which the government is based. Successful defiance of specific federal court orders in one sphere opens the way for defiance elsewhere and weakens the entire governmental structure. Faced with a fundamental challenge to its authority, the Court had no alternative but to insist that its orders be carried out. This was the same issue that a year earlier had impelled the reluctant Pres. Eisenhower to send federal troops into Little Rock.

In the ruling of September 29, already referred to, the Court made it clear that it took a serious view of the challenge to its authority. Chief Justice Earl Warren, who wrote the decision, quoted from two of his predecessors, Chief Justice John Marshall who served from 1801 to 1835, and Charles Evans Hughes who was Chief Justice from 1930 to 1941, to restate the basic concepts of government that have guided the United States throughout its existence.

He quoted Marshall as follows: "It is emphatically the province and the duty of the judicial department to say what the law is ... If the legislatures of the several states, at will, annul the judgments of the courts of the United States and destroy the rights acquired under those judgments, the Constitution becomes a solemn mockery."

From Hughes, Warren quoted: "If a governor can nullify a Federal Court order it is manifest that the fiat of a state governor, and not the Constitution of the United States, would be the supreme law of the land; that the restrictions of the Federal Constitution upon the exercise of state power would be but impotent phrases."

Can It Be Enforced?

In denying the delay sought by Little Rock, the Court spoke out with unmistakable clarity. Yet its order was insufficient to send a single Negro child to a white school. In the normal course, the Supreme Court has spoken, its decision is final and the disputed issue is settled. This does not apply, however, to cases involving race relations in the South, for these cases reflect a basic clash between antagonistic social forces. Demands of Negroes for equality even in limited spheres can be satisfied only by weakening the Jim Crow structure of society, the system which assures the continued rule of the white supremacists. To settle cases that involve struggles of such sweep, something more than a Supreme Court verdict is required. Some means must be found to enforce the verdict.

This is the essence of the problem. Can the Supreme Court decision be enforced? And if so, how?

Negroes say that the decision can be enforced and that it must be enforced now. They regard it as a monstrous crime against their children that they continue to suffer the degradation and disabilities of segregated, inferior schools in defiance of the clearly enunciated law.

They are right, of course. Justice cries out that their demands be met. Concern for human dignity, for the education of
the millions of Negro children growing up in the South, for their modest but intense striving merely to be treated as equals, dictate that the court decision should be enforced.

But like the court ruling itself, such considerations carry little weight with white Southern leaders. Instead of complying, the South insistently defied the Court, challenged the decision and organized systematically to oppose it. Since May 17, 1954, when the Supreme Court handed down its initial school decision holding that segregation in itself equals discrimination and is unconstitutional, the Southern states have passed close to 200 laws to prevent integration in the schools.

They have devised endless delaying tactics; they have organized and activated the White Citizens Councils and the Ku Klux Klan; they have resorted to economic boycott and terror against Negroes who seek their rights, and economic pressure and social ostracism against whites who are unwilling to conform to the Southern dictate and obey its taboos. They have thus sought to organize the totality of white society into the "massive resistance" policy of which they boast.

The South has made it abundantly clear that it is prepared to use every resource it can muster in defense of segregation. In following this course, it is doing what every ruling class or group has always done and always will do. It is fighting to preserve its own special privileges.

Those in power in the South owe their elevated position to the denial of rights to Negroes. This is true of the U.S. senators and representatives, the state governors, the state and city administrations and the courts. It is also true of the landlords who exploit the sharecroppers and of the manufacturers who benefit from the open-shop, low-wage situation that results from division of the workers along race lines.

This "way of life" is based upon the myth of Negro inferiority. Segregation is one of the means whereby the myth is perpetuated. Separate and inferior schools are part of the Jim Crow pattern and in turn supplement and reinforce the degrading effects of segregation.

Any gains made by Negroes, no matter how small, tend to destroy the myth. Give the Negro an adequate education, equal opportunities for employment, the right to vote and to hold office, and the myth will explode. Once Negroes acquire equality of status, the arbitrary rule of the white supremacists and the advantages they reap from that rule will come to an end.

Integration — In Ten Centuries

The effectiveness of the South's resistance is reflected in the statistics on school integration. Up to the present time, not a single elementary or high school anywhere in the Deep South has been integrated, and there has been only a trickle of integration in the Middle South. The important gains have occurred in the border states, but even here the process has slowed to a virtual halt.

The first two years following the 1954 Supreme Court decision saw many thousands of youngsters attending mixed schools for the first time — in Washington, D.C.; in Wilmington, Delaware; in Baltimore; in much of Kentucky and most of Missouri.

Then integration bogged down. By the fall term of 1956, some 700 school districts, almost a quarter of the approximately 3,000 in the South, were desegregated. In 1957, only 57 new districts were involved. This September the number of newly desegregated school districts dropped to 12, involving only 307 Negro children.

In the whole state of Tennessee, one of the states of the Mid-South, a total of 117 Negroes were enrolled in formerly all-white classes up to the end of school last spring. If Tennessee were to maintain that rate, it would take about 1,000 years — ten centuries — to integrate its 133,740 Negro students.

The battles now convulsing the South are not being fought over full integration, but over token integration. Only the millions of Negro children growing up in the South, for their modest but intense striving merely to be treated as equals, dictate that the court decision should be enforced.

But like the court ruling itself, such considerations carry little weight with white Southern leaders. Instead of complying, the South insistently defied the Court, challenged the decision and organized systematically to oppose it. Since May 17, 1954, when the Supreme Court handed down its initial school decision holding that segregation in itself equals discrimination and is unconstitutional, the Southern states have passed close to 200 laws to prevent integration in the schools.

They have devised endless delaying tactics; they have organized and activated the White Citizens Councils and the Ku Klux Klan; they have resorted to economic boycott and terror against Negroes who seek their rights, and economic pressure and social ostracism against whites who are unwilling to conform to the Southern dictate and obey its taboos. They have thus sought to organize the totality of white society into the "massive resistance" policy of which they boast.

The South has made it abundantly clear that it is prepared to use every resource it can muster in defense of segregation. In following this course, it is doing what every ruling class or group has always done and always will do. It is fighting to preserve its own special privileges.

Those in power in the South owe their elevated position to the denial of rights to Negroes. This is true of the U.S. senators and representatives, the state governors, the state and city administrations and the courts. It is also true of the landlords who exploit the sharecroppers and of the manufacturers who benefit from the open-shop, low-wage situation that results from division of the workers along race lines.

This "way of life" is based upon the myth of Negro inferiority. Segregation is one of the means whereby the myth is perpetuated. Separate and inferior schools are part of the Jim Crow pattern and in turn supplement and reinforce the degrading effects of segregation.

Any gains made by Negroes, no matter how small, tend to destroy the myth. Give the Negro an adequate education, equal opportunities for employment, the right to vote and to hold office, and the myth will explode. Once Negroes acquire equality of status, the arbitrary rule of the white supremacists and the benefits they reap from segregation will come to an end.

Integration — In Ten Centuries

The effectiveness of the South's resistance is reflected in the statistics on school integration. Up to the present time, not a single elementary or high school anywhere in the Deep South has been integrated, and there has been only a trickle of integration in the Middle South. The important gains have occurred in the border states, but even here the process has slowed to a virtual halt.

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To satisfy these conflicting needs, country ever since it gained ascendancy unity, the differences that have existed semi-skilled and skilled labor. finance capital which has ruled the party. Both, parties are controlled by Negroes. With the cracking of that population smothered in a common anti-Race party or the Democratic division has been along race lines, with Negroes. Up to now the Negro ethos is also faced with the changing economy of the South where the logic of the elaborate plans the President, he was not merely indulging in the “radical” wing of the Democratic party, he was not merely indulging in campaign oratory; he was also voicing the apprehensions of the financial rulers of the country.

The strange phenomenon of the Supreme Court enunciating a policy which neither the President nor Congress is prepared to enforce reflects the contradiction faced by Big Business. It is determined to impose its policies through control of the executive and the conservative bloc in Congress. At the same time, it is bedeviled by Negro pressure at home and damaging criticism of American race relations in foreign countries. It is also faced with the changing economy of the South where industrialization is beginning to supplant the plantation in importance, with the resulting increase in the demand for semi-skilled and skilled labor.

To satisfy these conflicting needs, in the Civil War, and it is, by and large, the interests of Big Business that are served by the lawmakers and the executive. Control of Congress is exercised primarily through a bloc between Southerners and Northern conservatives. Within this bloc, the most stable group is that which comes from the Deep South. Wall Street, despite the fact that its publicists keep assuring us that Wall Street finds it convenient to speak with two voices, The Court says proceed with integration; the President counters with an admonition not to proceed too rapidly. With one hand it gives with the other it taketh away.

We can expect, therefore, that the extension of Negro rights will be held to a minimum, and that, as a corollary, the gains that Negroes make will be in proportion to the amount of pressure exerted both here and abroad.

“Massive Resistance”

The crisis that has built up in Little Rock and in Virginia and which will develop elsewhere stems in large part from the dual policies of the government described above. Astute politicians like Faubus are emblazoned to defy the Supreme Court by the sympathy they find in high places. When the Court this fall issued what amounted to a death warrant, Faubus replied by putting into operation the “massive resistance” provisions of the Civil Rights bill which it passed in 1960. Instead of supporting the Negroes in their legal proceedings, Faubus had openly defied a federal court order. Even in that tense situation he made it clear that he was not taking sides publicly on the integration issue. Instead of supporting the Negroes in their demand that the law be enforced, Eisenhower has given encouragement to the South in its resistance to the law.

Congress, the third branch of government, could have passed laws increasing the power of the Justice Department, but Congress, like the President, has refrained from taking action to back the Supreme Court ruling. In the Civil Rights bill which it passed in the summer of 1957 — the first such legislation since Reconstruction — Congress spoke only softly, content to let the old bromide about how you can’t change men’s hearts by passing laws. This is the language of the South by the President of the United States. It begs the question, for Negroes are little concerned about what goes on in the hearts of Southern whites. Let the Southerners hug their hate to their bosoms as tightly as they like — but also force them to comply with laws that guarantee Negroes their rights.

The farthest Eisenhower has ever gone in his speeches was to deplore the bombing of synagogues after the dynamiting of a Jewish temple in Atlanta in October. When he sent troops to Little Rock in September, 1957, he was careful to explain that he did so only because Faubus had openly defied a federal court order. Even in that tense situation he made it clear that he was not taking sides publicly on the integration issue. Instead of supporting the Negroes in their demand that the law be enforced, Eisenhower has given encouragement to the South in its resistance to the law.

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Marx’s theories have been disproved, has a clear understanding of the conflict between its interests and those of the workingman, whether he has a white skin or a black skin. It has, therefore, a profound distrust of any congressmen or senators who show a tendency to “coddle” labor, including the Negro, for it recognizes that not all the legislators are equally pliant and reliable servants.

When Pres. Eisenhower in his campaign speeches prior to the November elections lashed out against what he called the “radical” wing of the Democratic party, he was not merely indulging in campaign oratory; he was also voicing the apprehensions of the financial rulers of the country.

The strange phenomenon of the Supreme Court enunciating a policy which neither the President nor Congress has prepared to enforce reflects the contradiction faced by Big Business. It is determined to impose its policies through control of the executive and the conservative bloc in Congress. At the same time, it is bedeviled by Negro pressure at home and damaging criticism of American race relations in foreign countries. It is also faced with the changing economy of the South where industrialization is beginning to supplant the plantation in importance, with the resulting increase in the demand for semi-skilled and skilled labor.

To satisfy these conflicting needs,
differences, begin to manifest themselves. Already we are hearing voices that sound strange in the South. When Faubus, after sending the high schools to remain closed, called for a referendum to decide whether the schools should be kept closed or opened on an integrated basis, white women of Little Rock organized a "Women's Emergency Committee to Open Our Schools," and conducted a house-to-house campaign to get their neighbors to vote in favor of integration. One member of the committee commented: "It's ridiculous to try to retain the ways of old grandad in this age of sputniks and missiles.

During the same campaign, 63 of the city's leading lawyers, many of whom number railroads and other large corporations among their clients, took out ads in the daily papers, urging a vote for integration.

In Charlottesville, Virginia, last June, when school closing was threatened but had not yet become a reality, a poll was taken of PTA members at Venable Elementary School, one of those affected by the court order. Of the 305 parents who replied, 177 favored "limited integration," against 128 who preferred closing the schools rather than admit a few Negro students. When the school was finally closed this fall, the townpeople were split in two. Two committees were formed, one for integration, the other for segregation.

A sizeable section of Virginia's teachers also are prepared to accept integration. At its state convention October 30, the Virginia Educational Association heard an address by Gov. Almond and then voted a resolution asking him to convene the General Assembly and pass laws to reopen the schools. A softening resolution was tabled by a vote of 650 to 151.

The American Federation of Teachers likewise took a fine stand at its convention in Milwaukee and set an example that other unions should copy. The convention refused to reinstate its all-white Chattanooga local and upheld its constitutional provision that prohibits any local from "limiting its membership on account of race or color." It also called upon the federal government to take over and run an integrated basis all schools that have been closed. This same proposal has appeared in a number of places and gives some evidence of developing into a popular demand.

Another proposal that seems likely to spread is one for "local option," that is, letting the residents of a city or town ordered to integrate decide by referendum whether they prefer to close the schools or admit Negro children. One such referendum has been held in Norfolk, Virginia. A threat to close schools next year in Atlanta, Georgia, has led to a similar demand from the mayor there. Let the people vote on the issue, he urged.

An action that is highly unusual in the South - if, indeed, it has ever occurred before - took place in Norfolk in October when a group of white parents filed a lawsuit against the governor and other state officials asking that the state's segregation laws be ruled unconstitutional and that the six schools that have been shut down be reopened.

The press, too, here and there, is showing signs of shifting its position. On October 5 the Roanoke (Virginia) Times commented editorially: "The program of massive resistance has now come to the bitter and inevitable finality... [Yielding to the court is onerous] but to deprive Virginia's children, white and colored, of education or to give them a defective education is an even greater evil."

There has occurred, also, a beginning of political activity in favor of integration. In Virginia, a white woman, Dr. Louise O. Wensel, the mother of five children, ran as an independent candidate in the November 4 election against Sen. Harry F. Byrd and his tightly knit, pro-segregation machine. In her campaign, she charged Byrd with using "dictatorial control" to impose an unconstitutional program of massive resistance. She obtained an unprecedented vote equal to one-third of her total. Her strongest support came from those cities immediately affected by integration orders: Norfolk, 42 per cent; Arlington, 38 per cent; and Charlottesville, 37 per cent.

A special referendum two weeks later on November 18 confirmed the election results. In voting on the school issue, 41.2 per cent of Norfolk's citizens preferred accepting integration to keeping the schools closed.

In Houston, Texas, in the November elections, a Negro housewife, Mrs. Charles E. White, upset all expectations and won election to the city's school board, after campaigning on a clear-cut pro-integration platform. She could not have been elected without white votes.

Of special interest among these first voices raised against the monolithic anti-Negro refrain are the voices of the youth. At the height of the agitation in Little Rock this year, a group of teen-agers gathered at Hall High School and solemnly drew up a petition asking that the schools be reopened and stating that they had no objection to attending classes with qualified Negroes. In Norfolk, when the school's were closed there, about 100 students gathered in a parking lot near the Northside Junior High School and collected signatures on a petition which stated: "Not as segregationists or integrationists but as students who want an
People in Glass Houses

“The sudden spread of military regimes in the free world worries the Eisenhower Administration,” according to a Dec. 7 special dispatch from Washington to the New York Times.

In the last six months, generals have taken over in seven more countries, bringing the total to sixteen.

“Responsible men at the topmost levels of Government” are “asking why the democratic system is failing in so many parts of the world” and what “if anything” should be done about it.

The White House, naturally, “does not consider itself responsible, much less to blame” for the trend toward dictatorial military rule. Nevertheless the fact “that the President of the United States is a general probably adds to the sensitivity of the Administration.”


education we ask you to please keep our schools open.”

In Van Buren, Arkansas, in the western part of the state, a 15-year-old girl, Jessie Angelina Evans, president of the Student Council, put her elders to shame when she stood up before a turbulent school board meeting and asked segregationist parents: “Have you thought what you make those Negro children feel like, running them out of school?” To hostile questions, she replied: “Negroes have a right to attend school just as much as anybody. If we don’t object, why should anybody else?”

These are as yet only scattered voices in a wilderness of reaction, for the most part neither pro-Negro nor pro-integration, merely pro-education. In almost every case those who have spoken out in favor of integration have prefaced their remarks with the accepted ritual of the South: “I am opposed to integration . . . but” or “I dislike the Supreme Court decision as much as anybody . . . but”. Thus the prejudice remains, even while segregation tends to break down in fact — proving again the Marxist theorem that often social ideas often persist after the institutions which nourish them have disappeared.

The numbers involved in this incipient opposition to the South’s “massive resistance” are as yet too few to give the needed assistance to the Negroes who, as a minority, must find allies in order to carry their fight to a successful conclusion. The logical alliance is with the labor movement, but the cooperation that exists between Negroes and labor is limited and sporadic.

It would be incorrect to say that the labor movement has done nothing to further Negro demands for equality. The industrial unions formed in the militant thirties, especially in such areas as Detroit, have an excellent record in this regard and have demonstrated what can be done when workers unite. The unions have fallen down miserably, however, where their support is needed most, in the heartland of Jim Crow. In most instances the white workers of the South, instead of mobilizing on behalf of Negro rights, have formed an unnatural alliance with their class enemies against the Negroes, while their national leadership, grown conservative, has buckled under segregationist pressure and has failed even to discipline its own members. (There have been some exceptions. One, already noted, is the American Federation of Teachers; another is the Packinghouse Workers Union.)

Insistence on the part of the national union leaders that their locals in the South remain neutral for union purposes for integration would, moreover, bring them into conflict with the politicians of the South and would pose the need for a labor party, in opposition to the Democrats as well as the Republicans. Such a perspective runs counter to the intentions of the union leadership which is busy courting the Democrats in the false hope that they can resolve the problems facing the working class by putting in office the political representatives of the capitalists.

Negro leaders have been preoccupied with efforts to steer a course towards victory in the fight against segregation, while at the same time avoiding the horror of a racist massacre, and have shied away from organizing along political lines, even when such a development seemed possible, as in the march on Washington on May 17, 1957, the third anniversary of the Supreme Court decision.

They didn’t call the demonstration a March on Washington. Instead, they referred to it as a “Prayer Pilgrimage,” and the choice of name was significant. The leaders did not conceive of the demonstration as an inspiring beginning of a mass movement, national in scope, spearheading the formation of a new political alignment. By Martin Luther King, the acknowledged leader, called upon that demonstration to reject both Democrats and Republicans and take steps, together with white workers, to initiate a new party, he would have set in motion a political force that could eventually have challenged Jim Crow rule. Those in charge of the demonstration chose to contain it within safe limits and channel it into a prayerful supplication, pleading for understanding and love, then dispersing quietly and inconspicuously.

In the main, Negroes have chosen to carry on the fight through legal contests, where they have won singular successes. Both the Negro leaders and the Negro people have given inspiring examples of integrity, courage, devotion and resistance. In many cases these qualities in the Montgomery bus boycott where the entire community under the leadership of the Rev. King and the Rev. Ralph D. Abernathy, organized itself and walked together in order to win the right to “sit up front.” A heroic example was set also by the “Little Rock nine” who faced the mob and the bayonets of the state troopers and, then standing up to insults and taunts of white students throughout the school term, Their heroism has been matched by that of students in other test cases, and of countless other individuals in every section of the South.

But heroism, even when backed by a Supreme Court decision, has proven insufficient to overcome the entrenched power of the Southern rulers.

They maintain their power through political control and it is only through political action that they can be dislodged. In other words, we can expect that the Supreme Court decisions have been enforced in the Deep South only when a political realignment has taken place of such proportions as to make possible a successful bid for power by forces in opposition to the white supremacists.

It is for this reason that the rift within the white population of the South brought about by the closing of the schools is of such special significance. Integration in places like Norfolk has been an unnatural alliance with their class enemies against the Negroes, while their national leadership, grown conservative, has buckled under segregationist pressure and has failed even to discipline its own members. (There have been some exceptions. One, already noted, is the American Federation of Teachers; another is the Packinghouse Workers Union.)

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It is for this reason that the rift within the white population of the South brought about by the closing of the schools is of such special significance. Integration in places like Norfolk has become a live political issue instead of merely a dirty word used to inflame passions and instigate violence. There is now activity where before there was dead calm.

It is too soon to predict future developments, but this much can be said: the more Negroes challenge white supremacy, the more the division within the white South will deepen, and the greater will be the opportunity for the liberal forces and the white workers to line up alongside Negroes so that together they can strike a decisive blow against segregation and for equality.
Socialism and Humanism

Humanists come in many varieties. Should followers of Marx be included among them?

by William F. Warde

The opponents of Marxism from the Catholic theologians to the capitalist liberals have repeatedly indicted socialism for its alleged inhumanity. The solicitude of such critics for human welfare does not prevent them, however, from supporting a system which breeds fascism and military dictatorships, drops A-bombs on civilian populations, sends troops to protect the profits of oil magnates and keeps colored children from unsegregated schools.

The socialist movement, which aims to uproot these and similar evils, can easily defend itself against accusations of inhumanity from pro-capitalist sources. But recently a far more serious current of questioning about Marxism's regard for humanity has welled up within the socialist camp itself.

Revolted by the practices and pretenses of Stalinism, or repelled by the cowardice of Stalinism, or repelled by the cowardice of Stalinism, an increasing number of socialist and communist intellectuals are calling for a reconsideration of the relations of socialism to Humanism. There is a demand for a humanized socialism, provoked for different reasons in different parts of the world.

In Western Europe and England it voices the disillusion among the younger generation of radical intellectuals with the capitalist Welfare State policies of the reformist socialist parties. The new Humanists are deeply troubled by the perversion of socialist ideals they observe in the traditional working-class parties and their regimes. They are looking for an explanation of these pollutions and for the way to eliminate or avert them in the future. The Stalinist and Social Democratic leaders, they say, are so indifferent to the needs of ordinary people because they have forgotten the Humanist heritage of Marxism — and they recommend a return to Humanism in order to save socialism from further degradation.

The editors of Universities and Left Review, which came to life in England "between the re-entry of Soviet tanks into Budapest and the first combined assault of Port Said," form one significant section of this tendency. These young radicals start by rejecting two prevalent propositions: one, that socialism has culminated in the Welfare State; the other, the simple identification of Stalinist regimes with "the socialist half of the world."

This combined rejection of Social Democratic reformism and Stalinism is not only a sound beginning of political enlightenment; it is also an advanced one. It means that these spokesmen for the younger generation start — in words, if not yet in deeds — by skipping two whole stages of working-class political evolution.

While they are not quite so certain of their positive positions and program, they advocate a Socialist Humanism. "What we need now more than ever, as we open up the undiscovered area beyond the Welfare State," these political explorers write, "is a deep, radical critique of our society, a critique informed by Humanism (so little in evidence in either of the competing ideologies), holding to the revolutionary perspectives of socialism, which will break out of the cramp of orthodoxy into the freedom of new possibilities. A re-statement of the humanist basis is necessary, not only to purge away the crimes committed in the name of socialism, but as the first premise in a new argument, as an indispensable beginning to coherent thought on what the word means."

This accords in its own way with the much more powerful and insistent movement toward a Socialist Humanism associated with the anti-Stalinist struggles in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. In 1955-1956 Imre Nagy wrote a critical essay, Morals and Ethics, which was sent to all members of the Central Committee of the Hungarian Communist Party. "The Party membership and the Hungarian people . . . do not want a return to capitalism," he declared. "They want a people's democratic system in which the ideals of socialism become reality, in which the ideals of the working class regain their true meaning, in which public life is based on higher morals and ethics; they want a system that is actually ruled not by a degenerate Bonapartist authority and dictator but by the working people through legality and self-created law and order. They want a People's Democracy where the working people are masters of the country and of their own fate, where human beings are respected, and where social and political life are conducted in the spirit of humanism."

These were "dangerous thoughts." For the official indictment of Kadar's
government covering Nagy's execution in June 1958 charged that they served to inspire the Hungarian uprising of October 1956.

An issue fraught with such grave political and personal consequences deserves careful consideration. What are the real relations between Socialism and Humanism? In order to arrive at a correct answer to this question, it is first necessary to find out what Humanism is and what its history and achievements have been.

The Humanist Tradition

Humanism is a much older philosophy than Marxism and in various periods it has had a highly progressive influence upon human thought and social action. Before the advent of scientific socialism this mode of thought had already traversed a series of historical stages extending from antiquity to the Humanism of the Renaissance, the Humanism of the bourgeois-democratic revolutions, and the liberalistic Humanism of the nineteenth century.

Humanism first appeared as a distinct philosophical viewpoint among the Sophists in the Athenian city-state of the fifth century B.C. Under the impact of the democratic movement in that mercantile slave republic these wandering "teachers of wisdom" shifted the focus of theoretical attention away from the problems posed by the phenomena of nature, which had engrossed earlier Greek thinkers, to the activities of the citizen.

They sought to find out: "What is the good life and how can it be attained in this world?" Protagoras, the most renowned of the Sophists, not only diverted philosophy from nature but also from religion. Neither nature nor the gods but man "was the measure of all things," he taught. "As to the gods, I cannot say whether they exist or not. Many things prevent us from knowing, in the first place the obscurity of the matter, then the brevity of human life." For such agnostic doctrines he was accused of impiety, his books were burned, and he was driven from Athens.

The Humanist concentration upon a rational investigation of the affairs and destiny of mankind persisted into Roman times. One of the most memorable utterances of Humanism has come down to us from the Roman poet Terence: "I am a man and nothing that concerns a man is a matter of indifference to me." This maxim was a favorite of the French Humanist Montaigne and of the German socialist Karl Marx.

After its long eclipse by Christianity, Humanism re-emerged during the fourteenth century in Italy as one of the first rays of enlightenment issuing from the nascent urban merchant--craftsmen culture. This literary Humanism of the Renaissance, proceeding from the Italian Petrarch to the Dutch Erasmus, broke through the prison walls of medievalism. It opened a wider horizon on history than the enclosed outlook of the Catholic Church and circulated fresh air through the stale atmosphere of scholastic thought.

The Humanist writers, scholars and artists threw off the constrictions of the feudal monastery by immersing their minds in classical Greek and Roman life. Turning away from absorption in the hereafter, they began to celebrate the joys of life on earth. They took fresh delight in the human body and the senses and studied the conduct of mankind in preference to the mysteries of divinity. The more secular interests of the Renaissance Humanists educated the advanced elements of their times, helping to displace the values of Catholic supernaturalism and clear a path for Protestantism and bourgeois culture.

Humanism came into its own with the spread of the ideas and influences of the bourgeois revolution. This can be seen in the formative period of our own country. Many of the leaders of the First American Revolution, from Franklin to Jefferson, were imbued with Humanist ideals. Soon after Franklin's arrival in Philadelphia, he gathered around him, Charles Beard tells us, "a coterie of printers, shoemakers, and carpenters — a group known as the Junto which he called 'the best school of philosophy, morality, and politics that then existed in the province.' Three questions asked of new members revealed the spirit of this strange academy: 'Do you sincerely declare that you love mankind in general of what profession and religion soever? Do you think any person ought to be harmed in his body, name, or goods for mere speculative opinions or his external way of worship? Do you love truth for truth's sake and will you endeavor impartially to find and receive it yourself and communicate it to others?'" With the support of the Junto, Franklin founded the first institution of learning with a scientific and secular program of study in place of the classical and clerical curricula offered by the other colonial colleges.

The cosmopolitan outlook of this profoundly democratic and militant Humanism was best exemplified in the life and work of Tom Paine, who proudly proclaimed: "The world is my country and to do good is my religion."

In the field of religion Humanism was associated with Deism and later with such Protestant sects as the Unitarians who denied the divinity of Jesus, sought to rationalize and simplify Christianity, and substituted moral imperatives applicable to all mankind for theological dogmas. These churches still today in some places provide refuges for political dissenters.

At its extreme, this rationalism evolved into free thinking which rejected God altogether, discarded the last vestiges of supernaturalism, and made a cult of abstract humanity. In the United States it has found quasi-religious organization in Ethical Societies and Community Churches.

In its heyday, Humanism formulated the worthiest ideals of the democratic revolution. It was one of the highest forms of the bourgeois rationalism and individualism of the Enlightenment. In certain respects and in certain thinkers it came very close to materialism. The German materialist Feuerbach, for instance, thought of himself as a Humanist.

Present-day Humanism functions under the towering domination of monopolist capitalism, long after the completion of the democratic revolution and in the face of powerful labor and advancing socialist movements. It is essentially liberalistic, expressing the ethical attitude of cultivated city middle-class individuals who have torn up traditional religious ties, are agnostic or atheistic, phil-
to follow these positions to their logical conclusions and usually seek the intervention of some supposedly impartial agency to adjudicate and settle the claims of the contending forces. In the case of the Negro struggle for equality they look to the Supreme Court and the government; in strikes to boards of arbitration; and in the struggle for peace to the United Nations.

They fail to see, when the most vital issues are posed for decision, that concrete antagonisms turn out to be stronger than the claims of an abstract humanity in class society. The actions and reactions of strikers and scabs, Negroes and white supremacists, colonial rebels and imperialist agents are determined, not by their membership in the same human family, but by the defense of their respective interests. The unity of society gives way before the real fraternity of the oppressed confronting the camp of the oppressors.

There are, of course, Humanists of many hues, from the conservative to the radical. But their principal spokesmen are united in their preference for the conciliation of classes as the means of social reform. The philosopher John Dewey was both a pragmatist and a Humanist who advocated incompatible methods of action and rely upon different social forces to realize their objectives.

First of all, Humanism is not a philosophy of the working class, either in origin or in intent. In fact, it explicitly repudiates any specific class basis or affiliation. Its teachings are not founded upon the facts of economic life but upon universal ethical standards which are binding upon all people, because of their common human nature. This viewpoint conforms to the abstract individualism which is the substance of the ideology of bourgeois democracy.

On its social and political side, Humanism not only preaches peace by negotiation among nations but the reconciliation of classes, on the ground that the general interests and aims of all members of the human race, or inhabitants of a given country, transcend their particular social divisions. In this view the main source of social conflict comes, not from opposing material interests, but from ignorance, indifference and prejudice. Humanists therefore depend primarily upon the effects of education, reasonable arguments and appeals to the moral conscience of individuals to overcome the hostilities of contending social forces. This is a secular version of the universal embrace of Christian brotherhood without the Fathership of God or the mediation of the Son-Savior.

Marxism, on the other hand, explains existing antagonisms as the inescapable outcome of the irreconcilable material interests of the exploiters and exploited in capitalist society and bases itself upon the decisive role of the revolutionary struggle of the working people in bringing forth a better world.

In the second place, although many Humanists are materialist in their rejection of supernaturalism, they are quite idealistic in their approach to history and the solution of social problems. For them the motive force of historical progress does not come from the development of class conflicts brought about by changing economic conditions but from the diffusion of democracy, intelligence, moral values and higher ideals which stand above narrow class considerations and class material interests. They may be radical democrats and social reformers but they are not scientific socialists or working-class revolutionists.

Corliss Lamont, for example, is a thorough-going materialist and atheist in his outlook on nature and religion. When it comes to the reconstruction of our social system he advocates the methods of reason, democracy and science. These are admirable methods. But he will not admit that there is anything reasonable, democratic or scientific in the class struggle and the forms of action which flow from its recognition.

Humanists can and do support many progressive causes, from colonial revolutions to socialist electoral campaigns. But they hesitate to follow these positions to their logical conclusions and usually seek the intervention of some supposedly impartial agency to adjudicate and settle the claims of the contending forces. In the case of the Negro struggle for equality they look to the Supreme Court and the government; in strikes to boards of arbitration; and in the struggle for peace to the United Nations.

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Socialist Humanism in the Capitalist World

It is necessary to bring forward these points about the history of Humanism and its essential connection with middle-class liberalism because of the light they cast upon the movement for a "humane socialism" developing within the capitals of the West. Unlike the Humanist liberals, most of these Socialist Humanists presumably accept the premises, methods and conclusions of Marxism. In reality, many of them tend to
slip over by degrees toward the standpoint of bourgeois Humanism.

Despite certain ideological similarities, there can be sharp differences between the social and political functions of Socialist Humanism in the Soviet zone and in the capitalist environment. The Soviet Humanists are in the vanguard of a revolutionary opposition. They face a ruthless enemy in the entrenched holders of state power. They risk their careers, liberties and lives speaking and writing as they do.

The Socialist Humanists who operate in the capitalist West have a more ambiguous character. In so far as their Humanism becomes an ideological lever for promoting a break with the Stalinist perversions of socialism and opens a road to genuine Marxism in theory and in practice, it has a liberating effect. But it may also work in the opposite sense. Humanism can become the pretext, not for simply cutting loose from Stalinism, but for leaving the ground of dialectical materialism altogether, renouncing class-struggle policies, and shaping ideas to the prejudices of a petty-bourgeois outlook.

In one case Humanism can serve to bring its advocates closer to an unfalsified, revolutionary Marxism. In the other it can propel its proponents onto a wrong path. It is important to observe in which of these directions any avowed Socialist Humanist is heeding.

In addition to the young men of the Labour party around Universities and Left Review, some ex-Communist party scholars headed by Professors E. P. Thompson and John Saville, who edit The New Reasoner, have also raised the banner of a Socialist Humanism but in a more regressive manner. In their outrage against the recently reappraised abominations of Stalinism they incline to throw out the materialist basis of Marxism in favor of a moralistic and Utopian brand of socialist theory.

Here in the United States the demand for a more "human" approach to the solution of social problems is a persistent theme of the reformist socialist and ex-Trotskyist writers assembled around the magazine, Dissent. One of its editors, Irving Howe, wrote in an article, "A First Word on Sputnik," in Winter 1957: "The major problem of our world is no longer —assuming for the moment that it ever was— (my italics) the development of technology. Advances in technology bring no necessary good; when controlled by repressive governments they can cause pain and harm to many people; and if they seem to solve certain problems it is only by bringing into existence new and, at times, more difficult problems. The need of our time remains the ordering of a humane society, the creation of human relations among human beings. And that is why one remains a socialist."

Noteworthy in this lamentation is the light-minded way in which the author tosses aside, almost in passing, the materialist foundations of scientific socialism. Marxism insisted from the first, in opposition to all varieties of bourgeois idealism and Utopian Socialism, that the construction of a humane society depends upon a high development of technology along with the productive forces as a whole.

It is no novelty to learn that reactionaries can misuse progressive achievements, although the current world crisis drives that lesson home with emergency emphasis. That is why the workers have to wrest the means of production — and destruction — from the capitalist rulers. But from this situation the new Humanists infer, where they do not assert, that the materialist premises of Marxism — and the political practice based on them — must be given up because they somehow obstruct the road to "the creation of human relations among human beings."

It would be wrong to contend that Marxism has had nothing to do with Humanism either in the course of its formation or in the completed structure of its thought. During its birth process Marxism passed through a Humanistic stage. In the early 1840's, as he evolved from the Hegelian idealism of his university years to dialectical materialism, the youthful Marx at one point adhered briefly to Humanism and called his philosophy by that name. That was while he was an avowed disciple of Feuerbach. Just as Marx was a radical democrat before becoming a Communist, so he was a Humanist in philosophy before he emerged as a full-fledged materialist.

Those intellectuals who are hunting for the causes of the Stalinist perversions of Marxism in its departure from Humanism have seized upon this historical episode for their own purposes. Just as the Protestant reformers went back to the original gospels to find an uncorrupted Christianity, so these Socialist reformers are going back to the first writings of the immature Marx for the unpolluted sources of socialism.

Unfortunately, their research does not always produce progressive results. They arrive at extremely one-sided conclusions. While playing up the similarities between Marxism and Humanism, they fail to show wherein they essentially differ and even conflict with each other. Nor do they bother to explain why Marx and Engels revised and repudiated the Humanism they learned from Feuerbach in favor of the superior theory of dialectical materialism.

In philosophy, as in other domains of knowledge, the creators of Marxism incorporated into their own theory whatever remained valid and valuable in earlier schools of thought. They did this not only with the materialism of Feuerbach and the French Encyclopedists and with the dialectical logic of Hegel but also with the viable elements in the Humanist tradition of the Western world.

The major theoretical difference between their version of Humanism and all its preceding forms is that the latter were based to one degree or another on non-materialist premises, especially in the fields of sociology, history and politics. The Humanism of Marx is solidly integrated into a comprehensive and consistent materialist viewpoint.

When they weaken or discard these materialist foundations, the neo-Socialist Humanists wipe out the fundamental distinction between all types of bourgeois Humanism and a genuine Socialist Humanism. Whether they realize it or not, they do not pass beyond Stalinism but are pulling Socialist theory back to an infantile pre-scientific stage it has long since outgrown.
Europe and the Recession

America's recession terrified capitalists in Europe. But the dreaded impact has not been felt as yet. A Marxist explains why

by Tom Kemp

One of the most significant aspects of the American recession of 1957-58 was the attention which it received in the European press. Even before it became clear that it was to be the most acute since the war, it had probably occupied more space in the press, especially in Britain, than the two previous postwar recessions together.

The defenders and beneficiaries of capitalism in Europe began to lay bare some of the anxiety which had been dormant during the great boom era. Some resentment against the transatlantic big brother, whose every minor ailment was liable to afflict its weaker brethren with debilitating disease, was to be detected. Others sought in the lessons of the past the key to the "American Enigma" and some dire predictions were circulating by midsummer, 1958, even in the sober pages of United Nations publications. It is true that all good men predicted that a recurrence of anything like the depression of the 1930's was out of the question. But if their arguments were subjected to rational appraisal it could be seen that faith played an important role in them.

As it happened, of course, more by good luck than judgment, the predictions of numerous economists on both sides of the Atlantic that the recession would be sharp but short seems to have been confirmed. The revival currently proceeding could be a mere respite before a more drastic downward plunge: such things have happened before. On the other hand the prospect of a renewed powerful upswing, based on a high level of new business investment, seems improbable for the moment. It seems unlikely that the European economy will, in the coming months, receive much impetus from the United States; if anything the situation on this side of the Atlantic is likely to set limits to the extent of American recovery.

Both segments of world capitalism are in positions today somewhat unlike anything predicted. How did this occur? Even those who were confident that the recession in the USA would not be prolonged, often tended to be gloomy about its impact upon the rest of the capitalist world. Thus a long, leading article in the London Economist, regarded as an organ of City business, put forward a series of detailed proposals intended to deal with the threatened shortage of dollars consequent upon the recession. Dollar injections into the world economy on a sufficient scale to prevent the volume of world trade being curtailed were to be effected either directly or through the underwriting of the Sterling Area and the turning of the International Monetary Fund into a "super central bank".

1. An article under that title in Barclays Bank Review, November 1957, concluded by stressing the need for a resurgence of production in the United States because "in a world so divided ideologically, capitalism as exemplified by the American way of life must demonstrate its ability to prevent a severe recession."

2. Thus in the World Economic Survey, 1957 it was asserted that "There is no question of the recession taking on the dimensions of the pre-war depression; a decline on any such catastrophic scale is possible, on social and political, as well as on economic, grounds."

This is a British Marxist view of the effects of the recession on European capitalism. Tom Kemp teaches economics at Hull University.

Well supplied with dollars. A heartfelt appeal to "economists in the American administration" to "start working on the minds of the non-economists among their colleagues" concluded the article, which reflected the prevalent anxiety in business circles at the time of its appearance in May 1958.

In the following month the Economic Bulletin for Europe contained a highly technical article on "The International Impact of the United States Recession" which made less specific proposals but was based on similar premises. That is, a chronic shortage of dollars was in the offing and if world capitalism was not to be severely shaken by the inevitable trade contraction which would ensue, the United States should "take part in arrangements designed to alleviate the impact of the recession on international liquidity." And these would be needed even if domestic action were to be taken in the near future to raise demand in the United States. There was another alternative to which the authors of the article pointed: "concerted action by the industrialized countries of western Europe to maintain high levels of output and trade in the international economy outside the United States." And this would entail some measure of discrimination against imports from that country.

The Labour party's economic program, published in July, while seeing the "possibility of a world slump arising out of the present American recession," evaded the question of how its effects in Britain could be countered. The main line of defense suggested was the re-


5. Ibid. This article made clear that it was considerably easier for the West European countries to withstand the United States depression than the primary exporting countries, whose reserves had already been running low in 1957. It also pointed to the danger of a cumulative contraction spreading through the international economy. Another article in the same issue warned that the recession would in the United States...
In God We Trust

American billionaires are withholding investments in Asian and African lands because of their "fear of expropriation," according to the Dec. 7 New York Times. But these "also are the regions in which the Communist 'economic challenge' is being most vigorously pursued."  

Philip Cortney, chairman of the United States Council of the International Chamber of Commerce and president of Coty, Inc., came up with the following solution to the problem:

"It will require more intelligence than dollars, enlightened selfishness and unselfishness of the free nations of the people, a great responsibility of their leaders, if we are to stave off the flux of the barbarians. So help us God."

striction of dollar imports; i.e., discriminatory practices hardly to the liking of the U.S. government. Clearly the authors of this document sincerely hoped that the danger would never have to be faced. Not long before, one of the Bank reviews, discussing possibilities for government action to maintain home demand, added that it was "certain that the U.K. could not hope to spend itself out of a serious American recession."  

From about May 1958 an undercurrent of serious doubt crept into discussion of the American recession for several months, especially in Britain which was particularly vulnerable to cold blasts blowing in from a disorganized world economy.

Precarious Equilibrium

The reason for the anxiety was that even before the recession began European capitalism faced the prospect of a serious recession of its own. In both the previous postwar recessions in the United States powerful upward movements had persisted in most European countries. Then, throughout the 1950's, Europe had experienced a surge forward of investment and production with a classic capitalist, boom superimposed upon a high level of activity generated by armaments and other state expenditures. As a consequence there was a strong pull on the industries producing means of production both to expand their own capacity and to equip the industries turning out consumer goods. The extent of this investment boom differed in each country, being generally most rapid and far-reaching where wartime destruction and previous underinvestment had left a terrific backlog of investment opportunities, which, in the favorable conditions of an expanding world market and technological change, could be profitably exploited.

In the nature of things such a boom tends to exhaust itself — rising costs cut into profits, some sectors of industry grow disproportionately and markets tend to become saturated. Already during 1956 the rate of expansion had slackened and in many countries it slackened still further in 1957. During 1958 a distinct contraction was perceptible in Britain, Belgium and the Netherlands and was ineluctable in a number of other countries. The emphasis of economic policy had shifted from coping with the inflation and recurrent pressures on the balance of payments, which had accompanied the boom, to the problems involved in utilizing capacity and maintaining the rate of new investment. Not only did the American recession threaten to confront the European countries with a new shortage of dollars to maintain their external trade but it could precipitate a sharp and perhaps uncontrollable plunge in domestic activity.

Despite the rapid recovery of the capitalist world market since the war, largely made possible by dollar injections through the Marshall Plan and other American aid programs, it is still in precarious equilibrium. The disproportion between the United States and the rest of that market still remains. It shows itself in the dependence of the other countries on their ability to earn dollars for essential payments in the USA. And most capitalist countries — Western Germany is the main exception in Europe — have very slender reserves available to cushion adverse changes in their own balance of payments. The fear of a repetition of the 1940's, with their chronic dollar deficits, hangs over foreign economic policy. Hence the measures taken by the British government in September 1957 to meet a drain of sterling, though that meant dampening down business activity at home. Hence, too, the measures proposed in many quarters during 1958 to meet the apparently imminent all-round shortage of dollars expected to be a consequence of the U.S. recession.

The boom in the industrial countries was closely interlocked with the growth in their foreign trade, including increasing trade amongst themselves and with the USA. The expansion of demand from the primary countries, consequent upon this boom in turn reinforced it. For some time before 1957, however, commodity prices had been falling, raising the prospect that within a foreseeable time there would be little to curtail their imports from the industrial countries — setting in train, or contributing to, a contraction in world trade and depression in the industrial countries. The U.S. recession introduced a new fear, that of further pressure on commodity prices by reason of the lower demand for imports, likewise playing back upon the industrial countries.

Such expectations had shown themselves to be only partly valid in the previous U.S. recessions. As it happened in 1957-58 a number of other factors entered the picture, obscuring the clear-cut outlines that had been expected or feared. In fact the manifold relationships of the capitalist world economy do not lend themselves to mechanical representation as a series of two-way transactions or cause-and-effect sequences. They are inherently dialectical in their complex interactions; shot through with unevenness and contradictions. Moreover, each boom-slump cycle in capitalist development shows its special features: inflationary practices hardly to the liking of the U.S. government.

Why They Escaped

The most direct way in which the recession could have made its impact upon the European economy was through a fall in U.S. demand for its exports. All the main European producers have made special drives in recent years to extend their direct sales in the expanding American market, with not inconsiderable success. Had these sales dropped, the effect on the in-
dustries most concerned would have been severe. No doubt there would be a time lag until pre-recession orders had been fulfilled, but repeats could have expected to be lower. In fact, however, while the ultimate fall on investment outlays, inventories, industrial production, business profits and employment, all spread unevenly over the economy. On the other hand, though consumer demand ceased to rise as it had been doing during the previous period, and even fell back a little in per capita terms, the aggregate level of consumption fell by no more than about one cent. If European exports had entered the circuit of exchange via the production of means of production (Department 1) as raw steel, heavy machinery, machine tools and raw materials, the fall of the demand would have felt the full blast of the reduction of American industrial activity. Indeed, since imports from Europe would have tended to be the first to cut the effect would have assumed an exaggerated form; Europe would have become a depressed area.

It is, comparatively few European exports pass through those parts of the economy most severely affected by the recession. A European consumer may have felt the full force of the reduction of American industrial activity. Indeed, since imports from Europe would have tended to be the first to cut the effect would have assumed an exaggerated form; Europe would have become a depressed area. As it is, comparatively few European exports pass through those parts of the economy most severely affected by the recession. A European consumer may have felt the full force of the reduction of American industrial activity. Indeed, since imports from Europe would have tended to be the first to cut the effect would have assumed an exaggerated form; Europe would have become a depressed area.

A special factor of considerable force was the ability of European automobile manufacturers not merely to maintain, but actually to increase, the volume of their sales, despite the depression in the American industry. Not only did that mean valuable dollar earnings; but it contributed to the high prosperity of the some European exports might have been severely affected. In addition, higher tariffs been imposed under pressure from American manufacturers, or had they switched successfully to compete with the imported article, a valuable market might have been greatly reduced.

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The behavior of American consumption over the second part of 1958 there is no doubt that these favorable conditions would have been in jeopardy. Consumption would have fallen, and had it reached the higher income levels, European imports might have been severely affected. In addition, higher tariffs had been imposed under pressure from American manufacturers, or had they switched successfully to compete with the imported article, a valuable market might have been greatly reduced.

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The behavior of American consumption was clearly a vital factor in preven-
ism which would have followed upon a severe American slump spreading out on a world scale seems to have re­ceded into the background for the moment. The spokesmen for European business are visibly relieved. Now they are wondering what sort of respite they have secured. As one of them wrote recently: “Europe has so far remained largely insulated from American developments. Unfortunately it looks as though she will continue to be so in the immediate future, for it is unlikely that the American recovery will produce a rapid improvement in the economic climate here.”13

In other words, a number of European countries — West Germany seems the most important exception at present — are facing their own recession un­aided by any powerful uplift from a full-scale expansion across the water. In this negative sense the American recession has had an important bearing on the situation of European capital­ism. The failure of the United States to continue its boom through 1957–58 may deprive Europe of the spur it needed, and still needs, to prevent it from slipping into a comatose state of semi­starvation, symptoms of which have been apparent in Britain for some time.14

For the present, facing lowered pro­duction and unemployment that has risen above the 500,000 mark, the Con­servative government is trying to console itself with the improvement in the strength of sterling. The shape of the problems looming before European capitalism are perhaps most sharply delineated in the case of Britain, but in essence they are to be found everywhere. In France and Germany they have been slower in coming to the forefront for a number of special reasons, but they may not be long in breaking through; very quickly there were to be a sharp contraction of world markets, such as might be precipitated by a worsening of the position of the primary producing countries.

In the meantime the governments of the capitalist countries, under the pres­sure of business interests, have been considering how they can maintain their share of trade in the more intense com­petition now expected. The proposals for a European Free Trade Area for the sixteen OEEC countries (those which benefited from the Marshall Plan) and for a customs union, known as the Eu­ropean Common Market, of France, Germany, and the Benelux countries, have been given a new appraisal in the light of changing prospects. Each nation is now afraid of being at a dis­advantage if others have their way; threats, menaces, bickering and horse­ trading have characterized the negotia­tions of recent months over initiating the new structures.15

No potential agreement has been arrived at internationally to deal with the eventuality of a deepening of the recession. Instead, steps have been taken to give exporters more generous credits or to diminish the threat of outside compet­ition by restrictive policies. Each na­tional capitalism seems likely to seek a solution of its own problems regardless of whether the measures adopted will adversely affect the prospects of the others. The race will be to the strong­est. Thus the French industrialists, with their high production costs, seek to avoid a situation where they will have to confront their German competitors in their own territory with the lower level of protection which entry into the Com­mon Market will impose. Likewise the British cotton textile manufacturers, hard hit by competition from Hong Kong (which is importing from India as well as from China in Far Eastern markets), have been trying to secure a “voluntary” limitation of exports into their home market from Britain’s col­ony.

Moreover, in general, recession seems to have a loosening effect on the com­mon front which the capitalist powers have put up against the Soviet bloc since the war. The immediate prospects of European capitalism depend upon the capacity of the system to extract and realize sur­plus value on an expanding scale. Cloth­ed in special forms, concealed, if not modified, by the changes which it has undergone in recent decades, the classic dilemmas of capitalism still im­pose themselves. The most pressing question is whether markets can be ex­panded to enable the capacity built up during the boom to be profitably em­ployed and to enable the producers to raise output to something of the same magnitude.16

In Britain there has already been some decline in assets spending as a proportion of national income, and Prime Minister Macmillan has offered this as one of the reasons for the growth in unemployment. On the other hand the continued rise in American aid in France through 1957 was accounted for in part by “a steep rise in public expenditure, consisting primarily of higher military outlays connected with the Algerian con­flict.”18

Although some German sources claim that the slight recession experienced in some sectors earlier in the year has been overcome, there is little doubt that performance will be less brilliant in 1958 than for many years.19 In the first half of the year the rise in exports came to an end; they were expected to fall in the second half. The effects of this slackening has so far been counteracted by continued construction and invest­ment, but the United Nations Economic Bulletin for Europe doubts whether this “will suffice to secure an accelerated in­crease in total output in the rest of the year given the tendencies towards stag­nation or decline of home consumption and exports.”20 The prospects of West

This article looked to “a renewed upsurge in demand for goods from Europe­an material producing countries overseas.” The same journal stated November 1 that “There is general agreement among businessmen that exports from European material producing countries overseas.”

14. It is worth noting that while exports to the USA have continued to increase, trade be­tween countries themselves has been falling, a trend which has affected Britain to an important extent.

15. The French Patron is afraid of German competition inside the Common Market: Brit­ish and other businessmen are afraid of Com­mon Market discrimination against their ex­ports; the Commonwealth countries are afraid that their interests might suffer from some bar­gains, recent agreement between Britain and the “Staatsvereinigung” and so on. The prospect of the division of capita­lism Europe into two rival trading blocs is now being considered as a possibility. “It is like­ly to be effective as soon as side which would come off worst,” writes the November 1 Financial Times. “The only thing is that certain it that both would come off badly.”

16. Thus, despite an apparent revival in busi­ness confidence in Britain and government measures against depression, the November 1 Financial Times, in discussing the problem of unemployment in regions dominated by heavy industry, writes: “None of the expansi­onist measures taken by the Government so far has been able to make an appreciable im­pression on this problem.”

17. “What is wanted is . . . a general ex­pansive force to raise output to something nearer its potential level and give an incentive to further investment,” London and Cambridge Economist Bulletin, December 1957.

18. World Economic Survey, 1957. A marked slowing of the growth in industrial output has been apparent since the summer, and talk of stagna­tion has been growing. Unemployment remains minimal, however.

19. Witness to continuing optimism is shown by the readiness with which the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung (September 25) claims that Germany is already spending “two thirds of the growth in the internal market of which there were signs earlier in the year. It adds, “The re­sults of the Autumn economic crisis, with the exception of a few sectors, were insignificant given that, in a large measure, the West German economy is independent of the American conjuncture.”

The Real Incentive

A recent study of 2,500 "wage" incentive plans in 29 industries reveals that for every 1 cent increase in wages earned by the worker, the companies on average increased productivity by 3.1 per cent and cut unit costs 1.25 per cent.

Germany depend to a large extent upon the future behavior of world trade and whether incentives will be found for a continued high level of investment. Its comparative immunity from the effects of the American recession does not signify that it will be able to continue on an upward course.

Now and in the near future the Keynesian claims that appropriate fiscal measures and government spending can avert depression will be put to the test. Already in Britain the rapid increase in unemployment within the last nine months has induced the government to step up even to the nationalized sector, lower the interest rate from its crisis height of 7% down to 4 1/2%, and take measures to encourage installment buying of homes, cars and consumer durables. There is not much doubt that these measures can give some relief by creating, as it were, an artificial market. The volume of consumer credit, for example, is only about one-fifth that current in the USA. With one car to twelve people, against one to three in the USA, the automobile manufacturers look hopefully towards a growth in the home market demand. At present, however, cars carry a luxury tax (known as "purchase tax") amounting to 60% added to the factory price. Even with 10% deposit and two to three years to pay, as under the new credit terms, few workers can expect to buy a new car.

The Conservative government will no doubt consolidate electoral support with the middle class with such measures, but whether they will stem the drift into recession depends upon many factors, including important ones quite beyond their control.

Not Immune

Countries with high export ratios, such as those of Western Europe, cannot expect to expand for long unless the whole world market is doing so. A great deal depends upon whether the present limitation of the market is a passing phase or merely the prelude to a resumed expansion. The shift towards a more optimistic view of market prospects which has been taking place in the past two or three months in business circles is obviously based upon the latter view. The growth in foreign exchange reserves — a result of falling import prices — has given the industrial countries the means to finance the larger volume of imports needed in the early stages of a re-expansion. On the other hand, if their exports continue to fall not only would this tend to disspate the reserves once more but government spending and fiscal policy would be of doubtful efficacy against the cumulative deprecation taking place within the economy. The main difficulty would be of maintaining those industries and sectors hardest hit by the loss of overseas orders, as well as by cut-backs in private investment which would also follow.

A situation of this kind could have been expected to follow for Europe had the American recession not started and extended through to 1959. As has been seen, other countering forces, largely of a kind which cannot be counted upon to recur, were sufficiently potent to all but avert depression. The tendency to recession already apparent in Europe. Certainly the experience of the past year does nothing to prove the immunity of Europe, or of one or more countries on that continent — to a subsequent depression. Should it coincide with a contraction of the world market, the most exposed sections of European capitalism would be thrown into an economic crisis which, while perhaps not as profound as that of the early thirties, might be even more significant in its political results.

That is not to say that the strengthening of the working-class movement in the European countries necessarily depends upon a sharp deterioration in the economic situation. The growing uncertainty, the threat to jobs, the swings from inflation to recession, the inability of the system to justify itself in terms of living standards will provide increasing opportunities for developing a new leadership on a militant socialist program. At the same time, the crisis of confidence on the part of the advocates and beneficiaries of the system, which came close to the surface under stress of recent events — in Britain the fear of an American depression, in France the crisis of the colonial system — may break through and stand fully revealed.

It is not suggested that these possibilities are immediate; but they do seem to sum up the tendencies in European capitalism which have been so manifest. The Conservative government will no doubt consolidate electoral support with the middle class with such measures, but whether they will stem the drift into recession depends upon many factors, including important ones quite beyond their control.

Space Can Wait

"The ultimate goal of space travel is sometimes cited as justification for the missiles race. Anyone who believes this belongs on a psychoanalyst's couch. Since the intensity, duration, spatial distribution and frequency of radiation bursts are only now being investigated, it is by no means certain that man can venture into interplanetary space and survive. And if it should prove feasible, what's the hurry? An effective therapy for cardiovascular disease alone would be worth far more to the human race than a few fledgling astronauts setting foot on the moon." — Carl Dreher in the Dec. 13 Nation.

21. Mortgage debt outstanding is one-quarter of the annual national product in the USA, only one-tenth in Britain.

22. Automobile manufacturers fear that export sales will fall, especially if Detroit turns seriously to the production of smaller models. Britain's share in world markets has been declining. This will mean that an extremely large number of vehicles will have to be sold on the home market if total capacity is to be fully utilized. It seems, therefore, that considerable surplus capacity may emerge in the industry as the present plans for extending capacity are carried out. A. Riberston in The Structure of British Industry, Vol. 2.
Production, Profits and Inflation

Do the 'deep roots' of inflation lie in the falling rate of profit?

by Arne Swabeck

TWO apparently contradictory phenomena are manifest simultaneously in the American economic structure today; at least they appear contradictory in the terms by which they are often described — inflation and deflation. A vastly expanded credit system, with its mountains of fictitious capital, has debased the currency almost beyond recognition. Alongside of this, excess capacity of production shows up in idle plants, or partially operating plants, and the resultant large-scale unemployment.

On closer examination, however, these apparently contradictory phenomena turn out to be directly interrelated consequences of the disintegrating tendencies that are besetting the capitalist system.

For serious students of the laws of capitalist production this poses a number of important questions. Correct answers to these questions will enrich our understanding of the operation of these laws. From this point of view the contributions to a discussion made by Albert Phillips in "The Deep Roots of Inflation" have their own special merit.

Needless to say, Phillips adheres to the Marxist approach in his attempt to elucidate some of these questions. He starts out from one of the basic features of capitalist production: the disproportionate expansion of constant capital (equipment and materials) as against variable capital (labor, wages) and the resulting higher organic composition of capital which fosters the tendency of the average rate of profit to fall.

On the whole, many of the important points made by Phillips contain food for thought; but his general analysis suffers from a certain weakness. It tends to be too schematic. His basic thesis seems to be that the explanation of the inflationary process "lies in the falling rate of profit along with the positive effects of the class struggle; and that the growth of debt, including state debt, and the growing intervention of the state in the economy are increasing contributory effects rather than prime causes." (Summer International Socialist Review, p. 96) This thesis is not substantiated; nor can it be substantiated in the form in which it is presented. To arrive at a more exact analysis, some serious modifications will have to be made in the relationship between the above-mentioned factors, while other interconnected components need to be taken into account.

But before discussing this basic thesis, let us take another look at the relative position of capitalist production during its earlier expanding period and its present declining stage. I agree entirely with the statement made by Phillips, that capitalism during its progressive youth — roughly prior to the twentieth century, — was able to lower prices and simultaneously extend the market, expand production, profits and the accumulation of capital; to absorb lowering of the hours of work and to increase both real and money wages over the long run.

The process whereby this was achieved was, generally speaking, the same for capitalism everywhere. Primarily it found its expression in the transition from handicraft to manufacture and to large-scale industry. The formerly limited and scattered individual means of production were concentrated, enlarged and transformed into giant social means of production which enabled a vast increase in the productivity of labor to occur.

For the United States, however, there should be added the fact that capitalism here, during its early stage, enjoyed the exceptional opportunity to expand on a virgin continent. This permitted the rapid mechanization of old industries, the tapping of new resources, the building of new industries and the constant industrialization of new regions, which again provided for the swiftly mounting capitalization of appropriated surplus value. This process included the extermination of the Indians, the foundation of the Negro population and the turning of the mighty flood of immigrants into producers and consumers of goods pouring out from a rapidly expanding economy.

This is a response to the discussion article "The Deep Roots of Inflation" by Albert Phillips, published in the summer and fall issues of the International Socialist Review.

1. The "$27.8 billion" should be "$28.7 billion, apparently, and for 1955, not "1953." The figure of "$377.2 billion" for 1953 likewise appears to be inaccurate.
somewhat like an uncontrolled nuclear chain reaction resulting in the inevitable explosion that converts matter into energy and leaves in its wake only the proverbial blob of atomic ash. The trouble is that Phillips was led astray by his own careless handling of statistics. The figures he quotes for total output are in constant dollars, the figures for expenditures for new plant and equipment are in current dollars. In other words the former are figures excluding the effects of inflation, the latter are not.

To set the matter straight one needs merely to measure both items in current dollars. Such figures are the most easily accessible and they will work out the same way for both items. These figures are as follows: The total output of goods, measured in current dollars, went from $91.3 billion in 1939 to $364.9 billion in 1953, a rise of about 400%. Also based on current dollars, expenditures for new plant and equipment rose from $3.5 billion in 1939 to $27.8 billion in 1953, an increase of about 700%. Thus instead of an erroneously assumed relationship of 100 to 500, we have an actual relationship of about 400 to 500.

If we extend this over a longer period we get a more complete picture. Let us compare the year of 1929 with 1956. Both represent peak years of twentieth century capitalist prosperity in the United States. The period as a whole includes its deepest and longest depression as well as its highest and most sustained war and armaments “ prosperity.” During this period total output of goods and services, measured in current dollars, rose from $104.4 billion in 1929 to $414.1 billion in 1956, an increase of 396%. Business expenditures for new plant and equipment, also measured in current dollars, went up from $9.2 billion in 1929 to $35.1 billion in 1956, an increase of 385%. Thus we notice that the rise is about equal for both items or, in other words, the increase in output kept abreast with the increasing cost of capital investment. Looking at this relationship from another angle we find that the ratio of investment for new plant and equipment to total output, remained constant at a little less than 9% for both 1929 and 1956.

With these corrections introduced we can get a better view of the basic thesis propounded by Phillips. Is the falling rate of profit, along with the positive effect of the struggle, the primary cause of inflation, while the growth of debt, including state debt, etc., adds only contributory effects?

We start out in agreement, as previously stated that the transition from handicraft to manufacture and to large-scale industry enabled the bourgeoisie to cheapen the commodities produced.

In England, this transition dates back to the Industrial Revolution. In this country it is possible to fix a fairly exact date. The United States Census of 1900 is authority for the statement that “the factory system obtained its first foothold in the United States during the period of the Embargo and the War of 1812.” But the same authority informs us “it was not until about 1840 that the factory method of manufacture . . . began rapidly to force from the market the handmade commodities with which every community had hitherto supplied itself.”

Let us now follow the wholesale price index from that period to the present day. We learn from the Bureau of Labor Statistics data, with 1926 as 100, that the index of wholesale prices stood in 1840 at 71.1 and reached its lowest point of 46.5 in 1896. During the Civil War and World War I the index went up quite high for a relatively short period on both occasions, to drop somewhat lower during the Great Depression and reach 77.1 in 1939. Since 1939, however, the wholesale price index has made a steeply upward climb, practically uninterrupted for two decades, without any sign of reversal of this trend. Projecting it forward with 1926 still as 100, instead of the average of 1947-49 now in common use as the base, by October, 1955, the wholesale price index stands at 184.9, a rise of almost two and one-half times since 1939.

For the bourgeoisie this is an entirely new phenomenon. Its reverse side is the drastic currency depreciation; and this phenomenon of the last twenty years is rightly named inflation. Moreover, the reluctance of the American people to buy government bonds to finance the present huge federal budget deficit seems to indicate that the further rotting of the dollar is now accepted as inevitable as death and taxes.

The Role of Credit

Popular awareness of inflation seems to spring from a more realistic appraisal of what it really is than all the bewildered effusions of the bourgeois economists mentioned by Phillips. For if the latter were to approach an explanation of the problem, they would have to turn their attention first of all to one of the basic institutions of capitalist society — the credit system. There they would find the most direct source of the origin and growth of inflation.

Marx made the scathing indictment that “the credit system destroys the incentive of capitalist production, the accumulation of wealth by the appropriation and exploitation of the labor of others to the purest and most colossal form of gambling and swindling, and reduces more and more the number of those who exploit the social wealth.” (Capital, Vol. III, p. 522).

Marx also provided us with a thorough analysis of the function of money, and tokens of money, in capitalist society. He explained how money becomes capital in the course of production by the intervention of the commodity labor power, “a commodity whose use value possesses the peculiar property of being a source of value.” Marx similarly explained the two-fold function of money in the process of circulation. In the one instance, in its abstract or ideal form, it becomes the socially recognized measure of value inasmuch as it represents the incarnation of human labor. In its concrete form, money performs the function of a socially recognized medium of exchange (including the function of means of deferred payments or credit).

In the latter case, the function is transient. After having mediated at one point, between purchaser and seller, the money moves away to repeat its office elsewhere. Because of being a “transient and objective reflex of the prices of commodities,” said Marx, money (gold or silver) is “capable of being replaced by a token,” but “only in so far as it functions exclusively as coin, or as the circulating medium, and as nothing else.” (Capital, Vol. I, pp. 144-145).

Marx subjected interest-bearing capital, banking capital — which forms the essential basis of operation within the credit structure — to a careful examination. While he was aware that such capital in the hands of the banker appears as an independent self-expanding value, he demonstrated how it can in reality have no independent function: separate and apart from capital employed in the process of production. And Marx found a great proportion of such “money capital” to be fictitious. From this he drew the observation: “With the development of the credit system and of interest-bearing capital all capital seems to be money, or even treble, itself by the various modes, in which the same capital, or perhaps the same claim on a debt, appears in different forms in different hands.” (Capital, Vol. III, p. 523).

This purest form of gambling and swindling has today gone far beyond anything ever experienced at the time of Marx. The mountains of fictitious capital created to finance World War II,
The almighty American dollar suffered ceaselessly to reduce labor costs and resulted in its qualitative decline. The market created the extraordinary quantitative increase in the money supply. Precisely this artificial urge and motivating force, of all capital productive and kept on advancing beyond the normal roots of inflation. These enormous sums of fictitious capital flowed as an important statistic that the cost of a car dropped from $36 billion to $9 billion. At the end of 1939, deposits in banks (check-book money) amounted to about $36 billion. At the end of 1952, when the most intense inflationary heat began to subside, but not to disappear, currency in circulation and check-book money had risen to about $129 billion. It had more than trebled! The extra $93 billion entered into and vastly augmented the money supply of the nation.

For the United States this is also an entirely new phenomenon, of which the steeply rising price index expresses the other side of the reality. Never before in American history has anything even approaching such a tremendous increase in the money supply occurred. And precisely in this do we find the main roots of inflation. These enormous sums of fictitious capital flowed as an element of solution into every pore of the financial and economic structure. There it has remained as a parasite feeding upon productive capital and drawing value away from all money capital.

New forces were thus set in motion which generated their own internal dynamic and kept on advancing beyond the control of the capitalist rulers. The question is how shall this new money supply result in its qualitative decline. The almighty American dollar suffered a precipitous depreciation. As a measure of it shrank drastically. In the short span of twenty years it has lost more than half of its purchasing power.

This is the real picture of inflation, its causes and its manifestations; and inflation has become a distinguishing characteristic of capitalist disintegration wherever this system prevails. In the European capitalist nations inflation is ravaging workers' living standards and many uncontrolled forces are also on the rampage in the United States.

The “Return” Is What Counts

What then is the relation of the tendency of the falling average rate of profit to the present process of inflation? To be sure it always enters as a component part of the commodity price system, especially of the big monopoly concerns. So do rising labor costs, or higher wages, both nominal and real, that workers have actually gained as a result of their organization. November 28, 1958, New York Times quoted Walter Reuther, president of the United Automobile Workers, as saying:

"We don't believe in the class struggle. The labor movement in America has never believed in the class struggle."

By the end of the year, three automobile workers had been out on strike than in any other year in the history of the union. Moreover, for the first time in a single year, strikes included all the Big Three — Chrysler, Ford and General Motors.

Say That Again?

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must be acknowledged that precisely this period of raging inflation, beginning with 1939, has been exceptionally favorable to capitalism both as regards the rate of profit and the mass of profit.

**Labor Productivity**

Obviously, this phenomenal profit gain, and the great magnitude of realized surplus value that it represents, was made possible primarily by the constantly higher labor productivity. The tremendous diversion of labor, of production and of national income to turn out armaments for hot wars and for the cold war could take place only on the solid underpinning of the high American labor productivity.

It is difficult to measure labor productivity; estimates made are usually rough approximations. However, the calculation by Edwin Clague, the Commissioner of Labor Statistics, appearing in *Scientific American*, September 1951, seems reasonable. Clague computed the productivity improvement for the whole economy at an average increase of 2% per year from 1900 to 1950. Phillips quotes *Labor's Economic Review* (AFL-CIO) which computed an annual productivity increase of 3.0% to 3.6% from 1947 to 1958. These higher figures may have reference only to manufacture where such gains are always greater. Nevertheless, the constant and substantial increase in labor productivity is clearly evident.

But the assumption repeatedly asserted by Phillips that “the increase in labor productivity tends to decline in proportion to the organic change in the composition of capital,” is entirely without foundation in fact. In the long run, as we have seen, from 1929 to 1955, the rise in total output held up about evenly with the rise in total capital outlays.

Viewing this question of labor productivity from another angle, we can add a double result of current economic reports made public by the Federal Reserve Board, of output by U.S. factories, and by the Bureau of Labor Statistics giving the number of production workers employed. Both conclusions are reached. The results are a 35% gain in output with 6% fewer workers employed. And the auto manufacturers, who have an especially keen sense of the rate of return on their invested capital, have been quite willing over a period of years to pay the annual 2½% wage increase for the so-called improvements factor. All in all, the evidence should leave little doubt that the rise in labor productivity has kept level with the higher organic composition of capital.

To be sure this labor productivity growth does not signify a second industrial revolution. And I am in complete agreement with Phillips that a second industrial revolution under capitalist auspices is precluded. My agreement however, derives from entirely different considerations, one by one of which are summed up, if
I understand him correctly, in prohibitive costs.

Phillips presents a number of statements to this effect from industrial magnates, bourgeois economists and other mouthpieces of Big Business. What does it all add up to? These statements are perfect examples of the platitudes, usually interlarded with frozen hypocrisy, that customarily emanate from these sources as a justification for higher prices, and as a means of countering union demands for higher wages.

J. Pierpont Morgan, the elder, is reputed to have been fond of saying: Every man can give a good reason for what he is doing: but these same men also have their real reasons — or words to that effect. I shall try to indicate the real reason for the statements mentioned by Phillips.

Whether or not "staggering costs" stand in the way of modern instrumentation, or automation, of the capitalist-owned productive plants is highly debatable. Wassily Leontief, the Harvard economist referred to by Phillips, states the contrary view as follows: "The estimated cost of total instrumentation of a new modern plant to automatize it as fully as possible today, ranges from 1 to 19 per cent (depending on the industry) of total investment in process equipment; the average for all industries would be about 6 per cent." Leontief adds, "... the smoother and better balanced operation of self-regulating plants has already shown that they can function with less capitalization than a non-automatic plant of identical capacity." (Scientific American, September 1952).

To illuminate the other side of the question, let us recall the case of the steel industry during the late forties. When the cold war and the armaments race began there were loud and insistent calls for enlarged steel capacity from President Truman which were echoed by the labor lieutenants of capitalism. The steel barons had an answer; it was a resounding, No! They pleaded poverty. Because of their heavy capital investment, they asserted, their break-even point — the point of production below which profits would vanish — had by 1949 reached 70% to 75% of capacity. But behind their pleas lurked their fear of excess capacity, the fixed charges on which would eat into surplus value and profits realized. And besides, their vested interest in existing technology paid off handsomely.

In fact, it paid off so well that Bert Seidman, of the AFL-CIO Department of Research, could comment this year: "Since 1939 the profits per man-hour of U.S. Steel have gone up from 13 cents to $1.80, or an increase of 1,284 percent!"

With this, we begin to approach some of the real reasons for reluctance by the dominant monopoly entrepreneurs to take advantage of the new possibilities offered by electronics, automation and nuclear energy. They may well cast envious eyes Eastward. Already the Soviet economy with its nationalized property and state planning is infinitely more capable than is capitalism of adapting to this higher level of technology. Not hampered by private profit motives, Soviet industry is able to skip stages and make a leap directly into the new forms of production while capitalism remains hesitant — except where implements of war are concerned — on the brink of this new era.

## Lagging Consumption

The real truth is that capitalism is incapable of continuous, planned utilization of all the means and techniques that are available. And this arises out of the simple fact that it is incapable of developing commensurately the conditions of consumption.

The higher organic composition of capital with its greater labor productivity, inherently the basis of potential plenty, tends under capitalism to lead in the opposite direction. Not only does it foster the tendency of the falling average rate of profit. It sets in motion simultaneously a restriction on the growth of the market by imposing limitations upon the purchasing power of the great mass of the workers. For it is a fact that profits always race ahead of wages, and wages fall relatively to output and profits. Capitalism develops the forces of production more rapidly than the means of consumption.

But the expansion of constant capital at the expense of variable capital also reduces the demand for labor. Compared to the total capital set in motion, the labor force employed diminishes steadily. Therefore, the greater magnitude of capital, produced by the workers, becomes the means whereby they are themselves made relatively superfluous. The workers are face to face with the twin scourge of unemployment and inflation.

In the epoch of capitalist crisis and disintegration every serious advance in technique quickly renders obsolete existing capital equipment. It raises to more menacing proportions the ever-present spectre of excess capacity, of overproduction of capital. Simultaneously it deepens the contradictions of its mode of production and thereby intensifies the inner tensions and conflicts of capitalist society.

From its earlier progressive position, the capitalist mode of production is now in the stage of decline and decay. The constant expansion of the internal and external market, formerly operating as a self-sustaining process promoting expanded reproduction, has been thrown into reverse in a relative contracted internal market and on an absolutely restricted world market. Heavy armaments production, devoid of use values, a drain on the economy; and manipulations of the credit system, with attendant inflation, are applied in an effort to prop up the sagging economic structure. These characteristics of the epoch lead to the conclusion that for the capitalist mode of production a second industrial revolution is precluded. It is precluded because on the historical scale the capitalist relations of production, i.e., property relations, which formerly served as forms of development of the forces of production, are now fetters on production.

In recommending this book, Earl Browder, former general secretary of the Communist party, says in his foreword: “Gates shows us that the influence of American communists on the future is now confined to the role of horrible example of what to avoid.”

This assertion requires modification. The author of The Story of an American Communist disregards the influence on the future of those American communists who fought from the beginning against Stalinism. Moreover, he does not include as a “horrible example” the policies associated with Browder’s leadership. In fact he advocates those policies.

John Gates’ account of how he came to join the Young Communist League in 1931 is appealing. Anyone who became a radical at that time will recognize a kindred spirit in the college youth who responded in despair and anger to the depression and turned toward socialism.

But for one who was never in the Communist party, who came directly to the Trotskyist movement, as I did, Gates’ 27-year experience arouses astonishment, despite everything one is prepared for. He does not appear to have ever felt the impact of Marxist theory. He does not appear even to have met or worked with a single serious Marxist theoretician. After almost three decades of fighting for socialism—which he still believes in—and after recognizing that the Communist party “has failed, and has disintegrated,” he is capable of concluding: “But all other socialist groups and parties in America have also failed. Their membership is negligible and their influence insignificant.”

Pure pragmatism! The elementary axiom of Marxism, that the struggle for socialism begins with the struggle for program and that only in relation to the success of that struggle do “membership” and “influence” become significant, does not seem to exist for the former editor of The Daily Worker.

The meaning of the debacle of the Social Democracy in 1914, so analogous to the debacle of the Communist party today, appears unknown to Gates. He seems never to have realized — really realized — why Lenin’s unyielding opposition to class-collaborationist policies and his insistence on a program of class struggle, despite the isolation and narrowing of “influence” this entailed in the early years of World War I, proved decisive in winning the October 1917 Revolution, while the big membership and wide influence of the Social Democratic bureaucracy did not prevent it from losing the German revolution and preparing the ground for Hitler.

I do not think that Gates is responsible for this defect. As with so many others, it was a consequence of intense but undiscriminating loyalty to the “land of socialism.” In this lies the radicalism of his life as a Communist; for this kind of loyalty proved self-defeating. It was harmful to the defense of the conquests of the October Revolution; it was harmful to the struggle for socialism in America.

Gates, it is clear from his book, was primarily an activist, and, insofar as one can judge from his account, a capable organizer and administrator. His pragmatic bias and lack of drive in the direction of theory is native to the American working class and in a healthy party would have been of first concern to a leadership that recognized his talents.

But the Communist party in 1981 was not healthy. It had already succumbed to Stalinism. The founders had been purged. Democratic centralism had been displaced by bureaucratic monolithism. The cult of Stalin was entrenched. The mind of a youth like Gates was systematically poisoned against Marxist criticism of the Soviet bureaucracy and its representatives in America. Even the true history of his own party remained unknown to him — not an academic matter in view of the way such knowledge shapes political judgment.

Despite this, he might have won his way to the truth and better political insight, as others did, if his positive qualities as an activist had not betrayed him. One of this temperament, becoming convinced of the need for socialism, gets to the point. “What are we waiting for?” He rolls up his sleeves and gets going. An admirable characteristic, quite typical of American workers.

Fresh off the campus, Gates won quick recognition as a dedicated party organizer in the Youngstown steel area. In the unemployed demonstrations and union drives of the time, success seemed to follow success, and the party mushroomed.

Like himself, thousands of radicalized workers in the thirties did not distinguish between the Soviet Union and its Stalinist administration or between the Communist party and the program of Marxism. They were attracted by the October Revolution and by the militant record established by the Communist party in the twenties and did not see that a profound change had occurred both in the Soviet Union and in the American Communist party.

The growth of the Communist party, due to political capital accumulated by the founders of the Communist movement plus the intense activities and self-sacrifices of the Gates type, was thus ascribed to Stalin or to — Browder. The Gates’s did not see that the policies followed by these exploiters of other people’s achievements pointed in the direction of degeneration and disintegration.

A remarkable example of this blindness is recorded in the book. As a vol-
unteer in the Lincoln Brigade, Gates fought heroically against fascism in the Spanish Civil War. In the thick of this great struggle, Gates apparently never once rose far enough above the shooting to see a logic in the intense class struggle analogous to that of the Russian Revolution. He approved the oppression of the Barcelona workers who sought to follow the October 1917 example of the Russian workers.

“A comparable situation — perhaps easier for Americans to understand —” says Gates, “would be if a group of radicals had organized an armed uprising in Chicago against the Roosevelt government in 1944 when our troops were landing in Normandy.” A more realistic comparison can be found in the Russian Revolution. A Gates there would have fought against Kornilov, but — listening to the slanders about the Bolsheviks being in the pay of the Czar, Gates refused to read Bolshevik literature — he would also have found himself in Kerensky’s campaign against the Bolsheviks.

Kerenskyism failed in Russia; in Spain it succeeded in paving the way for Franco. Gates correctly condemns the “democracies” for refusing arms to Republican Spain; it still does not occur to him to condemn the crushing of all attempts to conduct a Bolshevik-type political struggle to dissolve the armies of the fascist general. Risking his life in an anti-fascist struggle, he nevertheless helped carry out a policy that ensured Franco’s victory.

In 1949, as one of the first CP victims of the witch-hunt, Gates was sentenced by the notorious Judge Medina to five years and sent to Atlanta federal prison. There, cut off from activity, he read about Debs, who had been sentenced to the same prison as a witch-hunt victim in World War I. Gates was struck by the fact that the socialist leader was so esteemed by the workers that he had been able to run an effective campaign for President in prison and was eventually freed by a huge mass movement in his behalf. In painful contrast to this, there was an “almost complete absence of popular concern over our imprisonment.”

This difference “weighed most heavily” on Gates and he gave it a lot of thought. Yet he misses the indicated deduction that Debs’ influence was due to his policy of militant opposition to World War I, while the discredit of the CP and its leaders was due, among other things, to the experience of militant workers with the CP’s class-collaborationist “no strike,” super-patriotic “keep ‘em sailing” policies in World War II.

So powerful was Gates’ indoctrination against Trotskyism that he did not notice, it would seem, a nationally famous case which showed once again that radical views are not a decisive barrier to winning the sympathy of American workers. Organizations representing more than five million working people rallied to the cause of James Kutcher, discharged from his Veterans Administration job in 1945 because of membership in the Socialist Workers party. This powerful movement finally won everything it set out to get: restoration of the persecuted veteran to his job and pension and, among other things, James Kutcher enjoys the singular distinction of being the only government employee in the United States avowedly a member of an organization on the Attorney General’s “subversive” blacklist.

Similar widespread labor and civil liberties support came earlier to the leaders of the SWP, the first victims of the Smith Act, when they were railroaded to prison during World War II for opposing imperialist war and advocating socialism in the Debs tradition. (They were released from prison shortly before Gates succeeded in getting to Germany as a volunteer member of the paratroops.) The SWP leaders won such support in contrast to the CP victims of the same witch-hunt law because they enjoyed respect among militant workers for their adherence to class-struggle principles.

Gates describes the factional struggle that broke out in the Communist party following Khrushchev’s famous revelations at the Twentieth Congress in 1956. This struggle was accompanied by an exodus from the party, particularly after the Polish and Hungarian events when it became clear to the delegates at the 1957 National Convention that no perspective of reform was left in the CP, not even the hope of a well-organized struggle around an opposition leadership. “I did not lead them out,” says Gates; “they led me.” (His emphasis.) That appears to be an accurate judgment, for nothing in Gates’ experience in the Stalinized Communist party had prepared him to lead a factional struggle, particularly one involving fundamental ideas.

This is now a “living corpse” in the opinion of this former top CP leader. The suspension of The Daily Worker was “the final dramatic proof of a situation that had existed for some time, that the Communist Party of the United States has ceased to exist for all practical purposes.”

“Less than 5,000 members remain,” he continues, “of whom no more than a third pay dues, and few carry on meaningful activities. The average age level is past 50, and for a decade there has been no recruitment of young people or new members. All of which contrasts with the 75,000 members at the close of the World War, apart from 20,000 young Communists, and it contrasts also with at least the 17,000 members when the party’s crisis broke open in 1956.”

The Workers’ Party presents a political position that is contradictory. He remains opposed to capitalism, including emphatically such of its institutions as the House Un-American Activities Committee and the FBI. He remains in favor of planned economy and socialism. He no longer feels allegiance to the Soviet bureaucracy although he is a partisan of Soviet achievements. He recognizes the truth about a number of vile crimes committed under Stalin. He acknowledges that workers in the Soviet bloc (“...socialism is incomplete and distorted in the Communist countries. It remains to be fulfilled.”) And, as before, he is for an end to the cold war and to the nuclear weapons tests; he advocates recognition of the new China.

All this is progressive. Quite different are his recommendations as to what to do next in the United States. These indicate deep pessimism: Until the labor movement accepts socialist ideas, socialist electoral efforts “can amount to no more than a cry in the wilderness.” He is not against socialist tickets but they generally serve “to isolate socialists from the labor movement and even to make socialist ideas suspect.” (As in the case of Debs?) He favors working in the Democratic party with the hope of “undermining” it into something “similar to the British Labor Party.” (Is that easier than transforming the Communist party into something similar to a socialist organization?) His boldest goal for the present is a new New Deal, a coalition embracing all classes which would establish “the principle” of “public regulation of Big Business.” The “FDR” myth blocks his thinking. Paying penance for having gone along with what he now considers to be the unjust expulsion of Earl Browder, he believes that the Peoples Front policy of the Communist party under the “agcis of Browder (Where was Stalin?) provides a model for the radical movement today. Even supporting Henry Wallace in 1948 was a mistake, he insists, not because of the former President’s capitalist program but because “we got ourselves off from the mainstream.”

Gates thus appears to be inclined to move toward the program of socialist renovation of the Soviet Union; yet obstinately refuses to get out of the mire of “unity” with capitalist politicians like Harriman. From these mutually exclusive positions he gets well tangled in tactical questions facing the American socialist movement today. These involve what to advocate as transitional formations and measures on the road to socialism, such as a Labor party, a government that starts to go beyond capitalism but is still not socialist, including popular allegiance to the industrial management, curbs on profit-making, and so on.

While floundering in this fashion, Gates raises questions of fundamental importance: “The real nature of the dicta-
torship of the proletariat. ("It is based on the total monopoly of the Communist Party... This easily becomes socialist despotism.") The correct relationship between democracy and centralism in a combat socialist party. ("Our problem... dated back to the party's inception forty years earlier.") The validity of Lenin's organizational concepts. ("I said we must take a 'new look at the concept of democratic centralism' which seems to result in a 'semi-military type of organization.'")

The drift of these ideas is clear. It is toward the Social Democratic position that Stalinism was inherent in Leninism; that Stalin's monstrous crimes and dictatorial rule can ultimately be traced back to Lenin's method of party organization. This is Gates' former superficial position with the signs changed. Stalin is still Lenin's heir but instead of pluses, both men get minuses. Added to the demand for "unity" with liberal capitalists and support of the Harri- mians, this would seem to put Gates well within the Social Democratic camp. But a crucial difference remains: he is pro-Soviet.

Nevertheless the logic of his development must make it more and more difficult for him to escape the question, "What's to prevent crimes like those committed under Stalin from happening here if America goes socialist?"

For 27 years Gates evaded this question by refusing to admit to himself that anything could be less than perfect under Stalin. The reality is now upon him and in 1958 he is faced with accepting one of two diametrically opposite answers — (1) serfdom is inherent in any planned economy; (2) planned economy in an industrially advanced area of sufficient size removes the material foundation for all forms of slavery and totalitarian rule.

One hopes that enough of the youthful Gates still remains to lead him to serious investigation of what Marxist theory and experience, as kept alive in the Trotskyist movement, has to offer in the way of proof of the correctness of the latter answer. But he seems still to be under the influence of the Stalinist ban against reading anything by T-----y. He was physically courageous enough to jump from planes in his para trooping training but not until he was in prison could he screw up enough intellectual daring to read Orwell's bit ing novel 1984, which was on the CP's index. Beyond that he mentions nothing to indicate an attempt to overcome his illiteracy. He gives no indication even of having accepted Howard Fast's challenge to CP members to read The Revolution Betrayed. It is safe to say, however, that without studying Trotsky's writings he will never reach an understanding of so much as his own 27-year experience in the Communist party. It remains to be seen how thoroughly this former leader of the Communist party has been shaken from his dogmatic slumbers.

"The economies and sociology of Marxism are simply wrong as an analysis and prognosis of 'capitalism.' In advanced industrial communities the 'proletariat' grows richer... 'workers revolutions' can come about only in backward rural economies... . Marxism serves purposes and fulfills functions that have nothing in common with the postulated aims and goals of Marxist theory."

Having built his thesis on such an untenable foundation, little wonder Schuman finds constant shifts in interpretation necessary!

If this renowned professor of politics and history had not gone in for what his publisher calls his "prophetic analyses" and had adhered to the use of authenticated, well-documented historical facts, he could have produced a book of lasting value for reference. For mixed with his analytical nonsense he gives in condensed form a lively account of Soviet versus capitalist diplomatic parrying in the hot and cold wars from the time of the 1917 Revolution to the crises of 1956.

His review of the ten days that shook the world; of the diplomatic perfidy of the Allies after the Revolution; the brutality they perpetrated in the civil war; his evidence that there was no popular support for the Constituent Assembly; his ridicule of the slanders of the Bolsheviks in the United States remains to be authenticated, well-documented history and "present Stalin as the great leader and the real architect of Soviet progress. He repeated Stalinist slanders of Trotsky and for good measure added a few of his own. He revealed a hatred of Trotsky and all that Trotsky represented. Which, after all, is not surprising. One of Schuman's petty-bourgeois persuasion more often than not tends to gravitate to a Stalin rather than a Trotsky. Stalin had the power. And, as Trotsky himself wrote of such characters as Schuman: "The machinery of state! Every petty bourgeois is brought up in adoration of this mystic principle... Removing in imagination not only his hat but his shoes too, the petty bourgeois comes tip-toeing into the temple of the idol in stocking feet..."

But Russia Since 1917 was written after the Twentieth Congress of the CPSU. This made it obligatory for Schuman to modify his tributes to Stalin. This he does, at times being severely critical. However there is no softening in his hatred of Trotsky. While admitting that Stalin had Trotsky's role in the civil war expunged from history, Schuman still accepts the

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**Dr. Schuman Reconsiders**

by Hilde MacLeod


A note by the publisher informs us that Dr. Schuman, Professor of Government, Williams College, is an "outstanding interpreter" of Russian affairs. *Russia Since 1917*, written after his recent third visit to the Soviet Union, is in many respects a follow-up of his former *Soviet Politics* published in 1948. That this latest book was, in part, written to cover up the most flagrant misconceptions and misinterpretations so authoritatively presented before, he practically admits. "Many judgments" he writes, "on many matters offered a decade ago have been much modified in view of new facts, precisely as many of the evaluations here set forth may well be in need of alteration a decade hence."

Dr. Schuman is too optimistic. Many of his present evaluations already need alteration — only a year hence.

Schuman's failure of interpretation and his need for continual alteration "in view of new facts" stems from his superficial method. He bases his analyses on temporary conjectures. This leads one to believe he has never conscientiously studied the fundamentals of the new Soviet society, has no understanding of Marxism, and lacks awareness of revolution as a motor force of history.

Schuman has observed Stalinism in action. For him that suffices. So he concludes that Stalinism equals Marxism, for Marxism is "a cosmology, a creed, a gospel!" and the works of Marx and Engels are to Marxists "revelation, sacred writings and scriptures."... the very history of the USSR refutes the relationship that Marx assumed"; so

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WINTER 1959 29
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The Big Name, by William M. Freeman.
230 pp. $3.75.

The Hidden Persuaders, by Vance Packard.
1957. 242 pp. 35c.

Sure, They're Honest

by Paul Abbott

in The Hidden Persuaders, a serious study, Vance Packard does not pay much attention to the "honesty" of the advertising racket. He notes that $9,000,000,000 was spent in advertising in the United States in 1955, roughly $53 for each man, woman, and child. Why does Big Business feel such compelling need to persuade people to buy the commodities they make?

The basic answer is that industry is producing "perhaps as much as 40% more than the market can absorb. Under threat of extinction each company must increase its share of the market and all of them face the threat of a great depression."

Packard surveys what the pitchmen are doing to induce greater buying, particularly how they are using depth psychology to get the public to buy despite its own best interests and rational inclinations. Packard's findings are startling, often amusing, and sometimes shocking.

The use of depth psychology by the hucksters is a perversion of science, in Packard's opinion. Grave enough in the commodity market, its extension into other fields involves the fate of America's democratic institutions. Both the Democratic and Republican machines, Packard notes, have turned increasingly to the hucksters to sell their candidates, "drawing upon the insights of Pavlov and his conditioned reflexes, Freud and his father images, Riesman and his concept of modern American voters as
spectator-consumers of politics, and Batten, Barten, Durstine and Osborn and their mass merchandising lore.

In what sinister ways the big corporations use the new psychological findings, beside stepping up the sales of cheese, is indicated by such inductive examples of their handling of employees as the following: "Several companies were reported employing a psychiatrist on a full-time basis. And increasingly employees began being psycho-tested in various ways while on the job. At a Boston department store girl clerks had to wait on customers with the knowledge that a psychologist was somewhere in the background watching them and recording their every action on an instrument called an 'interaction chronograph,' which recorded data on a tape recorder. The notations made of each girl's talk, smile, nods, gestures while coping with a customer provided a picture of her sociability and resourcefulness."

Psycho-testing in the selection of personnel for management goes so far as to write of applicants. Fortune magazine is quoted: "Management knows exactly what kind of wife it wants. With a remarkable uniformity of phrasing, corporate officials all over the country sketch the ideal. In her simplest terms she is a wife who is (1) highly adaptable, (2) highly gregarious, (3) realizes her husband belongs to the corporation."

A study of 5,800 executives, reported in the Harvard Business Review, put it even more bluntly when it stated that the mid-century American wife of an executive "must not demand too much of her husband's time or interest. Because of her single-minded concentration on his job, even his sexual activity is relegated to a secondary place."

The liveliness of this exposé of Big Business huckstering and where it is taking industry is illustrated by the following item which explains why the laughter at some of the jokes on TV comedy programs appears to have come from a brain-washed audience:

"It has been discovered, or purportedly discovered, that people are more apt to laugh and enjoy themselves if they hear other people laughing." But live audiences are not tractable; often they don't laugh when the advertiser wants them to. "As a result of this need for canned laughter companies have sprung up selling laughs by the platter, with such labels as 'applause'; 'applause with whistles'; 'applause—large spirited audience'; and 'large audience in continuous hilarity.' TV comedy writer Goodman Ace explains how this works: 'The producer orders a gross of assorted yaks and boffs, and sprinkles the whole sound track with a lacing of simpering snorts.' On another occasion he said that the canned laugh is 'woven in whenever the director imagines the joke or situation warrants a laugh. It comes in all sizes and the director has to be a pretty big man who can resist splicing in a roar of glee when only a chuckle would suffice.'

"With the growing need for synthetic hilarity in precise dosages more refined techniques for producing it were developed. One network engineer invented an organlike machine with six keys that can turn on and off six sizes of laughter from small chuckles to rolling-in-the-aisle guffaws. By using chords the operator can improvise dozens of variations on the six basic quantitative laughs. Also according to Neumann the producer of the I Love Lucy show developed a machine that can produce one hundred kinds of laughs."

Schweitzer's Appeals


These three appeals to end nuclear tests were broadcast from Oslo, Norway, on April 28, 29, and 30, 1958. Outside of the Saturday Review, which printed them in full, the press followed a policy of ignoring the eloquent words of the world-famous Dr. Schweitzer. In the first appeal, Dr. Schweitzer stresses the danger of even a small amount of nuclear poisoning of the world's atmosphere. The crime is projected into the future; for, by affecting the human gene, thousands in coming generations are doomed to be born with "the most serious mental and physical defects." The crime also violates international law for it affects whole countries that do not engage in nuclear tests. "Who is giving these countries the right to experiment, in time of peace, with weapons involving the most serious risks for the whole world?"

The second appeal deals with the danger of an atomic war. At present, according to the author, there is a stock of about 50,000 atom and H-bombs. Only fifteen to twenty H-bombs are required to finish off countries like England, West Germany, and France. The danger of annihilating all mankind is therefore real.

The cold war can turn into an atomic war in Dr. Schweitzer's opinion. Even an accident can plunge the world into the nuclear catastrophe. How close we have already come to this can be judged from the following incident: "The radar stations of the U.S. Air Force and U.S. Coastal Command reported that an invasion of unidentified bombers was on the way. Upon this warning the General, who was in command of the strategic bomber force, decided to order a reprisal bombardment to commence. However, realizing the enormity of his responsibility, he then hesitated. Shortly afterward it was discovered that the radar station had made a technical error. What would have happened if a less balanced general had been in his place?"

It is regrettable that Dr. Schweitzer chose, after this sound presentation of the crime and the danger, to offer in his third appeal an unrealistic alternative to the present drift toward war: "His proposal is a Summit Conference — and a highly undemocratic one: "Only the highest personalities of the three nuclear powers, together with their experts and advisers, should take their seats there."

To make the conference successful, no preliminary conditions should be insisted upon such as general disarmament. The conference should confine itself to one point and begin with that: "the renunciation of nuclear weapons."

However, to bring this desirable end about, Dr. Schweitzer is forced to indicate different preliminary conditions of formidable character: Statesmen must "return to a diplomatic method" and avoid "unnecessary, thoughtless, discourteous, foolish, and offensive remarks . . ." "In the final analysis East and West are dependent on presupposing a certain reciprocal trust in one another."

Perhaps as a lesson on how trusting people must become to follow his prescription, Dr. Schweitzer approvingly cites Eisenhower's demagogic response to the launching of Sputnik II: "What the world needs more than a gigantic leap into space is a gigantic leap into peace." This sentiment was expressed by the same Eisenhower who later took the gigantic Lebanon and Quemoy leaps toward atomic war.

Will the ordinary people of the world respectfully wait for the highest personalities of the three nuclear powers to respond to the entry of another spirit? It's not likely. The working people have means at their disposal for achieving peace more powerful than the nuclear war weapons held by the highest personalities. They have class solidarity, mass action and the goal of socialism.

How to facilitate the use of these means is the problem our best minds should be considering: not how to read more effectively with the breed who began their nuclear tests by dropping two atom bombs on crowded cities.

J.H.
Reveals details of Trotsky's life in France and Norway as friends and members of his family fell under Stalin's persecution. Poignant passages disclose how the famous exile came to realize that his most important task was to train a new generation of socialist leaders. The notations he jotted down on his feelings, reading, and response to events show the world's leading socialist as a most human figure.

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