

# LABOR ACTION

ISL Contribution to the Discussion:  
Unity and Regroupment  
of the  
American Socialist Movement

... page 6

JULY 29, 1957

TEN CENTS

## Liberal Party Backs Wagner for N.Y.C. Mayor

By C. R.

On Wednesday, July 10th, delegates from the Liberal Party Clubs in New York City met in convention to designate candidates for the coming municipal elections this November. The convention was opened by Ben Davidson, executive director with the presentation of the proposal of the Policy Committee that the Liberal Party designate as its candidates for the major posts mayor, president of the Board of Estimate and city controller, the Democratic candidates Wagner, Stark and Gerosa. The Policy Committee recommended that independent Liberal Party candidates be run for members of the City Council.

The only motivation given by Ben Davidson for this proposal was that the Liberal Party, while retaining "our own program," "thinks well" of the Wagner administration, has confidence in it and that "it deserves the support of liberals and progressives."

Several delegates asked for and received the floor. All those who spoke opposed the proposal of the Policy Committee. The major speech in opposition to this policy was made by Eli Trachtenberg, delegate from the Astoria Club in Queens. He pointed out the following:

1. Four years ago the Liberal Party nominated its own candidate for mayor because it could not see how a Democratic administration could give New York a clean, honest government, and because it wanted an administration that would respond to the needs of the citizens of New York.

### WHY SUPPORT WAGNER

2. The Wagner administration has not in any way proven that the Democratic Party has changed in this respect. On the contrary, "the City Council epitomizes the worst in local government. . . . Our estimate of a Democratic administration proved so correct that today we say we will not support Democratic candidates for councilmanic posts throughout the city."

3. Trachtenberg asked why the Liberal Party should then support Wagner for re-election. He pointed out that four years ago Wagner as Borough President was found wanting by the Liberal Party, that he was characterized then as weak and unable to exercise leadership and would prove easy pickings for the Tammany politicians who dominate the Democratic Party. Nothing since then, according to Trachtenberg, has happened that should cause the Liberal Party to change its estimate of Wagner.

4. The speaker pointed to the submission of Wagner to the Real Estate interests of the city in opposing public housing, especially in the Borough of Queens. Gerosa, the present City Controller, on whose endorsement by the Liberal Party Wagner insists as a condition of acceptance of Liberal Party endorsement for himself, has "for years been sitting on millions of dollars made available for middle income housing by the State. Wagner has done little or nothing to put that money into use."

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## The Negro Drive for Equality Sparks the Civil Rights Fight in Senate

By GORDON HASKELL

The spotlight in the civil rights struggle is now on the United States Senate. The question is: will this traditional burial-ground of all measures designed to give legal support to the Negro struggle for full equality prove any different this time? Will the clear-cut issues surrounding enforcement of the right of Negroes in the South to vote, run for office, and in general to become full-fledged citizens of their country, be once again buried and obscured in the crossfire of petty partisan interests, deals and accommodations, as has happened to them in the past?

The one way in which this year's "struggle" over civil rights legislation in the Senate differs from all its predecessors is that this time the Southern racist leadership has been forced to at least present an appearance of being willing to consider the substance of the legislation put before it. In a way, this is and can be only slight satisfaction to everyone really concerned with civil rights, as it is clear that the actual purpose of the Southern leadership has not changed a bit: They are out to kill any civil rights legislation, as in the past.

Nevertheless, it would be a mistake to overlook the very significant difference between this fight and past ones, for it is a sure sign of the effectiveness of the Negro struggle for equality over the past few years.

Down South, politicians and other racists are just as unrestrained as ever in their speeches and proclamations in which

they say Negroes will never be given equal rights. The filth with which they revile the Negroes, the strength and apparent success of the White Citizens Councils in organizing terror and economic intimidation of Negroes has driven some to believe that the day of equality for Negroes in that area is farther off than ever; that the reaction of the racists has proved to be stronger than the force of the action the Negroes and their allies have been able to bring to bear upon Jim Crow.

The form of the Senate debate demonstrates how wrong such an estimate is. In years past, the Southern leadership simply said "No!" dug their heels in, and filibustered. They did not bother to acquaint themselves with the intricacies of the bills placed before them. They did not run to the law books and historical texts to find arguments directed at one or another section of the bills as drafted. They did not find it necessary to try to split their opposition by argumentation. They just said "no!" ran up the parliamentary Jolly Roger of the filibuster on their masthead, and waited for the oppo-

sition to founder and break up on the reefs of the Senate cloture rule.

### FILIBUSTER?

But this year, that will not do. True, the Southern leadership refuses to say whether they will not end up in a filibuster anyway. But however much they strut and fume and belittle the Negroes in the safe precincts of their own southern newspapers and legislatures, they recognize that when the whole American people are looking on, and beyond that, millions of people all over the world, a different pose, a different tactic is indicated.

So, the South has not made its stand on the trusted old ground of white supremacy, Negro "inferiority" and preservation of the purity of the race. Instead, they have sought out less familiar but more respectable grounds with which to give a bit of palatability to their reactionary purposes. They stand on the right of trial by jury, and against "forcible" school integration backed by federal troops.

There would be little point to going into the merits and demerits, advantages and disadvantages of substituting trial by jury for trial by judge in cases involving violation of injunctions. That no one is really less interested in these "issues" than the Southern leaders who are howling about them in the Senate is illustrated by the fact that none of them has ever raised this question in their own

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## A Dilemma for All Sections of the Communist Party

# Democracy and the Shake-up in Russia

By H. W. BENSON

Less than six months ago, the national convention of the Communist Party ended in New York. It was an event of genuine political significance affecting the course of radicalism in the United States. It came as the climax of a deep-going discussion inside the Communist movement lasting for at least a year: serious-minded party members and leaders sought a way out of the crisis into which their movement had been plunged by the revelations of the 20th Congress and the Hungarian Revolution. The best among them were turning away from totalitarian distortions of socialism and

toward the American working class movement and democratic socialism. It was a real discussion, an authentic internal struggle between divergent basic views. Anyone who still does not understand this can hardly comprehend what has aroused the socialist movement in this country.

The convention rebuffed the drive of William Z. Foster to re-Stalinize the American party, an attempt backed by the authority of Jacques Duclos whose new letter of advice was spurned. But at the same time, the convention evaded the main issues in the name of party unity: it did not even consider the Gates proposal for a Political Action Association; it dodged the Hungarian events; it failed to solidarize itself with the struggle of the Polish people, under the leadership of the Gomulka regime, for independence from Russian domination. Thus, its

sessions ended with a question mark.

Hundreds streamed out of the party in disappointment over its failure to make a real turn, the tendency which leaned toward democratic socialism. Many of them, finished with the Communist Party, now await the rebirth of a militant socialist movement.

Others, who were just as dissatisfied, decided to remain in the party, await new events, and renew the campaign for a turn toward socialist democracy under more favorable circumstances. Now, six months after, it is possible to take stock. Has the party moved further toward democratic socialism or has it begun to slide back toward Stalinism?

The most sensational event in the Communist world since the convention was the shift in Russia which entrenched the power of Khrushchev and eliminated two of the erstwhile highest ranking leaders: Malenkov and Molotov. The state of the American Communist Party is revealed instantaneously in this: before the last convention, a wide-ranging discussion, debates, articles, bulletins, an effort to grapple with basic socialist problems. Now, after the Russian events, almost nothing. An editorial in the *Daily Work-*

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### Attention Newsstand Readers!

As everyone knows, in the past few years the cost of living has more than doubled. Reluctantly, one newspaper after another, regardless of its size, politics or quality, has been forced to increase its sales price. LABOR ACTION has resisted this trend longer than most, but we can do so no longer. As we announced in our last issue, the subscription price per year will remain the same despite our bi-weekly appearance. We now announce that starting with this issue, the price per individual copy will be ten cents.

# ISL Convention Endorses Unity with Socialist Party

By SAM TAYLOR

The Fourth National Convention of the Independent Socialist League reflected the new mood of optimism felt in most sections of the socialist movement resulting from the belief that socialism in the U. S. is on the eve of a new beginning.

The famous Khrushchev revelations at the 20th Congress, the Hungarian Revolution, the crisis in world Stalinism, the magnificent struggle of the Negro people, the turmoil inside of both power blocs and the reversal of some of the most outrageous features of the witchhunt, all coming within the last year and a half, have given renewed hope. For the first time in many years the objective conditions point to possibilities for the growth of the socialist movement rather than retrenchment.

This new situation was reflected in the active interest and participation in all the problems raised at the convention by delegates coming from all parts of the country.

The central point of interest was the discussion on the resolution on socialist regroupment and unity. The resolution, which is published in full starting on page 6 of this issue of *Labor Action*, was unanimously adopted by the convention.

It put the ISL on record in favor of "a broad, all-inclusive democratic socialist movement" in the best traditions of the Debs period. Such a movement "must encompass a wide range of tendencies living within a single organization united upon a common objective while debating and discussing disputed questions in an atmosphere of unity."

## FOR SP-SDF UNITY

A minority resolution was presented which agreed with the general perspective of a broad, all-inclusive movement committed to the general principles of democratic socialism, and unity with the SP-SDF. It, however, raised two conditions as a "political basis" for unity with the SP-SDF.

(1) "Both parties to such a merger would recognize that the purpose of the unity is to lay the foundations for the regroupment and revitalization of a broad socialist movement; and (2) "... the program of the movement would have to be a minimum program, stated in such broad terms that it could be supported and propagated loyally by all members, while any grouping in the party would naturally reserve the right to advocate their special points of view in a manner consistent with their loyalty to and support of the party organization."

The convention rejected such conditions other than calling for full democratic rights in the unified organization. The majority resolution stated: "To effectuate unity with the SP we do not believe that it is necessary for either side to gloss over or conceal actual differences or criticism of their respective positions on questions of immediate importance. Rather it is possible to discuss them not in a harsh or hostile manner but in a non-polemical, non-factional spirit."

"... we are ready to make concrete proposals on specific immediate issues facing socialists in the fields of both domestic and foreign policy with the objective of strengthening the united organization, and increasing its effectiveness. Our fundamental theoretical approach to problems of both immediate and long-range importance can properly be explained and presented in such vehicles of expression as are available under the rules of the united organization."

The convention endorsed the actions of the Political Committee in refusing to send a representative to participate on the National Committee of the American Forum—for Socialist Education. The motion said, in part, "We reaffirm the position taken by the Political Committee in favor of maintaining the friendliest attitude and relations with all elements in the AFSE who are sincerely interested in continuing the discussion of socialist problems and regroupment, including

such discussions as may be organized by the AFSE itself."

The International Resolution was presented in two parts. The first part, "The Coming Revolution in the Stalinist Empire" was published in the July 15 *LABOR ACTION*; the second part, "The Road for World Socialism and the Anti-Stalinist Revolution," in the June 24th issue. Both resolutions deal with the new problems and situations arising in the revolutionary upheavals in the post-Stalin era.

A lively discussion took place around the question of aid to the East European anti-Stalinist revolutions. The Political Committee resolution said "We do not advocate or support advocacy of the military intervention by any of the imperialist powers, or the UN, in this revolutionary battle."

## AID TO THE REVOLUTION

A minority amendment which passed by one vote stated: "We do not call for such action as would turn an anti-Stalinist revolution into an inter-imperialist war. With this in mind, we do not call on any of the imperialist powers, including the U. S., or on the UN, to intervene in this battle militarily or by sending arms. This does not mean that under certain circumstances such a call for arms, where it would not lead to an imperialist war, would be impermissible."

The intent of the amendment was to make it permissible under certain circumstances to call for military aid for the revolutionaries, although no one was for any form of military intervention by the imperialist powers in the Hungarian Revolution.

Both parts of the resolution were passed as amended.

The liveliest discussion, as has been the case at most recent conventions, was over the relationship of socialist electoral policy to that of the labor movement. After a long discussion the delegates by a vote of 19 to 3 with several abstentions voted to refer the entire question to the incoming National Committee which was instructed to organize a full discussion on the question throughout the organization. The discussion will take place in the pages of *LABOR ACTION* and in *Forum*, the ISL bulletin.

Two resolutions were presented, one representing the Political Committee majority. This resolution starts from the basic analysis that "a correct socialist policy rejects the line of supporting bourgeois candidates as disorienting and self-defeating and stresses the alternative of a Labor Party."

## POLITICAL ACTION

However, the problem is that the most militant and union-conscious workers, that is, those most likely to be interested in socialism, are supporting labor-endorsed bourgeois candidates. The resolution set forth the general approach that "the propaganda advantage of running socialist candidates against such labor-endorsed candidates must be carefully weighted against the possible alienation of those more advanced currents within the union, so that it will not appear that the small socialist movement is pitting itself against the present class movement of labor in politics during election time..."

"Thus, the ISL does not, as a general rule, expect that the socialist movement, reunited or not, can or should orient toward running candidates in such elections with general socialist propaganda or 'party building' purposes in mind..."

"The key consideration is not that socialists should not counterpose themselves

to the official policy of labor, but that socialist electoral activity should be based primarily on considerations rising out of the real trends in the working class, and not merely for the purpose of socialist propaganda regardless of such trends or the absence of them and regardless of the effect of such a socialist campaign on encouraging or discouraging such trends and of alienating and driving away the more militant unionists."

The resolution and various amendments from delegates then specified certain situations where exceptions can and should be made to the general rule.

The minority resolution presented to the convention put the problem in the following way: "... socialists should and must seek the advantages and the gain that become possible with the running of a socialist campaign and socialist candidates counterposed to the old parties. This is one of the most important party-building means available to strengthen the new, broader socialist movement toward which we look. Far from considering that such a socialist campaign is a bad thing because it counterposes socialists to the official labor movement, we would urge it as a good thing, one of the best things the movement can do, to bring socialist ideas before the people precisely when political interest is at a maximum, and before the workers while they are

## Open Letter to A. J. Muste

*LABOR ACTION prints below extensive excerpts from an "Open Letter to A. J. Muste" which was released by David McReynolds to the press on July 6. We believe that McReynolds' comments on the American Forum, and the reasons he gives for his resignation from its National Committee will be of interest to our readers. Bold-face type and sub-heads have been added.—Ed.*

### Dear A. J. Muste,

I am taking this opportunity to make public my resignation from the American Forum for Socialist Education.

Because the American Forum has been under attack by Senator Eastland as a Communist Front I cannot give my reasons for resigning without first trying to clear the air of charges hurled by Eastland and some others.

I am in this respect happy to say that the National Executive Committee of the Socialist Party-Social Democratic Federation voted to condemn the Eastland attack and, as you know, Norman Thomas has spoken out most vigorously on that matter.

Having been involved in the American Forum from its inception, I am in a position to say without reservation that any charge, from any source, that the American Forum is a "front" set up by the Communists is either a direct lie or a reflection of profound ignorance.

The present discussion has taken place and will continue not because the Communists want it (I don't believe they do) but because the radical movement has entered a period in which old answers have failed us and we must seek new solutions to new problems.

And just as I oppose excluding anyone from that serious discussion process, just as surely is it true that no one can exclude themselves without fatal results. Those elements in the Communist Party—and those elements in the socialist movement—that are fearful of free and open discussion of basic issues will wall themselves off from the stream of history.

Let me make it emphatically clear that my resignation from the N.C. of the American Forum, and the basic doubts I will raise with you in a moment about the future of the American Forum, in no way mean I am withdrawing from the discus-

sion process. As an individual, and on an informal level, I shall continue to talk with anyone who wants to discuss the problems of socialism. That specifically includes Communists and Trotskyists.

What bothers me most of all is that so much of the fire that has been directed at the American Forum was an attack directed against the very idea of talking with Communists. This attempt to ban discussion with members of the Communist Party is to adopt the methods of the Communists themselves, who for so many years refused to engage in public or private discussions with those of us who are anti-Communists.

I cannot conceive of any occasion on which I would favor joint action with the Communist Party. I consider the Communist Party a totalitarian movement. I am convinced the only positive action the CP can take is to dissolve at once and completely. But these political disagreements do not mean the Communists must be treated like lepers and excluded from all normal human relationships, or from such important political intercourse as open debate. The attempt to "seal off" whole groups of human beings, whether Communists or Fascists, is a profoundly evil and profoundly totalitarian thing.

Now, having made it clear that my resignation is not motivated by any misguided fear that the American Forum is perhaps a "Communist Front," let me give my reasons for leaving the National Committee.

The first reason is that I am an alternate member of the NEC of the SP-SDF. As you know the SP-SDF has expressed its opposition to the American Forum. I do not altogether agree with my Party's position on this point and am considerably less than proud of some of the material which recently appeared in the *Call*. However,

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After a brief discussion on opening ISL conventions to observers from radical groups, the following resolution was passed: "The convention recommends favorably the principle of opening our convention to observers and instructs the incoming National Committee to discuss the question of opening ISL conventions to avoid observers and representatives of the various groups and publications with the aim of reaching a decision before the next convention."

The convention also passed the following decisions: to establish a West Coast Council as the authorized representative of the ISL on the West Coast; to organize a discussion on Jewish problems. Toward the end of the convention Michael Harrington, national chairman of the YSL, gave greetings from the YSL and spoke on the bright prospects facing his organization.

... in fighting for their own rights, then the Negro is fighting for the political program of the whole nation, to free the labor movement from its dependence upon the Democratic Party, to open up a new political road for the U. S." The resolution then went on to criticize the AFL-CIO for its failure to make equal rights for Negroes a living reality, or even taking the first steps in that direction.

... we are ready to make concrete proposals on specific immediate issues facing socialists in the fields of both domestic and foreign policy with the objective of strengthening the united organization, and increasing its effectiveness. Our fundamental theoretical approach to problems of both immediate and long-range importance can properly be explained and presented in such vehicles of expression as are available under the rules of the united organization."

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## A Challenge Facing the Socialist Movement:

# The Crisis of Italian Politics

By LUCIO LIBERTINI

The crisis of the Italian government is not a mere parliamentary crisis, but reflects fundamental problems of Italian society. In fact, we have come to a turning point in Italian politics, and the laborious solutions to the government crisis can only be temporary.

Today, the Italian situation is characterized by two main factors. One is the crisis of the economy. In 1956, there has been a drop in the rate of increase of the national income, and an absolute decrease of the agricultural income. Secondly, there has been a serious break in the balance of the economic system. Certain large monopolies have reached such a degree of technical and financial power, that they now constitute an economic world by themselves, a state within a state.

These monopolies (FIAT, which produces 96 per cent of all cars; Montecatini, which controls 95 per cent of all chemical production; Edison, which reigns supreme in electrical power; Pirelli, which monopolizes the rubber industry; Falk, which controls steel production; etc.) have shown an increase in profits which far exceeds the increase in national income. Without any substantial growth of the labor force, these groups have doubled or even quadrupled their production and their revenue within the last six years. The productivity in their enterprises has increased by 100 per cent and, in some cases, by 200 per cent, partly because of the high rate of exploitation which they have succeeded in imposing upon the workers.

The workers of the monopolies receive wages which are twice as high as the national average, and are surrounded by a miserable army of unemployed, of underemployed and of underpaid wage-workers: two million permanently unemployed, two million under-employed, several million agricultural workers who live on bread and onions in miserable dwellings. Consequently, the workers in the monopolistic industries have accepted truly police-like discipline in the plants, and submit to exhausting working conditions and to fierce exploitation.

### MONOPOLY CONCENTRATION

The economic strength and the prosperity of the monopolies is based on the absolute rule of management in their own enterprises and on the fact that, by means of their financial power, they have succeeded in subordinating the whole national economy and the state apparatus itself to their own interests. This monopolistic island arises from a depressed and stagnant economy, which is characterized by desperate poverty in the South.

These economic conditions provide the basis for the policy of the leading group of Christian-Democrats, led by Fanfani, which goes under the name of "Catholic integralism." Its aim is to obtain an absolute majority of the votes for the Catholic party, i.e., a monopoly of political power. Today, the Christian-Democracy represents about 40 per cent of the vote.

At one time, after the elections of 1948, it reached 51 per cent. This time, however, Fanfani, having established the dictatorship of his fraction within the Christian-Democratic Party, intends to avail himself of a possible majority to smash the opposition forces and to impose a paternalistic, authoritarian regime, on the Salazar [Portugal] model.

Behind Fanfani's plans stand not only the ambitions of the ecclesiastical hierarchy of the Vatican, but also the program of the monopolistic groups which have entered a close alliance with the Vatican and which cannot maintain their own domination, nor solve the economic crisis in their own way, without absolute control over Parliament and the destruction of the working-class organizations.

In short, what is occurring is a regroupment of the same coalition of interests, driven by the same internal logic, which led to the establishment of the old fascist regime.

The plan of Fanfani and of the Christian-Democratic leadership was to arrive at the next elections (Spring 1958) with a four-party government, made up of the Christian-Democrats and the Small Liberal, Republican and Social-Democratic parties.

Such a coalition government would give the Christian-Democrats a double advantage: it would conceal Fanfani's integralist schemes from public opinion and it would burden the small associated parties with the class contradictions which threaten the unity of the Catholic party. Within the Christian-Democracy, large masses of workers and peasants coexist with some of the most powerful and reactionary bourgeois groups. The Catholic leaders are thus compelled to cover their reactionary policies with a social program, which includes many popular demands and which is systematically dropped when it comes to "practical politics." The "center coalition" arrangement therefore enables Fanfani to unload the responsibility for the non-fulfillment of the program on the minor parties. He would make the Liberal Party (a conservative group) responsible for the failure of the social program, while pointing to the cooperative attitude of the Social-Democrats and of the Republicans to persuade the Left Catholics to keep their peace. (In Italy, the Republicans are a liberal bourgeois party which has shrunk to a small group, but which possesses a strong democratic tradition.)

### ENTRY INTO THE PSI

Last March, however, the four-party coalition broke up under the stress of violent class contradictions, combined with the impact of the new socialist policy. In their last Congress, the socialists had confirmed their class orientation, but had also asserted in the strongest terms their ideological and political independence from Stalinism. As a result of the orientation taken at the Venice Congress, the Independent Socialist Union and many previously unorganized socialists had entered the PSI [the Italian Socialist Party, led by Pietro Nenni].

These developments brought about a serious crisis within the Republican Party, which had been pushed towards clericalism in the past, contrary to its traditions, partly as a result of the socialists' presence in a Stalinist-dominated front. After the socialists' declaration of independence, the Republican Left succeeded in obtaining the party's departure from the government. A similar process took place in the Social-Democratic Party: the left wing, which advocates a union with the PSI, suddenly increased its strength. The social-democratic leader Saragat, fearing a defeat at the coming party congress, then also decided to leave the government, which entered into a crisis. Both Saragat and Fanfani planned to reconstitute the "Center coalition" as soon as possible, but their plans were crossed by a violent explosion of class antagonism.

### AGRICULTURAL REFORM

An essential plank in the new government platform was supposed to be the law on agricultural contracts. The Christian-Democratic Right and the Liberals insisted that this law establish the right of the landowner to dismiss agricultural workers and sharecroppers at will, as a means of imposing unfavorable contracts on the latter. The Left, on the other hand, including the Catholic Left, demanded that the dismissal be subordinated to the recognition of a "just cause" by a court. A few months before the elections, and while a bitter struggle was beginning in the countryside between peasants and landowners, the old partners of the four-party coalition were unable to come to an agreement.

After long and repeated attempts at a solution along the old lines, the Christian-

*The following article was written by LABOR ACTION's correspondent, Lucio Libertini, early in July. Although it may have been superseded in some of its details by later events, we believe its general description of the political situation in Italy will be of great value to our readers in following developments there.*

*Comrade Libertini, a former editor of Risorgimento Socialista, is now a member of the Central Committee of the Italian Socialist Party (PSI) and a regular contributor to Avanti and Mondo Operaio, two of its publications.—Ed.*

democratic leadership realized that the "Center coalition" had exhausted its possibilities, and decided to form an all-Catholic government, i.e., based on a minority in Parliament. It presented a "caretaker" government to administer current business until the elections, and solicited support from both Right and Left, from the monarchists as well as from the socialists. This formula also expressed Fanfani's determination to maintain an equivocal situation: the unity of the Catholic party would be saved by making the "caretaker" government the scape-goat for not acting on the social program; any such action would be postponed until after the elections, and subordinated to a 51 per cent victory at the polls.

The socialists naturally stayed out of this game, rejected the easy formula of the caretaker government, and challenged the Christian-Democrats to carry out the most urgent points in their social program—above all the law on agricultural contracts—offering their votes to pass all these bills in Parliament. Fanfani was thus forced against the wall. After numerous contorsions, which are too long to describe, the Christian-Democracy de-

decided to form a government of its own, presided over by Senator Zoli, who came before the Chamber with an equivocal and vague program. The socialists voted against, as they had announced; the monarchists and fascists voted in favor.

The favorable vote of the fascists caused a real rebellion of the Catholic popular base, and forced Zoli to resign. After another week of crisis, and after Fanfani's failure to make the president of the Republic dissolve Parliament, Zoli decided to withdraw his resignation and to accept the fascist votes, maintaining that he would lose these votes again when he would proceed to apply the social program. The socialists maintained their positions, defying Zoli to bring the social laws before Parliament. At present, this is where things stand. It is unlikely, however, that the crisis is ended, because the disarray of the Catholic party remains strong, especially in the North, where the Catholic workers are sincerely republican and had risen against Mussolini with arms in their hands.

The socialists are now facing one of their major problems in Italy: their relationship with the Catholics. The socialist movement has an old maximalist and anticlerical tradition. If the socialists should decide to follow it, they will only favor the plans of the clerical leaders, who are aiming to revive the wars of religion in order to split the unity of the masses and to isolate the socialists. The task of the latter, on the contrary, is to formulate and to follow an active policy towards the Catholics without sacrificing either the class struggle or the separation of Church and state, but with a view to establishing a solid alliance with the mass of Catholic workers in common social struggles.

This is not an easy policy, and it certainly involves some risks. But in Italy, with its religious and social history, any other policy would lead to stagnation and would contribute to Fanfani's totalitarian schemes. In order to carry out such a policy, the Socialist Party will have to begin by strengthening its organization, and will have to deepen its ideological preparation, in order to become capable of shifting its activity from propaganda to the leadership of mass-struggles.

## ISL Hears Talk on Cuban Revolt

The Labor Action Forum on July 18 heard the story of the armed struggle in the mountains of Cuba against the Batista dictatorship. Speaking in Spanish, translated into English, Angel Perez Vidal, U. S. representative of the July 26 Revolutionary Movement, told of the rise and meaning of the fight now led by Fidel Castro.

It was in December last year, he related, that 82 young revolutionaries landed in small boats on the Cuban shores. All but 27 were killed; but those who survived the first battles took refuge in the hills where they were sheltered and provisioned by peasants who got them arms and helped them find sanctuary in the mountains. Their small band grew, he said, as hundreds joined until a striking force was mobilized that has harassed the Batista armed forces, inspiring the fight for democracy all over Cuba, as it fought off every attempt by the dictator's troops to crush them.

Vidal explained how all oppressed classes have come to the aid of the revolution. Peasants help everywhere. In three months, workers donated a million dollars and now are giving more in response to a new appeal.

In a desperate effort to gather some kind of popular support Batista, the speaker maintained, reached a deal with the Communist Party of Cuba tolerating its activities. In return, he said, the CP gives passive toleration to him; it does not dare to oppose the revolutionary movement openly, for that would totally destroy its influence, but it refuses to give the slightest aid to the struggle for democracy against the dictatorship. The official labor movement is headed by men imposed upon it by the government but organized revolutionary workers groups exist everywhere, he reported.

Vidal outlined the aims of the revolutionary movement: (1) Aid to the peasants. (2) Creation of a domestic industry so that Cuba ceases to be a simple supplier of raw materials. (3) Nationalization of public services such as the railway and

telegraph lines; nationalization of the nickel resources. (4) An end to foreign military bases in Cuba. (5) Development of a merchant marine to end Cuba's dependence upon foreign shipping. (6) The restoration of democratic rights for labor including the right to strike; freedom to organize. The end of the domination of labor unions by the government dictatorship. Minimum wages, pensions and other social security laws for workers. (7) Reform of the judiciary. (8) Abolition of the present army and its replacement by a civilian army with the present officer corps of professional soldiers replaced by a cadre drawn from the universities. (9) For an international order based on "justice and peace"; against all totalitarianism and dictatorship in America.

Mr. Vidal urgently stressed the need for moral and material support from the United States to Cuban democracy. "Batista gets arms from foreign countries," he said, "we get none." We should expect aid from our brothers in the United States, he declared, but few voices are raised on our behalf. The UN refuses to hear our case. Not one country will agree to ask that the UN discuss our struggle. If there were protests; if there were declarations of support, we would get help. But the United States ambassador to Cuba, he pointed out, slandered our democratic fighters as "gangsters." When the Hungarians fought for democracy, there was a universal outcry on their behalf. That was justified, he said; but for us there is no outcry at all. Yet, our movement is part of the struggle for democracy by peoples in all nations.

On behalf of the Independent Socialist League, H. W. Benson its New York Organizer, expressed solidarity with the fight in Cuba. "Some are for the fight for democracy only when it takes place in Communist countries. Others are for it only in capitalist nations. But we support the struggle for democracy everywhere; in Guatemala; in Hungary; in Algeria. And now, we hail it in Cuba," Benson said.

# Democracy and the Shake-up in Russia

(Continued from page 11)

er, a short column by Joe Clark, and that is all.

To renew the discussion is not as simple as it appears. Not the least difficulty is a general weakening of the Gates forces and the resurgence of Foster and his co-thinkers. This is not to say that the Fosterites have been recruiting adherents. They have been winning only by default. As the party fails to move forward, it automatically slips backward. Even before the national convention, the Gates wing was weakened by defections, not to Foster, but out of the party in despair. The process continues. At the last state convention in New York, once a stronghold of anti-Stalinism, the Fosterites and allies took control. The Gatesites were voting with their feet. Pro-Gates delegates, elected before the convention, quit the party before it could assemble. The Fosterites could take over only because their rivals were disintegrating by the minute. Why? Those who left the party obviously saw no future with it. They were not guided in any fight for democratic socialism inside the party; they saw no alternative acceptable to them on the outside. So far, this situation remains unchanged.

## FOSTERITES GAIN

The *Daily Worker* remains under the editorship of John Gates and therefore does not seem to reflect openly the changing balance of forces. We get a hint of the real situation only by realizing what the *Daily Worker* does not say.

Foster-types begin to take over in New York. The tone of old-time Stalinism is heard again in somewhat subdued fashion. In his resignation from the Communist Party, Howard Fast expressed horror at Stalin's crimes and criticized the Russian regime for maintaining dictatorship and continuing to suppress democracy. He called for freedom in Russia. One can understand why those who remain in the party criticize, even repudiate Fast's act of resignation and dissociate themselves from it. After all, they believe that Communists must reform the party, if possible. But what of Fast's call for democracy? What of his criticism of the Russian regime? That is something quite different. Is it permissible to agree with Fast on democracy and remain inside the party nevertheless?

The arrogance of Stalinistic thinking begins to reassert itself. Foster feels free in public to denounce Fast for his views on democracy, borrowing again from the old lexicon: "slander," "monstrous distortion," "playing directly into the hands of the class enemy."

Another sign of the times: *Political Affairs*, the party's monthly magazine, has a new editor: Herbert Aptheker. That alone tells all. Only at the very height of the party discussion did a trace of fresh air filter into its pages. But now! Aptheker is a typical "red professor" whose eminence in the party rests upon the art of sifting out little grains of history into a formless heap and building the latest line on top of it. This craft is displayed in classically crude form in his book "The Truth [sic!] About Hungary." Here, to the astonishment of no one, he discovers that all Hungarian history points to the irresistible conclusion that the Hungarian Revolution was essentially the result of a reactionary and imperialist plot, a conclusion that he had no doubt reached long before commencing his concentrated researches. As a reward, he now assumes the editorship of the party's magazine. Properly enough, the first issue under his editorship publishes a lengthy laudatory review of his own

book written by a member of the party's National Committee, Hal Lumer. Some time before, in the *Daily Worker*, a Gatesite reviewing the same book felt impelled to express his dissatisfaction with it!

With this background the party learned of the change in Russia. At first the *Daily Worker* was non-committal, confining itself to straight news. There was no return to the old Stalinist-style drum beating. It referred carefully to the "alleged" anti-party faction of Malenkov and Molotov, indicating very subtly that the editor did not necessarily swallow Moscow's official, canned account of events. That was all for a few days. Obviously, the *Daily Worker* which had quickly reflected dissatisfaction with Russian policy during the Hungarian events now felt it advisable to be prudent, perhaps to wait for top level party discussions. For this is a time of rising Fosterite strength and dwindling Gatesite influence.

## A DILEMMA

Moreover, the Gatesites faced a dilemma entirely apart from the internal party balance. A Fosterite could react with automatic precision; to him each tack and turn in Russia is invariably the latest and greatest contribution to humanity; and now, when our own ruling politicians seemed pleased by events, he could ride with popular currents. But for the best of the Gatesites that will not do at all. They want a movement based not on Russian policy but on the needs of socialism in the United States. The turn in Russia took place under the sign of "liberalism," of "peaceful coexistence," of easing tensions in the Russian bloc. The Gatesites are all for that. Yet, the change was hardly a model of democracy. To climb the Khrushchev bandwagon was not good enough; it would suggest the old platform of blind apologetics. Thus, the *Daily Worker* continued to report developments in Russia in minor key, concentrating as usual on events in the United States which are simpler to handle.

On July 9, the *Daily Worker* commented editorially under the heading "Soviet Events and Coexistence." Later a reader wrote to the editor, "The *Worker* editorial on the change in leadership was an excellent piece of writing. One could almost picture the staff working together to present a correct editorial policy." In a way, he was right. It was an attempt to please everyone and in the end will probably prove fruitless. At bottom, the editorial approved of the changes. "Whatever their many secondary elements," it began, "the central feature of the recent historic Soviet events is that they strengthen the tide to peaceful coexistence and a durable peace." It approved of "the rebuffing of a faction" which opposed among other things "democratic rights of the Soviet people." And, "we view with the warmest sympathy the efforts of the Soviet Communists to maintain the unity of the party which leads 200 million Soviet peoples." If they are for unity, what of democracy?

## DEMOCRACY?

"From all accounts," the editorial continues, "the issues were debated vigorously for a week at a full meeting of the Central Committee (about 200 were present) with all points of view presented. This was a departure from certain of the condemned practices of the latter years of the Stalin leadership which frequently bypassed the CPSU's elected bodies. The meeting took the decisive steps already noted. It may be suggested, however, that matters might not have even come to this pass had a wide public discussion preceded the meeting for the Soviet Communist Party membership and the Soviet people undoubtedly support wholeheartedly the policies of peaceful coexistence, democratization and the raising of living standards. The process of democratization requires such a debate; the process of correction of the abuses of Soviet democracy will undoubtedly provide new forms for such public discussion. But this is distinctly subordinate to the historic events themselves—events which will help shape a peaceful world."

It is impossible to consider this assemblage of ideas as a public declaration of policy; it reads like a diplomatic com-

munique, composed to satisfy an inner family circle. Is there a real trend to democracy in Russia? The editorial suggests that there is. But it offers not a single substantial fact to bolster its hope. If the "process of democratization requires public debate," was there any evidence of it in Russia? No, that is what is missing, we are told.

At any event this must be answered: yesterday Molotov, Malenkov and others were at the very pinnacle of power. In the twinkling of an eye, without public debate, and now without recourse of any kind, without the slightest right to go before the Russian people, they are immediately reduced to nothing... unanimously. If that is the fate of yesterday's rulers when they take issue with the regime, rightly or wrongly, what must be the fate of the ordinary Russian worker and farmer, without power or influence, who wants to call for a change? The Russian people want democracy? We have no reason to doubt it. But is the regime moving toward democracy? The dumping of Molotov and Malenkov without consultation with the people proves the opposite.

## PUBLIC DEBATE?

On July 10, Joseph Clark was ready to go further in his *Daily* column. He spoke bluntly of "The lack of basic democratic procedure in the Soviet Communist Party which still persists. . . ." (We remind our readers that it is the only legal party in the country! If there is no democracy within that party, how is it possible to speak at all of democracy in Russian society?) Clark deplores the fact that the removed Russian leaders "were never given the benefit of public debate. The struggle was bottled up in the presidium of the Party's Central Committee."

Clark then turns to the charge that they were responsible for Stalin's crimes and points out the plain truth. "It would be . . . fatuous to think that Khrushchev, Mikoyan, Bulganin and Voroshilov, remaining collaborators of Stalin, were also not responsible for the Leningrad frame-up and the repressions of the '30s for which they now blame Molotov, Malenkov and Kaganovich."

And so, there is no democracy in the Russian party; there was no appeal to the people possible for the defeated "faction"; the present leaders of Russia bear responsibility for Stalin's crimes. Any ordinary person would consider these to be grave charges. If true, they must lead to a basic change in attitude toward the ruling regime.

What is so astounding in this type of thinking is the ability to combine it with a whole system of old illusions. At the same time, Clark somehow senses a fight, among other things, over "democratization." "It would be unfortunate if that basic trend were obscured by the methods being used by the Soviet leaders to fight against Stalinism." And again, he concludes: "Meanwhile, slowly but inexorably by zig-zags if not straight, by fits and starts if not steadily, Soviet society moves toward democratization which is the guarantee of socialist progress."

## ABOVE OR BELOW

But Clark will not face up to the issue. Let us assume that "Soviet society" will move toward democracy . . . and every socialist has confidence that it will because he has confidence in the Russian people. . . . The question is: will democracy be won by the people fighting below or will it be condescendingly handed down bit by bit by benevolent dictators above?

No realistic political person, and especially no socialist, can be satisfied merely with promises and hints of promises by rulers, especially when the latter enjoy uncontrolled tyrannical power. If Clark and his friends simply accepted the promises of the Russian regime as good coin we could only say that they are being deceived. But that is not the case! They are not even given promises! The Russian regime does not promise to move toward democracy (they only insist that they already have perfect "democracy"). They do not pledge to allow public debates. They do not offer public pledges of "democratization" to say nothing of free elec-

tions, free parties and free trade unions. Not at all. Clark and the *Daily Worker* are gratuitously reading these promises into events. They are only deceiving and disorienting themselves. And that is the tragedy: for it cuts them off from what is possible today: to rebuild a socialist movement in America and bring it to the working class.

The crucial fact, says the *Daily Worker*, is that the turn in Russia makes possible a peaceful world. All the questions of democratization, it maintains, are "distinctly subordinate to the historic events themselves, events which will help shape a peaceful world."

## WHERE DO YOU STAND?

Suppose we grant that contention? Let us assume that the main impact of events in Russia is to strengthen the possibility of peaceful coexistence. But that alone will solve nothing for the Communist Party in the United States. The days when it could draft along on the tide of Russian policy are obviously gone. What socialist militants in the labor movement and the world of radicalism want to know from the Communist Party is this: where do you stand on democracy, not only in the United States but in Russia too? Do the latest events in Russia show a real turn of the regime to democracy? Does socialist democracy live in the private world of a narrow clique? It is not enough to piece together a reply that will hold divergent groups together inside the party, you must face the world of socialist public opinion.

Two years ago, the article by Clark and the *Worker* editorial would have represented a courageous break from the domination of the Russian CP. Even today, they reveal a strong resistance to the Fosterite process of re-Stalinization. But a lot has happened in the last year. Socialism in the United States faces a new beginning. All those, and they only, can make a real contribution toward its resurgence who publicly proclaim that socialism is and can only be democratic. It is not simply a question of abstract theory; it is a matter of finding a place inside a renewed socialist movement for every militant who should be there.

## Liberals — —

(Continued from page 11)

5. Trachtenberg further pointed out that the Liberal Party will win adherents to itself on the basis of its liberal program, and its independence from the Democratic Party. He ended with the proposal that someone like Charles Abram would make a far more suitable candidate for Mayor than the present Democratic incumbent.

The three delegates who spoke next rose to support the essence of Trachtenberg's remarks. One delegate from Brooklyn pointed out that the present city administration is without morality and that the Liberal Party would be gambling its principles and existence by supporting the Democratic Party. Another indicated a strong feeling for "running our own candidates."

Alex Rose then took the floor to supply the justification of the Policy Committee's proposal. This was based on the philosophy that the Liberal Party considers itself to be in a "coalition" with the Democratic Party and that the present municipal election campaign must be seen in light of this coalition and not as a separate entity in itself. He pointed out that the Liberal Party policy today has to be based on the 1958 elections when on a national scale, he felt that liberals and the labor movement would have to "coalesce" with the Democratic Party in order to defeat the Republicans.

In closing, Rose pointed out that "he had nothing against the members who spoke against" the Policy Committee's proposal, that he knew that they spoke "from motives of idealism and devotion" and that he wanted them to "stay and work along with us."

The vote was then taken on the Policy Committee's proposal. It was carried by a vote of 208, with 23 votes opposed.

### WHAT'S GOING ON?

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## French Student Socialist Congress

# Deals Blow to Mollet's Algerian Policy

In recent months, opposition to Guy Mollet's imperialist policy in Algeria has been developing within the French Social Democracy. At the last Party Congress, two tendencies appeared which broke with the official leadership on this question. Now, reports indicate that the young socialists of France have also adopted a perspective which is contrary to Mollet's line. This new development was formulated at the Tenth Congress of the Student Socialists (Etudiants Socialistes).

The Student Socialists came into being in 1947. Since then, they have been numerically weak, tied as they were to Mollet's party. But in the recent period, the group has become more and more militant, and its successes have been a function of a growing hostility to the imperialist policy in North Africa. At the Ninth Congress, in February 1956, no officials of the SFIO (the name of the French Social Democratic Party is

"French Section of the Worker's International; the initials, SFIO) appeared. But the growing importance of the student socialist movement was witnessed by the presence of Mendes-France and Claude Bourdet.

The Tenth Congress apparently caused concern among the leaders of the SFIO. The temporary secretary general of the party appeared. The reporter for *La Commune*, the publication of the Liaison Committee for Workers Democracy, notes that

this Party official was confronted with a series of disagreeable surprises. And when Pierre Commin appeared to state his version of the line, he was subjected to a gruelling question period, and was attacked from various sections of the organization.

But the center of the Congress was, of course, the formal debate on the Algerian question. On this issue, the Mollet minority fought a rear guard action. The program of the Student Socialists was adopted by a vote of 36 to 7, with two abstentions. The salient points of the program as reported by *La Commune* were:

1. That the government make a solemn declaration that it commits itself to elections to a representative Algerian Assembly; and further, that it will respect the results of this election no matter

what they are; and that no solution to the Algerian question be ruled out in advance.

2. The immediate adoption of measures which will demonstrate the seriousness of French policy in this regard: specifically, a liberation of all political prisoners, and an amnesty; a change in the policy of the local administration; a withdrawal of troops who have been involved in brutal, punitive actions; a policy against the excesses of the local colonialist tendencies. Under this heading the Congress also demanded the removal of Robert Lacoste, the chief French agent of the repression in Algeria.

3. Finally, the Student Socialists called for a Round Table Conference which would include the Tunisian and Moroccan governments as intermediaries and which would also represent all tendencies within Algeria including the Frontists (FLN) and the Messalists (MNA). This conference would have the job of defining the conditions of a cease-fire; organizing free elections; and fixing guarantees for the rights of the French minority (it being understood that this would be the one point agreed upon in advance of the actual convocation of the Algerian Assembly.) The negotiations which would come out of this process would have, as their immediate end, the establishment of a transition program, but with the understanding that, if the Algerian people vote for it, this will be the first step toward independence.

### GROWING OPPOSITION

This development among the Student Socialists takes place at a time when opposition to Mollet's Algeria policy is growing within the SFIO. At the recent Extraordinary Meeting of the National Council (brought about by the ministerial crisis), the dissidents received almost a third of the votes. This in contrast to little over a year ago when they could only muster about ten per cent. In part, this emergence of minority strength was due to the work of the "Socialist Committee to Study Action for Peace in Algeria," which came into existence last January. This group includes familiar names: Morceau Pivert, Jean Rous, Andre Philippe, Daniel Mayer, and others. Its basis was the belief that the socialist ministers had taken a position "completely contrary to the most fundamental principles of socialism."

At the recent meeting, this minority attracted some 81 signatures to its point of view, including those of 15 deputies, 2 senators, 2 Counselors of the French Union, and other well-known party leaders. But at the same time, another minority was emerging, that of Gaston Deferre, leader of one of the Party Federation. Deferre's position was not as forthright as that of the Committee founded last January, yet it was in a fundamental opposition to the attitude taken by Guy Mollet. More recently, there was, of course, dissension at the Congress of the SFIO.

This is the context in which the Congress of the Student Socialists must be placed. As part of the general ferment on the French left, the action of the young socialists has a significance which transcends their own congress. As an element of support for the oppositionists within the Party, it is also of some importance. It remains to be seen whether the SFIO can find within itself the resources to blot out the terrible stain of Mollet's policy. The Student Socialists, at least, are clearly attempting to do precisely that.

## Mao Regime Scythes Blooming Flowers

The tremendous ferment of youth within the Stalinist world continues. The latest reports are of great importance: they come from China.

The general rhythm of events in China is well known. In February, Mao delivered his famous speech with its emphasis upon "criticism." Consequently, the Chinese Communists have been engaged for some time in a "rectification" campaign to tighten the screws. And it is in this context that official governmental admissions of student unrest have been forthcoming.

For example, there is the story of the events at Tsinghua University in Peiping. There, according to the *China Youth Journal*, the "rightists" gained considerable influence. They attacked the Communists as a "Fascist, privileged class" and opposed the terror of a few years back. According to this Communist report, the "rightists" included party members and the secretary of the Party branch. At Peiping University, the *Hsinua News Agency* told, the "rightists" attracted "quite a few" students who attacked the Communist dictatorship and bureaucratism. An "all-flowers

study group" (which based itself on Mao's slogan about freedom of criticism) was said to have mailed anti-Communist bulletins to other schools.

If one credits the information, there is also a report that the "rightists" engaged in an attack upon the hostel of the Party committee secretaries at Peiping Medical College. And at Nanking University, anti-Communist slogans were posted on the wall. When the police tore these down there was a demonstration.

### STUDENTS PENALIZED

The reaction of the regime to these student events went according to the usual pattern: the "hundred flowers" campaign for criticism was quickly forgotten, and the government invoked the power of the state against the critics. The State Council of Communist China held that students whose "thought seriously runs against socialism face penalties ranging from corrective labor to long periods of work without pay while undergoing reform." "Corrective labor" is, of course, the standard Communist euphemism for forced labor.

At the same time as the State Council announced its decision of how to handle the blooming of a hundred flowers, more information on student unrest was released by the government. The *People's Daily* of Peiping records the story of a demonstration of one hundred students from the Second Teachers' Training College at Chengtu, capital of Szechwan province. The demonstrators were protesting the detention of two students who had been arrested for leading a move against the Communist representatives in the College.

And at National Wuhan University at Hankow, the *China Youth Journal* admitted that students posted slogans on walls and on busses accusing the regime of having "made a mess" of the campaign against "counter-revolutionaries" in 1950-1951.

These developments in China are part of the student unrest that is literally sweeping the entire Communist world. Polish, Hungarian, Czech and Russian students have already engaged in sharp criticism of the regime (*Challenge* has, of course, analyzed at length the role of the youth in the Hungarian and Polish Revolutions). But now the evidence points to the fact that the opposition is not confined to the Western reaches of

the Stalinist empire, that it has reached into the fastness of the newest of the Communist states with considerable force.

And the way in which the Chinese student opposition has developed is similar to the events in Eastern Europe too. The regime, in this case Mao, attempts to loosen up by allowing a little criticism. The students immediately seize the opportunity, understanding the new position as a function of weakness, and begin to discuss, to correspond, even to act. And this, in turn, calls forth a new response from the totalitarian state: the use of force to stifle every free voice of criticism.

But here again we must not make the mistake of speaking in terms of a youth "class." The students are, to be sure, more apt to be moved by changes in the ideological sphere, they have a tendency to react first (as shown in Hungary and Poland). But their very chance to speak is won for them by the masses of people. In the case of Mao's February speech, it was most probably the attempt of the regime to ease up on the incredible program of collectivization which it adopted in July of 1955. But once the opening was made—an dMao probably anticipated harmless criticism which might have the effect of making the economy more efficient—the students began to speak, write and act in earnest.

### NO REAL CRITICISM

Thus is the mask of the "hundred flowers" campaign ripped away. The Chinese government has made it clear to the students, and to the others who foolishly took Mao at his word, that no real criticism of the regime will be brooked. There is not even a sense of shame in this shift, or a trying to hide the new turn behind some fine words. The Peiping Radio announces the reward of free criticism: "corrective" labor or working without pay. The latter penalty, that of working without pay, is listed as the easy one. We can well imagine the reality of the "corrective" labor.

Youth under Stalinism is on the march. And contrary to the ideas of many who have illusions about Stalinism in China, that country is no exception. There too the forces of opposition, of freedom among the youth, are being heard.

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Discussion leader: Mel Stack

Aug. 13: ECONOMICS OF CAPITALISM

Discussion leader: Sam Taylor

August 20: IMPERIALISM AND WAR

Discussion leader: Sy Landy

August 27: THE STATE

Discussion leader: George Rawlings

September 10: DEMOCRATIC SOCIALISM vs. STALINISM

Discussion leader: Bogdan Denitch

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## ISL Contribution to the Discussion

# Unity and Regroupment of the American Socialist Movement

The workers are organized. The Negroes are on the offensive. The mood of liberalism and democracy is rising. Of course, conservative and anti-democratic trends persist strongly but a new situation is determined by the above three facts.

Taken by themselves, these factors would make possible a significant and relatively prompt rise of socialist influence in the U.S. only if it were already an established force of some power; but it is not. On the contrary, the truly socialist movement is at the lowest point in its history. It will take time, class struggles, political experiences, the further radicalization of the consciousness of the working class, above all, its development toward political independence and a new party before we can expect socialism to begin to emerge as a mass force.

## UPWARD PUSH

Awaiting that however, it is still possible for socialism to begin its rise; to come out of its present position of stagnation, decline and disintegration and to commence its upward push toward the status of a recognized political movement, if not a genuine working class party. The big historic trends make possible a long term, steady climb—the slow process of assembling new human material for a newly built movement. The relationship of forces between socialism and labor, at this point however creates special difficulties. All experience has demonstrated that where socialism is reduced to a tiny sect existing side by side with a big mass movement, it is difficult to win those active in the mass movement to affiliation to a small socialist group.

If this fully described the task of socialists today, they might properly proceed in leisurely fashion, encouraged and optimistic over the long range prospects while continuing as before to educate, to issue various papers and magazines, to maintain the present existing organizations in the same form, while awaiting big events.

But more is necessary because a big step forward is possible. It is possible under certain conditions to unite existing groups, to make a new start, to break out of the sectarian form of existence into which all are stalemated, and to renew socialism as a movement.

The possibilities exist now and will probably remain for some time, but not forever. To realize these possibilities before they are dissipated all socialist groups, including the ISL, must reorient their thinking and make a turn in outlook.

## The Collapse Of the Communist Party

Stalinism was thrown into a world-wide crisis by the 20th Congress and the Hungarian Revolution. Nowhere was the crisis as deepgoing as in the United States where the Communist Party is smashed, isolated, split from within and reduced to a large but dwindling sect. For some time, the party had been plagued by its "isolation from the mass movement." Up to the Congress it was easily possible to attribute the decline of its influence to this or that tactical error, "rightist" or "leftist." But now, the source of its demise is revealed to all as Stalinism itself. In the U.S., the CP as an organization seems doomed beyond hope of redemption. The rapidity of its disintegration is a product of many causes but most crucial is the unrelenting hostility of a powerful labor movement. The most militant and progressive elements in the working class who once looked upon it with tolerance, even with sympathy, and who often followed its leadership, have now become its most determined opponents. Thus, the work-

ing class movement in the U. S. has finally triumphed over Stalinism.

The collapse of the CP clears the way for the reconstruction of the socialist movement in the U.S. For it was Stalinism through the CP, that dominated the radical movement for more than 20 years. For a variety of reasons, the overwhelming majority of those who opposed capitalism and who wanted socialism looked to Stalinism. They joined the CP or fell under its influence directly or indirectly. The socialist sympathies of a whole generation were perverted and undermined: if radicals were led to accept totalitarian dictatorship because they thought it was socialism, liberals and laborites were led to reject socialism because they thought it meant totalitarian dictatorship. Thus it was its identification with tyranny, by its critics as well as by its self-styled supporters, that ruined socialism in the U.S.

## SOCIALIST TRADITION

Yet socialism, while always a minority in the working class, has deep traditions in the U. S. labor movement. For a generation, Stalinism was able to capture control of this current in American life and thereby to defeat and almost to wipe out the democratic socialist movement which was reduced to a handful of organized individuals in scattered small groups. But that chapter is finished.

Tens of thousands have already broken with Stalinism or are about to do so. Many are ripe for a new conception of socialism and in their rejection of Stalinism are at least moving toward democratic socialism. It is possible now to rebuild the socialist movement as a genuinely democratic movement. The speed with which this can be done depends to a large extent on the political direction and fate of those who have moved away from Stalinism.

It is true that some have been so corrupted by Stalinism and its perversion of socialism, that they will never find their way back to socialism; above all those inside the Communist Party who agree with Foster and those outside who remain unmoved by world events and the anti-Stalinist revolution. Others too have undoubtedly become hopelessly cynical, contemptuous of the working class and lacking all confidence in socialism. They will find their places among the 27 varieties of bourgeois politics or drift out of politics altogether.

## THOUSANDS SEEK ROAD

But other thousands leave Stalinism to find a road to democratic socialism. Thousands have already left the CP but drift about without direction waiting for a new orientation. They read the publications, they attend the symposiums and discussions but they join none of the socialist groups. Others, for lack of any alternative perspective, remain within the CP where they look to Gates and his allies. Here, they continue a disorienting and futile effort to escape the consequences of Stalinism while remaining together with Stalinists.

It is possible that, in the last analysis, all this will come to nothing; that the corrupting effects of Stalinism will prove to have been so deep-seated that these tens of thousands will perish politically. We do not think this is likely. If so, however, Stalinism will have succeeded politically in wiping out a whole generation of those who once looked to socialism. Even in defeat it would have won its ironic victory over democratic socialism. Under such conditions, it will be necessary to rebuild the socialist movement more slowly and with greater difficulty from among new elements, especially the youth, whose political interests and so-

*On these pages LABOR ACTION prints a resolution adopted by the recent convention of the Independent Socialist League on the prospects for socialist unity and regroupment in the United States. The material printed here constitutes the concluding sections of a general resolution dealing with the political situation in the United States in which are discussed, among other things, such topics as the Negro struggle for equality, and the decline of McCarthyism.*

cialist consciousness has yet to be aroused. If democratic socialists turn their backs upon events and take a purely negative attitude toward the thousands torn loose from Stalinism, then the possibilities may in fact be dissipated.

But a chief task and duty at this moment is to fight politically to rescue socialism from its Stalinist perversion and to win those thousands to democratic socialism. What is required is a positive, fighting, militant, confident campaign to establish its dominance in the American radical public.

In no sense is it a matter of reconciliation with Stalinism, of appeasing it, or compromising with it. We must take, as they are, those who are breaking with it; find a way to complete their break from Stalinism and win them to resurgent socialism. In sum, it is a question of the final and complete defeat of Stalinism and all the remnants of its ideology.

## INSIDE THE CP

The CP is not only drastically reduced in numbers, isolated, distrusted, reduced to little more than a big sect. Significantly, it is divided into at least 3 different opposing tendencies. The conflict among them has led to a debate and faction fight unlike any in the party's recent history, for it was a genuine political struggle which has not yet been resolved and which can never be resolved within the framework of a single organization. The situation inside the CP requires the closest attention of all socialists and, where possible, participation by them in the debates, especially on the question of a new, broad, socialist movement and related questions of democracy.

The three tendencies could be roughly characterized as follows: the Foster wing represents a "Russian" Stalinist wing which would maintain the Communist Party as an unchanged instrument of world Stalinist policy. The Dennis wing, basically Stalinist in outlook, would attempt to adapt the party to the American scene in a maneuverist manner, while retaining a basic loyalty to the Russian bureaucratic class and its social system. The Gates wing alone has taken significant steps away from Stalinism, above all in its position on the Hungarian events, in its attitude toward a broad socialist movement, in its strivings towards what it itself calls "democratic socialism." Its theoretical and political positions are far from adequate. Its tactics are weak and compromising. It continues to vacillate between Stalinism and democratic socialism. At bottom, it is torn between the Russian ruling class and the American working class. But the important political fact is that it has already moved a distance away from one and toward the other.

It is true that the CP is now relatively small and the Gates group even smaller. But it is not a question of Gates as an individual nor even merely of the hundreds of CP members who look toward him for leadership and a way out of their dilemma. The Gates wing, inside the CP, repre-

sents in a concentrated form the problem and the opportunities for democratic socialism among thousands of others outside the CP who were once under its influence. The fate of the Gates tendency will help determine the political course of many others outside the CP.

No one can propose to prescribe its precise tactical course inside the CP, for it will undoubtedly be necessary for it and its followers to go through a whole evolution and new internal struggles before it can find its place in a renewed socialist movement. However, if it is not to slide backward, it will have to continue to press for an anti-Stalinist line, above all to come out clearly and unambiguously for democracy everywhere, and in the final analysis at the proper time and under the proper conditions to make a complete break with the Stalinists and find a place in the democratic socialist movement. It is the duty of socialists, on the other hand, to encourage and to press it to make that break not only by participating in all the discussions but above all by reconstructing democratic socialism as a new pole of attraction for all radicals.

## Regroupment and Unity

While the disintegration of Stalinism makes possible the reconstruction of a socialist movement, this possibility cannot be realized, so to speak, automatically. All the groups and publications, socialist, near-socialist and pseudo-socialist, are intensely interested in the question of socialist regroupment and reunification. None of them, as they are, in the natural course of their normal activity and development is able to serve as the vehicle for rallying thousands for a new beginning. None has emerged as the center by itself and none has demonstrated that it is about to do so. For one thing: the terrible experience with Stalinism has left thousands, and rightly so, hesitant to accept out of hand any new "finished" program which purports to answer all the political, social, and theoretical and historical questions in one uniform, worked out program. In the theoretical uncertainty that follows the disarray of Stalinism, a whole period of discussion and deliberation will be required before new theoretical landmarks are clearly mapped out. Unity need not wait resolution of all these questions.

Each of the groups too is weak. Each compares itself not only with the others but with the big mass movements and seeks an effective means of bringing socialism to them. All the discussions finally hit up against the key problem: how, from the respective standpoint of each of the tendencies, to achieve or restore the union of socialist (or pseudo-socialist) ideas within the labor movement.

This too is the case with the ISL.

## A CONCRETE TASK

Our decisions must facilitate, not in some unrealizable ideal or abstract sense but in the sense of the maximum possible under the concrete circumstances the advancement of the ideas of democratic socialism in the ranks of labor and Negro movements and the corresponding growth of the socialist movement based upon these broad mass movements and exercising an increasing influence among them. Any decision taken in the matter of socialist unity or in relation with other groups, must serve this objective. Any decision, no matter what success it seems to yield of a temporary or isolated nature, but which conflicts with this objective, which does not serve it, or which is not conceived and carried on in a way which is consciously subordinated to the attainment of this objective is wrong.

Since no single group as it is now constituted is in a position to accomplish this task, a tendency arises to unite forces. But it is not a simple matter and not every projected form of regroupment is equally effective or correct.

One complicating factor is this: Stalinism as an organized party and leadership is practically dead, but the ideological influence it once wielded has not yet been completely eliminated. In one form or another it remains as an influence among several of the tendencies. To the extent that they are able to shake off the residue of the ideology of Stalinism, it will be possible for them to make a positive contribution to an effective socialist regroupment. But if a regroupment took

# Toward a New Beginning of the Socialist Movement...

place essentially through the unification of these groups into a new united movement excluding only the outright Stalinist leadership, it would of necessity repel those who are committed to democratic socialism. Such democratic socialists, without accepting all the policies identified with the ISL, oppose Stalinism and are hostile to those who give it critical support in the name of socialism.

## "PRO-SOVIET" REGROUPMENT

Such a new coalesced movement would carry the stamp, not so much by formal decision as by its predominant composition of a reformed and modified pro-Stalinist movement. Such a coalition could hardly play a genuinely positive role in the growth of a socialist movement as we conceive of it. Nor could it push those who are already moving away from Stalinism further in the right direction. On the contrary, it would tend to halt their ideological and political progress and nullify the contribution they can make to the growth of the socialist movement. Our contact, discussion or collaboration with these groups and individuals must therefore aim at persuading them not to yield to any tendency toward such a coalition and at turning their attention to concrete alternatives.

While we seek friendly contact and discussions free from violent polemics with such groups and individuals, we must decline sponsorship and responsibility for any organization or "semi-organization" that has not declared plainly, whatever its estimate of the social nature or course of development of the Stalinist countries, that it is hostile to and independent of the totalitarian regimes that rule them, and supports all genuinely democratic movements and struggles against these regimes. Inasmuch as all the groups involved in any possible unification have to one degree or another condemned the attack of Stalinism upon the Hungarian people and expressed support for the democratic and socialist struggle of these people against the Hungarian and Russian Stalinist regimes, our proposal for such a general declaration on their part cannot reasonably be objected to as an attempt by us to impose an ultimatum upon them.

Further, it is not we who propose that any new organization center exclusively around such elements. If these groups, for whatever motive of principle or tactics, are not ready to base their mutual collaboration among other things upon a clear public commitment to support of democracy and democratic struggles everywhere, then it is clear that any regroupment, new organization or semi-organization formed by them would be, at the very least, premature.

## DEMOCRATIC SOCIALISTS

What is required is a clearly democratic socialist pole of attraction as an alternative to Stalinism. If it can be created and built, it will speed up the process of rooting out the last vestiges of Stalinist influence and induce all other groups to shake off the remnants of its ideology. The first elements of such a center exist among those already committed, like the ISL, to democratic socialism. These are all the groups and tendencies that clearly oppose Stalinism; whose socialism is nowise identified with it; who declare that socialism and democracy are inseparable; and who maintain that socialism cannot be imposed by dictators above but must come from the democratic decision of the people.

There are many differences among all these tendencies; in origin, in theory, in historical analysis, in political line on current questions; differences which will undoubtedly persist for some time. We do not propose that they renounce their views on disputed questions and we do not propose to renounce ours. But it is fully possible and necessary to discuss all views in such a fraternal atmosphere that makes it possible to collaborate in achieving the key political objective of our time; the reconstruction of a united democratic socialist movement.

Of all the groups, one stands out uniquely: the Socialist Party-Social Democratic Federation. In size, it is not larger than others. It, however, is already broad enough in character to serve as

an inclusive movement embracing a wide range of democratic-socialist tendencies. It represents, to the interested public, socialism in general; unlike the SLP it is not hostile to the labor movement; it is small but it is not discredited and enjoys the respect, if not the support, of many militants in the labor movement. It can play a special role in unifying and rebuilding the movement.

The Independent Socialist League is in favor of unity with the SP because it can become the framework for such a unification and make a tremendous contribution toward its advancement. If the SP neglects the opportunities at hand it will drastically reduce the prospects for its growth in the immediate period ahead and in the future as well. The orientation of the ISL is based upon doing its best to help realize the former possibility. The ISL decides firmly in favor of unity with the SP as it is at present constituted and without posing any conditions of an organizational or political kind save those that are incontestable for all members enjoying equality of rights and duties.

## OPEN DISCUSSION

To effectuate unity with the SP we do not believe that it is necessary for either side to gloss over or conceal actual differences or criticisms of their respective positions on questions of immediate importance. Rather it is possible to discuss them not in a harsh or hostile manner but in a non-polemical, non-factional spirit.

The ISL has neither the intention nor the desire to unite with the SP in order to capture it, for even if this were possible, such a "victory" would not only be meaningless but, what is worse, it would defeat the very objective of converting the SP from its present position of isolation and weakness to an effective influential, broad democratic socialist movement in the best traditions of the Debs period. Without for a moment abandoning our right to present our own views on the policies and tactics of the socialist movement, we favor the exercise of this elementary right in such a way as to serve the aim of building the SP, of bringing into it new and numerous elements from the labor movement, the Negro movement, the student youth, the intellectuals and professional people and not in such a way as to sterilize the party by making it a vanishing battle ground for hard and fast factions or sects.

In the same spirit, we are ready to make concrete proposals on specific immediate issues facing socialists in the fields of both domestic and foreign policy with the objective of strengthening the united organization, and increasing its effectiveness. Our fundamental theoretical approach to problems of both immediate and long-range importance can properly be explained and presented in such vehicles of expressions as are available under the rules of the united organization.

## BUILD UP SP

Without for a moment abandoning our support of the principles and practices of democratic socialism as the basis for a reunited and healthy socialist movement, but rather by insisting upon these principles, we aim to build a Socialist Party which successfully takes up the challenge offered by the existence of great numbers of radicals who have already broken with Stalinism or are in the course of doing so, and seek a vigorous socialist organization which rejects sectarianism and aims at becoming a living movement. It is precisely in this sense that the Socialist Party has the possibility of replacing the Stalinist Party as the leader and spokesman for the radical and progressive movement, not only and not even so much those of the past period but the new ones that are sure to develop.

Individual radicals formerly under the influence of Stalinism may be recruited to a revolutionary sect. But the bulk of those who are still ready to work for socialism can be attracted only to an organization which is a serious political movement or which has the possibility of being developed into such a movement. From this point of view, too, the ISL favors unity with the SP as the organization which it is possible to build up as a serious pole of attraction to all radicals of yesterday, today and tomorrow, which offers a signifi-

cant alternative to Stalinism in the struggle against capitalism and imperialism. If the SP takes advantage of the real possibilities that are arising before our eyes it will be able to become such a pole of attraction. Meanwhile, in discussions with the various so-called "pro-Soviet" elements in and outside the CP we emphasize above all our minimum political platform for democratic socialist regroupment and present and defend the ISL's proposal that it unite with the SP. We strongly urge that the SP enter into all the current debates and discussions on regroupment.

## TOWARD LABOR MOVEMENT

Our aim with regard to the Socialist Party must serve in turn our wider long range aim with regard to the labor movement, as the most important of the mass movements in the country. The present period is a long interlude between the last radicalization wave and the one to come. In such a period it is not possible to think in terms of a genuinely powerful socialist movement numbering many tens of thousands and influencing many hundreds of thousands and more. But it is possible and necessary to utilize to the maximum all the possibilities now at hand to consolidate during this interlude the kind of socialist movement that will be best able to assist the working class in its further economic and political progress and be assisted in turn by the most conscious elements from its ranks who join and build the socialist wing of the labor movement.

There is no ideal form of socialist organization good for all times, places and conditions. What is required is a movement adapted to the tasks of its time. In the United States, socialism faces a new beginning; it must rescue and restore a generation which has been influenced by Stalinism; it must educate a new generation never touched by socialism; it must restore socialism to a respected position inside the labor movement. The characteristics and qualities of a movement best adapted to perform these tasks will become clearer with experience; it would be impossible to elaborate in detail now what will be required in time. We can suggest in a general way what seem to us the indicated landmarks.

## DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENT

What ruined socialism in the United States was its identification with Russian tyranny by a majority of radicals as well as by non-socialists. It will not rise from its present state of fragmentation and isolation—more, it will not deserve to do so—unless it comes forward unambiguously as a democratic movement.

It takes its position against capitalism, against Stalinism, and for socialism, making clear in its platform that the social system it proposes to substitute for capitalism in the United States is not what prevails in Russia or other nations dominated by the Communists.

It stands for democracy everywhere and gives moral support and encouragement to those who fight for it in every nation. It defends democracy in the United States and strives to extend it and in all the capitalist countries of the world. But it stands at least equally for democracy in Russia and its satellites. It insists that the people deserve at least the same democratic rights there as we demand here.

And by democracy we mean the right of free speech, free press and assembly, the right to free trade unions with the right to strike; the right to form political parties and organizations free to alter the ruling regime by peaceful, legal processes.

Wherever a capitalist imperialist government crushes the independence of a subject people, any democratic socialist movement worthy of the name must speak out against it; particularly if, as in France under Mollet, it was perpetrated in the name of a government formed by a Socialist Party. But the movement must be at least as ready to support the struggle for freedom in all nations dominated by Russia, to defend the right of the nation's of Eastern Europe, for example, to self-determination and to condemn attacks upon their national existence as in Hungary.

A renewed movement is for the democratic road to socialism. Socialism will come into power with the support of the

people or what comes to power will not be socialism. Democratic socialism rejects the notion that socialism can be imposed upon the people by a tyrannical regime.

A renewed movement must encompass a wide range of tendencies living within a single organization united upon common objectives while debating and discussing disputed questions in an atmosphere of unity. It must be broad and not "narrow" to accomplish two objectives: (1) Only a broad movement could unite the diverse currents that must join together at this point. (2) In the context of the situation in the U. S., only such a movement could bring socialism to the working class and recruit substantial numbers from it.

The old generation of radicals who are breaking from Stalinism have been thrown off balance; they will not readily accept some newly worked out system of ideas they are discarding. They need time and covering every subject to replace what they deserve it to work their way through a whole series of complex problems. The new generation that will come to socialism cannot be expected to adopt any elaborate program at one swoop; they will come step by step to socialism on the basis of their own experiences. Moreover, democratic socialists themselves are divided over many questions of theory and history, not to mention important current political questions.

## MINIMUM PLATFORM

Many problems of theory and history will of necessity remain "unsettled." If it was necessary to work through all these questions to a final conclusion the rebuilding of socialist organization might wait indefinitely. The analysis of two wars, the fate of two internationals, the Russian Revolution; the roots and meaning of Stalinism . . . questions like these are of great significance but they cannot become the basis for a new movement. What is required is not a fully finished declaration of principles, fully motivated historically and analytically, but that minimum platform of democratic socialism that makes it possible to take a big step forward at this juncture.

One of the chief causes of permanent splits in the past was the so-called "Russian Question." The theoretical differences have fanned out until a whole rainbow of theories are put forward by the tendencies. Some refer to Russia as a state of a "socialist" type; others state capitalism; others bureaucratic collectivism; others a degenerated workers state. Likewise there are varying modes of characterizing the tasks of socialism in relation to the Stalinist regimes. Some call for democracy through reform; or by evolution; or by political revolution; or by social revolution.

For us to declare that collaboration with other groups requires their acceptance of all our theoretical positions including our position on the nature of Stalinism and of Stalinist society, or that such acceptance is required for coexistence in one socialist organization, would be wrong and ultimatumistic and contrary to our conception of the socialist unification that is now required. We make no such declaration and we reject it when made by anyone else. We regard the theoretical differences on the "Russian Question," on Stalinism, as regards the groups now discussing unity as "frozen" for the present. We do not refrain from advancing our own theoretical position but we do not make it or the position of any other tendency the pre-condition for unity.

The pre-condition for unity is acceptance of the general principles of democratic socialism, agreement upon a democratic life for the united organization and support of the democratic struggle against totalitarianism. This does not encompass the full position of the ISL, to whose tendency we reserve the democratic right of advocacy in a responsible and not disruptive way in a united organization, which is the right of any other tendency as well. This viewpoint indicates that we do not regard or put forward the ISL as the basis of the reunification of the socialist movement, but do consider it as an indispensable element of the unity and as a tendency in it enjoying full equality with all others.

(Turn to last page)

# The Civil Rights Fight — —

(Continued from page 1)

state legislatures. It is a subterfuge, pure and simple. It is designed to disorient and weaken whatever determination there was among Republicans and Northern Democrats to drive a meaningful civil rights bill through this session of Congress. And it appears to have worked well enough for the purpose.

**We say: appears to have worked. As this is written on the eve of the projected Senate vote on the bill, it is impossible to say just what the final line-up in the battle will be. The indications are that the drive to amend the bill out of enforceability, or even to drop the whole of its most important Part III will succeed. Even if the bill as handed down by the administration should emerge by a narrow vote without crippling amendments, the Southern leaders would be encouraged to filibuster, this time "justifying" their action not on the ground that only over their collective corpses will Jim Crow be banished from the South, but rather on the ground that only a filibuster can prevent all of us from being robbed of our right to trial by jury by a Congress in which liberalism has gone completely hog-wild.**

If the Southern leadership should once more succeed in defeating a civil rights bill in Congress, their victory will, as usual, be attributable not so much to their own strength as to the weakness and division of their opponents. Republicans who hope to gain control of the next Congress by picking up some extra Negro votes in the North, but who otherwise have no more concern with the real needs and aspirations of the Negro people than they ever did do not make the stoutest of champions. Many Democrats are prodded to the recognition that if they don't put up some kind of a showing the Republican hope of winning increasing numbers of Negro votes may actually materialize, with disastrous consequences for the

Democratic Party in many hotly-contested districts. But at the same time, they are determined to keep the unity of the Democratic Party intact, on the ground that to break it up would put them in the position of a hopeless minority party. Thus, though they are willing to push just so much for civil rights legislation, they prefer a compromise which will keep the party together at the expense of the Negroes of the South, than an all-out struggle for civil rights which might tear it asunder.

## REPUBLICAN DREAM

Republicans have been dreaming of breaking into the South for a long time. As long as Negro registration and voting in that whole area was negligible, not even the most liberal Republican could really think of successfully challenging the monopoly of the Democratic Party down there.

Trade unionists and other liberals have been chafing under the alliance with the Southern reactionaries and white-supremacists for a long time. But simple arithmetic told them that except in the most unusual circumstances, without the Solid South the Democratic Party could not win a presidential election, with all that goes with it. Since they never got beyond simple arithmetic in their political calculations, this left them tied to the South (and that meant, in practice, to Southern reaction for the most part) despite their wails over the terrible restrictions imposed on them by this alliance.

**But despite terror, evasion, fraud and intimidation, the Negroes had been registering and voting in the South. In many places they are riding the busses, just like anyone else, and in an increasing number of places their children are going to school with the white children. Everywhere this has been won by dogged determination**

**heavily interlarded with heroism. So, the simple arithmetic which has dominated American politics for so long is being changed, and changed radically before our very eyes. A real alternative begins to present itself to the alliance with Southern reaction: an alliance with the progressive forces of the South.**

This alternative is becoming more realistic, more practical in the narrowest sense, from month to month. What it needs to turn it from a practical possibility to an irresistible force is that the labor movement and the liberal forces of the rest of the country stop their half-hearted support to the struggle of the Negroes, and replace it by an all-out effort. In the face of such determination, the legalistic arguments and pettyfogging tactics of the Southern leadership would look like ridiculous and helpless rear-guard diversions rather than the

statesmanlike strategy for which it is being hailed today.

The spotlight is on the Senate, as we said at the beginning of this article. However thickly the verbiage may fly in Washington, however, the heaviest fighting goes on in the cities, towns and villages of the South. The immediate outcome in Washington can aid the forces of progress in that battle, or it can keep things very hard for them, as they have been in the past. Without in any way minimizing the importance of such aid to the main participants in the struggle, whether they get it now is not and cannot be decisive. Much more important is and must be a growing determination in the labor movement and among liberals in general to range themselves beside the freedom fighters in the South in word and in deed. That would make civil rights bills inevitable.

## Socialist Unity — —

(Continued from page 7)

From this general conception of the nature of a broad movement, we do not rule out any group or individual in advance as part of a united socialist movement solely on the basis of past political positions or affiliations. What is decisive is their position today on the central question of democracy in both the Communist and capitalist camps and their readiness to participate together with other tendencies in the reconstruction of a broad democratic socialist movement.

## POLITICAL ACTION

Another question that has been sharply disputed in the socialist movement has been political action policy. One line of divergency here lies between those on the one hand who would support bourgeois candidates on the old party tickets under certain conditions, and those, on the other, who propose to support only the candidates of the labor movement against the old party machines. This difference will probably persist until labor forms its own party and perhaps even after. A reunited movement must permit the co-operative coexistence of both these views within the framework of a single organization and provide suitable political and organizational forms for their living together without imposing the line of one upon the other. However, we feel that one of the primary tasks of a socialist organization is to clearly and unambiguously, as an organization, oppose support to the capitalist parties and candidates and to dispel illusions about the possibilities of working within, defending or reforming one or the other as the lesser evil. But while favoring such a policy for the party we feel that for the reasons described before, and as on other matters in this broad, inclusive party, no discipline should be imposed on this question. What is involved here is not just a formula to suit the convenience of small groups with divergent views. It is the only practical way to make it possible to bring all those union militants who can be brought into a united socialist movement without waiting for a drastic change in their views on every question.

We take for granted that the inner life of a united movement must be one of vigorous democracy for all its tendencies and individuals. This is not only a guiding principle in general but an elementary precondition for its growth today.

**Socialism is on the eve of a new beginning. When it first emerged in this country from a sectarian existence at the turn of the century, it had to break out of the hard shell of the old SLP which rigidly and mechanically subjected all the activities of its members to organizational censorship and controls. To free the movement from stultification, to unleash the initiative of its supporters and to win over new elements among the workers, farmers and intellectuals, it was necessary to found a new party, to make a new start: the Socialist Party.**

In many respects the task today is similar. Those who come to socialism will come in their own way out of many arenas of struggle, from many political directions. A renewed movement cannot

try to cast everyone into one uniform mold without harm to itself. Upon the foundation of its basic minimum platform of democratic socialism it must permit the widest latitude of autonomy to its sections and members, encouraging them to issue books, periodicals, pamphlets; to establish schools, scientific institutes and to participate freely in all the political and intellectual arenas without subjecting them to rigid or mechanical organizational controls and censorship. In sum, it must not be based on any form of super-centralism, but upon the free association of common ideas limited and determined only by its basic platform of democratic socialism and the defense of the movement against its enemies, allowing initiative, experimentation and the accumulation of experiences. It is such an atmosphere, and only such, that can win capable militants in the unions to socialism and once again attract serious talented elements among the intellectuals.

## GOOD WILL

Just as the movement must provide democracy and autonomy, all its branches and tendencies should be expected to utilize and exercise these rights in a responsible fashion, carrying on all activity in the spirit of loyalty to a common organization and conducting all discussions and debates in a fraternal atmosphere without bitter internecine factional warfare and without threat of splits. There must be a realization by all that the cementing of a new movement out of diverse elements requires good will and co-operation on all sides.

We are under no grandiose illusions about the speedy possibility of a powerful mass movement of socialism. But there is now the unmistakable opportunity for a big step forward, above all to lift democratic socialism from the level of small rival sects to the position of a unified movement, supported by thousands and respected by thousands of others at the outset.

**The ISL, however, is only one tendency among many and the responsibility for making a new start rests upon all. It is possible, but not likely, that the inspiring potentialities will be wasted and a great occasion tragically missed for socialism. If so, it will not be the ISL which bears the blame; we can do only our share and that we will do to the utmost. If, however, despite our efforts, despite our hopes and expectations the reconstruction of American socialism is postponed, we will continue as before to preserve and to defend the principles of democratic socialism, ready for every step to reestablish it as a unified movement.**

In any case, we look to the future with optimism. The world working class struggle against Stalinism has begun. In the United States Stalinism is dying; the working class is powerfully organized; the Negroes fight for democracy. In one way or another, even in forms which are not now predictable, these potent historical factors will make their impact upon American socialism, shaping its course and guaranteeing its resurgence.

## Letter to Muste — —

(Continued from page 2)

what is important is that as a national officer of the SP-SDF my continued membership on the American Forum's National Committee could be misunderstood by some as unofficial or tacit support for the American Forum by the SP-SDF. Since this is clearly not the position of my Party, it would be irresponsible and unfair of me to give that impression.

I believe the American Forum, by failing from the beginning to involve any significant section of the Democratic Socialist movement will therefore fail to achieve its basic purpose of a discussion process which involves all elements of the socialist movement. Certainly you were not to blame for this failure, but I think now that it has taken place it is necessary to take account of it.

I am very much disturbed over the fact that the American Forum has become a weapon in various factional fights within the socialist movement. As such it has failed to achieve its original purpose of playing a neutral role. I believe that by failing to involve major elements of the democratic socialist movement the American Forum will increasingly become a prisoner of a "Left" which has its historic roots in Leninism. It is clear in my mind that many support the American Forum on the basis of the same misunderstanding and confusion about what it really is that caused the SP-SDF to oppose it—namely the impression that it is some kind of "joint action." If enough people on one side refuse to take part on the basis of that confusion, and if enough people on the other side do take part on the basis of that confusion, then it will cease to be a confusion and become a reality. I greatly fear the real character of the American Forum is being changed by the course of events.

**I believe the American Forum tends to become an organization in its own right. This must inevitably be the case since the American Forum has become a "splitting force" in the radical movement. If there is a split in an organization over the question of the Forum those who split in order to support the Forum will orient to the**

Forum itself and group themselves around it. At this point, when it becomes very clear the Forum is taking on organizational aspects, we then have a right, a duty, and a moral obligation to insist that your National Committee of which I was so recently an active member, take a clear stand on the question of democracy and free elections everywhere.

As you know I had raised this question at the first meeting of the group and was voted down, the argument running to the effect that to raise such a demand would make it impossible for the Communists and the Trotskyists to take part in the discussion, and that, after all, it was simply a discussion process and not an organization and therefore didn't need a "platform." I was not convinced then, and I am less convinced as time passes, that the American Forum is in some unique position where it can avoid taking a stand on such questions as Socialist Democracy versus Soviet Tyranny.

I believe the American Forum cannot achieve what it set out to achieve. In fact it has become a hindrance at this time to the basic discussion involving all tendencies. It is because I favor an inclusive and serious discussion of basic issues that I urge you and the other members of the American Forum to give serious consideration to the points I have made and consider the future structure of the American Forum. The task is to promote serious discussion of socialist problems—not to get caught up in a back-wash of sectarian in-fighting and the re-hashing of past radical history.

I have resigned with deep regret. I support now as ever your splendid and courageous work, along with others such as Norman Thomas and Max Shachtman, in pushing for a full, free public discussion of socialist problems. But I have come to the difficult conclusion that the tactic of formalizing the discussion process into the American Forum was a mistake at this point.

With fraternal regards and best personal wishes,

David McReynolds