The End of Socialism: A Review of Isaac Deutcher

By Max Shachtman

Crisis in French Stalinism

By A. Guarometti

BOOKS IN REVIEW

35¢
The End of Socialism: A Review of Isaac Deutscher

An Analysis of Deutscher's Biography of Leon Trotsky

A biography of Leon Trotsky, written by an author who understands that his life was nothing more than his political ideas and political activities, is of necessity a political document. The fact that this biography* is written by Isaac Deutscher gives it more than ordinary importance. He brings to his work the extensive knowledge of his subject acquired through active participation in the revolutionary movements with which Trotsky was so prominently associated and through earnest research into materials not easily available to others. The bourgeois caricature of Trotsky as an incorrigible and irresponsible firebrand maddened with the lust for personal power does not even concern him; and he allows the clearly marshalled facts to dispose of the legends and calumnies disseminated by Trotsky's Menshevik adversaries, on the one side, and on the other by those he calls the Stalinist tomb robbers and ghouls. He knows he is writing about a man of heroic gifts and attainments, of such stature that it seems society must rest up for generations before being able to produce his like again.

Deutscher is no uncritical adulator. Far from it, indeed. The deep respect he has for Trotsky, and the recognition that he is one of the very greatest men of our time, is evident throughout his study and is overwhelmingly justified by it. Simply by sticking to the facts, Deutscher shows that whatever Trotsky's shortcomings may have been in one respect or another, there cannot be found another man in his time, and very few before him, who combined such an extraordinary range of extraordinary talents developed to an extraordinary degree. In one human shell was found the most audacious and sweeping revolutionary theoretician of the century; the greatest strategist and tactician of the revolutionary uprising ever known, as well as the greatest field commander of insurrection; one of the most outstanding military thinkers, organizers and leaders of his time, all the more remarkable because of the complete amateurishness in practice with which he entered the field of armies and warfare; by far the most scintillating, the most elegant and the most eloquent orator-writer and certainly the most shattering polemicist of the age; as well as political and party leader, statesman, diplomatist, agitator, administrator, industrial director, historian, literary critic, journalist—and all of these of the very first water. If Deutscher had less than admiration

for such a man, his biography would be suspect from the start. Yet he does not allow this feeling to cancel his objectivity and sense of criticalness. In fact, he seems to feel the need of qualifying the proportions of his admiration by what is often an exaggerated correction of Trotsky's portrait in a double sense: in one, by chiding Trotsky for generously attributing to Lenin an undeserved superior role "in some crucial points," and in the other by a severity of judgment against Trotsky which is not particularly opposite. But these are all trivia by the side of the dimensions of authenticity, for in drawing this kind of portrait a man is entitled, presumably, to a modest freedom in the use of high-light and shadow—caval, reservation and predilection.

Deutscher has performed a precious service, in general to all those who are interested in historical truth and accuracy and in particular to those who are interested in the revolutionary movement. Although this book is actually only the first part of the biography he planned to write—it covers the period from Trotsky's birth in 1879 to about the mid-period of his life, in 1921, leaving the remainder of his life to be dealt with in a second volume called The Prophet Unarmed—it already supersedes, in respect to documentation on the life of Trotsky, everything else that has been published, not so much in particular as on the whole. For example, Max Eastman's biography, written thirty years ago, gives a warmer and truer picture of Trotsky as a youth, before he became a Marxist and in the course of his becoming one. But the social and political background which Deutscher gives of that period in Trotsky's life lends his work a greater solidity in spite of some arbitrary conclusions about Trotsky's personal and political character that he has a foil for drawing irrelevantly from casual remarks or occurrences or other bags.

Elsewhere in the work, Deutscher provides us with information and insights that have either been partly or totally neglected by other biographers, and are given only the scantiest mention, if mentioned at all, even in Trotsky's autobiography. Where Victor Serge, in his posthumous biography, rushes through Trotsky's life up to the year 1917 in a couple of dozen skinny pages, Deutscher's biography devotes more than a couple of hundred to the same period. In a sense, they are the most valuable pages, in that they deal with the material which is hardest to find or to get at. They give us our first substantial portrait of Trotsky as a beginning journalist and feuilletonist during his first Siberian exile, with examples from his writings that help us follow his intellectual formation. In the same pages we learn about Trotsky's first political writings, in the same period, on the literary giants of his day: Zola, Hauptmann, Ibsen, D'Annunzio, Maupassant, Gogol, Gorky and others, and the shaping of his views on literature and art in general. Our first extensive glimpse of Trotsky's political and military writings as correspondent during the Balkan War of 1912 is provided by Deutscher's book. It gives us also our first intimate knowledge of Trotsky's remarkable articles during the First World War on the military-technical aspects of the conflict.

If the fate of Trotsky's writings, we repeat, and the extent to which they are read or ignored had not been so inextricably bound up with his political fortunes and with the sympathies and antipathies that his mere name evokes, he would have had his niche in literature on the strength of these writings alone.

To disinter and assemble all this material would be to any writer's credit, especially when the material relates to a man about whom more falsehoods and calumnies were consciously and consistently spread than about almost any other public figure in the past thousand years. Yet that is not the purpose—not the main purpose—of Deutscher's work. After all, that purpose was served, and not badly, by Trotsky's autobiography, a work as unique in political literature as was the campaign of falsification which it refuted. Deutscher acknowledges that "after a close and critical examination I still find Trotsky's My Life as scrupulously truthful as any work of this kind can be." Nevertheless, adds Deutscher, Trotsky did not and could not satisfactorily explain the change in the climate of the revolution which made his defeat both possible and inevitable; and his account of the intrigues by which a narrow-minded, "usurpatory," and malignant bureaucracy ousted him from power is obviously inadequate. The question which is of vital and central importance, as far as Deutscher is concerned, is: to what extent did Trotsky himself contribute to his own defeat? To what extent was he himself compelled by critical circumstances and by his own character to pave the way for Stalin? That is the question Deutscher sets out to answer. A more meritorious enterprise may exist, but we do not know what it is. For the answer to the question directly concerns the most vital and burning problems of world politics today. And there is nothing wrong with the idea of making a biography of Trotsky into a vehicle for the answer, even if it does not quite make up in convenience what it lacks in forthrightness. The important thing is that the answer be as close to correct as the most scrupulous scientific examination of the problem in its present state of development will permit. In this labor, the bourgeois investigator—be he politician or sociologist, journalist or scholar—is hopelessly handicapped. The very pre-condition for success is a social self-renunciation, because we consider it established beyond serious controversy that an analysis, that is, a critique, of the Stalinist denouement of the Bolshevik Revolution demands a revolutionary critique, and therewith a rejection, of bourgeois society. The bourgeois critic, and that includes the one who is not only personally but politically honest (he is rare, but he exists), can fully understand Stalinism only as he ceases to be bourgeois. The socialist critic has an immeasurable advantage over the bourgeois precisely in that he has discarded the standpoint and criteria of bourgeois society. But he can utilize his advantage only to the extent that he equips himself with the scientific instruments of Marxist theory. Otherwise, it will end by our having to say even of the socialist criticism of Stalinism what Engels used to say about the primitive socialist criticism of capitalism and its outcome—"it could not explain them, and so also could not get the mastery over them; it could only simply reject them as evil."

A political writer does not have to speak in the first person to reveal his views; they appear even when he speaks in the second and third. Deutscher does not announce his concepts in his own name, as it were, but they are announced nevertheless. It would appear from his writings, then, that he still regards himself as an opponent of capitalism, a supporter of socialism and not of the more conservative school but of the more radical, and, on the whole, a Marxist. But it is precisely in this last respect that the results are nothing less than a disaster. After you rub your eyes with
your knuckles to make sure you have read what you have read, you ask the question: what was this man doing all those years in the communist and Trotskyist movements, above all in the Polish movement which always had so high and serious a regard for Marxism, that allows him to end up with theories that are at once superficial, preposterous and downright reactionary, even though they are put forward in the name of socialism? To try to answer would lead us too close to aspects of life which are not our field. It will have to do if we say that by the side of exceptional talent in the exhaustive work of bringing together the facts and documents, of honorable contempt for the small-minded carper and the forger, the picayune adversary and the "tomb-rober," of writing skill which is most unusual in a second language, Deutscher discloses a paucity and shallowness in the theoretical domain which is startling by comparison. And it has invariably been a grave weakness in this domain that has proved to be the obstacle to reaching an understanding of Stalinism—and worse than an obstacle.

Take, as one example, the disagreement between Lenin and Trotsky during the First World War on the question of "revolutionary defeatism." Deutscher dispenses with the matter in a paragraph. It is not a matter of terseness that is involved, although the writer devotes far more space to matters of far smaller importance and greater transparency. It is, however, a matter of the very great theoretical importance of Lenin's position during the war and of its political implications and consequences, at the very least from the standpoint of the historian, not to say the enlightener of readers. To Deutscher, "actually, the difference [between Lenin and Trotsky] was one of propagandist emphasis, not of policy. . . . Each attitude had, from the viewpoint of those who held it, its advantages and disadvantages." This is pious enough, especially from one who proclaims himself "free from loyalties to any cult," but it does not even mar the surface below which lie rich ores for the theoretical or historical assayer. One does not have to agree, any more than we do, with every judgment made of Lenin's "revolutionary defeatism" by Hal Draper, but it is enough for anyone to read the extensive material which he so carefully assembled and analyzed in these pages recently to see that the question is one of great complexity. It cannot begin to be explained or disposed of in the casual manner displayed by Deutscher. What makes matters worse, is that he does not anywhere pursue the subject to its obvious conclusion, namely: what relation did Lenin's conception or slogan of "revolutionary defeatism" and Trotsky's conception that "the revolution is not interested in any further accumulation of defeats," have to the actual defeats at the end of the war, if not in general then at least in Russia? What relation did they have to the actual revolutions at the end of the war, at least to the Russian revolutions in March and November? Worthwhile if limited generalizations can be drawn from such an examination to conclude the subject, as Deutscher does, by saying that "In 1917 these two shades of opposition to war merged without controversy or friction in the policy of the Bolshevik party," is simply to state a truth that has no great relevance to the controversy in question. After all, Deutscher might have used the same phrase with regard to the pre-1917 dispute over the "permanent revolution," but nobody has yet argued that the dispute on this question between Lenin and Trotsky represented "two shades" of opinion.

The other example is precisely the dispute over Trotsky's theory of the "permanent revolution" and Lenin's formula of the "revolutionary democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry." The theory which is Trotsky's distinctive contribution to Marxism and to the course of the Bolshevik revolution itself, which is, so to speak, the head and heart of his entire political life, is given surprisingly cursory treatment here. The reader gets a fifth-carbon copy of Trotsky himself, uninspiringly presented, which is a matter of taste, but also uncritically presented, which is something else again. Why did Lenin combat Trotsky's theory so persistently, not to say violently? Why did he cling so long and so doggedly to his own formula? Were the differences serious, or primarily the product of a misunderstanding on Lenin's part, or of his failure to read Trotsky's elaborated version of the theory—a possibility suggested by Trotsky at one time and repeated by Deutscher? Deutscher gives his view of Lenin's position and summarizes the dispute in these words: "Lenin's formula of a 'democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry' seemed broader and more cautious than Trotsky's 'proletarian dictatorship,' and better suited for an association of socialists and agrarian revolutionists. In 1917 events in Russia were to confirm Trotsky's prognostication." To reduce the dispute to these terms is an all but incredible feat. We are here altogether unintended in the monstrous inventions and falsifications concocted by the Stalinists. Nevertheless, the fact remains that the dispute hinged on two radically and irreconcilably different views about the character of the Russian revolution and the nature and prospects of socialism in Russia—least of all on whether Trotsky would "prejudge [the] potentialities" of the peasantry and Lenin "would not," and not at all on whether one view was "broader and more cautious" and the other narrower and more reckless. It is hard to believe that an ex-socialist like Bertram Wolfe (in his Three Men Who Made a Revolution) presents a far more comprehensive and well-documented picture of the conflict as seen by the two protagonists (regardless of Wolfe's own arbitrary conclusions from the conflict) and even grasps it better than Deutscher does.

As for the second statement—about the confirmation of Trotsky's views in 1917—that is good enough for an article or a popular pamphlet, or it is good enough "on the whole." As an unqualified assertion in a critical biography of Trotsky it is inadequate. A critical evaluation or reevaluation of Trotsky's conception of the permanent revolution, without detracting an inch from its remarkable theoretical power and insight into the actuality of future developments, would nevertheless add some observations as to exactly where the "1917 events in Russia" did not confirm Trotsky's prognostications. It would become clear exactly how important, indeed, vitally important from the standpoint of the concrete political struggle during a decisive period in the development of the revolution, this error in the theory would have turned out to be, if Trotsky had not been so completely free from dogmatism and, refuting to "go by the book," acted in accordance with the exigencies of the struggle itself, not with the theoretical error. Trotsky himself has provided the clue to the error and it
would not require too great an effort to make it plain, specific and instructive for the political problems of today.

Here again, Deutscher is either indifferent to theoretical questions or incapable of finding his way among them, even when the political consequences that clearly follow from them are of immense and active importance. It may as well be added that, on the basis of the theories he propounds about Stalinism, the latter is more likely the case. It is a pity. Where he should have his greatest strength, there lies his most glaring weakness. The weakness, we shall see, is not less than fatal. At the least, it is fatal to the entire conception of socialism as a revolutionary movement and as a social objective that was set down in the name of science by Marx and Engels and supported for a hundred years thereafter by all those who professed their views to any substantial degree.

Deutscher does not set forth his own conception about the development of the Russian revolution and its relationship to the socialist goal in any forthright way or as any sort of systematic theory. One might say that he is under no obligation to the reader to do so, that he is satisfied to let the reader draw his own conclusions from objectively presented facts of history. Whatever may be said about such an assertion—and we regard it as absurd—the fact nevertheless remains that in one way or another, Deutscher does draw conclusions of his own along the lines of his own theoretical and political views. If one is to express an opinion about these conclusions and views, it is necessary first of all to do what Deutscher fails to do, that is, to bring them together from the various parts of his work in which they are loosely scattered and give them the maximum cohesiveness that they allow for, to make them succinct and explicit to the greatest extent that this is made possible by the diffuse, ambiguous, inmuendoish and even irresponsible way in which they are often stated.

To Deutscher, the Russia of Lenin and Trotsky, the Russia of the Bolshevik revolution, is organically continued in the Russia of Stalin (and his recent successors). Although generally sympathetic to Trotsky's point of view and full of praise for his theory of the permanent revolution in particular, he points out that there was indeed one aspect of the theory that was a "miscalculation."

Not for a moment did Trotsky imagine, however, that the Russian Revolution could survive in isolation for decades. It may therefore be said as Stalin was to say twenty years later, that he "under-raised" the internal resources and vitality of revolutionary Russia. This miscalculation, obvious in retrospect, is less surprising when one considers that the view expressed by Trotsky in 1906 was to become the common property of all Bolshevik leaders, including Stalin, in the years between 1917 and 1924. Hindsight, naturally, dwells on this particular error so much that the error overshadows the forecast as a whole. True enough, Trotsky did not foresee that Soviet Russia would survive in isolation for decades. But who, apart from him, foresaw, in 1906, the existence of Soviet Russia? (P. 160.)

The important thing in this passage is not that the author is more severe toward the critics of Trotsky's "miscalculation" than toward Trotsky himself, but that he holds that "Soviet" Russia is still in existence despite its long isolation and the triumph of the Stalinist regime in the country. What there is about the régime that warrants calling it a "Soviet" régime today, when there is not a microscopic trace left of Soviet power or even of a Soviet institution, is nowhere discussed or even so much as mentioned by Deutscher. That is evidently the least of his preoccupations.* That Stalinism represents the organic continuation and maintenance of the Bolshevik revolution as it inherited it, or took it over, from the régime of Lenin and Trotsky, is indicated by Deutscher in a dozen different ways as a fact which he considers established. That is not because he is oblivious to the differences or denies them. The Bolshevik Revolution was the great revolution of democracy and socialism in Russia, and so also was the régime it established in 1917. Since that time, great changes have taken place. The world revolution did not come, yet "Soviet" Russia survived in isolation for decades. A man like Trotsky could not imagine that "the revolution would seek to escape from its isolation and weakness into totalitarianism." It is this totalitarianism that Stalinism represents. The masses of the people are held in cruel and ruthless subjection by tyrannical rule. That is true, and Deutscher will not blink at the fact. But it is likewise true, in his eyes, that this rule represents the continuation and even the extension of the same revolution.

The whole theme of his book, as was the whole theme of his earlier biography of Stalin, is, first, that the change from the Lenin-Trotsky régime to the Stalin régime was an inscrutable necessity for this revolution in particular; second, that the change was inevitable not only for this revolution but so it always has been and presumably always will be for every popular revolution in general; and third, that the outstanding and apparently distinctive characteristics of the régime established by the change are not only to be found in the régime that preceded it, and are not only the products of an organic outgrowth from it, but were originally directly but inconsistently prompted by Lenin and Trotsky whose program is being simply if brutally carried out by their successors. Indeed, this theme is more blatantly asserted in the present friendly biography of Trotsky than in the previous unfriendly biography of Stalin. It is not a new one. Up to now, it has been almost exclusively the property of all the opponents of Stalinism who are opponents of the Bolshevik revolution as well, on the one hand; and on the other hand of all the upholders of Stalinism who profess their support of the Bolshevik revolution. It is worthy of special attention again because it is now presented by a supporter of the Bolshevist revolution, in fact by a not entirely reformed former Trotskyist, who is not a Stalinist, and worthier yet because of the arguments Deutscher musters.

*One of the outstanding curiosa of political terminology today is the persisting but anachronistic reference to "Soviet Russia." In journals of every political hue, where the press speak of "socialist Russia" that too is wrong, but it is understandable. But there is plainly less Sovietism in Stalinist Russia than in Germany, France, England or the United States.

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who will rule against the will of the proletarians but for their own good. Deutscher refuses to entertain any vulgar socialist illusions about the working class, the Russian working class in particular, and most particularly in the period of 1917 onward. He calls attention extensively and with a special sort of relish to the fact that the "grotesque sequel to the October insurrection, a sequel to which historians rarely give attention, was a prodigious, truly elemental orgy of mass drunkenness with which the freed underdog celebrated his vic­

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That is how it happened that the revolution which began with the naively Utopian idea of Bolshevism that the road to socialism lies through the fullest achievement of democracy, found it necessary to learn the hard lesson that the road to practical and successful socialism lies through the fullest achievement of totalitarian tyranny.

Thus Deutscher. And he is not at the finish line, he has only just started. Anyone who imagines that Deutscher is concerned here only with explaining the transformations necessary for a revolution that occurred in a backward country under exceptional circumstances from which a socialist revolution in more favored countries would be exempted, is luring himself to disappointment. To Deutscher, the evolution to Stalinist totalitarianism was the inevitable outcome of the Bolshevik revolution, in the same way that an equivalent tyranny has always been and must presumably always be the inevitable outcome of any popular revolution. The idea that the masses of the people can ever directly manage and control their destiny is as erroneous as the assumption that such control is essential for human progress in general or socialism especially. How does he reach this not entirely novel conclusion?

Readers of Deutscher's biography of Stalin will recall the theory—"the broad scheme"—by which he explains not only "the metamorphosis of triumphant Bolshevism" into Stalinism but, much more generally, the basic processes which have "been common to all great revolution so far." In the first phase of all these revolutions, "the party that gives the fullest expression to the popular moods outdoes its rivals, gains the confidence of the masses, and rises to power." Civil war follows.

The revolutionary party is still marching in step with the majority of the nation. It is acutely conscious of its unity with the people and of a profound harmony between its own objectives and the people's wishes and desires. It can call upon the mass of the nation for ever-growing efforts and sacrifices; and it is sure of the response. In this, the heroic phase, the revolutionary party is in a very real sense democratic.

This phase lasts little longer than the civil war. By then the revolutionary party, though victorious, faces a country and a people that are exhausted. A reaction sets in among the people.

The anti-climax of the revolution is there. The leaders are unable to keep their early promises. They have destroyed the old order; but they are unable to satisfy the daily needs of the people. To be sure, the revolution has created the basis for a higher organization of society and for progress in a not very remote future. This will justify it in the eyes of posterity. But the fruits of revolution ripen slowly; and of moment are the miseries of the first post-revolutionary year. It is in their shadow that the new state takes on its shape, a shape that reveals the chasm between the revolutionary party and the people. This is the real tragedy which overtook the party of the revolution.

If it obeys the mass of the petulant and unreasoning people, it must relinquish power. But, "abdication would be suicide." In order to safeguard the achievements of the revolution, it must disregard the voice of the people in whose interests the revolution was made.

The party of the revolution knows no retreat. It has been driven to its present pass largely through obeying the will of that same people by which it is now deserted. It will go on doing what it considers to be its duty, without paying much heed to the voice of the people. In the end it will muzzle and stifle that voice. (Deutscher, Stalin, pp. 174 f.)

That was in his Stalin book, and that it was not a momentary abberation is shown in his Trotsky biography, where this theory is not only expanded upon and underscored, but becomes the heart and soul of his work. The Prophet Armed—the title of the book—comes from a famous passage in Machiavelli's The Prince, where he is discussing the difficulties facing "the innovators" who seek to replace an old order with a new. Can they rely on themselves or trust to others—

... that is to say, whether, to consummate their enterprise, have they to use prayers or can they use force? In the first instance they always succeed badly, and never compass anything; but when they can rely on themselves and use force, then they are rarely endangered. Hence it is that all armed prophets have conquered, and the unarmed ones have been destroyed. Besides the reasons mentioned, the nature of the people is variable, and whilst it is easy to persuade them, it is difficult to fix them in that persuasion. And thus it is necessary to take such measures that, when they believe no longer, it may be possible to make them believed by force.

By 1920, says Deutscher, the Bolsheviks were faced with the choice which every revolutionary party in power faces, in its essence, at one time or another: Let the masses speak, and they will remove you from power and destroy the revolution; stifle the masses, and "it would deprive itself of historic legitimacy, even in its own eyes."

The revolution had now reached that cross-roads, well-known to Machiavelli, at which it found it difficult or impossible to fix the people in their revolutionary persuasion and was driven "to take such measures that, when they believed no longer, it might be possible to make them believe by force." (The Prophet Armed, p. 606.)

To vouchsafe democracy to the masses may have meant the removal of the Bolsheviks from power, and as we have seen above, Deutscher does not believe they had the right to give up power. That would have encouraged the White Guards to resort to arms again; and the Bolsheviks "could not accept it as a requirement of democracy that they should, by retreating, plunge the country into a new series of civil wars just after one series had been concluded" (p. 505).

But there is a deeper reason, in Deutscher's mind, why the crushing of the proletariat was inevitable—and by that, it should now be clear, Deutscher means desirable from the standpoint of preserving the revolution. That reason, too, lies in the very nature of the revolution—not the Russian alone, but all revolutions. Every "great revolution" has its Utopian extremists who do not understand that the revolution cannot really satisfy the unreasonable demands of the masses it inspired, of the masses who assuaged its triumph, of the very masses who were told that the revolution will satisfy their demands. With the best intentions in the world, these Utopians—Levellers in Cromwell's England, Hétbertists in Robespierre's France, and in Bolshevik Russia the Workers' Opposition, the Democratic Centralists and then the Trotskyist Opposition—can only imperil the revolution, its conquests and its future. They are among those who...
It is not necessary for us to emphasize that Deutscher applies this conception—the new tyranny against the people nevertheless does, "on the whole," use its power to strengthen the conquests of the revolution—to the revolution that established capitalism and to the revolution that is to establish (and according to him, has already established in Russia) socialism. The analogies between the industrial revolutions that consolidated the social revolutions in both cases, he finds "as are numerous as they are striking." He summarizes the "primitive accumulation of capital" that marked the bourgeois revolution in England as "the first violent processes by which one social class accumulated in its hands the means of production, while other classes were being deprived of their land and means of livelihood and reduced to the status of wage earners." A similar process took place under Stalin in the Thirties.

Marx sums up his picture of the English industrial revolution by saying that "capital comes [into the world] dripping from head to foot, from every pore, with blood and dirt." Thus also comes into the world—only in one country.

In spite of its "blood and dirt," the English industrial revolution—Marx did not dispute this—marked a tremendous progress in the history of mankind. It opened a new and not hopeful epoch of civilization. Stalin's industrial revolution can claim the same merit. (Stalin, p. 342.)

That a new despotism is the inevitable product of every revolution, after its first stage, should not generate unperturbed gloom. For if the masses cannot be trusted to continue the revolution they began or, in any case, made possible, they may console themselves with the thought that the despots are tyrannizing over them for their own good. Even if against their will, and by cruelties which drip blood and dirt from every pore, the achievements of their revolution are being protected in the only way that is practical—by suppressing them. A new and not unhappy epoch lies ahead. It is a relief to know it.

The final proof of this not wholly discouraging theory lies, in Deutscher's revolution, in the concrete circumstances from which it is contemporaneously deduced. They show the organic link between Lenin and Trotsky and their régime, and Stalin and his régime. There is no rupture between the two but a relentless continuity.

Deutscher claims to have traced the thread of unconscious historic continuity which led from Lenin's hesitant and shamefaced essays in revolution by conquest to the revolutions contrived by Stalin the conqueror. A similar subtle thread connects Trotsky's domestic policy of these years with the later practices of his antagonist. Both Trotsky and Lenin appeared, each in a different field, as Stalin's unwitting inspirers and prompters. Both were driven by circumstances beyond their control and by their own illusions to assume certain attitudes in which circumstances and their own scruples did not allow them to persevere—attitudes which were ahead of their time, out of tune with the current Bolshevik mentality, and discordant with the main theme of their own lives. (The Prophet Armed, p. 515.)

The world revolution—the extension of the revolution westward which was to save Russia from the disintegration to which its isolated position, according to the Bolsheviks, surely doomed it—was it one of their illusions? Precisely, says the now disintoxicated Trotskyist. If Lenin and Trotsky "had taken a soberer view of the international revolution" they might have "foreseen that in the course of decades their example would not be imitated in any other country.... History produced [sic] the great illusion and planted and cultivated it in the brains of the most soberly realistic leaders...." (Ibid., p. 293.) "What was wrong in their expectations was not merely the calendar of revolutionary events but the fundamental assumption that European capitalism was at the end of its tether. They grossly underrated its staying power, its adaptability, and the hold it had on the loyalty of the working classes." (P. 449.) As for the organization of the Communist International, which was to organize, stimulate and lead the world revolution, it was an illusion and a mistake—"fathered by wish, mothered by confusion, and assisted by accident."

Yet, a veritable horror of isolation reigned among the Bolshevists, Trotsky more than any of them. Since world revolution proved to be an illusion, year after year, the Bolsheviks were driven—"true... in the heat of war, under abundant provocation, without grasping all the implications of its own decision"—to break out of isolation by embarking for the first time, in violation of their hallowed principles, upon the course of revolution by conquest. The first time was in the 1920 war with Poland. "If the Red Army had seized Warsaw, it would have proceeded to act as the chief agent of social upheaval, as a substitute, as it were, for the Polish working class." It is true that Trotsky and Stalin were against making the attempt to pursue the defeated forces of Pilsudski that were retreating back to Poland. But Lenin was for it. The attempt failed.

Lenin [then] grew aware of the incongruity of his rôle. He admitted his error. He spoke out against carrying the revolution abroad on the point of bayonets. He joined hands with Trotsky in striving for peace. The great revolution—
by Deutscher, “Trotsky . . . stumbled . . . he initiated courses of action which he and the Bolshevik party could carry through only against the resistance of the social classes which had made or supported the revolution.” His proposals for loosening the bonds of War Communism, an anticipation of the New Economic Policy soon to be advocated by Lenin, having been rejected by the party leadership, Trotsky proposed in its stead to carry the policies of War Communism to the bitter end, as it were. He “advanced the idea of complete state control over the working class.” The reference is to Trotsky’s proposals during the so-called trade-union dispute in 1920 for the “militarization of labor” and the “incorporation” of the unions into the state machine. The divorce between dictatorship and proletarian democracy, which Stalin carried to its inevitable conclusion, was clearly obvious. But Lenin refused to proclaim the divorce. For although he, too, “was aware that government and party were in conflict with the people . . .” he was afraid that Trotsky’s policy would perpetuate the conflict.” And even Trotsky was his own antidote to the program he proposed.

Accustomed to sway people by force of argument and appeal to reason he went on appealing to reason in a most unreasonable cause. He publicly advocated government by coercion. . . . He hoped to persuade people that they needed no government by persuasion. He told them that the workers’ state had the right to use forced labor. . . . He submitted his policies to public control. He himself did everything in his power to provoke the resistance that frustrated him. To keep politically alive he needed broad daylight. (Pp. 516ff.)

Trotsky did not direct the transformation of the revolution into a despotism not only because circumstances then prevented it but because it was not in his character to do it. But a different one was available, luckily for socialism. “It took Stalin’s bat-like character to carry his [Trotsky’s] ideas into execution.” Neither Trotsky nor Stalin, each for his own reasons, would admit this. But it was true.

There was hardly a single plank in Trotsky’s program of 1920-1 which Stalin did not use during the industrial revolution of the Thirties. He introduced conscription and direction of labor, he insisted that the trade unions should adopt a “productionist” policy instead of defending the consumer interests of the workers; he deprived the trade unions of their last vestige of autonomy and transformed them into tools of the state. He set himself up as the protector of the managerial groups, on whom he bestowed privileges of which Trotsky had not even dreamed. He ordered “socialist emulation” in the factories and mines; and he did so in words unceremoniously and literally taken from Trotsky. He put into effect his own ruthless version of that “Soviet Taylorism” which Trotsky had advocated. And passed from Trotsky’s intellectual and historical arguments ambiguously justifying forced labor to its mass application. (P. 515.)

Therein lay and still lies Trotsky’s victory in spite of all, the victory of which he himself was one of the outstanding victims. That is what Deutscher means by titling the last chapter in the present work “Defeat in Victory.” “All armed prophets have conquered, and the unarmed ones have been destroyed.” Trotsky could not, in the crucial hour, arm himself against the people so as to “make them believe by force” after persuasion had failed to sustain their beliefs. Stalin could. He became the true prophet armed.

The revolution itself had made that necessary, for such is its nature; it made it inevitable; it prepared for it willy-nilly. Fortunately, the new prophet armed proved, again, to be one of those rulers who, “on the whole, use their power to consolidate most of the economic and social conquests of the revolution.” The result has been the victory of socialism in Russia, and not only in Russia but wherever else—and that reaches far across two continents by now—the armed prophet has extended the revolution by conquest. In the crude environment in which the revolution was obliged to entrench itself for so long, it could only produce a “brand of socialism,” as Deutscher puts it.

The brand of socialism which it then produced could not but show the mark of its historic heritage. That socialism, too, was to rise rough and crude, without the vaulting arches and spires and lacework of which socialists had dreamed. Hemmed in by superior hostile forces it soon delivered itself up to the new Leviathan state—rising as if from the ashes of the old. (P. 521.)

As every good American knows, you can’t get something for nothing. For the blessings of Stalin’s “brand of socialism,” which lacks such gewgaws as arches, spires and lacework, hundreds of millions are paying with the Leviathan-state. If, to realize these blessings, the totalitarian regime was indispensable, it is not entirely to Stalin’s discredit that he knew or felt which was the right way and took it resolutely. And Trotsky, the gifted revolutionary Utopian? “It was another of history’s ironies that Trotsky, the hater of the Leviathan, should become the first harbinger of its resurrection.”

This is as good as an epitaph, even if it is written before the second volume of the biography has appeared. But only in a manner of speaking. It is not merely a matter of Deutscher having written a libel of Trotsky, and not of Trotsky alone. In his biography of Stalin he already showed how far he has traveled from Marxism. His biography of Trotsky shows he has not retracted a step but gone farther away and to ever stranger fields. Deutscher has put a cross over himself. It is his own epitaph as a revolutionary and a socialist that he has written.

If justice were half as prevalent as prejudice, Deutscher’s book would be acclaimed far more widely than it is likely to be. Even those who did not cheer its main theories would find quiet solace in it, from one standpoint or the other. The revolutionary socialists—the Utopians!—are presently in such a small minority that they do not count; besides he abandoned them to their own devices years ago. But the others, those who make up the big majorities and the big minorities, for them the book should be a box of bonbons.

The Stalinist—if not the official Stalinist then the sophisticated Stalinist, the openly cynical Stalinist, the Stalinist by design and the Stalinist by gullibility—might ask for better, but not expect it. What else has he been saying in justification of his whole regime, his whole course, his whole political philosophy—not of course on the platform before the vulgar mob but in the less exposed intimacy of the enlightened. There it is safer to explain the simple truth that the donkey is a donkey, and should be grateful that the driver is determined to lash him toward the new and not unbelievable pasture where he may some day roam unsaddled, unlash and with an abundance to nibble on. The professional Mensheviks of both schools have equal delights in store for them, equal parts of confirmation for each bias. The one school, all the way down to and including Shub, who feed their detestation of the Bolshevik revolution on its Stalinist outcome, can feel vindicated by this avowal from a hostile camp that there
could be no other outcome, they never said otherwise. The other school, represented by the late Th. Dan, who justified their late-in-life capitulation to Stalinism, can feel, at least secretly, vindicated by the thought that the Bolshevik revolution which they opposed was indeed led by irresponsible utopians. Leftist Laborite demagogues and ignoramuses, to whom Marxist theory was always a redundant nuisance we can well do without in Britain, and social-democratic or radical "neutralists" in France, should feel easier about their conciliatory inclinations toward the slave state when it is brought home to them so clearly that, unlike the capitalist states where the workers are oppressed and exploited in the name of capitalism, they are oppressed and exploited in Russia in the name of a brand of socialism which has opened a not unhopeful epoch of civilization. The classical bourgeois opponents of socialism, ranging all the way from the academicians of the von Mises and Hayek type to plain blatherskites like Kerensky, owe lavish thanks to Deutscher for such a rich replenishment of their thinning arsenal of arguments, dating back to Spencer, that all efforts at freedom based on collectivism cannot but lead to the Servile State, the new tyranny, and that the highminded socialist idealist is at best a Utopian—moreover one who, it turns out, is more dangerous to socialism than to capitalism itself. The new snobocracy, the neo-pseudo-proto-Machiavellians, has a rich morsel here over which to quiver with delight ever so fastidiously, for ever since they had the theory of élites explained to them third hand by second rate dabblers in Machiavelli, and Mosca, Michels and Pareto, they have understood how preposterous is the Marxian myth that the working class and it alone has the historic mission of emancipating itself and therewith all of humanity. The tired and retired radical of yesterday, and his name is indeed legion, can find here some justification for the clod-of-earth existence to which he has degraded himself, as can his blood-kin, the ex-radical cynic and skeptic now turned pusher and climber up the ladder of bourgeois respectability—financial, social, literary, academic or all together. For what else have they been saying for a long time except that the struggle for socialism can lead only to totalitarianism and that the working class, as the socialist self-emancipator, has failed atrociously to live up to the confidence which they vested in it for so many months and in some cases even years.

Whether this motley public does justice to Deutscher's book or not, we have our own responsibility to discharge. It obliges us to say:

If Deutscher's theory is valid, it is not as an explanation for a "brand of socialism," as he calls it. It is the end of socialism. And so, in one sense, it is. It is the end of socialism for an entire generation. That generation is finished and done for so far as the Stalinist reaction; at best, if the best is insisted on, they represent his resignation to Stalinism, and in the round the difference is not worth quibbling over.

If the generation of yesterday is finished, we are as confident that a new generation is entering the scene to pick up the socialist banner again as one did after the dark and critical years opened up by the first world war. Its mind must be as clear as can be of all the accumulated rubbish in which the old generation has been choked and blinded and worn to death. Deutscher's theory is part of that rubbish. If for no other reason than that, we shall try to clear it away.

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Crisis in French Stalinism

The Meaning of Recent Purges in French CP

The recent demotion of Auguste Lecoeur, Organization Secretary of the French Communist Party, member of its Executive Committee, Secretariat and Central Committee, has shed new light on the crisis that has shaken French Stalinism since September 1952.

The origins of the crisis must be sought in the change of tactics imposed by the international situation on Russia’s foreign policy. The failures in the West and the deadlock in Korea caused a reversal of the original policy of “militant” conquest. In the Stalinist parties of Western Europe the new approach meant collaboration with certain sections of the bourgeoisie in broad anti-American “National Fronts.” In France, the policy of the National Front was officially adopted by September 1952.

The new orientation was summed up in the phrase “No struggle for bread without struggle for peace.” (Jeanette Vermeersch, writing in France Nouvelle, the CP’s weekly, in May 1952, shortly after her return from Moscow). More concretely, the CP’s political program became: “The new "militant" orientation is necessary to express... their opposition to the government and the patriotic bourgeoisie in the face of the workers and masons were called upon to write to their deputies in Parliament to express... the non-involvement of the CP in any line at any time. The CP’s statements are to collaborate with the bourgeois in favor of all colonialist policies (like a general wage raise) and in favor of all colonialist and imperialist policies (like the deal with the Indo-Chinese war). If these groups are to collaborate with the CP in an anti-American National Front, they must be given solid guarantees on the social scene, that is, the government and the patriotic bourgeoisie must be emboldened by undue militancy on social issues. Accordingly, last August, the strike wave was side-tracked by the CGT (Confédération Générale des Travailleurs). In December, the representative of the CGT metal workers at Malakoff, writing in Mouvement Syndical Mondial (No. 20) says that “it is necessary that in the formulation of the agenda the defense of peace should be given more importance than the struggle for the improvement of living conditions.” In December also, the cement workers and masons were called upon to write to their deputies in Parliament to express... their opposition to the Bonn treaty. In March the CGT calls for the “formation of Peace Committees in the factories” four days after Duclos says that they would be a good thing to have. This does not mean that the CP will cease making overtures to the SP. It simply means that it will propose collaboration on the same terms as with the bourgeoisie: instead of a Popular Front policy based on the slogan of working-class unity, it will propose a policy based on class-collaboration, chauvinism and anti-American “Union Sacrée.”

The proclamation and the application of the new policy immediately threw the CP into a serious political crisis. Those of its cadres who were accustomed to think in terms of revolutionary action against the government became obstacles to the National Front policy and had to be silenced. In September, 1952, the “militant” faction was beheaded by the expulsion of Marty and the demotion of Tilton. After this, two tendencies were left in the Central Committee:

- One was headed by Duclos, Fajon, Servin, which may be considered to represent the apparatus mentality in its pure state, ready to enforce obedience to any line at any time. The other faction was Lecoeur’s, the party boss in the Nord and in the Pas de Calais, representative of the “hard” line in the CGT, the “sectarian” who kept embarrassing the Popular Front Stalinoids by his rigid hostility to everything that was not 100 per cent Stalinist.Ordinarly a conflict would probably not have developed between these two factions, which only represent different shadings of the CP’s bureaucracy. But this was no ordinary situation.

The effects of the Marty-Tillon purge on the party organization were immediate and serious. Soon after, Georges Guingouin, the CP’s hero of the Resistance, was also expelled from the party for having supported Tilton. In December, 1952, the Central Committee was asked to discuss the orientation and the tactics of the party and the Marty-Tillon crisis. The low degree of participation in the discussion shows the uneasiness of the party’s secondary leaders in the face of these issues. Out of 90 members, only 9 spoke on the first point and only 11 on the second. Shortly afterwards, L’Humanité published the number of cells who had approved the sanctions against Marty and Tilton: only 2,200 out of approximately 21,000 cells nationally. In Paris and in the Northern departments “Comités de Redressement Communist” were formed, in support of Marty. In March, 1953, Guyot, a member of the
Central Committee, had to admit in France Nouvelle:

Marty-Tillon have done much harm in the Paris region. They have thrown doubt on the party's policy, they have spread skepticism and slandered the party leadership; they have broken the Party's unity; they have thrown confusion into the minds of the workers and even into the ranks of the party's organizations. The increase of the CP's anti-party centers, attempt to bring confusion into the minds of the workers and even into the ranks of the party's organizations. The Party's leaders, had to admit in March-April 1954, that the party should take a new course, in order to maintain the Party's unity and to attract the most active elements into its ranks, as after the August strikes, the party found itself paralyzed and无所作为.

In April, further crisis in the Seine Inférieure: in the local elections the Stalinists were confronted with several “independent” and “progressive” lists headed by ex-party functionaries who had resigned a few months earlier. In May, in the local elections in the Tarn, the departmental CGT put up a list against the Stalinist candidates and obtained more votes than the CP.

Probably not all of this opposition comes from followers of Marty, but the CA conflict contributed decisively toward strengthening it.

In July, spectacular change in policy: the Central Committee was informed that the Political Bureau had decided to ask Marty to re-enter the party. This after a tremendous slander campaign of several months, culminating in Lecoeur's "old police agent." But nothing came of this move, Marty having refused to re-enter the party.

The August strikes marked a decisive stage in the evolution of the crisis. Far from improving the CP's readiness to support a government of "working-class, republican and patriotic forces," the party found itself paralyzed and in the factories. . . . The Cherbourg section of the CGT had to limit the struggle wherever they could. Their sabotage of the strike in the Renault works is a clear example of this. The CGT's declaration on August 14, proclaiming its readiness to "discuss with the government in the interests of the workers" is another. Moreover, the CGT's policy on unity of action among the different trade union federations, was designed to make it impossible for any of the other organizations to accept unity of action. The importance of this attitude can be best appreciated if one remembers that the CGT's policy was rooted in the opposition of the CGT to the government. In the last conflict, this opposition showed its limitations, its lack of consistency; it was lost completely in some sort of petty-bourgeois legalism. It seemed to the workers that the reasons which made them support their union's policy were collapsing.

It is no wonder, then, that the party organization continued to decline after the August strikes. On October 6, the CGT called a "day of struggle." Most of the slogans were political: against the Indo-Chinese war, against German rearmament, against the "armies of the workers" is another. The FO does not participate, CFTC in only two industries. The movement was a complete flop: the work stoppages were short and the strikers were few. The economic life of the country was in no way affected.

On October 22 the Central Committee met again, in Drancy. This is the famous meeting where Duclos called for the "assembly of all good Frenchmen, whoever they may be" against EDC, and proclaimed the CP's readiness to support a government of "working-class, republican and patriotic forces" on a program which is "neither our final program, nor our immediate program." Much of the discussion in that meeting had to do with the state of the party organization after the August strikes. Here are a few significant admissions: Vandel: "The life of the factory cells still shows an unquestionable underestimation of their role. The lack of life of the party in the factories is also a cause of the lack of consistency of the strikes in the private sector, particularly in the metal industry. Servin, complaining about the October flop: "Where is the spirit of responsibility, of devotion to the cause of the working class, where is the spirit of the comrades who do not boil with impatience when the time for struggle has finally come?" Lecoeur, still Organization Secretary, proceeds to "self-criticism":

Yet an important number of our members are not active. Recruitment is still not organized systematically in the factories, many of which are without cells. For example: at the S. E. V. works (Issy-les-Moulineaux), 1500 workers, no cell. At Geoffroy-Delore (Clichy) 780 workers, no cells. In the Pas de Calais, at H. G. D. (Isbergues) more than 1000 workers, no cell. This carelessness, still too widespread, explains the persistent variation [sic—A. G.] in the membership of certain federations . . . federations such as the Seine, Ardenne, Oise, Aisne, which must admit to themselves that the variations in their membership originate in the factories. . . . The Cherbourg section does not organize a cell in the Ar:

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senal, where 4000 workers are employed, even though Communists work there. The Asnières section also fails to organize a cell in the Citroen works, which employs 1500 workers.

The great farmers strikes of September 1953, also failed to strengthen the party in any way. Waldeck-Rochet, the editor of La Terre, the party's paper for the farmers, complains that the rural cells do not function properly because their social composition is wrong; they seem they do not contain enough wage workers. Servin also complains:

The struggle in the countryside, just as the August strikes, brought about a shake-up in the CP federation of the Nord. The result of the Nord is a key region of France from the point of view of working-class politics. It is one of the densest areas in population and it contains important coal mining and textile industries. The industrialists have a powerful organization, and so do the workers, who are traditionally combative and class-conscious. It is an area where the CP cannot afford to lose its positions. It is also one of the few areas where the SP has a working-class basis and where it has a fairly solid organization, even outnumbering the CP.

In November 1952, elections took place in the Nord, and the CP lost 28,000 votes by comparison with 1951, 28 per cent of the working-class voters abstaining. This December, the federal secretary was accused of "not having drawn the consequences of this failure." However, at the time, Lambin drew the following conclusions (at the national CC meeting of December 6, 1952): "The workers are tired of hearing the same old speeches—this is why they refused to come to the polls." It seems that Lambin did worse than "not to draw the consequences": he drew the correct ones.

We know from the CC conference of March 1953, that "economist" and "social-democratic" tendencies were rife in the northern departments. We also know that in CP language this means neglect of general political slogans and emphasis on concrete issues, mostly local issues. Opposition to manipulation from the Cominform was particularly strong in the Lille and Valenciennes regions. Lambin himself had to admit, in the Liberté du Nord, "the comrades feel that it would be preferable not to talk of the USSR, that what happens in the country of Socialism is of no interest to the textile workers, and some militants even question the principle itself of loyalty to the USSR." The resolution against Lambin admits the same trend in an underhanded way when it insists: "it is the permanent task of the party to develop solidarity without reservations towards the USSR in the working-class...not to do so is to admit the slanders of the worst enemies of the working-class."

It would seem, then, that in the Nord the CP ranks were among the least inclined to sacrifice their demands as workers to National Fronts, Peace Campaigns and similar projects. Also, it is probable that the party leadership in these departments had shown too much leniency toward these particularly vicious forms of deviationism, and that it refused to reject "without discussion" protests against the party's policy in the Marty case.

Opposition in the party against the National Front policy is not limited to the Nord; the bureaucrats, themselves, admit it, as diplomatically as they can, in the CC meeting of March 5, in Arcueil, the same that heard Duclos' excommunication of Lecoeur. Duclos, himself, asks a rhetorical question:

On January 2, we read concerning the Nord: "Out of 613 cells in our federation only 151 are factory cells."

On January 9, an editorial: "Where do we stand on the renewal of mem-

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(2) The circulation figure for March 3, 1954, is 167,199 copies daily.

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bership cards for 1954? The working program of the federations of Allier, Rhone, Cher, Saône et Loire, Haute Garonne, Nièvre, etc., is not oriented toward the factories. In the departments where the farmers' struggles became important, such as the Creuse, Haute Vienne, Corrèze, Lot et Garonne, Charente, Loir et Cher, etc., it does not seem that sufficient efforts were made to attract to the party the farmers who were the leaders in these struggles."

On January 23, Dupuy, of the Seine Inférieure, writes: "It must be noted that the principal difficulties come from the factory cells. For instance at Choisy-le-Roi, the cell of the waterworks managed to bring together only a third of the members . . . we must pay the utmost attention to the fact that even the most successful meetings did not bring together all the members of 1953. These are not isolated facts; no section has been able to indicate the number of 1953 members absent from the meetings."

On January 30, France Nouvelle writes about "the weakness of the party in the Pas de Calais, where today there are only 70 factory cells even though there are 110 mines and more than 60 factories in our department. A few instances: in a large mine like the No. 6 in Fouquières there are no cells even though three section secretaries are employed in it. The No. 2 in Oignies employs 2,000 workers but has no cell. On the other hand, the important factories of Isbergues, Beghin at Corbehem, Finolers at Douvin also lack party organization. At Arras, Carvin, etc., not enough is done to keep the party organizations going in the factories."

On February 13, concerning the party federation in the Bouches du Rhône: "The St. Marcel section [Marseilles] contains 5 large factories in its area with over 4,000 workers. The local cells have 437 members while the factory cells have only 54. On the other hand, a very small number of the new members that joined in 1953 and of the 280 members for 1954 come from the factories. Since the end of November the 1954 membership cards have been sent to the sections. Numerous cells begin the distribution of cards in the beginning of December. However, by February 2 only 7,000 stubs out of a membership of 18,000 have been returned to the federation.

In France Nouvelle of February 20, Plissonnier of the national CC proceeds to a summary of the recruitment campaign. After expressing his disappointment with the "timidity" of the party organizations which are "content with little," he says that "there are thousands of factories employing over 50 workers which have no party organization and which remain completely outside the reach of the party. Among the new members . . . the workers are in a minority, and those that have been recruited by the factory cells are an even smaller number. In sections such as Clermont-Ferrand, where there are 16,000 workers in the chemical industry alone, one has to admit that the life of the party is very weak."

WE ARE NOW IN POSSESSION OF MOST OF THE facts providing the necessary context for an explanation of Lecoeur's purge. As a product of the CP's crisis, it served two important political purposes: to eliminate from the leadership the last elements who might have been in a position to oppose the National Front line as handed down by Duclos; to mask the reasons for the organizational crisis by putting the blame on Lecoeur. The accusations brought against Lecoeur tell only part of the story.

Some are clearly artificial, and only serve to put the blame on Lecoeur for unpopular positions of the party leadership. This seems to be the case for the accusation that Lecoeur had a "sectarian policy" concerning trade-union matters, thus preventing unity of action with FO and CFTC. This may be true, but it also goes for Duclos. It can be compared to the charge of "sectarianism against the SP" brought against Lambin in December, which amounted to making Lambin responsible for the refusal of the SP Federation of the Nord to have anything to do with a Popular Front maneuver. Other charges against Lecoeur, those concerning his condoning of "social-democratic habits" in organizational matters ("10 dues-payers to one militant") and his neglect of factory cells as against local cells are a transparent attempt at making Lecoeur responsible for the loss of influence of the CP on the workers and for the drop in membership.

Some of the charges are more significant. Lecoeur was criticized for his move of sending "political instructors" into the factory cells. Here is Duclos' conclusion: this move, it seems, represented a definite tendency of the Organization Section [i.e., Lecoeur—A. G.] to interpose itself like a screen between the party leadership and the Federations, a tendency to attempt to by-pass the party leadership in the promotion of the cadres of the Federations. In the last analysis, this amounted to substituting the Organization Section to the leadership of the party . . . one can imagine that under these conditions the placing of certain cadres was considered by the Organization Secretary more from the angle of personal loyalties than from the angle of loyalty to the party.

Billoux also charges: "He had a political instructor elected . . . with the perspective that this instructor would become Federal Secretary."

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This, indeed, is serious. Duclos doesn't mind Lecoeur's "placing" of cadres, or the fact that Lecoeur "elects" people into responsible party posts—that is common practice. What bothers him is that Lecoeur did so behind Duclos' back. Today Duclos can rest assured: he has replaced Lecoeur with Servin. Who is Servin? None other than the organizer of the "Central Commission of the Cadres," the internal police organization of the French CP—none other than the liquidator of Marty. No better person can be imagined to strengthen the police rule in the party.

There are also some political charges. André Stil, editor of L'Humanité, denounces Lecoeur's "laborist and populist demagogy." Billoux charges "laborist adventurism." Together with the charges of "sectarianism" they clearly point to the issue: Lecoeur was a potential obstacle to collaboration with the bourgeoisie.

The fact that Lecoeur had to be removed is in itself an indication of the enormous problem the CP's leadership is facing. Unlike Marty, who is a died-in-the-wool bureaucrat but who is also a political leader with considerable prestige in the party ranks, Lecoeur is a hack with little prestige and political authority. He is known for being narrow, despotic and brutal. What made him dangerous for the party leadership was the fact that he has some roots in the working-class, his belief that a policy of anti-capitalist struggle is the only appropriate one for a Stalinist party (even though he can only conceive a regimented working class with himself as the colonel) and his capacity to build his own apparatus beside the local GPU. In a time of demoralization of the working class, the conflict between Duclos and Lecoeur need not have broken out. Nothing fundamental
separates the two factions: the greater servility of Duclos is only a matter of degree. But in a time of mass upsurge, in a time when the French working class has just demonstrated to itself how strong it can be, and how strong it can be independently—this is a time when even types like Lecoeur can threaten to become a focus for opposition inside the party.

Lecoeur's removal is intended as a warning and an example to the party. In purging Lecoeur, Duclos hopes to stifle any organized opposition that may rise within the party. But what Duclos cannot hope to achieve by it, is to arrest the growing decomposition of the party's organizations. Duclos cannot resolve the CP's crisis, because it cannot be resolved by purges: its real reason is that the French working class is not in a mood to swallow the National Front, and that it will rather leave the CP than to submit to class-collaboration in the interests of Russian foreign policy.

A. GIACOMETTI

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in the case of Poulos v. New Hampshire, it was held: "Regulation and suppression are not the same, either in purpose or result, and courts of justice can tell the difference," i.e., prior refusal of the right to speak on the basis of licensing ordinances was upheld.

Picketing: in 1940, Justice Murphy stated, in the case of Thornhill v. Alabama, that peaceful picketing was an exercise of free speech and therefore under all protections of the First Amendment. In International Brotherhood of Teamsters v. Hanke, the Vinson Court, speaking through Frankfurter, upheld an injunction against picketing for a legal objective on the grounds that "if Wisconsin could permit such picketing as a matter of policy it must have been equally free as a matter of policy to choose not to permit it. . . ."

Free Speech: in one of the worst decisions of this court, Vinson held that a Wallacite whose speech had started a riot, could be arrested for "incitement." As Pritchett points out, "The Feiner case, does, indeed, approve a formula which can make police suppression of speech ridiculously simple. Any group which wishes to silence a member but also that they were not Communist Party members..."

Fifth Amendment: in the Rogers' case Vinson ruled that the defendant had "waived" her rights by answering an initial question on party membership. Black, Frankfurter and Douglas dissenting, noted that persons pleading the Fifth Amendment "risk imprisonment for contempt by asserting the privilege prematurely; on the other (hand), they might lose the privilege if they answer a single question."

Attorney General's List: by confining itself to narrow legalisms in the Joint Anti-Fascist Refugee Committee case, the Vinson Court managed to side step all constitutional issues. The result has been the continued existence and use of a totally arbitrary invasion of constitutional freedoms.

Immigration: Ignatz Mezei, an alien, has been held for several years now on Ellis Island. He has never had a trial. He does not know the full charges against him. The Supreme Court upheld this Jackson, dissenting, held that executive imprisonment "considered oppressive and lawless since John at Runnymede, pledged that no free man should be imprisoned, dispossessed, outlawed, or exiled save by the judgment of his peers or by the law of the land" has come to the United States.

This is just part of the record. Unfortunately, it is impressive. It documents a broad pattern of new restrictions on American liberty. It is fair to say that the Constitution in 1954 is far less of a meaningful document than it was in 1946 before the Vinson Court took over. In his book, Pritchett gives an excellent presentation of how this was done, but he does not discuss why it was done. Yet these are the opposite sides of a coin.

First, as to the question which Pritchett does not treat: why did this ominous trend appear in the decisions of the United States Supreme Court? Part of the reason obviously lies in the development of the cold war, in the social changes which took place within the period of the Vinson Court. Confronted by the ideological and military threat of Stalinism, American capitalism demonstrated its political bankruptcy by replying in terms of military force and political reaction. This was true with regard to the very real threat of international Stalinism; it was also true with regard to the diminishing threat of domestic Stalinism.

The court was obviously affected by this political shift within the United States. In some cases, this is terribly obvious—for example, the tragic and fantastic haste with which the execution of the Rosenbergs was expedited.

Yet, I think it would be a great error to make a theoretical construct in which this factor of shifting politics is the key to the analysis of the Vinson Court. The United States Supreme Court is an unrepresentative, appoin tive and life-time body. Of all the branches of government it is the least directly susceptible to short-run political change. If anything, it usually exhibits a cultural lag rather than contemporaneousness. Within this context, the period of the Vinson Court was too short to allow for the working of long range factors, or to admit the hypothesis that its decisions are a one-to-one corollary of the domestic and international reaction which the United States represents in the post-war world.

Yet having said this, having admitted that political factors were at work but denied that they were decisively so, why did this court act as if it were an elective body, i.e., in complete keeping with the reaction of the cold war? The answer, I am afraid, is undramatic. It lies in the psychology of Harry Truman who used the court as a place to reward friends and cronies.

But the how of the Vinson Court also relates to the problem of the relation of the court to social change. The only coherent debate that has taken place has been among three justices: Frankfurter and, on the other side, Black and Douglas. The anti-libertarians simply have an empirical gift for the reactionary, more or less devoid of consistent rationalization, but these three justices have argued the social policy of the court's functions in regard to change.

Frankfurter belongs, by the skin of his teeth, to the libertarian bloc. But this has not prevented him from making a number of striking anti-libertarian decisions. What was the metamorphosis of this "liberal" nominee to the Court?

Frankfurter's change is bound up in his own personal brand of pedantry. But more than that, it is bound up in his persistance in precisely those attitudes which endeared him to the New Deal. Frankfurter's philosophy is one of "judicial restraint." He is conscious of the non-representative character of the court and he feels that he should bend over backwards to allow
"legislative experiment." His is the very antithesis of the conception of the Four Horsemen who struck down so much Roosevelt legislation.

But when the "legislative experiment" shifted from social programs to anti-libertarian legislation, Frankfurter did not budge. He "restrained" himself to allow the Smith Act.

Black and Douglas, on the other hand, are moving in the direction of a judicial theory which includes Frankfurters' very sound worry over the unrepresentative nature of the court, but which avoids the pitfalls of his civil liberties position. Their is the "preferred" theory which calls for judicial restraint on all but matters of civil liberties. These they would argue, are "preferred" by the court since they are the preconditions of democracy. Therefore, in attacks on free speech, the Fifth Amendment, etc., they would argue that the weight is in favor of striking down questionable statutes and not of allowing experiment.

This is far from solving the general problem of the judiciary in a democracy, yet it is a theory which allows for social experimentation, counseling only that it may not be experimentation with basic freedoms.

As far as it goes, Pritchett's book is brilliant, readable, and will do much to destroy the aphoristic approach to the Supreme Court. Yet one would wish that it had gone into the why of the Vinson Court and explored the problems which can only be raised in a short review such as this.

In the Vinson Court we face, to a limited extent, the close workings of judiciary and politics. But to a more decisive extent, we are in the presence of a tragedy which is not accounted for by structural analysis, but far more by intangible qualities of personality and historical accident. And above all, in the Vinson Court, we face a coherent, consistent attack on the very basis of our liberties, we live in a time which has, in the field of civil liberties, a new Constitution, and one which is probably more reactionary than any in the history of the United States.

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