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THE NEW INTERNATIONAL
A Marxist Review

Vol. XXI, No. 2 **SUMMER 1955** **Whole No. 168**

Notes of the Month

Three Vital Court Decisions

The Shachtman Case

The Court of Appeals on June 23 handed down a unanimous decision in favor of Shachtman's appeal against the State Department's denial of his right to a passport that is both momentous and historic in its consequences.

The Court held that the "denial of a passport accordingly causes a deprivation of liberty that a citizen otherwise would have. The right to travel, to go from place to place as the means of transportation permit, is a natural right subject to the rights of others and to reasonable regulation under the law. A restraint imposed by the Government of the United States upon this liberty, therefore, must conform with the provision of the Fifth Amendment that "No person shall be . . . deprived of . . . liberty . . . without due process of law."

The court found that due process was denied to Shachtman and that the Secretary of State acted "arbitrarily," relying only upon the fact that the Independent Socialist League was on the Attorney General's list.

Five main points in Attorney Joseph L. Rauh's brief were accepted by the court:

(A) It found that the Secretary of State did not use his discretionary powers in relying solely on the Attorney General's listing, but acted arbitrarily.

(B) It found that the listing of the Attorney General, initially made to apply to government employment, has no competency for passport purposes.

(C) It took note of the fact that the ISL was placed on the Attorney General's list without notice, hearing or opportunity to rebut, and therefore denied Shachtman his rights under the due process clause of the Constitution.

(D) It found that the denial of a passport was on the basis of the listing only, and not because of any independent determination that Shachtman might commit acts of "misconduct" abroad.

(E) It took particular note that the Attorney General has denied a hearing to the ISL.

In his concurring opinion, Chief Judge Edgerton of the Court of Appeals added, in part:

"1. The League is 'an anti-Communist educational organization.'

"2. The Passport Division knew plaintiff has tried and failed to get the Attorney General to give the League a hearing.

"3. The premise that a man is not fit to work for the Government, does not support the conclusion that he is not fit to go to Europe. The Attorney General's list was prepared for screening Government employees, not passport applicants.

"4. Even in connection with screen-

ing Government employees, membership in a listed organization was intended to be only an *inconclusive* item of evidence.

"5. In other connections, the list has not even any *'competency to prove the subversive character of the listed associations. . . .'*" (Emphasis mine—A.G.)

The decision is not only notable for what it set down as law in passport cases, but even more, for the manner in which it has pointed up the problems created by the insupportable uses of the Attorney General's list and the failure of the Attorney General to grant hearings of any kind for seven years!

The next issue of the *New International* will carry a full review of the case and analysis in detail of this great decision by the Court of Appeals.

A. G.

The Nathan Case

When the State Department decided to grant Dr. Otto Nathan a passport rather than meet the constitutional issues involved in a Court of Appeals decision directing it to accord Dr. Nathan a hearing, it forestalled a judicial reckoning with the question.

The Nathan case is somewhat old, in the same way that all similar cases before the State Department become "old" before "decisions," provisional or final, are reached. Originally, Nathan was denied a passport on the ground of either alleged membership in the Communist Party, or association with it and its organizations. Under departmental rules, having been denied a passport absolutely, Nathan had the right to appeal to the Board of Passport Appeals. It was pointed out that Nathan had refused to avail himself of that appeal when it was offered on April 18, 1955. For two years prior to that, however, the State Department just stalled on this important administrative detail and no appeal was available to Nathan.

Only when the case came close to a court hearing, did the Department hasten to correct its administrative irresponsibilities. By then, however, the case had already appeared on the calendar. And now, Dr. Nathan achieved some prominence by being appointed a trustee of the Einstein estate. He demanded a passport to travel to Europe in order that he might execute his duties as such trustee.

Judge Schweinhaut, after hearing the case and listening to the arguments of opposing counsel, became enraged with the State Department and simply ordered it to issue a passport to Nathan. He was especially angered because the Government attorney, one of Mr. Brownell's departmental disciples, knew none of the reasons why a passport had been denied. It was upon the Court's instruction that an affidavit was produced within twenty-four hours containing the State Department's reasons for denying the passport.

In any event, the Government appealed to the Circuit Court of Appeals which, in avoiding a decision on Judge Schweinhaut's order, instructed the State Department to grant an immediate hearing under procedures similar to a court of law; thereupon, to report its decision to the court for review in the event of a continued denial of the passport.

Such a hearing would involve the presentation of evidence and witnesses, both subject to examination and cross examination by Nathan's lawyers. This the State Department, in keeping with administration policy, refused to do. Neither did it desire at this time to take the case higher in a test of the Circuit Court's decision. Rather than grant a real hearing to Nathan or to test the Circuit Court of Appeal's action, it issued a passport.

In the Shachtman case, the State Department pursued another course. Shachtman made application for a passport more than two years ago. The application was ignored for months. Only the strongest pressure and the employment of legal counsel brought forth the first answer, some six months after the application, denying a passport, on the ground that it would be against the best interests of the country. No further detail could be obtained from the Department.

Further pressure produced a meeting between Shachtman and his counsel, Joseph L. Rauh, of Washington, and Mr. Ashley G. Nicholas of the Passport Division of the State Department, representing the then head of the Division, Mrs. Shipley. The only result of that meeting was a plea made by Mr. Nicholas that the ISL settle its case with the Attorney General's office.

Shortly thereafter, Mrs. Shipley wrote denying a passport to Shachtman on the ground that the ISL, of which he is chairman, is on the Attorney General's list. Here we come to an important difference in Shachtman's case from that of Nathan.

Mrs. Shipley, in denying the passport to Shachtman, stated that it was a *temporary* denial. In her letter of denial, she stated that although it was known to the Department that neither Shachtman nor the ISL were in any way connected with the "International Communist Movement," still, the organization was on the Attorney General's list. When and if that situation was changed, i.e., the ISL was removed from the list, then Shachtman would be able to get a passport.

Under the rules, that meant that Shachtman could not get a hearing from the Board of Passport Appeals because he was not denied a passport outright, or, to put it another way, it was not a complete denial, but a temporary situation!

Mrs. Shipley failed to explain her decision in light of the fact that the Attorney General did list the ISL under the general designation "Communist." We are led to conclude that either the lady paid no attention to the actual manner of the listing, or that she did not accept, on the basis of the transcript of the meeting with Nicholas, the Attorney General's designation.

In any case, the decision of Mrs. Shipley left the matter where it had been for some years. She knew, as did Mr. Nicholas, that for seven years the ISL had been trying to get a hearing from the successive Attorneys General without avail. Unless such a hearing was held and the ISL had an opportunity to challenge its listing Shachtman would have to wait an indefinite number of years before a decision on his right to have a passport would be decided definitively!

That is the background to the Shachtman passport case. The case was taken to court in Washington. The lower court upheld the State Department and the case went to the Circuit Court of Appeals where a hearing was held in mid-February. No decision has as yet been handed down, although four months have passed since the case was heard. It is obvious that the case, while not fundamentally different from the Nathan case, involves some special legal questions, since obviously, the Shipley decision, points a finger directly at the Attorney General. It does not seem possible

that the Circuit Court of Appeals can come to any favorable decision without taking into account the Attorney General's list, constructed without notice or hearings of any kind.

The two cases involve an attack on the whole security program of the administration from a rather surprising angle. Ordinarily, it would have appeared that the best challenge to the government program on security, based as it is on administrative decree, the information of stool-pigeons, of unevaluated FBI reports, was a direct case of government employment. But in the matter of Dr. J. P. Peters v. The United States Government, an employee case, the Supreme Court evaded the fundamental consitutional questions, in favor of an administrative one in which it found the position of the government wanting.

Thus the question of the rights of accused persons to confront their accusers remains legally undetermined. Furthermore, the rights of persons under the First and Fifth Amendments, even though employed by the government, likewise remains undetermined. Under the "doctrine" that working for the government is a "right" and not a "privilege" has developed the companion "doctrine" that a government employee has no legal and constitutional rights and/or privileges. Government bureaucracy is free to deal with government employees as it wills.

If as a result of recent cases the no right and no privilege doctrine is upset what becomes of the historic separation of the powers of the executive, the legislative and judiciary branches of the government? This is what worries such a conservative journalistic pundit like Arthur Krock of the *New York Times*. Krock, of course, is the conservative counter-balance to the sometime liberalism of the *New York Times*. He is a noted defender of administrative prerogatives against the "popular clamor." As such, he is a sort of barometer of the interchanging euphoria and dyspepsia of the administration.

Mr. Krock is quite alarmed over the Nathan case because he feels that it marks the interference of the Judiciary in the affairs of the Executive. He deplores the fact that in the Nathan case, "the courts directly substituted their judgment for that of the Executive." But, if the Executive plays fast and loose with an employee or a passport applicant? What then? What recourse does such a person have against the bureaucratic machine? What if, as Krock himself admits, "the State Department [had] . . . a bad record of evasion and delay on Nathan's passport application . . ."? Wasn't the Executive's judgment rather wanting in this case? And if a person cannot call upon the Judiciary to assist him in fighting a "bad record of evasion" or "unconscionable stalling by the department," what then becomes of the rights of the citizen?

This is an issue which Krock deftly avoids as he usually does when the issue involves individual rights and liberties against the governmental bureaucracy. He can compose splendid essays on the democratic rights of corporative business against government bureaucracy—it is within his line of vision. That is his horizon. No, more. He sees in the action of court a return to the Roosevelt era, which to a certain type of conservatism, is equivalent to socialism, or something like socialism. And so, he quotes an unnamed political scientist, who is a lawyer, yet, when he says of the three judges of the Circuit Court of Appeals:

> They were calm and judicious in their calculated substitution of their judgment for that of the State Department. They seemed to consider that it is the function of the courts to correct the errors of the Executive, and the fault of Congress for failing to enact a statute granting a "due process" judicial hearing—an adversary proceeding—for passport applications.

Horrendous, isn't it? Of course, it was entirely all right for the Supreme Court to find Roosevelt's court plan unconstitutional. That, obviously, was no interference with the rights of the Executive. But for the courts to intervene in behalf of the basic constitutional rights of citizens in a State Department passport case—that is an unconstitutional intervention in the rights of the Executive!

How would it interfere with the rights of the Executive? Listen to Mr. Krock, for he is truly a big mind in Washington!

> If the courts should follow the logical line of the Nathan case, and order the State Department to disclose for the record all its reasons for refusing to grant passports, a constitutional crisis would be inevitable (no less). Executive judgment of national security is often involved. There are many factors in foreign affairs not present in domestic administration. A friendly foreign power, for instance, might prefer not to have any American making speeches on subjects that are controversial in its area (you see, Americans just go running around making unfriendly speeches all over the world—we don't mean admirals and generals and senators, etc.—and some friendly government like Spain might object). It might also prefer not to have its position known, and the Secretary of State, in his Executive judgment and by virtue of the plain statutory power granted him, might honor this request and decide also that it was against the public interest to disclose his reasons.

Which government objected to Shachtman's passport? Was it the Stalinist government in Russia, because Shachtman might talk to some anti-Stalinist Ukrainian refugees? Or was it Fascist Spain, because Shachtman might talk to members of the POUM or other anti-fascist exiles in France.

Of course, Krock is either kidding or else nobody has told him what has been going on for almost a decade now. Actually, not one of the important cases involves anything that Krock is talking about.

The real problem in the country has been, not the interference of the Judiciary in the affairs of the Executive but the cruel, inhuman, anti-libertarian, unconstitutional so-called security programs and procedures. Krock's own descriptions of the conduct of the State Department in the Nathan case, does not recommend its judgments. Its role in the Shachtman case is even worse.

The real problem remains: what are the rights of citizens presumably protected by the Constitution? Do they lose these rights when they become employees of the government? Have they no protection against the maliciousness, mendaciousness and simple cupidity of the government bureaucrats and their false accusers? Recent experience illustrates many abuses, but they have almost all been committed by the "judgment" of the Executive branch.

Can a citizen leave the country to travel or to pursue his work? Does he have a right to judicially appeal to departmental denial of a passport when no good and sufficient reasons have been adduced to deny him that "privilege"?

The State Department did not challenge the court in the Nathan case because it was afraid to test its case against him in open court. That is what is important. It is another reason why the Shachtman passport case must be given the fullest support to see it through to the finish. Here, too, the State Department is afraid to test

its case legally. It is hiding behind a filthy screen held up by the Attorney General.

ALBERT GATES

The Peters Case

On June 6, the Supreme court by a vote of 7-2 determined that Dr. John Punnett Peters, Professor of Medicine at Yale University, had been unjustifiably fired by the government from his position as part-time Public Health Service consultant. The Court ordered the Civil Service Commission to expunge from its records the finding of the now defunct Loyalty Review Board that there was a "reasonable doubt" of Peters' loyalty.

Dr. Peters had been twice tried and twice cleared by security boards of his governmental agency. These hearings were brought on by charges of disloyalty including membership in the Communist Party made by unnamed informers whose identities were never disclosed to the accused. A considerable portion of the "derogatory information" was not even given under oath. Peters' first hearing was early in 1949, with Truman's Executive Order 9835 already in effect for two years. This Executive Order directed all departments and agencies of the Executive Branch to form one or more loyalty boards which would hear loyalty cases and make recommendations for dismissal or clearance. Truman's Order also provided for the organization of a central Loyalty Review Board in the Civil Service Commission which would, among other functions, review cases of individuals recommended for dismissal by departmental or agency loyalty boards.

In May, 1951, Truman's Executive Order was amended, making even more nebulous the basis for dismissal: from finding "reasonable grounds" of disloyalty the revised criteria became "reasonable doubt" of an employee's loyalty. Following this revision, the central Loyalty Review Board ordered the loyalty board of the Federal Security Agency to hold a second hearing. This second hearing was held and Dr. Peters, again, was absolved of any "reasonable doubt" of loyalty.

Obviously dissatisfied, the Loyalty Review Board decided to hold its own hearing and in May, 1953, a board panel met in New Haven confronting Peters with accusations but no accusers, with unsworn charges and allegations. Peters' counsel was denied the right to learn the accusers' identities and question them. Peters denied all the allegations under oath and a number of prominent individuals testified to his unquestionable loyalty. The evidence which Peters provided his own agency's review board which had cleared him twice was produced at this third hearing. But as could have been expected of it, the Loyalty Review Board found that on the basis "of all the evidence, there is a reasonable doubt as to Dr. Peters loyalty to the Government of the United States." Peters was fired from his part-time job. His job, incidentally, consisted of a four to ten day visit each year to Washington where he discussed Federal grants to medical research institutions with the Surgeon General or members of his staff. It was not even disputed that Peters' job was not of a confidential nature and offered no access to classified information. Peters attempted to get a re-hearing and, failing this, he immediately went to the courts.

As the Peters case neared the Supreme Court hearing stage it achieved national prominence for it involved the constitutionality of some of the ugliest aspects of the security-witchhunt program. Peters claimed that because he was denied the right to face his accusers or even to learn who they were and precisely what they alleged, he had been deprived of "liberty and property without due process of law" clearly in violation of the Fifth Amendment. Had the Supreme Court ruled in Peters favor on this constitutional ground the security-witchhunt would have been dealt a mighty legal blow. The so-called security program, vicious to begin with under Truman, has matured under Eisenhower into a truly scabrous object continuously galvanized by the venom of anonymous bigots, stool-pigeons, psychopaths, professional informers, character assassins, all protected by the government woven cloak of secrecy and anonymity. The interest of "national security" is made largely dependent on anonymous informers and the rights of the accused have been largely supplanted by the government's self-assumed right to protect its sources of unevaluated and uncontested testimony.

By reaching the Supreme Court the Peters case posed the problem directly before the nation and to the courts. The government was unquestionably alarmed, and even divided on how to handle the issue. It was a month late in filing its brief, which, when finally submitted, was signed by Attorney General Brownell rather than by Simon Soboleff, the Solicitor General, who invariably signs such documents, thus indicating publicly for the first time a division of opinion within the Department of Justice.

Both the Peters Counsel and the government fought for a decision on the fundamental issues. The government brief denied the right of a fired federal employee to enjoy the privileges of judicial review and stated that the government security program had to rely largely on "undercover agents, paid informers and casual informers" who "must be guaranteed anonymity."

The government brief further made clear its position in the following passage from its brief: "Evidence which would be rejected under established legal doctrine in a criminal proceeding could well be the compelling reason for the dismissal of an employee on loyalty grounds."

IN THE LIGHT of the fundamental issues posed by Peters and the government the actual Supreme Court decision came as a whopping anti-climax. It completely evaded the all-important constitutional issue. Instead, it ruled in Peters favor, but on technical grounds that his counsel and the government had properly shied away from, and which, apparently, took both sides by surprise. The court decided that the Loyalty Review Board had no right to take it upon itself to "post-audit" the Peters case after he had been cleared by his own agency's loyalty board. The central Loyalty Review Board could review cases of those found disloyal but its self-made "Regulation 14" assuming the right to review all cases of local boards was, in the opinion of the court, in contradiction with the literal meaning of the Executive Order which established it.

The Supreme Court did not ignore the question of constitutionality. On the contrary it acknowledged the constitutional problem but deliberately refused to vote on it on the ground that "this court has declined to anticipate a question of constitutional law in advance of the necessity of deciding it." As the court found a procedural question on which to base its decision it felt relieved of the responsibility to vote on the real issue.

That the constitutional question weighed heavily on the minds—and

backbones—of the Supreme Court justices was made quite clear in the following paragraph from the majority decision written by Chief Justice Warren: "This [constitutional] issue, if reached by the court, would obviously present serious and far-reaching problems in reconciling fundamental constitutional problems with the procedures used to determine the loyalty of government personnel." This amazing passage can only be interpreted as an admission of the legal incompatibility of the security system with the constitution. Otherwise what would be the need for "reconciling fundamental constitutional problems with the procedures" of the loyalty program? *Reconciliations* are not as a rule effected among compatible forces, particularly when *fundamental* issues are at stake.

Two of the seven majority votes were cast by Justices Douglas and Black, each of whom wrote his own concurring opinion which hit at the heart of the constitutional problem and in no uncertain terms criticized the rest of the majority for failure to meet the issues squarely. Justice Douglas was of the opinion that the Loyalty Review Board did exercise technically proper jurisdiction over Dr. Peters and its subordinate agency board. But he was even more firmly of the opinion that the Supreme Court majority had failed in its responsibility "to reach the constitutional issue." Douglas wrote:

> The question of construction of the Executive Order was so well settled that neither the Government nor Dr. Peters suggested the absence of authority in the review board to take jurisdiction of this case on its own motion. I agree that it had such authority. It, therefore, becomes necessary for me to reach the constitutional issue.
>
> Dr. Peters was condemned by faceless informers, some of whom were not known even to the board that condemned him. Some of these informers were not even under oath. None of them had to submit to cross-examination. None had to face Dr. Peters. So far as we or the board know, they may be psychopaths or venal people, like Titus Oates, who revel in being informers. They may bear old grudges. Under cross-examination their stories might disappear like bubbles. Their whispered confidences might turn out to be yarns conceived by twisted minds or by people who, though sincere, have poor faculties of observation and memory.
>
> Confrontation and cross-examination under oath are essential, if the American ideal of due process is to remain a vital force in our public life. We deal here with the reputation of men and their right to work—things more precious than property itself. We have here a system where government with all its power and authority condemns a man to a suspect class and the outer darkness, without the rudiments of a fair trial. The practice of using faceless informers has apparently spread through a vast domain. It is used not only to get rid of employees in the Government, but also employees who work for private firms having contracts with the Government.

Justice Hugo Black also wrote a separate concurring opinion, one which was even more to the point than Douglas'. Unlike Douglas, he was of the opinion that the majority was correct to rule that the Loyalty Review Board exceeded its prerogatives in holding a hearing for Peters after he had been cleared by his agency loyalty board. At the same time Black makes the point very effectively that there is no binding principle demanding that questions of procedure be decided first and constitutional problems avoided whenever possible. Black writes on this point: "... this generally accepted practice should not be treated as though it were an inflexible rule to be inexorably followed under all circumstances." Black then proceeds to denounce the security system itself:

> But I wish it distinctly understood that I have grave doubt as to whether the Presidential Order has been authorized by any act of Congress. That order and others associated with it embody a broad, far-reaching espionage program over Government employees. These orders look more like legislation to me than properly authorized regulations to carry out a clear and explicit command of Congress. I also doubt that the Congress could delegate power to do what the President has attempted to do in the Executive Order under consideration here. And of course the Constitution does not confer law-making power on the President.

The High Court's ruling on the Peters' case is patently a politically motivated decision. It did not want to vote on the constitutional issue so clearly required by the case before it because it feared the political consequences. It could not make any intelligible "fundamental reconciliation" between the constitution and the security system and it was obviously determined not to take too many bristles out of the witchhunts widesweeping broom. It preferred to compromise by evading the important question and ruling against the government on a *relatively* minor issue.

THE SUPREME COURT'S DECISION cannot be evalulated in any abstract fashion. It can only be viewed in the context of the real issues involved and the background of the case. Judged this way, the Court's evasion was a setback for democracy. Insofar as this particular ruling is concerned the government still has the green light to fly the witchhunt's airlanes. For the ruling in no way interferes with the government's practice of firing employees on the basis of secret evidence given by secret witnesses.

In addition, the President's Loyalty Review Board was a special feature of Truman's security program which has been dispensed with by Eisenhower. Thus, as a precedent for future cases the court's decision does not have much practical meaning.

Though the court decision viewed in context was a setback for democracy, in its narrower, immediate sense it was also a setback for the government. The self-assumed right of the Loyalty Review Board to audit cases of cleared government personnel on its own initiative, a form of double jeopardy, was one of the more pernicious details of the government program. The court decision not only denies this practice to any future central loyalty board but it now leaves open to review other cases similar to Peters where the Loyalty Review Board had reversed the decision of agency loyalty boards. One such case is that of John Stewart Service who was fired from the State Department by Dean Acheson. Service had been cleared six times by his own loyalty board only to have these decisions reversed by the Loyalty Review Board. Service has already presented a petition to a Federal District Court asking for reinstatement on the basis of the court decision and the Justice Department has already conceded that the Peters decision has knocked out one half of its case against reinstating Service.

THE COURT'S DECISION, and its language, on the Peters case was more or less in line with a generally more relaxed mood in the nation. In recent months there have been any number of signs that the political temper of the nation has been somewhat annealed.

• Two weeks before its decision on Peters, the Supreme Court squashed contempt proceedings against three witnesses before government committees who used the Fifth Amendment. The court decision in this case did

not establish any definition of law but it was, nonetheless, a rebuke to the government.

- The government acknowledged another defeat when it finally dropped its oft-repeated attempts to jail Owen Lattimore.
- The excellent decision in the Shachtman case which is discussed elsewhere in this issue.
- There is the case of Dr. Otto Nathan, an economist and executor of the late Albert Einstein's estate. Nathan had been denied a passport by the State Department which refused to divulge the exact nature and sources of its "derogatory information" maintaining that issuance of passports was "confined exclusively to the judgment of the Secretary of State." Nathan took immediate legal action and when the State Department was ordered to hold a "quasi-judicial" hearing the State Department, fearful of the consequences, retreated and issued Dr. Nathan his passport.
- The vigorous speeches by ex-Senator Harry Cain denouncing the security program is significant in itself, considering that Cain was one of the country's most zealous witchhunters. But more significant is the widespread and not unfriendly press he has received.
- The University of California's (Berkeley) conservative faculty Standing Committee on Academic Freedom felt free to attack the government's campus security program as a threat to academic freedom. And at the recent annual conference of the National Association of State Universities, state legislatures and the government were pilloried for encroaching on academic freedom.

Part cause and part effect of this changing mood are several recent revisions in the security program. Attorney General Brownell proposed a number of "improvements" in protecting the rights of accused federal employees, which the President accepted. Any analysis of these "improvements" shows that they are primarily verbal, without any substantial change to protect the rights of accused government employees. But the government obviously felt the need to placate a more vocalized dissatisfaction with the security program. A second concession is the decision of the Subversive Activities Control Board—of which Harry Cain is a member—that organizations on the Attorneys General List of alleged subversive organizations which are defunct do not fall within the restrictions of the Internal Security Act.

Although there are signs of growing dissatisfaction with the excesses of the security system and evidence that the courts and the government prepared to remove some of its brittleness, it would be pure self-deception to read into this any deep, wide and popular rebellion against the witchhunt. The post-war reaction reached its peak when Senator McCarthy seemed omnipotent in all his madness. McCarthy's demise, however, merely accelerated a process that did not make brave men out of timid souls and liberals out of reactionaries. What it did was to strengthen the feeling, less muted now, that it was time to call a halt to some of the vigilante madness that was taking a firm hold on the nation. The reactionary McCarthyite wave has receded to a more natural water level—submerging McCarthy in the process. The incidents which we have mentioned—the recent Supreme Court decisions, the Nathan case, the changes in security procedures, etc.—are reflections of a changing mood—which we welcome—but they are not symptomatic, unfortunately, of a political rebellion against the reaction itself.

This relaxation has followed the newest look to American foreign policy. With the accent now on achieving a "modus vivendi" with the Kremlin it is not possible for the administration to permit the security-witchhunt system to operate without some checks and balances.

But the limits are on both sides of the witchhunt. Just as the administration and the Democratic Party can no longer tolerate a witchhunt whose vigilante character knows no bounds, neither can they suffer any wholesale dismantling of the whole system of repression and curtailment of civil liberties in the coming period. The cold war has been relaxed but it has not been settled. Although some accommodations may be made between Washington and Moscow there can be no final, amicable resolution of the differences between these two mutually exclusive centers of world power. And with the continuation of the cold war we cannot look to either bourgeois party to become the inspirational source or the focal point of a wide, popular counter movement to the witchhunt system.

One of the pledges of the Democratic Party during its Congressional campaign was to carry on a thorough investigation of the security system and to expose the administration's "numbers racket" on security "risks." Once it won control of Congress, however, the Democratic Party was conspicuous by its failure to meet this commitment. It carried on but a few hearings supervised by a reactionary Southern senator. In a blast by the ADA, this Democratic controlled committee was sharply attacked:

> Instead of an all-out investigation, the committee staff is riddled with defenders of the existing system such as a former paid consultant of Scott McCleod's notorious operation in the State Dep't. . . .

The Democratic Party, itself, is too committed to the witchhunt to undertake any serious investigation of it. And it feared the political consequences in the elections of any large-scale exposée of the administration's security program. Instead it proposed to Congress a bipartisan committee to investigate the operation and procedures of the security program—a proposal which the administration accepted, with some misgivings. That the committee, nearly half of whose members will be Republicans, and which will have some of its members appointed by vice-president Nixon, will not make any proposals for a fundamental revision of the security program is a foregone conclusion. But that it will attempt to modify the program somewhat is no less indicated.

Thus the move for a bi-partisan committee is unquestionably a product of the generally felt need to relax, but the manner in which it was born and it's likely members serves as a reminder of the limited nature of any such reform movement organized today by the leaders of American bourgeois politics.

JULIUS FALK

Notes of the Month

The British Elections

By all accounts, the parliamentary election was preceded by one of the dullest, most listless political campaigns in recent British history. The result of such an issueless contest was pretty much in the cards. With a light vote (76.8 per cent as against 82.6 per cent in 1951 and 84 per cent in 1950) the Tories increased their parliamentary majority from the feeble 26 seats of 1951 to the safe and substantial figure of 67. Only an economic and/or political earthquake will be able to overturn this Tory government before its five-year term is up.

Before we take up the more general significance of this resounding defeat for the British Labor Party just ten years after it won its smashing victory of 1945, a few facts about the British electoral system may be of interest, especially to readers in America who perforce get most of their information about British politics from the overwhelmingly pro-Tory press of this country.

As in the United States, the electoral franchise in Britain is heavily weighted against the urban, industrial population, which in concrete terms means against Labor. In 1951, for instance, Labor polled 48.8 per cent of the vote, but got only 295 seats in Parliament, while the 48 per cent for the Tories won them 321 seats. In this election, Labor received 46.4 per cent of the vote, exactly the same percentage they got in 1950. In 1950 that won them 315 seats in Parliament, while this year they received only 277. The difference is a tribute to the clever redrawing of electoral districts carried out by the Tories, as well as a reflection of the well-known fact that in a light vote Labor tends to suffer relatively more than its opponents.

This weighting of the franchise against the working class even in the most democratic countries is a standard, built-in feature of bourgeois democracy. It is one of those things which every labor party knows must be overcome if it is to succeed in winning a parliamentary majority. If the British Labor Party (or any other, for that matter) when in power were to re-draw the electoral districts so that every citizen's vote would count for just as much and no more than every other's, it would no doubt be denounced by all the respectable organs of public opinion for using its power to rig future elections, for failure to play the game according to the rules, and who knows what all else.

The dullness of the campaign is accounted for by the fact that the Labor Party offered the voters a program which was remarkably similar to that offered by the Conservatives. The latter have accepted, in the main, the basic Labor reforms of 1945. Since Labor had no bold new changes to offer, what argument there was tended to be confined to relatively minor disputes over how the various programs should be administered. Since the British economy is riding high on the world-wide capitalist boom, the voters can be excused for the tepid interest they showed in a dispute over administrative minutae.

A time of prosperity is not the most propitious for the presentation of bold new programs of radical reform

or revolutionary transformation. We do not advance the claim that the BLP would have been sure to win the election if they had only presented such a program. What is evident, however, is that the BLP cannot win an election by presenting itself to the voters as a "more efficient" or a "more humane" or even a "more liberal" version of conservatism. If the voters have to choose between two claimants to the Conservative mantle, they will generally prefer the genuine heir to his parvenue rival.

As Aneurin Bevan pointed out during the campaign, the British people have been exhausted politically by fifteen years of crises and forced marches. First there was the war, then the years of post-war austerity and reconstruction, accompanied by the alarms and crises of the cold war. The present prosperity has dripped down to the masses sufficiently to make them want to enjoy it for as long as it will last. The Stalinist peace offensive has given rise to hopes that a number of years may pass before another war crisis is reached. Since conditions of life have eased under the Tories, and they seem as likely as Labor to put the squeeze on the United States to reach some kind of a deal with the Stalinists, why rock the boat by turning them out of office now?

True, there are momentous issues in foreign and domestic policy which Britain must meet in the years ahead. The rearmament of Germany, the continuation of the armament race in nuclear weapons, the shaky basis of the present prosperity for Europe and Britain which have not corrected the deep structural defects which render them weak in themselves and keep them at the continued mercy of the economic policies and conditions in the United States . . . all these are issues and problems which are as real today as they were in the past. But the policies of the BLP on foreign affairs have never transcended the bounds of the most narrow conception of British national interests. And in this election there was a gentleman's agreement that neither party would seek to tie the hands of the British representatives at the forthcoming four-power conference by making the British position at that conference an issue in the campaign.

After the votes had been counted, Clement Attlee was asked to give reasons for Labor's defeat. His answer was to refer to "the dissension in the Labor ranks."

Since the election campaign was fought on lines determined by the right wing of the BLP, it is quite natural that they should seek to blame their defeat on the Bevanites. And it may very well be true that a substantial number of voters, when given no other basis for choice, will withold their votes from a party which is divided in favor of one which is politically and organizationally united. In this respect, again, Labor's real difficulty was that the basis of choice given the voters was so narrow that the Tories could exploit the disunity in Labor's ranks effectively.

The American press has noted, with glee, that the Bevanites came off no better in the election than their right-wing opponents in the Labor Party (in fact, they tried to make it appear that the Bevanites came off worse). Actually, no serious conclusions can be drawn from the failure of the Bevanites to make a better showing than the rest of the party. Since the policies in the campaign, and the policies of a possible Labor Government reflected or would have reflected the politics of the right wing, it is not surprising that the morale of the Bevanites and their supporters failed

to reach heights of enthusiasm. This led to the fact, remarked on by most observers, that the campaign organization of the Labor Party functioned poorly. Their failure to get out the Labor vote was not due to some kind of technical organizational laxity, but to the feeling on the part of the party militants, a large number of whom are Bevanites in sympathy, that their cause did not warrant an expenditure of their energies to the maximum.

The current prosperity in Britain made Labor's task exceptionally difficult. But the defeat they suffered has far more profound causes than that of the economic conjuncture. The fact of the matter is that the great reforms of their 1945 government exhausted the ideological capital of the party. They have played out their string in a historical sense. Either they must form a new conception of their goals, and hence of their role in British society, or they must content themselves with a perspective of being the junior (liberal) partner in the administration of British capitalism for a long time to come.

It is apparent that the old, right-wing leadership of the party is utterly incapable of transcending the ideas which were realized by the 1945 government. To them, socialism meant more and better and more humane government administration of a larger area of social and economic affairs. A certain amount of nationalization was a necessary means of attaining that goal. If conditions were to require it (such conditions as more sick industries, or growing general unemployment), they might nationalize another industry or institute some other reform measure. If things go relatively smoothly, they could tighten up on the efficiency of the programs already adopted.

In short, the very real encroachments on the foundations of British capitalism made by the 1945 government were regarded by them not as first steps in the reconstruction of British society, but as a slice of socialism fully realized. Additional slices would be added to it in time, even if they were not too sure just what these additional slices might be. What they did not, and do not understand, is that unless a socialist movement aims at a fundamental revolution in the social and economic relations of a society, i.e., in its class relations, individual "socialistic" measures can as easily serve to prop and patch up the old society as to transform it.

The Bevanite wing of the Labor Party has vague, almost instinctive understanding of this truth. Hence their resistance to the idea that what Labor must do is to "consolidate" its past gains, and their demand for more nationalization instead. Bevan has pointed out ("In Place of Fear") that the problem is not to set more theoretical or arbitrary limit on nationalization, but to advance to the point at which the economic and political power of the capitalist class has been definitely and clearly subordinated to that of the productive members of society.

This insight, though vital to the historical rebirth of the BLP, is not sufficient for it. One reason for the floundering and uncertain progress of the Bevanite movement has been its failure to transform this insight from a generalization into a concrete program and series of policies designed to achieve it. Bevanism has remained a restless, dissatisfied mood in the BLP loosely held together by a group of prominent individuals who have tended to gallop from one set of issues to another. If there is some coherent plan in all this motion, or even some guiding principle which connects the various issues on which they have taken a stand, it has remained as obscure to the ranks which have tried to follow them as to their opponents who are convinced that all they want is to make trouble and/or gain personal power.

In recent months, Bevan and his friends have tended to concentrate their attention on foreign affairs. Their strictures on West German rearmament, on British production of the H-bomb, and against the more disastrous aspects of American foreign policy may well reflect the sentiments of broad sections of the Labor Party and of British public opinion in general. But the fact remains that out of all their criticism no coherent policy has emerged as an alternative around which to rally the Labor Party and the working class, or at least their most advanced elements. All one can gather is that Bevan and his friends are hot for co-existence and negotiations with the Russian and Chinese Stalinists. Their tendency is to seek to reduce the alternatives for British foreign policy to a choice between war and "peaceful co-existence." When the latter term is subjected to closer scrutiny, it turns out to mean a deal to divide the world peacefully among the rival imperialisms.

If these were indeed the only alternatives, there can be no doubt that the people of Britain (and of all the other imperialist powers, at the very least) would tend to choose "peaceful co-existence" to war, if the choice were put up to them. The facts of the past five years demonstrate that they are not the only alternatives, and even a rudimentary insight into history convinces that they are really not alternatives at all. In any event, a policy designed to bring about "peaceful co-existence" does not tell the British people much about how Britain can achieve a long-run position of economic prosperity and security even in a world which has been carved up by Russia and the United States in the most amicable fashion imaginable.

As a mood in the Labor Party, Bevanism has prevented this great British working class movement from becoming frozen in an outlived ideology reinforced by a bureaucratic party administration. It has kept alive the possibility for the exchange and hence development of ideas inside a live political movement, rather than forcing those who seek to work out a more consistent, fudamental and coherent policy for the British working class into sectarian isolation from it.

The defeat of the Labor Party at the polls, and the *manner* in which this defeat was invited by the party may well intensify the search for a new approach among a wider section of the party militants. The inconclusive and floundering manner in which the Bevanite leadership has conducted its struggle may induce an effort on the part of many more of these militants to think through the problems of their movement in a more thorough and systematic manner than they have found necessary in the past. Unless such a development takes place, this defeat is not going to remain an isolated event in the fortunes of the British labor movement, but will tend to point the pattern for a whole period of its existence.

GORDON HASKELL

The Crisis in Distribution

While the economy keeps rolling on to new peaks of prosperity, with high levels of production and profits, there are some clouds on the horizon. These may be small, but they can grow. Moreover, they are discernible to more or less orthodox supporters of the present system. Above all, they perturb the defenders of small business.

The *Annual Report of the Select Committee on Small Business* (of the United States Senate, 84th Congress, 1st Session, Report No. 129) in its report of March, 1955, has this to say in its introduction:

A searching appraisal of the position of small business within our economy during 1954 does not provide a basis for viewing the future of small, independent enterprises with complacence. In a sense, 1954 was a "normal" year. No war galvanized the industrial community. No depression swept large numbers of small enterprises out of existence. Indeed, the somewhat slower tempo of busines activity which became apparent in 1953 and carried over into the first quarters of 1954, quickened perceptibly during the closing months of 1954. It may be assumed that a well-founded spirit of optimism about the immediate business outlook was responsible for the 11,981 business incorporations in December, the highest monthly total since January of 1947, and for the full-year total of 117,164 incorporations which exceeded those of each year since 1947. On the other hand, 10,300 fewer businesses of all types started in the first 6 months of 1954, compared with the same period of 1953, and Dun & Bradstreet recorded 2,224 more failures involving court proceedings or voluntary action likely to end in loss to creditors in 1954 than in 1953.

Your committee realizes, however, that it is easy for selective indices to mislead those who hold that what seems good for the economy as a whole must of necessity also be good for small business. The fate of small, independent businesses is not chained by natural law to the more narrowly fluctuating fortunes of the larger and hardier units within the industrial complex. *Countertrends are not only possible, but clearly discernible.*

To a businessman, the proof of the pudding must be in the profits. And it is precisely in the profit position of smaller manufacturing enterprises that your committee detects one of the basic aspects of the current small-business situation which is most disturbing. *Whether measured by percentage of stockholders' equity or by percentage of dollars of sales, the profits of smaller manufacturing corporations, after taxes, have shrunk since 1952, while, with few exceptions, the profits of the largest corporations have increased....*

Profits as a percentage of dollar sales present a similar picture for the first 6 months of 1952, compared with the first half of 1954. On this basis, *the smallest group's money-making ability declined 60.9 per cent, while the biggest corporations showed an increase of 10.5 per cent.* In addition, the small manufacturer's share of total sales has drifted downward from 19 per cent in 1947 to 14 per cent in 1953, *a trend which,* if unchecked, *can easily assume alarming significance.*

These and other factors strongly suggest to your committee that *there are obscure, complex, and underlying forces at work within our economy that are inimical to the future of small, independent enterprise.* To discover and correct these causes of the mounting disadvantages facing the small-business man should be a major concern of all who want to see preserved the vigor of our free-enterprise system....

Your committee has long been deeply disturbed over the multiplying evidences of concentration of economic power in the managements of a relatively few huge corporations. Oligarchic control over groups of vital industries, even though such control may be exercised within the letter of the law, must inevitably exert a contracting influence on freedom of endeavor. In each of its annual reports since 1951, your committee has stressed its belief that *the threat of monopoly has not lessened, not remained constant, but has, in fact, assumed more menacing proportions.* It would, indeed, not be stating the case with excessive emphasis to say that *your committee's uneasiness of former years has turned to grave apprehension.*" (Italics mine—T.N.V.)

The above findings, it should be emphasized, are those of the Senate Small Business Committee. Their concern over the growth of monopoly and the consequent weakening of small business is reinforced by the still more recent study of the Federal Trade Commission. As reported in *The New York Times* of May 20, 1955: "Business mergers, while still well below the pre-depression levels of the late Nineteen Twenties, are running at three times the 1949 rate." The F.T.C. "gave two major reasons for the current merger wave: an urge to expand production and *an inability of smaller companies to get adequate financing for expansion.*" (Italics mine.—T.N.V.)

The tremendous accumulation of capital that has taken place in recent years is beginning to be accompanied by a fall in the rate of profit—attacking first the smaller capitalists. The process is not an unexpected one. In discussing the relationships between accumulation of capital and the rate of profit, Marx states (*Capital,* Vol. III, p. 283):

A fall in the rate of profit and a hastening of accumulation are in so far only different expressions of the same process as both of them indicate the development of the productive power. Accumulation in its turn hastens the fall of the rate of profit, inasmuch as it implies the concentration of labor on a large scale and thereby a higher composition of capital. On the other hand, a fall in the rate of profit hastens the concentration of capital and its centralization through the expropriation of the smaller capitalists, the expropriation of the last survivors of the direct producers who still have anything to give up. This accelerates on one hand the accumulation, so far as mass is concerned, although the rate of accumulation falls with the rate of profit.

It may be objected that profits increased in 1954, but the increase did not help the rate of profit. This, moreover, is true of leading corporations. In the annual study of the National City Bank, contained in the April, 1955, *Monthly Letter,* the return on net assets declined (for 3,442 leading corporations) from 10.6 per cent in 1953 to 10.3 per cent in 1954 despite a four per cent increase in reported net income after taxes. Imagine what the results would have been if not for the tax swindle law of 1954! States the National City Bank:

In the manufacturing industries, which in number of companies and capital investment comprise over half of the totals for all lines of business included in our tabulation, the 1,778 reporting companies show combined net income up 4 per cent. Tax details given by the larger companies indicate that in 1954, on an over-all volume of sales about 5 per cent lower than in 1953, *pre-tax earnings were down 10 per cent.* Liability for federal income and excess profits taxes declined by 25 per cent, with the portion of pre-tax earnings absorbed by such taxes in the two years declining from an average of 53 to 45 per cent." (Italics mine.—T.N.V.)

The dependence of private capitalists on the capitalist state for maintenance of the profits of the bourgeoisie as a class is thus shown in a relatively new and graphic form. Profits, of course, remain the end-purpose of economic activity ("the proof of the pudding") under capitalism.

One of the main props of the prosperity in the first half of 1955 has been the automobile industry. Never before in history has American capitalism produced automobiles at such fantastic rates. According to *Dun's Review and Modern Industry* for May, 1955,

More cars were produced in the first quarter than in any other quarter in history. The record total of 781,000 cars reached in March was almost matched in April (a shorter month) as production continued at the starting rate of about 30,000 cars per day, which means that cars have been rolling off the assembly lines at the rate of one each three seconds, night and day. . . . During the first half of 1955 more than 4 million cars will probably be made. Before 1949 there had been only one year—1929—in which more than 4 million cars were made during an entire year.

Profits of the big three (G.M., Ford and Chrysler) have been huge. The smaller automobile companies have been forced to merge in an attempt to remain alive. Meanwhile, what has happened to the dealers? They are not doing so well; in fact, they are not sharing in the profits of the big automobile manufacturers at all. Nor is the outlook likely to improve, as dealers have been forced to take unprecedented quantities of cars from the manufacturers. The same analysis in *Dun's* goes on to say:

The supplies of new cars with dealers rose noticeably to 624,277 in the beginning of April, to reach a postwar peak. However, at the present rate of sales which have been outrunning output, new car inventories are entirely reasonable. Notwithstanding the expansion in sales, The National Automobile Dealers Association reports that *operating profits for new car and truck dealers are the worst in fifteen years.* (Italics mine.—T.N.V.)

IT IS NOT ONLY the small manufacturer, but the small business man in general whose position is steadily worsening, while monopoly capital is steadily strengthened. These fundamental trends of a capitalism that has outlived its historical usefulness more than a generation ago are reinforced and accelerated by the development of the Permanent War Economy. War outlays are necessarily concentrated in large aggregations of capital. The Senate Small Business Committee, in the previously cited report, states in the chapter on "Military Procurement" that "all business and Government agencies have experienced dislocations due to the conversion from the highly geared war economy of the Korean war period to a reduced defense-production economy. This transition period has been fraught with changes in Government buying policies, which have caused much concern within the ranks of small business and among Government officials charged with the responsibility of procurement functions."

Later on, it becomes clear that the concern is with "negotiated" contracts, as small business is suspicious of all contracts awarded by negotiation. When to this attitude is added the fact that "Since 1950 approximately 90 per cent of the dollar value of all purchasing has been awarded by negotiation, and the emergency exception has been widely used to justify this sharp departure from the basic method of advertising," it becomes clear that despite all the double-talk small business has not been doing so well in receiving military contracts.

Perhaps, if large-scale war outlays do not mean increased business for small enterprises at the manufacturing level, small retailers benefit from the existence of the Permanent War Economy. Not very directly, according to the Hoover Commission Report on Business Enterprises, for the digest published by the Research Department of the Citizens Committee for the Hoover Report bemoans the fact that government is allegedly taking business away from private enterprise by various forms of government enterprise. The magnitude of the competition is indicated by the volume of business done by commissary stores and post exchanges. The annual figures cited are as follows:

199 commissary stores in the U. S.	$185,000,000
239 commissary stores abroad	121,000,000
450 post exchanges in the U. S.	470,000,000
2,700 post exchanges abroad	540,000,000

Thus, over $1.3 billion of sales are "lost" by retailers. The Hoover Commission observes that

The whole operation [of commissary stores] is at least a vivid illustration of how bureaucracy can expand against the intent of the Congress, accompanied by a failure to include real costs. The real justification of the continued operation of most of these stores is a "fringe benefit" to the military personnel and their families.

The question arises as to whether . . . increased salary payments . . . would not be more consonant with sustaining our economic system.

What hurts is not only the loss of business, but the fact that millions of servicemen, and through them their families, are able to purchase a variety of commodities at substantial reductions from prevailing retail prices. From the point of view of the military budget, it would obviously be poor economy to raise military salaries in order to provide military personnel with purchasing power comparable to civilians.

Such considerations do not intrude upon the cerebrations of the Hoover Commission, who conclude by asking: "Is this [government enterprises] 'creeping socialism'?" The answer is a model of its kind: "Most of these projects were started for what, at the time, appeared to be justifiable operating reasons. Therefore, we cannot say that they were socialistic in intent. However, their perpetuation beyond the emergency period has led to the tremendous increase in the rate of growth of government wealth – as compared to private wealth—which the Harden Subcommittee cited. This is certainly an alarming symptom. Further, the rate is such as to suggest that 'running' is a more apt description than 'creeping.' "

Not only is large-scale manufacturing prospering, but retail business is running about 8 per cent ahead of a year ago. Perhaps there has been some slight decline in the rate of profit, and perhaps small manufacturers are having their problems but, state the apologists of the bourgeoisie, 1955 will be the best or second-best year on record. Not only will we have "two cars in every garage" (who was it who said "two chickens in every pot"?), but eventually "every family will have three cars." This pious wish is supposed to solve the problem of maintaining the present high rate of automobile sales in the latter part of the year.

The first signs of trouble occur as a rule, not merely in the difficulties that small businesses have in surviving, but in wholesale distribution. Marx puts it this way (*Capital,* Vol. III, p. 359):

Hence we note the phenomenon that crises do not show themselves, nor break forth, first in the retail business, which deals with direct consumption, but in the spheres of wholesale business and banking, by which the money-capital of society is placed at the disposal of wholesale business.

The manufacturer may actually sell to the exporter, and the exporter may in his turn sell to his foreign customer, the importer may sell his raw materials to the manufacturer, and the manufacturer his products to the wholesale dealer, etc. *But at some particular and unseen point, the goods may lie unsold.* On some other occasion, again, *the supplies of all producers and middle men may become gradually overstocked.* Consumption is then generally at its best either because one industrial capitalist sets a succession of others in motion, or because the laborers employed by them are fully em-

ployed and spend more than ordinarily . . . *the production of constant capital never takes place for its own sake, but solely because more of this capital is needed in those spheres of production whose products pass into individual consumption.* However, this may proceed undisturbed for a while, stimulated by prospective demand, and in such lines the business of merchants and industrial capitalists prospers exceedingly. A crisis occurs whenever the returns of those merchants, who sell at long range, or whose supplies have accumulated also on the home market, become so slow and meager, that the banks press for payment, or the notes for the purchased commodities become due before they have been resold. It is then that forced sales take place, sales made in order to be able to meet payments. And then we have the crash, which brings the deceptive prosperity to a speedy end. (Italics mine.—T.N.V.)

To be sure, Marx was discussing the turnover of merchants' capital in the above passage, and describing the development of crisis in a fairly simple, undifferentiated type of capitalism that prevailed a century ago. He could not have forseen the development of the Permanent War Economy stage of capitalism in decline, where production of the means of destruction becomes an integral "third" department of the economic scene. Constant capital is currently not only produced when needed by industries "whose products pass into individual consumption," but also—and with equal social acceptability—when needed by industries whose products enter into military consumption. In some cases, the individual product that enters into military consumption is identical with that which enters into individual consumption. The ability of the state thus to subsidize whole industries (mining, for example) materially helps to stabilize the entire economy.

Depending on the character and degree of state intervention in the economy, the traditional course of the captalist business cycle becomes considerably modified. The possibilities of the boom culminating in sudden, abrupt crisis are remote so long as the political preconditions, nationally and internationally, of the Permanent War Economy obtain. Moreover, economic fact-gathering and knowledge have progressed to the point where any unsold goods are fairly conspicuous. They are either agricultural surpluses bursting out of government warehouses or automobiles bulging in dealers' showrooms—to mention the two major points where quasi-crisis conditions are presently in the process of developing.

Nevertheless, Marx remains eminently correct in stating that crises tend to originate with the wholesale level of distribution. In this connection, it is most interesting to examine the latest figures on business failures (as published by *Dun's,* op. cit., p. 32). There were 2,854 failures during the first quarter of 1955 compared with 2,895 during the first quarter of 1954 —a decline of almost two per cent in number of failures. The liabilities represented by these failures declined from $134.6 million to $121.1 million during the year under comparison—a decline of ten per cent. Yet, against this favorable performance for the economy as a whole, *wholesale trade is the only sector of the economy where the number and dollar volume of failures rises significantly from the first quarter of 1954 to the first quarter of 1955.* The number of failures in wholesale trade increased from 289 to 337—a rise of 17 per cent; while the dollar volume of the liabilities involved in these failures rose from $12.9 million to $13.7 million—a rise in excess of 6 per cent.

By themselves, these figures could be merely episodic. Yet for the month of March—the latest month for which figures are available—business failures rose 12 per cent over February 1955. According to *Dun's,* "Casualties were higher only once, in March 1954, in the entire postwar period." This is the type of cloud on the horizon that may only be a speck today, but tomorrow can be very sizable.

THE FUNCTION OF DISTRIBUTION, the turnover of capital in retailing and wholesaling, is fundamentally to realize the values and surplus values embodied in capital employed in production. Only in this manner can the capitalist cycle of M—C—M' be completed and the capitalist achieve the profit that is his sole aim in business. When production increases faster than consumption (unless military expenditures consume the entire disproportionate excess of production), there is another cloud on the horizon that is symptomatic of quasi-crisis if it continues to grow.

That all is not serene for the American capitalists may be seen from a glance at the figures on retail and manufacturing sales. Retail sales in 1946, the first postwar year, are reported at $102,488,000,000; in 1954 they were $170,664,000,000—an increase of *67* per cent. Manufacturing sales, on the other hand, rose from $151,402,000,000 in 1946 to $287,707,000,000 in 1954—an increase of *90* per cent. As a matter of fact, if the comparison is made with 1953, the postwar peak, the increase in retail sales remains the same, 67 per cent, while the increase in manufacturing sales reaches *100* per cent, as manufacturing sales for 1953 are estimated to have reached over $303 billion.

While a portion of the increase in manufacturing must go to replace the constant capital that has been used up in prior production, and a portion (about $20 billion) goes into increased inventory that is presumably salable, it is clear that a sizable portion of the increase in commodity production (capital) has been immobilized by the state principally in the form of military stockpiles and government storage of agricultural surpluses.

The use of state power, no matter how haphazard or inefficient it may be, for such equilibrium purposes introduces an aspect of planning into the anarchic system of capitalism that neither Marx, Lenin nor Trotsky could have foreseen in detail, as fundamentally the decisive aspects of state intervention and "planning" are products of the Permanent War Economy. Eliminate the threat of Stalinist imperialism, remove the social acceptability to all classes of the huge expenditures for war outlays, destroy the political basis for state intervention in the economy on such a huge scale, and the pre-World War II violent swings in the economy are immediately restored.

The "triumph" of American capitalism today lies not so much in its ability to maintain an historically outmoded social system, but its ability to persuade the masses of the population that the Permanent War Economy is really the Welfare State. This, however, is a separate subject outside the scope of this article.

Another way of expressing the fundamental economic developments that have taken place during the past decade as a result of the huge accumulation of capital is to refer to the increasingly high organic composition of capital, with its consequent rapid increase in productivity of labor. These tendencies we analyzed in Part III, "Increasing State Intervention," of the original series on the Permanent War Economy *(cf. The New International,* May-June, 1951, p. 150):

"Precisely where the breaking point is likely to be, no one can say, but it is clear that the composition of capital is already dangerously high and constitutes a sword of Damocles, hanging over the unsuspecting head of such a highly-geared capitalist economy that in a few years it is possible to produce all the automobiles, television sets, etc., that can be sold under capitalist conditions of production."

Labor productivity, according to an unpublished study of the Federal Reserve Research Department, may have reached the fantastic figure of between four and eight per cent last year in manufacturing, against a normal current rate of increase of three per cent. The resulting rise in national income has, in turn, given rise to significant increases in personal savings. The forms of savings have recently been studied by Raymond Goldsmith. As reported by Will Lissner in *The New York Times* of May 29, 1955, "The information already developed has been credited with aiding in the formulation of policies that moderated recent tendencies toward boom and slump. Economists in close touch with the research going on predict that within five years enough will be known about the business cycle to banish major depression from the American economy."

What these economists ought more profitably to study is how to sustain the economy once production of the means of destruction declines appreciably below present levels. This is not to be interpreted as a forecast that such will happen. The basic decisions are now *political* in nature. But the Stalinist peace offensive has as one of its objectives the promotion of a political climate in western Europe and the United States that will bring about a reduction in war outlays on the part of American capitalism. It is by no means excluded that the Stalinists will achieve some degree of success in this part of their strategic aim.

Without speculating about substantial reductions in war outlays, however, there are already evident signs of stress and strain in the field of distribution. The size of the average capital engaged in retail or wholesale trade is smaller than in manufacturing. Its return on sales is less, as it depends on a higher turnover of capital to maintain its share of the average rate of profit. By the same token, however, capital engaged in distribution is more vulnerable to minor changes in the business cycle. From the point of view of monopoly capital, the overwhelming majority of the almost four million enterprises engaged in retail and wholesale distribution are at best necessary evils. If a substantial percentage of merchants' capital were to disappear, provided that the process did not rock the capitalist boat, monopoly capital would not be unduly concerned. Except for propaganda phrases, consequently, monopoly capital is not at all alarmed about the "mounting disadvantages facing the small-business man," nor for that matter is monopoly capital the "vigorous defender of the free-enterprise system" that it poses as.

As a matter of historical record, the decisive majority of commodities intended for consumption by individuals is produced by a relatively small number of monopoly capitalists. These manufacturers, except in the case of a few large aggregations of merchants' capital, are able to ignore with impunity the desires and aspirations of retailers and wholesalers. During the Great Depression of the 1930's, when the capitalist structure was rocked to its foundations by the ravages of the crisis, monopoly capital

engaged in the production of consumer goods sought legislation to enable it to withstand the vicissitudes of competition. The result was the passage of the Miller-Tydings Act of 1937, which exempted manufacturer-retailer price fixing contracts from anti-trust prosecution. This was really the origin of the Fair Trade movement, whereby monopoly capital attempted direct control of the pricing activities of merchants capital.

Under Fair Trade agreements, if a manufacturer enters into a minimum pricing agreement (price fixing agreement) with *one* retailer in one of the 48 states (there are at present 42 states where this monopoly practice is legal), all other retailers in that state who are selling the same commodity—*whether they have signed a Fair Trade agreement or not*—are bound to the schedule of prices dictated by the manufacturer. The main argument in favor of Fair Trade has always been that the manufacturer needs protection against those retailers (and wholesalers) who follow the practice of loss leaders; i.e., the manufacturer of a nationally branded and advertised product claims that he has spent considerable sums to establish consumer preference and desire for his product, and the "unscrupulous" retailer sells this product at a loss in order to lure customers into his store, on the theory that once they are in the store they will purchase other merchandise on which he makes his normal profit or more. Certain retailers, especially department stores, have been the main supporters of such price-fixing agreements, as they find it difficult to cope with the competition of specialty stores and discount houses who slash prices on branded merchandise. The fact that the consumer pays more under such monopoly practices as Fair Trade is, after all, relatively unimportant to the monopolist so long as his profit position is adequately maintained.

The legislative history is important in only one respect—as the supplies of civilian products on the market increased in the postwar period, advocates of Fair Trade attempted to solve the problem on a state by state basis, once the Supreme Court declared that the Miller-Tydings Act could not be used to support Fair Trade. They found, however, that this would not work as there was an immediate and obvious conflict with the Federal anti-trust laws. Consequently, Congress passed the McGuire Act in 1952 which exempts state Fair Trade laws from the provisions of Federal anti-trust laws. The McGuire Act gives permission to monopoly capital to establish price-fixing agreements at the wholesale and retail level on a state by state basis without fear of prosecution under Federal anti-monopoly laws.

THE GROWTH OF FAIR TRADE has been accompanied by an immediate and parallel rise in discount houses, much like the passage of the Prohibition Act was accompanied by the growth of bootlegging. Discount houses are no longer confined to New York and a few large cities. They have spread across the entire country. Everyone is "discount-conscious." Every commodity that has a list price, or suggested list price, or whose retail price can be established in the minds of the consumer through advertising or any other device, is immediately sold at a discount. The havoc that this process has caused among various types of distributive outlets has given rise to what may properly be termed a veritable crisis in distribution.

Discount houses are not to be confused with retail outlets that have pe-

riodic sales. A proper definition would have to confine the term to those retailers that are selling as a regular daily occurrence Fair-Traded merchandise at less than the Fair-Traded prices. How extensive is this practice? The surprising, or perhaps not so surprising, thing is that nobody knows. The estimates vary so widely as to be almost meaningless. Yet, unless there are some quantitative measures, it is impossible to analyze the current crisis in distribution.

The same Annual Report of the Senate Small Business Committee, previously cited, has an interesting chapter on the Distributive Trades, in which we find the following illuminating discussion of the extent of discount houses:

> Various estimates have been made of the extent to which these discount houses have made inroads into more normal retail outlets. Spokesmen for the Toy Manufacturers' Association and the National Retail Dry Goods Association, both of which operate in areas especially vulnerable to the competition of discounters, have provided your committee with their guess that *the total sales volume of discount houses is about $5 billion.* On the other hand, *the United States Chamber of Commerce has given a figure of $25 billion, or five times as great, as its best guess of the extent of business being done by these outlets, most of whose business is done in fair-traded items.* On this point, incidentally, the American Fair Trade Council feels that over 80 per cent of the discount houses' revenue comes from prixe-fixed merchandise, and there seems to be no reason to doubt that the 80 per cent figure is close to the mark.
>
> *Your committee, however, has no means and no data by which it could come to a decision on the relative reliability of either the $5 billion or $25 billion annual revenue estimate. Since it is generally agreed that only 10 per cent of total retail sales in the Nation are in fair-traded goods, the total amount of such business would come to about $18.7 billion* with total sales of $187 billion. (*Dun's* figure for total retail sales is about $170 billion, but the difference is not significant for purposes of this analysis.) Therefore, it would seem that the Chamber of Commerce figure overstates the income of the discounter, but your committee is unable to find any mutually agreed upon level between the $5 billion and $25 billion estimates. Naturally, precise information is not available, since the discount houses do not file reports with any agency of the Government or with any private association regarding the extent of their sales. (Italics mine. —T.N.V.)

On the other hand, *Housewares Review,* a trade publication, in its May, 1955, issue has an article by the editor on the "Distribution Revolution." In it, he refers to 10,000 discount houses doing an annual volume of $500 million. To be sure, there are other types of discount operations, including super-markets and mail order and catalog operations, but the figure given by *Housewares Review* for gross volume of discount houses looks like they placed the decimal in the wrong place. An annual volume of $500 million divided among 10,000 discount stores (the figure seems to be extremely conservative) would yield only $50,000 gross volume per store. A genuine discount house could not exist on such a small volume, as the key to a successful discount operation is large volume on a small mark-up, resulting in a much faster turnover of capital than the average retailer. Surely, a $500,000 average annual volume is more apt to be correct for the typical discount house than $50,000. On this assumption, the annual volume would be $5 billion, coinciding with the estimate of the Toy and Dry Goods Associations cited by the Senate Small Business Committee.

Whatever the actual figures, it is clear that a very substantial percentage of the volume of many commodities, especially certain types of consumer durables, is sold at discount. In fact, E. B. Weiss, one of the main trade analysts of "off-list" selling, in a comprehensive article in *Advertising Age for* April 18, 1955, states:

> The president of Webster-Chicago had declared that "in the New York City area, 85 per cent of all major appliances were sold by discount houses in 1954." That figure is correct as applied to the discount *operation*: not as applied to the discount house. He also said that the discount house is "tending to become more like a conventional dealer every day"—a statement that is not quite factual. A small handful of discount houses are opening more luxurious outlets and giving more services. But the *total discount operation* is far from conventional. If anything, the contrary would be a more accurate summation—in other words, the *conventional* outlet is tending toward the unconventionality of the *discount* operation — witness the circusy warehouse sales of department stores.

While, as *Housewares Review* puts it, "The factory list price, made into a legalized point of reference for the discounter, became the discounter's chief asset," the fact remains that the average discount house works on a gross margin of 10-20 per cent, whereas the average department store requires a mark-up at least twice that of the discount house. How does the discount house do it? Masters, one of New York's largest discount houses, has made its figures publicly available. They are analyzed by *Housewares Review,* as follows:

DISCOUNTER AND DEPARTMENT STORE
Costs as a Percentage of Sales

	1952 %	1953 %
PAYROLL		
Dept. Store	17.8	18.5
Masters	6.1	5.8
Excess	11.7	12.7
ALL OTHER EXPENSES		
Dept. Store	14.8	14.8
Masters	6.1	5.5
Excess	8.7	9.3
TOTAL COSTS		
Dept.Store	32.6	33.3
Masters	12.2	11.3
Excess	20.4	22.0

Thus, assuming that merchandise costs are identical (and many of the large discount houses receive larger quantity discounts from most manufacturers than do department stores), the discount house has definitely lower selling costs, lower overhead, and above all lower payroll. With a margin of 20 percentage points, or thereabouts, there is little wonder that the average discount house can undersell the average department store by an appreciable amount—enough to attract the average consumer.

THE DISCOUNT HOUSE, and the discount method of operation, have been growing. This is not to imply that all discount houses are prospering and all department stores suffering. Many department stores are doing quite well, and recently a number of discount stores have gone into bankruptcy. Still, however, some old and honored names in retailing have disappeared from the scene: McCreery's, Wanamaker's and Hearns in New York, Loeser's in Brooklyn, O'Neill's in Baltimore, Famous of Los Angeles, and Alms & Doepke in Cincinnati. There is no doubt that a squeeze is beginning to operate on retail distribution. This is the central aspect of the crisis in distribution. The frantic seeking of other distributive outlets, the general chaos that prevails, are merely symptoms of the falling average rate of profit in distribution at large.

Fair Trade was supposed to have protected the profit margins of the distributor and retailer. Properly policed it was supposed to have eliminated the discounter. At least, that

was the theory on which the manufacturer sold the concept to the retailer. When the Supreme Court ruled in 1951 that the Miller-Tydings Act of 1937 applied only to those retailers who actually signed price agreements with manufacturers, large-scale price wars broke out in most major cities, with the result that retailers took the lead, assisted by manufacturers, in pushing through the McGuire Act of 1952. The vote was overwhelming in Congress, 196 to 10 in the House and 64 to 16 in the Senate. Yet after three short years of operation, Fair Trade would seem to be on its way out.

States the Senate Small Business Committee, after reviewing the disparity of statistical estimates on the size of discounting:

> Even with that degree of statistical uncertainty, though, it is apparent that discounters do account for a sizable share of the retailing pie. Furthermore, any increase in their sales during the coming year which even closely approximates the growth of the past 12 months will undoubtedly provide a most definite and pragmatic answer to the question of what happens next in the fair-trade puzzle. In the opinion of your committee, a more serious challenge to the fair-trade laws than was ever presented by any court decision arises in the shape of these ever-expanding operations of discount houses located in those States which have resale-price-maintenance laws.
>
> Based on current observations, your committee concludes that favorable court actions against individual price cutters have proved ineffective in halting such retail outlets. While protracted litigation was under way which was aimed at forcing 1 operator to respect the fair-trade price of 1 manufacturer's articles, hundreds and thousands of discount houses were cutting prices on hundreds and thousands of fair-traded articles.

This air of hopelessness of the official watchdog over the health of small business merely reflects the economics of the situation. Discounting on a large scale is here to stay. It exists not only with the tacit support of manufacturers, but with their complete coöperation. It goes without saying that discount houses could not survive for one day without the benevolent support of manufacturers. Many manufacturers supply discount houses openly. Many more use one or more indirect or surreptitious methods of supplying discount houses, so that they can piously inform their more conventional distributive outlets that "they" are not selling the discount houses.

THE ENORMOUS INCREASE in the productive capacity of American capitalism has led to a frantic search for every type of market. It is this which is fundamentally responsible for the chaotic condition in distribution. It should be clear that no legal device, Fair Trade or its repeal, or any other patented formula, can serve as a nostrum to remedy the crisis in distribution. Meanwhile, however, the government appears to be getting ready to sponsor repeal of Fair Trade.

The Federal Trade Commission recently, according to *Electrical Merchandising* (a McGraw-Hill publication) for April, 1955, in an article entitled, "Is Fair Trade Dying?",

> released a letter to retailers refusing to enforce state Fair Trade laws. And to add insult, the Commission advised retailers they could "with impunity" ignore the state laws where they were not being diligently enforced.
>
> The F.T.C. said that if a manufacturer persists in discriminatory or lax enforcement of his Fair Trade contracts "he has forfeited his rights to enforcement and there is no longer any legal obligation—or at least any legally enforceable obligation—upon a retailer to observe the manufacturer's fixed prices."
>
> The commission went on to advise retailers to "resort to various avenues of self-help." Among the avenues suggested: *disregard the fixed price "and compete on a price basis with the discount house."*
>
> The F.T.C. concluded, "It cannot seriously be suggested that price competition is morally reprehensible. A retailer forced to cut prices to compete . . . could do so with impunity."

Hard on the heels of this F.T.C. letter came Attorney General Brownell's long-heralded and long-delayed study. Formed in 1953 to review the whole structure of anti-trust legislation, the Brownell committee was composed of 60 top lawyers and economists.

In strong words, the committee's report attacked the federal laws which exempt Fair Trade agreements from anti-trust action.

The report said, "We regard the Federal statutory exemption of Fair Trade pricing as an unwarranted compromise of the basic tenets of national anti-trust policy. The throttling of price competition in the process of distribution that attends Fair Trade pricing is, in our opinion, a deplorable yet inevitable concommitant of Federal exemptive laws.

"We therefore recommend Congressional repeal both of the Miller-Tydings amendment to the Sherman Act and the McGuire amendment to the Federal Trade Commission Act, thereby subjecting resale-price maintenance as other price-fixing practices, to those Federal anti-trust controls which safeguard the public by keeping the channels of distribution free." (Italics mine.—T.N.V.)

The Administration is thus squarely behind repeal of Fair Trade. Whether immediate legislation will result is doubtful, but it makes little difference so far as the over-all problem is concerned. While some manufacturers will state that they favor continuation of Fair Trade, more and more retailers are moving in the direction of advocating repeal of Fair Trade.

In fact, Attorney General Brownell in a speech before the Annual Conference of the NRDGA (reported in *Retailing Daily* of April 4, 1955) tried to convince the department store owners (apparently, without too much resistance) that they would be aided in their fight against discount houses by repeal of Fair Trade.

He suggested that the discounter probably owes more to fair trade than anyone else since it gives him a fixed ceiling and makes it a simple matter to undersell those retailers bound by fair trade contracts....

"It may be that elimination of fair trade would hamper the operations of discounters to a greater extent than it would hurt those who have so earnestly sought the protection of fair trade!"...

The Attorney General's declaration constituted his first detailed discussion of fair trade "price-fixing" as the Justice Department sees it. Included in his reasoning were these fundamental points:

Although fair trade legislation was supposed to help small retailers compete with chain stores and other large outlets, "the anticipated benefits have been somewhat illusory."

Fair trade handicaps those small retailers who cannot afford extensive advertising, or elaborate establishments or services and whose best hope of attracting customers is in charging lower prices....

The argument of some manufacturers that fair trade is needed to protect the small merchant has "a somewhat false ring" when they admit they have engaged in manufacturing for sale under private brand an article identical, except for a different brand name, with the fair traded item.

One of his major conclusions was when "He said it 'seems evident' that the absence of competitive pricing under fair trade results in higher prices for the consumer and that consumers are deprived of the opportunity of 'shopping around' for the same product priced competitively and advertised freely by different retailers."

It would thus seem fairly clear that despite the development of state monopoly capitalism and the Permanent War Economy, with all the modifications that have taken place in the structure of capitalism, some of the basic laws of capitalism still operate. The trends toward concentration of capital, and its increasing organic

composition, that Marx observed and analyzed are still at work. Competition is still cannibalistic in its impact, especially on smaller aggregations of capital. The crisis in distribution and its continuation are both inevitable and incurable. They are a reflection of the fact that American capitalism, despite its tremendous wealth, is in reality a sick economy.

The fact that capitalist crisis does not appear in traditional form, as a sudden curtailing of credit at the peak of a boom, with resultant forced liquidations on an extensive scale, does not at all mean that capitalism has solved the problem of the business cycle, or that capitalist prosperity is permanent. On the contrary, as we have repeatedly observed, unless there is a constantly increasing ratio of war outlays to total output, the equilibrium becomes more and more precarious until it is finally upset.

The dead weight of mass unemployment will become more and more a powerful social and political lever, despite the fact that the increase in unemployment is uneven and gradual, and despite the fact that the labor movement has lost much of its militancy. In 1949, unemployment reached a postwar peak averaging 3.4 million for the year. The equilibrium of the economy was certainly endangered at that point. But, fortunately for American capitalism, the Korean war was launched by Stalin at just the right time. Unemployment which had averaged 3.1 million in 1950, declined to 1.9 million in 1951, 1.7 million in 1952, and 1.5 million in 1953, but in 1954 unemployment rose to an average of 3.2 million.

It is impossible to predict at what level (four, five or six million) unemployment will become such a dead weight on the entire economy that the far-reaching nature of the present crisis will be apparent to all. The fate of small business may be of only passing interest to monopoly capital, but its decline tends to aggravate the unemployment problem, and of course its demise is hastened by rising unemployment. If 1955 becomes the most prosperous (profitable) or the second-most prosperous (profitable) year in the history of American capitalism, with unemployment remaining at about the three million level, then what will happen to unemployment when there is a 5-10 per cent decline in production? And the crisis in distribution is a sure sign that in the not-too-distant future there will be a fall-off in production!

T. N. VANCE

May 1955

Moscow in Lenin's Days: 1920-21

With this issue we begin the publication of extensive extracts from a work of capital importance and interest. Although the original French edition of Alfred Rosmer's book has already been translated and published in Italy, an English edition has yet to be issued. We are all the happier to be able to provide our readers with an English translation and although it is not possible, to our great regret, to publish the entire work in our pages for that would spread it over too long a period of time, the bulk of the book will, with the kind consent of the author, be printed here in substantial installments.

"The destiny of the Russian Revolution," writes Rosmer in his preface, "the daily gymnastics of recent years which are designated as 'Marxism-Leninism,' pose important questions: Is Stalin continuing Lenin? Is the totalitarian regime only another form of what was called the dictatorship of the proletariat? Was the worm already in the fruit? Is Stalinism "a logical and almost inevitable development of Leninism," as Norman Thomas asserts? In order to reply, you must first know the facts, the ideas, the men, just as they were in the heroic days of the Revolution; a preliminary work of excavation is necessary, for they have been systematically buried under successive layers of varying falsehoods. My work is aimed at helping restore them as they were in truth. I will simply say: I was there; this is how it was. My intention is to facilitate the task of those who are interested in the history of those times by placing every fact in its true light, by giving every text its full sense."

Alfred Rosmer comes to his task uniquely equipped. He is the only survivor among the founders of the Communist International who is in a position to write about the history of its early years out of intimate and direct knowledge, which he communicates with sympathetic understanding, objectivity and critical independence of judgment. The idea of justifying everything that was said and everything that was done, even in the "heroic days of the Revolution," is alien to him. So is the practise of retailing, let alone inventing, malicious gossip about all sorts of trivialities, which is the stock-in-trade of a whole school of embittered turncoats and cheapjack sensationalists, and which always warps and shreds the great canvas of great events beyond recognition. The present work again justifies the exceptional reputation for intellectual integrity and historical scrupulosity which the author has had in the eyes of all who have known him from his earliest days as a syndicalist militant in the French General Confederation of Labor which he served for years before the First World War as editor of its then famous paper, *La Vie Ouvriere*, throughout his years in the Communist and then the Trotskyist movements, to the present day, where he continues an unflagging dedication to the cause of socialist liberty in his writings and his presidency of the *Cercle Zimmerwald*, the association of the French left-wing militants who remain pledged to the principles of internationalism.

The present translation is the work of Max Shachtman.—EDITOR.

CHAPTER XI

Among the Delegates to the Second Congress of the Communist Int'n'l

In the pre-Congress discussions, the feeling that was dominant among all the delegates was a profound desire, a thought-out wish for agreement; for all of them the October Revolution and the Third International were a common possession. Nonetheless, there were but few who arrived all prepared to approve every point in the theses submitted to them; their content escaped the usual familiar classification, and the way in which the problems were dealt with were different, too. All the problems had to be taken up and examined from top to bottom.

For the syndicalists and the anarchists [Lenin's] *State and Revolution* had greatly facilitated a synthesis of theoretical conceptions in their essential respects. But the dictatorship of the proletariat, until that time confined to the theoretical domain, was now posed concretely and even as the most urgent practical problem. This transitional period, however, this passage from capitalism to socialism, had never been gone into deeply, it had been shunted aside when it came up as an obstacle: you leaped from capitalist society right into an ideal city erected at leisure. Even syndicalist militants like Pataud and Pouget, in a book they had entitled *Comment Nous Ferons la Révolution* [How We Will Make the Revolution] had made no precise contribution to the transitional period even though they were committed to one by the very title of their work: a brief general strike; the regime collapses . . . and after a few days of disturbance and a minimum of violence, the syndicalists would proceed peacefully to building the new society. All that remained in the

realm of fairy tales. In Moscow, in 1920, we were face to face with reality.

The bourgeoisie, even a bourgeoisie as weak as the Russian, does not let itself be beaten so easily; it, too, knew the practise of sabotage when it was menaced; it found support abroad, for the bourgeoisie of the entire world sped to its aid. Far from being able to begin working peacefully, the revolutionists were obliged to prepare for war, a terrible war, for the attack came from all sides. They had wanted peace. They had been generous and magnanimous toward their enemies; they had freed rebel generals on their word of honor; all had been in vain. The bourgeoisie imposed war upon them; the liberated generals violated their oath. All the material and moral resources of a country already exhausted and gutted by the war, had to be poured into war for three years. To count upon things happening otherwise and easier elsewhere was an unpardonable illusion. The fight would be still fiercer, the bourgeoisie being stronger everywhere.

Certain delegates who already imagined themselves in full accord with the theses submitted to the Congress were often among those who were farthest removed from them. To MacLaine, delegate of the British Socialist Party, who had boasted of being able to adhere to them unreservedly—he was in agreement on the role of the party, on participating in elections, in agreement on the struggle in the reformist unions—Lenin had replied: "No, it is not that easy, or if you believe it is, it is because you are still imbued with that socialist jabbering that was prevalent in the Second International but which always halted before revolutionary action." In connection with the party, Trotsky said: "Of course it would not be necessary to convince a Scheidemann of the advantages and the necessity of a party; but in the party we aim to have there would be no place for a Scheidemann." And Bukharin replied animatedly to a young Spanish comrade who, anxious to prove his communist orthodoxy, had exclaimed: "We are carrying on a pitiless struggle against the anarchists," "What does that mean—fight the anarchists? There are anarchists who have rallied to the dictatorship of the proletariat since October; others have come close to us and are working in the Soviets, in economic institutions. It is not a question of 'combating.' It is necessary to discuss cordially and frankly, even to work together if possible, and not turn from that unless you run into insurmountable opposition."

IN MOSCOW I FOUND Jack Tanner again; up to 1914 he was the one who sent us "Letters from London" for *La Vie Ouvrière;* I had seen him in Paris during the war where he had come to work in a factory in the Paris suburbs.* He represented, along with Ramsay, the Shop Stewards Committees that had developed and taken on great importance in the course of the war as a reaction against the attitude of the majority of the trade-union leaders who had rallied to the government's war policy. I was in full agreement with them. The fight inside the reformist unions was nothing new to them; they had always been supporters of it; and like myself they had up to then always been impervious to parliamentarism and the political party.

An active sympathy brought us close to other delegates even though certain differences persisted between them and us. John Reed and his American friends were in agreement

*He is today the president of the Amalgamated Engineering Union.

with the Bolsheviks on the question of the party, but under no circumstances would they listen to a word on working in the reformist unions. Wijnkoop, delegate of the Dutch "Tribunists" (left-wing Social Democrats who took their name from their paper, *De Tribune),* separated himself flatly from the "leftists," Pannekoek and Gorter; he found the mere presence in Moscow of "centrists," of opportunistic socialists like Cachin and Frossard who had come for "information" intolerable. On every occasion he protested violently against their presence: "There is no place for them here," he exclaimed.

These first contacts among delegates were very precious. We all learned a lot from one another. Our conversations and discussions lasted late into the night. They were cut off by expeditions to meetings, among workers and soldiers. One day Bukharin came to take some of us to a military encampment in the environs of the city. As we arrived near a high tribune, Bukharin cried: "There is our tank!—Do you know what the point is?" He explained it to us. When Yudenitch, moving in from Estonia, attacked in the direction of Petrograd, he advanced rapidly thanks to the tanks with which the English had equipped his army. The young recruits of the Red Army had never before seen this redoubtable engine; they felt it was a monster against which they were defenseless. An inevitable disorder, sometimes downright panic, followed. In the face of this powerful material weapon the Red Army could only resort to its special weapons. Among these, the most important was the tribute from which the Bolsheviks explained to the workers and peasants the meaning of the war that had been forced upon them. The soldiers knew why they were fighting!

In our little troop that day there was the Italian socialist Bombacci. He was a deputy and played at anti-parliamentarism even though he was not a Bordigist; but by means of an extreme leftist position that he never made specific, he did his share in isolating Serrati who was left without support (on his left). He was very handsome. A golden head. Beard and hair shone in the sun. On the tribune he displayed an impressive mimicry with sweeping gestures and movements of the whole body, sometimes plunging above the railing as if he were going to dive into space. He was always a great success and it was unnecessary to translate his words. We did not take him too seriously but would never have thought that he could end up on the side of Mussolini. Our long and serious discussions were not free of moments of relaxation. Then you could see a group of delegates running after Bombacci in the hallways of the Dyelovoy Dvor shouting, *"Abàsso il deputàto!"*

With another of the Italian delegates our relations were less cordial and included no pleasantries: that was D'Aragona, secretary of the Confederazione Generale del Lavoro. His comrades of the trade-union organizations, Dugoni and Colombino, hardly showed up at our meetings; they left soon enough. It is no exaggeration to say that they had come more for the purpose of finding reasons for combating Bolshevism than for confirming the adherence that their party had given to the Third International. To try to justify their attitude, they said in private that the Italian workers would never endure he privations imposed upon the Russian workers by the October Revolution. But since D'Aragona had signed the appeal of

the Provisional International Council of the Red Trade Unions, he was not always able to duck out and he had to submit to our questions. We posed them unsparingly because we were convinced of his insincerity; all he did was swim with the stream, like Cachin in France. When he found himself too harassed by us, he invariably went to look up Serrati who would rescue him from the corner into which we had driven him.*

CHAPTER XII

Radek Speaks of Bakunin

IN THIS PRE-CONGRESS PERIOD, I had a supplementary assignment with the credentials commission. I had been designated by the Executive Committee to be a member of it, along with the Bulgarian Shablin, and Radek, then secretary of the Communist International.

Radek occupied a unique position in the International. He was a Pole, had been a militant above all in Germany, and now was more or less Russified. He had the reputation of a brilliant and informed journalist, but it was not rare to hear unkind remarks made about his behavior in groups where he had worked. In the course of intimate meetings of the commission, and later in the Executive of the Communist International I had the opportunity of knowing him well. After our first meeting at the Executive Committee, he had asked me to visit him in his office at the International which was then installed in the building of the former German embassy, the house where ambassador von Mirbach had been assassinated by the Social-Revolutionary Blumkin. He claimed he knew French but he did not speak it and our conversation took place in English. During a recent imprisonment in Germany, he had, he believed, perfected his knowldege of English. Perhaps he had learned to read it but his spoken language was frightful; yet he was the only one who didn't notice it for he expressed himself with his customary assurance. For this first meeting he was extremely amiable and after having asked for some information on the French movement, he spoke of his recent works, notably a study on Bakunin. "In prison," he said, "I re-read the principal writings of Bakunin and I became convinced that the evaluation that we social democrats made of him was in many respects mistaken. It's a work that must be taken up again." I had the impression that an unforeseen concession was to be made to syndicalism and anarchism which placed Bakunin among their great forerunners.

Returning to affairs in France, he asked my opinion about the leaders of the French Socialist Party, in particular about Cachin and Frossard and their information mission. He knew Francis Delaisi from his work on *La démocratie et les financiers,* asked me about his present activity and about his position during the war, about the possibility of bringing him over to communism. I had to answer that I knew nothing about that. Delaisi had remained silent during the war whose

*How D'Aragona and his friends behaved upon their return to Italy is shown by the following lines: "After having announced the revolutionary apogee in the victorious occupation of the factories, their deflation became suddenly and ineluctably manifest. It did not take them long to record that the Russian myth no longer warmed the heart. The members of the socialist mission who had gone to Moscow the foregoing July and who on their return to Italy had been very careful not to report their deep disillusionment out of fear of the Red extremists, now found their courage again and spoke of and proclaimed the enormous mistake made in applying the doctrines of Lenin in Russia. To the interviews granted the newspapers to this effect by Mr. D'Aragona, the general secretary of the General Confederation, were added the publication of a much more effective arraignment, the documented report of the two heads of the metal workers' organization, Messrs. Colombino and Pozzani, presented in a volume in which was described the destruction by the Bolsheviks of the whole vast machinery of production.—Domenico Russo, **Mussolini et le fascime,** p. 45.

oncoming and essential character he had nevertheless forecast in his brochure *La guerre qui vient* [The Coming War].

Our task, in the commission, was fairly easy; the delegates who turned in their credentials to us were almost all known; there were practically no contests except for an incident of little importance in connection with the French delegation. Jacques Sadoul and Henri Guilbeaux had taken part in the First Congress. Guilbeaux, regarded as the representative of the "French Zimmerwald left," with deliberative vote; Sadoul, credentialed by the communist group in Moscow, had been admitted with a consultative vote. Should they both be included in the delegation? I was then the sole delegate with credentials from the Committee of the Third International. In my view Guilbeaux, by virtue of the action he had conducted in Switzerland, was qualified to receive a credential with deliberative vote, whereas Sadoul, who belonged to the Socialist Party and had only been an accidental joiner, should only have a consultative vote. Radek hardly liked this proposal—he detested Guilbeaux for personal reasons; he notified Sadoul accordingly and Sadoul sent us a vigorous protest. Guilbeaux and Sadoul were finally put on the same plane; delegates with consultative vote, which satisfied neither one of them.

CHAPTER XIII

Smolny—The Solemn Opening Session of the Second Congress

ON JULY 16, 1920, the whole Congress left for Petrograd and held its session there the next day. It was in Petrograd that the revolution had begun; it was there that the Second Congress of the Communist International was to have its solemn opening. Smolny, that former college of young ladies of the nobility had become the headquarters of the revolution in October. When Lenin walked down the large hall where we had gathered, the English and American delegates, reinforced by a few more units, for they were not very numerous, surrounded him, forming a chain and singing, "For he's a jolly good fellow!"—the traditonal testimonial which, among Englishmen, adds affection to admiration.

After a few brief speeches, the delegates, joined by militants from Petrograd, left in a cortege for the Field of Mars where the victims of the revotion were buried, then for the Tauride Palace, seat of the Duma and then of the Petrograd Soviet whose debates from March to November we had followed with such anxiety; few in number at the outset, the Bolsheviks had progressed rapidly to win the majority in it in September and to make Trotsky its chairman. It was the second time, twelve years apart, that Trotsky chaired the Petrograd Soviet; the first, the precursor, was the Revolution of 1905.

The meeting hall was similar to those in which the parliamentary assemblies of all countries meet (except in England which, as a sacrifice to tradition, allows itself the fancy of a rectangular hall in which grandiloquent declamation is necessarily banished); a highly-perched tribune, an amphitheater where the delegates were seated, and a gallery for the spectators. It is here that the inaugural session of the Congres stook place. The address was delivered by Lenin. There can be no question, within the framework of this work, of giving a report, even summarized, of the works and decisions of this Congress, which was in reality the first Congress of the

Communist International. The meeting of March 1919, had had the aim, above all, of proclaiming the Third International. Impatient to inscribe its ideas in deeds as quickly as he deemed it possible and necessary, Lenin had resisted the objections, notably those of Rosa Luxemburg and the German Communist Party, whose delegate, the only genuine one at the Congress—except for the Russians—had come with the formal instruction to oppose the proclaiming of a new International; it was too soon, proper preparations could not yet be made, said Rosa Luxemburg. On the other hand, this Second Congress had a remarkable representation. Delegates had come from all the corners of the earth and on its order of the day were inscribed all the problems of socialism and of the revolution. For this Congress as for the other two—those which met in the days of Lenin—I will confine myself to extracting the essential points of the debates and the theses and I shall endeavor to reconstitute the atmosphere in which they unfolded, to cast up the balance.

Lenin's address was very significant of the man and his method. He seemed to ignore the solemnity of this meeting in this place. No grand phrases, even though the circumstances might well have justified them. There was great surprise when we saw that his speech was based on the book of the Englishman, John Maynard Keynes, *The Economic Consequences of the Peace*. Not that it was not an important work; of all the experts at the [Versailles] Peace Conference, Keynes had been the only one to see clearly, in any case, the only one who dared show, while there was yet time to remedy them, the disastrous consequences of the semi-Wilsonian peace to the economy of the new Europe. Lenin started with this book but he speedily reached what, I believe, was the essential thing to him. In this period, his mind was always dominated—as his book on "leftism" had shown—by the fear that the young communist parties regarded the revolution as something easy and even ineluctable, and the idea he insisted on was that it would be false and dangerous to say on the morrow of the world war that there was no longer a way out for the bourgeoisie. And following his usual method—which gives his speeches and writings a desultory appearance—after having formulated this warning, he returned to it, picked it up again, developed it in other words—variations on the same theme.

The members of the Bureau of the Congress delivered brief speeches. In Paul Levi's, there was an unpleasant note. On two occasions, speaking of the Polish aggression, he used the word *"schlagen"* [to beat]. All of us were joyfully following the riposte the Red Army was giving Pilsudski's aggression; Tukhachevsky's audacious march upon Warsaw filled us with hope but what we were expecting from it was the uprising of the people —the revolution in Poland. But the tone of the speaker and the repeated *"schlagen"* revealed in Levi something of that chauvinism which is all too frequent among Germans in their attitude toward Poles and it was certain that his words on this score were not those of an internationalist.

In the afternoon a meeting was held on the vast square of the Winter Palace, so rich in memories. There Kerensky's ministers had found their last refuge. A tribune had been erected before the palace from which you overlooked the crowd that had come to hear the speakers; you could not help thinking of that other crowd,

which the priest Gapon had led in supplication before Nicholas II only to have him meet it with a fusillade. Gorky appeared among us for a minute. He was big, square-shouldered, solidly built. Yet, it was obvious that he was gravely ill and obliged to watch himself carefully; it was nevertheless pleasant to see his robust appearance. He had consistently fought the Bolsheviks and the October Revolution. Then, without completely renouncing his criticisms and reservations, he had rallied to the regime, devoting the greatest part of his activity to saving people unjustly persecuted, intervening among the Soviet leaders who had for so long been his friends. It was said that he was one of the authors of an original play whose premiere we were to see in the evening.

You could not have imagined a finer site for this open air theater than the one that was chosen. It was the peristyle and square of the Stock Exchange, and had great symbolic value. The decor was grandiose. The building, Greek in style as was, it seems, a universal custom, was surrounded by a long colonnade. It occupied the peak of a triangle formed here by Vassili-Ostrov between the two arms of the Neva. The view ran from the quays of the river with their marble palace all the way to the sinister Peter and Paul Fortress.

The stage was the peristyle which was reached by a high stairway. The vast crowd which had gathered to see the spectacle stood at ease on the huge square. In this exceptional framework was unfolded a succession of scenes depicting "the march of socialism through struggles and defeats toward victory." The story began with the *Communist Manifesto*. The well-known words of its appeal appeared at the top of the colonnade. "Proletarians of all countries, unite! You have nothing to lose but your chains!" Light was furnished by powerful projectors installed upon structures anchored in the Neva. The "three taps" were given by the cannon of the Fortress. Then there came the Paris Commune with dancing and songs from the Carmagnole; the war of 1914; the leaders of the Second International prostrating themselves before their governments and before capitalism while Liebknecht took up the red banner that they had dropped and cried, "Down with the war!" The overturn of Tsarism was the subject of a unique achievement: automobiles filled with armed workers burst out of several places in the square and threw down the imperial edifice of the Tsar and his clique. A brief episode showed Kerensky soon replaced by Lenin and Trotsky, two large portraits surrounded by a red flag and lighted up with the full strength of the floodlights. The harsh years of the civil war found their symbolic conclusion in a Budenny cavalry charge annihilating the vestiges of the armies of the counterrevolution. At the end, a tremendous "International" rose into the night. An act of faith fittingly terminating a day charged with emotion.

CHAPTER XIV

The Debates at the Second Congress

BACK IN MOSCOW, the Congress promptly began its work. The Russian delegation was important due to the number and the worthiness of its members. It included: Lenin, Trotsky, Zinoviev, Bukharin, Radek, Rykov, Riazanov, Dzherzhinsky, Tomsky, Pokrovsky, Krupskaya. The first point on the agenda was the role of the Communist Party. However, for a certain number of delegates it was the

question of the political party itself that was posed first of all; they had never until that time belonged to a political party; all their activity had developed inside workers' organizations. Jack Tanner had just said that from the tribune. He explained how, during the war, the Shop Stewards Committees had developed, the new importance they had taken on in opposing the policy of the trade-union leaders who were thoroughly committed to the war policy of the British government. The hard battle they had conducted during the war, not free of risk, had led them quite naturally to giving the factory committees a revolutionary program and to rallying to the October Revolution and the Third International from the very beginning. But their activity had always developed outside the party and in good measure against the party, some of whose leaders were the very men they were confronted with in the trade-union struggles. Their own experience of the past years could only strengthen their trade-union convictions: the most conscious and capable minority of the working class could orient and guide the mass of the workers only in the daily struggle for their demands as well as in the revolutionary battles.

It was Lenin who answered Jack Tanner, saying in substance: "Your conscious minority of the working class, this active minority which should guide its activity, why, that's the party; that's what we call the party. The working class is not homogeneous. Between the upper stratum, that minority which has reached full consciousness, and the category to be found at the very bottom, the one that has not the slightest notion of it, the one from whose midst the employers recruit the scabs, the strikebreakers, there is a large mass of workers which we must be capable of involving and convincing if we want to win. But for that the minority must organize itself, form a solid organization, impose a discipline based upon the principles of democratic centralism; when you have that you have the party."

A fairly similar dialogue on the basic question occurred between Pestana and Trotsky. Unlike Tanner, who represented only groups that were not yet numerous and were developing at the fringe of the central trade-union organization, Pestana could speak in the name of the Confederacion Nacional del Trabajo. It did not include all the Spanish trade unions; there existed another trade-union center dominated by the socialist tendency, but the C. N. T. could boast of numbering a million members at the time; it was solidly implanted in the industrial areas of the country, above all in Catalonia; it embodied exactly the anarcho-syndicalist tradition so deep-rooted in Spain. Also, Pestana spoke with more assurance than Tanner and in a more trenchant tone. Toward the party he had more than hostility—contempt. "But it is possible," he conceded, "that in certain countries the workers want to unite in political parties; in Spain we do not need them. And history shows that revolutions, from the Great French Revolution onward, take place without a party." Trotsky could not refrain from interrupting him: "You are forgetting the Jacobins!"

Taking up the question of the party again in his reply, Trotsky proceeded first to answer Paul Levi who, with his customary haughtiness, had declared that that question had long ago been settled by the big majority of the workers of Europe and even of America and that a debate on it was

hardly the sort of thing to raise the prestige of the Communist International. "Without a doubt," said Trotsky, "if you are thinking of a party like that of Scheidemann and Kautsky. But if what is in your mind is the proletarian party, then it must be stated that in the various countries this party is going through different stages of its development. In Germany, the classic country of the old Social Democracy, we see a powerful working class, highly cultured, progressing ceaselessly, embodying substantial remnants of old traditions. We note, on the other hand, that it is precisely those parties that claim to speak in the name of the majority of the working class, the parties of the Second International, that oblige us to pose the question: is the party necessary or not? Precisely because I know that the party is indispensable and because I am persuaded of the value of the party, and precisely because I see Scheidemann, on the one side and on the other the American, Spanish and French syndicalists who not only want to fight against their bourgeoisie but who, contrary to Scheidemann, want to decapitate it, I see that for this reason it is very necessary to discuss with the Spanish, American and French comrades in order to prove to them that the party is indispensable for the accomplishment of the present historical task, the overthrow of the bourgeoisie. I shall try to prove to them, on the basis of my own experience, and not by telling them on the basis of the experience of Scheidemann, that the question was settled a long time ago. We see how great is the influence of the anti-parliamentary tendencies in the old countries of parliamentarism and democracy, for example, in France, I had the opportunity to see for myself, at the beginning of the war, that the first bold voices against the war, at the moment when the Germans were at the gates of Paris, were raised by a small group of French syndicalists. Those were the voices of my friends Monatte, Rosmer and others. There could be no question at the time of speaking of the formation of a communist party: such elements were much too few in number. But I felt myself a comrade among comrades in the company of Monatte, of Rosmer and of their friends, most of whom had an anarchist past. But what could there be in common between me and Renaudel who understood very well the need of a party?

"The French syndicalists are carrying on their revolutionary work in the trade unions. When I discuss this question with Rosmer, we have a common ground. The French syndicalists, in defiance of the traditions of democracy and its delusions, say: 'We do not want any political parties, we are supporters of the workers' unions and of a conscious minority within their ranks which advocates and applies the methods of direct action.' What do the French syndicalists understand by such a minority? That was not clear even to themselves; it was a forecast of the coming development which, in spite of the prejudices and illusions, has not prevented these very syndicalists from playing a revolutionary role in France and from bringing together this small minority that has come to our international Congress.

"Just what does this minority signify for our friends? It is the elite segment of the French working class, a segment which has a clear program and an organization of its own, an organization in which all the questions are discussed, where decisions also are taken and where the members are bound together by a certain dis-

cipline. As a simple consequence of the struggle against the bourgeoisie, of its own experience and of the experience of other countries, French syndicalism will be led to create the communist party.

"Comrade Pestana, who is the secretary of the big Spanish syndicalist organization, has come to Moscow because there are among us people who, in different degrees, belong to the syndicalist family; others are, so to speak, 'parliamentarians'; others, finally, are neither parliamentarians nor syndicalists but supporters of mass action, etc. But what do we offer him? We offer him an international Communist Party, that is, the union of the advanced elements of the working class who have brought their experiences here, confronting them mutually, criticizing each other and after discussion, adopting decisions. When Comrade Pestana returns to Spain, bearer of the decisions of the Congress his comrades will ask him: 'What do you bring us from Moscow?' He will present to them the fruits of our labors and will submit our resolutions to their vote, and those of the Spanish syndicalists who unite on the basis of our theses will be forming nothing but the Spanish Communist Party.

"We have received today a proposal for peace from the Polish government. Who can reply to such a question? We have the Council of People's Commissars; but it must be submitted to a certain control. The control of whom? The control of the working class as a shapeless, chaotic mass? No, the Central Committee of the Party will be convoked, will examine the proposal and will decide. And when it is necessary for us to conduct the war, to organize new divisions, to assemble the best elements—toward whom do we turn? We turn toward the Party, toward its Central Committee. And it is the same thing for food provisioning, for agricultural problems, for everything else. Who will decide these questions in Spain? The Spanish Communist Party—and I am confident that Comrade Pestana will be one of the founders of the party."*

In Lenin's eyes, the national question was scarcely less important than that of the party. The colonial and semi-colonial countries had been aroused by the Russian revolution; their struggle for independence appeared under favorable conditions, their imperialist oppressors emerging from the war all exhausted; it could be a decisive struggle, assuring their emancipation and weakening all the more the big imperialist powers. He was aware that on this point two different and sometimes opposite conceptions were to conflict at the Congress. Before the war he had already polemized on the subject with Rosa Luxemburg for whom socialism transcended national demands which were always more or less tainted with chauvinism. And he had reason to believe that that point of view would be held by a certain number of delegates. He had also taken it upon himself to draft the theses and was anxious to report on them to the Congress after the commission debates. Actually it was in the commission itself that the real discussion took place.

The Indian delegation was relatively numerous; it was headed by a capable man, Manabendra Nath Roy. His activity in India had earned him imprisonment and then expulsion. The October Revolution found him in Mexico and he had come to Moscow through Germany, stopping off and getting information in the course of his travels so that he arrived at the Congress fairly well instructed in the revolutionary world movement. On the struggle to be conducted against British imperialism, he had well-defined ideas. According to him, it was the Indian Communist Party which should take over its leadership. No doubt the Indian bourgeoisie had its program of national demands; but far from uniting with it in the struggle for indepenednce, it had to be fought in the same way as the British occupants because to the extent that it exercized a power of its own—it already possessed important plants in textiles and metallurgy—it was the enemy of the workers, an exploiter as harsh as the capitalists of the independent democratic nations.

Patiently Lenin replied to him explaining that for a longer or shorter period of time the Indian Communist Party would be a small party with but few members, having only weak resources, incapable of reaching, on the basis of its program and by means of its own activity, a substantial number of peasants and workers. On the other hand, on the basis of demands for national independence, it would become possible to mobilize large masses—experience had already demonstrated that amply—and it was only in the course of this struggle that the Indian Communist Party would forge and develop its organization to the point where it would be in a position, once the national demands were satisfied, to attack the Indian bourgeoisie. Roy and his friends made some concessions; they admitted that a common action could be envisaged under certain circumstances. Yet important differences subsisted and, reporting on his theses before the Congress, Lenin added to it Roy's, forming a co-report.

The trade-union question was less well treated by the Congress—without scope and without benefit. Not that it was not discussed at length: the commission was still debating it at the very moment when the plenary session was going to deal with it and preliminary meetings had already taken place even before my arrival between Radek and the British syndicalists. Radek had been designated as the reporter and he was the one who drafted the theses even though he had no special competency in these matters. He approached a difficult problem with the mentality of a German Social Democrat to whom the subordinated role of the trade unions was something established and hardly worth while discussing. He would have repeated readily here what his friend Paul Levi had said with regard to the party: such a discussion is humiliating and hardly calculated to raise the prestige of the Communist International.

He found unreserved support among other Social Democratic members of the commission, among whom Walcher showed himself to be one of the least understanding, ignoring or wishing to ignore the characteristics of the trade-union movement in a country like England, for example, where it had solid traditions and a long history. So that invariably Tanner, Murphy, Ramsay, John Reed were found on one side, not in agreement on all points but agreed to reject as inadequate texts which, at bottom, were confined to reiterating those that were favored in the Second International. On the other side stood Radek and the Social Democrats, sure that they possessed the truth. The dis-

*This optimistic forecast was not to be realized. Upon his return to Spain, Pestana was one of the syndicalist leaders—the majority—who withdrew the decision of adherence which they had given to the Third International in 1919. But the story does not end there for Pestana. He did not join the Spanish Communist Party but ten years later he founded a "Syndicalist Party" which never counted more than a handful of members and more intellectuals than workers, most of them former militants of the C.N.T. who had broken with the anarcho-syndicalist organization. As for the anti-parliamentarian, elected to the Cortes in 1936 by the voters of Cadiz, he died, a deputy, two years later in Valencia.

cussions lasted for hours without advancing a foot. Still, in spite of the new importance attributed to the role of the party, to the recognized necessity of a central organism to conduct the revolutionary struggle after the example of the Russian Communist Party, the role of the trade unions in the capitalist countries and their role in the construction of the socialist society remained considerable. They could not be unaware of this in Moscow, for it was not rare to hear recriminations and criticisms of the Russian trade unions and of the way in which they acquitted themselves of their tasks, of their inadequacy, criticisms which the trade-union leaders did not let pass unanswered. New problems were posed; in the course of the war factory councils had arisen in several countries. What was to be their particular assignment? What was to be their relationship to the trade unions?

When I came to the commission, it had already held several sessions but I could just as well have believed that it was the first. The Social Democrats were so convinced that they possessed the truth that they confined themselves to formulating their viewpoints, decided in advance to pay no attention to the remarks of their antagonists. Radek listened with a distracted ear, reading the voluminous packages of newspapers brought him by the couriers of the Communist International. When he was finished the session was ended to start again at his fancy. In the course of a plenary session of the Congress, we were notified that the commission would meet as soon as the session ended. That was usually around midnight; the discussion was started again up to two or three in the morning, then we would go off to bed sure of having wasted time. Even that part of the theses on which I was in agreement with Radek —the struggle inside the reformist unions and opposition to all splitting— was formulated so brutally, so summarily, that it could only wound and certainly not convince. When the resolution was brought before the Congress, John Reed looked me up. He was greatly moved: "We cannot go back to America with such a decision," he said to me. "The Communist International has no supporters and sympathy in the trade-union world except among the Industrial Workers of the World (I.W.W.) and you are sending us into the American Federation of Labor where it has nothing but hidebound adversaries."

BESIDES THE THESES on the national question, Lenin was charged with the theses dealing with "The Tasks of the Communist International." He attached equal importance to them since actually they again took up and concretized the conclusions and decisions of the Congress, placing them within the framework of the situation of each country. The commission designated to study them was so large that its sessions already looked like a small congress; they were held from 10 to 4 without interruption.

One morning, ten o'clock having already passed, we were still at the hotel when someone came to tell us that Lenin reminded us that the meeting was to begin at 10 o'clock in the Kremlin. Needless to note, we were pretty abashed as we took our places around the table. Zinoviev and Radek had given us bad habits; with them there was always a certain disruption of the timetable and we were unaware that for Lenin and for Trotsky—who were like each other in this respect too—the time was the time. The next day we were all in our places at 10 o'clock. But this time it was Lenin who was missing. He arrived a good quarter of an hour later, made his excuses, and it was his turn to be abashed: he lived at that time in Gorky, thirty versts from Moscow, an automobile breakdown had held him up—and the discussion was resumed at the point where it had been left off.

The theses, drafted by Lenin, offered a convenient means of discussion. We took paragraph by paragraph, discussing, correcting, amending or simply ratifying the proposed text. The specter of "leftism" was present here too. We were asked to condemn by name the organs and organizations which were afflicted with it, like the magazine *Kommunismus* of Vienna and also the bulletin published in Holland by the West European Bureau of the Communist International in which "leftism" had been occasionally manifested. I pointed out that we could not put on the same plane a magazine edited by Austro-Balkan communists and the Bulletin of the Communist International; if the latter was to be mentioned we would have to blame the leadership of the International since it bore the responsibility for it. That appeared to me to be so obvious that I did not imagine that a discussion could develop on the point and after all it was only a detail. But Zinoviev insisted, Paul Levi supported it: the Bulletin must also be blamed. "All right," said Lenin, "we will vote.—But where is Bukharin?" he cried. "He must be found." Bukharin was brought back—he disappeared frequently. Lenin said to him: "Sit down over here, next to me, and don't budge." The commission divided exactly in half: same number of votes for and against. Lenin had followed the operations without taking sides; he reserved his vote; he threw the balance to our side.

An infinitely more important matter then took the attention of the commission. That was the Italian question. The Italian Socialist Party was so profoundly divided that it is scarcely an exaggeration to say that each one of its delegates represented a tendency. Isolated in his delegation, Serrati alone made vain efforts to keep together all these divergent elements. The right tendency included the best known and no doubt the most educated leaders, Turati and Treves; it was absolutely hostile to the Third International. On the extreme left were Bordiga and his friends, warm partisans of the C. I. but abstentionists; Bombacci represented an inconsistent left; Graziadei took up abode on the peaceful terrain of theory; old Lazzari, secretary of the party, was not there but I had met him during one of his trips to Paris and had heard him speak of the New International without sympathy: "Adherence is not yet won," he said. It appeared clear that if the Italian Socialist Party had voted adherence to the Third International it was because its leadership had been unable to resist the strong pressure coming from the ranks of the party, the workers and peasants. Abandoned on all sides, Serrati remained alone to receive all the blows.

But there was still another tendency. It had no delegates to the Congress and it was precisely the one about which it was said in the theses we were discussing that it expressed exactly, in its writings and its activities, the conceptions of the Communist International. That was the group of *l'Ordino Nuevo* of Turin, whose best known militants were Gramsci and Tasca.* When we

*"The Ordine Nuevo group constituted a veritable faction in the Piedmont region. It carried on its activity among the masses, knowing how to establish a close connection between the internal problems of the party and the demands of the Piedmont proletariat." Gramsci, Correspondence Internationale, July 18, 1925.

reached the paragraph concerning Italy, we noted that there was no Italian delegate present. None of them wanted to come. Precisely because of their divergences of view, nobody considered himself authorized to speak in the name of the party. We had to ask Bordiga to expound and concretize the position of *l'Ordino Neuvo*—which he did very honestly even though he started out, as always, by delineating his differences. The details that he contributed confirmed the editor of the theses in his intention to give the "investiture" to *l'Ordino Nuevo* and the commission approved it unanimously.

Finally came England and the Labor Party. The Communists should join it, said Lenin; but there he ran into the general and absolute hostility of the British. Zinoviev supported Lenin; so did Paul Levi, in a tone that expressed a German's disdain both for retrograde and declining England and for its minuscule communist groups; Bukharin with cordiality and comprehension. But all these weighty assaults did not shake the British who, moreover, found reinforcement from the Americans, and from the Hollander Wijnkoop. As chairman of the commission, I was supposed to speak last, but the same arguments, on both sides, had been repeated so often that there was nothing to add. Sure of accommodating the desire of everybody, I said I agreed to yield and that we could go on to the vote. "No, no," said Lenin, "you must never yield the floor." So I summarized the arguments put forward by the British, which were also my own. Lenin had the clear majority of the commission on his side but as he felt that the opposition to his views remained serious he wanted the question brought before the congress, and even though I had expressed myself against this particular point of his theses, he asked me to take on the report of the commission to the plenary session

The debate was followed by the Congress with great attention and a certain curiosity, because the Englishmen had decided to have their standpoint defended by Sylvia Pankhurst. She was one of the daughters of the famous feminist who had conducted a "revolutionary" agitation to obtain the vote for women, but the only one of her family to pass from feminism to communism. She edited a weekly paper, published brochures, and had turned out to be an active and excellent propagandist. The speech she delivered was a speech for a mass meeting and for a Congress, the speech of an agitator. She spoke with fire, moving about dangerously on the narrow tribune. We did not have a good defender in her. Even the sentimental argument of refusing to enter into a party discredited in the eyes of the workers, of finding there leaders who had betrayed during the war—which was after all not a negligible argument —was drowned in abundant declamation. Lenin's theses won but the minority remained impressive.

* * *

I HAVE SAID NOTHING yet about a question on which, however, a good deal was to be said later on, that of the "conditions for admission into the Communist International." There were twenty-one of them. The Russian communists had drafted them with meticulous care; in this way they meant to reply in advance to the criticisms aimed at the method they followed in constituting the Communist International. These draconian conditions formed a barrier so solid that the opportunists would never be able to cross it. That this was an illusion

they would quickly perceive. They had, to be sure, a good knowledge of the workers' movements of the countries of Europe; they also knew their leaders, they had met them in the Congresses of the Second International. But what they did not know and could not know was how far the maneuvering skill of these men trained in the practises of democratic parliamentarism could go. They had more tricks in their bag than the suspicious Russians could imagine. For example, the secretary of the French Communist Party, Frossard, was able to teach them a lesson in the art of evasion for two years. Rosa Luxemburg who knew these people thoroughly because she had spent her life as a militant in the German Social Democracy where she was easily able to follow the life of the parties of the neighboring countries, in 1904, had written an article published by *Iskra* (in Russian) and by *Die Neue Zeit* (in German) which might have put the authors of the theses on the 21 conditions on their guard if only their recollection of it were fresh. "In the first place," she wrote, "the idea that lies at the basis of extreme centralism—the desire to close the road to opportunism by articles of the statutes—is radically false. . . . The articles of the by-laws can dominate the life of little sects and private clubs, but an historic current passes right through the mesh of the most subtle paragraphs." A criticism in anticipation—and all of the subsequent life of the Communist International was to confirm its correctness.

In the course of one of the Congress sessions, a big lad of about twenty approached me. He was French, had just arrived in Moscow, and wanted to talk with me. It was Doriot. He told me his story. It came down to a few words: he had been prosecuted and sentenced to a few months in prison for an anti-militarist article. Instead of going to prison, he had decided to escape, preferring residence in Moscow to a prison cell of the Santé. His political education was fairly sketchy but in those days he was reserved, modest and assiduous. He lived two whole years in Moscow, returned to France to take the secretaryship of the Communist Youth, was elected a deputy in 1924. His break with the Communist International, where the "good Communist Right" was on his side—he had refused to follow Stalin in his "leftist" turn of the "Third Period" of the Communist International — might have allowed him to form and organize a healthy opposition. But during his brief and brilliant career he had learned to maneuver; he had become too quickly a perfect politician and he had been contaminated too heavily by Stalinism to be able to undertake an unselfish task. He wanted to be a "leader," and it was easy for him to move over, like so many others, from Stalinism to Hitlerism.

CHAPTER XV

Trotsky Delivers the Closing Speech on the Manifesto

THE CONGRESS CONCLUDED with the same solemnity that marked its opening. This time the scene was Moscow; for its final session the Congress met in the Great Theater. The delegates were there in mass. A long table went all across the hall and behind it sat Zinoviev and the members of the Executive Committee. The vast hall was filled with a joyful and attentive crowd: militants from the party, the trade unions and the Soviets. The meeting after all was for them. At the Kremlin, the discussions had all taken place in German, in English, in

French; it was time to speak in Russian. The speech was delivered by Trotsky. It was the manifesto of the Congress, but a manifesto of a different character from what is usually meant by the word. It was divided into five big parts. Trotsky first described the general situation of the world, the international relations after the Versailles Treaty; it was a dark tableau but one that the countless victims of the war were beginning to see. Then he passed over to the economic situation. General impoverishment and disorganization of production which an effort was being made to remedy by resorting to state intervention. But in point of fact, the intervention of the state into the economy could only compete with the pernicious activity of the speculators by accentuating the chaos of capitalist economy in the epoch of its decline. In this period of decline, the bourgeoisie has completely abandoned the idea of conciliating the proletariat with reforms. There is no longer a single great question that is being settled by the popular vote. The whole state machinery is turning more and more clearly back to its primitive form. detachments of armed men. It is necessary to defeat imperialism in order to let humanity live.

In contrast to this agonizing regime, Soviet Russia has shown how the workers' state is capable of reconciling national requirements and the requirements of economic life, by eliminating chauvinism from the former and liberating the latter from imperialism.

On the basis of this broad exposition Trotsky then summed up the debates and explained the decisions, with these words as his conclusion: "In all his activity, be it as the leader of a revolutionary struggle or as organizer of clandestine groups, as secretary of a trade union, as deputy, as agitator, cooperator, or as combattant on the barricades, the communist always remains faithful to himself, a disciplined member of his party, an implacable enemy of capitalist society, of its economic regime, of its state, of its democratic falsehoods, of its religion and of its morality. He is a devoted soldier of the proletarian revolution and the tireless herald of the new society. Workers and working women! On this earth there is but one banner under which it is worthwhile living and dying, the banner of the Communist International."

The man, his words, the crowd that heard him, all contributed a moving grandeur to this final session of the Congress. The speech had lasted a little over an hour. Trotsky had delivered it without notes. It was marvelous to see how the speaker organized this vast subject, enlivened it with the clarity and power of his mind, and to observe on all faces the impassioned attentiveness with which his words were followed. Parijanine—a Frenchman who had been living in Russia a dozen years—came to me, gripped with a potent emotion: "Let's hope that it's properly translated!" he said to me, expressing in this way something more than the concern of a faithful translator — the fear that something of this grandeur might go lost.

THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE met the day after the Congress. It was to examine the practical consequences of the adopted decisions and resolutions, to take measures relating to their application. The first point of the order of the day was the designation of the chairman and the secretary. The reelection of Zinoviev to the chairmanship went without saying but that was not the case with the secretaryship:

the Russian delegation asked for the removal of Radek. The first secretary of the Communist International had been Angelica Balabanov; Radek had replaced her at the beginning of 1920; so that he had held this position for only a short time. Nevertheless, his candidacy, which he maintained, was defended by several delegates, notably by Serrati. A discussion began; it was fairly short because it only repeated a debate that had taken place in the Executive Committee a few days before the meeting of the Congress.

It was an extremely important matter, for the question that was unexpectedly posed was this: with whom is the Communist International to be made? With what parties? What groups? What revolutionary tendencies? Who is to be admitted and who rejected? Only those socialist parties that voted to join while retaining in their ranks opponents of the Communist International? Or only the new groupings that had been formed during the war on the very foundation of adherence to the Third International? The Russian Communist Party had adopted an intermediate solution: its theses on admission to the Communist International, the 21 points, were to be at once a guarantee against the opportunists, a barrier prohibiting their entrance, and a means of facilitating the indispensable selection among the members of the old socialist parties.

To everybody's surprise, Radek had raised a question that was believed settled and he had taken a position flatly in opposition to the decision of the Russian Communist Party. The Congress is going to meet, he said. Who is allowed to participate in it? Certainly not these new organizations which, although constituted on the basis of adherence to the Third International, include above all syndicalists and anarchists, but only the delegates of parties, socialist or communist, who are alone qualified to designate delegates. Serrati and Paul Levi immediately supported him; the operation had undoubtedly been prepared in advance; the Italian Socialist Party and the German Communist Party were, outside of the Russian Communist Party, the two important parties of the International. Radek might have thought that their intervention in his favor would be decisive. But he had made a poor calculation. Bukharin reminded him of the position taken by the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party, of the text of the appeals launched by the Communist International to the workers of all countries. With the opportunists, he said, we have nothing in common; with the sincere and tested revolutionists who have voted adherence to the Third International we want to discuss amicably; we ourselves have made revisions in our program that became necessary; we have thrown away, in Lenin's expression, our dirty social-democratic linen in order to build communism on a new foundation; we want to continue our efforts to lead the syndicalists and anarchists to carry out in their own way the operation that will enable them to join us in the new Communist Parties that are now being formed. Bukharin had concluded by saying that he could not understand why Radek had brought up again the decisions taken by the Russian Communist Party and by the International. "What are the English delegates from the Shop Stewards and the Workers' Committees doing here? What is Pestana doing? What is Rosmer doing? Why were they called if we were resolved to close the doors of the Congress to them?" It was so obvious that Radek was unable to find any other recruits

for his maneuver at the last minute; he remained with Levi and Serrati. I have spoken of them elsewhere. What I said about them explains their attitude, especially in the case of Paul Levi. He detested the anarchists and syndicalists as a bloc, "oppositional" elements who did not cease to haunt him. Serrati's motives were different. He found it inadmissable that the International should welcome cordially the syndicalist and anarchist groupings at a time when it continuously formulated various demands with regard to an impressive party like his own.

That is where we left it at that session of the Executive Committee but naturally there was a conclusion that had to be drawn from the debate and the conclusion was, according to the Russian delegation of the Communist International, the removal of Radek from the secretaryship; the debates had only emphasized its inevitability. The decision was not adopted right away, however. To replace Radek, the Russian delegation proposed a Russian communist, Kobietsky. We did not know him. John Reed, who did not know him either, asked for a postponement of the decision. He had received, he said, information that had to be checked; in Kobietsky's political past there were compromises that made him undesirable, above all in a post of this importance. It was not hard to see where John Reed had obtained his information. Radek was hanging on grimly. But Zinoviev remarked that the nomination by the Russian delegation was a guarantee and the matter was settled. After the experience with Radek in the secretariat, the selection of a man who was not so brilliant but more reliable was obvious.

Another important decision was taken on the same day. On the initiative of the Russian delegation, every delegation was asked to appoint a representative who would remain in Moscow and would participate directly in the work of the Communist International. A permanent liaison would thus be achieved, assuring good reciprocal information between the Communist International and its sections. For me, this decision was welcome. I had started on my trip not in order to go to a Congress, but to study on the spot the Bolshevik revolution and the Soviet regime it had installed—something that the Congress had hardly permitted me to do. Now I would have the opportunity. In addition, I was anxious to follow the work of the Provisional International Council of the Red Trade Unions. There I felt more at ease and was sure of doing useful work. The tactic defended energetically by Lenin against the "leftists" in his *Infantile Sickness*, and approved by the majority of the Congress might have seemed contradictory. The Communists, the revolutionary workers, were asked to remain in the reformist trade unions, and on the other hand, the road toward a Red Trade Union International was being openly laid down. The reformist leaders of the Amsterdam International Trade Union Federation did not fail to say so and even to shout it, and along with them the bourgeois press. We were denounced as splitters.

But the contradiction was only apparent. The splitters did not come from our side as the events were soon to prove. There certainly was a split but it was provoked by the reformist leaders the very moment they felt they were losing the majority. They would not allow the masses of trade unionists to express themselves at any cost, to decide freely and in conformity with democratic rules when they feared the loss of the leaderehip of

the trade-union organization. Their tirades against "all dictatorships," and for democracy, were nothing but words. In actual fact they were resolved to use all means to keep the positions they had been able to keep or get hold of thanks only to the war. I have already had occasion to show the point to which Lenin showed himself inflexible on the trade-union tactic: you had to fight and remain where the workers were, which meant almost everywhere in the reformist trade unions, since the reformist leaders had succeded in keeping the leadership in spite of their attitude during the world war. However, in the unions as in the Social Democratic parties, more or less substantial minorities were fighting under the banner of the Third International to win the organization by leading the majority of the members to rally to the conceptions they were openly defending.

If our activity did not always unfold the way we wanted it to, the responsibility for that was of two sorts. On the one hand, there were inside the minorities impatient people and so-called "theoreticians" who wanted to have a trade-union organization of their own without further waiting; their blunder or their mistake could only facilitate the game of the reformists who rejoiced at finding such adversaries before them. On the other hand, in the leadership of the Communist International there was not always an understanding of exactly what our task consisted of; its importance was not grasped; all attention was concentrated on the development of the young Communist parties. Yet, if the reformist leaders in the trade unions were vulnerable, it was only on the condition that the blows were struck at the right place, for they were full of shrewdness and ruse. It was on their side that you found falsehood and dissimulation. However, most of the time nothing more was done than to fire insults at them, which they undoubtedly deserved but which were ineffective. In connection with a meeting in London of the General Council of the Amsterdam Trade Union International, the Executive Committee of the Communist International had decided to launch an appeal, jointly with the Provisional International Council, addressed to the workers of all countries and to the British workers in particular. Zinoviev and I were each assigned to prepare a draft which would serve as the basis for the final text. But our two drafts were so dissimilar in form and foundation that there was nothing left to do but adopt one or the other. While I set myself to grouping together all the grievances of the workers in a way that might impress and convince, reminding them of the past activity of the Amsterdam leaders, emphasizing how little internationalist this Federation was—chauvinism raged there to such a point that the nations adhering to it remained classified as allies or enemies, as in the war days—Zinoviev confined himself to firing a volley of insults, sometimes in pretty bad taste, against "Messrs. Yellow Leaders," etc. You had to be ignorant of the workers' movement and of the British workers to imagine for a single moment that an appeal of this sort could win us any adherents or simply sympathy, or facilitate the task of the revolutionary minorities. Zinoviev proposed to try to combine the two texts but it was impossible. The appeal reproduced exactly his authorship and I was greatly annoyed to have to put my signature to it.

My work in the Communist International was less absorbing, even though I was assigned to represent

Belgium and Switzerland which had been unable to leave a permanent delegate in Moscow. I had established contact in the course of the Congress with their delegates the principal ones among whom were, for Belgium, Van Overstrateten, serious, competent, one of the founders of the party whom the Zinovievist "Bolshevization" of the Communist International alienated from Communism in 1927; and for Switzerland Humbert-Droz who abused the confidence that had been placed in him. A pastor in London at the beginning of the world war, he had been persecuted there for his opposition to the war; after returning to Switzerland he contributed to bringing together the Zimmerwaldians, organized propaganda work in favor of the Third International, edited an excellent review. Contrary to all expectation he approved not only the "Bolshevization" but Stalinism as a whole, including the "Moscow Trial." It was only during the second world war that he was to separate himself from a party that had become altogether different from the one he had helped create.

LIKE ALL THE SOVIET INSTITUTIONS, trade-union or political, the Third International had a rest home for its workers. It was a pretty vast estate—the former property of the Grand Duke Sergey, governor of Moscow—situated at Ilinskoye, twenty versts from the city on the road to Klin. The main building was impressive in its dimensions but ordinary; others, smaller in size, were scattered throughout the park. The work of the Congress and the long discussions had exhausted the delegates; those who remained in Moscow went off to rest at Ilinskoye. I made a short trip there which enabled me to take some interesting observations. First the contrast between the exterior and the interior. The interior furnishings were simple, even poor. Everything had been taken for the war; beds were nothing more than a straw mattress spread over planks, and the menu as usual was of extreme sobriety. But what a cordial and pleasant atmosphere! Everything contributed toward it: it was summer and to save on light an hour of "daylight saving" had been instituted, so that the pleasant evenings were prolonged. After dinner we all assembled in the principal building. Imagination, fancy, the artistic gifts so common among the Russians enabled them to improvize the most ingenious entertainment. And above all else there were the songs, those incomparable popular Russian songs which, coming from the nearby villages, rose into the night.

One morning, I met M. whom I had not seen again since my arrival on Soviet soil, since the trip from Yamburg to Petrograd when he tried to persuade me that it was proper to use the parliamentary tribune for Communist propaganda. His wife joined us shortly. She was Kollontay's assistant in the section devoted to work among the women, hence an important person in the Soviet "hierarchy" (nobody, of course, would have been well advised in those days to use such a term; the Fascism of Mussolini was needed to implant it and Stalinism to welcome it). But she was not at all disposed to find that all was for the best in the Soviet Republic. Quite the contrary, she criticized a good deal and unsparingly. It is only at a distance away that such a thing should be surprising. In those days you could speak freely: no embarrassment, perfect comradeship. During my stay in Moscow I saw M. and his wife again and again. They had a room at the Metropole Hotel and no matter how late at night you came home from a meeting or at times from the theater, you could always see light in their window and be assured of getting a glass of tea from them—even if a weak one—and sometimes a bonbon to sweeten it with, but always a harsh denunciation of the insufficiencies of the regime. It was a home not to be frequented by a vacillating communist, but the ones of those days were well tempered.

A TELEPHONE CALL from Trotsky informed me that he had just received the French translation of the Manifesto of the Congress. It made up into a sizable brochure that was to be published simultaneously in Petrograd and in Paris. The translation appeared to him to be faithful; nevertheless he would like to go over it with me. The checking took several evenings. On those days, instead of returning to work to his secretariat after dinner, he remained at the Kremlin. For me it was an opportunity to resume my questioning bearing now more precisely on several subjects I wanted to go into more deeply, and naturally on the Congress itself. I also questioned him about persons. I knew some of them very well but many others I knew only by name. Of the latter he gave me biographies that I always found to be flattering when I got the chance to check on them; he knew very well all those with whom he worked in the Central Committee of the Party and in the Soviet institutions. If there were some he did not like and whom he judged severely, it was never for personal reasons but because they were inferior to their task or discharged it badly; there was never anything petty in his remarks.

"Were you ever seriously perturbed about the outcome during the long civil war?" I asked him one day. "What was the toughest moment?"

"Brest-Litovsk," he said right away, replying first to the second question. "The party was deeply troubled, excited. Lenin was almost alone at the beginning to accept the need of signing the treaty without discussion. There was fear of a split, of fierce internal struggles which might have had disastrous consequences for our Revolution in the state that Soviet Russia was in at that time. . . . The civil war presented dangers of a different kind. When we found ourselves pressed simultaneously from the East and the West and the South, when Denikin threatened Tula, it is certain that we could not help asking ourselves with a feeling of anguish if our red Army might not succumb under this triple assault. For my part, the feeling of confidence never left me. I was in particularly favorable circumstances for judging the situation: I knew exactly what you could ask of our army, and thanks to my incessant trips to the front and throughout the country I also knew what the armies of the counter-revolution amounted to. They were better equipped than ours: Yudenitch even had tanks at his disposal for the attack on Petrograd. But I knew their fundamental weakness: the peasants could see standing behind them the proprietors of the lands they had seized. Even those among them who were not too sympathetic toward us then became allies on whom we could count."

A. ROSMER

BOOKS IN REVIEW

Kempton's Ruins and Monuments

Part of Our Time: Some Ruins of the Thirties, by Murray Kempton. Simon and Schuster, New York City, 1955, 334 pp., $4.00.

Readers of the *New York Post* know Murray Kempton as one of its leading institutions; the *Post's* more acute readers know him as a puzzle. Having succeeded Victor Reisel, erstwhile radical, of whom it could accurately be said, "he is the fairest labor columnist: one day he's for the workers and the next he's for the bosses," Kempton has for some years now ostensibly been the *Post's* labor columnist. *Ostensibly,* because such items of interest to the labor movement as automation, the guaranteed annual wage, the recent UAW convention, and the forthcoming merger of the CIO and AFL have barely, if at all, found their way into his columns. Indeed, until the past few days when he began to cover the UAW-Ford negotiations, Kempton has virtually ignored the unions and their problems during the past year.

Instead, his articles have concentrated almost exclusively on questions of civil liberties. These, however, have not been in the main the larger questions relating to the witchhunt and the anti-democratic trends in the nation. Kempton, concerned more with personalities than with politics, generally searches out the "dramatic" and the "ironic" from among civil liberties incidents and focuses on them. Hence the fact that column after column has in recent months starred Harvey Matusow, wringing the last drop of interest to be found in that informer through the wringer.

Prior to his civil liberties period Kempton rode the "corruption in the labor movement" wagon. And so, for months and months he hammered away at racketeering and gangsterism in the International Longshoreman's Association, reporting ad nauseum the criminal histories and activities of ILA officials and organizers, hunting down the last detail of their associations, connections and family relationships with this or that underworld figure or gang, with this or that racket, race-track, questionable business, or other unsavory group or institution.

Kempton, then, appears to have a touch of the old-fashioned muckraker in him, at least with regard to his range of interest, if not with respect to his attitudes. And therein lies his first limitation. Muckraking without social vision and political theory may have some value but in the long run it is necessarily ineffective, and frequently becomes a bore.

Moreover, Kempton betrays too much concern with the "human interest" and "ironic" value of his subject matter, and takes too much delight in turning a phrase, even at the expense of clarity and meaning, to bear close comparison with the exemplars of the liberal muckraking tradition. Indeed, his popularity among liberals rests as much upon his literary style as upon his political views and knowledge, many of his devotees being attracted to the man on a basis similar to that which brought so many intellectuals to the Stevenson banner during the 1952 elections.

This reviewer, it should be said at the outset, is not one of those enamoured of Kempton's literary style.

Kempton writes in an exaggerated, flamboyant fashion; the hyperbole dominates every sentence. His "literaryness," in which the maudlin and the rococco march hand in hand, frequently results in clouding ideas and exaggerating the trivial to unwarranted importance.

Kempton's literary style recently figured in a court decision. Victor Lasky had sued Kempton for libel. The court, in finding for Kempton, declared that it was impossible to say whether or not Laski had been libeled since the article in question had been written in so hyperbolic a fashion that its exact meaning could not be elucidated.

After all is said and done, however, it must be recorded that a solely negative evaluation of Kempton as a newspaper columnist is both inaccurate and unfair. For, every so often, Kempton produces a column which, given our time, is an outstanding and unmincing exposé of and attack on the witchhunt or against racketeering in the trade unions; in these reside his value and justification. And of course, the fact is that Kempton and the newspaper for which he writes are almost singular in American political and journalistic life for the degree of resistance to the witchhunt which they offer.

Kempton has now devoted his talents to a larger stage. *Part of Our Time,* a study of that "Red Decade," the 1930s, may well turn out to be one of the items in the biblical canon of contemporary liberalism, even though its dissemination and reception so far in liberal circles has not been on a grand scale. The reviews to date by such liberals as Arthur Schlesinger Jr. indicate that they will by and large accept it as the definitive explanation of not only the growth of Stalinism in that decade, but also of the "radicalism" of the period and of their own, in the case of many, now-embarrassing radical pasts.

The book's dust-jacket bears as a subtitle the following legend: "Concerning some of the men and women who were active in the 'Red Decade' in the U. S. Some of them radicals, most of them Communists; how they felt in their days and their gain or loss from an experience intense and passionate, which changed their lives profoundly." From this, and from the organization of the work, which in Kempton's words, consists of "a series of novellas which happen to be about real persons" one might conclude *Part of Our Time* to be merely a collection of disconnected portraits of radical or Stalinist figures of that period.

Such a conclusion would be misleading; Kempton himself makes clear the larger intent of his study. For Kempton the personality study is the vehicle for understanding history best and through this vehicle, he believes, we shall come to understand a given period. He writes:

"It was the sense of the author of this book that the anatomy of any myth is the anatomy of the men who believed in it and suffered by it. To understand the thirties it is, of course, necessary to understand what the thirties themselves would have called their social forces. But it is far, far more important to try to understand the people who lived in that long-gone time. Whatever is permanent in the lessons of the thirties is permanent from these people."

This book attempts, then, a vision of an entire period, a social portrait of the 1930's, and an explanation of that era. It is written from the standpoint of our day, a time to which all

of the momentous developments of those years seem utterly alien, and in which social struggles and impulses of "long-gone" years seem to so many of those who participated in them to be embarrassing gaucheries committed by callow youngsters.

The picture which Kempton paints of the 30's and his theories about that period are presented in a prefatory chapter, which he characteristically calls "A Prelude," and is often repeated in other chapters of the book. These cement *Part of Our Time* and give it cohesion; they explain Kempton's selection of characters, the incidents in their private and public lives which are examined, and the analysis which he offers.

Every decade, says Kempton, has its own myth: the myth of the 1930's having been a social myth. Its essence lay in the idea of social struggle and social revolution, in the notion that the problems of capitalism in the 1930's could be solved only by the destruction of the social system, only in the replacement of capitalism by a new revolutionary social order. The new society, it was felt, would indeed come to pass. If it did not, barbarism would triumph. There would be some kind of Armaggadon, of that, the "victims" of the myth had no doubt.

Kempton sets himself the task of reaching through this myth and searching out reality, he sees himself the exploder of myths who can definitively disentangle the distorted versions of the history of that era. This process involves two aspects for not only must the myth be uncovered, but the myth prevalent in our day about *that* myth must likewise be exposed. The myth of our day is the McCarthyite myth which holds that the myth of the '30's was real and not myth at all, which believes that capitalist America was in danger of falling before the revolution, and therefore wishes to bring the myth-makers and myth-victims of those years "to justice." Thus Kempton identifies the ideology of the witchhunt with the position that the radicalism of twenty years ago had some reality to it. Although he does not say this in so many words, one can easily infer from this idea the feeling that one of the defenses of civil liberties which Kempton makes is that the socialist and Stalinist forces never amounted to anything anyway.

Rather than being the exploder of myths, as he likes to think of himself, Kempton has fallen victim to a number of myths, himself. The most obvious myth of which he is captive is the myth of "American exceptionalism." In its most recent form the myth holds that the New Deal, and not World War II, ended the depression. As seen through the eyes of its votaries, a galaxy of New Deal bureaucrats, labor "statesmen," and enlightened capitalists, through their "social engineering," afford America an unlimited opportunity, with the few, as yet, unsolved social problems to be smoothly solved without social convulsions or intense class struggle.

Throughout the book Kempton contrasts the futile self-defeating activities of *his* radicals and Stalinists with the reality-oriented constructive work of those who gave up the "myth." Reuther and Curran, for example, by giving up the myth were able to achieve without a revolution that which the radicals thought only radicalism and social revolution could deliver. He even ties this myth in with a psychological point. The radicals, he tells us, were neurotics; they reacted not to social reality but to their inner conflicts and to their rebellion against *their fathers*. Reuther,

by way of contrast, is lovingly viewed by Kempton, as a man with a happy childhood, whose psyche presented a picture of harmony, being at peace both with itself and its environment, finding no need to indulge in the usual adolescent rebellion against parental authority and restrictions.

To EVOKE THE ATMOSPHERE of the Thirties, Kempton writes rather precious vignettes of those he considers its representatives. Most of them, to be sure, are Stalinists. We are fairly certain that Kempton is politically sophisticated enough to know the difference between genuine radicals and Stalinists, and to know, moreover, that while the Stalinists have reactionary aims they are pursued in a peculiar manner. The Stalinists operate primarily in the labor movement, and in appealing to the workingclass they frequently invoke legitimate demands. They are not only participants in social struggles, but attempt to lead them. In this sense, and this sense alone, can Stalinists be regarded "radicals." There are few in Kempton's cast of characters who were such participants during the Thirties. Yet, actually, had he dealt with the historic reality he would have been offered a wide selection.

Kempton's representatives include Hiss, Chambers, Lee Pressman, Joe Curran, J. B. Matthews, Elizabeth Bentley, Ann Moos Remington, Paul Robeson, some Hollywood characters, and a few of the less inhibited proletarian literature cultists. A motley crew of espionage agents, New Deal bureaucrats, Hollywood hacks and neurotic women. McCarthy and Kempton have hired the same cast to act out the history of the Thirties, but whereas McCarthy bellows about their villainy, Kempton has them playing bit parts or off stage entirely. When they do make an appearance, they serve as comic relief, as objects of ridicule.

Kempton is a victim of McCarthyism to the extent that he, like McCarthy, treats communism as a conspiracy of dedicated fanatics worming their way into the government, trade unions, motion picture industry and other institutions for the purpose of spying and subverting. But while McCarthy plays up this "menace," Kempton plays it down. In effect, he is telling the witchhunters that their picture of the Thirties as an era of mass radicalism is a distorted one, that radicals were few and far between but managed to publicize themselves well, and that really it was an eminently respectable period. One wonders whether Kempton might feel the witchhunt justified if he believed that Stalinism had really represented a dangerous mass movement.

For the most part, those presented as representatives of the Thirties were not really of that era. Robeson, for example, was in Europe during most of the period and therefore not an active participant in American political life. Pressman did not really achieve prominence until the Forties. Hiss was a minor New Deal bureaucrat and did not achieve any public status until after the war, and then he was accused not of public association with the Stalinist movement but of espionage. Chambers was a minor figure in the CP during the late Twenties whose claim to that status rests on his authorship of a few short stories and the editorship of the *New Masses* for a short period. He disappeared from public life entering the Russian espionage apparatus in 1934, emerging during the Forties to confess. The motivation for including Chambers, Hiss, Bentley and Remington as figures of the Thirties is to identify the

radicalism of that period with espionage.

The various sketches present abundant evidence of which Kempton seems dimly aware that his "radicals" lived their entire lives in a manner at variance with the "myth" and had as motive for their activities no discernable impulse that can be called radical. In a few of the essays he points ironically to the discrepancy between the lives and activities of these Stalinist "radicals" and the "myth" they represent but mystifies his readers by failing to draw any conclusions. The individual studies are of an uneven character. Some, like the one on Matthews and another on the Hollywood Stalinists contain nicely delineated insights into the personalities of those dealt with; but, for the most part, they are merely personal projections and utterly pointless when they are not downright dishonest.

In the chapter on Hiss and Chambers, Kempton sets himself the task of explaining the relationship between the two men. He sees them as drawn to each other precisely because of the difference of their backgrounds, with each longing for the other's environment. For Hiss, according to Kempton, Chambers represented a much to be desired rootlessness, bohemianism and non-conformity, while for Chambers, Hiss' near Southern shabby gentility and traditionalism proved very attractive. Sometimes in the early Thirties Hiss joined the CP and soon thereafter was brought into the underground apparatus. What motivated Hiss to join the Communist Party? Was the "myth" of social revolution and radicalism responsible? Kempton maintains a discreet silence on this question. Only once does he quote Hiss on politics, a comment on the Moscow Trials that "Joe Stalin certainly plays for keeps." The reality of power and not the "myth" of radicalism brought Hiss and many others like him to Stalinism.

Lee Pressman with an entirely different tradition and background is essentially the same type. Kempton portrays him as a fellow-traveler, always balancing himself carefully between the Stalinists and the official leadership of the CIO. He had his big moment during the war while an alliance existed between these forces. When the break occurred Pressman carefully wrote resolutions straddling the fence. As to Pressman's political ideas, his radicalism, Kempton offers two quotations, both defending the use of terror by the Russian government.

The mockery of this group as representing the Thirties is nowhere more glaring than in the chapter dealing with the Hollywood Stalinists. Kempton ironically points out the lack of connection between their lives and "creative" work and the radicalism and social consciousness of the "myth." The script writers, actors, directors and producers who were Stalinists or fellow-travelers spent their lives, for the most part, in a manner undistinguishable from the non-political and politically conservative members of the movie industry. The films they wrote, directed and produced were the typical Hollywood product. Kempton runs down a list of movies in which Stalinists were involved and quotes the favorable reviews accorded them by the Daughters of the American Revolution.

As Kempton knows, or should know, the Hollywood Stalinists had essentially two functions to perform for the CP. Their primary task was fund raising for the party and its innumerable front organizations, and secondarily they were used as public figures and speakers for CP fronts.

Kempton pretends ignorance and gleefully tells stories about a Stalinist actor whistling a few bars of the "Internationale" when asked to improvise during a blank spot in a scene and of a Lester Cole movie in which the football coach paraphrases La Passionaria. About such gestures he can perceptively say:

> A few bars from the "Internationale," a slogan of La Passionaria: these, of course, are only the rags and tags of what these people are supposed to have believed. It is hard to understand why gestures so empty of meaning seemed important to men whose daily lives were spent consuming the comforts of commerce. To say that they were vagrant twinges of conscience does not seem quite adequate. They are more like gauges of culture. For most of the younger Hollywood Communists appear to have been persons whose knowledge of the Communist Interntionale was limited to a snatch of its anthem. Their vision of the Spanish War was confined to LaPasionaria's phrase about refusing to die on her knees, which does not sit uncomfortably on the lips of a football coach.

Kempton's recognition of the absurdity of the Hollywood Stalinists as representatives of revolution, his knowledge of their political ignorance, his insight into the vacuous bourgeois mediocrity of their lives poses the problem of his choice of them in the first place as people who lived by the "myth." The answer to this question can be found only in Kempton's vision and theory of the Thirties. It is both a symptom of his distorted perspective and an index to it. To start with a comparatively minor point, if Kempton recognizes the vast ignorance of politics among the Hollywood Stalinists, and at the same time has no doubt that they are authentic representatives of the "myth" of political radicalism of that decade, it is because for him ignorance was the hallmark of the whole radical movement. As proof for such a view, Kempton produces a letter his wife received in 1936 from a radical friend in which Ghandi is spelled "Gandi" and Lesbianism is spelled "Lesbienism"; plus the testimony of an ex-Stalinist informer before the House Committee on Un-American Activities in which Rosa Luxemburg is converted into "Rosie Luckenburg."

Three examples of errors in spelling and pronunciation on the part of unknown and unnamed Stalinists or radicals and Kempton is ready to say: ". . . this was a dismally ignorant radical generation. . . ." To be sure, there were ignorant people in the radical and socialist movements in the Thirties, and this was especially true for the Stalinists. But can there be any doubt that on the whole the radical, socialist and Stalinist students stood head and shoulders above their non-political fellows in regard to political knowledge? Where did the labor "statesmen" who are Kempton's "monuments" learn what they know, and what distinguishes them from ordinary business unionists? Surely, they too received their training in these movements. And we may well ask: what of Kempton himself?

For Kempton, movements hardly existed, if they existed at all, and the radical sentiments which swept broad sections of the workers, students and lower middle class generally were the opium dreams of the "myth" addicts. He tries to belittle and make ludicrous the mass character of radicalization. The student ferment existed only in the perturbed imagination of the Hearst press and the periodicals issued by the victims of the "myth." For evidence he tells us that in 1937 500,000 college students took the Oxford Pledge (although he doubts the figure), but in 1940 when the draft

was instituted less than 100 refused to register. Conclusion: the whole student movement was, at most, a prank.

What Kempton doesn't realize is that for most of the active participants in the movement refusing to be drafted was not considered a means of fighting against war, that the Pledge was not literal but a dramatization of political opposition to imperialist war and that only the pacifists regarded it as a weapon. Aside from that, between 1937 and 1940 the Stalin-Hitler Pact was made and the Stalinists wrecked the student movement, causing hundreds of thousands of students, to be disillusioned with radicalism and all politics for that matter, in the process. 1940, then, was set in an entirely different scene than 1937.

IN HIS CHAPTER, "Father and Sons" which deals with the Reuthers, Kempton discusses the mass unionization of the millions of workers in the mass production industries and the formation of the CIO, but does not relate this upsurge of the American workingclass to the general radicalization of the period and the growth of radical organizations. For Kempton, the unionization of millions simply involved another process taking place at the same time but having no real point of contact with the radical and socialist movements or the growth of radical sentiments in general among the American people. Instead of recognizing that the growth of radical parties was one expression of ferment in the population as a result of social crisis and that the trade union development was another, that the two phenomena had many points of contact, not least of which was the leading role played by Stalinists, socialists, ex-Stalinists and ex-socialists in the organization of the CIO, Kempton regards these as two distinct affairs. How then explain the radical social struggles which occurred in that upsurge, struggles which took the form of sit-down strikes and violated the sanctity of private property?

Kempton deprecates the radical nature of the sit-down strike. Using his own brand of logic, he points out that the workers were very careful not to damage any of the machines in the occupied plants; that the Detroit Woolworth strikers even fed the canaries faithfully. In order to have demonstrated their radical sentiments to Kempton the workers would have had to smash the machines and slaughter the canaries. Anything less was in the nature of conservative union action.

The socialists and such radical union leaders as Reuther, Kempton tells us, felt that the working class struggles were much more than a bread and butter proposition; Reuther "had thought of the union as an instrument to reshape America sharp and fast." But after the 1937 victories, the workers had had enough, their conservatism reasserted itself; the "surge of that promise was over and he [Reuther] was left with the ebb." Like so many other ex-radicals Kempton feels betrayed by the working class. Yet, in his view, this situation permitted Reuther to exercize his great virtue of adjustment. "His institution would not change for Walter Reuther, and so Walter Reuther changed for it," says Kempton approvingly. This quality of flexibility enabled Reuther to become one of the "monuments" in Kempton's gallery; the radical inflexibility of those who remained socialists caused their ruin and caused them to create ruins.

Joseph Curran, President of the National Maritime Union may not be the well adjusted personality of our times, at least Kempton does not compare him with Walter Reuther in that

respect, but he too enjoys the status of a "monument." Not perhaps as stylized and refined as Reuther, granite hewn and a bit rough on the surface, but flexible, and therefore a "monument." Curran, it turns out, was unwilling to remain a victim of the "myth" when it dawned on him that seamen were not interested in radical social programs. He was sufficiently reality-oriented to break with the Communist Party and struggle against the Stalinist domination of the union.

There is no doubt that Curran had wide support when he initiated the fight against the Stalinists in 1946. Restless in the face of the CP's bureaucratic control of the NMU and the wretched gains that that administration had won for them during the "war unity" years, a majority of the seamen fought hard and long in the Curran caucus to oust the Stalinist leadership. Aside from the rank and file, Curran had the support of a large section of the secondary leadership of the union which had also broken with the CP. These men were more than mere Curran supporters. They were the backbone of the anti-Stalinist caucus, its theoreticians, its leaders, its spokesmen. It may be romanitc to think of Curran in Kempton's terms: "Roaring, rasping, and unsleeping, he fought them and beat them in union metings month after month up and down the coast," but it isn't strictly factual.

When Curran boasts that everything he knows the Communist Party taught him, he tells the truth. Cynically, and with every bureaucratic means at his disposal once his power was consolidated in 1949, Curran initiated a struggle against any future opposition. He not only learned from the CP, he learned all too well. For an issue he used a proposed amendment to the union constitution favoring the expulsion of all present and future communists. Those who had been the leaders of the Curran group in its fight against the Stalinists in 1946, among them a group of CP dissidents, were the primary victims of the attack, but before the fight was over, thousands were involved and with Curran's victory many seamen lost their hard won union membership.

Wtih all of the hard-boiled sentimentality of a tenth rate novelist Kempton gives the following account of the 1949 fight:

> In the end Keith and Lawrenson had to go too, because they were not comfortable in peace and order. Curran, by now implacable, put through an amendment to the union constitution ordering the expulsion of all present and future Communists. Keith and Lawrenson fought against it and were never reconciled. On Thanksgiving of 1949, they rallied their followers for one more battle in the streets and seized the union headquarters. For one more night, Joe Curran came back to stand unmoved on a platform while the sailors roared him down too, smoking a cigarette and smiling a cold smile with bits and splinters of the woodwork flying about his head as they had flown around so many others.
>
> But Curran did not walk away and before very long, he beat them too. Then Keith went and Lawrenson was defeated and with them passed the last organized segment of the army of the future. They had been shipmates for a very long time, but there is no record that anyone said goodbye to anyone else.

Kempton's fiction might even have been more lurid had he stuck to the facts. He omits mention of the brutal beatings of oppositionists by Curran's squads in private chambers of the union headquarters reserved for that purpose, of the faked charges against hundreds, of the use of police at a union meeting to protect Curran from an enraged membership which

voted his defeat five to one. To report such facts about a labor "statesman" is perhaps to detract from his statesmanship.

Just as there is something malodorous about Kempton's choice of "radicals" so there is about his selection of "monuments." Like so many of the Stalinists he abhors, Kempton is intrigued and attracted by power. The hated Stalinists and Stalinoid intellectuals look longingly at the Russian model while Kempton confines his admiring glance to the respectable, but powerful bureaucrats of the American trade union movement.

THERE IS A SOCIAL BASIS for Kempton's political ideology. It consists of the relative social peace resulting from the prosperity which America enjoys today, having achieved this position through World War II, its preparations for World War III and its imperial relation to the rest of the capitalist world. The radicalism of the Thirties must consequently have been a myth, the bad dream of our childhood.

But there was a social basis for the political, economic and social struggles of the Thirties. Kempton has a selective memory and has repressed his knowledge of it. Forgotten is the mass unemployment resulting from the depression, the shrinking economy, the social and economic injustice all of which gave rise to large waves of protest; forgotten the desperate and largely unsuccessful pump-priming efforts of the New Deal as a response precisely to the growing radicalism of the American people.

Kempton cannot see the real ruins and monuments for the trivia.

Max MARTIN

Dissipating a Reputation

Why Dictators? by George W. F. Hallgarten. Published by The Macmillan Co.

Why does an historian with Hallgarten's reputation write and publish a book like *Why Dictators?* (Hallgarten's fame rests securely on his two-volume work, *Imperialismus vor 1914*. Written and finished just as Hitler came to power, Hallgarten's work was not published in complete form until 1951 in Munich. It has found its place as an indispensable source in any study of imperialism.)

There is nothing to admire about *Why Dictators?* except the display of learning and technical virtuosity. Hallgarten freely roams all periods of Western history to find his material. Arnold Toynbee may have needed ten thick volumes, Hallgarten needs only 354 breathless pages. Cypselus of Corinth, Orthagoras of Sycyon, Pisastratus of Athens stand side by side in uneasy contemporaneity with Tiberius, Gaius Gracchus, Ferrante of Naples, Thomas Munzer, Cromwell, Bonaparte, right down to Chiang Kai-shek. We are dazzled but not instructed.

Hallgarten distinguishes four types of dictatorship: the "classical," the "ultra-revolutionary," "Counter-" and "pseudo-revolutionary." Social crisis, our author tells us, prepares the soil for dictators. But he simultaneously insists on the psychological derangement and "charismatic" character of dictators to explain their origin, rise and success. Marx, Weber, and Freud all suffer equally as a result of Hallgarten's method.

Of course Hallgarten is too sophisticated to explain dictators on psychological grounds alone. But the way he combines psychological and social drives is something wonderful to behold. His analysis of the reasons for the extremism of the "pseudo-revolutionary type a la Hitler will serve as a model of his method.

He begins by giving conditional acceptance to Gisevius's opinion that "neither greedy masses nor unleashed matter nor inscrutable destiny conjured World War II into being. It originated in the will of a single individual." Says Hallgarten: this statement "undoubtedly contains a sizable nucleus of truth, though not the full truth. In reality, no pseudo-revolutionary leader would have come to power without active help from the ruling classes and from their individual members whom he was expected to save from distress. Besides, he always remained dependent on the masses behind him. . . ."

So far, so good. Who could disagree? But then matter is translated into spirit. "The pressure exercized upon his [Hitler's] psychology by the mechanics of rearmament—the exhaustion of raw materials, the increase of inflation, the chance of being outraced by other powers, and the increasing impatience of his own radicals—became more and more unbearable."

The last chapter of this dismal work ends with some comments on the world struggle between the United States and Russia. Hallgarten fears this struggle will produce dictatorships within the Western world. As is usual, he produces his cataclysmic vision. But instead of turning to Burkhardt, the favorite oracle for the doom-sayers these days, the slightly old-fashioned Hallgarten reverts to Spengler for his panorama of decay. The specter of Spengler's Caesar, ruler of a declining civilization, threatens Western society unless . . . unless the ordinary citizen shakes off his complacency.

We close with the same question we asked at the outset. Why does a historian of Hallgarten's note dissipate his reputation by writing this kind of book?

Abe STEIN

Fictionalized Biography

Faithful Are the Wounds, by May Sarton. Rinehart, New York City, $3.50.

As an individual, a personality, the late F. O. Matthiessen was an appealing figure. The author of one of the most significant contemporary studies of American literature, *The American Renaissance,* he argued for a conception of the scholar as a man of commitment, of action (see, for example, the posthumus collection of essays, *The Responsibility of the Critic).* Indeed, it was Matthiessen's own personal commitment which led him to a "Christian socialism," into the Wallace movement, and ultimately played a part in his tragic end. His suicide note defined his despair as a result of the contradiction between his values and the trend of America today.

Now, in *Faithful are the Wounds* by May Sarton, we have a fictionalized treatment of Matthiessen's life. Or rather, as this discussion will make clear, a novel built around the incidents and values of his life, yet independent of biographical intent, a work of art. In analyzing the book, in making such distinctions, it is necessary to raise larger questions of social criticism.

First, some general considerations. It is possible to have a political novel, a *roman à clef,* in which motivation is derived from ideological analysis. *Darkness at Noon* has this quality to a certain extent. The logic of Rubashov's actions is, more often than not, dictated by a rationalistic, one dimen

sional, image of man in which the political-philosophical is controlling. His affair, for example, is a medium of political development rather than romance. This same characterization could be applied to the actions of Thomas in *Murder in the Cathedral,* except that the ideology in this case is religious.

But it is also possible to have a novel in which politics is a background, a setting, but not the center of motivation. In *Man's Fate* the social struggle is primarily the medium of individual release and self-consciousness, thus reversing Koestler's pattern. And in Dicken's *Bleak House,* the courts perform a metaphorical function, standing for a certain attitude toward the world, and it is the latter, the attitude, which is the principle of selection and description, not the reality of the legal system itself.

Finally, it is possible to combine these two types, to have a work of art in which politics is both context and principle of motivation, but not solely the principle of motivation. This, I think, is the case with May Sarton's book. Such an approach can yield a multi-dimensional thickness, a complex image of decision enmeshed in society, private and public worlds in their inter-mingling. It is a difficult technique, for it demands a careful, structured presentation, balanced and inter-related.

Thus, in *Faithful Are the Wounds,* there is a central "private" theme: the failure of communication. It is developed in the inability of Edward Cavan's sister (Cavan is the Matthiessen-like figure) to understand her brother, in the gulf between two young lovers, in the marital relationship of Damon Phillips, one of Cavan's colleagues, and his wife.

The major consequence of this failure is Cavan's death. He attempts to communicate his anguish to his various friends and cannot do so. The despair which results is an occasion of his suicide. The content of his anguish *is* political—the Czechoslovakian coup, the politics of the American Civil Liberties Union, etc.—but the inhibitions of communication are not. These spring from other motivational sources, from childhood, from personality variances, from different social positions.

The point of the private theme is that through Cavan's death, a certain possibility of *personal* communication comes into being. The lovers marry, a man and his wife realize their relationship more deeply, the sister is changed. In the development of this theme, the political is context, it is the stage, but it is not the determinant of motivation, it is the occasion. In this regard, one could compare *Faithful Are the Wounds* to an unpolitical book like *Wings of the Dove,* where personal relationships develop around the death of Milly.

Yet there is also an explicitly political level. Cavan's death does not ony lead Damon Phillips to an understanding of his marriage; it also causes him to take a definite political position with regard to a congressional committee. In the Epilogue, Phillips refuses to testify about his friends or associates because he realizes that Cavan was right, that ". . . the intellectual must stand on the frontier of freedom of thought."

It is in this case, and only in this case where the author uses her material to give emotional weight to a particular point of view, that we can apply political criteria in judging the book. And it must be remembered that this is only one part of the judgment, that it is possible to respect the political line and yet admire, and

value, other aspects of the novel. In judging Balzac, Marx used a political *and* social criteria; I am proposing a political *and* formal consideration.

In its political aspect, *Faithful Are the Wounds* is somewhat ambiguous. The central political problem is Cavan's belief that Communists and Socialists can cooperate. In the end, Damon Phillips tells the committee "that although Edward Cavan may have been wrong in his belief that Communists and Socialists could and should work together, in the essence of his belief he was right and many of us were wrong." The main political question is how Miss Sarton distinguishes the "essence" of Cavan's political belief from his tragic conviction that Communists and Socialists can work together.

It is here that our estimation of the "private" theme is an aid to the political judgment. For the metaphor established between the public and private worlds of this book, make it clear that the "essence" of Cavan's belief is that of responsibility, of commitment, of communication, both public and private. His failure lead to his death; his death led to others achieving what he failed. The impact of the book is not to call for a political program, but for a political attitude—and for a sound political attitude. There is a certain ambiguity, but it is, I think, resolved.

Indeed, the synthesis of the two worlds, private and public, is quite moving. Communication, as a personal ideal, and communion, as a political ideal, are joined at Cavan's funeral and in the effect of his death upon his friends. The choice of the quotation from John Donne ("No Man Is an Island . . .") is somewhat trite, but aside from this, the emotional impact and the artistic achievement are considerable.

Faithful Are the Wounds is an accomplishment. It is far more than a political novel, taking that term in its sense of programmatic fiction. It performs a subtle and delicate weaving of private and public motivation, its image of decision is complex, its social context is movingly presented. Judged as it should be, as a work of art, it is a significant success.

MICHAEL HARRINGTON

MAGAZINE CHRONICLE

Just prior to America's entry into World War II *Partisan Review* announced its withdrawal from partisan politics. It would no longer take political sides in any militant fashion, but would devote itself to philosophy and belles-lettres. But only a cursory contact with the magazine in the past few years reveals that *PR* hasn't abandoned politics. It has merely reversed its politically partisan nature. From a magazine of social and literary revolt it has become tedious, academic and, what mainly concerns us, engaged in a painful struggle to achieve political respectability.

How painful this effort can be is easily illustrated by an article by Hannah Arendt in a year-old issue, January-February, 1954. Arendt is one of PR's favored Marx-slayers, a woman who is prepared and over-anxious to club Marx and Marxism to death with a mace spiked with distortions of Marxism and delicately embroidered with innumerable references from the original Greek, Latin, French and German.

All that space, patience and interest permit in this column—is to take a few of the key sections from Arendt's multi-lingual potpourri which reveal the increasing withering away of anti-Marxist thought.

Arendt quotes phrases from Marx on the state, labor and violence concluding that:

> These statements, in addition to being predictions, contain of course, Marx's ideal of the best form of society. As such they are not utopian, but rather reproduce the political and social conditions of the same Athenian city-state which was the model of experience for Plato and Aristotle, and therefore the foundation on which our tradition rests.

This is not a typographical error; it's Hannah Arendt. It is the kind of theoretical mish-mash which is so grotesque that the reader is caught unaware, unprepared to admit what is being said.

In what possible respect could anyone in his right political sense remark that the ideal form of society for Marx could be found in the "political and social conditions" of ancient Athens, a slave society whose estimated ninety thousand free citizens were many times outnumbered by their chattels?

In the Homeric age, before the emergence of a Greek *state,* Greece was classified by Marx and Engels as a "primitive democracy." Can it be this which inspires Arendt to write such foolishness? But the Iroquois tribes, according to Engels, were even more democratic and more primitive than the Greeks. Perhaps, then, it was this barbarian Indian tribe which presents a more accurate precursor of Communism?

Whatever may have inspired Arendt to write this, whether it was her misreading of Marxist writing on primitive society, or a misunderstanding of Marx's genuine admiration for ancient Greek culture, or plain maliciousness, one thing is clear—it belongs in the realm of Pure Nonsense.

This amalgam of Marxism and primitive society is only one in a whole series of scholastically presented boners. Just one or two more examples.

Arendt discusses Marx and labor:

> "Labor created man" [a phrase of Engels] means first that labor and not God created man; secondly, it means that man, insofar as he is human, creates himself, that his humanity is the result of his own activity; it means, thirdly that what distinguishes man from animal, his **differentia specifica,** is not reason, but labor, that he is not an **animal rationale,** but an **animal laborans;** it means, fourthly, that it is not reason, until then the highest attribute of man, but labor, the traditionally most despised human activity, which contains the humanity of man.

Hannah Arendt is almost artistic in her creativity. "What distinguishes man from animal, his *differentia specifia,* is not reason, but labor, that he is not an *animal rationale* but an *animal laborans. . . .*" Does this not show signs of genius, of some sort or other?

If Marx regarded man as an "animal laborans" how does that distinguish man (his *differentia specifica)* from an animal, in the first place? If that is all man is, then, he is an animal in Marx's eyes according to Arendt. But that would make Marx a bit of an idiot, and not even Arendt makes any such contention. Of course, Marx regarded man as a thinking animal and it is this ability to think which, if properly exercised, will make us all properly wary of Arendt's pretensions. Where does Marx counterpose *work* to *thought?* Man, according to Marx, through his labor and his ability to reason, is capable of harnessing nature to his needs and interests; through labor and through his unique intelligence he is capable of freeing himself from all the meanness of capitalism.

If Hannah Arendt wants to know —if she is really interested—in learning Marx's *differentia specifica* we offer the following passage from Volume I of his *Capital* (Modern Library edition, page 198).

> We presuppose labor in a form that stamps it as exclusively human. A spider conducts operations that resembles those of a weaver, and a bee puts to shame many an architect in the construction of her cells. But what distinguishes the worst architect [the *differentia specifica*] from the best of bees is that the architect raises his structure in imagination before he erects it in reality.

Implicit in the paragraph we have quoted from Arendt – and further along the same lines Arendt refers to Marx's "glorification" of labor—is a lightly veiled attempt to de-humanize Marx.

Did Marx glorify labor under capitalism? Did he see something especially noble in the idea of a young man wasting away before a British textile loom? Marx of course did not glorify labor under capitalism. What he did was to give a new dignity to labor, revealing its social role and indispensibility for leading a movement of human emancipation.

If Marx glorified labor it was not labor under capitalism but labor which would be freely and consciously performed under socialism; a distinction, of fundamental importance, but apparently of little concern to Arendt. To Marx, labor performed under capitalism is on the whole performed with disinterest or disgust. A working man does not realize himself through his labor in bourgeois society. He becomes indifferent, alienated and estranged from his work and from himself, often reduced to an animal level by his condition of life and labor.

"The Marxian identification of action with violence," Arendt tells us, "implies another fundamental challenge to tradition which may be more difficult to perceive, but of which Marx, who knew Aristotle very well must have been aware." In reinterpreting Marx on the role of violence, Arendt does violence not only to Marx but to the nature of Greek society. She tells us that:

> The twofold Aristotelian definition of man as a **dzôon politikon** and a **dzôon logon echon,** a being attaining his highest possibility in the faculty of speech and the life in a **polis,** was designed to distinguish the Greek from the barbarians and the free man from the slave. The distinction was that Greeks living together in a **polis** conducted their affairs by means of speech, through persuasion, and not by means of violence through mute coercion. Barbarians were ruled by violence and slaves by labor, and since violent action and toil are alike in that they do not need speech to be effective, barbarians and slaves are **aneu logou,** that is, they do not live with each other primarily by means of speech. Labor was to the Greeks essentially a non-political, private affair, but violence is related to and establishes a contact, albeit negative, with other man.

Now, this is what the Greeks may have said, but even Arendt knows this does not accurately describe the relation of Greek to Greek, Greek to slave and Greek to barbarian. The labor of the slaves was decidedly not a non-political affair, since the freedoom of the Greek citizen rested on its perpetuation. The Greek state, "a body of armed men," was always ready to step in and use violence against the slaves to maintain the *polis* where questions were decided by rational discourse. Furthermore, violence was used not merely against slaves and barbarians, but if we remember our history, in the struggle between one Greek city-state and another. And in

how many instances were the vanquished enslaved? Finally, has Arendt forgotten the plight of the Greek peasants, citizens of the *polis,* who fell into slavery because of indebtedness?

Having reinterpreted ancient society and its philosophic tradition in order to discredit Marx as the preacher of violence and not reason, Arendt now shifts her sights into the future to propound a paradox that puts Zeno the Eleatic to shame.

> If labor is the most human and most productive of man's activities, what will happen when after the revolution 'labor is abolished' in 'the realm of freedom' when man has succeeded in emancipating himself from it? What productive and what essentially human activity will be left? If violence is the midwife of history and violent action therefore the most dignified of all forms of human action, what will happen when, after the conclusion of class struggle and the disappearance of the state, no violence will even be possible? How will man be able to act at all in a meaningful authentic way?

That Marx said "violence is the midwife of history," we agree. But only Arendt's inventive mind can deduce from this that Marx also believed that "violent action therefore [is] the most dignified of all forms of human action." Against that day when the state has withered away and the class struggle is a bad dream, we offer the hypothesis that poets will quarrel on a mass scale with nothing more damaging than verbal violence over the use of meters, and painters will rend the air in a dispute as to the use of solid colors and abstract art. There will be all kinds of struggles. All except the class struggle.

If men are not chained to the machine and the tractor, what productive activity will engage the free energies and minds of men? Being a child of the great German philosophic tradition, Arendt must know that Schiller defined art as the realm of freedom. When men are free from the compulsion of labor, the creative transformation of society, nature and man himself stands on the order of the day. In *Literature and Revolution,* Leon Trotsky foresaw the day when men would level mountains in one area and raise them in others, turn arid deserts into singing gardens and reshape even their own bodies to their own desire. And in this day of atomic energy, Trotsky's imaginative visions become real possibilities—if capitalism is replaced by a socialist order.

A Dubious Defense

IT IS NOW little more than a year since a statement of the Atomic Energy Commission concluded that "Dr. J. Robert Oppenheimer is hereby denied access to restricted data." In that year an immense volume, the transcript of Oppenheimer's hearing before an AEC security board appointed by Lewis Strauss, had been released followed by a niagara of articles, letters, and books on the subject.

One of the books on the Oppenheimer case came out shortly after the scientist's clearance was lifted: *We Accuse!* by Joseph and Stewart Alsop. Reading it, one can readily see why *We Accuse!* has suffered a virtual blackout in the press. It is scathing in its indictment of the government, the AEC, the Air Force Generals, the security system. The Alsop's accusations are made furiously, but also factually; their mood is one of outrage and indignation which does not impinge on their style which is direct and lucid.

An account of the Alsop brothers' book is outside the scope of this column. We mention it only to contrast it with another defense of Oppenheimer which has appeared recently in *Partisan Review* (November-December, 1954) written by Diana Trilling. Where the Alsops discuss the Oppenheimer case with forthrightness and a sense of reality, Trilling's defense is circumspect, equivocal and abstract. In all 32 pages of the *PR* article one fails to find any connection made other than in passing between the Oppenhimer case and the witchhunt. For all we might gather from the Trilling analysis, the Oppenheimer case might have taken place on a different planet and in a different century—earlier or later, it makes no difference.

Trilling's failure to discuss the Oppenheimer case in its social context is not an oversight, and it is more than a defect. It stems from her own basic commitments to prevalent prejudices and anti-democratic attitudes. We know this from her past writings, her political activities and from what is said and left unsaid in her article on Oppenheimer. In the Spring issue of *PR* there is a very effective analysis of Trilling's approach, written by Hans Meyerhoff on the faculty of the University of Southern California. Meyerhoff's article was made all the more persuasive by Mrs. Trilling's brief rejoinder in the same issue.

> ...at one point she [Diana Trilling] admits that Oppenheimer was reinvestigated because he represented "a way of thinking and even of being which was antipathetic to a dominant faction and because the political climate of our times had prepared an appropriate ground for his defeat." But if Mrs. Trilling thinks the political climate of our times is relevant to this case, or why it is, she has *nothing* more to say about it in the entire article. She has nothing more to say about what it means that this political climate provided an *appropriate* ground for Oppenheimer's defeat. She does not assign any significance to these contemporary problems looming in the background. She does say that the final AEC report by Strauss "evaded the very issue" of Oppenheimer's opposition to the H-bomb; but she does not say what this evasion means. In other words she herself evades any issue which might possibly be of current interest. As far as her analysis is concerned, it is as if we were not dealing with any contemporary problem at all.
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> Thus her only comments on the report by the Gray Board are that "public reaction . . . was intensely unfavorable" and that "liberal sentiment was outraged," because a man semed to be condemned for his opinions. Was he? Mrs. Trilling does not, or will not, say. Was liberal sentiment *justifiably* outraged by what looked like punishment for a thought-crime? Or does Mrs. Trilling's phrasing imply that she really believes liberal sentiment, once again, indulged in liberal sentimentality? The Alsop brothers print excerpts from this report. It affirmed Dr. Oppenheimer's "loyalty," "high degree of discretion" and the public debt owed to him for "loyal and magnificent service." The Board then declared Dr. Oppenheimer a security risk; and the Alsop brothers ask the naive question, what standards of security and justice were employed in this ruling. Mrs. Trilling does not ask any questions. To say that a man deserves the thanks of the fatherland and to humiliate him in the same breath—is that absurd or not? Mrs. Trilling does not, or will not, say.

Mrs. Trilling fails to discuss the political and cultural climate surrounding the Oppenheimer case but she does develop a theory of the political and moral responsibility of the liberals of the thirties and forties for the growth of Stalinism and the present impasse of liberalism. McCarthyism, the witchhunt, even the humiliation of Oppenheimer are the unpleasant retributions visited upon liberals for their past mistakes. Diana Trilling writes:

> Fairness to Dr. Oppenheimer requires that we remind ourselves that our current acute relations with Russia, of

which the Oppenheimer case is only one relatively small result, would very likely have never reached their present point of crisis had not so much of the energy of liberalism been directed, in the very period in which Dr. Oppenheimer failed to report Chevalier, to persuading the American people that Russia was our great ally instead of the enemy of democracy and peace which she had already clearly demonstrated herself to be.

Does Diana Trilling really believe that it was the liberal world during the war that has brought us to our present "point of crisis"? Is she really ignorant of the fact that liberals never could have cornered the market on coining adulatory phrases for "our great Russian ally" because the bulk of the bourgeois world jealously clung to its rights of peddling the virtues of the Russian Bear. Doesn't Mrs. Trilling know that it wasn't only the liberals, sucked in by the Stalinist Fronts and even by the Communist Party who proposed toasts to Stalin and the glorious Red Army? From the *Daily News* to *Time* magazine and from Cordell Hull to Churchill our "great Russian ally" was treated to public adulation. Whatever secret misgivings some bourgeois politicians may have had or even occasionally expressed, it was the bourgeois world, not liberalism, which must bear this onus for invaluable services performed for Stalinism, motivated by more or less equal parts of immediate military considerations, stupidity and a typical imperialist indifference to conditions of life in Russia.

This view of the responsibility of liberalism for Stalinism today is nothing more than a gentle and palatable version of Senator McCarthy's screwball expostulations about "twenty years of treason." Diana Trilling's self-flagellation for the crimes of liberalism permits her to conclude her article with the observation that, in effect, the fate of Oppenheimer,"... constitutes a projection upon Dr. Oppenheimer of the punishment we perhaps owe to ourselves for having once been so careless with our nation's security."

Smash us with your broomsticks, oh you avenging witchhunting angels, for we one-time radicals are guilty and born in sin.

JULIUS FALK
ABE STEIN